



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

GERRY McCLOUGHAN



Dear Members

Welcome to the winter edition of IRSEA News. I do hope you are all coping well with the colder climate we are generally experiencing in what seems, to me, to be a genuine winter in New South Wales for the first time in a number of years – I hear some meteorologists are now talking about the impact of ‘blocking highs’ – a new phenomenon in winter times?

Despite the colder weather conditions, activity levels for IRSEA have been running hot! And IRSEA has developed a bumper issue of the newsletter which we hope all will find interesting and informative at this time.

*Wisdom grows in quiet, reflective times,
Ideas crystallize, like frost on window panes,
New knowledge emerges, in stillness it climbs,
Thoughts deepen, nurtured by winter's reign.
Eager minds, like evergreens, remain bright,
Rejuvenated by winter's quiet flight.*

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UPCOMING EVENT

Members' Luncheon

11:30am, 2 August 2024

Castlereagh Boutique Hotel

The May General Meeting

I can report that the May meeting was a 'bottler' – fun and informative, with over 30 members and guests enjoying the chance to socialise, network and contribute to our wonderful organisation.

The program commenced with a special sing-along led by our special guest performer, the legendary member Mr Geoff Baldwin, introducing us to unique lyrics to accompany his ukulele playing of *There's a Hole in my Bucket*. While we are not aiming to duplicate dubious traditions from the USA, it was hilarious to hear Geoff's satirical 'educational' version to commemorate the 30th of May as *National Hole in My Bucket Day*.



Geoff's rendition, titled *Hole In My Budget*, played out a battling exchange between some unnamed educational minister and her miserly treasurer! Towards the end of the meeting, Geoff also demonstrated that the classics can be beautifully accompanied by the ukulele with his fine rendition of Gerry Rafferty's *Baker Street*. Some members have suggested that Geoff become a regular item at General meetings. We'd be happy to receive your votes on this suggestion.

With a very full agenda for the meeting, routine IRSEA general business was curtailed; however, I was able to report to members that the Executive Committee are in the process of developing a long term IRSEA plan which will feature a one-page overview to assist in promoting the Vision, Purpose, Priorities and Impacts of the Institute.

Three draft priorities of '*Thriving membership*', '*Thought leadership*', and '*Advocacy and inspiration*' would authentically encompass our evolving Institute as a beneficent and forward-looking organisation with an emphasis on improving the future for public education while honouring and building on its illustrious past.

Please keep an eye out for ways you can contribute to the new plan. We intend to provide information about the new plan and a draft for consultation in the Spring IRSEA newsletter. We are keen to gain as much input from members as we can and to implement the plan, we will be looking for multiple ways that members can contribute as we put the plan into action.



The May meeting was significantly memorable in two valuable ways which reflect the IRSEA mission. Firstly, IRSEA acknowledged one of its most hardworking and influential members, Geoff Walton, in a very special manner.

Geoff was presented with a life membership of IRSEA for his outstanding service to the Institute over a 20-year period. Geoff is the first to receive this high token of enormous gratitude within the Institute, and it was my great honour to present a framed award to Geoff on behalf of members. The citation provided to Geoff with his certificate is featured for your edification on Pages 7/8 of IRSEA News.

A second highly valued component of our meeting was an outstanding and passionate address from David Riordan, CEO of the Public Education Foundation (PEF).



David shared with us the goals, activities and vision that drives the operation of the Foundation in its magnificent support and advocacy for public education in NSW and beyond. Our Institute and the Foundation clearly share important common purposes in advancing public education for the good of students, their families and society.

Members of the IRSEA Executive Committee are meeting with David in July to deeply explore how we can bring our intellectual and organisational resources together to improve the outcomes for students in public schools in NSW.

To cap a successful General Meeting, I'm very pleased to report that IRSEA was able to raise \$480 for Stewart House through our meeting raffle – thank you to all for your generosity. The Executive Committee is looking to extend our ways to support Stewart House, the foremost charity of NSW Public Schools since 1931.



IRSEA's 1st Life Member

Mr Geoff Walton

Membership

Due to an enormous effort of the Executive over the last few years, IRSEA membership is climbing steadily. Thanks primarily to the introduction of new membership categories, including *honorary* and *associate* memberships, we now have over 140 members compared to 130 members a year ago.

The new associate membership category is a forward thinking and positive strategy and is proving to be highly effective in advertising the benefits and value of IRSEA, and in drawing new members. If associate membership was available when I was a senior officer in the

Department, then I would have known about IRSEA before I retired instead of finding out about it some five years into my retirement. The introduction of the associate membership category has attracted 16 additional members in the last 12 months and is key to ensure sustainability of the Institute.

Personal contact still stands as the most effective way to build our membership, so please continue to promote the value of IRSEA membership to eligible former colleagues with whom you have worked or knew of in the Department.



President Gerry delivering his address at the May Members' Luncheon

Executive Committee activities

The hardworking executive committee has been meeting face-to-face and through electronic means to progress the mission of IRSEA.

Recently Kerrie Ikin met with the Secretary, Department of Education, Murat Dizdar, with the outcome being joint commitment to progress a process to acknowledge high achievement of senior educational administrators working in the public education sector through a fellowship or awards scheme. Kerrie will report in more detail as she progresses the development of this fine initiative.

The Executive Committee has agreed to continue to use the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel for our general meetings and for executive meetings for the next 12 months. The staff of the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel have been magnificent and adaptive in supporting our meeting schedule, and we thank them very much for their support.

In June and October 2023 IRSEA held social events at the Kirribilli Club in North Sydney. We were planning another social luncheon for September 2024. Unfortunately, the Kirribilli Club has quite unexpectedly closed for business. We are currently exploring other venues and your suggestions for our social gatherings would be most appreciated.

In line with the goal of conducting some meetings beyond the Sydney Metropolitan area, we are planning to run a meeting for members and guests in the Hunter region in September/October. If any members residing in the Hunter area are willing to assist in organising this important event, please contact Gerry McCloughan (0417243744) or Janina Sulikowski (0411205610).

The upcoming August General Meeting

We are excited with planning for our August meeting for two special reasons.

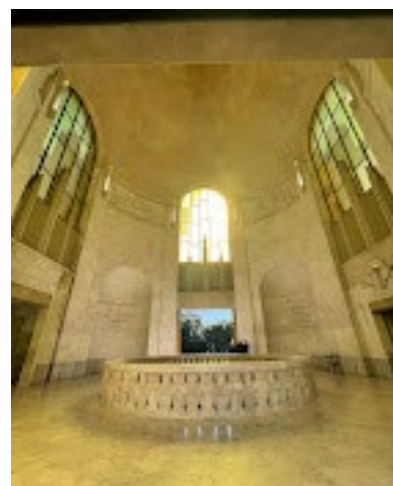
1. *A tour of the ANZAC Memorial*



Vice President, Lindsay Wasson, has been liaising with our intrepid Department of Education contact, Raechel McCarthy, to organise for IRSEA members a tour of the ANZAC Memorial in Hyde Park as a lead-up event to our 2nd August General meeting at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel. As it happens, the Memorial is within easy walking distance of the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel.

This special event will commence at 10:00am, with a guided tour of the magnificent displays in the remodelled and additional historical display areas, as well as the extraordinary history research and library area in the basement.

The Department is looking to more closely collaborate in expanding the reach of the educational opportunities offered by the Memorial, and that will be of particular interest to many of us.



If you would like to be part of this event, whether attending the General Meeting or not, please meet at the Memorial entrance on the Oxford Street side at 10.00am. **Please use our August Booking sheet to notify us of your intention to attend** (see later in the newsletter). The tour will conclude by 11:00am to allow members to stroll to the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel in time for our General Meeting. What a fascinating start to our program.

2. *Meeting Guest speaker*

Our very special Guest Speaker for the 2nd August Meeting is Viv White AM. Viv is Co-founder and CEO of Big Picture Learning Australia (BPLA), a non-profit organisation whose core business is 're-imagining education' in response to a rapidly changing world. BPLA was established in Australia in 2006 by Viv and her colleague John Hogan using an innovative and internationally recognised design for personalised, student-driven learning; the educational design is now being implemented in over 50 schools around Australia.

