

**TASMANIA'S EDUCATIONAL  
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING:  
KEY PERSPECTIVES**

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requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF EDUCATION**

by

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## **DECLARATION**

I certify that this Dissertation contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any institute, college or university, and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the Dissertation.

Jeffrey R. Garsed

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**ABSTRACT**

**TASMANIA'S EDUCATIONAL MEMORANDUM OF  
UNDERSTANDING: KEY PERSPECTIVES**

**By Jeffrey R Garsed**

Historically, governments, departments of education and teacher associations in Tasmania have argued that they had the best interests of teachers and education at heart. Yet, until recently, they tended to operate without formal mechanisms that facilitated common understandings of each other's positions or an agreed long-term approach to education as a whole.

The 1998 Tasmanian Memorandum of Understanding [MoU], whilst far from attempting to develop an exhaustive compact on public education, did, however, establish a consultative mechanism between the Government and the Australian Education Union [AEU] on matters affecting teachers and education. Further, it specified points of understanding about particular teacher and educational matters that have potential for enhancing trust and cooperation between the government and teachers.

This study investigates the significance of the MoU in the current educational context and looks at the implications it may have for establishing future points of agreement, on key educational issues, between the key partners in

education, namely the government, the AEU and the Department of Education [DoE].

An interpretive case study framed the investigation. The author interviewed a chief, or former chief, decision-maker from each of the three sectors: the DoE, the Minister's Office and the AEU. The interviewees were questioned by means of a semi-structured interview schedule to ascertain their organisations' position on the issues surrounding the MoU and its place in assisting resolution of the key issues currently facing education. Each interviewee brought forward dominant issues that formed, along with the review of literature, the focus for the analysis of the significance and implications of the MoU.

The key issues arising out of the MoU were seen to have both professional and industrial implications, and it was found that these are often difficult to separate. The emphases placed by the three interviewees on professional and industrial matters were disparate, and at their core, represented quite separate value stances. Yet, all accepted certain basic precepts about teachers and education suggesting that it seems possible for further formal understandings and cooperative practices to be developed between these to the betterment of public education in Tasmania.

To Pam,  
with great appreciation  
for tireless assistance, inspiration,  
and a belief in public education.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

Public education systems throughout the western world have been undergoing processes of change towards decentralisation in various guises. Similarly, there have been calls for more collaborative and cooperative ways of planning for and implementing educational changes. Yet there has been little formal consultation between the key players in some public education systems in Australia, with the view to establishing a common understanding about the key issues for education.

Whilst industrial agreements between teacher associations and Australian state governments have not been uncommon, many have appeared lengthy and detailed compared with the Tasmanian Memorandum of Understanding [MoU] (see Appendix A). Irrespective of their detail, most of these agreements have tended to solely address industrial matters and appear to have done little to enhance processes of collaboration and cooperation, or to address many of the key issues facing education in the post-modern period.

This chapter provides a description and rationale for a study of the groundbreaking Tasmanian MoU. The chapter initially considers the problem statement and background of the study. What then follows is a statement of purpose, the study's significance, and the research questions. The study's assumptions, limitations, definition of terms, and scope further follow these. Finally, a summary of the chapter is provided and the remaining chapters outlined.

### **Problem Statement**

Increasingly, members of organisations expect to have some form of input into the major policy-making processes of these organisations. To that extent, within Tasmanian public education, the MoU may represent a means of achieving such input for teachers.

Further, the MoU may represent a means of achieving a greater consensus between government, Department of Education [DoE], and the Australian Education Union [AEU] on the key issues for Tasmanian education, and thereby enhance the level of cooperation between these key organisations in Tasmanian public education.

### **Purpose**

The general purpose of this study is to explore the significance of the MoU from the standpoint of a nominal representative of each organisation, namely the DoE, the Office of the Education Minister, and the AEU. Also, a further purpose is to understand the position of each interviewee and the MoU in relation to the key issues facing public education.

### **Background**

The Rundle/Napier Liberal Government in Tasmania in the late 1990s was characterised by a perceived lack of consultation between the three key parties in public education, namely, the DoE, the Government ministry, and the AEU. In those years immediately preceding the MoU, consultation existed primarily

between the DoE and the Government, and the AEU claimed that there were few occasions when they could be 'heard' (Hull, 1999). This was not seen by the AEU as an open form of government, and the way in which the Government's New Directions Policy was being implemented was deemed to be symptomatic of 'closed' government.

With the onset of state elections, teacher associations in Australia have sought industrial agreements and points of understanding with interested key political parties about how issues affecting teachers and education might be dealt with during the next term of government. So, before the Tasmanian election of 1998, the AEU and the Parliamentary Labor Party, led by Mr. Jim Bacon, entered into discussions about how public education would be managed under a Labor government. What emerged was a MoU aimed at guiding the way Labor, if it achieved government, and the AEU would view a variety of educational matters during Labor's first term of office.

In Tasmanian terms, the MoU was a significant departure from the way government, of all political persuasions had previously dealt with teacher and educational issues, and appeared to signal a new form of teacher inclusion in the process of top-level policy development.

### **Significance**

The MoU is a proactive compact, designed to lay the groundwork for agreement on key issues affecting teachers and education, thereby creating a degree of certainty about future matters to be developed, and therefore direction, in education.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

Why did the MoU develop?

How is it anticipated that the MoU will affect education in Tasmania?

## **Assumptions**

The study was based on the following assumptions:

1. The interviewees would vary in their conception of such notions as democratic process and consultation.
2. The interviewees would at least nominally be representative of their respective organisations.
3. The interviewees were committed to their organisation and therefore to public education.
4. Conflict between the three interviewees' organisations on some issues would be inevitable, however not necessarily problematic, as it could ultimately result in a better resolution of educational issues.

## **Limitations**

Whilst ideally the study may have benefited from having a range of people's views from within each organisation, longer interviews, or a series of interviews with existing interviewees, this was not possible due to time and other practical constraints.

## **Definition of Terms**

<b>AEU</b>	Australian Education Union (Tasmania).
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<b>ACTU</b>	Australian Council of Trade Unions.
<b>ALP</b>	Australian Labor Party.
<b>Case Study</b>	“An in depth investigation of an individual, group, or institution” (Gay, 1992, p. 235).
<b>DECCD</b>	Department of Education, Community and Cultural Development, Tasmania. The name of the public education authority in Tasmania until October 1998.
<b>DoE</b>	Department of Education, Tasmania. The name of the public education authority in Tasmania from October 1998.
<b>Interpretive Theory</b>	“states that meaning- and hence, reality- is constructed through the social interaction of people within a social setting. Meanings change in the course of interaction because the participants hold different perceptions; thus reality is flexible and based on interpretations, rather than fixed” (Bennett & LeCompte, 1990, p.32).
<b>MoU</b>	The Memorandum of Understanding achieved between the AEU and the Tasmanian Labor Party, in opposition, which came into effect when Labor gained office in September 1998 (See Appendix A).



**New Right** Supported by market liberal economists Hayek and Friedman, a political movement which gained prominence from the early 1970s, based on the belief that the public interest is best served by economic and social competition, and a small, corporatized government (Marginson, 1997a).

**Post-modern period** The period since the mid 1970s.

**Public education** A system of education administered through a government department and broadly available to all citizens.

**Private school** A school separate from the public education system.

**Public or**

**Government school** A school that exists within a public education system.

**School Based Management**

**[SBM] or Local School**

**Management [LSM]** A process of devolution of decision-making to local school level, which has taken place in different guises in many countries.

**School culture** "...the set of shared expectations about what is and what ought to be, derives from both the

more distant external environment common to most schools and the local setting” (Rossman, Corbett, and Firestone, 1988, p. 122).

**TTF**

Tasmanian Teacher’s Federation, the name of the major teacher association in Tasmania, previous to 1994, when it became the Australian Education Union, Tasmanian Branch.

**Scope**

A sociological perspective broadly underpins this study. The decision to base the study on a sociological foundation was made following consideration of a number of matters. Aspects of roles, groups, and social institutions formed the subject of much of the inquiry and were dealt with in an interpretive way. These dimensions of a study were considered to fit well within the purview of sociology (Merriam, 1988). In addition, it was anticipated that aspects of educational culture would be dealt with at a number of points in the investigation. Bogdan and Bilken (1992) claim “sociologists use culture ... to theoretically inform their qualitative studies” (p. 39).

The disciplines of psychology or anthropology could have provided a base for this study as interviewee’s understandings of events were involved. However, psychology tends to be focused on the individual in order to understand human behaviour, and anthropology is based on an in-depth understanding of culture, often requiring quite large investments of time (Merriam, 1998).

The most viable alternative to sociology appeared to be history, as the study’s central interest was in the significance of a particular document, namely, the

MoU. However, historical case studies have “tended to be descriptions of institutions, programs and practices as they have evolved over time” (Merriam, 1998, p.35). Indeed, Bogdan and Bilken (1992) claim that the key to historical case studies is that they trace an event over time. Yin (1994) suggests that historical case studies are the preferred strategy when access to relevant persons is minimal or non-existent.

Having access to people directly concerned with the drafting and implementation of the MoU influenced the decision to discount a historical base and place the study in sociology. Moreover, sociology is concerned with the processes of human interaction and social life (Merriam, 1998).

Further, this study was informed by interpretive theory. Historically, interpretivism has been located within sociology (Merriam, 1988). Yet, it is acknowledged that in recent decades the realm of interpretive inquiry has extended beyond a single discipline (Bennett and LeCompte, 1990). Indeed, Bennett and LeCompte argue that in being open to a range of standpoints, interpretivism can be informed by the findings of a range of disciplines providing a richer depiction of people and issues.

### **Summary**

The central focus of this study was the MoU. The MoU is a document that reflects a view that the potential for change in Tasmanian education can be pursued by enhancing processes of cooperation and collaboration between three key centres of power, namely the Government, the DoE and the AEU. The study focused particularly on how the MoU stood in relation to the key issues currently facing education.

A qualitative case study was used to understand the educational context in which the MoU developed and the potential significance of the MoU for the future of Tasmanian public education. The adoption of an interpretive sociological standpoint has enabled this study to appreciate various perspectives on, and the complexity of, the key issues currently facing teachers and education. The study concerned itself particularly with issues and concerns brought to light by three interviewees representing the three 'centres of power' in Tasmanian public education.

### **Chapter Outline**

In the next chapter literature on key issues facing teachers and education will be reviewed. Subsequent chapters then elaborate the Methods and Procedures (Chapter 3), Summary of Interviews (Chapter 4), Discussion of the Issues Arising from the Interviews (Chapter 5), Key Issues Arising from the MoU (Chapter 6), plus Summary, Conclusion, and Implications (Chapter 7).

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

An exhaustive search by the author found no literature directly related to agreements of the same kind as the Tasmanian MoU. Literature broadly concerning the role of teacher unions in educational decision-making is reviewed here. Also reviewed is literature that provides a context for the MoU in a contemporary public education system.

To gain an understanding of the importance of the MoU in the development of public education in Tasmania it is necessary to view it within its broader context, that is, in light of the main issues affecting public education, and also recent developments in public education in both Australia and other countries. In turn, the main issues of education necessarily involve some view of how education may be in the future. Recognising the role of teachers, as being central to the delivery of educational change seems essential for ensuring that a fair and appropriate public education system can be developed and maintained.

In particular, these issues are discussed through such themes as: The nature of teachers' work; teacher motivation and stress; teachers and 'reculturing' schools; support, professionalism, and teacher empowerment; the curriculum; teacher job security; resourcing education; the nature of teacher associations; and the 'partners' in education.

This chapter is organised into the following topics: Public Education as an Important Public Investment; Private School or Public School – the Edges Blur; and A Century of Reform. These are followed by: Change and Work Intensification; The New Role of the Teacher Unions and Self-Managed

Schools; and Defining Teachers' Work. Following these are: Teacher Work Commitment and Stress; Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction; Teachers and Educational Change; and Reculturing Schools for Everyone's Benefit. The topics then following are: Support, Professionalism, Empowerment and Leadership; Teachers and the Curriculum; Workload, Work Value, Work Intensity and Educational Reform. Subsequent topics are: Status, Professionalism and Job Satisfaction; Job Security as a Major Condition of Employment; Resources; Teacher Unions as Educational Pressure Groups; Teacher Associations' Industrial and Professional Concerns; and Links Between the Partners in Public Education.

### **Public Education is an Important Investment**

The education system is one of the largest public assets in any modern economy. The total cost of education in Australia is about \$30 billion per annum nationally and it generates \$3.2 billion in export earnings and overall funding for schools for 1996-7 was around \$15 billion (ABS, 1999). Even in the small state of Tasmania the annual cost runs into hundreds of millions of dollars (ABS, 1999). The education 'industry' represents 6.2% of Australia's Gross Domestic Product, and has 5 million people working or participating in it (Mulford and Myhill, 1999).

Public education is a major social institution, so it must matter to our society. Indeed, Saul (1995) says public education is the single most important element in maintaining a democracy. The better people are educated, the wider and more possible it is to have sensible public debate and participation. Social mobility also increases with strong public education.

American demographer Harold Hodkinson (1990 cited in Townsend, Clark and Ainscow, 1999) demonstrated that for every dollar spent on a young person's education, six to eight dollars were saved in decreased problems, such as poverty, crime and poor health, later on in life. These statistics underscore the importance of maintaining and developing an effective public education system.

However, recognising the potential benefits of a vibrant public education system is not simply a recent phenomenon. For example, public education in Australia progressed rapidly in the two years following the Karmel report in 1973, when Commonwealth spending on schools increased from \$364 to \$1091 million (Marginson, 1997a). This was widely applauded in the Australian community. The Australian Teachers' Federation hailed the Karmel innovations as the greatest leap forward in public education to date.

One of the central focuses of the Karmel recommendations, as implemented by the Whitlam Federal Government, was equality of opportunity. Whitlam laid claim to this value in his policy speech of the 13<sup>th</sup> November 1972 (Whitlam, 1972). The Disadvantaged Schools Program, a result of the Karmel report, evidenced this belief in equality of opportunity (Connell, 1993). This was a compensatory education program that provided extra funding, administered separately from conventional school funding, to schools catering for economically disadvantaged children.

Whilst keeping the essence of Karmel's initiative, the Fraser Government adjusted the framework to alter the balance more favourably toward private schools, and in the process, nearly doubled the share of education funding to

private schools. What then followed was a great expansion in demand for private schooling (Marginson, 1997a).

There has been a major shift in values from the value of equality in education to the value of choice between schools, Marginson (1997a) argued. In one sense, this shift points to a contradiction in the beliefs about a private school education. The principle of an adult being able to exercise a choice between schools is somewhat contrary to the value of tolerance that is essential to pluralist society. This lack of tolerance is shown, in part, by the reasons why many middle class parents have, in the past twenty years, transferred their children to private schools. The perception is that schooling is a positional competition wherein 'good' parents, wanting the best for their children, must enrol them in a private school. Marginson (1997b) suggested that even with a radically improved public school system these parental anxieties and insecurities would remain. Marginson (1997a) also suggested that such a competitive view of society is far from a tolerant and inclusive one. In 'wanting the best' for their own children these parents are necessarily relegating 'the rest' to what they perceive as second best.

