

**FOUNDATIONS OF A PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR
PRIMARY PRINCIPALS IN NSW**

THE CHANGES AND CHALLENGES OF THE EIGHTIES



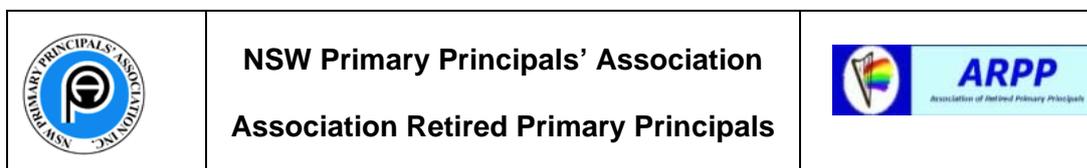
Bill Supple
Fred Armstrong
Geoff McAlary
Darryl Walker
Barry McConville
Tom Howard

FOUNDATIONS OF A PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR PRIMARY PRINCIPALS IN NSW

THE CHANGES AND CHALLENGES OF THE EIGHTIES

CONTENTS

Foreword	(i)
The First Decade	1
Bill Supple Recalls	2
Changes to the System of Promotion	6
Conferences	8
Fred Armstrong: Recollections – The Early Years	10
School Councils	16
Geoff McAlary Remembers	17
Jim Rutherford	19
Darryl Walker – Recollections of the NSW Primary Principals’ Council	22
The Rise in Interventionist Approaches by Ministers for Education	25
Barry McConville – Building the Model: Remembering the Eighties	28
The Metherell Years	31
Tom Howard Reflections	35
Appendices	37



© NSW Primary Principals’ Association 2010

Front Cover

Inaugural Meeting NSWPPC 1st May 1981

Back Row L-R: Ken Dransfield, Fred Armstrong, Edgar Mickmicking, Les Bonham, John Bremmer,
Jim Rutherford, Geoff McAlary, Phil Bastik,

Front Row L-R: Bob Harbin, Bill Supple, Doug Swan (DG) Bernie Gregory, Greg Taylor, Keith Curry, John Small

FOREWORD

This publication, 'Foundations of a Professional Association for Primary Principals in NSW – The Challenges of the Eighties', is the second in a series that is tracing the evolution of the New South Wales Primary Principals Association from its origin as the NSW Primary Principals' Conference Committee and then the NSW Primary Principals' Council.

Six articles have been contributed by former primary principals who made significant contributions to the success of the NSW Primary Principals Association and public education during the nineteen eighties.

Bill Supple:	Founding Secretary of the NSW Primary Principals' Council.
Fred Armstrong:	State Councillor representing Central Metropolitan Region. State Convention Treasurer.
Geoff McAlary:	State Councillor representing Metropolitan West Region. State Convention Chairman 1981 to 1985.
Darryl Walker:	Secretary of the NSW Primary Principals' Council 1986-1988
Barry McConville:	State Councillor representing Metropolitan South West Region. Secretary of the NSW Primary Principals' Council 1989-1993.
Tom Howard:	Treasurer of the NSW Primary Principals' Council 1987-1988. President of the NSW Primary Principals' Council 1989-1990.

These extremely interesting articles recall the events and issues, as well as some of the characters and incidents, of the eighties. The articles are supplemented with information researched from State Council Minutes and other archival records, dealing with significant issues, events and characters involved in public education during the nineteen eighties.

Special thanks to:

- Bill Supple, Fred Armstrong, Geoff McAlary, Darryl Walker, Barry McConville and Tom Howard for their excellent written contributions as well as their expert advice.
- Brian Powyer for preparing text for publication.
- The Executive of both the Association of Retired Primary Principals (ARPP) and the NSW Primary Principals Association for their support and advice.

John McMillan
President ARPP
29 October 2010

Geoff Scott
President NSWPPA
29 October 2010

THE FIRST DECADE OF OPERATION

THE NEW SOUTH WALES PRIMARY PRINCIPALS' COUNCIL

Following the establishment of the New South Wales Primary Principals' Council in 1981, principals in public primary schools became intrinsically and strategically involved in the decision making processes of the NSW state government. Some of the most far reaching and momentous changes to the NSW education system occurred in the 1980s.

The State Government and its Ministers of Education became far more actively involved in legislating and promoting change. Government legislative initiatives at both Federal and State levels such as the Equal Opportunity Legislation and the Anti-Discrimination Legislation were enacted. These legislative changes reflected the changing societal values of the time.

Some of the issues that emerged at this time were:

- Changes to the promotion and appointment of teachers to Principals and Executive positions and the development of a K-6 concept of a primary school.
- The devolution of authority for decision making and financial management to the school together with a higher level of accountability to school communities and to the state government.
- A change in management structures and processes in schools involving increased community participation through the formation of School Councils. These initiatives greatly increased the responsibilities of principals.
- The development and introduction of new curricula in a wide range of learning areas, the introduction of Basic Skills Testing, the advent of information technology and the replacement of corporal punishment with Student Welfare Policies and support mechanisms.
- A more interventionist approach by Ministers for Education commencing with the election of the Wran Labor Government in 1990, the influence of Minister Rodney Cavalier in 1984 and a major systemic upheaval initiated by the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Dr. Terry Metherell, in the late eighties.

Throughout this decade, the NSW Primary Principals' Council increased the influence of public school primary principals in all educational decision making processes. This was achieved through the actions of State Council as well as the actions of Regional Councils. Members of the State Principals' Council Executive maintained effective and professional relationships with a succession of Directors General and Senior Departmental Officers. One of the strengths of the NSW Primary Principals' Council during this period was that it managed to maintain unity of purpose that provided outstanding support to public primary schools across NSW.

As well, through State Conventions of the NSW Primary Principals' Council and the Australian Primary Principals Association, the NSW Primary Principals' Council fostered the professional growth of principals, at the same time as increasing their potential for political influence at a state and national level.

BILL SUPPLE RECALLS

State Convention Secretary –1977 to 1981 Secretary PPA – 1981 to 1985

I began my teaching career in western NSW as a relief teacher based at Dubbo Central School. After teaching in places such as Cobar, Peak Hill, Dunmore, Louth and North, South and West Dubbo Schools, I transferred to Sydney in 1950 when I married. I was appointed to Harbord Public School where I taught until 1962. I was appointed as Deputy Principal at Rydalmere East for 1962/63. My first Principals' appointment was to Middle Harbour in 1968 (P2), Summer Hill (P1) in 1973, Manly Central (P1) (now Manly Village) in 1976 and Forestville (P1) in 1980. I retired in June 1986.

During my career I was involved in a number of organisations that were strongly associated with public schools and the people in them. Between 1964 and 1967, I was Secretary of the NSW Public Schools Amateur Athletics Association (PSAAA) which was the forerunner of the Public School Sports Association (PSSA).

At various times, I was Secretary of the Metropolitan North Regional Principals' Council which met at the Willoughby Legion Club, Secretary of the Metropolitan East Principals' Council which met at the Correspondence School in William St. Kings Cross, Secretary of the NSW Convention Committee and in 1981 I was elected as the inaugural Secretary of the NSW Primary Principals' Council.

My involvement with the Primary Principals Convention commenced in 1977. Warren Kennedy was the President of the Convention Committee and Doug Reeve the Secretary. I became Secretary after Doug Reeve joined the Inspectorate. At this time Warren was President of the Metropolitan North Principals' Council and I was the Secretary of that organisation. I remained Secretary of the Convention Committee until 1981 when I became the first Secretary of the NSW Primary Principals' Council with Bernie Gregory the President and Greg Taylor the Treasurer.

The Conventions at this time were held at the Crest Hotel in Kings Cross and the Convention Committee used to meet at the Services Club now known as the Gallipoli Club in Circular Quay not far from Head Office. There were only three people on the organising committee (President, Secretary and Treasurer) who decided on the topic, speakers and other organisational matters. The Secretary did all the groundwork - bookings of speakers and venues as well as advertising and other administrative duties. There were no other committee members to do it.

In 1978, I was involved in a State Convention that had the theme of '*The Role of the Primary School*'. We were lucky enough to obtain, as a guest speaker, the founder of the 'Lend Lease' Company, Dick Dusseldorp. He was organised to speak about the issue of '*Does the education we are providing in schools meet the needs of business*'. 'Lend Lease' at the time was a company devoted to the improvement of the human condition not just of any specific group, be it shareholders, workers, management or others. All workers shared in the success of the company. Dick Dusseldorp was an outstanding character in the Australian business world and was the founder of the Dusseldorp Skills Foundation. This foundation sought to enable all Australians to reach their potential through the acquisition of skills and knowledge and has given much support to schools and other educational organisations.

There was always the unexpected that happened when organising conventions. Because of the early completion of a coal-loader built by 'Lend Lease' in Gladstone, Dick Dusseldorp was unable to attend and sent his second in charge who was an outstanding speaker.

Another memory of an APPA Conference concerned a night out that was organised for conference attendees in Sydney. This event involved a bus trip to Luna Park for pre-dinner drinks, then to the Mandarin Club in Pitt Street for dinner. Following dinner, it was intended

to visit nightspots in Kings Cross in the bus. As the registrations came in for the conference and the various events, I noticed that three nuns from Melbourne had booked in for the night out. I was concerned that they might not be aware of where we were going in Kings Cross so I rang one of the nuns to explain the venues they might encounter in Kings Cross. She was not concerned stating that "We have to be ladies of the world." She was a terrific person and had been a solicitor before becoming an educator in a religious order. At the same conference, I can remember two principals from New Guinea who had visited a duty free shop at the airport and were very generous in their hospitality and the sharing of their stash of *Chivas Regal*.

The establishment of the State Primary Principals' Council took a long time and much persistence by many people over many years. The Director-General, Doug Swan, feared that a Principals' Council would become involved in industrial issues. There was fair bit of tension between the NSW Teachers' Federation and the Department of Education and Training at that time. Whilst Bernie Gregory, Greg Taylor and I were quite supportive of the NSW Teachers' Federation, we gave Doug Swan every assurance that if we considered that an issue raised by a principal with the Principals' Council was industrial in nature then this would be referred to the NSW Teachers' Federation. Assurances such as this, led to an acceptance by Regional Directors and District Inspectors, that a State Principals' Council should be established.

The inaugural meeting of the NSW Primary Principals' Council was held in the Boardroom of the NSW Department of Education on Friday 1 May, 1981. The meeting was initially chaired by Warren Kennedy who conducted the business of the meeting until the 'Election of Officers' occurred. Bernie Gregory was elected as President, Greg Taylor as Treasurer and I as Secretary.

Other delegates in attendance at that meeting were: Geoff McAlary (Met. West), John Brammer (South Coast), Les Bonham (Riverina), Keith Curry (Hunter), Edgar Mackmicking (Western), Ken Dransfield (North Coast), Jim Rutherford (North Sydney), Bob Harbin (St. George), John Small (North West). Phil Bastick replaced Bernie Gregory (Liverpool), Fred Armstrong replaced Greg Taylor (Metropolitan East) and Ron Evers replaced Bill Supple.