Viv has also pioneered a new non-ATAR credential known as the International Big Picture Learning Credential (IBPLC) that is warranted by the University of Melbourne, accepted by 17 universities around Australia, and measures a broader array of student capacities than is conventional. In 2018, Viv was appointed to the Order of Australia for her services to education and to the re-engagement of young people in learning for life.

Viv's dynamic public speaking skills, combined with her networking and advocacy with government and education systems, has seen the Big Picture design for learning create breakthrough opportunities for thousands of young people around Australia. Prior to leading BPLA, Viv was CEO of the Victorian Schools Innovation Commission and CEO of the Australian National Schools Network. She has a thirty-year history of international work in educational reform, research, policy and practice. Viv taught primary and secondary education for 13 years, worked in tertiary research for five years as a research fellow at Macquarie University and Victoria University, and served as an adjunct professor at the University of Western Sydney.

Viv is a Fellow of the Australian Council of Education and was admitted in 2014 to the Australian Businesswomen's Network Hall of Fame.

IRSEA is delighted to be welcoming Viv to our Institute and to hear how BPLA is supporting public education in NSW and beyond. It will be an honour to welcome Viv to IRSEA.



All the best to members and friends of IRSEA.

Gerry McCloughan
President, IRSEA

IRSEA'S FIRST LIFE MEMBER

Congratulations to Geoff Walton

The highest honour of Life Member was conferred on Geoff Walton by IRSEA, at its lunch meeting of May 30, in recognition of: his 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.

Geoff has been an outstanding contributor to IRSEA over many years. He joined the organisation (then known as ARISSEA) in 2003 and in 2005 joined the executive. Geoff was Vice-President in 2006-07, and President in 2007-08 and again in 2008-09. As Past President in 2009-10 he chaired meetings as the president's position was vacant. In 2012-13 he stepped into the Secretary's role and continued in that position until 2017-18. During that time, he also stepped into the role of Welfare Coordinator in 2014 and continued in that position until 2019-20.



Geoff has made an extraordinary contribution to IRSEA. His remarkable and dedicated commitment included being a key member in the publication team of *I Remember When*, a book of reflections of district inspectors of schools. He was also a member of the working group for the Secondary Panels Project, documenting the experiences of secondary inspectors of schools. Geoff was involved in discussions to confirm and extend relationships and cooperation between ARISSEA and the Institute of Senior Educational Administrators (ISEA), he worked on the Steering Committee for the development of the book, *The Institute*, a history of ISEA, and played a major part in the 2012 review of Stewart House. Geoff was made a life member of ISEA in 1994.

Over the years, the impact Geoff has made on IRSEA has been much appreciated by many. Comments have recognised that he has played a great part in maintaining the smooth and effective functioning of IRSEA. He has been the backbone of the organisation as well as the historical cornerstone. He has contributed many high-quality articles to the newsletter, enhanced the collegial relationships and the quality of communication and provided effective organisation of meetings.

Geoff Walton thoroughly deserves to be honoured as the inaugural Life Member of IRSEA.

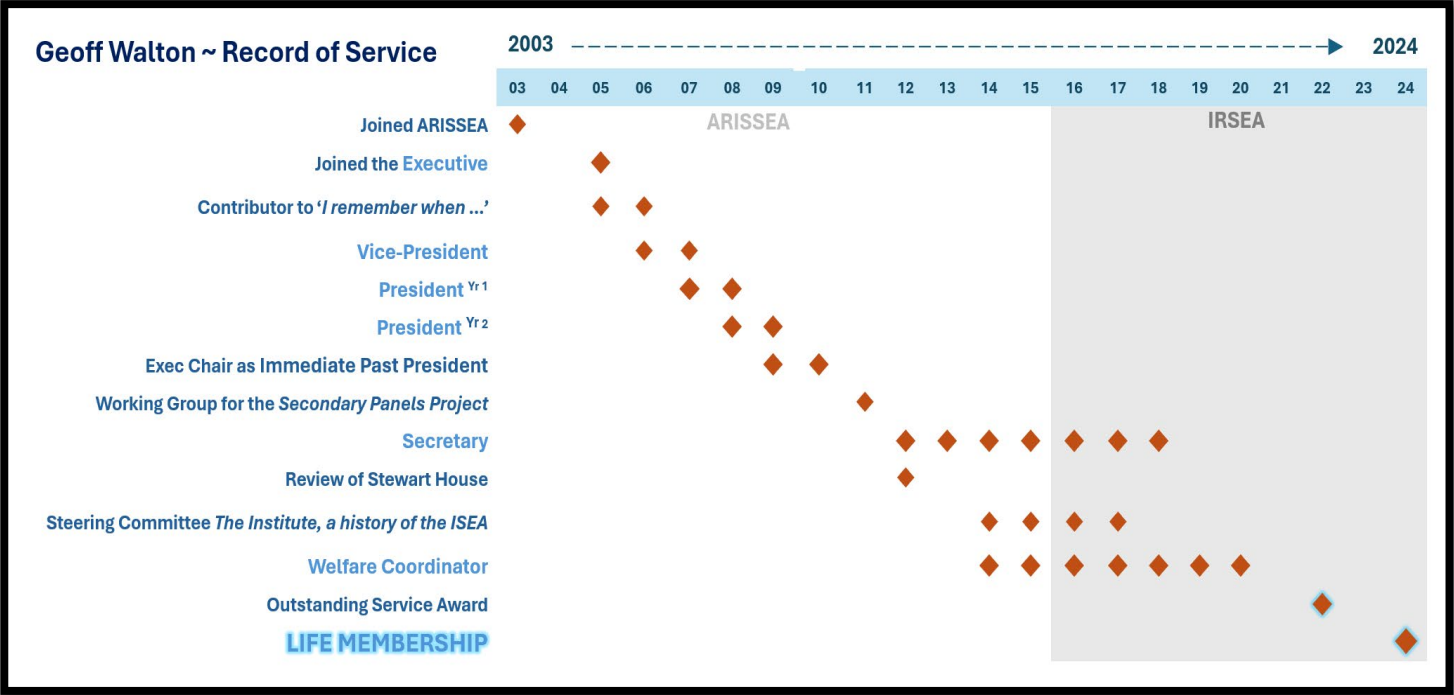


IRSEA’S FIRST LIFE MEMBER

Congratulations to Geoff Walton

I thank our Secretary, Geoff Walton, who has been a constant tower of strength in keeping the organisation running. Geoff has also taken on the welfare position after the gulf left by the resignation and then sad passing of John Dugdale. Without Geoff, ARISSEA would be in a much poorer position.

Syd Smith, **President**, April 2014



Our out-going secretary, Geoff Walton, has held this critical position for some six years. He has been the keeper of records and history, but more importantly he has monitored needs and responded rapidly, providing structure and materials for all meetings – has been the glue that has held the show together. Geoff, on behalf of all members of IRSEA, thank you very much and thank you for your willingness to now act as a guide and mentor to all of us.

Alan Laughlin, **President**, July 2018

THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Presentation by CEO David Riordan to IRSEA Members, 30 May 2024

IRSEA members were treated to a highly informative and stimulating presentation by David Riordan at our luncheon meeting on May 30 in Sydney. David outlined the vision and values of the PEF and their link to those of IRSEA. The role of the PEF in solving the Cycle of Disadvantage, the funding of the PEF and its impact were also explained.

A PowerPoint copy of David's presentation is on the IRSEA website (www.irsea.org.au) for those seeking more details of the talk.

It is gratifying to learn that we, in IRSEA, are not alone in our dedication and commitment to public education in NSW. As David informed us, the Public Education Foundation's (PEF) has an Australia-wide vision that includes:

- Promoting and advocating a high quality, widely respected public education system;
- Identifying and supporting students who are experiencing financial and social disadvantage; and
- Identifying excellence in students and educators in the public education system.

