



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

KERRIE IKIN



Dear Members,

Although I have been overseas for much of the time between our last Newsletter and this one, with the benefit of today's technology, I have been able to keep up to date with IRSEA's initiatives and in a few instances progress them. I would be remiss, however, if I didn't acknowledge that it is because of the remarkable work of the executive committee that our program for 2026 is remaining on track and indeed several new initiatives are now being considered and implemented.

First, my thanks to every member of the Executive Committee, who have kept IRSEA's cogs turning—Lindsay Wasson, Gerry McCloughan, Ray Gillies, Brian Davies, Michael Murray, Alan Laughlin, David Riordan, Kerryanne Knox, Liliana Mularczyk, John Allsop, Kim Fillingham, Jeff Bruce, and Irina White, plus of course Kay Rigas from the Department. Without them our finances, constitution, strategic planning, membership data, members' welfare, newsletter, IRSEA Fellowship, and many more would not occur.

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Second, my immense thanks to Janina Sulikowski, Gerry McCloughan, and Lindsay Wasson for their planning and organisation of the upcoming Hunter meeting, *Connect and Reconnect 2026*, on 30–31 October. I urge you to attend this event at the Apollo international Hotel and invite others within your educational circle to join you. Last year was wonderful; this year is shaping up to be even more so.

Last but not least, my indebted thanks must also go to Lindsay Wasson and Gerry McCloughan, whose sustained efforts in strengthening IRSEA's advocacy partnerships with like-minded organisations have laid an important foundation for our future work. Their endeavours resonate strongly with the themes articulated by Ken Boston in his address (reprinted in this newsletter) at the Education Awards at Sydney Town Hall, where he was honoured as the Outstanding Advocate

for Public Education. His reflections provide a compelling context for turning my attention now to IRSEA's own program of partnership development.

The enduring benefits of public schooling and IRSEA's commitment to strengthening advocacy partnerships

Public schooling remains one of the most significant democratic institutions in Australia and across the world. It is a system built on the principles of equity, inclusion, and collective responsibility—values that have shaped generations of learners and contributed to the social and economic wellbeing of our communities. For retired senior educational administrators, these principles are not abstract ideals; they are the foundation upon which careers were built, reforms were championed, and futures were shaped.

As the Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators, we must continue to advance these values by forging strong, purposeful links with organisations that share our commitment to high-quality public education. In doing so, we aim to amplify the voice of experienced educational leaders and contribute meaningfully to the national conversation about schooling, equity, and the public good.

The great benefits of public schooling

Public schooling offers a range of profound benefits that extend far beyond the classroom. These benefits are not only educational but social, civic, and economic.

1. Universal access and equity

Public schools are founded on the principle that every child—regardless of background, postcode, or family circumstance—deserves access to a high-quality education. This

universal entitlement is a cornerstone of a fair society. Public schooling reduces barriers, supports vulnerable learners, and ensures that education is not a privilege reserved for the few.

2. Social cohesion and community building

Public schools are vibrant community hubs. They bring together students from diverse cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, fostering understanding, respect, and shared identity. This diversity strengthens social cohesion and prepares young people to thrive in an interconnected world. As Ken so rightly reminds us, our public school classrooms 'are the crucible ... in which the chemistry of social cohesion takes place'.

3. Highly qualified educators and strong professional standards

Public education systems invest heavily in teacher training, professional development, and leadership pathways. This commitment ensures that students benefit from highly skilled educators who are supported by robust standards, evidence-based practice, and strong accountability frameworks.

4. Comprehensive curriculum and holistic development

Public schools offer broad, balanced curricula that support academic achievement, creativity, physical development, and wellbeing. They provide access to specialist programs, inclusive education services, and extracurricular opportunities that nurture the whole child.

5. Economic and civic benefits

A strong public education system contributes to national productivity, workforce readiness, and civic engagement. Students educated in public schools are more likely to participate in

democratic processes, contribute to their communities, and engage in lifelong learning.

Why IRSEA Is building strong links with public schooling advocates

As an organisation representing retired senior educational administrators, IRSEA holds a unique position in the educational landscape. Our members possess decades of leadership experience, policy insight, and practical wisdom. Strengthening partnerships with associations that champion public schooling allows IRSEA to:

- **Amplify the collective voice** of experienced educational leaders in public debates.
- **Support evidence-based advocacy** for equitable, well-resourced public education systems.
- **Share expertise and historical knowledge** that can inform contemporary policy and reform.
- **Collaborate on initiatives** that promote excellence, inclusion, and innovation in public schooling.
- **Mentor emerging leaders** and contribute to the professional growth of the next generation of administrators.

