



IRSEA NEWS

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IRSEA enriches the lives of retired Senior Educational Administrators through engagement, collegiality, friendship, and support while deploying its intellectual capacity and educational expertise for the betterment of public education in New South Wales, Australia, and beyond.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

ERIC JAMIESON



Reflections

Seemingly in the blink of an eye, our 2024 Annual General Meeting is upon us which brings with it the completion of my term as President of this wonderful organisation. Custodianship of IRSEA during the past year has been the greatest of honours. After all, how many people reprise the opportunity to serve alongside their heroes of education, years after thinking that stage of life was over!! The camaraderie, support, and wise counsel have been brought to life once again, reviving wonderful memories of times past, as well conjuring future possibilities. To have such an opportunity, whilst also connecting with the current great leaders of public education in NSW, is truly something very special. I am immensely grateful to all. Thank you.

Reflecting on the past 12 months, despite some personal challenges restricting the progress I had hoped to contribute, with a lot of help from an outstanding executive team and the leadership of the Department at the highest levels, we are in a strong position to formalise our relationship with the Department.

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Annual General Meeting
Friday 22 March 2024

Following is a message I sent to Department Secretary, Murat Dizdar and his Deputy Secretaries, Deb Summerhayes and Martin Graham:

On behalf of IRSEA, I wish to extend our sincere congratulations for the outstanding Public Schools Summit that you led last week.

There was a powerful sense of unity and dedication to a clear vision and strong collective purpose. The presentations from divisional leaders epitomised a leadership group who not only understand their own roles and important responsibilities but recognise how they each significantly contribute to the collective imperative for public education in NSW. It was indeed inspiring.

As mentioned last week, we are enthusiastic about possibilities for IRSEA to further contribute to your wonderful efforts to progress NSW public education. We greatly value the way in which you have integrated IRSEA into your leadership design. To extend our contribution, I am attaching a proposal that has been approved by our executive committee for your consideration. Our focus is to provide not only advocacy to support your leadership, but also serve in a more practical way to promote exceptional practice in NSW public schools.

This paper is intended to serve as a discussion starter for further conversations with you, as well as action to highlight on an international and national stage, the outstanding practice within NSW public education.

On behalf of the senior executive leadership team, please consider this as a request to meet with you and further discuss possibilities, with an intention to move to action as soon as is possible.

Of course, the paper referred to in the email was the one included in our previous IRSEA News, November 2023. It was with great delight that we received positive responses from each of the three Departmental leaders in reply to our proposal. A representative team from IRSEA will be meeting with Murat, Deb and Martin in the near future, a very exciting development in our ongoing commitment as a key stakeholder in public education.

We are very grateful to Murat for directly involving us in the Department's leadership development, particularly in the standing invitation extended to us to attend the Public Schools Summits each term. A tribute to Lindsay Wasson for so enthusiastically driving and managing our involvement in the summits, and acknowledgement to Raechel McCarthy for her support as the Department's representative in ensuring we are looked after exceptionally well and clearly valued as an esteemed partner by Murat and his team.

There are exciting times ahead in which IRSEA can play a highly valuable role in promoting exceptional practice in NSW public schools. There is the potential for opportunities to abound through our direct support to promote national and international recognition of NSW public education.

IRSEA Christmas Luncheon

An occasion that epitomises the strong collegial and social fabric of IRSEA was on full display at our Christmas Luncheon on 1 December 2023. It was a great honour that attendees included former Director-General Dr Ken Boston, former Deputy Director-General Alan Laughlin, along with Irina White and a host of wonderful members. We were also delighted to welcome Lyndall Foster who was attending for the first time as a new member. In addition, Honorary Membership was presented to Chris Bonnor and Associate Membership to Jason Miezis.



Raechel McCarthy and Jason Miezis presented on behalf of the Department, outlining the vision for public education in NSW reflective of the aspirations of the new government in combination with Murat and his leadership team.



Warmth and generosity of spirit was plentiful throughout the afternoon, along with great conversation, colourful stories, a virtuoso operatic performance, and even performances by a couple of budding poets! It characterised the strong bonds that exist amongst so many people who have dedicated their professional lives to education.

Thanks to John Allsopp for his excellent organisation of the luncheon. It has been John, along with Ray Gillies, who make these events possible. Thanks also to chef extraordinaire Kerrie Ikin for her legendary Christmas cake raffle donation, and sommelier Lindsay Wasson for his raffle donation of an exquisite bottle of wine, all for the great benefit of Stewart House.

Members' Awards

Under the wonderful direction of Graham Dawson, the IRSEA Executive Committee recognises the contribution of its members, (and other approved non-members), to the life and objectives of IRSEA and the advancement of public education.

The nomination forms for these awards are included towards the end of this publication and can also be found on the IRSEA website (www.irsea.org.au).

The Executive Committee is keen to honour those members, and other educators, who meet the criteria for the awards, and we invite all members to consider nominating appropriate recipients. We have already conferred a number of Outstanding Service Awards to members, and we look forward to continuing to honour those members who have made a significant contribution to IRSEA and public education.



In particular, we would like to honour members at the upcoming AGM, so please consider nominating members now for these important awards.

Nominations should be sent to either Graham Dawson at: grahamd48@gmail.com or Brian Davies at: secretary@irsea.org.au. Please contact Graham if you would like further information about the awards or the nomination process.

It is such an important part of our ethos in honouring exceptional contributions of our members. We look forward to receiving your nominations.



Profound Respect and Gratitude

Through working closely with the executive of IRSEA, my respect and gratitude has grown even more for the inspired, intelligent, insightful, generous, and committed way in which executive members work together with such a strong collective purpose and extraordinary dedication. It has been an absolute privilege serving in this role.

Of course, the incredible leaders who complete the triumvirate of positions relating to the Presidency, Lindsay Wasson, Immediate Past President, and Gerry McCloughan, Vice President, have been remarkable in the support, encouragement, and guidance they have provided throughout the past year. You are both an inspiration. The organisation is in great hands with you both guiding the way.

I would also like to acknowledge two members who have played significant roles in different areas of our operations. After wonderful service, both members have decided to pass on the baton. They have each left an enduring legacy.

- John Allsopp, Luncheon Coordinator, has provided exceptional service in ensuring each event is conducted with style. The relationship John has established with the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel has been to our great benefit, with all of his arrangements being undertaken with good grace.
- Until early last year, Grant Beard has quietly undertaken the painstaking work of preparing the layout for IRSEA News publication. After assuming his duties when Grant finished in his role, I truly understand the demands of his work. Grant is the guru of publication style and standards. I know

editor Syd Smith, in particular, is greatly appreciative of the important role that was played by Grant.



What Lies Ahead?

I complete my stint as President feeling a strong sense of optimism for the future. The challenges ahead for education are substantial, particularly in a world of rapid change, yet the vision and strategy for public education in NSW is strong. It is uplifting to know that the amazing collective expertise, enthusiasm, and experience that exists within IRSEA is highly valued by our contemporaries. Opportunities in partnership to acknowledge and promote exceptional practice, creativity, and innovation will provide perfect complementarity for the benefit of students and staff throughout our cherished system.

I greatly look forward to what lies ahead under the leadership of Gerry McCloughan, with more than a little help from a powerful cast of accomplices.

Very best wishes
Eric Jamieson



MEMBER PROFILE: Gerry McCloughan

Editor: The Member Profile is another new attribute of IRSEA News, designed to help get to know our members better. If you have any suggestions of members you would like to know more about, please let me know.

In this edition is an intriguing interview featuring Gerry McCloughan, IRSEA President for 2024/5.