The meeting discussed the proposed Constitution and clarified issues concerning the operation of the Council. Regional Councils were to handle all matters up to and through their Regional Director. State-wide issues were to be referred by Regional Councils to State Council and Regional Directors were to be advised on all matters. The meeting also focussed on the funding of six delegates to the Australian Primary Principals' Council Conference in Darwin as well as operational matters such as which executive signed cheques and the distribution of Regional Delegate Reports.

Two more meetings in 1981 were scheduled for July 31 and November 13. However, events of the time resulted in a Special State Council Meeting being convened on Wednesday October 14 at the request of the Director-General. The purpose of this meeting was 'to provide the opportunity for full discussion on the proposed amalgamation of List 3 Primary and List 3 Infants Teachers and possible implications'. The issue of the amalgamation of List 3 caused a deal of friction in schools. Infants Mistresses on List 3 were not eligible, at this time, for the award of List 4 nor to be able to be appointed as Principals. There had been a move to develop a K-6 concept in schools rather than the Infants and Primary mentality that had existed in primary education for almost a century. The K-6 concept was supported by the Principals' Council although there was opposition to the amalgamation of the Lists. Eventually it happened.

At this same meeting, the delegates supported a motion that the Director-General and the Regional Directors be requested to approve that each State Council Meeting should be over two days and that Regional Directors be requested to meet the accommodation expenses of such a move. This was supported and duly happened.

A list of priorities was established at the November State Council Meeting for 1982 and beyond. The priorities were:

- Restructuring
- Reclassification
- Ancillary staffing
- Libraries

Once the Primary Principals' Council were established, support from Senior Officers in the Department grew. Bill Nay was the main contact between the Council and the Department and he would attend all meetings and gave extremely positive support to its work. Doug Swan also attended State Council Meetings. There were other times when Doug Swan invited the executive to meet with him and to sound out our opinions on a range of issues. Doug was a very considerate and thoughtful person. He used the executive as a sounding board. It was felt by some of us that the Inspectors were often telling the Director-General what they thought he wanted to hear. One of the issues discussed was the teaching of grammar and spelling.

On one occasion, Doug Swan, sent us to Canberra to participate as part of an APPA delegation, to meet with Susan Ryan, the Federal Minister for Education, in the Hawke Government. We presented her with information about the needs and the situation of primary schools. One of the issues being discussed was the drawing up of a national curriculum. We suggested that there was a major need to support pre-school and primary education as a way of reducing and even preventing later learning problems in children. She stated that "that there is a crisis in secondary education and action is being taken immediately to overcome it. Primary education throughout Australia is not causing great concern. It is not in crisis". She smiled at our invitation to be 'our fairy godmother' when we suggested that increased support should be given to primary education¹.

Other issues of significance in my time were:

- Computers in schools
- Selection of principals
- Financial management and audit requirements

Over the years there was also the development of State Committees made up of representative of the primary and secondary Councils as well as Departmental Representatives. Some of these committees involved were:

- Maintenance and Repair
- Materials
- Equipment
- Audit
- Publications
- Mathematics
- Sports
- Handwriting
- Curriculum
- Vandalism
- Computer Programs for Administration
- Computer Education

One of the issues that received a good deal of opposition was the introduction of School Councils. One argument was that the formation of School Councils would slow down decision making. The argument, as stated in the State Council Minutes of Thursday 29 November 1984, posed the question: "What educational and economic advantage will this

¹ President's Report to Australian Primary Principals' Conference, Sydney, June 1983.

delaying of decision making, have on the overall educational function and administrative role of the school?"

I retired as Secretary of the NSW Primary Principals' Council in 1985 and was replaced by Daryl Walker. I have continued to be involved with children since my retirement in 1986. I began a relationship with the 'Royal Far West Children's Health Scheme' in about 1976 which I have retained until this day. During my time as Principal of Manly Central Public School, the children visiting the 'Royal Far West Health Scheme' would use the grounds of Manly Central School during weekends and school holidays. I became a member of the School Council of the Scheme and was Chairman of this Council for five years. I still chair the Assets Committee of the 'Royal Far West Health Scheme'.

I have enjoyed my life involvement in education and especially the work done with Principals in Regional Councils, State and APPA Conventions and the NSW Primary Principals' Council.

Bill Supple
20 November 2008

CHANGES TO THE SYSTEM OF PROMOTION

The amalgamation of promotion lists was the first issue which confronted the newly formed NSW Primary Principals' Council. This involved the Council negotiating the mechanics of the change as well as managing the rights of all teachers.

Following the introduction of 'Equal Opportunity Legislation' by the Federal and State Governments in the late 1970s, the NSW State Government moved towards the amalgamation of both the Infants and Primary List 3 promotion positions thus allowing holders of an Infants List 3 to be appointed to 'Principal Two' or 'Principal Three' positions. In addition, all teachers holding List 3 were then eligible to apply to be assessed for List 4 and consequently to be appointed to Principal One positions.

This system of promotion involving separate promotion lists for Infants and Primary had existed for decades. The proposed changes caused much angst among primary principals and those on primary lists awaiting appointment to principal positions. A measure of the importance of these changes, was that a Special State Council Meeting (only the second meeting of the NSW Primary Principals' Council) was convened at the request of the Director-General Doug Swan on Wednesday 14 October, 1981. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for full discussion on the proposed amalgamation of the List 3 Primary and the List 3 Infants Lists and possible implications¹.

The outcomes of the meeting were that a communication was to be distributed by the NSW Primary Principals' Council to all Regional Councils, expressing '*grave concern*' about the manner in which the new promotion procedures had been developed. As well, the meeting resolved to meet with the newly appointed Minister for Education Ron Mulock, to discuss these matters of concern.

There was also a major change in the operation of primary schools occurring at this time. This was the development of K-6 philosophies and operations in primary schools.

The Term 3 State Council Meeting Minutes of November 24/25, 1981, stated, "The divisiveness, at present being experienced in schools, has resulted from misunderstanding, misrepresentation and inconsistencies, exacerbated by the present situation. These need to be clarified, if a K-6 policy is to become an educational reality and schools unity is realised."

The responsibility of the NSW Primary Principals' Council throughout this period of time was to manage the process of change, advocating for the rights of principals and executive and managing the transition from one process to an entirely different process. Over a period of two years, the List 3 of Primary and Infants amalgamated. Eventually Lists 1 and 2 were also amalgamated.

This was only the beginning of changes, throughout the 1980s, to the way by which principals were selected and appointed. The question of the selection of principals involving parent groups and the push for more involvement of parents in the decision making processes in schools generally, gained Ministerial support which led to the introduction of 'Comparative Assessment' procedures for selecting senior principals. These procedures for appointing Primary Principals 1 and Secondary Principals were introduced in 1987.

Candidates for promotion to principal status were still assessed by Inspectors under the List System but were appointed to positions after being interviewed by Regional Panels and ranked in order of Merit in a state-wide system. Principals were then appointed to schools they had selected, according to their state ranking.

¹ State Council Minutes 14 October, 1981.

On many occasions, the Primary Principals' Council expressed to the Director-General, grave concerns that the 'Comparative Assessment' process 'unfairly prejudiced the career opportunities for some principals'. Some of the concerns were that these procedures produce a 'Show-Pony Syndrome' whereby performance at interview could become a more important criterion than performance in the school. Principals considered that the Inspectorial process for promoting teachers and principals was already based on merit. Other concerns included the lack of training in interview techniques and the preparation of curriculum vitae, as well as the suspicion that 'nepotism' by panel members could lead to an abuse of the promotion system². A further criticism related to the lack of feedback provided to candidates and the risk that this could lead to 'high levels of disenchantment within the system'³.

Later, in the early nineties, all principals and school executive were appointed by Merit Selection procedures that were introduced in 1991. Therein, lies the next chapter of this story.

² State Council Minutes 29/30 June, 1988

³ State Council Minutes 15/16 October, 1988

CONFERENCES

The role of conferences for principals, both at a state and national levels, was and continues to be, critical to the foundation and the evolution of the NSW Primary Principals' Council and later the NSW Primary Principals Association.

The first State Convention was held in 1973 with Kevin Hepworth as the Convenor and Ron Brill as the Administrator. The conference theme was 'Community Involvement in Schools' and the venue was the Crest Hotel in Kings Cross. The conferences provided a framework for initiating the discussion of issues amongst principals and the catalyst for the construction of more formal decision making networks and structures that led to the formation of Regional Principals' Councils in the seventies and eventually the State Council.

Conferences between 1973 and 1990 continued to be organised on themes.

YEAR	THEME	CONVENOR	ADMINISTRATOR
1973	Community Involvement In Schools	Kevin Hepworth	Ron Brill
1974	The Principal & The Future	Kevin Hepworth	Ron Brill
1975	Student Teacher Education	Kevin Hepworth	Ron Brill
1976	Primary Education: Imported Or Product Of Australia	Warren Kennedy	Doug Reeve
1977	The Media And Education	Warren Kennedy	Doug Reeve
1978	The Role Of The Primary School	Warren Kennedy	Bill Supple
1979	Social & Educational Justice For The Primary Child	Warren Kennedy	Bill Supple
1980	Changes In Society And Educational Alternatives	Warren Kennedy	Bill Supple
1981	Core Curriculum & The Primary Aims	Geoff McAlary	Jim Rutherford
1982	Children & Change: A Challenge For Primary Principals	Geoff McAlary	Jim Rutherford
1983	Children & Communication: Problems For Primary School Principals In Policy	Geoff McAlary	Jim Rutherford
1984	The Primary School Principal & The Quality Of Education	Geoff McAlary	Jim Rutherford
1985	Values, Visions Whose?	Geoff McAlary	Jim Rutherford
1986	The Effective Principal	Bob Harbin	Bob Cannon
1987	Pupil Welfare: The Principal's Role And Responsibility	Tom Howard	Bob Cannon
1988	Primary Education: For The Years Ahead	Maureen Stephenson	Bob Cannon
1989	The Primary Principal: Managing, Marketing Motivating	Maureen Stephenson	Bob Cannon
1990	People: Education's Challenge	Frank Farrell	David Bishop

One of the first major conferences to be organised by the State Convention Committee was the 1983 Annual Conference of the Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA). This was the tenth Annual Conference of APPA with annual conferences being held in a different state each year. Office bearers for APPA were elected from the state hosting the annual conference for each year. Membership included primary principal groups from all primary education sectors – Catholic, Independent and Government. Associate membership was granted in 1982 to primary school principals' organisations in Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

Prior to the 1983 APPA Conference, some tense negotiations had to be undertaken to ensure their continuity. The Conference of the Directors General of Education which consisted of all Australian Directors General of Education had expressed concern that State School Principals Organisations were conducting annual national conferences during school time and that travelling and sustenance costs for delegates and the costs of replacement staff were escalating. The Conference of Directors General proposed that principals should meet biennially in vacation times with no financial assistance to be provided by government systems.¹

A motion was moved by the NSW President Bernie Gregory at the Launceston Annual APPA Conference in 1982 rejecting these propositions. The motion proposed that, "full and detailed

¹ Letter from H.S. Ormond, Secretary, Conference of Directors General of Education

discussions be undertaken immediately by each State/Territory delegation with its appropriate authority to (a) preserve the rights of APPA to meet annually as a fully funded conference, (b) determine representation and (c) negotiate the duration of such meetings". This motion was supported unanimously by all state principals' organisations.