In a similar vein, Reid (1999) argued that a system of schools catering for specific homogenous groups within our society is a threat to democracy. Diversity within the public system of education is crucial, Reid argued, for building a healthy 'public' as a civil entity. Public schools are thus the place where the 'common good' is fashioned.

Walford (1992) argued that the main purpose of moves toward greater choice in education has been ideological, aimed at putting an end to egalitarianism



and building a differentiated system which is based on competition. Greater choice then becomes choice for those who can afford it.

The ideological underpinnings of such a competitive approach are not new. Marginson claimed (1997a) that Friedman espoused them as early as 1960 when he criticised the mechanism of 'fairness', as he argued it was difficult to decide what was fair, in distribution of goods. It was better, in his view, to let the market decide. Friedman argued, the educational market, monopolised as it then was by government funded schools, could not pay close attention to customer needs. His answer was to introduce competition and give customer's 'alternatives'. This view ultimately gave rise to Friedman advocating a voucher system for education, wherein the Government would issue parents with vouchers redeemable for a specified sum, at approved educational institutions. Parents could 'top up' their children's education by spending additional money of their own. The Government's role would be reduced to ensuring that schools met minimum standards and controlling the terms and conditions of vouchers. This system, in Friedman's view, would be good for the education system and, through the creation of new mass markets, be good for the economy (Marginson, 1997a).

Apple (1996) considered the rationale for the market view of education from a critical theory standpoint. Inequality under a market, according to Apple, is seen by neo-liberals as a good thing, and more inequality is an even better thing because making everyone, including the rich, richer is the only way to make the poor richer. The market is thus effectively romanticised by this neo-liberal position, and represented as the fairest provider (Apple, 1996), despite the fact that, according to Apple, the poor, in relation to the rich are indeed

getting poorer. Society, however, in Apple's view involves much more than the market.

In contrast, the neo-conservative rationale is based on attempting to strengthen who and what is traditionally privileged in society. This view sees a strong nuclear family, in a traditional sense, as guardian of social stability and a wedge against the welfare state and feminism. As well, this view holds that the poor would not be so poor if they had strong family structures that imparted moral values of hard work and obedience (Apple, 1996).

Apple (1996) saw the neo-liberal (privatisation and market choice) and neo-conservative (Christian values and 'back to basics') positions as two 'languages' which, when spoken together, form a rightist coalition of immense power. A particular focus for pursuing the ideology of this coalition, within the American sphere, is education.

Marginson (1997a) traced the development of the New Right educational agenda in Australia, and claims that, coupled with the push for marketising education, came the New Right concerns about educational standards. From the 1960s there had been behavioural shifts in society: Mass-mediated youth culture, feminism, student political revolt, ecological movements, the demise of the church, and family breakdown threatened traditional power relations in western societies.

The New Right strategically exploited the resulting conflict, anxiety, and confusion by blaming schools for these developments. With enrolments at an all time high during this period, crowded schools were in no position to supplement family and church teachings, whilst themselves being pulled in several directions due to policy reform and change (Marginson, 1997a).

Apple (1996) outlined the American experience of society's expectations about schools and argues that, in the neo-liberal view of society, schools are seen as both the cause of economic downturn and the means of fixing nearly all that is wrong. The kind of language used to describe the condition of schools was somewhat pathologic, wherein problems in schools are described as 'deficits' or 'diseases'.

By contrast, some educational progressives wanted a curriculum more relevant to each individual student and emphasised process over content in educational reform. Such progressives shunned ranking of students by traditional assessment procedures and self-motivation was favoured above punishment and reward. From the 1970s, there was a general move away from formality in government schooling, yet few schools were wholly progressive (Marginson, 1997a).

In the mid-1970s, a 'back to basics' movement developed, partly as a reaction to this perceived progressiveness and, Marginson (1997a) argued, the sudden increase in youth unemployment at that time created a new doubt about the value of education. Claims of declining standards came from employers, parents, and some teachers in tertiary institutions, even though these arguments were not supported by reliable empirical evidence, according to Marginson. What evidence there was – on literacy trends – mostly indicated an improvement over time, as evidenced by Little, (1985, cited in Marginson, 1997a). Claims about declining standards have however, attracted maximum publicity whilst distorting meaningful debate on the issue.

Marginson (1997a) noted that the 1979 National Inquiry into Education and Training highlighted the fact that there were many complaints from employers

about the high proportion of school leavers lacking sufficient literacy for the transition to work or further study. 'Soft curriculum options' and an abandonment of 'basics' were blamed for this (Marginson, 1997a). This is a narrow, largely self-interested view of education, yet successive Australian federal governments have signalled their alignment with business on this matter.

The 'cultural conservatives' were opposed to educational pluralism for a different reason. Their concern was to preserve a system of elite selection. Conservatives saw a competitive academic curriculum, with an emphasis on 'hard' subjects (especially mathematics and science), and the use of public examinations for university entrance, as the best way to ensure high standards and getting the best people to the top. The reality was, Marginson (1997a) argued, this served to defend the positional advantages of established elites.

Into the 1980s, Australian teachers and teacher unions came in for frequent criticism from cultural conservatives. Their professional abilities, political views, plus the way they dressed and spoke came under attack. Against this, was a truism that teachers had undue influence on educational policy through their unions' links with Labor governments (Marginson, 1997a).

Yet, at the same time, cultural conservatism did not necessarily accord with market liberalism or the needs of employers. Market reforms had the possibility of reducing academic authority. Employers simply wanted vocationalism and held little respect for the value of education for its own sake (Marginson, 1997a).

Marginson (1997a) argued that the New Right developed a synthesised version of the 'problems' defined in terms of 'standards' and 'discipline' and a view

of the 'solution' as liberal marketisation. These heterogeneous elements were held together by the notion of competition, both as an economic system and as a system of pedagogical control.

The Karmel report, in advocating parental choice, in selection of schools for their children, made no clear distinction between choice provided by the market approach, supported by the New Right, and choice as collective self determination within the framework of school-based planning. The powerful New Right, apparently through the support of the media, was able to set the agenda for choice in Australian education (Marginson, 1997a).

Findings from a recent Tasmanian study (Mulford and Myhill, 1999) provide support for Marginson's claim. Whereas Mulford and Myhill found that members of the public have a more positive view of the functioning of public schools when they have close experience of a school, it also emerged that the public was largely dependent on the mass media for general information about public schools. As the media frequently misrepresents public schools, it may be worthwhile for schools and education authorities to pursue a more balanced portrayal of the aims and functioning of public school.

For the 'cultural conservatives', according to Marginson (1997a), the way through the dilemma of choice and self-determination versus authority and control in Australia was a controlled market with regulated curriculum and standards. The 'cultural conservatives', initially fearful of an undermining of academic authority through a market approach, were, however, eventually co-opted as they saw that the positional advantage of leading private schools would remain unchanged. Marginson's (1997a) argument suggests that the net

result has been that hegemony against democratic approaches to public education has evolved.

Marginson's (1997a) account of an accord between 'cultural conservatives' and neo-liberals in Australia is similar to Apple's (1996) description of disparate right wing forces in North American culture. The American New Right has focused on schools in a hegemonic alliance. Apple regards this as a wide 'umbrella' comprising dominant political elites who are market-driven, economic and social conservatives who are concerned with 'high standards', discipline and social Darwinist competition, plus a largely white middle-class cohort which is mistrustful of the State and concerned with security and a return to traditional values. Apple (1996) further saw a new middle-class whose interests and advancement depend on the expanded use of mechanisms of accountability and efficiency as contributing to this hegemony.

In Australia, during the 1980s and 1990s, governments Labor and Liberal, apparently driven by economic rationalist agenda, have tended to accord with the liberal marketisation approach to education. Yet by contrast, in 'the home' of the liberal market, the USA, government support for democratic community oriented educational approaches, although continually under threat in many ways from the New Right, has grown under the Clinton administration (Apple 1996). General expenditure per student relative to per capita GDP in the USA was, even before the Clinton reforms, around twice that for Australia (see Appendix B for a comparison of levels of expenditure on education in OECD countries).

Ultimately, it seems it would be possible for an affluent society to have a publicly well-funded education system if enough people in that society were to

value public education. The insecurities of some parents wanting positional advantage for their children seem to be the fertile ground in which most major threats to public education are sown (Marginson, 1997a). Further, with greater parental support it would seem less likely that the politicians and media would attack public education (Mulford and Myhill, 1999).

### **Private School or Public School – the Edges Blur**

During the last two decades, there has been a major shift in public management in OECD countries involving, among other things: devolving authority and greater flexibility; new accountability practices; developing competition and choice; changing the management of human resources; and a strengthening of steering functions from the centre (OECD, 1995).

In this context of change in public management it was not surprising that the Hawke Federal Government in the 1980s abandoned the old Labor Party objective of ‘giving a helping hand’ and ‘working to the betterment of mankind’ for the more liberal-market oriented notion of wealth creation. According to Hattie (1993), during the 1980s, education became more vocationally oriented, accommodating the views of employer groups and unions, while teachers and communities gave little public resistance to this trend. This was apparent in the ideological standpoint of Labor’s notion of ‘the clever country’. So it seems there was in large part, a ‘business mode’ of thinking about education at that time. Those who adhered to this view often accepted, with little questioning, the premise that professional educators were at fault for getting education into the mess it was perceived to be in at the

time, and so they should have no say in how it would be remodelled (Hattie, 1993;; Marginson, 1997a).

The once widely accepted notion of education as a 'public good', and general view that a well-educated populace made for a better, more democratic society, subsided. This notion of education as a public good was gradually overtaken by a view of education for individual benefit and the idea that the cost of education should be borne by those individual beneficiaries.

Currently, it is the private education system in Australia that is the greatest beneficiary of increases in federal government spending on education, with their announcement that private school funding will rise by 9.4% compared with public schools receiving an increase of 4.6% (Reid, 1999).

Federal government claims are that, under their current system of funding, it is possible to get more and better education (Kemp & Howard, June, 1999; Kemp, Aug. 1999). Yet, it has abolished the former Labor Government's New Schools Policy, which had strictly regulated the establishment of new private schools, in favour of a policy of funding any non-government school that meets minimum state requirements. New schools can now be established without any analysis of the impact on neighbouring government or private schools. According to Reid (1999), there has indeed been a rapid growth in the number of small 'independent', largely fundamentalist, religiously based schools. Although there is more money, it seems, it will be spread among a much greater number of schools. The new private schools have been allowed to establish themselves under the rubric of 'choice', and been able to do so with the benefit of expanded funding arrangements. Yet it would be difficult



to see how, in many instances, such 'choice' can amount to an economically efficient use of education spending.

Reid (1999) argues that, since 1996, the Liberal Coalition Government has used the rhetoric of consumer choice and user-pays to subtly alter the terrain of educational debate. Reid argues that one of the most significant effects has been to blur the distinction between the public and private education systems, thus again challenging the whole notion of public education as a public good.

Sid Sidebottom MHR (1999), in a parliamentary speech on the current state of public education in Australia, claimed that the recent growth in both the number of private schools and their student populations had led some, like Caldwell (1998) to argue that all schools were now public schools. Sidebottom claimed that the reverse was really the case. With self-managing, and in some cases, self-funding schools, the increased power to hire and fire locally, and compulsory fees for public schooling, all schools are becoming in some ways private schools.

Michael Apple (1996) was highly critical of what he saw as a (western) worldwide trend toward market oriented approaches to education. He argued that market oriented approaches in education (even when coupled with a strong state control over a system of national curricula and testing) will exacerbate already existing and widespread class and race divisions. 'Freedom' and 'choice' in a new educational market, Apple suggested, will be for those who can afford them.

Hence, in this way, the current Federal Government arguments, that medium to high charging private schools' fees will become cheaper, thus making them more accessible as more public money is channelled to them, seem difficult to

sustain. Indeed, Reid (1999) claims a majority of Australians would find it difficult to pay even one-tenth of the existing fees.

The call for something to be done about the pervasiveness of hard-line market-liberalism comes not only from the political left, as it may have done some decades ago, but also from progressive liberals. Argy (1998, May 6), suggested that progressive liberals are as keen as 'hard' liberals to remove unnecessary impediments to the efficient operation of markets. These 'hard' liberals, Argy noted, are concerned only for an ever-expanding economy or 'national cake.' The pervasiveness of this neo-liberal position leaves more progressive liberals wondering about the quality and distribution of that 'cake'. Argy was calling for a restoration of both competence and compassion to Australian society. Education, it would seem, is at the centre of that call.

Argy (1998) was particularly critical of Australian federal and state governments who discourage or even repress dissent from their economic orthodoxy. He called for a counter-coalition of people such as church groups, moderate trade unions, progressive business leaders, and a host of others to stop Australians proceeding relentlessly down the road of free market liberalism before we lose our largely consensual society. After all, the improvements in efficiency, so doggedly pursued by the proponents of free market liberalism, might be equally obtained by other, less divisive, means (Argy, 1998, May 6).

This is not to argue that there is no place for the market in public schools, but rather, that blind acceptance of the path of liberal marketisation may not be the best way to reform schools to become better learning institutions. Therefore it may be possible, or given the current political and economic climate,

incumbent upon schools, to develop an educationally responsible market model. Such a model may take into account effects on the curriculum, teaching, and assessment that school forays into the marketplace may have. Also, a school may have to decide whether in marketing itself it is promoting its educational functions or merely advertising to show the appearance of quality (Kenway, 1995). Kenway sounds a warning to schools that are being approached by numerous national and international companies, whose motives and means for wanting to be involved in education, may not be congruent with school and educational aims and functions.

### **A Century of Reform**

Tyack and Cuban (1995) explained how a century of reform in American education has produced very little change. The 'grammar' of schooling, its structural and organisational forms, persist. According to Tyack and Cuban, change is hardest to achieve where it counts- in the daily interactions of teachers and students. Teachers whose knowledge and skill place them in the best position to make changes from the 'inside' might legitimately be seen as key actors in the reform process. Tyack and Cuban (1995) favoured this kind of reform, which they called 'positive tinkering'.

They claimed that a vision of democracy has marked the best discourse about the future of social and educational goals over the past century. The gap between the ideal and the actual is not a reason to dispense with public education but rather a reason to take stock, see what is good and to build on that effectively. Tyack and Cuban (1995) called not for an entirely teacher centred reform, but for the inclusion of teachers as there is a greater chance

this way than with only 'top-down' reform. There is no doubt, in Tyack and Cuban's (1995) view, that teachers will need assistance. For example, in development of new curricula, such assistance should take the form of a 'hybridising' model wherein individual schools and teachers are able to implement curricula, developed in collaboration, in ways that are appropriate to them. In a similar vein, that reform is most effective, Fullan (1993) reminded us, when it is focussed on the teaching and learning aspects of education, involving teachers at the centre of that process. That is, when it is contextual: When it is developed closest to where it is to be implemented.