These partnerships ensure that IRSEA remains an active, respected contributor to wide-ranging educational discourse, rather than a passive observer. They also honour the legacy of our members by continuing the work they dedicated their careers to—strengthening public education for all.

A shared commitment to the public good

Public schooling is not merely an educational model; it is a public institution that reflects our collective values. IRSEA's commitment to

forging strong links with like-minded organisations is grounded in the belief that collaboration strengthens advocacy, deepens impact, and ensures that the voices of experienced educational leaders continue to shape the future.

By working together, we can uphold the principles of equity, excellence, and inclusion that define public education—and ensure that future generations benefit from the same opportunities that have long supported Australia’s social and economic prosperity.

Kerrie Ikin

IRSEA President

August 2026



Photos of presentation by
Candice Fox, acclaimed
Australian writer, highlight of the
General Meeting Luncheon –
May 2026



DECLARATION FOR EDUCATION: *'PUBLIC EDUCATION AND SOCIAL COHESION'*

KEN BOSTON

KEN BOSTON and the Public Education Awards 2026

Recently, on 3 August, the Department of Education and the Public Education Foundation partnered to announce the 2026 Public Education Awards at the Sydney Town Hall. This prestigious event was attended by the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning, the Hon Prue Car, and the Secretary of the NSW Department of Education, Murat Dizdar. The Award for Outstanding Advocate for Public Education was presented to our colleague and IRSEA Member, Dr Ken Boston. Ken's acceptance speech was a powerful affirmation of Public Education and its critical contribution to nation building and social cohesion. Congratulations, Ken, and thank you for encapsulating our enduring beliefs. Ken's speech follows.



Public Education and Social Cohesion

Until 1848, sixty years after the arrival of the First Fleet, there were no public schools in NSW. The children of the military and the free settlers attended church schools, mainly Church of England, or were sent back to boarding school in England. The great majority of children - those of the convicts, emancipists and the poor – had no formal schooling at all. Many were Irish Catholics.

Education – and the lack of it – reflected the deep social and religious divisions within this transplanted community.

The indigenous Australians of course had an excellent system of education. For thousands of years, they had cared for their children spiritually and culturally and taught them skills for living. But Aboriginal people were on the outer margins of European society.

By the early 1850s, the first few public schools began to appear. Two men saw these schools as the key to the future.

William Wilkins was the educational founder and first head of our public school system. Murat Dizdar is his direct successor. Sir Henry Parkes, later five times Premier of NSW and the Father of Australian Federation, was our political founder.

They had two objectives.

First, to provide education for all young people, by establishing a state-wide public school system of a standard equal to any in the world.

And second, to build a socially cohesive nation, by providing public schools as an alternative to dividing children into schools according to their religion, ethnicity and socio-economic status.

In his famous declaration on education, Parkes saw public schools as:

making “no distinction of faith, asking no question where a child had been born, what may be their condition of life, or what the position of their parents, but inviting all to sit side by side”.

Success was immediate and enduring.

By the end of the nineteenth century, there were 2,745 public schools in NSW. Three-quarters of all children were enrolled in them, and they came from all sections of society – an astonishing achievement.

The great majority of schools were primitive one-teacher schools in the bush, like the Old Bark School celebrated by Henry Lawson in the poem of that name. Many however were magnificent buildings in gothic revival style that are still in use, like Crown Street Public School and the Inner Sydney High School in Cleveland Street Surry Hills.

During the twentieth century, the founders’ two objectives were both firmly achieved, and are now etched deeply into the landscape of schooling in this state. We call them excellence and equity.

In 2026, we look back on almost 180 years in which successive waves of First Nations children, migrant children, and the descendants of migrants have sat ‘side by side’ in the classrooms of our

public schools, bridging their diversity, and bonding as young Australians, regardless of their language background or the colour of their skin.

Now, the point I want to make is this.

It has to do with the currently vexed question of social cohesion.

I put it to you that this country has no instrument more powerful for building social cohesion than the inclusive public schooling of our young.

Our schools are of existential importance to the peace and harmony of this nation.

Wilkins and Parkes were right.

The classrooms of our public schools are the crucible – the crucible - in which the chemistry of social cohesion takes place.

They are the vessel in which the diverse raw materials for this proudly multicultural democracy are brought together and transformed into young Australian citizens sharing common Australian values.

If we are to continue to be a peaceful and socially cohesive nation, governments must ensure that our public schools remain its foundation.