This conforms with PEF's values of:

- **Equity:** Fairness and equitable access for all
- **Respect:** for people, internally and externally
- **Sustainability:** of our relationships and resources, and
- **Opportunity:** for individuals to fulfil their potential.

To overcome societal disadvantage, PEF provides scholarships for primary and secondary school students in public schools all across Australia. In addition, secondary school scholarships are awarded

to students wishing to transition to TAFE or a public university, while separate scholarships are available to teachers and principals.



Major donors include: The Teachers Mutual Bank, Teachers Health, Toyota, NSW Dept of Education, corporate donors, individual donors, AEU branches nationally and the NSW Teachers Federation.

To provide an idea of how much is received by each group, a primary school scholarship is worth \$1,000 per annum, a secondary student can receive \$1,000 to \$2,500 per annum and tertiary scholarships are \$2,000 to \$3,000 per annum, plus a possible \$3,000 relocation allowance. Educators Scholarships are \$10,000 for professional development and Principals' Scholarships are \$20,000 employing the Harvard Leadership Program. In 2022-2023 over 3,218 scholarships were being funded involving 309 students and 122 educators. Of these 62 percent were female and 38 percent male. New scholarships from each year have increased from 204 in 2017/18 to 730 in 2022-2023.

Scholarships can fund laptops, iPads, stationery and textbooks, home Wi-Fi, subject or study related *software*, school camps, excursions, furniture for study, face-to-face tutoring or online tutoring, school subject costs, school uniforms, subject specific

clothing (chef coats etc) and specific tools for course work.

Two quotes from David's presentation emphasise what the PEF is all about:



"I have always thought that one of the best ways that I could help other people is to open doorways for them to succeed.

To me, one of the best doorways that can be opened for a person is education because (under the right conditions) it can be a means through which a person can alter the trajectory of their life."

A donor since 2016



"Education is a way to give hope to students who have lost everything."

Dorothy Hoddinott AO,
a retired principal



THE NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

AN UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENTS

from **Raechel McCarthy,**
DEL and IRSEA Liaison



Hi all

Looking forward to seeing many of you at the next planned IRSEA meeting on 2nd August and joining some of you for a tour of the Hyde Park War Memorial prior to the meeting. I thought for this newsletter I would share with you some fascinating research conducted by Nadia Abdelal as outlined in a “lessons in maths” podcast I listened to recently. As DEL I spend A LOT of time in the car and listen to a lot of podcasts!

Nadia has researched the history of Maths education in NSW and has come to several interesting conclusions about the politicalisation of maths instruction e.g. getting back to the basics 3 Rs, and the cyclical nature of maths reform. She advocates for the importance of enabling classroom teachers to become expert teachers of maths using a combination of professional trust, teachers connecting with their students and nurturing curiosity, sustained and targeted professional learning informed by student data, and an unrelenting focus on evidence-based methods of maths instruction.

The timeline of maths instruction in Australia includes:

- A recognition that Aboriginal people had complex systems of maths instruction and mathematical conceptualisation that had to be “unlearnt” with the arrival of Europeans.
- 1788-1800s maths instruction largely informed by what was happening in British schools but largely focused on the basic financial literacy needed for farming and home economics.
- 1867 classroom teachers paid on results (also influenced by what was happening in Britain at the time). This led to teacher and student burn out and a “drill and kill” approach to the learning of maths.

- 1888 matriculation introduced but not for the female and Aboriginal population. At this time a lot of the maths instruction related to rote learning.
- 1950s introduction of Cuisenaire rods allowed concrete manipulation and understanding of whole number, but teachers were offered limited professional learning on how to use this effectively.
- 1960 introduction of “new maths” i.e. conceptual maths instruction with the challenge that classroom teachers had not been taught in this manner and staff professional learning was still limited.
- 1970s movement towards modular classrooms with a shared learning area had a somewhat detrimental effect on the learning of some students who struggled with distractions and the physical design of classrooms made explicit teaching challenging
- 1978 increased focus on teacher professional learning associated with the teaching of maths
- 2000 onwards more attention to the science of learning/cognitive load and more focus on direct instruction and the explicit teaching of maths skills.

Our current mathematics K-10 syllabus recognises the critical importance of developing an increasingly sophisticated understanding of mathematics concepts and fluency with mathematical processes to help students interpret and solve problems. An overarching working mathematically outcome highlights how the skills of reasoning, communicating, problem solving, understanding and fluency are heavily interrelated.

The teaching of maths in NSW public schools is strengthened through

- Assistant Principal Curriculum and Instruction positions in all primary schools
- Eddie Woo’s Maths Growth teams in selected NSW high schools
- NSW Government committed a total of \$278.4 million over the next four years to deliver an ongoing permanent small group tuition (SGT) program to assist students who need additional support in literacy and numeracy. [Small Group Tuition 2024 \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/small-group-tuition-2024)

- A Mathematics retraining program for experienced primary and secondary teachers to retrain as secondary mathematics teachers
- Ongoing teacher professional learning opportunities offered by Teaching Quality and Impact Directorate.

I hope you have found this topic interesting and look forward to hearing IRSEA member’s opinions on this topic when we next meet.

Regards
Raechel

**A Response to Raechel from Eric Jamieson,
IRSEA Immediate Past President**

Hi Rachael

I love your article. As a maths teacher I am in total agreement. The wonder of number and the amazing patterns in our world are so easily forgotten in the operational approach to mathematics that is too often our focus. Interestingly, in the last PISA assessment, the student survey results were analysed in relation to mathematics results. The findings are fascinating and point to really important implications for learning approaches in maths – please see following.

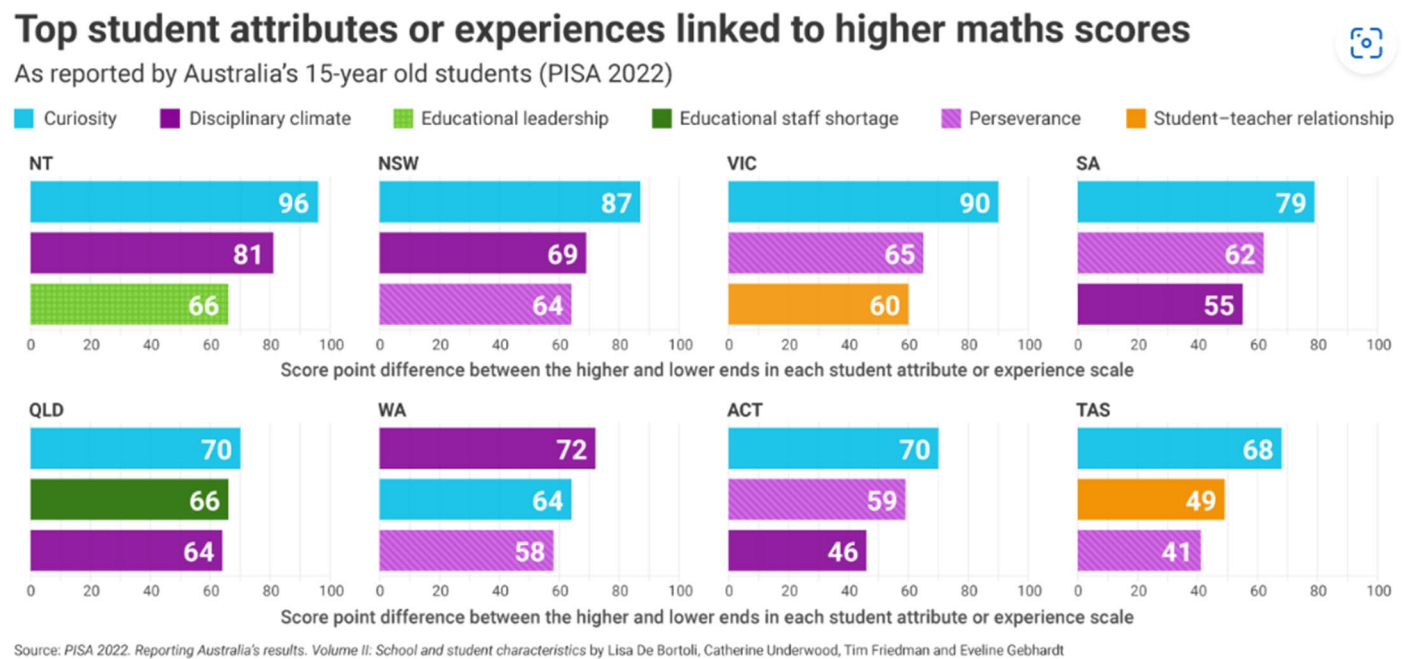
Source: [PISA reveals student experiences that help – and derail – maths performance - ACER Discover](#)

Curiosity a strong marker for performance
Curiosity was measured for the first time in PISA 2022, with the index including student behaviours such as asking questions, developing hypotheses, knowing how things work, learning new things and boredom.

