

1982 – The Impact of Societal Change

President – Bruce Bensley; **Secretary** – Barry O'Donnell; **Research Officer** - Bill Myles.

Major Papers/Reports

- The 'Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Board Report' on proposed changes to the school transfer and promotion system recommended limited tenure in favourable Regions and at any one school, reassessing those on promotions lists every six years (with removal after ten years if not accepting a transfer or promotion) and absolute preference for women in schools where there were no women on the executive.
- The 'Aboriginal Education Policy' was released with significant impact on the teaching of Aboriginal Studies and the obligation on all schools to integrate Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum.
- The 'Report of the Committee Enquiring into the Teaching of Languages K-12' was released.
- The Schools Commission issued a 'Draft Discussion Paper on Schools and TAFE' in response to social and economic change. It asked, "What personal attributes, skills and knowledge will enable young people to participate effectively in our changing society?" It pointed out that 25% of those beyond school leaving age took no further part in education.
 - The focus of the report was on the increasing community concern about the current level of youth unemployment (19%), rather than on increasing student retention rates beyond school leaving age.
 - It claimed that young people did not appear to be adequately prepared when leaving full-time education.
 - It questioned whether current education practice integrated training and work experience adequately in preparation for future life.
 - It questioned whether providing financial allowances as incentives would encourage young people to remain in schools, TAFE or tertiary institutions.
 - It suggested that secondary schooling should provide a general education to Year 10 and then students could move onto better-focussed courses in senior schools or TAFE.

Major Impacts on DoE, Schools and Principals

- The 'McGowan Report' recommendations (*please see page 4 of the SPC History paper '1981 – The Impact of Powerful New Bodies' for more information*) were generally supported by Council, particularly the issue of a certificate recognising achievement in wider areas of educational experience. Further consideration was considered necessary for the following issues:
 - The complexity of the central authorities' control mechanisms that may jeopardise school/community autonomy and lead to excessive rigidity in school curriculum offerings and student course flexibility and progress.
 - The community's desire for State-wide comparability of results.
 - The urgent need to clarify the nature of the 'compulsory core' within the curriculum.
 - The staffing and financial resources needed to develop individual curriculum structures.
 - The need to clarify the concept of 'universal secondary education'.
- The review by the Board of Senior School Studies of course structures in Years 11/12 introduced the concept of three levels of study: Type A Board Courses that enabled tertiary study, Type B Board Courses that provided tertiary entry but not for study in that subject area, and Type C School-Designed Courses which did not provide eligibility for tertiary entry.

SPC reactions indicated:

- While there was a need for courses pertinent to distinctive groups of students, the Type C courses would not get community acceptance unless they had Board input.
- The idea of a certificate at the end of Year 11 was well received.
- Concern was expressed that separating the school estimate (or assessment) from the HSC examination mark would demean the school component and a true picture of student capability would be better given by combining these two components.

Council Matters

- SPC hosted the three-day Australian High School Principals' Association (AHSPA) Conference at the Opera House in Sydney and Geoff Wardrop (Newtown BHS) was AHSPA President that year. This Annual Conference had expanded to include group discussions and workshops allowing a fertilisation of ideas across systems on a national level. The 1982 conference theme 'Education for Life's Chances' followed on from the conference themes of 'Community Expectations in Schools' (1981) and 'Education in Transition' (1980). Representatives of Catholic and Independent School systems attended and all NSW public school secondary principals were funded to attend.
- The SPC response to staffing issues for the start of the 1983 school year, developed by Liverpool Region in November 1982, included the following recommendations:
 - DoE to set priorities and allocate sufficient personnel to determine establishment of executive positions by the end of September, plus transfer and appointment of Deputy Principals, Special Masters and Mistresses, Mistresses in-charge-of Girls and staffing for Commonwealth-funded programs to be determined by the end of October.
 - Principals to be allowed to employ casuals from Day 1 Term 1 for unfilled vacancies, additional Year 7 classes (if needed) and increases in student numbers.
 - Regions to provide a list of casuals in each subject area by the start of the school year and advertise anticipated vacancies.
 - Head Office in November to meet anticipated shortfalls by making firm offers of employment to those new teachers prepared to take up positions anywhere in the State and later appoint these teachers into identified vacancies.
 - When the school year starts, teaching vacancies to be advertised with a 48-hour turnaround and the most senior applicant appointed immediately. (This proposal was accepted by NSWTF but not by the DoE.)

Relationships with the Department

- Council concerns about current audit procedures being adopted by school auditors and the lack of understanding by auditors on how schools operated led to the development of the 'Manual of Financial Management' and associated training for all principals.
- Positive negotiations with the Audit Director led to Regional Auditors being briefed on school management and the financial implications of principals' decision making. Many of the matters raised were included in the 'Manual of School Financial Management', with some duties of clerical staff also being redefined.
- In anticipation of the proposed 'Review of Secondary Education' to be conducted by Doug Swan and Ken McKinnon, South Coast Region asked schools to complete an extensive questionnaire covering decision making at the school level, organisational structures, community involvement, development or adaptation of courses and teaching methods, supervisory practices, assessment and reporting and student welfare.

Other Matters

- The issue of differential staffing for integrated special needs students to allow better support in regular classrooms was raised by Met West Region. This resulted in each student being allocated a multiplying factor based on their special need, thereby determining the number of students in the class.
- The Committee investigating school security measures met on many occasions, but their report was not published and the SPC Council Representative was not able to report any details although he suggested that there would be the introduction of a static sensor surveillance system.