"I have been very fortunate to have worked for the NSW Department of Education. It and its people have played a significant part in my life; and in retirement, I continue to enjoy being associated with and contribute to the advancement of public education."

Gerry, what has brought you to be a member of IRSEA?

I have been a passionate advocate of public education, even though my own school education was in the Catholic system. One certain thing I have learned in my

life is that challenges occur – sometimes they present slowly over time, and sometimes in sudden and dramatic ways, strongly influencing the pathways one might take through life – life's twists and turns have impacted significantly on my life journey and career decision making.

In joining IRSEA, I found that my ongoing mission in supporting public education matches IRSEA's mission completely; a bonus of membership is the opportunity to catch up and reminisce with former like-minded colleagues and to meet and learn from other's who share the vision – I am blown away that I have been able to continue and deepen association with some of my all-time school education heroes through IRSEA!

So, retirement from DoE?

Needless to say, I, like so many colleagues, have worked through the inevitable departmental restructures! I retired as Director, School Performance & Improvement, in the Learning, High Performance & Accountability Directorate in November 2015.

I was fortunate to work closely with Eric Jamieson in building the High Performance unit from 2011. Eric's approach and designs for the unit were invigorating, and exceptional staff contributed to realising an innovative and exciting vision. In February 2013, I was appointed Assistant Director, School Performance & Improvement in High Performance after being Assistant Director, Educational Measurement & School Accountability from March 2010. This period was busy but hugely rewarding – I had responsibility for piloting and refining the new school planning processes and state-level supports, for managing the expansion of the Essential Secondary Science Assessment (ESSA) program to be the Validation of Assessment for Learning & Individual Development (VALID), and the management of the analytics and information systems for student, school and system reporting including for NAPLAN, VALID and the HSC through the School Measurement, Assessment & Reporting Toolkit (SMART). I also had key roles in collaborating with the Department's Centre for Education Statistics & Evaluation (CESE) and the Australian Curriculum Assessment & Reporting Authority (ACARA) on a range of innovative student and

school information systems including the establishment of Tell Them From Me (TTFM), and the trialling of the online assessment of students' collaborative problem-solving skills. I am grateful to many in state office for encouragement and trust, especially Greg Prior and Louise Ferguson.

There have been many times in my life that I did not think I would ever achieve retirement at director's level in the Department, so I consider myself to be very fortunate to have others in education believe in me and value what I contribute.

Why are you such a passionate supporter of public education?

I think it relates to those twists and turns that life presents. I'm a Dubbo boy, growing up happily in the Hub of the West with great parents. I was described as 'an afterthought', having a wonderful sister and brother who were 10 and 8 years older than I. Since my birth, Dad was Principal, Dubbo South Public School and was respected as a fine educator, absolutely dedicated to his students, staff and community. I struggled with walking past his school to attend the local Catholic school, and I think that was the beginning of my valuing of public education over time.

My secondary education was as a boarder at a GPS school in Sydney – that had its rewards and challenges – I achieved highly academically and in leadership; was conflicted with the system and being away from home; and I think the experience overall contributed to the 'larrikin' in me. I left school with ambivalence, but I've always carried a 'cup-half-full' attitude.

With a high-level HSC, I was heading to study architecture at UNSW when the brick wall of financial means shifted my pathway to a Teachers Scholarship with the NSW DoE – I enrolled in a science degree with Dip Ed at Mcquarie Uni (. . the offer of scholarship was signed off by J Buggie, Director-General of Education). I told the old man "I'm NEVER going to be a teacher, Dad!". I kept that vow for two years until I began pract-teaching in 1975 in Western Sydney (which I just loved) and met Debbie, my wife-to-be at Macq Uni – those two things changed everything!

My first appointment was to Dunheved High School serving a highly disadvantaged community in Mount

Druitt. With about 1200 students and most teachers in their first three years of teaching, it provided a steep learning curve . . . and a lot of camaraderie. My Dad's best mate was Gus Bain, District Inspector of Schools, Dubbo, and when I began teaching, he sent me the following message that I hold dearly to this day:

To Gerard.

**You shall pass through this world
but once.**

**Any good thing that you can do or any
kindness that you can show to
Any human being... Do it now and not
defer it.**

For you shall not pass this way again

Gus Bain.

I loved Dunheved HS and built and shared my knowledge of real school curriculum there, leading innovation in science teaching and school wellbeing – I was appointed Year Adviser for a new Year 7 cohort of over 300 kids and I treasured my time in supporting their growth and achievement. I achieved List 2 Science in 1983 following inspection by the highly esteemed Bill Toft. Gus Bain sent me a congratulatory note saying "Good on you laddie; now for your next step, focus on reading educational research – read, read, read." And I did.

I increasingly became involved in professional development in Western Sydney. Through that, I met one of my all-time heroes, Dave Wasson, a brilliant educator with whom I have shared and crossed educational pathways frequently in my career! More twists and turns resulted in me being appointed as the first science teacher at the new Cranebrook High School in Penrith where I had the opportunity to develop inaugural programs for a brand-new NSW science syllabus. Professional support through departmental programs and teachers' associations in Western Sydney were critical for developing leaders, and I hope still are. I got to work with another personal hero, Warren Priest, who had been my practicum supervisor at Macquarie

Uni, and we worked together to design a Mathematics and Science Retaining program for the Department.

Another career turn came unexpectedly in 1990 – a head teacher position at Prairiewood High School, where I met a new hero, Frank Harmer, who referred to himself as ‘the biggest principal in the biggest school in the state’. Frank was referring to his physical size, but he proved to be a big intellect, a brilliant leader, mentor, and friend. At this time, I met and worked with many departmental heroes, including Di Wasson, who was HT Languages there, Gay and Geoff Walton, as well as Lindsay Wasson who I think was working for Alan Laughlin, our extraordinary and inspiring Regional Director. I worked for six years with the most wonderful staff at PHS, and we achieved a lot with outstanding collaboration with Deputy, John Pickering, and Leading Teacher, Dave Koffel.

My passion for improving science curriculum led to me joining the Curriculum Directorate, Ryde, in 1996, as Senior Curriculum Adviser, Science. My CEO Science, Jim Scott provided me with outstanding backing as I gained extensive experience working across K-12 Science curriculum and in literacy, numeracy, assessment, ICT and equity cross-curriculum areas. Designing and implementing new syllabus support resources and managing secondary and primary consultancies gave me the opportunity to lead and collaborate with teachers across all regions of the state. Working in Curriculum Directorate opened my eyes to the bureaucracy of the Department – Wow – what a culture shock!! I was extremely lucky to have Lindsay Wasson as Director and he and Jim encouraged me to excel and to take every opportunity to broaden my experience base – and I learned much through working with some of the most capable leaders of the Department including Peter Robinson, Janet Davy, John Gore, Syd Smith, Reg Newitt, Lyndall Foster, Peter Gould, Kevin Bradburn, Alan Rice, and Norm McCulla. Lindsay and Jim recommended me to represent Curriculum Directorate in a number of Quality Assurance school reviews with the late wonderful Barry Higgins; and in research projects with the awesome Dr Paul Brock, who was to become a mentor, advocate, and a close personal friend until his tragic passing in 2016.