Subsequent negotiations between state APPA affiliates and the Directors-General achieved a compromise that agreed, in principle, to APPA holding annual conferences of five days duration. However, from 1984, conferences were to be held in the vacation period of the host state. Funding was to be provided for two delegates from each state to attend for three days which included leave without pay, travel, accommodation and the usual expense allowance. Permission was given for other delegates to attend with leave without pay being granted, but with no funding for travel and accommodation.²

In 1982, the first official APPA Secretariat was introduced with Bernie Gregory as President, Bill Supple as Treasurer and Greg Taylor as Treasurer. This practice of each state forming a Secretariat was retained until the early nineties when a permanent Secretariat was constituted. This Secretariat was independent of states and office bearers held two-year tenure on their positions.

The 1983 Sydney APPA Conference was an outstanding success with many accolades coming from participants. Tom Brown, President of the New Zealand Principals' Association offered congratulations to the organisers for staging 'a truly impressive professional and social occasion.' This was the first time that New Zealand Principals had visited APPA and this began a strong relationship between Australian and New Zealand primary principals, that continues today.

Principals from NSW continued their strong Association with APPA over the eighties and again hosted the national APPA Conference in 1992.

² APPA Newsletter 1, 15.11.82 Written by Bernie Gregory

RECOLLECTIONS: THE EARLY YEARS – FRED ARMSTRONG

APPA Conference Treasurer - 1983 State Council Representative for Central Metropolitan Region 1981-8

In the publication, *The Foundations of the NSW Primary Principals' Association*, I read with pleasure the details of the early days of the principals' meetings initiated by Jack Case and his supporters from Metropolitan West Region and of the numerous events that led eventually to the formation of the NSW Primary Principals' Council.

It awakened so many wonderful memories of robust committee discussions, the challenges that arose with conference organisation, the exhilaration during and after a successful conference and the bonding with so many fellow principals that has lasted many years. How could you forget the antics of our group activities when it included the likes of Geoff McAlary? And of course, the slow but steady progress towards the formation of the Primary Principals' Council.

To appreciate the magnitude of the task of gaining permission to establish regular Principals' meetings and to finally form the Council, it is necessary to place in context and to review the hurdles that existed within the education system in the seventies.

Kevin Hepworth, in his report, made reference to the NSW Teachers' Federation Principals' subgroup that was an active participant in Union affairs. He also recalled, ".....the District Inspectors of the time almost had a 'heart attack' and were very suspicious of the intentions of the conference". As I recall, the leaders of the Teachers' Federation subgroup were the same leaders who were lobbying for the formation of a professional group. Around this time, the Teachers' Federation disbanded all subgroups leaving the younger inexperienced principals without a focus peer leadership and support group. This void of management and professional reference for colleagues became the real focus for Jack Case and his team.

Maureen Stephenson stated in her reference to the Teachers' Federation subgroup, "this Association met regularly enabling principals to share their concerns and ideas and allowing the younger principals to learn from their senior colleagues."

As a young principal at Island Bend then Uki Public Schools, both country appointments, I appreciated so much the communications from this Teachers' Federation sub-group. When I became principal of La Perouse Public School in 1971, I was able to attend these meetings and to benefit from their wise counsel.

Is it any wonder that the District Inspectors and other senior officers of the Department were suspicious of the motives of those lobbying to establish an autonomous Principals' Council? It took many years and many very successful Regional Meetings of Principals before such a monumental change could be accepted by the system. Maureen mentioned "...the significant events and personalities leading to its (the Council) establishment."

For me, professional development in the fifties and sixties was as an assistant teacher in a staff school (Leeton) very little and as a teacher in small schools Coreinbob (enrolment 13) and Kapooka (enrolment 44), an occasional District Inspector's Meeting. As a young Principal of Island Bend and Uki Public Schools we had District Inspector's Meetings, sometimes including an external presenter or a contribution from a fellow senior principal. Occasionally, we had gatherings of principals, with the permission of the District Inspector, who either expected to be invited to attend or it was required that a written agenda was submitted to the District Inspector prior to the meeting and a written report filed after the event.

The introduction of the Regional Conferences, organised and managed by the principals was a step forward in the development of the status of school leaders to have some autonomy over their professional development as educational leaders. The Presidents of the

Regional Primary Principals' Committees through the management of their activities in a professional manner, helped to allay the suspicions of senior officers of the Department of Education, as to their motives.

Prior to these Regional Conferences, the opportunities for the interaction of principals in a group situation for professional development were infrequent and were an extension of the Inspectorial system. In the sixties teachers, on List 2 of the promotion lists, were invited to apply for and to attend at their own expense, a two day professional development seminar held at the North Sydney Demonstration School during the Christmas Vacation. Between twenty and thirty hardy souls, mostly with country postings, attended. The two seminars, that I attended were organised by and all presentations were made by Inspectors Bill Rose and John Vaughan.

Principals on Lists 3 and 4 were invited to attend a three day residential conference at Glenfield. The agenda and choice of guest speakers were decided by a committee that included principals and the Director-General or his representative. The agenda did include some presentations by principals who were successfully developing alternative management or teaching strategies in their schools. It was in this context that Jack Case and his colleagues had seen a need and a desire for professional stimulation where Principals created their own environment to discuss problems, to evaluate a range of possible solutions and to implement these at school management and classroom levels.

The timing, when Regional and then the NSW State Principals Conventions were being established, was opportune. It was at a time when the NSW education system was progressing through rapid change. This included the teaching methods being used by classroom teachers, the variety of management styles being exhibited in school leadership and a more collaborative committee structure for decision making at District, Regional and State levels. It was an exciting, confusing, demanding and rewarding time for those Principals who embraced these opportunities to become a valuable and a valued participant in the process.

Under the NSW Department of Education and Training banner, major change agencies were established. These committees included a Senior Officer of the Department, several principals, occasionally other school executive and sometimes a parent representative. Significant among these decision making committees in the seventies were: CRILI (Centre for Research into Learning Instruction) Innovation Grants, Choice and Diversity, Open Space Learning Environments, School Building Design (NSW Government Architects were included), Gifted and Talented Education (Myer Foundation funded publications). Regional Inservice Committees were established around this time and their membership included Regional Director, principals (Government, Catholic and Independent), a parent and a committee secretary.

At the classroom level there were a bewildering collection of innovative strategies being implemented. These included: Open Space Learning, Open Education, the Integrated Day, Free Day, Individualised Instruction, Programmed Learning, Team Teaching, Conceptual Inquiry and the Spiral Curriculum with many more ideas being added to the scene from overseas publications.

All of these committees and educational strategies created a rich reservoir of important topics to be the focus of Regional and State Conferences.

Having transferred from Uki to La Perouse in the early seventies, I was able to be present at the early Central Metropolitan Primary Principals' Conferences and then later while at Woollahra Demonstration School, I was privileged to be the Chairperson for a few years. This was a most interesting and fulfilling period which offered the opportunity to work closely with a number of very stimulating colleagues on interesting topics for our conferences.

Being a delegate for the Central Metropolitan Region to the 1973 NSW convention, held at the Crest Hotel in Kings Cross, I was most impressed with the quality of the topics chosen and the presenters, the smooth organisation, the professional depth of the question sessions, and the obvious camaraderie that had been forged by the conclusion of the meeting. The country representatives were most appreciative of the opportunity to be present. Kevin Hepworth's leadership at this meeting was most impressive, establishing a no-nonsense approach and a format that became standard for these conventions for many years.

As I recall, for these conventions, four delegates from each region were selected. These principals were then required to apply to the Regional Office for a transfer of duty and also to apply to the Regional Inservice Committee for funding to cover the cost of the residential conference. Another rule that comes to mind, was that there was a public service requirement to include conference activities of equal school and non-school time. The program included an evening session on each of the two main days and part of the weekend to satisfy this requirement.

In 1973, NSW organised the Australian Conference and again I was fortunate to be a delegate for the region. As a NSW delegate I was allocated the role of host to the Queensland representatives. Again Kevin Hepworth proved to be a worthy leader and the event was an outstanding success. The senior officer representing the Director-General commented that it was a very professional conference and the organising committee was to be congratulated. Another small step forward in the process to establish a Primary Principals' Council.

By the time Warren Kennedy became chairman of the organising committee for the convention, it had achieved a wonderful reputation for strong leadership, an enthusiastic and knowledgeable committee, faultless organisation, stimulating topics and thought provoking speakers. Warren continued this high standard and for me, as a member of his committee, it was the beginning of a most demanding, exciting and satisfying period of time which reached a peak with the formation of the NSW Primary Principals' Council.

When, at the first meeting of the State Council, Greg Taylor, representing the Central Metropolitan Region, was elected treasurer, I was invited to be the new delegate. It was a tremendous privilege to become a foundation member of the group.

We hear so often the clichés like, 'seize the moment', 'fortuitous event', 'being in the right place at the right time'. All of these applied to Warren Kennedy. At the NSW Convention in 1980, the final convention before the establishment of the Council, Warren as Chairman, was seated between Director-General Doug Swan and the new Minister for Education Paul Landa at the front table for the official conference dinner. Warren was never one to miss an opportunity. All the evening he lobbied the Minister very calmly and very effectively on the merits of having a united principals' group as a sounding board and an educational web of information that the Minister would find very valuable in his new position. He argued that such a council would be a strong force for the professional development of principals and a wonderful morale booster for the profession. Warren emphasised that the main beneficiaries of such a group would be the boys and girls in our primary schools. The Minister's daughter, Sophie, was a student in a government primary school at that time.

Later in the night, the Minister was heard to comment that Warren was a fine man and an impressive leader and that he could see much merit in the formation of such a council and that he would give the proposal his support. Did this event tip the balance that led to the formation of the much desired Council?

The NSW Primary Principals' Council was formed in 1981 with Bernie Gregory becoming the inaugural President. One of his first tasks was to organise the 1983 Australian Primary Principals Association Conference. This conference was to become a benchmark for future conferences of principals at a national level with many initiatives being introduced:

- Conference participation would be for five days.
- Day visitors would be encouraged. All NSW Primary Schools would receive a copy of the program.
- One day would be organised for all delegates to visit local schools.
- A major part of the funding would come from sponsorship.
- Three documents, in colour, would be produced: Conference Pre-reading, a Conference Program and a Conference Report.
- Delegations from each state would be increased from six to ten and must include government, catholic and independent school representatives.
- Delegates would receive a draft copy of the Conference Report at the conclusion of the conference.