### **Change and Work Intensification**

As Fullan (1993) and Blackmore *et al.* (1996) pointed out, most teachers began their career because they actually cared about children and wanted to make a difference in their lives. Though some may have lost sight of that aim, Fullan considered the vast majority of public school teachers persevere with a hope of providing children with a brighter future. Fullan also argued however, that schools do not nurture the sense of moral purpose with which many teachers began their careers.

As Fullan (1993) noted, it is of critical importance that teachers do their job well, but they are human beings, despite some of the inhuman feats that many perform daily. As humans, they have their limits and breaking points as well as a myriad of strategies they sometimes employ just to survive. That many teachers may seem passive in the face of the difficult conditions of their work may seem a mystery to the casual observer. Yet, Fullan argued, teachers compartmentalise their lives, as do many citizens and employees in our

society. The balance of work/non-work aspects of their lives is rarely a subject for staff development.

What teachers need in order to develop and sustain an effective public education system may be less expensive than the economic rationalists might think. To develop schools as learning organisations in which teachers develop the necessary connectedness, through understanding and dealing with each other as whole people, may be a valuable first step.

The theory of school self-management suggests, according to Whitty, Power and Halpin. (1998), that teachers will be the most empowered by devolutionary reform. However, this requires central authorities trusting teachers, that is those closest to the 'action', to make decisions unencumbered by bureaucratic interference. Teachers have been, according to Angus (1994), the objects or receivers of policy rather than professional participants. This view is supported by Mulford and Bishop (1996 and 1999), who claimed that some approaches to School Based Management [SBM] have reduced trust between teachers and principals, lessened teacher ownership of the curriculum, decreased professionalism, and lowered organisational health.

There are many different ways in which devolution can take, and has taken, place. Such moves can enhance the professionalism of teachers and include parents in a partnership approach to educating children. However, as Whitty *et al.* (1998), pointed out, some neo-liberal policies could affect teachers and parents quite differently, as in Victoria in the 1980s and 1990s. Devolution might well be taking place there, but it seems not of a very professionally empowering kind. Whitty *et al.* (1998) and Blackmore *et al.* (1996) pointed out that the radical restructuring under the Victorian Schools of the Future was

aimed at empowering teachers and enhancing 'true leadership' at school level, making schools more able to respond to local need. Yet Blackmore *et al.* found that teachers were disempowered and schools became focused on survival in the market rather than educational matters. A culture of competitive individualism had replaced the previous collegial one, as principals could now hire and fire, and a system of performance-based pay for teachers was being introduced. Reduced staffing, DoE directives on assessment procedures, and accountability further intensified the work of teachers and schools.

Whitty *et al.* (1998) also argued that rather than increasing teacher professionalism under SBM, the reverse may be happening. The way reforms are being introduced suggests that teaching be viewed as a 'technocratic-reductionist' rather than a 'professional-contextual' activity. There are differing notions of what constitutes teacher professionalism. For example, the pedagogical aim of 'educational outcomes' seems more technocratic-reductionist compared with the aim of 'development of diverse human capabilities', which seems more professional-contextual. To this extent, the idea of professional autonomy seems to be giving way to a market-driven technocratic-reductionist ideology (Whitty *et al.* 1998; Mulford and Bishop, 1996).

Further, Whitty *et al.* (1998) argued that there has been a shift from democratic leadership to a market phase in school leadership, therefore teachers are not, on the whole, enthusiastic about local management, as they see little in it for assisting and empowering their ability to teach.

Whitty, *et al.* (1998) found that research shows work intensification rather than empowerment is the result of school self-management. A Queensland study of 71 primary schools, by Andrews *et al* (cited in Whitty, *et al.* 1998, p.68.) shows teachers working a fifty hour week, and having to fit numerous activities into any 'free time'. They seem to have a load of non-teaching duties that spread well beyond the time for which they are paid. Bishop's (1999) study of Victorian teachers also showed they typically worked between 46 and 50-hour weeks. Recent AEU figures showed 26% of teachers in Australia working upwards of 50 hours per week (AEU, 1999a).

Such intensification of teachers' work brings into question concerns about the health of schools as organisations, and the health of the individuals within them as it has resulted in tensions between principals and teachers (Cavanagh, 1995). There is a wide body of evidence to suggest that the relationship between teachers and principals has deteriorated under School-Based Management (Blackmore *et al*, 1996; Bishop and Mulford, 1996; Bishop, 1998), and teachers feel that their classroom work is less valued than many extra-curricula activities. Teachers have not been enthusiastic about having to attend more meetings and engage in 'contrived collegiality', as it has added to the intensification of their work yet not resulted in a strong sense of empowerment (Bishop and Mulford, 1996) nor added to improvements in student learning (Caldwell, 1998).

Principals under SBM have become business managers rather than the educational leader (Bishop, 1998) many may have envisaged becoming. There has also been less networking between schools, as relationships become framed by competition (Bishop, 1998; Marginson, 1997a).

Whitty *et al.* (1998) cited Menter *et al.*'s United Kingdom research, which showed that while a minority of teachers embraced the new market oriented local management, a larger number simply complied and others resisted. There were significant changes at school level affecting the nature of teachers' work and employment conditions. Schools attempted to make limited budgets go further by employing less qualified, part-time, casual teachers on performance based contracts.

In Australia, both Robertson (1995) and Blackmore (1996) suggested that the casualisation of the teaching force raises gender-based concerns, with women more likely to be the casual, part-time, lower paid teachers. In some classrooms parents, predominantly mothers, were being used as unpaid substitute teachers. Also, when there were opportunities to be involved in school-based decision-making, men were more likely to participate in this than were women (Blackmore, 1996). The professional development and career advancement of part-time and casual teachers also becomes a school concern, as it has become a concern of the union movement (ACTU, 1997).

Stratification is also evident, according to Whitty *et al.* (1998), in the move toward SBM in that it encourages an individual rather than a collective professionalism. The traditional support provided for teachers through their trade unions is being eroded as governments have enacted legislation aimed at reducing union power, particularly in New Zealand, but also in Australia. Some state governments, most particularly Victoria, have refused to formally recognise teacher unions. Those governments have aligned themselves against unions who have tried to resist the intensification of labour in schools (Whitty *et al.* 1998).



With greater casualisation of the teaching force, and governments who, for example, refuse to process pay deductions for union subscriptions, it is difficult for unions to maintain their traditional, broad-based membership. Teacher unions in such places are therefore at risk of becoming totally marginalised.

Therefore, through changes in the nature of their work, its intensification and lack of genuine attempts to involve teachers in decision-making processes, teacher morale and organisational health in public schools appear to be far from optimal. Under these conditions, schools and teachers may not be in the position to adequately manage the change process.

### **The New Role of the Teacher Unions and Self-Managed Schools**

Trade unions and teacher associations have, in the past, tended to be seen as concerned primarily with industrial issues and even, on occasion, seemed at odds with some 'professional' or broader educational matters. However, this has not always been so according to Bascia (1998), who suggested that educational matters have been pursued by teacher associations.

Bascia suggested that in North America, the traditional perception of teacher unions as being only concerned with industrial issues is changing. In fact, many see their responsibility to improve the quality of teaching and learning as a major priority.

To this end, teacher unions work simultaneously on educational and industrial matters. Many are currently directly involved in partnerships with education authorities on reform projects. Indeed the AEU in Tasmania is a partner with

the state Department of Education in looking at teachers' and principals' workloads (AEU & DECCD, 1998).

Much of this work, however, is unpublicised because positive media coverage of teacher unions is scant and negative coverage of their industrial efforts is common. Much of educational literature, according to Bascia (1998), says little about the unions and their involvement in improving education. North American teachers, themselves varying in their opinions about their unions' worth, still see some kind of collective voice as necessary for countering the impacts of policy initiatives on conditions of employment.

Bascia (1998) noted how successful partnerships have developed between the teacher unions and departments of education, universities, and district administrators in North America. Her suggestion is that much of this is unseen by teachers and, therefore understandably, neither comprehended nor valued.

Teachers frequently do not know much about the work that is done by the union in forging greater links between education authorities, government and university faculties in efforts to further the cause and achievements of public education. That much of this work remains beyond the view of mainstream teachers may be a reflection of the marginal position the union held for many teachers. For most teachers there are enough meetings to attend at school level without opting for involvement in union decision-making processes. Yet, in Australia, efforts are continually made to involve teachers at all levels of union decision-making (AEU, 1998).

That teachers do not opt to participate in the processes that might develop public education seems to support the suggestion of Saul (1997), that late twentieth century man has given himself up as a political entity in the

traditional sense. He has allowed his political self to be subjugated to a corporate entity. The social value of participation in debate seems to have disappeared from modern life (Saul, 1997).

According to Whitty *et al.* (1998) there has been a call in the United Kingdom for a new mode of operation within teacher unions. The call is for a 'strategic' or 'professional' unionism through which unions negotiate professional as well as industrial issues with a view to becoming partners with management in educational decision-making wherein they serve the best interests of learners (Whitty, *et al.* 1998).

As well, in the US (Nathan cited in Whitty *et al.*, 1998), there have been unions willing to abandon their resistance to charter school initiatives in order to develop new roles. This approach sees unions operating as brokers at local school and district level to introduce revised teaching programs for public schools. A devolved education system, it seems, requires a devolved union structure and new ways of securing labour representation. One example of this can be found in current union literature (ACTU, August, 1999).

This workplace-oriented approach indicates the need for teachers as unionists to be involved in decision-making at local school level. There are difficulties with this as management committee meetings are an aspect of work intensification for teachers which potentially takes their attention away from their primary role as educators.

In contrast, Caldwell and Spinks (1988) posited a different model of school self-management in which there is clear distinction between principals and a small group of senior management people who make policy and teachers who

simply implement it. Their model saw little room for broad-based participation in decision-making.

At system level, there is a difficulty in deciding just how far teacher unionists can move toward developing a participatory democratic school. The doubt comes as much from teachers not wanting any more commitments of time to distract their already intensified work (Bishop, 1998), as from management fearing erosion of their power to manage. However, it may be in teachers' and principals' interests to value some form of democratic participation in school decision-making if shared visions for school plans are to be implemented effectively and trust is to be built within the school system.

Whitty *et al.* (1998) conceptualised three different stages of development or 'generations' of unionism. The first generation is the traditional trade union that simply reacts to management decisions, the second generation sees much more workplace union activity, but only in the form of advising members of their rights, and interests, and negotiating at local level over grievances. The third generation sees a union that is able to work in partnership with management to the mutual benefit of both in getting the work done as efficiently as possible.

Whitty *et al.* (1998) argued there is a fine line to be drawn between this 'third generation' approach and a union that, in so doing, compromises its ability to defend the interests of its members. They cited examples of city technical colleges in the UK where staff associations lacking any teeth in negotiating conditions for members, represented teachers. Working longer hours under fixed term contracts was, arguably, not well compensated by private health insurance. This kind of 'flexibility' and 'enhanced professionalism' could be

seen as exploitation and worsening working conditions for teachers (ACTU, 1997).

In having to cooperate on decision-making boards, unions may find themselves out-numbered by other representatives (eg. management, parent or business representatives). In this scenario they may then have sold off recourse to more direct action.

Teachers in New Zealand, according to Sullivan (1994, cited in Whitty *et al.* 1998), were not consulted in sweeping national reforms resulting in a hierarchical system that did little to engender trust.

In Sweden, Granstrom (1996) found that newly decentralised schools were attempting to make team decisions, however, characteristics of the previous hierarchical system prevailed to the extent that people went through the motions of collaborating, yet, in reality, decisions were made in the old paternalistic way. This appeared to be largely due to teachers feeling insecure in their new role. It seems that people unused to making decisions now need to learn how to better participate and negotiate.

Schools in the UK, New Zealand, several states in the USA as well as parts of Australia have been subject to standardised indicators of student performance. Typically, these indicators have been published as 'league tables' and act as consumer guides to schools. Conservative governments, and media, have used these tables to support the notion that self-managing schools are better performers because they are under scrutiny from the market. Yet individual schools that appear successful in these published tables, because of self-management, may merely have attracted students from higher socioeconomic groups (Whitty *et al.*, 1998). If this is so, then their success appears much

more a marketing success, resulting in a changed student population, than an educational one.

Marketing is at least part of the function of a self-managing school (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988). Even one funded by a government on a per capita basis needs to ensure future enrolments in order to protect future years' budgets. Schools reliant on sponsorship for even part of their budgets would, it seems, have to devote further effort to marketing. The cost of marketing schools is likely, according to Whitty *et al.*, (1998) to result in reduced resources at classroom level. Cooper (1994) suggested that the English funding formula can reward or punish schools according to performance year-by-year. Reduced funding which comes from reduced enrolments and poor performance on 'league tables' means that schools in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas would be likely to suffer. Often when funds are reduced, resources at classroom level can also be reduced, further compounding the school's ability to perform.

Wylie's New Zealand study of the fifth year of self-managing schools is cited by Whitty *et al.* (1998). Maori schools in particular were found to have suffered resource problems from the reforms.

In short, Whitty *et al.* (1998) argued that under self-management marketing and administration, the system's new functions detract, in terms of time and money, from the school's ability to perform its prime function of educating. Per capita funding under this regime creates financial uncertainty and even diverts resources away from where they are most needed.

Indeed the very efficiency, effectiveness, and provision of equity of schools under self-management is questionable. The claim, that with self-managing

schools reduced bureaucratic control allows them to be more responsible to local need in deployment of resources (Caldwell, 1998), may be unfounded. Whitty *et al.* (1998) concluded that there are insufficient grounds on which to claim that self-managing schools enhance student attainment. Whitty *et al.*'s doubts about this capacity were forecast by Bishop and Mulford (1996), who suggested student outcomes were unlikely to improve under Schools of the Future. It was a prediction that was subsequently acknowledged by its architects (Caldwell, 1998).

Moreover, according to Whitty *et al.* the measurement of achievement through narrow academic criteria leads to advantaged schools being judged as good schools. The narrow academic requirements of the market (parents choosing where to send their children) leads the school to further narrow its focus and reduces the likelihood of fresh, alternative forms of school arising. There is thus less choice under a competitive market driven approach to resource allocation in education. However, there is more social and educational polarisation as those who have the wealth to put their children into elite private schools, or affluent government schools, get more of a return on their investment, and the disadvantaged are concentrated in the geographically nearby schools that often rank second best. Equity is therefore a major casualty of a system of market deployment of resources (Blackmore *et al.*, 1996, Whitty *et al.*, 1998).

Whitty *et al.*, (1998) claimed that overall self-management across the five countries studied has failed to either alter the balance of power between lay and professional stakeholders in education or empower teachers. They also claim that self-management has failed to achieve greater community

involvement, provide diversity of educational experiences, and enhance teacher professionalism. They further argue that self-management has neither increased school effectiveness nor widened students' educational opportunities.

