

1979 – External Threats

SPC President – Bruce Bensley; **Secretary** – Al Kemp; **Research Officer** – Bill Myles.

Major Papers presented to Council

- ‘Submission to the National Enquiry into Teacher Training’: G Wardrop, Met East Region; B Myles
- ‘Executive Structures: Response from Hunter Region SPC’
- ‘School Discipline and Behaviour Problems’: Submission to the Review Committee
- ‘The Principals’ Role in Industrial Relations and Teacher Assessment’: N Lynch, South Coast Region
- ‘Teacher Mobility and Assistant Head Teachers in Large Departments’: J Hale, Western Region
- ‘Formation of a Professional Association linked to the PSA’: Riverina Region
- ‘Strategies to provide Casual Relief in Difficult to Staff Schools’: Western Region
- ‘School Excursion Policy – A Response to the Department Memorandum’: R Dean, South Coast Region
- ‘Restructuring of the Council’s Annual Conference’: C Cooksey, Met South West Region

Council Matters

- To be effective, Council needed all regional groups to pro-actively identify key policy and management issues as well as respond to issues identified by the Executive.
- Annual Conference costs led to an offer by the DoE to fund conferences but with fewer principals attending. This was rejected as Council encouraged all principals to attend.
- Initially the NSW Education Commission Planning Committee didn’t include a primary or secondary principal representative. SPC representation resulted in the nomination of Fred Dobbin (Canobolas HS) to this Committee.
- Council was invited to have a representative on the ‘Inquiry on School Discipline’ Committee.

Relationships with the Department

- Director-General of Education (DG) Doug Swan recognised Council’s contribution to the Department of Education (DoE) but reiterated that the Government made many decisions (often despite advice given) that impacted on schools in policy and budgetary matters. While DoE might support Council’s views, their choices were limited, e.g. the late notification to schools re reduction of class sizes.
- The DG wanted to strengthen the role of principal’s councils and invited Council to provide further advice on how the proposed DoE/Council consultative committee might achieve this.
- The DoE set up an enquiry into the effect on teaching conditions of the introduction of Technics in the 7-10 curriculum.
- An oversupply of Maths and Social Science teachers severely impacted on subject scope with teachers teaching outside their subject area. As a result, subjects like History, Art, Home Science and other electives were not being offered in smaller schools.
- The Council expressed concern that DoE did not appear to support principals in industrial disputes, e.g. the Principal of Marrickville HS reported that the legal officer in a case before the Industrial Relations Commission had not been well briefed on the issues.
- The ‘Executive Restructuring Discussion Paper’ (1978) had not been well received as there was no betterment included, although the concept of ‘posts of responsibility’ was accepted as a way forward. There were significant differences of opinion on this by principals across the State.
- Discussion of suspension procedures involving students being moved from one school to another led to an agreement that receiving principals have access to counsellor and principal reports. Council also requested an increase in school counsellor numbers.
- A call for a review of ancillary staff numbers in schools was declined due to budgetary constraints.

The Study Boards

- While the introduction of school-designed alternate courses in Years 11/12 were promoted, duplication led to a recommendation that the Board of Senior School Studies (BSSS) should develop sample courses for schools to adopt. Principals were concerned that if these courses were taken in Year 12 they would not be recognised on the HSC.
- The BSSS set up a committee to review the scaling of 3 Unit English, and this was later extended to small entry subjects including Community Languages.
- A Select Committee of Parliament was established to review the School Certificate and consequently no decisions could be made on proposed new syllabuses. Chaired by Brian McGowen, its 1981 report would become 'The McGowan Report'.

The Teachers Federation

- The Federation's extras campaign impacted on many schools. South Coast Region SPC sought clarification that teachers could be reported and a dispute notified if teachers refused to teach their allocated load, take classes deemed in excess and take other rostered duties (bus duty etc).
- Federation passed a motion encouraging schools to actively use the Public Service Board ruling that, with the approval of the Area Director, casual teachers could be engaged to replace teachers involved in special school activities, committees, sports and excursions.

Tertiary issues

- Consultation resulted in improvement to Joint Admissions processes for entry to Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs).
- Teacher Education scholarships were reduced from 2700 to 700, with 400 to go to country CAEs for primary teaching and 300 allocated to secondary Art, Music, Home Science and PE.
- Concern existed about the requirement by Macquarie University for those retraining in Science to attend residential courses in term time.

Other Matters

- Cancellation of principal appointments: This issue had emerged as a result of the cancellation of the appointment of three women as principals of girls' high schools the previous year. Council opposed rule changes midstream and determined (76 to 46) that gender should not be a factor in appointments.
- Problems existed with alcohol consumption by students at sports events.
- Council recommended that Regional Offices should consult with SPC Regional Councils before allocating secondary consultants to service schools.
- The Commonwealth agreed to delay amendments to copyright to try to better meet schools' needs.
- The issue of funding of school STD telephone calls was finally resolved with the aid of the Teachers Federation.
- Clarification was provided on how the 'Summary Offences' and 'Enclosed Lands' Acts protected schools.

Items of Interest

- At Annual Conference, held at Hawkesbury Agricultural College, DG Doug Swan spoke of staff aspirations and the valuable contributions teachers could make in the life of a school. "The new goal should be to maximise the benefits that all can bring to a successful school."
- He suggested that Council might be better able to gather and reflect teacher opinion on major educational, organisational and industrial matters than the Teachers Federation.