Towards the end of 1996, my life trajectory took a totally unexpected and dramatic turn – my beloved wife,

Debbie, who had delivered four beautiful children, was diagnosed with aggressive cancer and she passed away in March 1997 aged just 40 years; Our youngest child had just turned 5! I was shattered with grief, as were the kids and other family and friends. I really did not believe I would ever be able to work again for the Department after this traumatic period, however, with strong support of family, friends, and work colleagues, I slowly returned to work towards the end of 1997. Jim Scott proved to be a super-hero in my time at Curriculum Directorate and I am indebted to him and his wife for their support and everlasting friendship. I am hugely grateful that the Department accommodated my needs as a single parent, adjusting my work hours and projects until I could get back to full speed.

Life’s twists and turns for me were not done yet – in 2000, I married the second love of my life, Dagmar Arthur, and as a result, we have assembled a large, expanded, and happy family – we now have 12 grandchildren, with another on the way. Dagmar has been an educational powerhouse in her own career in the Department, . . . and we complement each other very well.

The early twenty-noughties were a big time for change in the Department; yes, more restructuring; and with encouragement from Dave Wasson and Dr Max Smith, I looked to return to Western Sydney. In 2005, I was appointed School Development Officer, Western Sydney Region, and this proved to be one of the best career moves I made. My new director was to be Lindsay Wasson and now I got to work more closely with this mastermind and, of course, I learned and learned where things matter most – with schools, their leaders, staff, and communities. During this period, I was able to work closely with a plethora of other outstanding leaders including Eric Jamieson, Kerrie Ikin, Jason McGrath, Cheryl Ballantyne (who was a personal friend for Debbie and me at Uni), Dennis McKenzie, Barry Higgins, Mark Anderson, Chris Johnson, Kay Smith (Coombes) and with Greg Prior, whom I admired and trusted greatly. The five years, 2005-2010, set me up strongly to return to state office as Assistant Director in EMSAD, where my school-based experience helped in working with the outstanding analysts and resource developers of that exceptional directorate.

Have you been involved in education in retirement Gerry?

Yes – I have kept authentically engaged in education through a range of part-time activities, including in volunteer roles.

The legendary Aboriginal Educator, Cindy Berwick, said to me “Gerry, you need to join your local AECG when you retire.”, and so I did straight away. I recommend all Departmental retirees join their local AECG if they have not already as AECGs are critically important in improving the life trajectories for Indigenous students and their families, as well as contributing to broader societal understanding of the challenges and perspectives of our Indigenous communities. Your local AECG will cherish your participation in their work.

Since 2016, I have been a volunteer mentor in the leadership team of the Success for Complex Learners (S4CLs) cluster project, initially established by the principals of the special schools Clarke Road, The Hills and William Rose to develop a truly effective curriculum for students with severe intellectual disability. The project has progressed to attract five years of funding from Australian Schools Plus. It has also been further developed as the NSW DoE project ‘Assessment for Complex Learners (AfCL)’, achieving a 2023 Premier’s awards as ‘a world-first set of integrated, online assessment tools that help teachers understand the skills of students with complex learning needs’. The toolkit will roll-out for all schools with complex students from 2024.

Retirement can be busy – since 2017 I have been a leadership coach for Australian Schools Plus Inc., which has given me the opportunity to work closely with outstanding primary, secondary and special school projects in highly disadvantaged communities in urban and rural settings. In 2024, I will be coaching projects in Kempsey HS and the Macleay Public Community of Schools (a primary school cluster).

Dagmar and I have also been working as research fellows since 2018 with Professor John Pegg of the national research centre – Science ICT & Mathematics Education for Rural & Regional Australia (SiMERR), based in the University of New England. Our work has involved the design and development of a learning progression for

Science K-10, as well as reviewing and developing the science curriculums for The Philippines and Timor Leste.

In 2022, I helped establish the Australian Science & Engineering Fair (AUSSEF), a new program to ensure that Australian students have a pathway and funding to participate in the International Science & Engineering Fair (Regeneron ISEF) held in the United States each May. I have been Chair of the Steering Committee since establishment and I’m excited to report that in 2023 the first AUSEFF team of nine students achieved three Grand Awards and one Sponsored Award at Regeneron ISEF in Dallas, Texas. Kai Turner, of the Northern Beaches Secondary College Manly Campus achieved the 1st level Grand Award valued at USD \$5,000 for his project ‘Robotics and Intelligent Machines’. A goal for AUSSEF is to increasingly encourage and assist students from rural and remote and disadvantaged communities to be recognised nationally and internationally for conducting outstanding research-based projects.

I look forward to more opportunities to share my experiences and journey with IRSEA members. I particularly look forward to collaborating with members for the betterment of public education in New South Wales and beyond.



THE NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

AN UPDATE ON

DEVELOPMENTS

from **Raechel McCarthy**



Hello colleagues,

I hope you all had a relaxing Christmas with family and friends. Syd thought it would be a good idea to use this report to summarise Jason Miezi's and my presentation at the Christmas meeting on the NSW plan for Public Education which people seemed to find quite interesting.

You may remember the plan is a one pager with six major promises to the system.

The plan really speaks to the equity lens, that 'every student learns, grows and belongs' and as our Deputy Secretary Deb Summerhayes commented recently, a child's education and aspiration should not be defined by their postcode. She herself was the first child in her family to get a university education and we know Murat's own inspiring story.

Looking at the first promise - advance equitable outcomes, opportunities, and experiences...it's about:

- fostering a culture that values diversity
- prioritising resources where they are needed most
- having an unrelenting focus on giving all students access to a broad curriculum regardless of where they live. I remember as a Year 12 student at Condobolin High School driving with my friend and her mum 6 hours in the car to see the HSC play Equus then turning round at 10pm to drive back. These are the things we need to change

I like the fact this element prioritises diverse learner, family and staff voice in decision making. Far too often we don't put enough emphasis on student voice. We make plans **for** students instead of **with** students, we get student voice but not *representative voice*, we

don't ensure that the people who know our students best, i.e. their parents, are provided with many opportunities to have ongoing input into their child's education.

Looking at the second promise - strengthen trust and respect for the teaching profession and school support staff.

- This is about implementing our best ideas to reduce teacher workload and attract and retain high quality teachers in high need locations and high need specialist subjects eg maths, science.
- It relates to the Teachers Federation negotiated teacher pay rise and doing something about the fact that we only had 63% permanency in workforce. We therefore have a new temporary to permanent program where 16,000 teachers and school-based support staff are benefitting from the financial stability of permanent employment.
- It's also about ensuring all staff have access to high quality and accessible professional learning to build their collective efficacy to improve student learning outcomes.


The third promise is - give children the best start in learning.

- We want all children to start their learning in preschools and create better transitions between early education and primary school.
- Any new build will have a preschool and they have just announced which school communities will be receiving a new department preschool. I am thrilled that **4 schools** in my network have received the good news that they will be getting a preschool which is a pretty good result out of 100 across the state.
- This will increase the proportion of children who are developmentally on track and more data sources are being used to track the baselines of individual student learning in the early years.

Promise Four is - deliver outstanding leadership, teaching and learning.

- This speaks to the current work of schools in implementing a new curriculum and ensuring they use this opportunity to lift the quality of teaching and learning in every class.

NSW Department of Education



Our Plan for NSW Public Education

Transforming lives through learning


Our plan is built on the power of public education to provide opportunities for all and transform lives through learning. Our plan sets our direction and priorities for the coming years, and harnesses the commitment of our teachers and schools to provide an outstanding education for every learner. Our approach has been informed by evidence and insights from engagement with our education community.

Our commitment

Every student learns, grows and belongs in an equitable and outstanding education system.


Acknowledgement of Country


We recognise the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we learn, work and live, paying respect to Elders past and present as teachers of knowledge, songlines and stories. We strive to ensure every NSW Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander learner achieves their potential through education.