Ken Boston

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NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENTS

RAEHEL MCCARTHY, DEL AND IRSEA LIAISON



Raechel McCarthy is the Director, Educational Leadership, Lake Illawarra North Principals Network. Raechel plays an important role in liaison between IRSEA and the Department. In this article she reports on important and exciting developments in public education.

Hi all!

I hope everyone is coping with this wintry weather. I must tell you, the average temperatures out at Bourke, Coonamble, Gunnedah, Brewarrina and Tamworth are a bit trying for me as a coastal inhabitant, and I am getting very used to wiping frost and ice off my fleet car in the morning!

I thought in this article I would discuss how our Department is using system-led School Development Days across NSW schools to drive the reform agenda, alongside school-selected and teacher-identified professional learning during School Development Days.

For the last few years, the Department has asked each school to dedicate one of their Term 2 School Development Days to a system priority, strengthened by professional learning resources from the Teaching, Learning and Student Wellbeing Division. System-led School Development Days have included:

- 2025: High Potential and Gifted Education
- 2026: Disability, Neurodiversity and Inclusive Education

In 2027, schools have been asked to devote a total of 1.5 School Development Days to our Department's reform agenda. This will include a half day in Term 1 focused on **strengthening writing across the curriculum**. The quality-assured professional learning provided will aim to support effective teaching strategies, enhance student literacy and engagement, and promote the use

of high-quality, evidence-informed curriculum resources.

Term 2, Day 1 2027 will have a mandatory focus on **anti-racism**. The focus of this full-day professional learning will be on strengthening our schools and workplaces as equitable and inclusive environments by recognising, addressing and preventing racism and religious intolerance. This is an important shift because professional learning only becomes meaningful when it translates into changes in practice and, ultimately, better experiences and outcomes for students.

To assist in combating racism in schools, each school has an **Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO)**. The ARCO is a teacher nominated by the principal to support anti-racism education. This person should demonstrate a commitment to anti-racism education, have strong communication and interpersonal skills, and be trusted by students, staff, parents and carers and the broader community.

ARCOs perform a range of important roles within schools, including:

- promoting anti-racism education through staff professional learning and activities such as Harmony Day;
- providing advice to students, staff and community members about how to report racism; and
- supporting teachers to address reports of racism involving students through approaches such as restorative practices that promote respectful behaviour.

For principals, the opportunity is to think beyond whether the professional learning has been completed and consider whether it is making a difference to the culture and experiences of students, staff and families.

The NSW Public Schools Survey provides an important source of evidence for this. Principals can use survey data to consider questions such as whether students have experienced racism or discrimination during the school year, whether students feel good about their culture, and whether they feel connected to and have a sense of belonging at school.

This gives us an opportunity to close the loop between **professional learning, practice and impact**. If we are serious about creating equitable and inclusive schools, we need to ask not only *“Have we delivered the professional learning?”* but also *“What has changed as a result?”* and *“How do we know?”*

System-led School Development Days provide a valuable mechanism for creating consistency across the system and building collective capacity.

I hope you all find this report interesting and look forward to seeing you all at a future IRSEA gathering.

Warm regards,

Raechel McCarthy
IRSEA/Department Liaison



Education

racismnoway.com.au



Education

racismnoway.com.au

Fact file:

Cultural diversity in NSW public schools

- ☐ Roughly 40% of students in NSW public schools come from language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE).
- ☐ Nearly 250 different languages are represented in NSW public schools.
- ☐ Greater Sydney schools average 58% LBOTE enrolment, while the Western Sydney figure is 73%.

COMMITTEE REPORT UPDATES

IRSEA Charities Roundup: Alan Laughlin



Treasurer's Update: Ray Gillies

As of 14 August 2026, IRSEA's society bank account held \$10,106.12. Our term deposit of \$11,529.42 has been reinvested to mature on 14 July 2027.

So far this year, members' annual subscriptions amount to \$2,550. We have donated \$3,130 to Stewart House and \$1,090 to the Public Education Foundation. For IRSEA lunch meetings, members have paid \$4,550; we have paid the venue, Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, \$5,514. Thanks to our editor, the costs of IRSEA NEWS have been significantly reduced, amounting to only \$204 for the March and June issues. Other expenses have been a \$57 NSW Fair Trading fee, and \$68 for postage and stationery.

Ray Gillies
IRSEA Treasurer

A very big year

Stewart House is marking its 95th year of operation in 2026. Rather than treat this purely as a celebration, Stewart House is using the milestone to thank the people who have supported it. These activities include:

- A Governor's Reception, thanking schools for their ongoing involvement. Stewart House has invited the President of IRSEA to the Governor's Reception.
- A Cocktail Party, thanking volunteers, donors and sponsors.
- A ferry event, also held as a thank you to supporters.