The process of reform toward self-management remains, however, the most pervasive and enduring of educational reforms of the recent decade.

One of the concluding points made in the review of self-managing schools by Whitty *et al.* (1998) was that the shift towards self-management and liberal marketisation has been based on a rather simplistic notion. This notion was that by transposing the organisational characteristics of successful private and advantaged schools on to the less successful, the latter will also become successful.

Organisational characteristics were found by Chubb and Moe (1990), from data gathered across a wide range of UK schools, to account for only 5 % of the variation in student outcome scores. Further, it is arguable that if all schools performed as well as the best schools, then the stratification of achievement by social class would be even more stark. The problem of inequality in education appears to be much deeper than education itself. Patterns of poverty and social disadvantage in a society reproduce themselves and are extremely tenacious inter-generationally. These inequalities are compounded by 'user pays' economic rationalist public policy.

Fullan (1993), in reviewing the major research on schools as learning organizations, provided a useful perspective on the position of schools in relation to the problem of inequality when he notes, "schools obviously cannot



solve the problems alone, but they must see themselves as part of the solution” (p. 43).

The view of Whitty *et al.*(1998) accords with Saul (1997) that neither the market nor the state is likely to restore legitimacy to educational decision-making. Rather, what is required is a revitalised civil society and new forms of democracy more suited to our time. Thus democratic political parties and trade unions, having been developed in the nineteenth century, have promoted new ideas about governance that were often best suited to that industrial era in society. It may be that new and more appropriate forums are required in the knowledge-based third millennium. Saul (1997) argued it will be up to individuals and groups to make progressive innovations happen.

One concern about opening up schools to democratic activity is that it may release reactionary as well as progressive forces. Fullan (1999) believes this is a real prospect. Also, the production of elites may be an inevitable result of an active minority seeking to advance their own interests at the expense of the majority (Whitty, 1998). However, in a democratic system, such elites can be called to account (Saul, 1997).

### **Defining Teachers' Work**

If we more fully understand what it is that teachers do, then it may be possible to decide what they need in order to do it more effectively.

Lacking a formal job description which can be found in other professions such as nursing, Tasmanian teachers in turning to the Tasmanian State Service Regulations Section 285 (1994) may be no more enlightened about the nature of their work. This document requires them to “consider suggestions and carry

out instructions” of their superiors, to “teach in accordance with ...the Education Act 1932” (now superseded), to “maintain discipline within the school”, to keep records, and “punctually furnish returns”. These regulations, however, merely serve to describe a teacher’s position within the bureaucracy. A definition of teachers’ work is elusive because many experienced teachers do not quite know how to describe all of what it is they are doing. Schon’s (1991) case studies have also shown that outstanding teachers often have difficulty fully explaining why they make decisions to teach the way they do. Teachers’ knowledge and experience combine so that intuition forms the basis for educational decisions.

Connell (1985) pointed out that the labour process of a teacher is unusual when compared with that of other workers. “the object of teachers’ labour is difficult to specify, so the definition of their task can expand almost without limit, and the work could be intensified indefinitely” (p.86).

Hence, definitions of teachers’ work expand and contract depending on what is included. One definition that took shape in the early 1990s was strongly criticised by Seddon (1992). According to Seddon, this view suggests that teaching is only what takes place within the narrow confines of a teaching and learning situation. Seddon was concerned that there may be a push to a kind of ‘fundamentalism’ in the definition of teachers’ work, as indeed there had been a push toward a kind of fundamentalism in the curriculum particularly from the New Right. Seddon was concerned that under such a restrictive definition of teachers’ work, only what happens in the classroom in a teaching and learning situation might be counted. This push toward a rather limited, clinical definition leaves aside teachers’ involvement in social relationships in schools,

which are constantly shaping the culture of education, the classroom learning culture and the very nature of teachers' work. Furthermore, it fails to properly account for some of the myriad other tasks performed by teachers in the running of a school, which often occupy by far the majority of their working day. The complexity and intensity of teacher's work is thus lost under such a narrow view.

The simplistic view of teachers' work criticised by Seddon (1992) is similar to the narrow view that Fullan (1993) criticised when discussing the way teacher training institutions prepare, or rather, too frequently fail to prepare, teachers for beginning their careers. Fullan suggested an approach to teacher education that focuses on teaching as a learning profession throughout a teacher's career, can develop teachers with a keen 'moral purpose' and as 'change agents'. Whatever the cut-up of the teacher's working day, Fullan claimed it is the inspiration that teachers provide for their students, through the establishment of sound relationships, which has the greatest ongoing effect.

To try to list all the things teachers do, the time they spend on those things, in the course of their work still does not arrive at a useful definition of the essential qualities a teacher puts into the process of learning. More appropriately, Fullan (1993) attempted to map the work of teachers by identifying the skills, knowledge and commitment required to be an effective teacher. These include: a capacity to work with *all* students; being continuous learners themselves; developing and applying knowledge of the curriculum, instruction, principals of learning and evaluation and implementation; initiating, valuing and practising collaboration and partnerships with students,

parents and colleagues; working within ethical and legal requirements; and developing a personal philosophy of teaching.

There would seem to be major obstacles, for example, large class sizes and work intensification, for teachers in attempting to fulfil these aims. For example, teachers might need encouragement and support to participate in ongoing professional development, and they may need empowerment and time to engage in development of curriculum and new learning and collegial environments to implement real learning partnerships. A deep and well-founded philosophy of teaching and learning, and a sound personal code of ethics may be a major aim of ongoing teacher professional development, and take years to engender. Wealth of experience and the richness of theory can combine in both individuals and collegially within groups of teachers seeking to understand more about what it is they do and why (Tyack and Cuban, 1995; Fullan, 1993; and Dinham and Scott, 1996).

Perhaps such depth of understanding would allow teachers to define their work for themselves taking into account the most important, quality aspects of the job. In Fullan's (1993) view, a beginning point might be: Forming and sustaining quality relationships with students, colleagues and parents and developing the conditions for life-long learning.

This at least begins to identify conceptually the quality and complexity of the educational work process. The craft skills that an effective teacher employs to create the conditions for learning include ways of conveying information, managing groups, relating to pupils, and managing time. Some skills may not be able to be taught in teacher education courses. Rather, they may develop

with the personality of the teacher and/or through years of experience, sharing with other teachers and frequently trial and error (Connell, 1985).

### **Teachers' Work, Commitment, and Stress**

A beginning teacher, in many instances, is quite vulnerable until they have worked out their own particular strategy of survival (Connell, 1985). If not nurtured carefully the required teacher skills may become entirely survival oriented. Fullan (1993) outlined a process whereby an enthusiastic young graduate in a challenging classroom situation can reach burnout in a relatively short time even when surrounded by well-meaning and traditionally supportive colleagues.

The process can ultimately become one of embitterment because many teachers begin their work with enthusiasm and dedication (Fullan 1993). Initially there is a real sense that the work is socially meaningful and full of personal satisfaction. The inevitable difficulties of teaching interact with personal issues and vulnerabilities, as well as social pressures and values, to result in a reassessment of what the job involves and what one is to put into it (Fullan, 1993). Different teachers will react to this type of context in different ways. Some teachers may leave the profession. Others may not see an alternative career path and so continue on in a defensive or alienated mode. They will not give much of themselves, knowing that the little extra reward they may gain is not worth the extra effort and possible frustration along the way.

It is not only relatively inexperienced teachers who suffer from a similar scenario to the one described above, but this may also be a more widespread

phenomenon. Teachers, representing only 2% of the workforce, account for around 40% of workers' compensation claims for stress related illness (McHugh, 1999). Poate, (1999) noted that this figure means that teachers are over represented in stress related cases by a factor of twenty, or 2000%.

According to Spaul and Hince (1986), the problem of teacher stress appears to be at epidemic proportions. Because teacher stress was virtually unrecognised before the 1980s, there are few comparative studies, which establish the history, and even now there is little empirical evidence to explain, or even properly confirm, the apparent sudden increase in stress.

As recently as in the mid 1980s the Victorian Education Department had still not formally recognised the issue of teacher stress, even though it had become a major issue for teacher unions across the country (Spaul and Hince, 1986).

Teacher self-concept, or the way teachers view themselves in relation to their work may provide some insight into how best to deal with the burgeoning problem of teacher stress. A study by Hart and Murphy (1990), wherein they interviewed many young and beginning teachers, showed that the teachers with 'high promise and ability' had certain criteria for assessing their work and teaching as an occupation. They saw security was less important for them than professional growth opportunities. While teacher empowerment appealed to all groups of new teachers, the 'high promise' group saw this as an opportunity to provide leadership and influence student learning. Low status of the teaching profession was a source of dissatisfaction for the high group teachers, and their job satisfaction was related to clear linkages between work structures, incentives, teaching and learning and performance outcomes. Professional development and growth were more attractive to high group

teachers, and they felt less constrained in their future career opportunities. It was subsequently found that high group teachers were particularly affected by unfulfilling work conditions. Clumsy attempts at improvement added insult to injury for this group.

The empowering teacher characteristics described above appear to be, for the most part, both desirable and learnable for most teachers. Yet it needs to be remembered that most teachers are not exceptional and may therefore respond to different motivations to the ones outlined above.

In their relationship to their work and colleagues, those high group teachers seemed to have an ability to get what they needed from their work environment to be effective, to grow professionally and also to assist others to grow in their work. These features of teachers' working lives need to be better understood for organisational learning and benefit – particularly given that research by Dinham (1992; 1995) and Dinham and Scott, (1996), has found that only around one third of New South Wales teacher respondents thought their pre-service training 'adequately' prepared them for teaching.

Many teachers, it seems, began their careers with great enthusiasm despite feeling ill prepared training-wise for the job. In contrast to the success of some teachers, school culture can be less than supportive of others, as stress-related illness among teachers has recently reached alarmingly high levels (McHugh, 1999).

### **Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction**

Herzberg's (1966) seminal study of worker motivation, 'Herzberg's Dual Factor Theory of Job Satisfaction and Motivation', may be instructive in

relation to some of the recent issues of teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction in Australian public schools. Herzberg viewed job satisfaction as consisting of two separate dimensions: Job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. These two dimensions were based on the notion of a dual human need: In the first instance, psychological advancement and in the second instance, avoidance of pain. Herzberg's first hypothesis was that high job satisfaction is not, in the main, brought about by the absence of job 'dissatisfiers'.

The most potent characteristics leading to work satisfaction were seen as those fostering the individual's need for self-actualisation and self-realisation in his work: For example, intrinsic factors like a sense of performing interesting and worthwhile work. Dissatisfaction was characterised by the individual's relationship to his work environment rather than the work itself. Therefore, working conditions, salary, recognition and interpersonal relations were seen as the key factors affecting dissatisfaction.

Herzberg's second hypothesis was that satisfiers, rather than absence of dissatisfiers, were effective in motivating the individual to better work performance. Herzberg's research was criticised (House and Wigdon, 1967) for relying on interviewees' own interpretation of the sources of their satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The basis for the criticism was that when things go well people tend to want to claim the success for themselves and when things go poorly they may blame the environment. Thus Herzberg's theory was seen as 'method bound' (House and Wigdon, 1967).

Herzberg was also criticised for necessitating subjective interpretation of the data on the part of the researcher (House and Wigdon, 1967). These criticisms aside, the research is now some forty years old and pertains to an occupational



and social climate that is quite different to the current circumstances of teachers in the post-modern era. The dichotomous structure of the theory is also quite simplistic. However, conceptually, when Herzberg pointed to the conflicting nature of human need, he may have provided a useful starting point for a more contemporary study on job satisfaction. A mere reduction in job dissatisfaction may not lead to greater quality of output, nor may it necessarily create a satisfied worker, and if a worker is satisfied she/he may, even so, not necessarily be very productive at all. The interplay between satisfiers, dissatisfiers and whatever factors lead to greater productivity would seem a matter for further research if we are to better understand the function of management, worker, union, employer and workplace.

If Herzberg's (1966) theory has even partial application, unions may not be achieving their aim of looking after the welfare of their members if, by struggling only for the minimisation of job dissatisfiers, they are ignoring factors that could assist workers' self-actualisation.

Conley and Levinson (1993) note that since Herzberg's (1966) foundational work, a body of thought has developed which views job satisfaction as contingent on the interaction of work experiences and personal values. The answer to teacher motivation and satisfaction may therefore be a complex one, as Conley and Levinson (1993) found that determinants of job satisfaction varied across different categories of teachers. They found that whilst extrinsic rewards were strong predictors of job satisfaction for less experienced teachers, giving teachers opportunity to use their special abilities was an important satisfier for more experienced teachers.

Research by Dinham and Scott (1997) into teacher satisfaction and motivation, in Western Sydney, found school-based factors to be at greatest variance when schools were compared. Earlier work by Dinham and Scott (1996) in Western Sydney placed this school based domain of factors between the universally perceived, intrinsic rewards (most satisfying) such as self growth and student achievement, and universally perceived extrinsic hindrances (most dissatisfying) such as work loads and the status of teaching. These factors included aspects such as school leadership and decision-making, school reputation, school climate, and school infrastructure. It was found that this domain of factors showed the greatest variance between schools. The researchers suggested therefore that these would be the factors with greatest potential for change (Dinham and Scott, 1996).

Dinham and Scott (1996) claimed that school leadership style, decision-making and communication processes within schools directly determine school climate and effectiveness. Also, that local idiosyncratic contexts, like the local school community and its relationship with the school, and the nature and morale of students and staff, dictate the best balance of these school-based factors.

In their recommendations, Dinham and Scott (1997) suggested that school communities explore and frequently revisit their own leadership, communication, and decision-making processes. Feedback processes between school leaders and teaching staff were recommended for helping to foster the kind of collegiality needed to solve the majority of problems at school level.

It is doubtful whether these processes alone will be enough to solve the micro-political contradictions and dilemmas and forge a positive, supportive school.

After all, a school within a public education system is not a community of equals (Connell, 1993). It is fundamentally unequal both in its internal structures and as a part of a stratified school system, so power is therefore quite unequally distributed. The hierarchy of staff from class teacher through senior staff to principal reflects these power inequalities.

At both a macro and micro-political level, Dinham and Scott (1997) found that by far the most dissatisfying aspects of teachers' work were those matters over which they felt they had least control. This suggests that teacher empowerment might be one effective means by which to reduce teacher dissatisfaction.

Dinham and Scott (1996) in their study on teacher motivation and health (also in Western Sydney) made numerous recommendations for improvement. These recommendations fell mainly into several themes or categories. These themes included: Improving the status of teachers and teaching (which Dinham and Scott saw as being achievable through the maintenance of teachers' salaries) providing positive public awareness of school achievements; attracting people of quality to teaching; and appropriate screening of applicants for teacher training.

Dinham and Scott noted the importance of improving teacher recognition, appraisal and development. These were to be achieved, in part, by identifying individual teacher and teacher-executive strengths and weaknesses and developing a personal professional development program.

