

## 1985 – The Educational Needs of Young People

**President** – Nancye Harris; **Vice President** – Bob McKenzie; **Secretary** – Barry O’Donnell; **Research Officer** – Colin Cooksey.

### Major Papers/Reports

- 1985 Annual Conference (‘Education - A Partnership with Youth’) –
    - Address by the new Director-General – In his opening address at Annual Conference the new Director-General of Education Bob Winder referred to studies by Morton and Hill (UNE), ‘The Secondary School Dilemma’ and Roseth and Lee (DoE), ‘School and Beyond – School Leavers Perceptions’. The main message from both of these was that secondary schools serve quite well the needs of those who continue on to further study, but both studies contained criticisms from the respondents on their schooling experiences. These included:
      - The need to place more importance on ‘preparation for life’, and concern about the lack of practical skills currently provided
      - Their call for more student autonomy, responsibility and a role in decision making
      - More flexible structures for school organisation in timetabling and co-operation with tertiary institutions
      - The requirement for continuous assessment and comprehensive accreditation.

The two reports endorsed the recent structural changes within schools and the introduction of programs and initiatives such as link courses, school/TAFE programs, work experience, career education, personal development and living skills courses.

Responding to questions the DG said he considered that meeting with the Council was “an essential management tool” and that he was:

    - receptive to flexible school hours as trialled at Caringbah HS
    - prepared to look again at the request for flexibility for the first days of the school year
    - looking at establishing a Directorate of Schools dealing with student welfare, personal development, sport and school activities.

He went on to explain that the budget cut of 1-2% meant no additional funds for principal training.

  - Presentation by Dr E. Barrington Thomas, Deakin University – ‘What do Adolescents want from School?’ (*see summary of Dr Thomas’ slide presentation on page 6*).
  - Presentation on ‘The Assessment Practices in Schools Project’ by Eltis and Lowe (Macquarie University) –
    - This project was to examine Year 11-12 assessment practices in eight schools over two years (1985-86).
    - A team from both Macquarie and Sydney Universities were to report on effective practices and how teachers and schools responded or reacted to change.
    - Each school had to determine assessment tasks and their value and provide advice to students in advance. There was a need to consider the likely impact of tasks on students as learners.
    - The outcomes to date showed there was no best way of developing an assessment program, that for school executives the task was no different from any other call to adapt an innovation, and there were problems in individual subject areas over assessment and misinformation.
- ‘Review of Quality Education (Teacher Efficiency)’ –

In response to a request from the previous DG Doug Swan, a Council paper was prepared by Bob McKenzie and a working party drawn from all Regions. The main points included:

  - “While the majority of officers in the Teaching Education Service are efficient and carry out their duties effectively, there is a need to restate the procedures so that teachers are aware that their

efficiency is reviewed and acknowledgement is made of the quality of their work. It needs to be seen that such reviews take place and lead to appropriate action when needed.”

- Any procedures to review efficiency should be effective and not detract from the main purpose of educating students.
- Current practices do little to maintain confidence because:
  - There is pressure on the principal, rather than the teacher, to justify whether the teacher is efficient.
  - The present schedule is ineffective as it is not recognised as a review of a teacher’s work and the DoE does not assume responsibility if a teacher’s efficiency is called into question.
  - The DoE does not act to protect students and other staff from the damage caused by those who are inefficient.
- While the Principal is often required to account for his/her actions and the actions of others, other staff members do not necessarily see themselves as responsible for the effective operation of the school.
- It is recommended that the efficiency of each member of staff be reviewed on a regular basis and the procedures and criteria for such a review be brought into line with current management practices.
- Procedures for teacher reviews would need to be clarified, documented and circulated for discussion prior to their implementation. The criteria and associated statement of duties should identify both the general conditions of the employment of teachers, and their responsibilities both in the classroom and as a member of a faculty team.
- Once developed, these criteria could be used for self-appraisal as the first step in the process.