Stewart House continues to run its 12-day residential program, giving each cohort of children a break from difficult circumstances at home. Children come from both metropolitan and regional areas — the most recent cohort came from the Mid-North Coast, Tweed Heads and Ballina. Donors and supporters like IRSEA fund the meals, health screenings and social / emotional learning activities that make up the program.

Financial position

This year Stewart House launched the 95 for 95 Appeal to mark its 95th year — a fundraising initiative targeting \$950,000 through partnerships with corporate and philanthropic groups, with tiers from "Centenary Builder" (\$4,750) to "Centenary Architect" (\$95,000).

IRSEA has met with SH to discuss how it can contribute, and we remain committed to supporting regular fund raisers and donations. The NSW Department of Education, as Charity of Choice partner, continues to be a major supporter through the salary contribution scheme, with roughly 6,500 staff currently contributing.

Funding remains Stewart House's biggest challenge. The salary contribution scheme is the major funding source, but it does not cover the full cost of running the organisation, and the annual budget remains significantly in deficit. Rising costs across food, wages and program delivery are adding further pressure on top of this shortfall, making the fundraising task more urgent.

To every IRSEA member who has contributed through donations, raffles or events, thank you. Stewart House wants every supporter to know that their contribution is valued.

Friends of Stewart House (FOSH)

Many IRSEA members are also members of the Friends of Stewart House, FOSH, a group of ex-Department of Education employees (ex-teachers, principals and IRSEA members). FOSH runs great social events in support of Stewart House. All IRSEA members are welcome to join these activities. Coming Up:

- 24 September, Lunch at El Mesa Restaurant, Woy Woy. Easy train travel and the restaurant is on the water and near the station. Cost is \$65 which includes a donation to SH.
- 19 November, High Tea at Breakfast Point Country Club. \$65 per head. A very popular and regular event.
- 11 December, Christmas lunch at Massey Park Golf Club. Details shortly on the SH website.

If you'd like to attend any of these events, please let me know and I can provide further information (alaughlin21@optusnet.com.au), or check out the Stewart House website and go to Friends of Stewart House.



The Public Education Foundation is also having a big year. Recently it has partnered with the Department of Education to sponsor the 2026 Public Education Awards. The Awards were presented at the Sydney Town Hall on 3 August, the beginning of the 2026 Education Week.



The Awards were attended by the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning, the Hon Prue Car, and the Secretary of the NSW Department of Education, Murat Dizdar PSM. Dr Manisha Amin's comments at the Awards ceremony are worthy of special attention. (Dr Amin is the CEO of the Foundation).

Manisha said: 'Public schools are the heart of our nation: places where students from all walks of life come together to learn, grow and imagine new futures. You can gauge the worth of a nation by its education system, and with these awards we celebrate the people shaping that future'.

Manisha continued: 'This year's theme, Inspiring Excellence, is a theme that lives in classrooms and staffrooms and school offices across New South Wales, in the teachers, the principals and the people across the Department of Education who work quietly behind the scenes to make sure every student gets what they need. These are the people who raise the bar every day, not because anyone is watching, but because they believe all children and young people deserve an education Australia can be proud of. Our public schools are part of our community, and the parents and volunteers who

support them are a fundamental part of what makes our schools so special. At the Public Education Foundation, our purpose is to support and celebrate the best of schooling, which is without doubt our public schools.



The Awards covered a number of areas but of special interest to IRSEA was the Award to the Outstanding Advocate for Public Education. This was presented to our colleague and IRSEA Member, Dr Ken Boston, and we have been lucky enough to be able to publish Ken's speech as a separate item in this newsletter.



The Public Education Foundation has also now opened applications for its scholarships for 2027. Of note, scholarships are not only available for school students but can also include scholarships for professional

learning for principals, teachers and higher education students. IRSEA donations go towards these very valuable awards.

- Tertiary Scholarships opened on 29th June and close on 4 September 2026

The Public Education Awards are a major highlight in our annual calendar, a moment to honour the extraordinary achievements and stories that define our schools and communities'.

- Secondary scholarships opened on 20th July and close on 25 September 2026
- Primary scholarships opened on 3rd August and close on 9 October 2026
- Principals and Teachers will open 7 September 2026 and close 26 January 2027.