Together we will	Advance equitable outcomes, opportunities and experiences	Strengthen trust and respect for the teaching profession and school support staff	Give children the best start in learning	Deliver outstanding leadership, teaching and learning	Strengthen student wellbeing and development	Provide meaningful post-school pathways
With actions that	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Foster a culture that values diversity by advancing reconciliation and eliminating barriersEnsure schools have access to the staff and specialists they needPrioritise resources where they are needed mostDevelop targeted, differentiated, evidence-informed initiatives and supportsEmbed diverse learner, family and staff voices in decision-makingProvide broad, inclusive and rich curriculum with strong co-curricular activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Address staffing shortagesAttract and retain more high-quality teachers, especially in high-need locations and specialist subject areasEnsure initial teacher education is fit-for-purpose by partnering with the university sectorImprove staff wellbeingAddress workload pressures to ensure a manageable workload for all staffSupport staff development through high-quality and accessible professional learningMake public education a more attractive career with more quality career pathwaysStrengthen development for leaders at all stages of their careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increase enrolment and participation in preschool for all childrenBuild new public preschools co-located with public primary schoolsCreate better transitions between early education and primary schoolDeliver the NSW Aboriginal Children's Early Childhood Education Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Support schools to deliver school excellence through continuous improvementDeliver effective teaching practices including explicit teaching and effective feedback underpinned by high expectationsStrengthen educational and instructional leadershipProvide high-quality, evidence-based curriculum resourcesIncrease student literacy and numeracyStrengthen high-quality assessmentImprove how data is used to inform teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Implement evidence-informed, whole-school wellbeing approachesCreate positive school cultures that value student voiceBuild partnerships with students and families to connect them with the support they needProvide equitable access to services by building partnerships across agenciesExpand counselling services in schoolsImprove support for students at all transitions through schoolEnsure schools are inclusive and safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enhance access to high-quality vocational education and training (VET) in schools, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, and HSC pathwaysSupport, inform and inspire all students to choose post-school pathway options aligned to their goalsImprove access, opportunities and choice across post-school pathways including university, training and work for all students
So	Every learner receives a high-quality education that enables them to excel	Our teachers and staff feel valued, included and supported to perform at their best	All children have the best start in life	Every student achieves ambitious learning goals every year	Every student is known, valued and cared for	Every student finishes school ready to succeed in their chosen pathway as an informed, responsible citizen
And we'll measure success by	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reducing gaps in student outcomes, due to structural inequitiesIncreasing community confidence in public education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increasing the number of school staff so supply meets demandIncreasing the proportion of teachers and school staff who feel valued, trusted and respected in their profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increasing the proportion of children enrolled in preschoolIncreasing the proportion of children who are developmentally on track	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for all studentsIncreasing the proportion of students completing Year 12 in public schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increasing the proportion of students reporting a sense of belongingIncreasing attendance rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increasing the proportion of students who take up university, training or work in the year after school


Enabled by


Support services that are efficient, effective and easy to access


School infrastructure that meets the needs of a growing population and supports improved student outcomes


Our values


Excellence

Integrity

Equity

Accountability

Trust

Service

- You may have seen recent media coverage about the work we need to do as a system in improving students' reading proficiency and for this reason literacy and numeracy improvement continues to be the unrelenting focus in schools.

Promise Five - Strengthen student wellbeing and development.

- Lots of work being undertaken on transition points in schools to ensure continuity of learning and ensure NSW public schools are the system of choice for families.

The last promise is the one I am most excited about - Provide meaningful post school pathways.

- All high schools need to set an improvement measure which quantifies their success in maximising student opportunities for positive post school pathways including university, training and work. It recognises the fact that

university isn't for everyone, and our focus needs to be on nurturing students' ability to make informed choices on their future post school pathway.

It is certainly an exciting time to be in education and I am so pleased that our department has recognised IRSEA's value in giving experienced input into our future direction as a system. Part of this input comes from your executive members' attendance at our Capability Summits where they are active contributors to the conversations about school and system improvement.

Stay well everyone and I hope to connect with all of you soon.

Regards
Raechel

www.irsea.org.au

COMMITTEE REPORT UPDATES

Treasurer's Update: Ray Gillies

Annual subscriptions were due on 1 January 2024

I thank members who have paid their IRSEA subscriptions of \$25 for 2024. Many members took the opportunity to include their very much appreciated donation to Stewart House. I encourage all other members to pay their annual subscriptions as soon as possible.

Newsletters and other services will no longer be provided to those very few members who have been in arrears since 2022.

IRSEA finances are sufficient to meet current commitments.

On 16 February 2024, the IRSEA Society Account had a balance of \$12,809.48. Our Term Deposit is valued at \$10,335.07 (maturing 14 October 2024).

In mid-February 2024, IRSEA receipts were \$1,675 members' subscriptions, and \$1,965 in members' donations to Stewart House. There were no expenditures at that time.

The IRSEA Annual Financial Report for 2023 is shown below.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2023

Balance sheet: Financial Year - 1 January to 31 December 2023

Assets		Liabilities	
CBA Society Cheque A/c	\$9,139.48	Subscriptions in advance	\$205.00
CBA Term deposit	\$10,335.07	Subs. arrears written off	\$75.00
Non-current assets	\$0.00	Uncashed cheque	\$130.00
Subscriptions in arrears	\$50.00		
Total assets	\$19,524.55	Total liabilities	\$410.00
Net equity	\$19,114.55		

Income and Expenditure: Financial Year ending 31 December 2023

Income		Expenditure	
Stewart House	\$3,077.00	Stewart House	\$3,167.00
Subscriptions	\$2,685.00	Newsletter (printing)	\$1,220.00
Donation	\$110.00	Newsletter (postage)*	\$331.40
Lunch meetings	\$5,405.00	Lunch meetings	\$5,870.00
		Refund (overpayment)	\$10.00
		Fees to Fair Trading	\$50.00
		Other printing and postage	\$145.78
Total income	\$11,277.00	Total expenditure	\$10,794.18
		Operating surplus	\$482.82
CF from 2021-2022	\$8,656.66		
Plus operating surplus	\$482.82		
CF 2024	\$9,139.48		

Reconciliation as at 31 December 2023

Interest earned on the CBA IRSEA Term Deposit in 2023 was \$284.37. The current term deposit at 4.25% matures on 14 October 2024.

Members' approval of this report will be requested at the IRSEA AGM on 22 March 2024.

Secretary's Update: Brian Davies

Importantly, our Annual General Meeting is to be held on Friday 22 March 2024 at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, 169 Castlereagh Street, Sydney. The meeting will commence at noon and is scheduled to finish at 2pm. The lounge will be available for drinks before the meeting. You will get the chance to learn of what is happening in your organisation and enjoy a good lunch with your colleagues. If you would like to bring any business to the meeting, please let me know by Friday 15 March using the email address below. We value input from our members.

A critical part of that meeting is the election of the Executive Committee. You do not have to be at the Annual General Meeting to nominate. Any member of the Institute, other than Associate and Honorary members can nominate. The future of our organisation depends on members nominating for that committee. Please consider carefully whether you can help. If you have not been on the committee before, you will find that there is a great deal of support for each other amongst the executive members. If you have been on the committee before, then you will be welcome back.

There are only four Executive meetings per year. This is an opportunity for members to join the Executive, share their perspective and hear about what is happening in the Department of Education.