### Major Impacts on DoE, Schools and Principals

- The most significant issue in 1985 was identified at Annual Conference by the motion “That members of this Council believe that the matter which most affects the image and quality of Public Education is that of unsupervised classes.” Suggested solutions included:
  - Appointment of casual relief by Regional Office staff to be done from computer lists.
  - A pool of staff to be established in remote regions to provide relief for absent teachers.
  - When relief staff was not available, permanent staff should be paid to take extra periods for teachers on approved leave.
  - Implementing the incentive of payment for unused sick leave, as used by other organisations, which might reduce the number of short-term absences.
  - The DoE should streamline approvals for applications for teaching and give interim permission for temporary employment where lengthy checks were still needed to be done.
- The Commonwealth’s ‘Participation and Equity Program’ (PEP), introduced at the start of the previous year, was aimed at funding schools to increase student retention rates and increase participation in post-compulsory education. However, it penalised those schools that had already increased retention by using transition funds, and these schools were therefore not eligible under PEP. Concern was expressed by Council at the proportion of funds diverted to Regional and State Office. While 1985 funds resulted in significant change in schools, the late decision by the Commonwealth to spread the 1986 funds over two years (1986-87) reduced the impact of the program.

### Council Matters

- The Council was now recognised as an integral part of the policy advice machinery supporting senior DoE management. It achieved this by:
  - Determining priorities and adopting different approaches based on the nature of the actual policy or administrative issue under consideration.

- Responding to policy issues by involving Regional Principals' Councils, bringing together working parties and drawing on the vast expertise of principals to provide quality advice.
- Investigating areas of concern and handling school administrative issues by building contacts within DoE.
- Workshops at Annual Conference (held at Hawkesbury Agricultural College) included computers in administration (the 'motorised mark book' for the HSC), superannuation (permanent teachers able to re-join), the principal and the law, the staffing formula and its impact, efficient management of ancillary staff, strategies for teacher assessment and the new draft Student Welfare Policy (*see Council's response on page 7*).

### Relationships with the Department

- In Term 3 the DoE advised that 90 positions would be made available across NSW to cover casual relief. Schools could receive from 0.2 to 1.0 position above establishment and additional funding would be sought to further improve the situation.
- The 1985 staffing formula was generally accepted with an increase of 40 teachers overall and a buffer of 10 but then flexibility was needed to:
  - allow schools to maintain existing elective patterns if student numbers dropped in Years 10 or 12, provided the study pattern had been set up utilising the staffing allocated to those years
  - cater for able students and the provision of continuing studies in smaller classes.
- To assist with the integration of Special Needs students, 18 resource/remedial teachers, 10 Integration specialists and 14 Integration consultants were funded. The North Coast Region established a pilot scheme where a teacher was seconded to a school to work with staff managing behaviour-disordered students and truants. This teacher would then move to other schools to work with their teachers.
- After many requests, the DoE issued a document on class sizes. It said the principal is responsible for the organisation of the school subject to the constraints of the personnel and physical resources provided, as well as the curriculum and organisational guidelines that must be observed.

The principal must ensure that overall the number of classes is such that no class need exceed 25 pupils in Year 11 and 12, 30 across 7-10 (28 in disadvantaged schools) and 20 for Years 7-10 Technics, Industrial Arts and Year 7 Art. There was no provision for a reduction in class sizes in Years 7-10 Home Economics although it appeared to be a long-standing practice for principals to organise Home Economics classes at 24. The Council expressed their concern and sought further consultation.

There were no special class size provisions for less able students who may have been formerly referred to as General Activities students. Designated Special Education classes ranged from 18 to 6 depending on the level of need.

- In July 1985 a new policy was released: 'Removal of Children from the Normal Classroom - including Time Out for Positive Reinforcement'. It referred to certain behavioural management programs involving the removal of children from the classroom as a consequence of serious and persistent behaviour disorders. Such removal should occur only when all other procedures had proved ineffectual. The procedures proved inoperable as they required counsellor involvement (often when they were not available at the school) and parental permission, even when the parent was unwilling to be involved. The "protections of the child's rights" seemed to favour the misbehaving child at the expense of those behaving correctly. Concern was expressed that under this policy some cases of disruptive behaviour could lead to situations of danger and Council sought further consultation.

### The Teachers Federation

- The DoE provided advice that teachers do not have an automatic right to long service leave, and that the needs of students (particularly Year 12) must be considered. The NSWTF did not accept this.
- The Bega/Monaro industrial action relating to the decreasing numbers at Bega High School and the transfer of a teacher who was additional to establishment resulted in state-wide unrest. The Council requested that specific and factual information on the dispute be provided to schools as the NSWTF

were giving regular updates from their perspective of the developing issue. The DoE asked principals to ensure that staff understood the relationship between student numbers and the number of staff allocated to the school and the procedures for nominated transfers.