Dinham and Scott (1996) envisaged the need for better leadership and decision-making processes and greater collegiality. It was thought that by breaking down barriers between groups and individuals, and continually

evaluating and reviewing modes of leadership within schools, leadership, decision-making and collegiality might be improved.

Staffing, resources and workloads were seen, by Dinham and Scott (1996), to be in need of greater equity. By providing more specialist staff, redressing resource inequities, and examining individual teacher workloads, it was thought that more manageable and equitable spread of work could be achieved.

Concurring with Tyack and Cuban (1995), who reviewed a century of educational reform in the USA, and Fullan (1993), Dinham and Scott (1996) perceived the need to focus on the core aspects of schools, that is: Teaching and learning, behaviour management and change management. Improving departmental support for teachers and schools was deemed necessary by central authorities keeping schools informed, consulting with schools and teachers, reducing policy requirements, and reviewing teacher promotion procedures and criteria. Further, Dinham and Scott considered important the involvement of the NSW Teachers' Federation in contributing to improved decision-making. Nonetheless, it was noted that that the NSW Teachers' Federation needed to reassess its industrial and professional priorities to be more in keeping with the professional needs of teachers.

### **Teachers and Educational Change**

The 1998 report of the Senate inquiry into the status of the teaching profession observed that teaching in the 1990s was: "...a profoundly more complex and professionally demanding activity than it was 20 years ago" (Crowley, 1998).

Yet, changes have often been interpreted by teachers as ‘happening to them and around them’, rather than being ‘driven by them’ (Bishop, 1998). Many of the changes have, in effect, been societal changes (Marginson, 1997a). Hargreaves (1994) saw a number of paradoxes surrounding these educational changes which have taken place over recent decades. Included amongst the paradoxes nominated by Hargreaves are parental control (parents requiring schools to do what they can not or will not), control (devolution of decision-making to schools coupled with tighter controls and accountability), and globalisation (learning via the Internet whilst there are still, particularly within Australia, parochial education departments). In the change process itself, Hargreaves saw there is also a paradox: The uncertainty of what kind of future we are educating our young for often generates a nostalgia for traditional subjects and a ‘back to basics’ approach (Hargreaves, 1995).

Yet change, in its various guises, is a given factor in post-modern society. Hargreaves (1994) explained this by noting that schools and teachers are being caught up in a worldwide transformation of politics, economics, and technology. He argued that these flow-on effects of change contain risks for school-based personnel. For example, if teachers go on struggling alone to cope with the pervasion of the modern world and its problems into their classrooms, it is bound to result in guilt, perfectionism, and burnout. Hargreaves claimed that as a way of dealing with change and avoiding its negative side effects, teachers need to be empowered to take control of the change process. Hence, Hargreaves’ call was for greater collaboration and cooperation between teachers, as together, they have a far greater chance of solving educational problems collectively than in isolation.

Fullan (1993) saw teachers as moral agents of change in society. Teachers, in his view, have embraced change for some thirty years now. The teacher who works for the status quo, in his view, is far from the norm and may even be viewed as a traitor to the profession. For Fullan, purposeful change is central to the nature of teachers' work, so it must be pursued explicitly and aggressively.

Fullan (1993) set out four key elements that make effective agents of change, namely: Personal purpose and vision; inquiry; capacity for mastery and a willingness to take risks; and, collaboration or group mastery.

Fullan (1993) proposed numerous skills that are useful for educational change agents and saw that, as well as general skills that are needed, specific skills would be required at different stages of the change process. For example, in the early stages they suggest that interpersonal/rapport-building skills are most useful, whereas later more technical and task specific skills are required.

The complexity of the change process needs to be understood in order to guide change for the betterment of education. Fullan (1993) set out eight 'lessons' that need to be learnt in order to guide change effectively. These lessons, in effect, are principles about school reforms and implicate how they can be successfully developed.

Fullan (1993) claimed that with educational change 'you can not mandate what matters'. That is, the more complex the change, the less you can force it. It is not possible to force people to think differently, acquire new skills, increase commitment or change their beliefs. In fact mandating change may have profoundly negative side effects as Bishop and Mulford (1999) discovered in their study of schools implementing the Victorian Schools of the

Future [SoF]. They found that when principals appeared to be coopted to do the DoE's bidding, the casualty, at school level, was teaching staff's trust of the principal. Against such findings it is thus not surprising that Tyack and Cuban (1995) favour attempts at change that occur democratically at school level.

Fullan (1993) argued that change is a journey and not a blueprint as change is non-linear, loaded with uncertainty and sometimes perverse. Tyack and Cuban (1995) concur with this, as they see that along the way, new realities appear necessitating modification of goals. Moreover, Fullan (1993) posited that problems and conflict are inevitable and necessary for learning. He saw that open and frequent discussions of problems or 'worries' associated with school level changes are the best way to manage them.

Vision and strategic planning come later as premature visions and rigid planning can blind, according to Fullan (1993). It takes some time to evolve a shared vision through the dynamic interaction of individuals, he said, as he argued that to begin with a vision is to start with one person or group's vision and not a shared one.

Individualism and collectivism must have equal power, as there are no one-sided solutions to isolation and 'groupthink', Fullan claimed. He saw that there is a paradox in the creative tension between individual and group development wherein there is no one-sided solution. The isolated nature of much of teachers' work, Fullan argued, sometimes fosters conservatism and resistance to innovation. Whilst teachers' individualism needs to be respected, collaborative schools show far greater success at grappling with new ideas and problems (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991).

Fullan (1993) suggested that neither centralisation nor decentralisation works, so both top-down and bottom-up strategies are necessary. This, in one sense is similar to his first point, namely that you can not mandate what matters. However, Fullan's key point was to emphasise the need for local school empowerment (in the change process) to be coordinated and connected through a central resource. Thus he sees connection with the wider environment as critical, since the best organisations learn externally as well as internally.

According to Fullan (1993), it is vital for every person to become a change agent. Change is too important to leave to the experts, and therefore every teacher must be empowered to take part in and thus, even in a small way, to manage the change process.

Fullan (1993) suggested there are two broad reasons why school reforms are failing: Problems are complex and workable solutions hard to find, and also that changes at the learning core are very hard to develop as they involve changes in the culture of teaching toward more collaborative instructional practices. Such changes work in the opposite direction to the culture of teaching as a lone occupation.

Drawing on investigations of major reform initiatives, Fullan (1993) identified several more detailed reasons why restructuring of teaching has not occurred. Where positive restructuring is occurring, Fullan claimed, it goes relatively unnoticed compared with other kinds of more visible and less crucial reform. In agreement with Tyack and Cuban (1995), Fullan said the core culture of teaching is hard to change. Fullan posited that major transformation of schools and their relationship to other agencies is required and further suggested that



people in schools need to be aware that unanticipated changes in the course of any plan or project are inevitable. Thus, whilst plans are necessary, the future is unpredictable.

In this sense, Fullan's ideas accord with Mulford (1998) who pointed to the importance of organisational learning [OL] for the ability of schools to manage the problems of constant and enforced change in education. The central problem is how to create a system that is stable but able to deal effectively with change. OL sees learning as the most important tool for change and growth in both individuals and organisation (Mulford, 1998).

In Mulford's (1998) view, OL sees organisations advancing along two pathways, namely individual pathways and group pathways. OL acknowledges that organisations have their own developmental stages that must be recognised for the organisation to advance. Individuals too, have their stages of personal career development that need to be understood in order to see how educators proceed to try something new. Teachers are adult learners, so Mulford (1998) emphasised particularly the importance of five key skills in adult learning for the development of learning organisations: accompanying, sowing, catalysing, showing, and harvesting.

Mulford (1998) posited that the way schools are currently structured does not foster collaborative approaches, which require time and effort to set up. He emphasised the importance for the organisation of investing such time now in order to save time later on.

### **Reculturing Schools for Everyone's Benefit**

Fullan (1993) suggested that in restructuring a school to be a more effective learning organisation, many of the negative aspects of stress for teachers can be superseded by staffs accepting collective responsibility for development of one another. Fullan nominated various features of positive change. He perceived the difficulty of learning new behaviours and acknowledges the need to consolidate, with depth of understanding, new ways of working in schools. Ideas that are easily acquired, Fullan (1993) reminded us, are just as easily discarded.

Fullan (1993) envisaged team building as necessarily extending to the entire school, so that the change process is integral to the whole functioning of the school. Interpersonal dynamics (process) and sound ideas (content), he says, must go together. Furthermore, Fullan (1993) considered that successful change involves small steps, which can create consensus and progress.

As with Mulford (1998), Fullan (1993) suggested that finding the time to properly reculture a school enhances the prospect of success. Finding the time for generous, purposeful, ongoing and well-facilitated professional development is critical to successful restructuring efforts, according to Fullan . Hargreaves' (1994) work on addressing the challenge of redesigning schools for teachers to steer change themselves emphasises the importance of involving the widest range of school teachers in reculturing schools. His suggestion was that this can be best achieved by wilfully involving those who might initially make life more difficult, through acknowledging diverse expertise and sources of learning, creative problem solving, and critical thinking. He was suggesting that the teachers who are presently least

empowered need to be placed at the forefront of change initiatives.  
(Hargreaves, 1994)

Hargreaves was pointing to a teacher-lead recovery for public education. His ideas accord closely with Fullan (1993) in that they both regard ever-present change as endemic to post-modern society and the education system as not coming to grips with this feature of the post-modern era. Fullan, in particular, called for a fundamental shift of mind in the education sector, from a continual return to the status quo to a mindset that genuinely embraces change.

### **Support, Professionalism, Empowerment and Leadership**

According to Marginson (1997a) the recent 'right-wing' push into schools is leaving many teachers, and especially those who want to actively embrace change, feeling that they have no part in the reinvention of education. Amidst this shift, society and governments continue to blame teachers for students' lack of basic skills and even for society's ills (Marginson, 1997a).

Though change is both inevitable and, in many senses, desirable, the escalating rate of change in education leaves teachers feeling guilty and inadequate and often just exhausted (Hargreaves, 1994). The need for qualitative change in the way teachers work together, however, has never been more urgent. According to Hargreaves (1994), this change has to be a fundamental reculturing of schools so teachers are actually controlling the direction that education is to take. To this end, teachers need empowering so that they can deal with difficult education issues in the workplace and they need the support of governments, which are earnest in their claim for a better public education, and well versed in understanding the role of schools in

change initiatives. For the positive change to take place, at school level, the support of governments and education authorities is needed, but most importantly, effective school-based leadership is required (Hargreaves, 1994).

Blase (1993) pointed out the wealth of research that supports 'loose coupling' theory. This theory highlights the weakness of bureaucratic mechanisms and policy when it is used in attempts to control teachers. Blase noted that the bureaucratic system is too remote physically and conceptually from the daily concerns of teachers in their classrooms, in that teachers have far too many more immediate and relevant concerns than 'top down' reform agendas.

AEU (1997, July 16) literature suggests that although the bureaucracy may be remote, there is a perception in some schools that DoE guidelines are to be taken as sets of precise policy instructions. This seemed to be the case with the recent Tasmanian Reporting to Parents policy and whilst the confusion between the nature of DoE requirements and schools was being sorted out, the AEU published, in a workplace circular, a set of pragmatic guidelines for teachers and schools (AEU 1997, July 16).

Loose-coupling theory (Blase, 1993) suggests that centrally-imposed change can only have limited effect. The theory accords with Fullan's previously mentioned principle that 'you can't mandate what matters' (Fullan, 1993). Where the policy is 'heavy-handed' the implications are more dire. The findings of Bishop and Mulford (1999) in case study work on four Victorian schools showed that major differences exist between the 'delivered' and 'received' versions of Schools of the Future [SotF]. They suggested that with the implementation of SotF, the effect on the micro-political climate of schools was quite negative. Teacher perception of principal cooption in

implementing a key change, which they did not support, led to qualified trust for the principal and increased teacher alienation. They concluded further that, “if the theory (policy) does not make sense to teachers in the translation to practice (programs), they are unlikely to respond favourably. Instead, resistance or at best compliance, is likely to characterise teacher responses” (Bishop and Mulford, 1999, p.186).

Yet, principals can profoundly and positively influence teachers. The importance of interpersonal skills, cultural mechanisms, interpersonal competencies, support, and vision has been emphasised. Leithwood and Jantzi (1990) found that through strategies of staff development, communication about norms/values, power sharing, and manipulation of symbols, collaborative relationships with teachers were fostered. Leithwood and Jantzi’s (1990) research suggested merely that these are influencing factors and does not say much about whether they have a favourable impact on teachers’ work. Ball (1987) linked the control styles of principals to fatalism, and frustration in teachers. In a similar vein, Blase (1993) described how blatant control by principals negatively affected teachers’ classroom and school-wide performance.

Johnson (1984) outlined numerous principal attributes that have a favourable impact on teachers including ensuring there is equitable distribution of resources, equitable assignment of administrative responsibilities, sharing expertise, leading by personal example, and showing expressed personal interest. Indeed, according to Boardman (1999) teachers seek educational leadership from their principals.

If the link between education bureaucracies and schools is indeed a weak one, as Blase argued, then much power already exists at school level to make the positive reforms. What might be needed at school level is the will, confidence, trust and leadership to do this. To this end, developing an effective team would, at least, seem to require a reculturing of the way teachers and principals in schools work. In addressing the challenge of redesigning schools, Hargreaves' (1994) argued for teachers to steer change themselves and emphasises the importance of involving the widest range of teachers in 'reculturing' schools. Moreover, he claims the way in which leadership is conceptualised is important for cooperative education.

According to Schmuck and Schmuck (1997), leadership from a traditional perspective is viewed as an 'individual property', a set of behaviours and characteristics of the leader. Yet Schmuck and Schmuck (1997) argued that personality measures may not be reliable means to assess leadership and that it is not the position that is important but the process. Rather than being so individualistic, leadership in a more fluid and cooperative sense is seen more as arising out of the interpersonal exchanges, and as the psycho-social property of the group (Schmuck and Schmuck, 1997). Whilst some personality characteristics (e.g.. responsibility, vigor, persistence, self-confidence) may be useful, there are effective leaders who do not have these. Effective leaders may be people who are flexible and insightful, who size up the group and use appropriate interventions, rather than simply being particular personality 'types'. If leadership is viewed broadly as behaviour which influences others in the group, then it is possible to envisage a group that has as many leaders as members, given most or all are participating and contributing in some way.

Not all behaviours may exemplify functional (group goal directed) leadership, but understanding the emergent leadership behaviours within a group can help it direct those behaviours toward more positive ends (Schmuck and Schmuck, 1997).

Principals may currently be a long way from democratic leaders (Schmuck and Schmuck 1997). Schmuck and Schmuck's study of 82 principals in the United States showed 40 principals tended to be more 'authoritarian' (communicating with, but not involving teachers) in their dealings with teachers than they did either 'laissez faire' (non-communicative and non-involving) or 'democratic' (both communicating with and involving teachers in decision-making). The study found 35 'democratic' principals, however it did not investigate the quality of communication and involvement they provided, so it begs the question: Had quality of communication been a focus of the study would they have found even more authoritarian principals?