Nomination is easy. You can nominate for one of the office-bearers that are listed on the nomination form, or to be an ordinary committee member (the number is not limited), to help play a supporting role. You can also nominate for more than one position. All you have to do is complete and sign as the nominee. If there are issues with organising or getting the signature of a nominator or seconder, please don't let that put you off; just contact me on secretary@irsea.org.au or bdjinstitute@gmail.com and I will help.

The nomination form is on Page 23 with details as to where to send. Nominations forms need to be to me **by Friday 15 March 2024** with the election taking place at the AGM. It is an exciting time to join the Executive with growing opportunities to support public education, contribute ideas and to mix socially

with other members. The first meeting of the new executive will be on **Friday 19 April 2024**.

John Allsopp, our current Luncheon-Coordinator, will not be standing for the 2024-25 Executive. John has made an enormous contribution over the years to our organisation, not only in this role, but also with his thoughtful advice on general issues and in financial matters. Thanks John.

Regarding our May general luncheon meeting with members, please note that the original date of 31 May has had to be changed and you will be informed in the April newsletter. Our meeting in August, though, has been determined as Friday 2 August at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel.

It is important to recognise people who contribute to our organisation. Please remember, that members can nominate other members to receive an award for Outstanding Service to IRSEA. The nominations are to come to me but if you would like any help or advice about the process don't hesitate to contact me at secretary@irsea.org.au or at bdjinstitute@gmail.com. The nomination forms are part of this newsletter mail out. If any problems I can send you the forms; they are also available in the Awards section on our website <https://irsea.org.au/>.

Those who have contributed to our organisation, and who do so voluntarily, deserve recognition. For our growing number of Associate Members, if there is someone you would like to suggest to also become an Associate Member, then please get in touch with me.



Stewart House Update: Alan Laughlin

Good News

As previously reported, there is now a return to full enrolments. This means 80 children per fortnight, particularly from country areas of the state who have not been offered placements for some 2 years because of COVID restraints, will be placed in the full 12-day program. Stewart House is challenged with staffing vacancies, as are most schools around the state, but these are being overcome.



Interesting News

Plans for long term leasing of a portion of the site are proceeding with legal assessments currently underway. Should this proposal go ahead then Stewart House will benefit with a new fully funded state-of the-art facility. The proposed project is subject to the resolution of a number of key issues that will be addressed during 2024. On completion, this proposal would deliver a brand-new purpose-built facility in exchange for a 99-year lease on a portion of the property.

Fund raising through the Friends of Stewart House has resulted in some good outcomes in recent months.

Of particular note:

- A Xmas Wine Drive was organised with the purchase of quality wines from Leogate Estate. This year \$3306 was raised with considerable help from IRSEA members.
- A high tea was held at the Breakfast Point Country Club, at the end of November. \$607 was raised. A lunch in January at the Bellbird Café, Casula Art Gallery, raised \$718.
- The AGM for FOSH is scheduled for 21st February. Many IRSEA members participate.



Bad News

Although contributions to Stewart House from groups like FOSH and IRSEA are most welcome, the shortfall in income continues to grow. Salary contributions have fallen off and to counter this a promotional video has been sent to all schools. This features our new Secretary, Murat Dizdar, who gives Stewart House his full support. The PSA and the Principals Councils have also given their total support.

But last year there was a deficit of \$1.4m in total and it is projected this will be repeated again in 2024. This shortfall has been covered by generous bequests and savings but clearly this cannot go on. Apart from re-energising the salary contributions scheme, a new fund-raising program involving community clubs is being planned. This will focus particularly on clubs that are in Local Government Areas that have significant numbers of children attending Stewart House. I will keep you posted on progress.

In the interim any help you can give both through direct donations via IRSEA or promoting Stewart House will be greatly appreciated.



MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Editor's Note:

STORIES FROM MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS A GREATLY VALUED FEATURE OF IRSEA NEWS!

PLEASE SEND US A MEMORY, AN OPINION, A RESPONSE TO ITEMS IN OUR NEWS, OR ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO TELL US. PLEASE USE THE EMAIL THAT SENT YOU THIS COPY OF YOUR IRSEA NEWS.

How Public Education Gave Us an Australian Scientific Leader

Editor: Our thanks to Peggy Craddock who alerted us to this story on how a NSW primary school contributed to the career and success of one of its students.

Dr Carolyn McGregor AM believes her successful role as an international scientist, now working for NASA, goes back to her time as a student, when she was known as Carolyn Bland, attending Baulkham Hills North Public School. She remembers with gratitude her teacher inspiring her to develop a lifelong love for Mathematics. On reaching Year 9 she came top in Maths at Muirfield High School and revelled in its emphasis on logic, problem solving and how it could lead to a full-time successful career.

Her early academic career began at UTS where she gained her PhD. She still undertakes valuable research with her colleagues there. Being the first in her family to attend university, she then went on to Ontario Technical University where she became a leader in advancing research into "big data" and sensor data, both of which include information on human heart rates and how our physiology changes with different environmental factors. This type of data has immense application to how astronauts can be monitored

in space and how they adapt to gravity on their return to Earth.



As a world leader in these important areas, Dr McGregor soon became an integral part of the NASA team. Her contribution to space research includes looking for early signs of health risks for astronauts when they travel to the moon or even Mars at a later time. A bio monitor with an electrocardiogram can detect early signs of an astronaut's stress level and then send the data to NASA's central control where periodic checks are maintained.

Until Dr McGregor came on the scene there was little research or advancement in this important

area of space research. Like so many advancements in scientific research, the success of this study has had other implications for people living in isolated areas of the planet, including the Canadian north and remote



Australia. This same monitor can be used on premature babies 24/7, and further work is now conducted on the protective gear worn by astronauts.

If you want further information on this positive contribution of our public education to the world you can find below a 12-minute ABC Pod with Dr McGregor. Dr McGregor's qualifications include AM, PhD, SMIEEE, MACM, B. App. Sc (1st Hons, Comp Sc.)

Dean, Faculty of Business and IT. Director and Research Chair, Joint Research Centre in AI for Health and Wellness, and Canada Research Chair (Alumni) in Health Informatics.

Our thanks again to Peggy and Dr McGregor's mother, Jeanette who alerted us to these wonderful achievements.

Let us never forget the valuable work of our teachers in public schools in stimulating the beginnings and successes of our future leaders like Dr Carolyn McGregor.

<https://www.abc.net.au/sydney/programs/mornings/carolyn-mcgregor/>

OPINION: Syd Smith

FUNDING AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

Two recent articles in the national media highlighted the growing segregation occurring in our schools. For IRSEA members this is something we are acutely aware of, but it is interesting that the media is now explaining it very clearly to the population at large. Two articles on this theme appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald of October 2023 and The Saturday Paper of November 25, 2023.

Ross Gittins: Sydney Morning Herald Ross Gittins



who writes for the Fairfax press is a notable Economics journalist but, quite often, he wanders into socio-economic issues as well. Writing in the Sydney Morning Herald of 24 October 2023, Gittins makes the obvious point that although the Gonski Report of 2011 recommended that government funding of schools be based on the assessed needs of their mix of students, more than a decade later that has not happened.

One reason he asserts this, is that unlike most other English-speaking countries, Australia has allowed Christian churches to play a big role in the provision of primary and secondary education. They were there before compulsory education was introduced, of course, and they have been allowed to keep running them.



However, there is another reason for the “backsliding” on Gonski and this was the earlier decision of the Howard government to make parents’ choice of school, (not determined on student need), to become the highest priority for government funding. Howard got the states to licence many new private schools, most of them with some religious affiliation. This has changed the nature of Australian schooling in a way few people have noticed.