If you would like any further information about these scholarships, you can go to:

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

Alan Laughlin

IRSEA, Charities Contact Office

Socialising at the General Meeting Luncheon – May 2026



NSW SCHOOL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE:

SUPPORTING LEADERS AT EVERY STAGE OF THEIR CAREERS

JOANNE JARVIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SCHOOL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE



Dear Colleagues,

I always enjoy reading the contributions from IRSEA members, so I thought it was time to share a little about the work I've been fortunate to lead at the NSW School Leadership Institute (SLI).

When we began in 2018, we were a team of just three people delivering a single leadership program. Eight years later, the SLI has grown into a significant part of the NSW public education landscape, supporting current and aspiring leaders at every stage of their careers – from teachers beginning to exercise leadership beyond their classrooms to experienced principals and system leaders.

It has been quite a journey, and one I am immensely proud of.

Leadership development across a career

From the beginning, our purpose has been clear: to strengthen the capabilities of educational leaders so they can have the greatest possible impact on teacher

and student learning. Our mission is to provide world-class, evidence-informed and future-focused leadership development at every stage of a leader's career.

Today, every current and aspiring leader in NSW public schools can access SLI learning through induction, leadership development programs, professional learning and an extensive suite of on-demand resources.

We provide induction for newly appointed middle leaders, deputy principals and principals, helping them understand not only the responsibilities of their new roles, but how to lead people, build trust and maintain a strong focus on teaching and learning.

Our longer leadership development programs span the career continuum. They include programs for teacher leaders, middle leaders and aspiring principals, as well as our newest offering, the System Leadership for Principals Program, which supports experienced principals to amplify their influence within and beyond their schools.

We also offer shorter and more flexible opportunities. Our Insights Series for Principals brings leading thinkers and practitioners into conversation with NSW principals on contemporary leadership issues, while our Regional, Rural and Remote Leadership Program takes professional learning directly to leaders in communities across NSW.



I'm fortunate to be one of the presenters in this program, and it remains one of the most enjoyable parts of my role. Working face-to-face with leaders in regional and remote communities is a constant reminder that some of the most impressive leadership practice can be found a very long way from our metropolitan centres.



Grounded in research and informed by evidence

A principle we have held firmly since the SLI was established is that our work must be grounded in evidence.

Our major programs draw on contemporary research and many have been co-designed with university partners and academic experts. We also have our own research and evaluation capability, ensuring that our work is informed by evidence and continually refined through evaluation and feedback from practising leaders.

Increasingly, we are also investing in mentoring, shadowing and other practice-based approaches. Our focus is not simply on developing individual leaders, but on equipping experienced leaders to develop others and strengthen leadership capability across the system.

What's next for the SLI?

When I look back at where we started, I am incredibly proud of what our team has built. In the past year alone, the SLI has engaged with more than 6,800 leaders across 1,800 NSW public schools.

For a team that started with three people and one program, that still feels quite remarkable.

But there is much more to do.

In March, we released the NSW Public Schools Leadership Excellence Action Plan, which sets out our direction for continuing to strengthen leadership across NSW public education. We are also expanding access to high-quality leadership learning through a new platform for our Leadership Learning Resource. This is a one-stop shop for any NSW public school educator interested in developing their leadership and/or leading professional learning across their school or network.

And we continue to respond to emerging priorities, with recent work supporting leaders in areas such as High Potential and Gifted Education and the leadership of explicit teaching.

The SLI today looks very different from the small team we established in 2018, but the idea at its heart has not changed: leadership matters and investing in the people who lead our schools is one of the most important investments we can make in the quality and equity of public education.

I feel enormously privileged to have been part of building this work – and excited about where we take it next.

Find out more about the SLI

You can find our Leadership Excellence Action plan on our [website](#). If you have a DoE account, you can also access detailed information on our [staff-only pages](#).

I host a podcast called Leadership in Focus which is available on our website or you can listen on [Spotify](#). You can also follow us on X at [@NSWSLI](#).

We are always happy to hear from other educators, so please feel free to contact us at: slicorrespondence@det.nsw.edu.au

Institute of Retired Senior
Educational Administrators

Invitation flyer: 12 August 2026



Special IRSEA Invitation to 'Connect and Reconnect 2026' *Celebrating Learning Never Gets Old*

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.

IRSEA to the Hunter (again 😊)

Catch up with friends and colleagues at ...

Apollo International Hotel, Charlestown, via Newcastle

**Friday 30 October 2026 – Social networking dinner 6:00 – 8:00pm
and/or**

Saturday 31 October 2026 – Luncheon meeting with Guest Speaker 11:30 – 2:00pm

The Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators (IRSEA) invites former and current senior colleagues of the Department and TAFE along with Full, Associate and Honorary IRSEA members, partners & guests to join us for our second meeting outside the Sydney Metro area.