The NSW Convention Committee decided to organise a NSW State Convention in conjunction with the APPA National Conference as a means of maintaining the status of the state program with its local issues. The two events were to run end on, at the Koala Hotel – three days for the convention and five days for the conference. Geoff McAlary was Chairman for the convention and Bernie Gregory for the conference.

First things first. Bernie ‘hit the ground running’. He co-opted the NSW Convention Committee, added a few local government principals and stirred in a couple of principals from Catholic and Independent schools. At the early meetings, jobs were allocated, a conference topic was decided, venues discussed and a list of initiatives to discuss with the Director-General prepared.

“Fred, would you act a Treasurer for the conference?”

“Sure Bernie, I don’t mind signing a few cheques.”

Thinking this was the only duty of the Honorary Treasurer, I had the temerity to ask, “And where do the funds come from?”

There was a moment of stunned silence. Everyone looked at me and then at Bernie.

“Oh. You have to raise it. About \$40 000 should do it.” Then he added, “the Treasurer also looks after all the publications, runs the Conference Central Office and liaises with the venue management.”

So much for just signing a few cheques.

That was certainly another life-changing, challenging and extremely satisfying time. I am eternally grateful to Barbra Petfield, Principal of St. Theresa’s Catholic School at Mascot who volunteered to be Assistant Treasurer and to contact some of the companies that had benefited from commercial arrangements with our schools. Between Barbra and myself, over fifty contacts were made by mail and telephone, requesting donations to assist in the funding of the Australian Primary Principals’ Conference in Sydney.

The result. Only four companies had the courtesy to reply and they all said no!!!

In previous years, the Commonwealth Bank, School Banking Division, had been host for the welcome afternoon tea for the State Conventions and they made a commitment to continue this event. There was also a small grant from the Department of Education but all this was still a long way short of the \$40 000 as a minimum, required to mount this national event.

Well!!! Where to from here?

After a face to face chat with the NSW Schools Marketing Manager for Toshiba, I learned that you must have something to offer the companies if you expect them to contribute at the

level that the organising committee for the APPA conference required. This was indeed a new challenge for the Treasurer of the APPA Organising Committee.

What the committee was able to offer, proved to be a more than adequate solution, but initially it did take some hard selling. All the companies insisted on face to face discussion with a conference organiser, an inspection of allocated space at the conference venue and detailed discussion on financial arrangements. This was tough and time consuming but well worthwhile because as the first few companies accepted our propositions, the rest followed quickly in order to obtain the best of the remaining sites that were available to sponsors.

Each firm that came on board as conference sponsors received:

- Exclusive rights to display their products. (This made their eyes light up!!)
- A display space in easy view within the conference auditorium.
- The right, as major sponsors, to be able to make a five minute presentation to the assembled principals.

There were other considerations that were traded by some of the firms once they realised the potential this form of sponsorship offered. Toshiba was most generous and offered their latest photocopier and an endless supply of paper for the use of the conference committee.

Gestetner said, "No cash". They did supply a new computer and an operator for the duration of the NSW Convention and the APPA Conference and they also supplied an offset printer. The operator arrived each morning at 8.30 a.m. and printed off all of the presentations from the previous day of the conference. Every participant left the conference with a bound copy of all papers presented and all the working papers from the APPA Conference. By the official conference opening, there were forty one sponsors of cash or kind from NSW and another seven sponsors supporting our interstate guests.

The Teachers' Credit Union deserve special mention as they funded the official dinner of the APPA Conference and then continued to support the state conventions for many years. So successful were the efforts in forging these sponsorship links with these companies that this practice became an integral part of all future state conventions and national conferences. It also carried over into several other educational events in NSW.

A feature of the 1983 APPA conference was the special program for the additional day. On this day, all principals were escorted to visit up to three primary schools or special educational facilities each, within one of the Metropolitan Regions. A NSW principal would provide the transport and act as a guide for each group.

I still marvel at the organisational ability and diplomatic flare of Bob Harbin from the Conference Committee who persuaded fifty local principals to volunteer themselves and their cars to ferry these groups to their allocated schools. Each driver was timetabled to collect and return their passengers to and from the Koala Hotel so as to limit congestion in front of the hotel. As I recall, it took almost two hours commencing at 7.30a.m. for the principals to be picked up and on their way to schools.

This was an interesting innovation that amazed a most appreciative group of interstate visitors. The local principals also enjoyed the opportunity to visit the schools of colleagues who were proud to showcase their achievements.

I have always been impressed with the quality of my fellow principals and during my term as Chairman of the Central Metropolitan Principals' Council, the importance of a pre-reading document for conferences was emphasised. This document should predominantly be the presentations written by and for fellow Principals. For the 1983 APPA conference, this publication, was an important part of the three main documents.

A very productive committee, some extremely robust discussions, a strong camaraderie and a total commitment to Principalship and everything it stands for, ensured that the 1983 APPA conference was an outstanding success. It was professionally stimulating, socially satisfying and an organisational triumph.

The Department of Education and the NSW Government now recognised the standard of leadership and the status within the profession of the NSW Primary Principals' Council and welcomed its positive influence on schooling in NSW.

The initiatives, determination and perseverance of Jack Case, Ron Brill, Kevin Hepworth and their teams are to be applauded. Later the progress that had been made towards Principals Professional Conferences and the NSW Primary Principals' Council was enhanced by leaders such as Warren Kennedy, Bernie Gregory and Geoff McAlary and their teams.

These were the 'personalities' who inspired us all!!!

Fred Armstrong
November 19, 2008

SCHOOL COUNCILS

In 1984, a 'School Council Steering Committee' was established under the Chairmanship of Bob Winder, Deputy Director-General. A discussion document was subsequently released for discussion.

Minutes of the State Council Meeting held on 1 April, 1984 included as Motion 12,¹ "That State Council express its concern regarding the possible introduction of School Councils into our system, in view of the difficulties experienced in other states. State Council, is of the opinion, that no move be made to form School Councils until there has been full discussion by all organisations involved."

The original School Council Model proposed that the main decision making group in the school was the School Council with the Principal acting as an Executive Officer.

In a submission to Director-General Bob Winder dated 5 April, 1985, President Bernie Gregory on behalf of the Primary Principals' Council stated,² ".....the NSW Primary Principals' Council has serious misgivings about the proposed structure of School Councils. It reaffirms its commitment to community involvement in schools and seeks to further this process. Whilst it does not see School Councils, in their recommended structure, as beneficial to the development of schools in NSW, it stresses that it is willing to support any initiative which not only fosters positive community involvement but leads to the better education of for the children in our schools. That has to be the most important point in the whole debate on School Councils."

A survey carried out in 1985 or thereabouts had revealed that there was little interest by communities in setting up School Councils. Principals felt that Parents and Citizens Associations were capable of undertaking all the proposed responsibilities of School Councils and could also involve more members of the school community.³

The issue remained unresolved until the advent of the 'Schools Renewal' initiative in 1989. The first Schools Councils were introduced from this time albeit with reduced functions in terms of who held the power balance in schools. In a meeting between the Schools Renewal Task Force and the State Executive of the Primary Principals' Council held on November 9, 1989, it was categorically stated that "the Principal will be totally responsible to the Director-General and not to a School Council."

One of the first School Councils established was at Denistone East Public School. Barry Mainfield, former President of the NSW Teachers Federation, was Principal. This Council was unique in that the Mayor of Ryde and the Local Member for the Gladesville State Electorate were constituted members of the School Council.

By the end of 1992, Dr. Brian Scott as head of the Schools Renewal Consultative Group was reporting that forty percent or 873 public schools had established School Councils.

¹ State Council Minutes: April 1, 1984

² State Council Minutes: April 5, 1985

³ State Council Minutes: June 29/30, 1988.

TRIBUTE TO GEOFF McALARY

GEOFF McALARY REMEMBERS

State Conference Convenor 1981-1985 Metropolitan West PPC Representative 1981-1985

As Principal of St. Marys South Primary School, I attended the first Metropolitan West Primary Principals' Council in May, 1969. I was a regular participant at all Council Meetings throughout the seventies and early eighties.

When Kevin Hepworth was appointed Principal of Taree West Public School in 1975, Ron Brill followed Kevin as President of Metropolitan West Regional Council for a short time. Following Ron's retirement, I was elected President of our first Council in 1977 – a position I held for eight years after which I was seconded as Relieving Inspector for a short period. During my Presidency, I was well supported by a most competent and resourceful Secretary in the person of Bob Cannon (deceased May 2008). In addition, we were fortunate to have three supportive and approachable Regional Directors during my term of office – Ian Scott, John Farnsworth and Reg Pollock.

In March 1986, Ian Sutton was President of the Metropolitan West Regional Council and he awarded me Honorary Life Membership.

In 1976, I attended my first state Primary Principals Conference at the Crest Hotel in Kings Cross. There was no State Council at this stage and the conference was also attended by Principals from non-government schools. Warren Kennedy was the Convenor and Doug Reeve was the Administrator. These two administrators gave yeoman service to our Principals and their many professional concerns.

Following the retirement of Doug Reeve, Bill Supple was elected Administrator. Warren and Bill continued in their respective roles through 1977, 1978 and 1979, giving meritorious leadership until the establishment of the NSW Primary Principals' Council in 1981.

From 1981 to 1985, I was convenor of the NSW Primary Principals' Conferences and was well supported by Jim Rutherford as Administrator and Bernie Gregory as the founding President of the NSW Primary Principals' Council. During my time at State Conferences, the Executive invited me to propose the 'Toast to Education' on three occasions including the Australian Primary Principals' Conference which was held in Sydney in 1983, in conjunction with our State Conference. In addition, I gave the Principals' Farewell Address to Director-General Doug Swan on his retirement.

In May 1981, I was elected by the Metropolitan West Regional Primary Principals' Council Executive to represent the Metropolitan West Region at the first NSW Primary Principals' Council held at Head Office. At the inaugural meeting of the State Council, Bernie Gregory was elected as President, Bill Supple was elected Secretary and Greg Taylor was elected as Treasurer.

I attended all State Conferences until my retirement in May 1986. In addition, I was N.S.W. representative at APPA conferences in Canberra, Launceston, Brisbane and Perth. In 1994 the NSW Primary Principals' Council awarded me Honorary Life Membership when Karlyne Jacobson was President.

Over the years of the developing influence of the Primary Principals' Council, many varied issues and concerns were raised by the Council and significant improvements emerged for schools and principals through professional negotiation with Head Office Administrators.

Three issues where Council advice was sought by Head Office were:

- Accountability of Schools
- Assessment of Teachers and
- The Role of the District Inspector

This was a very large undertaking that involved canvassing many hundreds of principals seeking individual responses about Head Office policies and ways and means of improving public education throughout the state.