Gittins talks of “identity politics” where voters now think of themselves not just as Australians, or even Liberal or Labor, but as part of an ethnic, religious or gender-preference group. There was a time when almost everyone was educated at the local public or parish school where you learnt to get along with people from many different social classes and backgrounds. Today it’s more common for Jewish children to go to Jewish schools, Muslims to Muslim schools, evangelical Protestants to “Christian schools” and so on.

The real point Gittins is making is this may not be good for national tolerance and social cohesion but, just as bad, “it’s happening at the expense of public schools”. These schools are left with too few resources to do justice to more than 80 per cent of the disadvantaged

students they educate - those of the lowest socioeconomic status, Indigenous and the outback (not to mention misbehaving students expelled from private schools).

According to Trevor Cobbold, (Save our [public] Schools), combined annual federal and state funding grew by more than \$2,800 per independent school student over the nine years to 2020 after allowing for inflation. That compares with increases of almost \$2,500 per Catholic school student and just \$830 a year per public school student.

Throughout 2023, combined government funding is estimated to have provided private schools (Catholic plus independent) with 106 percent of the Gonski-inspired, officially calculated “schooling resource standard” needed to meet the particular needs of their students. Public schools will get just 87 per cent of what they need. With tuition fees and other income sources added on, little wonder independent schools can afford new swimming centres, music and drama centres, auditoriums, and sporting facilities.

Despite this, independent and Catholic schools’ students do no better than public schools’ students once you allow for the socioeconomic status of the children’s parents.

Gittins’ final assessment is not encouraging because as the current climate continues to increase the problem, the more parents will feel the need to send their children to the private and Catholic systems, “not a road we should want to travel”.

After coming to office in 2022 the Albanese government postponed any changes to federal funding of schools for a year, so an expert panel could report on the National Schools Reform Agreement, the agreement between the feds and the states on school funding. The panel’s report was due in November 2023.

The Saturday Paper: Class Privilege

In an article on pages 10 to 11 of The Saturday Paper of November 25 to December 1 2023, Mike Secombe and Jen Featch come up with some interesting data that provides us with a greater understanding of education funding in Australia.



[Link to the Article](#)

Figures reveal public schools are underfunded by more than \$6 billion a year. Unpublished research shows politicians are twice as likely as the general public to be privately educated, with less than half of

the Albanese cabinet having gone to a state school. Like Gittins, the writers claim that the more segregated schooling is, the worse the underachievement of low SES (Socio-economic status) students is going to be. "So, the extent that private schooling is growing, then that's driving segregation even more."

The two-page article provides further statistics to elaborate on the funding problems facing government schools in every state of Australia.

Dr Emma Rowe, senior lecturer in education at Deakin University has spoken to principals in state schools and asked them about the difficulties they face and why more of them are quitting. Everyone said their school was underfunded to quite a critically serious extent. This has led to a lack of outdoor dry space for students; windows that won't open; leaking roofs; and toilets that don't work etc.

Other points raised in the article include:

- Burnt out teachers applying to go part time or quitting, and vital technology simply not available for students.
- The seeds of inequity began 60 years ago because the system allowed schools to both receive government money and charge students. Over time some, but not all, non-government schools became extraordinarily wealthy, tapping money from both sources.
- As of 2021 total government spending on schools was \$61.26 billion. About 61 per cent of the money, or \$37.4 billion, came from the states, and \$23.8 billion from the federal government. On top of this, private schools raise an extra \$11.6 billion

from fees, charges, and parent contributions, and almost \$1.7 billion from other private sources.

- When Mark Latham was opposition leader, he proposed to cut \$520 million of federal government funding from 67 of the nation's richest private schools over 5 years, and to freeze funding at existing levels for 111 others. The savings from this would be redistributed among the government and non-government schools based on their needs. The idea was savaged by John Howard and the tabloid media along with the wealthy private schools warning of fee hikes and a flight by students to the government system, which would not be able to cope. Subsequently, Latham lost the next election.
- The Rorris Report released in November 2023 noted that only 1.3 per cent of public schools are resourced according to their SRS, compared to 98 percent of private schools.
- Laura Perry, a professor at the School of Education at Murdoch University argues it's all about choice. What she calls "the neo liberal market model" of school education really limits choice for most parents, which ultimately works to the detriment of us all. "When you make schools very unequal, very different, you're basically forcing parents into a decision", she says. "In terms of fee-charging private schools, Australia has one of the largest proportions, if not the largest proportion, of students in the OECD".



- Perry also says that the difference in resources between those schools that have a high SRS profile and those that have a low SRS profile is

greater in Australia than in any other OECD country, other than Turkey or Mexico.

- The Greens recent polling of 1,000 parents found 48 per cent would look to move their child out of the private system if government schools were better funded.

Final Proposal

If she were running education policy Perry has a few proposals.

First, she would give state schools more money to get them up to a reasonable resourcing standard. In her model, private schools would continue to charge fees, but those fees would influence government funding.

“If the fees a school charged were less than the school’s resourcing standard, then it would be eligible for public funding to meet the gap. And for private schools that charge in excess of their resource standard, they would receive no public funds”.

Given our history and the size of the private sector, not to mention the lobbying power of that sector and the significant over-representation of old boys and girls in the country’s parliament, this has become a significant challenge to a robust public education sector and perpetuates the growing underachievement of low SES students.

Perhaps Perry’s proposal has some merit for at least it is fair.

What do you think?

Comments and debate are welcome.

MEMBERS WRITE: Geoff Baldwin

STRAIGHTFORWARD OR STRAIGHT JACKET – MUSINGS ON THE CONSTITUTION AND SCHOOL EDUCATION FUNDING



What do events in England at the start of the 17th century have to do with the structure of school education funding in Australia? Maybe nothing. But bear with me. It’s about the journey as much as about the destination.

This is called a “musing” because that’s what it is. And, because the journey is important, it deviates somewhat from the straight path between start and finish.

The English constitution

England does, of course, not have a constitution in the sense of the formal instrument of that name in America and Australia. Important as it may have been, the Magna Carta too long predates Parliament to be thus regarded.

The conflict between Charles I and the Parliament, culminating in Charles’ execution, was the formal start of the struggle between the elected and executive governments.

Almost a century later, the 1701 Act of Settlement signalled the freeing of the judiciary from Royal influence and, by implication, the primacy of the Parliament over the monarchy.



Fast forward nearly another century, and the American founding fathers were confronted with a similar dilemma, in the attempts of George III to subdue the colonies. Plainly, the colonies needed to join together as a nation, if they were to repel the kind of threat that they had confronted and defeated in the War of Independence. But, if a federal government were established, what could stop it oppressing the people, as George III had tried to do? This was the question that the founding fathers tried to answer.

The US Constitution

Given that the founding fathers saw themselves as the keepers of the flame of freedom, it is unsurprising that the US Constitution secures the victories won during the preceding two centuries, enshrining the primacy of the legislature as the supreme law-making authority.

It was understandable that the founding fathers wanted the Constitution to be ironclad, so as to be able to resist subversion by autocratic tyrants. And as the bulk of the Constitution is given over to the machinery of government, this appeared broadly uncontroversial; no-one could foresee that anyone would ever want to change the way in which the government was to be chosen by the people.

The founding fathers knew that change would be needed, so that the Constitution should be ironclad but not immutable, although they erred on the “immutable” side. The process is not identical to that in the Australian Constitution but broadly similar (unsurprisingly, as the Australian founding fathers took much inspiration from the American Constitution). However, it is equally, if not more, stringent: over 11 000 amendments have been proposed in America but only 27 ratified. (The corresponding figures in Australia are 44 and 8.)