Students in Singapore, the highest performing country in PISA 2022, showed the greatest curiosity, followed by Korea and Canada. These were the only countries to have a significantly higher index score than Australia, with the Netherlands showing the lowest index score overall.

ACER researchers note that ‘curiosity is associated with greater psychological wellbeing’ and ‘leads to more enjoyment and participation in school and higher academic achievement.’ They found that Australia’s foreign-born students reported being more curious than Australian-born students, with 74% compared to 66% reporting that they liked learning new things.

Compared to other indexes, curiosity showed the highest score point differences in maths performance between those in the top quarter (showing the greatest levels of curiosity) and those in the lowest quarter – at 81 points. The difference ranged from 64 points in Western Australia to 96 points in the Northern Territory, with students in the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales showing the highest levels of curiosity overall.



COMMITTEE REPORT UPDATES

Treasurer's Update: Ray Gillies

The IRSEA Society Account has a balance of \$9,797.63. We started the year with \$9,139.48. Our Term Deposit is valued at \$10,335.07 (maturing 14 October 2024).

So far this year, IRSEA has received \$2,525 in members' subscriptions. Members have donated a total of \$3,055 (including money raised at lunch meetings) to our designated charity, and this has been forwarded to Stewart House. Meeting attendees have paid \$3,585 towards lunches and we have remitted \$4,145 to the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel for members, guests and venue costs. Thanks to a member for a \$30 donation towards increasing costs. The March and May newsletters have cost \$939.05 to produce and mail out. The editor will be reimbursed for the cost of this newsletter shortly. Other expenses have been \$278.80 for membership certificates and \$54.00 NSW Fair Trading fees. Executive committee meetings and the IRSEA website (irsea.org.au) are run at no financial cost to IRSEA.

While IRSEA finances are more than sufficient to meet foreseeable commitments, I again forecast that expenses will exceed receipts in 2024.

IRSEA Website Report: Ray Gillies

<https://www.irsea.org.au>

Since its launch in December 2021, the IRSEA website has added easily navigated pages recording our purposes, history, plans and resources.

There's a burgeoning Gallery of photographs from our lunch meetings and other events. It would be wonderful to be able to include more photos from groups of members meeting in regional areas.

The Resources tab gives access to our newsletters from 2011 to present, copies of presentations by guest speakers at lunch meetings, our annual calendar, directory of members, awardees and more.

I encourage you to click on the following website link [Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators – IRSEA](http://www.instituteofretiredsenioradministrators.org.au) and click through the pages. You're sure to find something of interest. The website is not generally discoverable by a computer search at present, giving members priority access and as a possible nod towards a little privacy.

Secretary's Update: Brian Davies

It is very important that members note that the date for Christmas luncheon meeting has now been changed to **Friday 6 December**. This was our preferred date and the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel has informed us that a room has now become available. The date of our next meeting is unchanged – it is **Friday 2 August**.

Our last meeting was a wonderful occasion, with the presentation of Life Membership to Geoff Walton, an impressive presentation by David Riordan on the Public Education Foundation and wonderful food and conversation – and all with musical performances by



one of our members. If you would like to get a sense of what happened (and see which of our members performed) you just have to look at the photographs on our website at <https://www.irsea.org.au/gallery/>. Come and join us in August.

There is another change involving our luncheons. In the past the booking slip for the next luncheon has first been in the newsletter with a reminder later by email. With the work required in the new formatting of the newsletter, this can't be guaranteed to reach members the usual two weeks before the due date for luncheon bookings. Members will now receive the booking slip by email instead. Please let me know (see email addresses below) if there is a particular problem for you with this arrangement.

Following the elections of the 2024-25 IRSEA executive committee, we still have a vacancy for the Luncheon Coordinator position. While it is very much appreciated that our Vice-President, Lindsay Wasson, has agreed to help on an interim basis in the role of Luncheon Coordinator, it is important that we have someone who will serve in that position. The future of our organization depends on members being willing to work on the committee. It is always good to have new members of the committee to share their perspective.



If you haven't 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.

Joining the executive committee is easy. All you have to do is complete a nomination form which I can provide and help you to complete, including providing

the required signatures. Please contact me on secretary@irsea.org.au or bdjinstitute@gmail.com if you are interested in applying.

Please send any comments, suggestions and photos for the IRSEA website to Ray Gillies at rcgillies@yahoo.com.au.

Stewart House Update: Alan Laughlin



Stewart House, fortunately, continues to operate its standard program. After the difficulties of COVID there has been a return to full enrolments. 80 children a session are placed in the full 12-day program. This is

a very pleasing outcome. However, fund raising continues to be a major challenge and all contributions are gratefully received. IRSEA members continue to be welcome contributors. Some \$450 was raised at our last IRSEA luncheon.

The Friends of Stewart house (FOSH).

The Friends of Stewart House have organised a number of fund-raising activities in recent months and I will report on two of these.

Support from Community Clubs.

FOSH has approached community clubs in NSW to see if they may contribute to supporting children at Stewart House, particularly for those who live in the LGA that the clubs service.

Three hundred and twenty-six (326) letters accompanied with a short DVD and brochure about the Stewart House program were mailed to Club Presidents in March. From this, 3 clubs donated funds and quite a number advised FOSH to apply for funding through *ClubGRANTS NSW*. Subsequently 161 on line applications were submitted to meet the May 31 deadline. To date now the strategy has raised \$29,500 which will support almost 15 student placements.

We are very grateful for this help and this support will grow.

Stewart House Social Functions

Lunch at Doyles

This luncheon will be held on Friday 26 July starting at 12.30 pm. The cost is \$60 per head which includes seafood chowder, Doyles famous fish and chips and salad, a glass of wine, beer or soft drink plus a donation to FOSH. Tickets are limited to 40 guests so if you are interested can you please let Alan Laughlin know: alaughlin21@optusnet.com.au

Christmas Lunch

A booking has been made at **Massey Park Golf Club** in Concord for **lunch on Thursday 12 December**. More information will be provided after the club has finalised menus and costs.

Please put the date in your diary



MEMBERS WRITE ~ A letter from Joan Healy

"Please include an apology from me for being unable to attend the Luncheon. While I am quite well (despite two similar names appearing in the Death Notices of the SMH in recent times) I am not sufficiently mobile to venture into the city these days.

I still miss the camaraderie of the group but enjoy catching up through the wonderful Newsletter that Syd provides for us.

Please pass on my thanks to the Committee and members for the Membership Certificate I received recently in the mail - it is always a pleasant surprise to find that I am still remembered by some of the older members. Also, my congratulations to the newly elected executive and committee members. I hope they enjoy their experience as much as I did during my many years of close association.

Regards

Joan Healy"

Any news you would like to share with colleagues? IRSEA News is more than happy to share it for you in our next edition.

MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTIONS: SYD SMITH, IRSEA EDITOR

NEW ACARA RESOURCE TO SUPPORT AI IN SCHOOLS

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.

In May this year ACARA released a set of curriculum resources relating to Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI is a major initiative in modern society and will be an important feature of education in our schools for the remainder of this century. While AI has enormous benefits, we need to educate children in how to stay safe as they use these technologies.

This new resource helps our teachers to equip our young people with the skills and knowledge they need to understand the challenges, opportunities and risks of AI. This now means teachers will have a framework to identify and structure information on AI to support the practical application of the curriculum. It connects a range of subjects and a foundation of learning from K to 10.