### The Study Boards

- In August 1985 the Minister (on the advice of the Board of Senior School Studies) determined that both assessment and examination marks would be shown separately on the HSC in 1986. The Board courses were to be assigned a mean of 60 and 20% of candidates would score above 80. The school's assessments were to be moderated to reflect the range of exam marks achieved by the students in each course. Students would be given their ranking after the HSC exams and could appeal if they believed it wasn't a true representation of their performance in the schools assessment program.
- Funding was made available for the Board of Senior School Studies to appoint a Field Officer (SEO2) in each Region to assist both government and non-government schools to develop assessment programs and to provide advice to students and school communities. They also managed the approval of Other Approved Studies and the HSC Information Centres in the Region.
- Concern was raised that a number of syllabus and support documents mandated field work and other visits when there was no provision for relief staff, e.g. 30 hours required over two years in Geography 11-12.
- A survey of 134 schools at the Annual Conference in June showed that over 60% would have subject assessment programs and overall policies in draft form by the end of July. 80% expected to have information to students and parents by the end of August.
- The Council expressed its thanks to Board Officers for their response to the theft of the 1984 HSC papers and the minimal disruption caused to the exams.

### Other Matters

- Council had identified over the years problems associated with policy and procedure documents randomly arriving in schools. The DG determined that policy would be released over his signature and Directors were to issue and sign all documents related to their areas and carry responsibility for their impact on schools.
- The 'Sport in Schools Policy' covering Dance, Health Education, Physical Education and Recreation was released and it recognised the many ways that sport was organised in schools.
- School closures were foreshadowed. Ryde HS and North Ryde HS were estimated to have only 625 students between them by 1990. Wilkins HS was to be absorbed by Marrickville HS, Cremorne Girls to be absorbed by Mosman HS and Petersham Girls and Newtown Boys to be amalgamated.
- The DoE was advised that schools were having difficulty in raising sufficient money to cover all the costs associated with the increased retention of students that was occurring, e.g. purchase of texts and resources for new courses given that a decreasing number of parents were prepared to pay school fees. Concern was expressed at the increasing inequality of educational opportunity as schools in affluent areas had greater incomes.
- The requirement by the DoE for schools to set up OH&S Committees was not sufficiently explicit on the size and composition of the committees, the role of the principal and meeting procedures. In some schools industrial action and threats to principals resulted.

### Items of Interest

- Six principal positions in schools could not be filled for 1986, including three in Newcastle where twelve principals had retired by the end of 1985. To ensure that in future there were sufficient candidates to fill all positions, the DoE decided that Deputy Principals could be inspected for List 4 in their first year and take up positions in the following year.

- In David Cohen’s publication ‘Blocked at the Entrance’, Brian McGowan described the difficulties in bringing about curriculum change in schools due largely to power struggles that placed “irreconcilable constraints on innovation”.
- The Journal of the Federation of P&Cs reported that “when a School Council makes a decision, the role of the Principal as Executive Officer is to arrange the doing”. Policy decisions should not be matters for the principal as their “main role is to be manager of the school and only advise on implementing policies”. The Council responded that the statements were in conflict with the relevant legislation and regulations. The principal is the educational leader and manager of the school, responsible for school policies while also recognising the legitimate interest and contribution of parents and others in the life of the school.
- The Federation of P&Cs wanted to rewrite sections of the ‘Managing the School’ document.
- The non-government schools in the northern suburbs of Sydney put pressure on public school principals to sign letters and join advertising about alcohol consumption at school events (largely to do with problems with alcohol at sporting events and Year 12 events at their own schools). The SPC expressed concern that the advertisements were implying there was consumption of alcohol at school when the real problem was the consumption of alcohol by school-aged children at any time. The Council wrote to the Minister agreeing to support any government action on the sale of alcohol to children.

*Please see below for these appendices:*

- ❖ *Annual Conference presentation by Dr E. Barrington Thomas, ‘What do adolescents want from school?’ (page 6)*
- ❖ *Council’s response to the DoE’s draft Pupil Welfare Policy, presented at Annual Conference by Ruth Readford (page 7).*

## What do adolescents want from school? – E. Barrington Thomas, Deakin University

### SLIDE 1: A Third Wave program

Influential changes in mass media, family life and commerce. Resistance to 'massification'. A belief in 'small is beautiful' and a greater balance between work and leisure. Fewer offspring. The Third Wave organisation will be less hierarchical and rigid. The employer will need people who can accept responsibility, understand implications, adapt quickly, and who are in tune with co-workers. Many people will work part-time and report to several employers. The 'electronic cottage' will emerge, the Third Wave society will be based on new values, which will stress personal fulfilment, feelings of self-worth and time for leisure. (*Alvin Toffler, The Third Wave, Pan Books, 1980*)