The democratic leader, as described by Bottery (1992), works towards an institution in which each member has the opportunity to exercise influence and power, ideally on an equal basis, with other members. In such a situation leadership becomes dispersed and devolved. However, this does not happen overnight, nor is it a utopian vision. It involves the establishment of a shared vision throughout a school and requires ethical treatment of people. Properly shared leadership can only occur within a climate of deep-seated optimism in the potential of human beings. It requires a belief that 'they can' (Bottery, 1992).

In Connell's (1993) description of work on the Disadvantaged Schools Program [DSP] he talked about participation as both goal and process. Whilst

it was primarily aimed at compensating the poor, a major goal of this innovative program, which began in the mid-1970s, was to raise levels of participation among teachers, parents, and pupils empowering them to decide their own futures. The DSP started to give hope to those involved with it, bringing previously isolated people together, and developing amongst them a sense of common purpose. The program became focused around a submission process for government grants to disadvantaged schools, and early submissions were little more than 'shopping lists' for equipment identified as needed to catch up with better endowed schools. However, the very process of participation in submission writing itself drew in teachers and parents who would not have otherwise been involved in school policy making. The submission process thus became a vehicle for the democratisation of DSP schools. The DSP funds were small but the process of deciding on them became something that circumvented the traditional model for school decision-making. According to Connell, the participants became empowered. He added that such empowerment would probably endure..

The DSP according to Connell (1993), was perhaps the beginning of a more democratised Australian school. The public sector teacher unions supported the DSP and, from the 1970s, pushed workplace democracy as a major theme. In his analysis, Connell (1993) found mixed responses to democratisation in many schools. Teachers were reluctant to commit more time to committees and school based curricula development when the teacher's job was already a busy one. There was a suspicion too, amongst teachers, that school democracy was a sham and, in reality, principals made the important decisions.



Clearly there are both professional and industrial aspects to teachers' interest in issues of control and democratisation of the workplace. Teachers need the empowerment and professional autonomy to do the job well. Teacher professional autonomy has progressed since the days of the Inspectorate. Yet, teachers may need more autonomy if they are to properly develop a professional identity.

### **Teachers and the Curriculum**

Much teacher professional identity comes through the curriculum. Because the curriculum is a major focus of the work that is done by teachers in schools, some control of the curriculum is essential for teachers. For teachers, the curriculum issue may involve more work and some hard debate in relation to, for example, the place of the competitive academic curriculum [CAC].

A critical theory standpoint sees inequality as the core problem in public education. As a critical theorist, Connell (1993), regarded the hegemonic curriculum that is in current use, that is, the CAC, as forming to some extent, the basis for inequality within schools. Typically, the work of math and language teachers is seen as more important than, for example, art or physical education. Connell's view was based on the philosophical notions of Rawls (1971) that education must specifically serve the interests of the 'least favoured' groups in society. To that end, Connell argued that curricula justice requires a counter hegemonic curriculum.

In adopting a different emphasis, Fullan (1993) claimed that teaching for understanding is what teachers need to aim to achieve with all students. Fullan's concern extended to claiming that much of the curriculum does not

‘reach’ children, as for many it seems alien and pointless. Given the immense scale of the education industry, fundamental issues such as ‘who gets what’ from it should be of concern to us all.

In a similar vein, schooling, Connell (1993) claimed, must be concerned with social justice. Connell also argued that the education system distributes ‘social assets’ in ways that are more than a little unequal. Because of the shift to a knowledge-based society, the education system is likely to become more important as a public asset in the future – distributing the paper credentials that will have great bearing on the social, racial and sexual divisions of labour. In so doing, the education system is shaping the kind of society we will become. Finally, Connell was concerned about what the notion ‘to educate’ means. Teaching is a ‘moral trade’ he argues, as many religious groups acknowledge, and though such groups may be fearful about it, they are deeply concerned about this, just as many people are concerned that everyone has the right to a quality education. Against this latter principle, an elitist education system can only serve everyone badly, and much of this elitism, in Connell’s (1993) and Apple’s (1996) view, stems from the Competitive Academic Curriculum [CAC].

Curriculum is a central facet of the education industry yet at school level, in many major policy documents, and in the discussions of teacher unions, it does not feature prominently. There seems to be an irony in this, in that the curriculum is both a major part of the definitions of teachers’ work and of student learning (Connell 1993). Further, Little (1990) pointed out, teachers value curriculum and would like to have some ownership of it.

Connell argued that the CAC has provided teachers with the educational success they needed in order to become teachers in the first place, so they may not be inclined to readily question its validity. The current emphasis on 'back to basics' suggests notions of a core curriculum that is assumed to be superior to all other possible curricula. There is little evidence of teachers, or their unions, questioning the value of a core curriculum.

The tiered structure of all educational institutions is based around CAC, in that primary, secondary, college and university all arise out of a relationship to CAC. The subjects that determine successful progression through this hierarchy are the ones favoured by CAC (Connell, 1993). Of course, many other curricula exist in schools but they tend to follow a different logic to the competitive, academic ones and are frequently marginalised and seen as subordinate to serious schooling. Pupils who do not succeed in the CAC end up 'sorted' into the lower streams and become seen as the less than fully successful. When children, or their parents, speak of them 'not being good at school' they may be referring to not being successful at the CAC, rather than the other curricula offerings of school. For example, for a subject such as physical education to become a 'serious' subject it must be ascribed CAC credibility and renamed 'sports science' (Connell, 1993). Yet, some of the great innovations in public education are occurring in non-CAC areas like physical education.

Similarly, the Information Technology curriculum area exists in contrast to the CAC. Information Technology's rapid rise into prominence in schools and its quickly changing knowledge base, have meant that traditional forms of learning are becoming inappropriate, as both teacher and text may be bearers

of outdated knowledge. A quicker, more democratic, model of learning is developing as people freely share ideas, software, skills and applications. Clearly Information Technology is one of education's great challenges. To some extent, teacher professionalism is linked with the CAC. Most schools are increasingly having to measure, and develop plans for, student success with the CAC. (Connell, 1993).

Connell (1993) suggested that teacher professionalism might more appropriately be defined in terms of the difficulty or complexity of the teaching job. If either were to be the focus then high level professionalism might well be judged by success at working with some of education's more difficult clients, namely those for whom education, in its traditional form and curriculum content, might hold limited success. Moreover, there may be a need for greater development of effective learning programs which provide success with those for whom the relatively straight forward CAC provides little success (Connell, 1993).

### **Workload, Work Value, Work Intensity, and Educational Reform**

Case studies of schools by Andy Gitlin (1998) pointed to a dilemma in teachers' work between expediency and quality teaching. Where the daily workload and after hours responsibilities were intensified, Gitlin suggested teachers employed a range of short-cut strategies just to cope. These responses suggest a form of 'defensive' teaching takes place. Where there is less intensity and more time to think and plan, Gitlin argued teachers are able to engage students in a richer more integrated curriculum. Further, Gitlin indicated that the conceptualisation of 'teachers as professionals' who would

gladly constrain their private sphere activities in order to do their work effectively, and 'teaching as a calling', if enacted, mean that educators must work to overcome obstacles whatever their nature. In contrast, Gitlin argued, the view of teachers as workers, having constantly to balance their time and orientation to personal, family, and work needs, is a more realistic one. As teaching is an emotionally demanding activity – even at the best of times –this means that often not enough energy is left over for teachers to take control of their own interests and the interests of education as a whole.

Gitlin's (1998) findings have wide-ranging implications for teachers, not only for the quality of their work in the classroom context, but also for teachers' ability to defend and develop themselves, plus their profession, in collegial and industrial spheres.

Connell (1985) explains that successful schools, private and public, are so because there is mutuality, between the needs of the teachers and the needs of their clientele. The teachers' needs for autonomy, professional recognition, satisfying and rewarding work, and the families' needs for skillful teaching, academic achievement, secure environment are mutually respected. Connell (1993) cited examples where a number of working class schools have prospered by fostering this kind of relationship.

### **Status and Professionalism and Job Satisfaction**

Some measures of the status of a profession may involve its standing in the community, desirability as a career and level of remuneration.

Teachers still have a surprisingly high status in the community, according to some public polls. Next to pharmacists, doctors, and nurses they are the most

highly trusted professional group in the Australian community (Morgan, 1997, June 10)

One measure of a profession's status is its desirability as a career. This may be reflected in part by public perception of the teaching profession. Teaching needs to attract the bright and talented people to give the profession the vibrancy it needs to solve the problems we face into the next millennium. To attract some of the bright and best students to teaching will take quite a turn around from existing arrangements.

With an existing shortage of teachers in certain areas like math/science and information technology, and predicted shortages elsewhere, teaching may not be a highly desirable profession (Preston, 1998). Tasmania might be somewhat of an exception, as it has tended to produce high numbers of graduates in teaching. Even so, there is a trend particularly among secondary graduates to leave the state for employment elsewhere (Preston, 1998). With the financial cost of gaining a degree, i.e. HECS and living costs, the remuneration for teaching may be part of the reason for the lack of new graduates. In fact, Australian teachers are being enticed to Britain where recent improvements in salary scales, in response to their own teacher shortage, could see top classroom teachers on salaries in excess of A\$100,000 (AEU, 1999b).

Dinham and Scott's (1996) second recommendation, in conclusion to their extensive study of teacher motivation and health, in Western Sydney, begins, "That teachers' salaries not be permitted to decline relative to those in similar occupations..." (p.65). Dinham and Scott (1996) regarded teacher salaries as integral to the status of their profession. They proposed two arguments for maintaining teacher salaries. The first argument involved 'wage justice';

namely their salaries keeping pace with the cost of living. The second argument was that teachers need reasonable salaries for the community to value the work they do.

With so many teachers currently on the top of their pay scales, as the average age of long-serving teachers in Australia is now well over forty (Crowley, 1998), Dinham and Scott (1996) suggested there is little incentive for them to undertake further study. To remedy this, they recommend financial incentives for teachers who voluntarily undertake professional development (Dinham and Scott, 1996). This would seem a more appropriate form of incentive compared with the more divisive performance-based pay incentives.

If the extent to which teachers control the curriculum is a measure of their professionalism, it is debatable whether, in some instances, teaching is understood to be a profession. If teachers have little control at all over curriculum they may be rendered to the status of technicians rather than professionals. (This view accords with Hattie's (1993) notion of the current 'techno-reductionist' nature of teaching.) Although involving more, the term 'professional' suggests some kind of autonomy over development and synthesis of what is the central 'tool' of the job. For teachers this involves, at very least, the careful selection and engagement of students with appropriate curriculum material. In this way, the CAC is central to teacher identity and professional status, so it can be argued that the private school teachers appear to be regarded as more professional and command the greater status and consequently pay.

The key unifying ideology of the teaching occupation is professionalism, according to White (1986). Professionalism is also the source of many cleavages among educators.

Teachers in the USA gained equal pay between the sectors as early as 1930. It was hailed as a great democratising move. No longer would the best primary teachers have to move into the secondary sector to gain better status and pay (Tyack and Cuban, 1995). Equal pay improved morale and diminished what were called “class distinctions” between the sectors. Even though teachers in different sectors in Tasmania have had pay equality for many years, their status between sectors has not been equal. In that respect the current move to reduce primary teachers’ contact hours nearer to that of secondary teachers can be viewed as a similar landmark in providing more equal status between the sectors.

The move toward achieving equality of standing among teachers has not been rapid or smooth, according to Tyack and Cuban (1995). Past and present teachers in the USA have faced a long history of attempts by outsiders to attract and retain good teachers by the introduction of performance-based pay. USA teachers past and present have resisted such innovations. They have not trusted administrators to apply performance-based pay arrangements fairly, viewed such arrangements as professionally divisive and irrelevant to the centrally important aspects of public education (Tyack and Cuban, 1995). Australian teachers, though currently covered by award conditions, may still face this kind of innovation if current Federal Government industrial policy is widened. The abolition of awards could, for example, mean the end of the incremental pay scale and the prospect of all teachers being placed on a, ‘paid



rates' or, minimum pay system. Individual teachers would then have to bargain with their employer for extra pay under an Individual Workplace Agreement if they thought they were worth more than the minimum pay.

### **Job Security as a Major Condition of Employment**

Job security is an important condition of a teacher's employment. The working conditions of Queensland teachers during the mid 1980s, (Spaull and Hince, 1985), still apply to most temporary teachers in Australia today. Temporary teachers usually have no security of tenure even within the period specified in their letter or "contract" of appointment, so they can be legitimately dismissed with two weeks notice. They receive less remunerative benefits than do relief (emergency) teachers who get a daily pay loading, or permanent staff who get holiday loading and employer superannuation contributions. Although sick leave is accrued in a similar way for temporary employees, it is unclear what would happen should this be exhausted, and unused sick leave is lost at the completion of a contract and a new 'base' lot issued upon re-employment.

Many Tasmanian temporary teachers are involved in long term employment, due a series of contracts. A number are women who have returned to the workforce after relinquishing their permanent status to have children. Temporary teachers are subject to detailed principals' reports about their performance if they want re-employment, no matter how many years they have been teaching. Yet, no permanent teacher is subject to these performance reports.

Temporary teachers appear to be, in effect, a sub-class of teachers used to balance the staffing needs of schools. In Tasmania, according to the DoE, District Offices keep a temporary teacher register from which temporary appointments are made according to particular school requirements after all permanent teachers have been placed.

In Tasmania, the proportion of temporary teachers employed by the DoE reached a peak of around 20% of total teacher numbers under the previous Liberal Government. At the time, this figure had been repeatedly put forward by the AEU and denied by the Liberal Government, and finally confirmed by the subsequent government's Education Minister Wriedt, under questioning in the Parliamentary Estimates Committee (Hull, 1999). Given the concerns about having large numbers of temporary teachers, the current Tasmanian Labor Government, as evidenced in the MoU, has committed itself to reducing significantly the percentage of temporary teachers in the State Teaching Service (see Appendix A).

### **Resources**

Public and private schools compete for government funding. In Australia, private schools may well be winning that competition, as evidenced by the current Federal Government Enrolment Benchmark Adjustment [EBA] (AEU, 1998). Under this scheme, a complex formula sees those students who move from public to private schools taking larger amounts of funding with them than do students who move from private to the public education sector.

Prime Minister Howard and Education, Training and Youth Affairs Minister Kemp (Howard & Kemp, 1999, June) wrote an open letter to non-government

school parents explaining how non-government schools would be better off under the Government's new funding arrangements. Nervousness about how government school parents perceived the new funding arrangements may have prompted Kemp (1999, August) to follow this letter with a letter of his own to government school parents. This letter explained that non-government schools were not receiving extra funding at the expense of government sector schools, and that the new arrangements were fairer. Yet, even the wealthiest private schools qualified for at least some extra funding. Both letters firmly emphasised the value of parental choice in education, stating how under the new funding arrangements greater parental choice would be provided.