The American States

However, as the nation was an agglomeration of colonies, now States, the structure of government had to take account of this. The faith which had been reposed in the colonies to justly govern their citizens was almost child-like. Their autonomy had to be protected in the new structure, and thus there was

the Senate, ensuring that even the smallest States had a voice in government.

Again, as Australia was formed from an agglomeration of States, the Senate fulfils largely the same function, in largely the same way.

The powers of the Federal government

Very importantly, of course, the Constitution as the roadmap of government had to say what functions were reserved exclusively for the Federal Government, and what were left to the states. The reverential deference to the colonies in their new incarnation as states had the result that the “default” position was that the states could exercise any of the traditional functions of government as evolved from the Westminster system, blessed by the common law, unless the Constitution said otherwise. “Otherwise” included functions which were reserved as the exclusive province of the Federal Government (eg raising an army, coining money), and those which could be exercised by both the Federal and State governments. In this case, powers could be exercised by both, unless inconsistency thereby arose; in which case federal power prevailed.

Odd as it may seem, this was the distant genesis of controversies in current education funding in Australia. We will come back to this.

The Bill of Rights

Musings on the American Constitution would be incomplete without reference to the Bill of Rights, the name given collectively to the first ten amendments, which were the key to ratification of the Constitution.

One significance of the Bill of Rights is its demonstration of the folly of setting a rule for the ages in stone. The most prominent example of this is the Second Amendment, enshrining the right to keep and bear arms. Based on a precedent which was, even at the time, over a century old, it was enacted at a time when there were neither police forces nor standing armies. If you wanted an army, you called Paul Revere to round one up; and naturally a plentiful supply of men who owned guns and knew how to use them was essential. A quarter of a millennium later, the damage and misery thereby inflicted on the American people is writ large. (An even odder,

although far less destructive, example is the Seventh Amendment, guaranteeing the right to a trial by jury in civil disputes where the value in issue exceeds – wait for it – twenty dollars. It is within living memory that the US Supreme Court has upheld this.) There is no direct counterpart to the Bill of Rights in the Australian Constitution and, given the numbers of odd outcomes in American cases, which would have left the founding fathers amazed and aghast, this may be no bad thing.

The Australian Constitution and education

Like the US Constitution, the Australian Constitution is broadly concerned with the machinery of government, and in respect of the Federal government has three main divisions: the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary.

Also, there is the same demarcation of powers between State and Federal governments. In the Australian Constitution s.51 sets out the powers of the Federal government (for the curious, the American counterpart is Article 1 Section 8).

There is no reference in s.51 to education, so that is solely the province of the States. Since the 1940s States have derived revenue from the sharing arrangements under which only the Commonwealth collects income tax and, since the mid-1990s, the GST. Under this model, States derive revenue which they can spend as they choose, according to their own policy priorities. The basis of funding of essential services provided by the States – eg health and education – is up to the States.

There is however another provision in the Australian Constitution without any direct US counterpart, and that is s.96. Under that provision, “the Parliament may grant financial assistance to any State on such terms and conditions as the Parliament thinks fit”. This provision has become a significant determinant of the structure of education funding and, in the process, a rhetorical tool for critics of education funding. Mainly, it is a powerful tool for the Federal government to heavily influence, if perhaps not control altogether, school education policies in the States. Whole programs and policies can be dictated – unless the education system in question chooses to decline offered funding – by the Federal government,

despite its lack of legal power in the area of school education. An example – odd, and of little significance in the grander scheme of things – was the Howard Coalition government’s offer of a one-off monetary grant to any school that would erect a flagpole (if it didn’t already have one) and fly the Australian flag.

So where has this journey led?

Reflection

The upshot is that the Australian Federal government exercises a power not directly given to it by the Constitution, to manage school education in Australia. It is not suggested that this is a bad thing. Patently, in the Twenty-first Century, school education standards should be nationally uniform. In the late Nineteenth Century, when school education was of an elementary nature, Australia’s founding fathers could not have foreseen how school education would evolve. Although there is academic opinion to the effect that s.96 was never intended to be used in this way, it might be argued that it is fortunate that this tool was available.

At the same time, another result is that education funding in Australia is, for all but the experts, an impenetrable jungle. Worse, it lends itself to any argument someone wants to make about the fairness of school education funding, by cherry-picking funding data to support whatever point an advocate wants to make.

The stimulus for this musing was a recent opinion item in a major metropolitan newspaper which said, taking maybe 600 words, that school funding would be fair if it was fair. And that if parents understood that the government had foxed them into thinking that education was about all children and not just their own children, they would rise up in revolt, following which all would be well. I didn’t understand the item, and I’m not sure its author did either.

It cannot be expected that everyone in the country should have an understanding of the finer points of the laws which govern their governments but as can be seen from the nature of the debate around the most recent referendum, some greater awareness would not hurt. However, I know that educators abominate the push, by pretty much everyone in society, to have the schools cure all social ills; and to

include in the curriculum a unit about not riding bicycles near stormwater drains (true, not invented). So, I am not seriously pushing this barrow, and certainly not near a stormwater drain.

Editor's Note: *Comments from members on this article are welcome!*

MEMBERS' FEEDBACK: *Garrie Collins*



Garrie's response to Eric Jamieson's proposal in the previous edition of IRSEA News: Promotion of outstanding, creative, and innovative educational practice in NSW public schools.

Welcome to our new President of IRSEA, Eric Jamieson. Thank you for sharing your proposal with all our members.

Your headline, "promotion of outstanding, creative and innovative educational practice in NSW public schools" was refreshing and courageous, particularly to this retired lad of more than two decades. The perspective from your international colleague about our school system seems very close to the mark and my now distant viewpoint of emerging realities in secondary schools. Your initiative is timely.

As a life-time advocate for creative education and the arts, I recognise your call for an acceptance of some new realities of teaching and understanding, particularly in our secondary schools. Our young students are eager to become involved in so many ways with their educational future and the possibilities on offer to them. They want to actively participate and share in their learning, thinking, imagination and discoveries.

Education's best resource, 'teachers', are the innovators of inspirational practice. They have the passion, energy and generational rapport to bring forward critical, creative and constructive teaching careers as well as the optimistic and agile futures needed by young people. Teaching is a national investment.

Like our cockatoos, teachers learn from each other and respond to performance and recognition. They can provide caring, supportive, open, active, and challenging environments for study which are both independent and collaborative in presentation. They enjoy celebrating achievement together in classrooms, studios, quadrangles and sporting fields.

Perhaps, prizes for excellence could be reviewed and possibly replaced by identifying and establishing a special marketing program of innovation consultancies using these talented teachers.

This feedback commentary carries some pride in your professional connections with Plumpton, Mt Druitt and Rooty Hill High Schools. As the first Plumpton Cluster Director, I would like to acknowledge the foundational principals and staff who believed in 'renewal', innovation, well-being and high levels of educational quality and participation. They helped till the soil.

President's Note

Thank you so much for your support, insight and positive commentary, Garrie. How wonderful to have powerful IRSEA members whose passion for innovative and creative learning approaches continues to burn so brightly!!

I love your idea for a special marketing program of innovation consultancies using these talented teachers. IRSEA leadership will be meeting with Murat Dizdar in coming weeks where ideas like yours will be the focus of our discussion.

How incredible to share a Plumpton connection with you. The inspiration provided by you and foundational leaders continues to abundantly flow through the Plumpton network to this day. *On the shoulders of giants*, indeed!!