Two issues I recall vividly that received considerable discussion were:

- The production of an Audit Manual
- Improved reporting of students' progress/development/standards to parents.
(The jury is still out on the second issue.)

Metropolitan West Region was the first region to form a Regional Primary Principals' Council. We were well aware that industrial issues were not to be on the agendas. Considerable support came from the Regional Administrators when professional concerns were raised and debated, including:

- The Children's' Charter
- Employing casual teachers to be teachers, not child minders
- Better relationships between Regional Office Administrators and Principals
- Local Job Orders and the necessity for multiple quotations
- Closer liaison between the Public Works Department and Principals on school maintenance needs.

A highly significant professional outcome in the 1980s came from the Metropolitan West Infants Mistresses' Conferences. This organisation produced numerous publications of K-2 teaching resources and methodology that was disseminated throughout the Metropolitan West Region as well as throughout NSW and Australia. These publications were enthusiastically received by teachers and administrators of lower primary classes and their value in enhancing the learning of students was far reaching.

Twenty two years have passed since my first official retirement and I have been fortunate to be involved and enjoyed my participation in a variety of occupations and endeavours including:

- Teachers Credit Union – 11 years
- Superannuation and Retirement Seminars/Workshops for Teachers – 5 years
- Juvenile Justice Volunteer at Cobham Court Werrington - 1 year.
- Stewart House Volunteer Ambassador – 2 years
- St. Vincent De Paul, Social Justice Volunteer – 3 years.
- Member of Probus.

I remain reasonably healthy but have lost numerous good friends and close relatives over the years. I have also been lucky enough to spend considerable time on domestic and overseas travel.

However, I am still tracking and attending the Retired Primary Principals functions.

Geoff McAlary (Alias- The Leprechaun)

Geoffrey Neil McAlary sadly passed away on September 20, 2009.

THE ROAD TO RECOGNITION

By Jim Rutherford

After attending the inaugural meeting of the NSW Primary Principals' Council in 1981, I felt it a great honour to be appointed as Secretary of the NSW Primary Principals Convention Committee for that year – a position I held for five years. As I was in the final years of my forty one years of service to the NSW Department of education, to be at the centre of organizing a gathering of fellow principals from across the state, was a fitting finale, before my eventual retirement in 1987.

It was also great to again work with Geoff McAlary, for we had made friends at Armidale Teachers' College in 1945. Our paths coincided again in 1963 when I was appointed Principal of Cobar Intermediate High School and arrived to find Geoff my Deputy Principal. We worked together for four years and saw the school population grow from 360 to 700 with the opening of a copper mine in Cobar. This presented a continuing challenge of organization and staff induction, in a school that was not seen as a popular appointment.

Until I came to Canley Vale in 1968, my service had been in country towns. This meant that contact with other teachers and principals, was limited to occasional 'Day Meetings' arranged by the District Inspector or a higher placed official of the Department of Education. This often meant a long journey with Cobar and Bathurst being at extremities of the Western Region of the Department of Education. So it was great to be in the Liverpool Region and to meet with a range of fellow principals at meetings held at the Smithfield RSL Club. I could also regularly attend meetings of the NSW Teachers' Federation and the Principals' Association Meetings held at Federation House.

Eventually I moved to the Central Coast and had the privilege to be appointed Vice President of the North Sydney Regional Principals' Council and then to follow Warren Kennedy as President of this Council. This, of course, led to representing the principals of the North Sydney Region at meetings of the State Council of the NSW Primary Principals' Council.

Other writers, in previous articles for this 'History of the NSW Primary Principals' Association', have described the road to recognition and shown that it was not always smooth going. Many potholes had to be negotiated along the way. I think we were fortunate to have Doug Swan as our Director General, for he was always approachable and supportive of what we were trying to achieve. You had to appreciate that he had restraints placed upon him.

The State Council of the NSW Primary Principals' Council evolved from the influence and interest of Regional Principals' Councils where meetings were held two to three times per year. As I shall reinforce later, attendance at these meetings was at the personal expense of principals attending. There was no travel allowance in those days. All that individual principals could do, was to keep a diary and claim this travel as a tax deduction together with other travel expenses incurred as a principal.

Regional Directors also varied greatly in their approach to principals attending Regional Principals' Council Meetings and I can recall some interesting comments. In one region, instead of meeting in a school, the Regional Council Executive was given space in a local RSL Club that was central to public transport. The Regional Director questioned this move, as he thought parents would not take kindly to their 'Principal', meeting in this environment. On another occasion, a Regional Director remarked that parents might query the time principals were absent from their schools, to attend these Regional Principals' Council meetings. I think these concerns were soon negated when it became evident that the discussions between Regional Directors and Regionals Principals' Council Executives brought to light many educational issues and positive outcomes for schools were achieved.

Finance, certainly was a problem with the attendance and organization of the Annual State Convention. In my hazy recollections, there was no funding from the Department of Education except for travel vouchers to defray the cost of travel to Sydney. Costs incurred by principals to attending the Annual Convention had to be met by other means. For regional delegates, this came from Regional Council funds and these were often limited by the amount of membership fees collected. I have a feeling that in some regions, delegates met all or part of their own expenses.

Fred Armstrong has already mentioned that the Commonwealth Bank was a supporter of the Annual Convention and on another occasion, Ashton Scholastics (now just Scholastic) had representatives stay with a display of books, for the duration of the Convention as well as providing some financial support. In a lighter vein, I also took it upon myself, to approach certain establishments within walking distance of the Crest Hotel and the Koala Oxford Hotel where conventions were held in the early eighties, to arrange discount prices for those conference attendees who were inclined to have an enjoyable night out in their free time.

With poor financial resources, planning the Annual Convention around a theme with good leading speakers was always a problem. Luckily, a willing 'Keynote Speaker' was always found who would come at their own expense. Two who come to mind were the well-known Hugh McKay who travelled from Bathurst and Franka Arena, Member of Parliament, whose social input was a revelation.

I am sure the quality of the speakers, the chosen themes and the action plans developed by the Convention Organising Committee impressed Bill Nay, Deputy Director General, who attended the Conventions. Subsequent meetings with Doug Swan provided a positive outlook for not only for conventions but also for the future of the Primary Principals' Council itself.

I can well remember a meeting held at the Department of Education in Bridge Street where members of the NSW Primary Principals' Council met with representatives of the NSW Teachers' Federation led by Barry Manefield. Other writers have made mention of this meeting. The NSW Teachers Federation felt that the NSW Primary Principals' Council was encroaching on its domain. The meeting ended with a consensus that the Federation had nothing to fear. I do believe it is important to realize, that at this point in time, the NSW Primary Principals' Council was being recognised more widely in the educational community.

For my part, I was also very privileged, as a member of the NSW Primary Principals' Council, to be a representative at the Annual Primary Principals' Convention held in Canberra, Launceston, Brisbane, Perth and at home in Sydney. Luckily, funding to attend these conferences was provided by the Department of Education.

The Sydney Australian Primary Principals Conference held in 1983, I regard as an important milestone in the pathway to recognition. Thanks to the work of Fred Armstrong, sponsorship played an important part in this conference as it allowed for improved planning and gained recognition from outside bodies. The Conference Planning Committee was enlarged to include representatives from Catholic and Private School systems. This gave more recognition to the NSW Primary Principals Council.

Unfortunately, having been retired for a lot of years, I sometimes find it difficult to remember events. I have not followed the development of the NSW Primary Principals' Council into the NSW Primary Principals' Association. I have, however, noticed on many occasions that the President of the Association has been asked for comment from the media. This is a good thing, for such recognition, gives the Association an important place in the educational environment and shows that its views are appreciated and respected.

I think the NSW Primary Principals' Association of today does not have the financial restraints of the early years of the NSW Primary Principals Council which I have tried to highlight. This can only be a great development!!!

JIM RUTHERFORD – O.A.M., B.A., DIP.ED.ADMIN, M.ED:
February 2011

RECOLLECTION OF THE NSWPPC (now PPA) IN THE EIGHTIES

DARRYL WALKER

State Secretary NSWPPC 1986-1988

Having read the document *Foundations of a Professional Association for Primary Principals in NSW* where the contributors Kevin Hepworth, Ron Brill, Maureen Stephenson and Bernie Gregory have covered the historical aspects leading to the formation of the NSWPPC in 1981 very thoroughly, I have decided to be more anecdotal in my recollections of the Council in the eighties.

Following my appointment as P1 to John Warby Public School in the Campbelltown District of the Liverpool Region in 1979, I became involved with the affairs of the Liverpool Region PPC under the presidency of Bernie Gregory who at that time was also President of the NSWPPC. Following his transfer to Bangor Public School at the beginning of 1983 my colleagues at Liverpool elected me to take his place as President of the local Council. Even though I had attended my first State Conference in 1982, 1983 was the first time I had become directly involved in the NSWPPC as at that time the President of each Regional Council became the delegate to the NSWPPC.

At that time the President of the Council was Bernie Gregory, the Secretary was Bill Supple whom I had previously met with my involvement with the NSWPSAAA when he was the Secretary of that organisation, and the Treasurer was Greg Taylor. All had served since the inception of the Council and presented a dynamic leadership of the organisation which was made up of representatives of every regional area in the NSW Department of Education. The aims of the Council and how those aims were to be achieved are clearly stated in Bernie's contribution to the initial NSWPPA/ARPP document mentioned previously.

The main purpose of the meetings was to give a forum to all principals, through their regional representatives (10), to bring to the attention of the Council and, through it, to the respective departmental representatives, any problems of a state wide nature which could be properly addressed at such a forum as the two day meetings held once a term in the Board Room at the Department of Education, Sydney. All of the senior officers, from the Director-General down, made themselves available to address issues raised and were very co-operative at all times, thus enhancing the mutual respect between them and, through the Council, the Principals of NSW. The Councillors would then report back to their respective regional councils.

In the years of its existence, the Council became a very prestigious and well respected organisation, mainly due to the awesome contribution of the President, Bernie Gregory who pursued issues with great vigour and purpose. In this, of course, he was assisted by the Executive, who often met for special meetings in between Council meetings, and the Councillors. While the Councillors changed from time to time, mainly due to transfers to other Regions, I recall such luminaries as Geoff McAlary, Bob Harbin, Tom Howard (who became Treasurer following Greg Taylor's retirement at the end of 1986), Barry McConville, Lawrie Maher, Owen Davies, Frank Farrell, Jan Muller (the first woman on the Council), John McMillan, Keith Currie, Ken Dransfield, Roy Parker and John Avery, to mention but a few, who pursued the concerns of their Regional colleagues with vigour and skill.

I left the Council in 1985 when I transferred back to South Coast Region but late in that year, if my memory serves me correctly, I received a phone call advising me that Bill Supple was going to retire as Secretary and would I consider putting my name forward for the role. This was quite unusual as the officers of the Council were generally elected from the current councillors but it was considered, because of my previous experience on Council, that I would be eligible and acceptable. After some thought, I agreed and thus became the Secretary of the Council for the next three years, 1986-1988.