What is AI?

AI systems attempt to mimic some types of human abilities to solve problems or perform tasks. The term AI encompasses a wide range of technologies, including systems that attempt to:

- find **patterns and meaning in data** – machine learning (ML)
- find meaning in text or create text that makes some kind of sense – natural language processing (NLP)
- **identify different parts of an image or video** – computer vision (CV)
- instruct robots, complex or simple machines on how to carry out physical tasks – robotics.

Generative AI

Generative AI (GAI) is a type of machine learning that uses a vast amount of training data (big data), which often includes images or text from the internet or added by people. AI uses this data to generate unique content such as **text, images, audio and video** that has not existed before.

Generative AI systems follow algorithms to choose the most statistically likely result. **They do not necessarily produce content that is true, relevant or well written.** This is why AI systems are sometimes said to “hallucinate”. Chatbot style AI systems are a type of generative AI that output text or speech mimicking human conversation, using text prompts.

Learning about AI by applying curriculum content to real-world contexts that increasingly involve AI in some way increases students' awareness and provides opportunities for them to realise its potential, risks and limitations.



AI and society

There are increasing community concerns about the potential risks associated with negative and harmful uses of AI systems, including:

- the manufacture of fake, biased and misleading content
- ways in which students might discern inaccuracy from fact and evidence
- the impact of AI systems on the future workforce
- the role of AI systems as co-workers to enhance work.

To learn about the risks and challenges of AI and its likely effect on individuals and society, teachers need to provide opportunities for students to develop critical thinking, creativity, ethical reasoning and empathy as part of a holistic education.

Students should have the opportunity to consider how using AI systems can lead to innovation, enterprise and the creation of preferred futures. There should be opportunity, access and equity for everyone to use and design AI solutions that bring benefits to all members of the community. When planning a program of teaching and learning, teachers can draw on content from across the Australian Curriculum, in particular Mathematics and Technologies.

To maximise the effectiveness of any AI-related program delivered in schools, learning should be sequential.



Purpose

The purpose of this Curriculum connection is to:

- develop student understanding of concepts associated with AI systems and the responsible use of AI
- guide educators to identify content in the Australian Curriculum that contributes to students learning about how AI works and its applications
- connect educators to a range of resources that have been developed to support teaching students about the concepts, skills and general capabilities necessary to understand and effectively use applications of AI or design future AI systems
- encourage students and teachers to critically evaluate the broader impact of AI on society and reflect on ethical consideration.

The Australian Curriculum addresses learning about AI through explicit content in the Mathematics and Technologies learning areas from K to 10 and in content elaborations in other learning areas such as Science. It also connects to key elements and organising ideas of the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities. For more information see the Curriculum links section.

Further information and relevant sections of the curriculum supporting AI can be found on the ACARA website by clicking on the following link: acara.edu.au. Here you should find practical examples on how AI can be used in learning and its use across the curriculum in the media release:

[New Resources for teachers to support Australian students in understanding AI.](#)

(Alternatively, you can find AI article by searching on Google: v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au).

Do you have any thoughts about AI that you would like to share?

Syd Smith
Editor

MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTIONS: GEOFF BALDWIN

THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD: A REFLECTION OF LIFE IN MOREE

I was originally inspired, some years ago, to commit a version of these recollections to paper by a book in which the author revisited his life growing up in an Australian regional area. Much more recently, I heard an address given to a meeting of an educational association of which I am a member, dealing with the quality of New South Wales public school education generally, and the education of Aboriginal students in particular. That prompted me to focus a little more closely on the schooling aspect of my experiences as a child in Moree.

Doing so inevitably made me compare, as a lawyer, what I perceived as a child in the later 1950s-early 1960s, in a town with a substantial Aboriginal population; with the current situation of Aboriginal people in the eyes of the law.

These recollections are from memory, and not from documents, contemporary or otherwise. The dates are, I think, generally right; but I have not verified them independently. Similarly, it is at this remove hard for me to disentangle what is generally an accurate first-hand memory from one embellished by many re-tellings; or indeed derived from childhood memories of my parents' recounting of things.

Prompted by the recent discussion I attended, about school education and Aboriginal students, these recollections are mainly concerned with this aspect, largely focusing on events surrounding an individual student, who I counted as a friend although by no means a good mate. He was Percy: more of him shortly. And what I write is simply personal: I do not pretend to dispassionate analysis.

And, for the avoidance of doubt (as lawyers are wont to say) I similarly do not pretend to any particular expertise in the law as it relates to Aboriginal people, although during law school I was greatly intrigued by

the case of Milirrpum v Nabalco Pty Ltd (1971) 17 FLR 141. More of that later, too.

Moree

I spent most of my teenage years in Moree – from when I was nine years old. In 1963, when I was sixteen, I went to the University of New England, where it was obligatory to live in college, so I was a visitor rather than a resident from then until my parents moved from Moree to Lismore, at the end of 1966, by which time I was twenty, and working in Sydney.

My family moved around the State because my father was a school principal, and his move to Lismore High School was his first more or less coastal appointment.



However, my observation of Aboriginal people in Moree was not only through the eyes of a school child, but to some extent through the prism of my father's position. He did his level best to conceal the inner workings of his position from my sister and me but, as the saying goes, little pitchers have big ears.

The Mission

I also visited the Aboriginal Mission a couple of times. Most white kids would never have set foot in the Mission, but I just happened to be closely friendly with the son of the principal of the Mission school, and the school residence was – perhaps obviously but perhaps not – within the confines of the Mission.

My memory of the Mission is of a ring of houses around a very large circular enclosure, as though it might once have been a racetrack. No house – including the school residence – was in good repair. Indeed, third-world; just as the houses were in Boggabilla when, in a blaze of publicity and flashbulbs, the (then much esteemed) Marcus Einfeld visited that town in the late 1980s.

In 1958 or 1959 the Mission school – which catered for students from kindergarten to roughly the equivalent of Year 8 in current terms – closed; and all students were re-enrolled in one or other of the two primary schools, or the (then) Moree Intermediate High School (the equivalent of the later central schools). It was plain, even to the kids, that education at the Mission school had been seriously deficient. Many Aboriginal students could form letters only by copying their shape. But if the pinnacle of your likely career was to be a burrcutter, why worry?

Percy's tale

However not all of the Aboriginal kids were thus, and the one who stands out in my memory was Percy Suey. (I use his name not only because I doubt that, over fifty years later, there is any realistic prospect of breach of privacy; and the fact that his surname is unusual is material to his tale.) The tale is also set in the era before the Wyndham Scheme.

Before the Wyndham Scheme changed NSW school education, high school ran from first year to fifth year. The equivalent of the now defunct School Certificate was the Intermediate Certificate, undertaken at the end of third year and, at the end of fifth year, the Leaving Certificate.

When the Mission school closed, Percy landed in class 2B, in Moree (then) Intermediate High School, which I think would have had fewer than 400 students, running to three first year classes (1A to 1C), but thereafter until third year, only to two.) Percy did pretty well in 2B, and was promoted to 3A.

In third year, at the instigation of my father who was a big wheel in Rotary, the Rotary Club sent Percy to Outward Bound, which he was pronounced to have successfully completed. He had the skinny build typical of Aboriginal people; was in the first XI in cricket, and from memory participated in the North West Zone athletics in javelin. And he got his Intermediate Certificate.

My father – a civilised and civilising man much ahead of his time in terms of concern for disadvantaged kids – conducted a pretty much one-man campaign to get Percy to stay on for the final two years of school. This would have given Percy – I think I can say with confidence although without any evidence at all – a school leaving qualification which would not have been enjoyed by any previous Aboriginal student in the area; at least through a school in Moree. And possibly a better job than being a burrcutter.

On my father's side was Percy's grandmother, who was to my eyes a wizened prune on legs, no less than 190 years old. Reflecting now, she was in fact probably in her late 60s or early 70s at the time. I knew what she looked like because she would come to the school to talk with my father.