VALE, Bill Clark

by Kerryanne Knox

While not a member of IRSEA, Bill was appointed from Scotland to help establish the Quality Assurance Directorate in 1994. As an experienced manager of the Ofsted program in Scotland, he was an excellent choice to work on the establishment of the QA program in NSW. Many directors who worked in school assessments at that time will remember Bill as a warm friend and excellent leader.

After the closure of the Quality Assurance Directorate, Bill returned to the UK. He had a highly successful career as a consultant, working in both Britain and North America. Bill and Anne were tennis enthusiasts and visited Australia on a number of occasions for the Australian Open, catching up where possible with friends from Bill's time in Quality Assurance. In retirement, Bill joined the management team of a Scottish divisional football team. He was highly regarded by the Club, with team players honouring Bill at the game following his passing.

President's Note: I had the great fortune of working very closely with Bill during the final period of QA and a shift in the Department's approach to school accountability. He was certainly a highly knowledgeable and passionate educator. I benefited enormously from his experience and expertise and am forever grateful. Very sad to know of his passing, but certainly a life well lived!!!

VALE, Brian Dennis

by Kerryanne Knox

We have received notice from his wife, Elaine, that Brian Dennis passed away in December.

His family farewelled him at the Holy Covenant Church in Canberra. Our thoughts go with them.

For all of those who remember Brian, or who were ex-colleagues, here is a quick reminder of Brian's work which alerts us of yet another person committed to making a difference to public education.

Brian commenced his teaching career more than 70 years ago in Henty. He then moved onto Arian Park, Glenn Innes High School, Parkes High School, and Wellington High School. He took the opportunity to teach overseas and enjoyed his time teaching in Edinburgh, London and Reigate.

He returned for a short stint at Dubbo High School before accepting a position as Inspector of Schools in 1972. He was District Inspector at Tamworth, Camden, Green Valley and Campbelltown. He was attached to Liverpool Regional Office for many years before being moved to Campbelltown Office of Education. He was also well known for the work he did with the Secondary Panel in Economics.

Brian is survived by his wife, Elaine, along with his two sons and their families. He lived a happy life and reached 90 years of age with many fond memories. For those who worked with Brian, I am sure your memories are now flooding back as we all say farewell to another public education stalwart. RIP Brian: thanks for your service.

VALE, Margaret Hopkins

by Kerryanne Knox

It is regret we report the passing of Margaret Hopkins, a former IRSEA member. Her funeral notice appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald of November 11, 2023. As Trevor Wootten reports, Margaret was a stalwart of public education, modelling all of its principles throughout her career. Those of our members who worked with her remember her engaging personality, her intelligence and the high standards of excellence she aspired to in the teaching of English in schools. Margaret was appointed as a Secondary Inspector, English, in the eighties following several years as English Consultant at Narremburn. Her work and commitment were attested to by her colleagues during those years. Margaret's family acknowledged her as "a gifted educator, Inspector of English and lifelong advocate of public education".

Another loss for us but so grateful that we had people such as Margaret guiding public education in those earlier days and contributing to its success.

Please Nominate For Our Executive

IRSEA 2024-2025 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NOMINATION FORM

We, the undersigned, being financial members of the Association, nominate:

Nominee:

As an ordinary committee member AND/OR for the specific position of (please specify):

Position:

Nominator:(signature):

Seconder:.....(signature):.....

I acknowledge and accept this nomination

Nominee (signature):

PLEASE RETURN TO BRIAN DAVIES **BY FRIDAY 15 MARCH** for the election to be conducted at the AGM on Friday 22 March 2024.

bdjinstitute@gmail.com OR secretary@irsea.org.au OR to

24 Olinda Crescent, CARLINGFORD NSW 2118)

NOTE: Please contact Brian Davies if you need assistance in obtaining signatures.

Executive Positions to be Elected

- Vice-President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Newsletter Editor
- Membership Officer
- Welfare Coordinator
- Luncheons Coordinator
- Stewart House Contact
- Ordinary Committee Members

(Note: The President and Immediate Past-President positions are filled by succession)



Institute of Retired Senior Education Administrators

***LIFE MEMBERSHIP
NOMINATION FORM***

The highest honour conferred by IRSEA in recognition of dedicated commitment to IRSEA; long-term and outstanding contribution to the membership; a profound and positive impact on the life of IRSEA; and commitment and contribution to public education in NSW and/or internationally.

Name of Nominee: ***Name of Proposer 1:***

Name of Proposer 2: ***Name of Seconder:***

Date Submitted:

REASONS FOR NOMINATION (To be completed by Proposer - Limit to 250 words)

Signature of Proposers:/..... ***Signature of Seconder:***

FOR IRSEA USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: Date of Consideration:

Decision: Date of Award:

President Signature: Date:

When completed please email the form to the Secretary, IRSEA at
secretary@irseas.org.au



Institute of Retired Senior Education Administrators

***OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD
NOMINATION FORM***

To recognise outstanding contribution in advancing the mission and objectives of the Institute and for exceptional leadership in bringing great value to the organisation, its members and to the advancement of public education.

Name of Nominee: ***Name of Proposer:***

Name of Seconder: ***Date Submitted:***

REASONS FOR NOMINATION (To be completed by Proposer - Limit to 250 words)

Signature of Proposer: ***Signature of Seconder:***

FOR IRSEA USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: Date of Consideration:

Decision: Date of Award:

President Signature: Date:

When completed please email the form to the Secretary, IRSEA at
secretary@irseas.org.au



Institute of Retired Senior Education Administrators

***HONORARY MEMBERSHIP
NOMINATION FORM***

Awarded to a person not otherwise a member of IRSEA or eligible for IRSEA membership, and who has made a significant contribution to IRSEA and the achievement of its objectives, or who has made a significant contribution to public education.

Name of Nominee: ***Name of Proposer:***

Name of Seconder: ***Date Submitted:***

REASONS FOR NOMINATION (To be completed by Proposer - Limit to 250 words)

Signature of Proposer: ***Signature of Seconder:***

FOR IRSEA USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: Date of Consideration:

Decision: Date of Award:

President Signature: Date:

When completed please email the form to the Secretary, IRSEA at
secretary@irseas.org.au



Institute of Retired Senior Education Administrators



**Annual General Meeting
Booking Slip
Friday, 22 March 2024**

The Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, 169 Castlereagh Street, Sydney

Please complete the lunch booking slip below and return payment with your cheque (unless paying by EFT) by Friday, 15 November to:

John Allsopp
3 Slade Ave
CASTLE HILL NSW 2154

Home telephone number is (02) 8677 3156. Email: johnallsopp@optusnet.com.au

I enclose my payment of \$65.00..... (@ \$65.00 per head) for the 2-course main meal with bread roll and coffee, tea, and petits fours.

Your name (please print):

.....

Guest's name(s) (if applicable):

For the above to attend the IRSEA luncheon at 11.30 a.m. for 12.00 p.m. at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel at 169 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, on **Friday 22 March**.

Please indicate in space provided if you require a special meal.

Meal type Number required

Signed: Date:

Phone no.

If paying by cheque make your cheque to the
Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators and cross it 'Not negotiable'.

OR

If paying by Electronic Funds Transfer the details are:

BANK Commonwealth Bank of Australia

BSB: 062300

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 10466684

ACCOUNT NAME: Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators (IRSEA)

YOUR REFERENCE: Your surname, initial, and 'meeting'

Money cannot be refunded for cancellations made after 19 March, 2024

I agree / do not agree (cross out one) that photographs of me in professional or social conditions may be published in newsletters and on the IRSEA website.