The AEU responded to the new funding arrangements with a national campaign, which claimed that the 1999/2000 budget was an attack on public schools and a windfall for non-government schools. The AEU claimed that the increases in funding, per student, for non-government students was nearly \$800, whilst the 70% of Australian students who attend government schools receive less than an extra \$100 each (AEU, June 1999). When the extra money reaches local school level it is likely to dissipate quickly into the range of programs the school is trying to provide.

School-Based Management [SBM] has meant a greater say at local school level, for principals, about how to use the financial resource package. Whilst the positive side of this allows schools to target areas of greatest need, it also has its down side, namely that there is little decision to be made about where most of the resource package is spent: The largest part of the resource package is used on staffing. There is little flexibility here because of curriculum requirements, and the need to have a given number of teachers for a given

number of students, and anything left after staff provision, typically, is largely devoted to maintenance and ongoing replacement of equipment. As schools try to cover all their organisational and curriculum needs, they sometimes end up spreading the financial package thinly. It becomes a tight process of timetabling, staff deployment, and allocation of funding to learning areas. With the focus on 'the bottom line', that is, not incurring a deficit, there is little slack in the system and so there is little real choice to make about how to spend the resource package once the essentials are factored in. Principals may indeed be better at handling the meagre school resource allocation than departmental bureaucrats, and some no doubt make a little go a long way. However, currently principals and schools are placed in a difficult position when trying to find money for staff professional development, extra-curricular activities, as well as special literacy and numeracy classes.

In this context, schools have reduced chances of attaining all their goals if they are forced to run so close to financial gridlock. Tensions or conflicts between staff, and between staff and principal are, therefore, likely to occur over budget allocations.

### **Teacher Unions as Educational Pressure Groups**

Pressure groups such as unions are associations whose leaders, in particular, attempt to influence government policy directly, plus policy implementation through negotiating with, and influencing, the public service bureaucracy. However, in Australia the Australian Education Union [AEU] has other functions besides influencing public policy, including counselling, giving advice, referral and advocacy, and other teacher-member services.

The most important political demands are made on the federal and relevant state governments through organised structures, like voluntary associations, who represent the interests and shared values of their members by voicing their claims (Mathews, 1976).

Mathews (1976) argues that pressure groups exist outside official governmental bodies, yet in Australia they are usually accepted as having a legitimate role to play in making and administering public policy. Thus, they are a vital link between the individual and government, providing a vehicle for citizen input into government decisions. In education, as in other important areas of government, pressure groups are active and numerous (Harman and Selby-Smith, 1976).

Nearly all teacher associations in Australia, in the latter part of the twentieth century, have been 'trade unions' rather than 'professional associations'. In this sense, they have held affiliation to trade union organisations, like the Australian Council of Trade Unions [ACTU], rather than having mostly operated alone like the professional associations common in other professions, for example the Australian Medical Association. Although some Australian teacher unions have been somewhat circumspect, in earlier times, about their relationship to the more traditional, 'blue collar' trade unions, since the 1970s most have been affiliated to larger union bodies, such as the ACTU. Unlike many of the more blue-collar unions, however, teacher unions have not often favoured overt affiliation with the ALP. Yet, they have often backed the ALP at election times on the basis that ALP public education policy is 'a better deal' for teachers and education than that of conservative parties (Marginson, 1997a; Spaul & Hince, 1986).

### **Teacher Associations' Industrial and Professional Concerns**

In addition to the Federal Department of Education, Australia has state education ministries and bureaucracies for administering public education. In each state there are a number of large teacher unions which represent their members who comprise a majority of teachers in that state. The largest of these unions is the AEU with branches in all states and a federal secretariat.

The AEU Tasmanian Branch was formerly the Tasmanian Teachers Federation and became the AEU in 1992. In Tasmania, the AEU has an estimated membership of around 94% of teachers K-12 including principals and district superintendents, a figure envied by branches and unions in other states (AEU 1998). Yet, even as the representative of such a large majority of teachers, the Tasmanian AEU was given little hearing, in so far as consultation was concerned, by the former Rundle Government and its administration in the late 1990s.

The AEU has a charter (see Appendix C) under which it operates to work, firstly for improvement in teacher pay and working conditions plus also teacher welfare, and secondly for the betterment of public education as a whole. The AEU in Tasmania and federally has, however, long concerned itself with the defence of public education as a prime political concern, such as, for example, when making submissions to Parliamentary Estimates Committees.

In focusing on teacher working conditions, the AEU, both federally and at state level, also concerns itself with a wide range of issues that are as much of a 'professional' nature as they are 'industrial' (AEU, 1999c). As professional

issues they have to do with the quality of the product of teachers' work, rather than merely making education better for teachers. Whilst some matters may seem more predominantly industrial concerns, and others of a more professional educational nature, the reality is that all teacher concerns are in some way an amalgam of both. For example, in Tasmania, the DoE's Reporting to Parents Policy would seem predominantly a professional educational issue yet it has profound implications for teacher workload and thus it is both a professional and an industrial matter (AEU & DECCD, 1997). Similarly, teacher contact hours may seem a largely industrial matter of teacher conditions, yet it has direct implications for the quality of product that teachers can deliver, so therefore it is a professional matter.

The emphasis teacher unions place on the benefits for education of a particular policy direction can be extremely important for generating both teacher and public support. On a Morgan Poll (1997, June 10), union leaders ranked near used car salesmen in terms of trustworthiness, yet some union leaders, for example Mr Mike Poate, President of the AEU Tasmania, nonetheless may have excellent local standing.

### **Links between the Partners in Public Education**

The creation of partnerships between the main stakeholders in education would seem to require genuine consultation and the development of trust. The Kennett Government, in Victoria, called their approach to education a 'partnership' between government and public service (Linnett, 1999, Sept. 30) yet teachers and principals were threatened, marginalised and silenced in this process.

Tasmania had, under early 1990s Labor Government, major cuts to its education system following the CRESAP (1990) report. The CRESAP report was prepared by a group of private consultants with no particular knowledge about systems of public education. It was commissioned by the Government at considerable public expense to point to areas where funding cutbacks could be made. (CRESAP, 1990; Hull, 1993). Consultation with stakeholders about these funding cutbacks on the part of the Government was either minimal or nonexistent.

A tendency was noted by Mulford (1998) that state Ministers of Education, where traditionally they have allowed their senior bureaucrats to make all major decisions, in recent years have taken a more 'hands-on' approach in guiding the direction of education in their state.

Until relatively recent times in Australia, the Departments of Education, the Education Ministers' Offices and teacher unions have tended, on a formal basis, to be quite separate entities. Certainly, in Tasmania, the idea of these sectors working together under more formal partnerships is quite new.

The Tasmanian Teachers' Federation was noted by Selby-Smith (1980) for its ability to use informal means, rather than confrontation and strike action, to successfully achieve its objectives. Selby-Smith attributes this success to the small size of the state and its teaching service, which means that the Director General and his senior colleagues are likely to be known to the officers and senior members of the Federation. Selby-Smith (1980) further notes that:

...the Federation had ready access to the Minister and his senior advisers, and discussions on matters of professional importance- even if they have an industrial component – can be conducted in a rational and relatively unemotional atmosphere. The Federation can be seen to have a significant



influence in the raising of many important issues, and in the decisions which are reached about them. (p.13-14)

Although in the late 1990s the Tasmanian AEU operates in a much more formalised way than was the case for the TTF in the late 1970s, what Selby-Smith outlines is a climate of collaboration in which potentially opposing sectors managed to negotiate effectively with one another.

According to Spaul and Hince (1986) state-based and federal Ministers of Education have traditionally let their departmental personnel determine educational policy. In recent years however, according to Mulford (1998), there has been increased formal and informal use of ministerial advisers and ministerial intervention to provide an alternative policy and monitoring group. The flow of personnel from one public sector to another has also increased as public servants have been seen more as professional managers rather than only being wed to a single sector (Argy, 1998). In NSW, ministerial staff, some from teacher unions, have joined the Office of the Minister (which is separate from the Director of Education) to become advisors on educational matters (Spaul and Hince, 1986).

Some state Departments of Education during the 1980s, notably Victoria, the second largest in Australia, have their own industrial relations unit. This mechanism can allow teacher industrial matters to be discussed in an atmosphere of greater understanding of educational concerns (Spaul and Hince, 1986). However, Victorian experience between 1993 and 1999 under the Kennett Government shows that this understanding was not always achieved.

Overall, however, there have not been many instances of formal attempts to achieve detailed, common understandings between government, education departments, and teacher unions with the view to establishing a shared, long-term view of public education.

In March 1998, just prior to the current Labor Government, the then minister, at least on one occasion, made inflammatory remarks about the worth of state schoolteachers. Minister Napier (Napier, 1998) stated that state school teachers were worth less than their private school counterparts as they did not work as hard and had greater job security. This kind of statement did little to foster a partnership between government and teachers for public education.

Currently, Education Minister Wriedt is in the process of developing a lengthy document concerning her view of the future of public education in Tasmania. This view appears to have been informed by local DoE central office, the AEU, and school practitioners and is due to be released early in 2000.

### **Summary of Chapter**

**Education is an Important Public Investment** looked at how public education is an important public institution and investment for a tolerant, democratic society. The agenda of western governments over the past two decades having seen the value of publicly funded education reduced.

In **Public School or Private School – The Edges Blur** the effect of marketisation of public schools in Australia and other western countries was explored.

In **A Century of Reform** it was mentioned that little has changed about the daily interactions of students, teachers, principals, and bureaucrats, so there is

a widely acknowledged call to make teachers central to the ‘reculturing’ of schools (Fullan, 1993; Tyack and Cuban, 1995).

....  
In **Change and Work Intensification** it was shown that changes towards a devolved, market oriented approach to public education, along with major changes in the social fabric of western society, have resulted in work intensification, and not professional empowerment, for teachers (Fullan, 1993; Angus, 1994; Bishop and Mulford, 1996 and 1999; Whitty, 1998).

In **The New Role of the Teacher Unions and Self-Managed Schools**, Bascia (1998) and the AEU (1998) showed how, contrary to their traditional industrial focus, teacher associations in North America and Australia have recently shown great interest in developing partnerships with education authorities, aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning.

**Defining Teachers’ Work** suggested that an understanding of the work that teachers do can provide insights into how education can progress (Fullan, 1993; Connell, 1995).

**Teachers’ Work Commitment and Stress**, concerned the difficulty of some teachers, who often find that, despite their commitment, the stress associated with working unsupported can lead to burnout and frustration (Spaull and Hince, 1986; Fullan, 1993).

**Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction** focused on the work of Herzberg (1966) and how it may relate to teacher motivation and job satisfaction. The studies by Dinham and Scott (1996 and 1997) showed the importance of school based factors and school leadership for creating supportive, inclusive environments for teachers.

**Teachers and Educational Change** highlighted the pervasiveness of change and the role of teachers as ‘change agents’ (Fullan, 1993; Hargreaves, 1991).

The necessity for changing the ‘core culture’ of schools is pointed out by Fullan (1993) and Tyack and Cuban (1995).

In **Reculturing Schools for Everyone’s Benefit** the ideas of Fullan (1993) and Hargreaves (1994) related steps toward placing teachers at the forefront of the change process.

**Support, Professionalism, Empowerment, and Leadership** focused on the need for governments and education authorities to support positive school-based changes and shared leadership aimed at empowering teachers and inspiring their trust.

**Teachers and the Curriculum** explored the notion of curriculum, which, being the tool with which teachers can make education relevant to the needs of a diversity of students, is central to the educational change process (Fullan, 1993; Connell, 1993).

In **Workload, Work Value, Work Intensity and Educational Reform** the necessity to balance teachers’ needs for professional autonomy, recognition, and satisfying and rewarding work with the needs of parents and students was examined (Gitlin, 1998; Connell, 1985 and 1993).

**Status, Professionalism and Job Satisfaction** examined how the status of the teaching profession needs to improve to attract people into a profession on the brink of a world teacher shortage (Preston, 1998).

**Job Security as a Major Condition of Employment** demonstrated that teachers with temporary employment status are treated instrumentally by education authorities.

**Resources** noted the difficulties of improving schools under current funding and resourcing arrangements, despite School-Based Management..

**Teacher Unions as Educational Pressure Groups** looked at the legitimate roles and affiliations of Australian teacher unions.

**Teacher Associations' Industrial and Professional Concerns** showed how Australian teacher unions, amidst their ever-present industrial concerns, have lobbied governments in defence of public education and sought cooperative approaches with educational authorities for the future of public education.

**Links between the Partners in Education** looked at how cooperation between the various stakeholders in education may assist development of a workable shared vision for the future of public education.

## **CHAPTER III: METHODS AND PROCEDURES**

### **Introduction**

This chapter contains an explanation of and justification for the design, method and procedures of research that comprise this dissertation. It is set out as: Research Design; Key Questions of the Research; Procedures, which includes subsections entitled: Interviewees, Interviews and Ethics, Instruments, Data Collection, and Data Analysis; and Summary.

### **Research Design**

This study is an interpretive case study. Case studies have the advantage of, as Merriam (1993) suggests, offering a means of investigating complex social units comprised of multiple variables. Case studies can result in rich and holistic accounts, offering insights and illuminating meanings that also aptly identify areas for possible future research. Programs, problems and processes can be examined in such a way as to positively affect practice in the field. Case study, which employs a qualitative design, is therefore usually better able to assess social change than more positivistic designs. Burns (1997) states that historical case study is appropriate for looking at a particular system over time.

Three quite salient reasons for the use of an interpretive case study approach come from Yin (1994) who notes that such an approach is the best when:

1. The study is concerned with 'how' or 'why' questions.
2. The author has limited control over the setting.
3. The phenomena of interest are set in a contemporary, natural setting.

A case study is limited by being hard to replicate, but in any study involving people's perspectives on events, changes over time invariably making replication problematic. Merriam (1992) considers that case study is limited by the ability and experience of the author and often relies on high-level interviewing skills. In this case study, the author was confident that he had the necessary skills due, for example, to the extent of reading he did on interviewing technique and content preparation. Moreover, the author endeavoured to operate with the utmost integrity during the negotiations before and during the interviews.

As Taylor and Bogdan (1998) point out, getting to 'the truth' with case study interviews is difficult. In this case study however, the interviewees were not being asked for their personal views. Rather, it was precisely their formal perspectives from their work roles that were being elicited. This was further made clear to them when they signed the Statement of Informed Consent (see Appendix D) prior to their interview.

It needs to be considered that subjective bias in supporting or refuting what the interviewees say remains possible. Yet, as Burns, (1997) points out, data collection in all research is problematic at this level. In this study three interviewees, each in, or formerly in, a senior position representing three key centres of power, was chosen to provide the study with greater construct validity. Construct validity refers to a set of operational measures, or points from which reality is viewed. According to Burns authors of case studies are prone to using subjective judgement in collecting data. Construct validity can be improved firstly by the use of multiple sources of evidence to demonstrate

convergence of data from different sources and secondly, by establishing a chain of evidence that links parts together.