Thus began a most rewarding part of my professional career and I was soon thrust into the heady whirlpool of, not only organizing all the materials for the efficient conduct of State Council Meetings but also being involved in Special Meetings with the Directors-General Bob Winder and Fenton Sharpe and Deputy Directors Brian Gillete and Terry Burke and dealing with the idiosyncrasies of a variety of Ministers of Education – Terry Metherell, Eric Bedford, Rodney Cavalier, Paul Landa and Ron Mulock (not necessarily in correct order of service in that role). Most of those mentioned, contributed to the role to the best of their abilities but it is fair to say that the one that most principals of the era would remember, not necessarily for the right reasons, would be the famous or the infamous, depending on the way you look at it, Terry Metherell, with whom the State Executive did meet on one occasion where many arguments of State and Regional interest were presented to him – at least he was prepared to listen to what we had to say even though he may not have taken much notice.

Of course, it is impossible to talk about the state council without acknowledging its relationship with the NSW Primary Principals' State Convention, another body that contributed, with a great deal of effectiveness and energy, to the welfare and professional development of Principals throughout the state. Each year, a vital program, with prominent guest speakers, both Departmental and from 'outside' (who could ever forget the input by then Children's Magistrate, Barbara Holborow), was organized by the convention committee on which there were several members of the NSW Primary Principals' Council and each region was invited to send a number of principals to participate in the convention. This was a most exciting period with luminaries such as Jim Rutherford, Fred Armstrong, Bob Cannon, John Payne, Maureen Stephenson, Jan Fredericks and Karlyne Jacobson involved in the organisation. Probably the most rewarding part of the organisation, during that period, was to obtain departmental funding for the convention. Catholic and Independent Schools had to be included and these sectors were also represented on the Convention Committee. It was during this period that a great deal of interaction between the systems took place and great ideas were shared. It is rather a pity that this no longer occurs.

The next stage was the Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) Conference which was held in the capital city of each state, in turn. My first introduction to APPA was at the Sydney Conference in 1983 and what a powerhouse performance that was. The sponsorship obtained by Bob Harbin was astronomical and contributed a great deal to the conference, run on similar lines to the State Convention. Delegates from each state attended to discuss issues at a national level. Once again, many wonderful ideas were shared and the atmosphere was truly inspirational. An example of this was the first introduction, from delegates from a similar conference held in New Zealand, to the exciting concept of 'Reading Recovery'. It is sad to note, however, that the concept was not greeted with same enthusiasm by State Departments of Education. In our own state, 'Reading Recovery' has only recently been fully implemented in schools (20+ years later). During my time on the State Council, it was my privilege to represent NSW Principals at the APPA Conferences in Brisbane (1985), Adelaide (1986), Melbourne (1987) and Canberra (1988).

At the end of 1988, long term President Bernie Gregory, retired and I decided that I would also retire from the role of Secretary as Bernie and I had a firm relationship going back to the Liverpool Region days. There were several reasons for my decision, not the least being the pressure being put on me by my school staff who conveyed to me on the odd occasion, in the nicest possible way, that I was spending too much time away from schools.

History shows that Tom Howard took over as State Council President, and Barry McConville became the new Secretary. History also shows that as the years progressed, changes were made leading to the eventual formation of the now thriving Primary Principals Association which among other things, according to my observation, allows broader participation of the principals of today.

My time as Secretary of the Council, however, remains one of the most rewarding and productive periods of my professional life and I still cherish memories of the many talented principals with whom I came in close contact and of the things we endeavoured to achieve on behalf of the principals of NSW public schools. To put the cream on the cake, I was honoured to be awarded Life Membership of the Primary Principals' Council in 1992 thus joining Bernie Gregory, Geoff McAlary, Tom Howard and John Avery at the time when you had to have been a contributory member of the Council to be considered for Life Membership.

My final recollections of my time involved in both council and convention level was the social side of things which I shared, to a large degree, with my old mate, Bob Harbin who, by the way, gave one of the most memorable toasts to Education at a Convention. I still recall, with amazement, our resilience when after entertaining any number of participants in our room each night we went to bed by the blossoming light of the rising sun on most occasions and still managed to function productively in following days. On a serious note, the social interaction following State Council Meetings and State Conventions was often extremely productive with many fine ideas being raised and shared informally and taken back to schools.

I commend the NSW Primary Principals Association and the Association of Retired Primary Principals, for their initiative in recording historical aspects of the development of the professional body that serves Principals and promotes Public Education to this day. I wish them continued success in the future.

D.K. Walker
June 4, 2008

INTERVENTIONIST APPROACHES BY MINISTERS FOR EDUCATION

For decades, the head of the key NSW government portfolio of 'Education' had been a Minister with responsibility for a large slice of the state government's expenditure. There was an accepted division between the Minister's role and that of the Director-General. The Minister looked after legislation and the Director-General looked after schools.

The Public Service Board was responsible to the government for the 'economy and efficiency' of the system and reported directly to the Premier. The Board handled all budget matters within the Public Service and was able to maintain strict control over expenditure. As well, the Board restricted information on budgets, to the privileged few, approved by the Board. A public servant could be dismissed if information was revealed.

However, this traditional structure was strongly challenged following the Whitlam Government changes to educational funding and the outcomes of the Schools Commission. More important was the election of the Wran Government in 1981. Wran moved to make all departmental heads more directly accountable to Ministers and to curb the power of the Public Service Board which he saw as 'obdurate and obstructionist'.

Most Education Ministers, in the Wran years, tended to follow a 'managerial' style and directed that relevant information should be freely made available to unions and to parents. Paul Landa carried this to the extreme by encouraging everyone to write directly to him. This almost paralysed the department 'as red tabbed Ministerials proliferated and piled up on desks across the Ministry'.¹

Another Minister to really adopt a 'managerial', even an 'interventionist' style to changing the educational system was Rodney Cavalier, Labor Member for Gladesville. The attitudes and operations of principals in schools were being challenged by changing societal values expressed by school communities. Politicians were reacting to these pressures.

The NSW Primary Principals' Council as well as Regional Councils and individual principals played significant roles in maintaining stability and unity during what would become a fairly turbulent period of major change. At all times, the NSW Principals' Council and its Executive, maintained an effective and influential relationship with the Director-General and Senior Officers of the Department. This was not always easy, as successive Ministers were initiating change without much consultation.

In a speech by Rodney M. Cavalier, Minister for Education to the Metropolitan North Principals on March 14, 1985, he spoke of a range of issues that heralded major changes to the role of the principal². His words were direct and unequivocal – "You are men and women in charge of a substantial and important group of schools. You are, the men and women whose support I require – no, whose support I demand – in the implementation of a number of changes to education in this state".

The first of these changes came in *The Teacher Efficiency Review*. "This 'review,'" stated the Minister, "sets in place a process which will identify our best teachers and our worst teachers and will help all teachers, including all of you, to grow in effectiveness. I have made no secret of my belief that teachers who are incapable of coping with demands of the profession should be removed from it. The welfare of the children who are our charges demands no less."

¹ 'Principal Issues: Term 2, 1988: 'Decision Making in the NSW Education System' by Barry Manfield – Principal of Denistone East Public School and former President of the NSW Teachers' Federation.

² Speech to Metropolitan North Principals' Council – March 14, 1985. State Council Minutes – June 1985

He continued, "I believe that teachers like politicians and governments, either get better or get worse. The Teacher Efficiency Review gives you, the principals – the mechanism whereby you can share your experience and expertise with your staff for the benefit of your school. Take the opportunity and demonstrate your leadership, because leadership is the key quality in a successful school."

The second issue that Minister Cavalier tackled was corporal punishment.

"You have noted my announcement that corporal punishment will disappear from the schools of this state from the end of this year. You will also have noted, I suspect, the almost complete lack of negative reaction to that announcement. I have brought the state into line with all but a handful of education systems in the world. I commend to you the notion that the continuing use of corporal punishment for the rest of the year will seem at best an exercise in insensitivity. I trust that in your schools, the cane will have struck its last blow well before the end of this school year."

The third issue was the introduction of an Annual School Report to be made to both the community and the department which would formalise and impose a wholly positive structure for planning of activities for the year and an evaluation of outcomes.

Minister Cavalier clearly stated, "I cannot understand, then, why I hear, from time to time, from parent bodies whose principals refuse to divulge anything about the school's general financial position to a parent body. If you are one, I suggest that you change your approach radically and speedily."

"Can we really expect to preserve the sort of public education system which characterised the first half of this century – a system based apparently on the assumption that teachers were better educated than most parents. You know as I do that our communities are educated and this means they are questioning, thoughtful, demanding. They are all of these for their children – and unless we learn to respond by meeting them and involving them in the education then they will exercise their right to choose and they may choose under-resourced non-government schools."

"Every parent desperately wants to believe that their school is a good one, all too easily withered by discourtesy, poor communication or worst of all insensitivity, poor teaching and poor leadership. That, to me, is the great challenge of the eighties."

"You are the leaders who have to make these things happen. You know that I do not shrink from hard decisions. I have already told the Inspectors of Schools that some of them may well not be in their present positions by the end of 1986. I have the same message for you – but you will have nothing to fear, if you give only your best."³

At this time, the Federation of the P and C Association had been making strident calls for the formation of School Councils and for a more transparent process for informing schools communities of the financial state of public schools.

President Bernie Gregory's in his President's Report to the Term 1 State Council of April 16, 1986 stated "If principals are to rebuff further calls for revealing the levels of funding in schools, they will need to ensure that the advice of the Minister is heeded and publicise the school's receipts and expenditure."⁴

³ Speech to Metropolitan North Principals' Council – March 14, 1985. State Council Minutes – June 1985.

⁴ State Council Minutes - April 16, 1986

Many of the major changes to effect public education through the next two decades, had their origins in this era of the Wran Government with Minister Cavalier. The Labor Government was replaced in 1988 by the Greiner Liberal National Party Government.

BUILDING THE MODEL - REMEMBERING THE EIGHTIES

BARRY MCCONVILLE

Secretary NSW PPC 1988/92
President APPA 1991/92

Moving from a residential college to the bush has always been something of a cultural impact on the young impressionable teacher. To have accepted the full responsibilities of moulding young lives at the tender age of 18 following a mandatory spell in National Service was a challenge thrust upon many ex students often hundreds of miles away from home and isolated from substantial professional support.

Years in small and two teacher schools provided an impetus for those seeking more than just the weekend football match and the conversation around the local bar, to look beyond the scene and make contact with others in a similar situation. Being able to “talk shop” with a colleague, discuss shared experiences and catch up on thoughts and ideas was a welcomed and valued exercise.

After a number of years of following the promotions trail, successful inspections and additional external studies, I was appointed to Dorrigo as Principal. Not only did this fine posting bring many delightful benefits to me and family but it also opened a new world to professional support.