On the other side were Percy's parents. I never saw them, and as far as I know they never set foot in the school. What dialogue – if any – they had with my father I do not know; but it was clear that, from their perspective, the sooner Percy and the white

establishment in the form of the school parted company, the better.

Percy's parents won. I can only recall seeing Percy again once. About a year later: he was leaning against the wall of one of the pubs pretty much exclusively patronised by Aboriginal men. He was, to borrow from John Schumann, only 15. Someone told me that he had a job in the sawmill. The year was, I think,

Hawkesbury Camp Trip

SPONSORED BY ROTARIANS

Percy Suzy, a ward of the Aborigines' Welfare Board, recently went from Moree to the Outward Bound Memorial Camp at Fisherman's Point on the Hawkesbury River, near Sydney.

Percy's trip, sponsored by the Moree Rotary Club, cost more than £100.

The Outward Bound movement was begun in England 20 years ago to equip boys between 16 and 19 to cope with the problems of adult life and to become active citizens.

Neville Toomey, of Morgan Street, Dubbo, spent a month at the school recently.

Pictures here show Percy being farewelled by his Headmaster, Rotarian W. Baldwin and Mrs. Baldwin, at Moree Railway Station.



Percy Suzy is seen here with his Headmaster and Rotarian friend Mr. W. Baldwin and Mrs. Baldwin at the Moree Railway Station, Moree. Percy (pictured again below left) has now been placed in employment by the officers of the Board in Sydney on the North Shore.

☆ ☆ ☆

DANCE TO AID FOOTBALL CLUB

About 300 people went to a dance at Baryulgil recently to aid the local football club.

A highlight of the night was the announcement of the engagement of a local boy, Ray Gordon, to Maria June Roberts, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey Roberts, of Cuthbert, Lismore.

The couple will be married at Lismore in August.

Miss Roberts figured in a number of events during the evening.

She and Johnnie Roberts were runners-up in the rock 'n' roll competition and in the competition for the best-dressed couple.

The rock 'n' roll competition was won by Patricia Mundine and Charlie Avery.

Lily Gordon and Ray Gordon won the prize for the best-dressed couple.



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1962.

The "problem"

In 1966 Charles Perkins and the freedom riders (including, incidentally, Jim Spigelman, later to be Chief Justice of the NSW Supreme Court) came to town. The locals hated him, but one thing was clear: he was educated, articulate, and more than a match for the white men he was arguing with. And the reason? He'd been removed from his parents at the age of about ten, and properly educated in Adelaide. QED. Game, set and match. It was the parents who were the problem.

Although the practice of removing Aboriginal children from their parents simply because of their Aboriginality is said to have persisted until the early 1970s, I did not know personally of any such case in Moree; although obviously I cannot say that removals didn't take place. But, to the eyes of the town "establishment" (my father, senior Rotarians, the Mayor, the owner of the biggest rural and general stores, the most senior pharmacist (meaning the one who was a Rotarian, courtesy of Rotary's rule that only one representative of each profession or calling could become a Rotarian)), the solution was crystal clear. The only way to ensure that Aboriginal children could get a proper education or a job was to remove them from the malign and obstructive influence of their parents.

Percy had of course not been taken from his parents, and that was seen to have been the problem: for some perverse and mysterious reason his parents had spurned everything that might have saved Percy from the miserable poverty which was his fate. Not only did no-one accept that his parents might have abhorred the white conquerors: the thought would not even have occurred to the town (white) establishment.

I saw all this, of course, through the eyes of a child. But, acknowledging that, my father and the town establishment were acting from the best of motives. The zeitgeist was "assimilation": not for genocidal reasons, but simply in order to give Aboriginal people the comfortable, middle-class, weatherboard existence enjoyed by the rest of the community.

It would not have dawned on my father and his contemporaries that Aboriginal people might not have wanted assimilation, or that the desirability of the white lifestyle was not blindingly obvious. Charlie Perkins may have been a bastard, but at least he was a comfortably-off bastard who had been fed by the hand of white society, for all that he might then have bitten it.

The ripples

Percy's tale was but one example. At some point a Moree service club (I think Lions, but it might have

been Apex) funded the building of an ablution facility at the Aboriginal mission. Within months it was mostly gone. Bricks had been removed to shore up the walls of houses; taps to replace broken ones; basins for home use. That the Aboriginal people's concept of property ownership bore no resemblance at all to the white public/private duality of ownership did not occur to anyone in authority.

So, hope again triumphing over experience, a row of houses (called "Thompson's Row") was built on the (poorest) edge of town, to house Aboriginal people. Summer was fine, but the houses were cold in winter, so the occupants used the fences for firewood and, when they were exhausted, the verandahs. The Aboriginal people were their own worst enemies, as it seemed to the town burghers.

When I started work in Sydney in 1966, I left that world behind. My parents no longer lived in Moree, and indeed I did not set foot in the town again until 2012, when my Leaving Certificate class had its 50th reunion. However, I did indeed see, in the early 1990s, what was almost certainly the legacy of Percy's tale.

Bitter fruit

In the early 1990s my work took me to Airds Juvenile Detention Centre (now Reiby Juvenile Justice Centre), in the course of which I had occasion to go through the list of inmates. Two had the surname Suey and came from north-west New South Wales. I didn't take details at the time, because the matter didn't involve any individual detainee, but as soon as I saw the names (which I had, obviously, not been expecting) I looked briefly at their histories. Aged about 16 or 17; each in effect expelled from at least two north-west schools; and each with the more common pattern of a string of small offences rather than a single major crime.

I don't know if Percy had brothers or sisters – as far as I knew, he didn't; but beyond the fact that he had parents and a grandmother I knew nothing of his family. The two detainees could have been nephews or, if direct issue, Percy's sons or grandsons. But I found it impossible to think that there was no link;

Treasurer, Mrs. L. Dennison and Secretary, Mrs. P. Knox, and Mrs. H. Duncan, represented the Toomelah branch.

"Despite our late arrival we enjoyed ourselves immensely, and were very glad we came," said Mrs. Duncan.

The International Night is run by the Goondiwindi Branch of the Country Women's Association as an annual event.

The Office Bearers of the Toomelah (Boggabilla) Branch are always invited. However, the President, Mrs. Mavis Dennison, was unable to attend owing to sickness in her family.

"Truly C.W.A. is a wonderful medium towards assimilation! Our aboriginal women were very grateful to the Goondi ladies", stated Leila. She concluded her remarks by saying, "We had a lovely time, and did enjoy seeing the way people of Malaya live and work together."

ESTABLISHMENT OF CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY

During the previous year Board approval was given to the lease, at a nominal rental and for use by a Co-operative Society, of 45 acres of the Cabbage Tree Island Aboriginal Station land, together with a building for conversion to a store room. This was the culmination of nearly two years' preparatory work by the Australian Board of Missions Co-operative Ltd., and constituted the first Aborigines Co-operative to function in this State.

The Australian Board of Missions Co-operative Ltd. was responsible for interesting and training selected aborigines to manage the project and the Aborigines Welfare Board assisted by meeting the transport costs of the aborigines concerned.

At its inception the co-operative functioned as a retail store under the registered name of the "Numbahging Co-operative Society Ltd.", but during the year it was decided to extend its activities to the growing of sugar cane and other agricultural produce. For transport of heavy equipment and removal of produce, a suitable barge was purchased at a cost of £45, portion of which will be met by the Board. Due to lateness of the season, it was only possible to prepare seven acres of land for cane growing. Twenty-two acres of millet, however, were planted and a further four acres of land were prepared for tomato growing.

Although the co-operative has operated satisfactorily so far in its store trading activities, it would seem that this venture and any other of a similar nature must receive efficient and continuous assistance during its nascent years. This aid at Cabbage Tree Island has been supplied by a school-teacher, Mr. A. McCrohon, who has worked tirelessly to ensure its proper functioning.

One significant fact has emerged following the progress of the Cabbage Tree Island Aboriginal Station Co-operative. Interest appears to have grown in surrounding aboriginal centres and enquiries regarding the possibility of membership have been received from aboriginal residents of Ulgunahli Island, Cubawee Reserve and Coraki.