The event to occur over Friday-Saturday provides opportunities for those still working to join in for this unique opportunity to connect, socialise and network with like-minded educational leaders – we are looking to bring together retired, semi-retired and yet-to-be-retired colleagues.

A number of Sydney-based IRSEA executive committee members will be attending, but we welcome all members and their guests to take this great opportunity to enjoy the company of friends and colleagues in the greater Newcastle and northern regions of NSW.

So, please join us for one, or both, of the following:

- 1. Friday social networking dinner 6:00 – 8:00pm**
We will be dining in the [Babbingtons](#) à la carte restaurant at our own cost. Look for the blue IRSEA flag.
- 2. Saturday luncheon meeting – 11:00am for 11:30 start**
We will be in Apollo Room, with a two course luncheon priced at \$47pp. Special dietary requirements can be met.



Luncheon Guest Presentation: *Q is for Quality*, Dr Drew Miller, University of Newcastle.



Dr Drew Miller, Deputy Director of the Teachers and Teaching Research Centre, has extensive experience in collaborative design and leadership of rigorous evaluation of educational interventions, having developed and led multiple large-scale randomised controlled trials and longitudinal evaluations, as well as bespoke program evaluations for and with research partners. Drew has led national reviews, sits on several national advisory groups, and has been a visiting academic at four international institutions. He is currently leading the Centre's \$4.3m *Thriving Schools* project (2024-26) with funding from the Paul Ramsay Foundation, and with support from the NSW Department of Education. Thriving schools involves 24 public schools across NSW in communities with the least access to socio-educational advantage.

IRSEA – connecting the past and the present to help shape the future.
Please join us . . this weekend promises to be one for the ages!



Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators **Connect and Reconnect 2026 Weekend Booking**

Please register below to indicate your attendance. Payment for luncheon meeting by **Friday 9 Oct 2026**.

REGISTRATION

Please return form to or notify Ray Gillies, IRSEA Treasurer (rcgillies@yahoo.com.au or **0412 763 242**)

Name (please print):

Guest's name/s (if applicable):

I/We would like to register for the following:

- ☐ **Social networking dinner 6:00 – 8:00pm Fri 30 Oct 2026**

[At *Babbingtons* à la carte restaurant at my/our own cost.]

- ☐ **Overnight accommodation and breakfast**

[At attendee's own cost – pay directly to the Apollo. The Apollo is offering excellent discounted accommodation for our group – anyone who would like to stay on Friday and or Saturday night/s can book directly by sending an email to Steve Renshaw, Conference and Events Manager, to reserve a room. To gain room discount/s (*Deluxe Queen* – \$180 Fri; \$220 Sat; *Superior King/Twin* – \$200 Fri; \$240 Sat) **please book by Friday 28 August 2026**. Discounted breakfast rates are also available. Please email Steve soon, as the Apollo is often heavily booked in October.

Steve's email: functions@apollointernational.com.au

- ☐ **Saturday luncheon with guest speaker 11:00 for 11:30am – 2:00pm Sat 31 Oct 2026**

[Main Event: Luncheon in the Apollo Room - **\$47.00 per head**.

I have transferred OR enclosed my payment of \$47.00 (or additional for my guest/s @ \$47.00 per head) for the above listed to attend the IRSEA luncheon, 11.30am for 12.00pm, at the Apollo International Hotel, Charlestown, which includes a 2-course main meal with coffee and tea.]

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

Meal type Number required

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

Signed: Date: Phone no.

NOTIFICATION and PAYMENT OPTIONS for the LUNCHEON ~ 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 **Friday, 16 October 2026**

IRSEA’S PARTICIPATION IN NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DAYS

REPORT COORDINATED BY GERRY MCCLOUGHAN

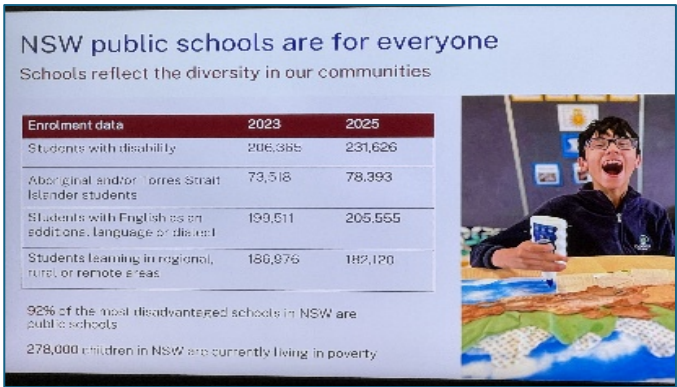
Over the last few years, representatives of IRSEA’s Executive Committee have been participating in professional learning days conducted by the Public Schools Division of the NSW Department of Education. There are usually four dedicated learning days each year involving senior departmental officers, including state office based directors, and the more locally based Directors Educational Leadership (DELs), Principals School Leadership (PSLs) and Principal, Coach-Mentor (PCMs).