The North Coast Primary Principal's Council had been established and its regular meetings provided contacts with both Regional and Head Office personnel whose names had previously been known only from official signatures. Due to the usual tyranny of distance it became desirable to split the North Coast Region into two Principal Council areas and having held a treasurer's role with the original group I was elected as President for the Lower North Coast Primary Principals' Council.

This began a long and meaningful relationship with the NSW Primary Principals' Council as each Council group was entitled to provide a delegate to sit at State level. It was at this time that I learnt about State Conferences and the ensuing benefits that these could have upon professional development.

On returning to Sydney and joining the Met South West Region Primary Principals' Council, my experiences were prevailed upon first as Treasurer then as President of the Council keeping open the ties with State Council.

State Council in the early eighties was fast learning to stretch its influence beyond the previously accepted regional boundaries. It had been recognised as a professionally based group of knowledgeable principals from across the state with grass roots contacts and extensive experience in developing trends and interest. Gone were the days of suspicion that an off shoot of a union was setting out to subvert Departmental organisation.

Meetings were centred upon Bridge Street with each gathering being addressed by the current Director-General in the magnificent oak panelled DG chamber. It was here also that we met with aspiring Directors General as the Deputy Director-General usually sat in on business items.

From such meetings emerged the request for our members to assist on various committees that were being mooted by the Department. This was a major breakthrough particularly as Global Budgeting and The School Renewal Program had begun to make their presences felt. Of interest also was the opening of doors to other State operations such as the Government Printer, the Government Stores Dept and The Furniture Branch, all of which were visited by the executive from time to time.

It was during this period that executive officers were invited to meet with the Minister of Education on an annual basis though these occasions were more of a “sit down and have a cup of tea whilst I tell you what’s going to happen” time.

There were matters to explore with the NSW Teachers Federation, The P&C Association and FOSCO. All of these commitments, demanding considerable additional out of school time, for Council executive officers.

In 1988 I accepted the role of State Secretary from Darryl Walker, a position that continued for the next four years. During that period I had the pleasure of working with three State Presidents, Tom Howard, Frank Farrell and Karlynn Jacobsen. State principals were moved to support the Council’s first Award in memory of Frank’s passing whilst still in his presidential year. Karlynn stepped up from her position as Vice President to become President, finally handing over the role of President to Tom Croker, at the next annual election.

It was in this period that it was thought fit to establish a formal recognition of past service to The Council and Education by initiating the award of Life Membership to accredited nominations.

Delegates to State Council over this period were elected representatives from their Regions. They travelled vast distances regularly to attend meetings in Sydney enjoying the collegiality of the occasions along with the satisfaction of contributing to the ever developing prestige of the Council. Overnight accommodation for out of town delegates was usually quite circumspect with first in getting the best bedding after the usual social update around the bar. Not surprisingly, such informal gatherings often produced much substance for the following day’s agenda.

A marked improvement to Council’s administrative credibility and efficiency came about through the appointment of David Bishop as Minute Secretary. David brought with him a new world of computer literacy that was relatively unknown to most principals at the time. He introduced computer minute taking at the meeting and delivered items in a most professional manner. It was also through David’s computer skills that our combined efforts produced *STATELINES* (2 per term), David taking the draft material and formatting items into the State’s first newssheet.

The Council later went on to publish *THE PRIMARY PRINCIPAL* an annual professional digest of educational contributions from many sources produced by John Davies.

A growing sense of maturity in the status of the Council led the executive to consider revisiting the past, its early tentative steps and consequent developments. Maureen Stephenson had a long association with the Council as regional representative and executive member. When her time to step down was imminent she was asked to accept a new role as State Council Research Officer, a role aimed at assisting members to access material required by various committees.

State Conferences had grown in significance also. Starting out as a gathering of elected representatives from around the state encompassing Catholic Schools representatives, the venue at the Cross came under scrutiny. A move from the Crest Hotel (The Glass Bowl) was made to the Gazebo. There was now room to expand and encourage a much wider group of principals. Such growth required the nomination of a separate Conference Committee working within the parameters of the Council. These conferences became show cases for public education and lost some of the interdepartmental contact.

In 1990 I was elected to the Presidency of the Australian Primary Principal Association. This resulted in Sydney holding the national conference for the second time, combining both state and national conferences for the year into one major event. It was a huge undertaking

but one that the committee of the year did supremely well with harbour trips, visits to local schools, excursions to The Rocks and visits to the then feted Sydney Town Exhibition. The

Governor General of Australia, Bill Hayden, was on hand to officially open the festivities with several schools contributing musical items during breaks. It was during this year also that Maureen Stephenson, David Bishop and I rewrote the Constitution of APPA which was presented to the annual meeting of that organisation. There were several meetings with DEET and senior government officials at Parliament House Canberra over national educational issues of the time.

Representation for NSWPPC delegates to participate in associated organisations during this era was seen as important. Delegates visited New Zealand to attend conferences: they joined with Independent Schools Principals to establish points of common concern; executive officer met regularly with their counterparts in The Secondary Principals' Council as well as appointing representatives to attend each other's Council meetings. There were accepted differences in philosophies but a great sense of collegiality amongst participants.

So what might be regarded as the achievements of the period? Yes there were professional friendships established that have continued well into the years of retirement. There are memories of frustrations and successes that have paled into diminished significances. There is some ongoing sense of satisfaction that our past endeavours have been recognised and further promoted by those who now occupy the executive roles of our Association.

But most significantly the eighties and early nineties brought a growing reality to the professional basis of our organisation. There was an acceptance that principals had much to contribute to educational policy, curriculum development and community relationships. They could and should be major links in the planning and implementation of progressive learning across the vastness of the state.

I believe that the NSWPPA has achieved its maturity as a valued and respected member of the educational fraternity. May it continue to lead and inspire principals in the years that lie ahead.

Barry McConville

THE METHERELL YEARS

On March 19, 1988, public education in NSW was turned on its head by a new State Government with Nick Greiner as Premier and Dr. Terry Metherell as the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs. During his two years as Minister, (March 19, 1988 to July 20, 1990), massive change occurred in almost every aspect of the public education system.

Dr Metherell legislated the *Education Reform Act 1990* (now the *Education Act 1990*) which had far reaching influence on education in NSW for decades.

The first major change was that, “Teachers would be promoted solely on merit and not on seniority under sweeping changes to the public education system we are signalling to the teaching service from top to bottom that merit is here – a guiding principle for the future”¹.

Dr. Metherell stated that merit selection procedures would allow talented teachers to be appointed to executive and principals positions faster and that merit selection would allow more women to be appointed to executive positions in schools. He also introduced the role of ‘Leading Teachers’ with specific responsibilities for curriculum, teaching and assisting new teachers in secondary schools.

In a meeting with the NSW Primary Principals’ Council on May 24, 1990, Dr Metherell stated that, “the subject of promotion on merit is not negotiable.”

In April 1989, a ‘NSW Government Committee of Review of NSW Schools’ under the Chairmanship of Sir John Carrick, was established by Dr Metherell, to examine ways of improving the quality of education in NSW. The committee was made of fourteen members including: Professor Sam Ball from Sydney University, Bob Cavanagh from the NSW Teachers Federation, Lesley McPaul from the Federation of P & C Associations, Bernie Gregory, former President of the NSW Primary Principals’ Council and representatives from other university and educational sectors

Shortly after this event, Dr. Brian Scott was appointed by Minister Metherell to head a committee to ‘Review the Management of the NSW Education System’. This group was known as the ‘Schools Renewal Taskforce’ and was responsible for the entire process of change known as ‘School Renewal’. Following receipt of submissions and taskforce visits throughout the state, an outline strategy was developed:

- Placing decision making at the school level
- Lessening of the power of the Central Executive and distributing more control to regions, to clusters of schools and to schools.
- Reinforcing merit based locally selected promotion systems
- Encouraging the formation of School Councils
- Introducing Global Budgeting.

The advent of ‘Schools Renewal’ brought about some of the most dramatic changes in the management of schools for decades. Foremost in these changes was a huge increase in the expectations placed on principals. A ‘Schools Management Working Group’ paper produced by the Taskforce included the following paragraph:

“More than ever before, the Principals will be involved in the professional partnership with the Cluster Director, the Schools Council, parents and schools staff, students and the wider community. These partnerships should enhance the educational programs of individual schools and cluster of schools”.

¹ Daily Telegraph article, May 26, 1988.

Principals were expected to:

- Develop in consultation with the school community, a School Renewal Plan which emphasised cyclical educational planning, implementation and evaluation enhanced by schools based budgeting and collaborative decision making.
- Provide educative programs that are relevant and challenging together with student welfare Programs that empower students to reach their full educational potential.
- Structure professional development activities to enhance teacher performance and to guide individual careers.
- Report to parents and community on the educational performance of students.
- Recruit and select staff, to negotiate roles and responsibilities for all members of staff as well as determining individual and organisational performance outcomes.
- In collaboration with the School Council, be responsible for the preparation of school budgets, determining funding priorities, overseeing maintenance of equipment, buildings, grounds plant and machinery.
- Initiate processes designed to promote the formation of School Councils.
- Establish and maintain links with community groups as well as the Department of Education and Training.
- Be accountable to the system for all aspects of school management and educational outcomes.

Principals of all public primary and secondary schools had to manage the introduction of:

- Global Budget allocation of funding to schools.
- The use of OASIS Administrative Technology and the training of School Administrative staff.
- The establishment of School Councils.

All schools were expected to have a School Renewal Plan and structures in place by the end of 1990².

Other monumental changes that were initiated in 1989 and beyond included:

- De-zoning of schools.
- The establishment of Centres of Excellence.
- Basic Skills Testing in all Year 6 and selected Years 3 classes.
- The establishment of and increased number of Selective Secondary Schools and Selective Primary Classes.
- Increasing use of OASIS (Office Administration Software in Schools).

A reorganisation of statewide administrative functions and structures also occurred:

- The establishment of the Board of Studies.
- A restructuring of Regions into Clusters of Schools instead of Inspectorates.
- The introduction of Cluster Directors instead of District Inspectors.

This period of dramatic change placed enormous pressure on principals and their staff, and allowed little time or opportunity for consultation with Minister Metherell. Morale was seriously eroded.

Two instances exemplify this loss of morale and dissatisfaction amongst Principals and their school communities.

A meeting between the Executive of the NSW Primary Principals' Council and Minister Terry Metherell was held on Tuesday August 30 1988. A paper on the major issue of 'Morale' was prepared and presented to the Minister who was dismissive of these concerns.