Outstanding Moree Students



These are the six outstanding aboriginal students of Moree High School, mentioned in the December *Dawn*.

Paying tribute to the aboriginal children at the Annual Speech Night ceremony, the Headmaster, Mr. W. Baldwin, said:

"The decision that all secondary pupils of the Moree Aboriginal School should attend Moree High School from the beginning of this year (1961) gave us the pleasure of welcoming these pupils to our ranks. They have made contributions of work in both the sporting and academic sides of school life."

Seen above are Percy Suey, Barry Johnson, Bob Stanley, Brenda Haines, Jeanette Binge, and Shirley Briggs.

In the Third Year Exams, Bob Stanley got first in general activity, English, Mathematics, Science, Woodwork, Art and Craft whilst Wayne Suey took first places in second year (2C) Social Studies, General Activity and English. Percy Suey won an Athletics Blue, and Jeanette Binge won a special Rotary prize for citizenship and service.

The Area Welfare Officer, Mr. S. Preston Walker, said: "It should be borne in mind that these children along with 50 others of aboriginal blood have just completed their first 12 months at the High School. I am particularly grateful for the efforts of the Headmaster, Mr. W. Baldwin and his staff who have done a wonderful job in the interests of assimilation here in Moree."

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that this was not the sad but inevitable legacy of events thirty years earlier.

The eyes of a child

If I were asked for an assessment, my first reaction would be to dispute some of the commonly received wisdom. There was no racism in the playground. There were groups, cliques and gangs. There were doubtless associations driven by socio-economic status, so statistically the Aboriginal kids probably

stuck together. But nobody called someone else a “boong” or an “Abo”. Percy was actually a pretty popular kid.

It was different, of course, at the adult level. My mother discouraged me from going to the milk bar closest to the school because it was “rough” – code for “patronised by Aboriginal people”.

My father probably had similar views, but he also had a strong sense of what was right. As principal, when he didn’t have to teach at all, he taught a class of three or four mildly or moderately intellectually impaired students – before that categorisation was ever mainstream – because he reckoned you might as well give them something they enjoyed doing. Among other things, they mowed the lawns (yes, there was some grass in Moree), and loved it. These days, he’d be struck down for using child labour.

A broader picture

Percy’s tale is of course an individual thing. The signs of the caste differences were everywhere: the Mission itself; “Tin (or Silver) City”, an assemblage of sticks and corrugated iron on the banks of the Mehi River (in reality a creek) in which people actually lived; pubs with semi-conscious Aboriginal men on the footpath outside; and the three (I think) cars owned by Aboriginal people, which were always seen with at least half a dozen people crammed into them. However, for me (although the significance of this didn’t really sink in at the time), the symbol was just a hundred metres from our house.

By contrast with school residences generally, the Moree IHS school residence was not next to the school: it was a mile away, across from the golf course at the northern end of West Moree. Through a bit of bush, down a small slope, was the Mehi River, and a small strand or beach. The “beach” was tiled with hip flasks – not the beaten pewter and leather-clad trinkets of the horsey crowd, but the seven-ounce, flat bottles of rum or whisky. The size of the bottles and the thickness of the glass made them quite robust. So much so that you could safely walk on this carpet, at least two or three bottles thick, on this tiny

piece of riverside land on which Aboriginal people drank their grog.

The poignant bit is that buying spirits in these small bottles is the most expensive way – per volume of alcohol – that you can buy this sort of drink. But, whether by cultural inclination or sheer poverty coupled with addiction, spirits weren’t bought in big bottles.

A new dawn?

I can accept that today’s millennials might think this picture of the 1960s interaction between Aboriginal



people and the white establishment in rural New South Wales is too bizarre to have been true. But a bit of evidence can easily be found: the wonderfully-named “Dawn” magazine, published by the Aborigines’ Welfare Board. I believe it can still be found online.

In one issue of Dawn, I found a grainy photograph of my parents farewelling Percy at Moree railway station, as he set off for Outward Bound. Dawn was

full of stories of white beneficence to Aborigines. I remember one item glowingly praising the Aboriginal workers at a mine as being harder workers than the whites. The mine was an asbestos mine: probably Baryulgil, but I can't recall: there were two or three asbestos mines up on the edge of the New England area. The item came complete with a photo of sweating Aboriginal workers, up to their knees (literally) in mounds of fluffy white stuff, enthusiastically flinging it about with shovels. You could almost hear them belting out *Sixteen Tons*, although they might as well have been singing their own funeral marches.

But what I found even more arresting in Dawn was the monthly handy household hint. Generally, these were aimed at telling people how to accomplish ordinary day-to-day tasks, but assuming they had neither the intelligence, nor the equipment (or both) to carry them out without some wise advice. The piece de resistance was "how to make a home-made bottle opener". You got a lump of four-by-two about a foot long; drove into it near one end a roofing nail (the kind with the broad galvanized iron cap) but only halfway in. You then bent the end over at a bit less than ninety degrees, so that you could hook the cap under your beer bottle top, and lever the top off.

This was, as they say, stuff you can't make up. Teaching Aboriginal people, too poor to buy a bottle opener because they spent all their money on beer, how to make one so that opening the beer would be easier, has an exquisite irony which is hard to match. To say nothing of doubling as a handy club with which to belt the missus if she needed pulling into line.

To a child, all of this was just the way things were. Nothing to be questioned. I didn't read Dawn's plan for a homemade bottle opener until many years later but, had I read it as a child, I would almost certainly have thought it a great idea, and shot out to the garage to try to make one.

A white perspective

In recent years I have thought on and off about putting these recollections on paper, but the recent

discussion I attended finally stimulated me to do so. But what are the conclusions?

From an admittedly white perspective, if there is a point to be made, it is that those involved, including my father, were *not* trying to wreak harm on the Aboriginal people, as the people who John Howard characterised as black armbanders claimed. They were, by contrast, genuinely trying to help, but the methods were misguided.

It is not as though they were ignoring obvious evidence, or advice, which might have suggested a different approach. On the contrary, a preferable course was an unknown unknown, as Donald Rumsfeld described these things. Or, as someone else said, like trying to see with your elbow.

Doubtless some child removals were carried out with malign intent, or simple indifference to the welfare of the children, but the people I saw were genuinely wanting to free Aboriginal children from what they saw as the damaging influence of their parents. We can now see, from this high hill, that they were grievously misguided; but for all that they were well-intentioned. They deserve some criticism for failure to diagnose the real cause of the problem but, at least in my view, from inside the tent, as it were, not the storm of opprobrium which burst over their heads with the coming of the term "the stolen generation".

The eyes of a lawyer

Milirrpum v Nabalco Pty Ltd, mentioned at the outset, is much less famous than Mabo (Mabo & ors v Queensland (No 2)) (1992) HCA 23 or indeed Wik (Wik Peoples v Queensland & ors) (1996) HCA 40, but no less significant.

In Milirrpum, Blackburn J unburdened himself of a scholarly exposition of the relationship between Aboriginal people and their land, which would be now referred to as "country"; a description later described as "subtle and elaborate".

However, His Honour, while recognising the relationship between the plaintiffs and the land in question, decided against them, on the basis that

even if the relationship amounted to native title, it would have been statutorily extinguished with the arrival of the British. The plaintiffs decided against appeal, wisely realising that His Honour's factual findings might fall with an unsuccessful appeal; and opting to preserve the findings for use on some future occasion. There was a future occasion, of course; but it was then far off. It might fairly be asked whether the two Mabo cases would have unfolded just as they did, absent Blackburn J's judgment.

The intriguing aspect of this judgment for me was His Honour's explanation of the relationship with the land. For those familiar with the common law, "ownership" of land essentially entails the right – with obvious exceptions – to exclude from your land anyone you don't want to admit, fairly much without any question as to why. If land is public, anyone can enter; if private, no-one can, unless with the permission of the owner. "An Englishman's home is his castle" says it all.

This dichotomy is not only absent from the Aboriginal framework, but also the framework itself is hard to describe.