The Term 2 and Term 3 days are operated as *Hub and Spoke* (H&S) meetings. These focus on enhancing curriculum, and teaching and learning delivery and support. The H&S model provides key information session from state office, intermixed with local workshops facilitated by the team representatives across the eight Public Schools directorates: *Metropolitan North, Metropolitan South, Metropolitan South and West; Regional North, Regional North and West, Regional South and Connected Communities, Rural North and Rural South and West.*

With the establishment of the *IRSEA-NSW DoE Memorandum of Understanding* in 2025, we now have a more formalised process for IRSEA’s representatives to participate in many of these important professional learning days. Senior officers of the Department have indicated that IRSEA’s participation in these events is highly valued in providing support to colleagues and the broader work across Public Schools. There is appreciation that IRSEA members are contributing extensive experience in education, deep expertise, perspectives and wisdom, and steady leadership and encouragement for the good of public education. On 20 May 2026, five of your Executive participated in Hub and Spoke meetings at Nirimba (Met North), Arncliffe (Met South), Liverpool (Regional South and Connected Communities), Riverwood (Metro South and West) and Tuggerah (Regional North).

Reports

We hope the strongly consolidating process, systems and achievements of the Public Schools Division will be of great interest to our retired members. Here are two reports to provide insights to the content and character of these important PL days.

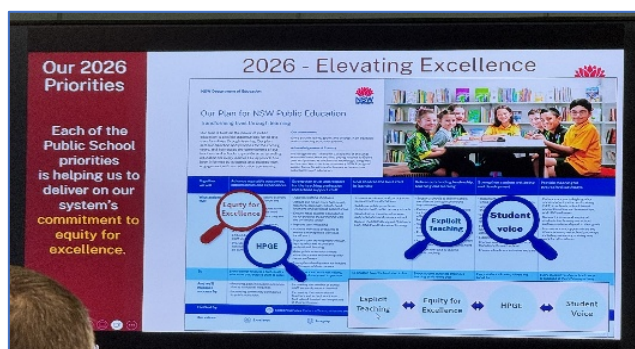


Riverwood:

There are times when leadership glows and there are times when it fiercely shines in powerful and stunning ways. Yesterday, Kathy Powzun, relieving Deputy Secretary Public Schools NSW, displayed a shining light of leadership and it was an honour to witness Kathy elucidate and clarify the complex issues that public education is currently facing. She gave splendid motivation to the senior officers of NSW Public Education, while speaking with authority, educational depth, warmth, clarity and purposeful brilliance that left all in total admiration. Kathy’s messages were simple, direct and memorable. That ‘every student should experience excellence as the standard’ was a take-away that will resonate across the state. That ‘excellence is different for each child’ and that it is ‘intentionally designed’ were powerful in their simplicity but even more powerful in the context of it happening in each classroom and for each child.

I could see the impact of Kathy’s presentation with the Metropolitan South and West Directorate at Riverwood, ably led by Executive Director, Kay Rigas. The Met South

and West group accepted the challenge and proceeded with their spoke workshops with the necessary confidence and purposeful intent in the context of very difficult times.



Tuggerah:

The Hub and Spoke Professional Learning Day on Wednesday was a magnificent event to be part of. Kathy Powzun, relieving Deputy Secretary, displayed spectacular leadership during her Hub presentation. Kathy's framing of the day was clear, focused, challenging and inspirational, and I witnessed passionate buy-in amongst the Tuggerah team. The key messages such as establishing what a 'System focus' looks like across the state, the framing of equity "as a capacity", and calling for "a relentless focus on impact", set up a powerful call to action that clearly resonated throughout the rest of the day's program.

Tim McCallum, Executive Director, Regional North, demonstrated outstanding leadership of a magnificent

team of senior educational leaders at the Tuggerah office. It was powerful to witness the strong educational thinking and commitment from the Regional North team in pursuit of excellence. IRSEA received a warm welcome and was encouraged to contribute to the discussions about how best to implement the central priorities.