² School Management Working Group Paper: 1988

The ensuing report of the outcomes of this meeting by Secretary Daryl Walker stated:

“Before the President could elaborate on the ‘teacher morale issue’, the Minister indicated that he was fully informed and well aware of the ‘morale issue’ and that nothing could be added to that argument and he suggested that we should move on to areas where perhaps it could be identified that changes or ‘trade-offs’ could be made.”³

Three meetings convened with Minister Metherell in the 1989/90 period, had not come to fruition with two meetings being cancelled the day before they were due to be held.⁴

A State Council Motion 148/88:15/16 September 1988, expressed the dissatisfaction, “State Council wishes to express to the Director-General, its deep concern for the Minister’s lack of consultation when endeavouring to implement the government’s agenda. The Minister’s approach and its resultant effect on morale within all state school communities, is having a detrimental effect on the education of children.”⁵

President Tom Howard on June 27, 1989, wrote to Fenton Sharpe expressing this concern - “For some time we, as a Council, have felt that because we have not gone public or adopted an aggressive role, our opinions and requests, appear to have received small consideration.”

“We feel Fenton, that although we have a representative on quite a few committees, our voice is not being heard. Because of the lateness of our involvement we are being consulted about the implementation rather than the actual body of the policy itself.”

“Approaching very soon is the greatest change in the history of education ever taken in NSW. We as principals are going to be heavily involved in this instance. The success or failure of the proposal will depend on our efforts.”⁶

In a letter of reply sent in November 1989 by Director-General Fenton Sharpe, he apologises for the delay in replying citing the “mass of changes and issues which has arisen day by day that have kept me from responding to a number of important items of correspondence such as your own.”

Fenton Sharpe then continued on to reassure the Primary Principals’ Council that the work of this organisation is vital to the health of the organisation as a whole and the quality of decision making. He went on to say that whilst the Department has not been able to implement the Council’s proposals, they have been taken seriously. He continues, “There have been occasions when our own Departmental recommendations have not been able to be sustained in the overall context of budgetary provision and Government priorities.”⁷

The Education Reform Act received the Royal assent in early June 1990. The Minister and the Education Reform Act were extremely unpopular and Dr. Metherell was replaced as Minister for Education in the middle of 1990. He was succeeded by Virginia Chadwick who became Minister for School Education and Youth Affairs.

A change in attitude in the new Minister, was detected at an early stage of her five year reign. President Tom Howard and Secretary Barry McConville had informally met with the

³ State Council Minutes:

⁴ State Executive Minutes: June 1990

⁵ State Council Minutes: September 15/16, 1988

⁶ Letter to Director-General Fenton Sharpe from President Tom Howard. June 27, 1989

⁷ Letter from Director-General Fenton Sharpe to President Tom Howard, November 3, 1989

Minister and reported to the PPC Executive that they “have heightened hopes that a spirit of proper consultation with educational lobbies will be achieved.”⁸

Virginia Chadwick met with members of the PPC Executive on Thursday, September 13, 1990 who were “most encouraged by the Minister’s welcoming manner”. She agreed to speak to the State Council Meeting to be held on Friday, November 23, 1990.⁹

Despite this change in attitude, the massive changes to whole system of public education in NSW continued unabated. Therein lies the next chapter in this story of the evolution of the NSW Primary Principals Association.

⁸ State Executive Minutes: June 1990

⁹ State Executive Minutes: September 13, 1990

TOM HOWARD – REFLECTIONS

President 1989-90
Treasurer 1987-88

Perhaps I was fortunate to follow Bernie Gregory as President of the Primary Principals' Council. He had done such a magnificent job and the Council Members were all experienced and very capable in their deliberations. They were an excellent group.

Initially I was a reluctant nominee for the roll of President as I did not live in Sydney and would probably have excessive travelling. However I discussed the matter with my Regional Director, Alan Beard, and he was very supportive and considered it an honour to have a country President. He offered a vehicle whenever required and this was willingly accepted. I felt very honoured to have the support of the Council and when you look at the experience and capabilities of the group I am sure you realise they were a fine group of principals. I decided that as President I would try to attend as many Council functions throughout the State as I could. This I tried to do and I thank those Councils who invited me to their meeting and also saved my pocket by assisting with the accommodation when required.

The Council was at that stage all male and it was not until Jann Muller from Bathurst joined us that there began nominations of female Principals as regional representatives. With this move I fully agreed, as all principals were considered capable and worthy of membership and thus ended what had been a male bastion.

Council continued to meet at Head Office and all members were responsible for their own expenses including meals and accommodation. The Annual Convention was held at the Koala and at that stage the venue appeared to be quite adequate. It was not until apparent appropriate funding came that the venues for the Convention moved into the more expensive bracket.

It was during this period that David Bishop commenced *STATELINES*, the first issue being 1/90. This was David's idea and only further demonstrates the interests and ability of the individual. Quite a simple and informative document which was anxiously awaited by all principals.

I cannot omit to mention the support given by the then Deputy Director-General, Terry Burke. On my appointment as President it was suggested that I would be better situated in Sydney and a position could be arranged at Head Office where I would receive copies of all documents etc to schools and full time employment would be organised. I said that I thought the President of The Principals' Council should be in a school and this was the final arrangement. However, as I did not have a class free Deputy at my School and I was absent on many occasions, it was arranged that a Relief Teacher be stationed at my school with priority only to one teacher schools. This enabled my Deputy Principal, freedom when necessary and was much appreciated. Thank you, Terry Burke.

I considered the NSW Primary Principals' Council to be the contact group to swap and suggest ideas with the controlling authority. This role, in most areas, was appreciated and all opportunities to discuss and liaise with the authorities was accepted, appreciated and enjoyed.

The Primary Principals' Council, over the years, was used as a sounding board by the ruling authorities. In most instances, this was appreciated by both sides. During my time, the Director-General Fenton Sharpe and Deputy Director-General Terry Burke, were always available for discussion and were of great support.

However, the same could not always be said of the Ministers for Education. During my time as President we had little opportunity to meet and discuss issues with the then Minister for Education, Dr. Metherell. On three occasions, our meetings were cancelled by the Minister.

On the one occasion when we did meet, discussion on each and every topic we suggested, was declined by the Minister, for reasons unknown and not revealed. This we found to be very disappointing and unsatisfactory. The Minister offered very little assistance and was only interested in topics of his choice which were not necessarily of great interest or relevance to us. Hence, as a Minister, Dr. Metherell was not missed and his replacement, Virginia Chadwick, was made very welcome and her assistance and availability was much appreciated.

Attendance at the Australian Primary Principals' Conference was limited and , I think in 1990, several Regions were prepared to fund a Principal to fill our quota. Unfortunately we had not discussed this matter with the Director-General and a week before we were to fly to Alice Springs I received a Friday afternoon request to attend Head Office at about 5.30p.m. Barry McConville and I attended, to be told by the Director-General that all attendance had been cancelled because we had broken the rules. After much discussion, Fenton Sharpe relented and on the understanding that no more principals were to be added to our team, we could proceed. There was no room for any more and unfortunately the airlines went on strike and APPA was cancelled. What a lot of worry over nothing, as it turned out. Incidentally, some of the Regions who had given their Regional Councils money for this purpose, recalled their loans and the Regional Councils concerned missed a little supportive funding.

During the nineties, it was decided that all principals be contacted and asked to make a \$10 donation to the State Council. Quite a few principals did respond and these donations made a considerable improvement to the state coffers so that State Council was able to communicate more effectively to schools and to principals.

My two years, as President, was a busy time, basically because of travel but still a very rewarding experience. Throughout the state, it was a delight and privilege to visit and feel welcome in schools. I thank my peers for this opportunity.

Incidentally, I was interested to read in the first chapter of the 'Foundations of a Professional Association for Primary Principals in NSW' that Kevin Hepworth had his school fenced many years ago. It was apparently suggested that he was running a prison. How things have changed? Again incidentally:

- How discipline has changed
- How funding has changed
- How behaviour has changed
- How teacher action has changed
- Etc., etc., etc., etc.,

I think we were very happy in the eighties and nineties. Things seemed to be more settled.

Tom Howard

NSW PRIMARY PRINCIPALS' COUNCIL
RECORD OF SERVICE ON STATE COUNCIL: 1981 TO 1991

DATE OF FIRST STATE COUNCIL MEETING: May 1, 1981

CHAIRMAN: Warren Kennedy

INAUGURAL EXECUTIVE:

President:	Bernie Gregory	Liverpool Region
Secretary:	Bill Supple	North Sydney Region
Treasurer:	Greg Taylor	Central Metropolitan Region

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS: 1981 – 1991

President:	Bernie Gregory	1981-1988
	Tom Howard	1989 -1990
	Frank Farrell	1991-1992
Secretary:	Bill Supple	1981-1985
	Darryl Walker	1986-1988
	Barry McConville	1989-1993
Treasurer:	Greg Taylor	1981-1986
	Tom Howard	1987-1988
	Ian Sutton	1989-1990
Vice-President:	Frank Farrell	1990-1991 (position constituted in 1990)

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES: 1981-1991

METROPOLITAN NORTH: (North Sydney Region until 1985)

Jim Rutherford, Bill Supple, Ron Evers, Beverley Evans, Allan Innes, Bill Muir, Frank Farrell, Helen Repin.

METROPOLITAN WEST:

Geoff McAlary, Ian Sutton, Tom Croker, Bob Hince, J. King.

METROPLITAN EAST: (Central Metropolitan and St. George Regions until 1983)

Greg Taylor, Fred Armstrong, Bob Harbin, John Goff, Diana Pearce, Bill Agnew, Karlynn Jacobsen.

METROPOLITAN SOUTH WEST: (Liverpool Region until 1986)

Bernie Gregory, Phil Bastick, Darryl Walker, Ross Smith, Barry McConville, David Bishop.

SOUTH COAST:

John Brammer, Des McIlquham, Roy Parker, Les Maley, Owen Davies, Doug Mann, Graeme Keast, Ed Shouten.

RIVERINA:

Les Bonham, Graeme Brownlow, Laurie Maher.

HUNTER:

Keith Curry, Dennis O'Neill, Tom Howard, Tom Croker, Michael O'Sullivan.

WESTERN:

Edgar Mickmicking, Ivan Eichorn, John Gallagher, Leigh Raynor, John McMillan, Jann Muller, Bruce Roberts, Phil Bradbury.

NORTH COAST:

Ken Dransfield, Geoff Stanley, Kevin Morgan.

NORTH WEST:

John Small, Trevor Short, Lester Waud, E. Warwick, John Avery

NSW MINISTERS FOR EDUCATION: 1980 TO 2000

Paul Landa	1980-1981
Ron Mulock	1981-1984
Eric Bedford	part of 1984
Rodney Cavalier	1984-1988
Terry Metherell	1988-1990
Virginia Chadwick	1990-1995

NSW DIRECTORS-GENERAL OF EDUCATION

Doug Swan	February 1977 to July, 1985
Bob Winder	July 10, 1985 to 29 April, 1988
Gregor Ramsay	Appointed Director-General April 1988 but sacked by Minister Terry Metherell as soon as he came to office.
Fenton Sharpe	April 30, 1988 to November 12, 1991
Ken Boston	January 2, 1992 to January 22, 2002