### SLIDE 2: An educational program must be devised which will carry us:

- FROM mass teaching TO personalised teaching
- FROM single learning TO multiple learnings
- FROM passive answer-absorbing TO active answer-seeking
- FROM rigid daily programs TO flexible schedules
- FROM training in formal skills and knowledge TO building desirable attitudes and appreciations that stimulate a questing for knowledge
- FROM teacher initiative and direction TO child initiative and group planning
- FROM isolated content TO interrelated content
- FROM memorised answers TO problem awareness
- FROM emphasis on textbooks TO use of media in addition to texts
- FROM passive mastery of information TO active stimulation of intellect.

(*Harold and June Shane, 'Learning for Tomorrow: The Role of the Future in Education', Ed. Alvin Toffler, Random House, N.Y, 1974*)

**SLIDE 3: The area of greatest concern from recent research** ('Young Australian Today') was that of curriculum, teaching and technology. Concern was with problems such as:

- the need for more appropriate curriculum
- the need to redefine the purposes of education
- the need for higher standards
- the great rapidity of curriculum changes
- the need for more practical and challenging teaching methods
- the problems of implementing a new curriculum
- the dissemination of new ideas about curriculum
- the problems of keeping up with the new technology.

### SLIDE 4: If education is to be valued by a Third Wave population it will have to be:

- less formal
- less wasteful
- more realistic
- more fun
- less expensive
- more individualised
- more humane
- lifelong

(*William C Miller, 'The Third Wave and Education's Futures', P.D.K. Fastback No.155, Phi Delta Kappa, 1981*)

### SLIDE 5.

The basic paradigm that dominated industrial societies



and the values of that paradigm...



have resulted in processes and states...



which counteract human ends...



and create mutually exacerbating dilemmas.

including emphases on individualism, free enterprise, material progress and capital accumulation

such as efficiency, productivity, growth of technology, growth of consumption and so on

such as extreme division of labour, overspecialisation, stimulated consumption, planned obsolescence and exploitation of resources

such as satisfying work roles, environmental enhancement, mutual assistance and so on

**SLIDE 6 – CONCLUSION: There is a misfit between the needs and expectations of adolescents and what the secondary school provides. The situation requires nothing less than a fundamental reappraisal of the approach to secondary schooling.**

## **Comments on the DoE Draft Pupil Welfare Policy by Ruth Readford, Met East SPC**

*(Business Session Report at the SPC 1985 Annual Conference)*

In general terms the document formalises policies and practices already in some/many schools and whilst the general brevity of the Policy and Principles is generally favoured, some aspects may be too idealistic and far removed for the real situation in schools.

### **The full implementation of Pupil Welfare as described in the paper has implications such as:**

- Additional resources including more time for members of Welfare Teams with greater flexibility for period allocations to Year Patrons etc.
- The essential appointment of a Pupil Welfare Co-ordinator to all high schools.
- School Counsellor services being inadequate for an appropriate Welfare Program.
- Boys' schools appear to be disadvantaged as no "welfare" position is included to equate to Mistress in charge of Girls (M.I.G.) and Supervisor of Girls (S.O.G)
- Smaller secondary schools and all schools with special problems with reduced executive and concessional periods need special consideration.
- Staff development is essential, and attention to teacher education in tertiary institutions must be provided.
- There is a clear direction for the inclusion within the school day of Personal Development Programs and Pastoral Care Schemes, e.g. Peer Support Programs. N.B. Some traditional subject time allocations may have to give way.

### **Omissions from the Draft Paper:**

- The Committee had no practising teachers and some had never worked in a school.
- Additional materials required include:
  - A list of available support agencies, specific strategies for enrolment procedures, coping with behavioural disorders, peer pressure, family crises etc
  - Descriptions of existing effective policies
  - Evaluation techniques
  - Case studies with some practical solutions to problems.
- Details of Regional support structures available to schools?
- Canteen Staff could have been listed in Personnel?

### **Suitability of the Policy to all schools:**

- Underlying principles are sound for all schools but the significant differences between secondary schools call for quite specific adaptation of policy.
- The involvement of parents and students in Pupil Welfare poses problems in some schools and for some teachers.