A feature of the Hub and Spoke Professional Learning days is the excellent chairing of the day by Nick Magriplis, Director, Public Schools from the Parramatta Office of the Deputy Secretary. Nick acknowledged IRSEA as an important partner in advancing public education in NSW.

On 20 August 2026, IRSEA will have representatives attending the next Hub and Spoke Professional Learning spokes at Macquarie Park, Liverpool West, Arncliffe and Tuggerah. We will provide reports in the November IRSEA NEWS.

The IRSEA Executive Committee is exploring ways to have IRSEA representatives at more of the Spoke venues in the future. For more information, please contact Lindsay Wasson on lindsaywasson9@gmail.com

IRSEA Fellowships 2026 – Applications opening soon

The Department will shortly call for applications for the **IRSEA Fellowship 2026**, offering \$2,000 to support the successful applicant in pursuing further **professional development or research activities** that strengthen educational leadership and practice.

All **Associate Members** are eligible to apply. Members may also wish to **recommend a current senior officer** who would benefit from this opportunity.

Further details, including application timelines and requirements, will be released shortly.



TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (TDP)

ARTICLE DEVELOPED FROM INFORMATION PROVIDED BY

AMY CURL, CEO TDPF

Two members of the IRSEA Executive, Gerry McCloughan and David Riordan, have attended magnificent **Talent Development Project (TDP)** events in recent months.

TDP empowers young Australian performers to develop their artistic excellence, personal agency and pathways into the professional music and performing arts industries. The Talent Development Project Foundation operates the TDP. Pam Christie, the previous Managing Director of TAFE NSW, is the current Deputy Chair of the TDPF Board.

Working with talented young musicians from NSW government high schools, TDP bridges the gap between classroom learning and the professional field. Through world-class mentoring, performance opportunities and industry engagement, students develop their craft, build confidence and resilience, and gain the skills and networks to turn their talent into meaningful, sustainable careers.

The Project is one of Australia's most successful youth development programs in the music and entertainment industry, established in 1991 to cultivate exceptional talent discovered at the annual Schools Spectacular. It is open to students in Years 9–12 from NSW public schools, including singers, singer-songwriters, instrumentalists, bands, and musical theatre performers. The program is delivered free of charge, with travel subsidies available for regional and remote students.

TDP's support extends well beyond graduation. Their alumni remain part of a vibrant creative community, with access to ongoing mentoring, scholarships, paid performance and teaching opportunities, and valuable professional networks. Together, TDP students and alumni represent the next generation of Australian artists, enriching our cultural life,

strengthening community connection, and carrying diverse Australian stories onto stages across the country and beyond.



For more information about TDP, check out their website: [Home - Talent Development Project](https://www.tdp.org.au).

If you would like to find out how you can support TDP, please contact Amy Curl the CEO of TDP at amy@tdp.org.au.

Upcoming performance

The next wonderful event is to be held at the Rebel Theatre in Walsh Bay on 12 October 2026. TPD would welcome members and partners of IRSEA to enjoy the incredibly beautiful performances from TDP award winning alumni, recent graduates and current students. *Live at the Rebel Theatre* is the TDP community in full flight. Show your support for the future of Australian music and join TDP in the Dress Circle for an inspiring showcase of artistry and live performance!

Live at the Rebel Theatre

Monday 12 October, 6 – 8pm

Rebel Theatre, Pier 2/3, Walsh Bay NSW 2000

Ticket price: \$20 (+\$1 booking fee)

Link for purchase of tickets:

<https://events.humanitix.com/tdp-live-at-the-rebel>



TDP: CHAMPIONING EQUAL ACCESS FOR EXTRAORDINARY YOUNG MUSICIANS

Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators

Invitation flyer: August 2026

*Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators***IRSEA General Meeting & Luncheon Booking**

Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, 169 Castlereagh St, Sydney 2000

TUESDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2026

10:30 -11:15am (NOTE earlier start!): Pre-meeting gathering and refreshments - Level 2

11:15am - 2:30pm: Meeting followed by luncheon - Cellos Grand Dining Room, Level 4

Please return the booking slip below and make payment for the lunch meeting by **Tuesday 15 September**.**BOOKING SLIP**

Name (please print):

Guest's name/s (if applicable):

- ☐ 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, 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.

Details:

- ☐ **I agree / do not agree** (cross out one) that photographs of me in professional or social situations 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****PLEASE NOTE:** Money cannot be refunded for cancellations made after **Friday 18 September 2026**.