

## 1977 – The Beginning

**President** – Reg Clarke; **Vice President** – Alf Gray; **Secretary** – Joe Byrne; **Assistant Secretary** – Bruce Bensley; **Treasurer** – Al Kemp.

### Brief overview of the formation of the NSW High School Principals' Council

In April 1976 the Executive of the Council of Metropolitan High School Principals (representing Sydney principals) met with the Executive of the NSW Council of High School Principals (representing both metropolitan and county principals) and they resolved to merge. At this meeting they agreed on a set of proposals and conditions for the recognition and formation of a new Council, which was to be submitted for approval to the Assistant Director-General and Director of Secondary Education, Arthur Buchan. They also elected an Interim Executive to guide the new Council through its formation.

In mid-June 1976 Arthur Buchan replied to the Interim President of the new Council, Reg Clarke, saying that while he couldn't agree to all the proposals they had put to him, he would approve some of these. These included that the new Council could continue to meet during 1976 as previously planned, and that the new Council's Executive and Regional Representatives could hold a series of limited meetings during 1977.

At the new Council's first meeting in February 1977 reports were presented on the state of negotiations on the future of the Council. During that morning Council representatives met with the Minister, Eric Bedford and Arthur Buchan (who was now the Acting DG), and in the afternoon they met with the Regional Directors. It was necessary to show Regional Directors that there would be no conflict between their meetings with principals and the state-wide meetings of the new Council. Similarly, special efforts were made to show that the new Council would focus on professional matters of common interest and not be involved in industrial negotiations impacting on the role of the NSW Teachers Federation.

The Minister in his meeting with Council representatives supported the concept of a state-wide principals' council but advised that any decision would be left to the newly appointed Director-General of Education (DG), Doug Swan. Subsequently the new DG determined that:

- The Council could also hold one full-day State Plenary Meeting in school time each term, with attendance being open to all principals in the five metropolitan regions, plus DoE would provide funding for the attendance of three delegates from each of the six country regions and all members of the Council Executive.
- The Executive and one representative from each Region (i.e. the Management Committee) could meet in school time prior to the full day meeting to ensure the agenda reflected the importance of items of state-wide significance.
- The President, Secretary and two other members of the Executive should meet with him or his delegate as soon as convenient after the State Meeting to discuss important issues arising from that meeting.

The DG also indicated that if the Council decided to hold its annual conference in conjunction with one of the full day meetings and partially over a weekend, consideration would be given to the release of all country principals and provision of rail warrants to permit their attendance.

**The NSW High School Principals' Council (later renamed the NSW Secondary Principals' Council in 1989) had officially come into existence.**

*(You can read more about the earlier history of the Council by clicking [here](#).)*

### Council Executive

- First President: Reg Clarke, Hurlstone Agricultural HS (previously Interim President of the new Council and before that President of the Metropolitan Principals' Council) was elected as President at the first official meeting of the NSW High School Principals' Council in April 1977 and was then re-elected at the first AGM in November 1977 for the 1978 school year.
- Other Executive: Vice President Alf Gray, Pennant Hills HS (previously Interim Vice President and before that President of the NSW Council of High School Principals), Secretary Joe Byrne (Seven Hills HS), Assistant Secretary Bruce Bensley (Broadmeadow HS) and Treasurer Al Kemp (Pendle Hill HS).

## Council Matters

- Developing the Constitution as part of the formation of the new Council was a priority.
- Determining equitable voting procedures at state meetings where metropolitan principals outnumbered their country colleagues.

## Relationships with the Department of Education (DoE)

- Concerns over problems associated with the staffing of schools.
- Request for period allowances for Form Masters/Mistresses (Year Advisers) and their allocation to Years 11 and 12.
- The need to employ full time School Counsellors.
- Prioritisation of the appointment of a second Deputy Principal over the appointment of a Bursar.
- The need for additional Special Masters/Mistresses (Head Teachers) to assist in the administration of schools and reduce the back log of those waiting for promotion on the Head Teacher Promotions List 2 (Special).
- Problems with supervision during scripture classes and a policy (in some places) that unattended scripture classes could go home with the Regional Director's approval.
- DG Doug Swan advised that the DoE was preoccupied with a review of class sizes and would not consider any changes in school executive or other staffing matters until that was resolved and fully costed.

## The Study Boards

The Secondary Schools Board (SSB – Years 7-10) and the Board of Senior School Studies (BSSS – Years 11-12) managed all secondary school curriculum. The Council expressed concern with:

- The composition of the Study Boards and the representation of principals on these Boards.
- Inequities in awarding Teacher Education scholarships.
- Problems associated with the new 2 and 3 Unit HSC courses and scaling processes used.
- Proposed changes to the curriculum for Years 7-10 and Council input on these changes.
- School developed courses in a less restrictive curriculum with greater school autonomy.

The new DG, in his previous role as Director of Primary Education, had not been associated with the Study Boards and became concerned at the rate of change. He determined that the Study Boards should review their philosophy and policies and advise him how they would minimise the impact on schools.

## Other Matters

- Restrictions on STD phone calls, impacting on rural schools contacting Regional and State Office, and on all schools participating in CHS sport competitions.
- Introduction of 'Senior Colleges' was first considered.
- The Research Officer Bill Myles, formerly Dulwich High, prepared advice on replacing the annual requisition with a per capita grant.
- Problems with the current school appraisal process and the Federation's attitude to accountability in schools.

## Items of Interest

- The DG announced a Head Office restructure introducing a Deputy DG (Arthur Buchan) and four Assistant DGs each with specific areas of responsibility - Bob Winder, John Vaughan, Kip Enderby and George Conomy.
- A residential conference was held at Goulburn College of Advanced Education in August and the 1988 Conference was booked for Hawkesbury Agricultural College.