My best quick (and lay) explanation is to suppose to my interrogator that I am the boss of some part of an organisation, sufficiently high powered to have my own office. But nice guy that I am, I'm one of those "my door is always open" managers. However, no-one ever actually marches straight in, even if the intending visitor can see that I'm not on the phone or pecking away at the keyboard, and knows that I would take no offence were that to happen. Instead, the visitor pauses; maybe coughs politely, makes a gesture, raises an eyebrow, whatever, before entering. This is what Aboriginal people – or at least those described by Blackburn J – do. They neither enter land associated with some other group or clan as of right, in the manner of someone walking through a public park; but neither do they actually formally seek permission. What they do is something in between those two things, and it's not easy to describe with the words we have at our disposal.



So this is what I was getting at by saying that the white people in Moree not only did not understand the Aboriginal relationship with land and chattels: they could not even envisage or describe it. Small wonder that what happened with the ablutions block and Thompson's Row was beyond their comprehension.

By way of an epilogue, I make no pretense to be an historian, on this subject or any other; or to have any special legal expertise in the area. But the first material I ever read explaining the Aboriginal perspective on the relationship between them and the land was in the Milirrpum decision. It speaks volumes that the learned judge took some time to explain, because the English language lacks words to succinctly describe the concepts.

In summary, there may have been no need to add to the huge body of commentary already in existence on this subject. However, I grew up in Moree, chronically (including right now) an epicentre of ongoing controversy in this area. So did thousands of white kids, but I happened to be the son of the high school principal and a friend of a kid who lived on the Mission; privy to Percy's tale and, by odd chance, privy to what became of the boys who were (I assume) Percy's descendants; and now a lawyer.

It is for these reasons that I write this.

MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTIONS: SYD SMITH, IRSEA EDITOR

REDEFINING EDUCATION AND LEARNING

David Astle, writing in the Sydney Morning Herald, pleads for a better definition of the word, “education” in our dictionaries. Quoting the Irish poet, WB Yeats that: “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire”, he adds that education means to lead out, as though students bank on teachers to walk them to their potential.

Regrettably dictionaries like the Macquarie can’t refer to words like “fire lighting” or “stirring” or “creativity”. No glossary mentions skill building or patience, or the role of counsellor or confidant, or even a dozen other words.

Nathan Van Der Monde, a principal of a primary school says, “The idea that a teacher stands in front of the class and reads from a textbook is not only outdated, it’s inaccurate and could prevent people from considering a career in teaching. Combine these elements with dwindling student teacher intakes, modest salaries and burnout rates, the Victorian Department of Education has sensed the need to improve the language around teaching.

Consider the definition of “teacher” by the Macquarie Dictionary, for example, and you will read: “someone who teaches or instructs, especially as a profession or instructor.”

Then look at the verb, “to learn” which says that to teach is: ‘to impart knowledge of or skill in’. All very bland, cold and too objective you would think.

Compare this with the superlatives drawn from the *Oxford Children’s Language Corpus*, a dynamic body of writing from primary age Australian and NZ students. Here you will find words more often aligned with teacher, including: “awesome”, “beloved”, “caring”, “cool”, “great”, “kind” and “wonderful”.

And what is the Macquarie’s response to this? Alison Moore, its chief editor says, “A dictionary reports what a word means, not what it should mean.”

Better definitions of “teacher” may lead to better pay packets, career paths, community esteem and perception, all of which could boost the lot of teachers.

Astle could have a point, but it may mean more than a dictionary to improve our perceptions of education and teaching.

Source: Sydney Morning Herald; November 25 2023; Spectrum; Wordplay; David Astle; See you later, Educator.



VALE

Roy Knudson

It is with sadness that we report the passing of our colleague, Roy Knudson. Family and friends attended a celebration of his life at St Paul's Anglican Church in Carlingford on June 6.

David Maher reports that Roy was an Inspector of Schools, Secondary Art. "In that role, he was a much respected visiting officer to the North-West Region for a number of years. Roy was well-liked for his honesty and his decency. After concluding any visit to the Region, he always reported his findings and his judgements to the relevant District Inspector of Schools and to me. His communication skills were much appreciated."

Roy retired in 1989 which gave him thirty-four years of retirement...what a wonderful way to end a life of public service.

Roy was 92 years of age and a member of IRSEA to the end. Thank you, Roy, for your dedication and commitment to public education. It was appreciated by so many.

Kerryanne Knox



General Lunch Meeting

Friday 2 August 2024

@ Castlereagh Boutique Hotel 169 Castlereagh Street, Sydney.

11:30am for the 12:00pm meeting

Plus a bonus for those interested . . .

A pre-meeting tour @ the ANZAC MEMORIAL 10:00-11:00am

Guest Speaker: Viv White AM, Co-founder and CEO of Big Picture Learning Australia (BPLA)

Big Picture Learning Australia (BPLA) is a non-profit company whose core business is 're-imagining education' in response to a rapidly changing world. The company was established in Australia in 2006 by Viv and her colleague John Hogan using an innovative and internationally recognised design for personalised, student-driven learning, which is now being implemented in over 50 schools around Australia.

Viv has also pioneered a new non-ATAR credential known as the International Big Picture Learning Credential (IBPLC) that is warranted by the University of Melbourne, accepted by 17 universities around Australia, and measures a broader array of student capacities than is conventional.



In 2018, Viv was appointed to the Order of Australia for her services to education and to the re-engagement of young people in learning for life. IRSEA is delighted to be welcoming Viv to our Institute and to hear how BPLA is supporting public education in NSW and beyond.

But wait, there is more!

Yes, IRSEA has arranged an exclusive tour of the ANZAC Memorial, Hyde Park prior to our meeting. For members and guests who would like to take up this opportunity, please indicate your attendance on the booking sheet (over). The tour will run from 10:00-11:00am from the Oxford Street side of the Memorial, which is within easy walking distance of the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel. The tour will cover the magnificent displays in the remodelled and additional historical display areas, as well as the extraordinary history research and library area in the basement.

This should be a fascinating start to the day – *it promises to be one for the ages!*



Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators

IRSEA General Meeting Booking

Come and join friends and colleagues for:

1. Our exclusive pre-meeting tour of the ANZAC MEMORIAL (10:00-11:00am), and / or
2. Our General Meeting with luncheon & Guest Speaker at Castlereagh Boutique Hotel (12:00-2:00)
on Friday, 2 August 2024

ANZAC MEMORIAL
Hyde Park South, Sydney 2000

400 Metres
←~ 6-minute walk~→

Castlereagh Boutique Hotel
169 Castlereagh St, Sydney 2000

Please complete the booking slip below. Please make payment for the lunch meeting by Friday 19 July.

BOOKING SLIP

Name (please print):

Guest's name/s (if applicable):

I/We would like to attend the following:

- ☐ The pre-meeting tour of the ANZAC MEMORIAL (no cost);
and/or
- ☐ The General Meeting with luncheon and Guest Speaker at Castlereagh Boutique Hotel.

I have transferred OR enclosed my payment of \$70.00 (or additional for my guest/s @ \$70.00 per head) for the above listed to attend the IRSEA luncheon, 11.30am for 12.00pm, at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel which includes a 2-course main meal with bread roll, coffee and tea.

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

Meal type Number required

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

Signed: Date: Phone no.

NOTIFICATION and PAYMENT OPTIONS

Payment by direct deposit/bank transfer is preferred.

- ☐ Payment by **Electronic Funds Transfer** – 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'

- ☐ Email or message your booking slip to Ray Gillies, IRSEA Treasurer, at rcgillies@yahoo.com.au
[Phone images or scans are acceptable]

- ☐ If paying by cheque, please make the cheque payable to *Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators*, or *IRSEA* and cross it '*Not negotiable*'. Mail your cheque and booking slip to:
Ray Gillies, 79 Albyn Road, STRATHFIELD, NSW 2135

For further information or notification, please call or text Ray on mobile: 0412 763 242

NOTE: Money cannot be refunded for cancellations made after **Thursday, 25 July 2024**