Generally a case study approach to research allows investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. (Yin, 1995) As well, it allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events. In this case the author required the flexibility to follow up issues brought to light by the interviewees and to give them meaning within an established context of educational ideas. Moreover, An interpretive approach was used, which sought to understand the phenomena rather than to place interviewees contributions within a set ideological framework.

Further, the essence of a case study according to Yin, (1995) is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result. These purposes accord with the research questions for this study.

This case study was an explanatory, as opposed to a descriptive or exploratory, one as it was concerned with analysing competing accounts of events. Such accounts were a distillation of the interviews which were underpinned by the key, guiding research questions posed below. As suggested by Yin, (1995) the 'how' and 'why' nature of these questions means that they deal with operational links needing to be traced over time. Hence, these 'how' and 'why' questions are complemented by the use of case studies.



## **Key Questions of the Research**

Why did the MoU develop?

How is it anticipated that the MoU will affect education in Tasmania?

## **Procedures**

### **Interviewees, Interviews and Ethics**

The interviewees were selected purposively because of their respective roles, or former role, at the top level of each of the three main centres of power involved in the MoU. Each interviewee had either responsibility for the formulation of the MoU or for its implementation or both. The interviewees were initially contacted by phone to establish their willingness to participate in the study. All three indicated an enthusiastic interest in participating in the interviews.

University of Tasmania Ethics Committee approval to conduct the investigation was sought and gained. An information sheet was provided to the interviewees with details about the nature of the study, time commitment involved, potential risks, the form of the interview and explaining their right to withdraw at any stage (see Appendix E). A Statement of Informed Consent (see Appendix D) was read out to them, prior to the commencement of each interview, indicating their rights and the obligations of the author and University of Tasmania henceforth. Both interviewer and interviewee then duly signed the Statement of Informed Consent and the interview began. Transcripts of the interviews were subsequently sent to the interviewees and any interviewee amendments suggested amendments were made.

## Instruments

The author was the instrument in this case study. In qualitative research, human instruments are considered to be the best way of gathering evidence as humans can adapt in order to interpret the evidence put forward by the interviewees and make informed assessments of the meaning and significance of that evidence (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The development of the interview schedule arose out of and was informed by the literature review. A semi-structured interview style was used to allow interviewees to take up issues and perspectives they deemed important. In keeping with an interpretive approach, the interviewee's perspective was gained so as to elicit his understandings rather than that of the interviewer. A set of typical questions for the semi-structured interview (see Appendix F) were drafted in accordance with Taylor and Bogdan (1998) who suggest a set of questions designed to encourage people to talk freely. The interviewees had expert knowledge, as they were, or had formerly been, top level personnel in their respective fields and a key purpose of this study to elicit their perspectives on the MoU.

Burns (1997) claims one advantage of semi-structured is that they provide a guide which enables the interviewer and interviewees to focus on crucial issues of the study. They are more flexible than the close-ended types of questions and allow a more valid response from the interviewee's perception of reality. The interviewee is free to use his own language rather than that of the interviewer. Because of this, Burns contends an interviewee is likely to be less threatened as the two engage in an equal status dialogue. More structured

interviews can not properly prepare for the subtleties and personal interpretations of the interviewee (Burns, 1997).

Merriam (1997) explains how less structured interviews assume that the interviewees define the world in unique ways, therefore the kinds of questions used are almost always open-ended. They allow the interviewer to follow up leads given by the interviewee in the course of the interview.

Compared with unstructured interviews, semi-structured ones require the interviewer to have a firm grasp of the subject matter. The author has been a teacher in Tasmania for 14 years. In the context of this study the author feels that he has very strong background knowledge of the study's content material, so the list of open-ended questions variously served as useful starting points, prompts and guides.

### Data Collection

The interviews were conducted at a time when the risk of interruption to interviews was at a minimum. They were recorded onto micro-cassette and transcribed. Typically the interviews lasted for around 45 minutes. One interview proceeded without interruption the other two had one brief interruption each as someone came into the office where the interview was held and then quickly left. The tape machine was turned off briefly in two of the interviews to enable installation of a new tape. In each case these interruptions were minimal and it was believed had little bearing on the quality of the data.

## Data Analysis

In order for the author to immerse himself in the data, several stages of analysis were undertaken. The author looked for patterns and commonalities between the three interviewees. The author asked questions of the data. For example: Who were the key players? Who and what did they criticise?

Initially, the author looked at what each interviewee said. Secondly, the author looked for what two of them agreed on. Thirdly, the author looked at what two disagreed on. Fourthly, the author looked at what all three agreed on and then at what all three disagreed on.

As well, the author looked at both the claims they were making for identifiable shortcomings in the MoU now and issues forecast as potential problems for the near or longer term future. The author attempted to understand the disparities in light of the different cultures and priorities of each organisation that the interviewee was or had been working in. That is, that the DoE, the Ministry and the AEU all have different histories and cultures that influence organisational members to view the world differently, yet there are core values for education to which each commonly, as well as differentially, subscribe. The interplay between the individual interviewee's personal history and the organisation they represent in their particular role also helped refine understanding of the data.

The analysis drew in data from other sources, which also served to illuminate the issues raised by the interviewees. For example, where teacher empowerment was alluded to by an interviewee, analysis was given greater meaning by reference to current work in the area of teacher empowerment. Put another way, the literature review continuously informed the analysis.

Of central concern was the view each interviewee had of the culture and performance of the other relevant educational and allied sectors of power. It was also necessary to gain an understanding of the communication that took place between these sectors and the quality of that communication, as this was to be a major theme of the paper.

Above all, the author continued to be cognisant that the aim of both collecting the data and analysing it was not to make measured judgements of 'good', 'better' and 'best' responses or rate the interviewees' performance or perspective but to seek to understand the various perspectives of the interviewees.

Taylor and Bogdan (1998) describe the intention of the author's efforts when they explain that qualitative data analysis is a process of inductive reasoning, thinking, and theorising. Also, that it requires the sensitive insights of the observer and often the assistance of a mentor to see patterns in the data. Researchers attempt to gain deeper understanding of what they are studying as they sift through for emerging patterns and themes. This kind of analysis draws on first-hand experience with settings, interviewees, or documents to interpret data.

The data also need to be understood within the context of information gathering; that is the interviews. Some guardedness in the course of analysis by the author is to be expected as the interviewees have, in one sense, political roles from which they must both argue the case for their organisation and demonstrate their understanding of the other sectors. On the former issue, the interviewees were expected to be quite clear. However, in terms of the extent to which they understood the others' positions, the author did not assume they

held a deep understanding. The data were read and reread thoroughly on multiple occasions over a period of four months to ascertain this kind of dissonance or accord.

### **Summary of Chapter**

This chapter contained Research Design, which showed that the study is an interpretive case study, Key Questions of the Research, which were: Why did the MoU develop? How is it anticipated that the MoU will affect education in Tasmania? Procedures included subsections entitled: Interviewees, Interviews and Ethics, Instruments, Data Collection, and Data Analysis.

The following chapter, chapter IV, entitled Summary of the Interviews, condenses matters brought forward by the interviewees who were, Mr Mike Poate of the AEU, Mr Graham Harrington formerly of the DoE, and Mr Nick Evans, adviser to the Tasmanian Minister for Education, Ms Paula Wriedt.

Chapter VI contains a discussion of the issues brought forward by the interviewees.

## **CHAPTER IV: SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS**

### **Introduction**

This chapter outlines the main content of the interviews with Mike Poate, Nick Evans and Graham Harrington respectively. Chapter IV discusses the issues raised by the interviewees. Chapter V then focuses on the key issues brought forward by the interviewees.

### **Mike Poate**

Mike Poate had been a school principal for many years. He is currently the state president of the Australian Education Union [AEU], Tasmanian branch, a trade union organisation, which has a charter (see Appendix C) defining its concerns as to firstly “maintain and improve the working conditions and professional welfare of teachers.” Poate, about to enter his second term of office, has held this position since late in 1997. Working conditions are, according to Poate, his number one priority, and the AEU president saw the Memorandum of Understanding [MoU] as directly addressing these conditions.

The union wanted the MoU agreement and, in June of 1998, when it was known that a state election was likely, some meetings were held between the AEU and senior Labor Party people, including the now Minister for Education, Paula Wriedt, in her capacity as opposition spokesperson on education. These talks occurred after the ALP had expressed some interest in coming to an understanding with the union about their needs. These meetings teased out what the AEU believed were the important industrial issues that were current at the time. The outcome of these meetings was a document

known as the Memorandum of Understanding, which was signed by Poate as AEU president, and the Honourable Jim Bacon as leader of the ALP in opposition.

In the interview, Poate said union members had subsequently accepted the MoU without protest, which surprised him because he believed teachers numbered equally Liberal and Green supporters as Labor among their ranks.. He added, "Maybe they saw the writing on the wall." Indeed Labor was considered most likely to win the election, and it is likely that teachers were some of those who swung towards Labor.

Poate said the Liberal Opposition party had expressed concern that the MoU had put the AEU too close to the ALP. He further noted that the shadow Minister for Education (The Honourable Sue Napier MP) had recently wanted to form dialogue with him to establish how the Opposition could provide the union and its members with support. "Quite a turn around in practice from when they were in government," he said.

Although Poate was doubtful that the Liberals could come up with an alternative MoU, he said he would be quite comfortable with the idea. "We are not politically aligned. We give the side that gives the best deal for education our support."

The MoU was signed with the ALP for two reasons. One reason was that they were willing to come to an understanding with the AEU and the second was, that the union took a gamble that they would succeed. If the Liberals had won the election maybe things would have been worse for the AEU, but Poate did not think they could have got much worse.



Poate said that now that the Labor Party was in government, it had removed the MoU from the party political arena: "It is seen now as something between the Government and the AEU rather than the ALP and the AEU."

When asked about the MoU and the role of the DoE, Poate said that the DoE was not a political body as it worked at the behest of the Minister and therefore needed to be seen to be carrying out the instructions of the Minister. The new Education Minister, Wriedt, had been quite resolute in insisting her role was to instruct the department. It would seem, according to Poate, that the 'Yes Minister' situation of recalcitrant senior public servants dictating policy was not one she would put up with. He said that there were a number of instances in which she had asserted her role with the DoE and that, as a result, she was gaining their respect.

On the section in the MoU which refers to security of employment, for instance, the initial response of the DoE was, "No we can not do it, there is no way." According to Poate, Minister Wriedt went back to them and said, " 'It will work...you will make it work'. And it did work. When they tried they found they could do it." That is, with the Minister insisting, the DoE found the necessary flexibility to carry out her instructions.

Poate stated that the Minister had been very supportive of the AEU in her role, in implementing sections of the MoU, and by putting pressure on the DoE to actually carry out her instructions to ensure that the Government kept its side of the MoU agreement.

Poate's impression was that, historically, the DoE had been used to running its own agenda for education and having the Minister 'rubber stamp' what they wanted to do. So, it took the DoE time to adjust to the fact that the new

Education Minister was an individual who was insisting that they do as she instructed, not the other way around.

Poate said the MoU had produced a positive affect on morale so far. The perception among teachers, he said, was that the AEU was working with the Government to achieve certain ends, some of which had already started to be realised. Extra teachers and job security were examples he cited. Poate believed that the MoU has made teachers feel that they were valued.

“Because of the wars we had over the past two and a half years with the previous Government, morale was very low and teachers felt that nobody cared about what happened to them. That’s beginning to change. One of the things the Minister wants to change is the culture of the DoE so that it is a valuing culture. The kind of culture which adopts initiatives to increase rather than decrease the morale of teachers. In a recent meeting with heads of the DoE the Minister was apparently quite surprised that, although their reactions were initially negative, by the time the meetings had finished they were actually thinking of new ways in which they could make teachers feel more appreciated.” There is certainly a much closer relationship now between the union and the Minister’s office and the DoE, according to Poate.

The Deputy Secretary for Facility Services, Mr. Simon Barnsley, deals with industrial matters on behalf of the DoE. Poate said Barnsley rang him frequently and they sorted out any problems that would arise, or be about to arise, thus preventing the development of major problems for schools and teachers. Poate said, “It’s a new and very open relationship.” Poate felt there was a keenness to have open channels of communication and recognition of the importance of open channels of communication for education. Poate

acknowledged that the union had been, and continued to be, very appreciative of that. Poate noted that the AEU had initially sought quarterly meetings with government representatives under the consultative mechanism, yet the Government offered to up this preferring to hold these every two months.

The only negative aspect of the MoU Poate saw was the pay nexus arrangement. He saw (the state) Treasury's involvement as a negative factor in getting an acceptable result for teachers as the union was concerned that they would try to compromise the Government.

"They are asserting their influence," Poate explained, "...the AEU has not had good relations with Minister Patmore's [Department of Industrial Relations] office...We've had one meeting and he just did not seem to want to know what the [nexus] process was all about. I'm sure he was playing games but I was quite affected by his attitude."

This is the big issue in the MoU, according to Poate. Teachers, after two and a half years of struggling to achieve their last pay increase and much related expense on the Government's and union's part, may have thought that at last here was a government who has come to an agreement on a nexus arrangement, providing a clean, transparent solution. "Now things are not progressing, as they should," Poate claimed.

Poate stated that the union had been very pleased with the process toward security of employment. "Everything that has gone through Minister Wriedt's office has come off, even if not always precisely as the union would have liked. Teacher numbers in primary schools have increased and there has been a corresponding reduction in teacher contact hours. The consultative mechanism is working in that the union has been meeting regularly with the

Minister to talk things over.” On this matter of the MoU Poate further stated, “It (the consultative mechanism) was a very open process, and they discussed all manner of issues. The only ‘blot’ on the horizon is the nexus proposal.”

Poate reiterated that the MoU clearly stated Labor would immediately, on coming into government, enter into negotiations with the AEU to establish a nexus, and that those negotiations would be aimed at being completed by January 1, 1999.

“It did not and they still have not really entered into it,” Poate remarked.

Poate suggested that the AEU would soon have to step up industrial pressure by, for example, ‘going public’ about the problem via the media.

Poate thought that Labor would be more cautious in future before entering into a MoU that brought them under pressure from Treasury, as Treasury saw the nexus as somewhat like an open cheque. “It is not quite like that,” said Poate, “but precise costs can only be estimated and it could still cost the state in excess of A\$10 000 000.”

There were still key issues not included in the current MoU, like class sizes, Poate said: “We’ve got to get that one nailed down. We have maximum contact times for teachers, but not class sizes. Currently the only way to redress class sizes, outside the kindergarten where there are specified class sizes, is political,” Poate explained, “by parents complaining if classes are too big”.

Poate noted that the AEU and the Tasmanian parent organisation [Tasmanian State Schools Parents and Friends Association] had always had reasonable relationships. “We’ve put out joint statements. We’ve worked together to stop the flood of money to private schools. We’ve worked together at all levels.”

On the issue of teachers' pay, Poate suggested a gap in understanding existed between the AEU and parents: "Many parents do not understand about teachers' pay though. It is hard for them when many do not earn near a teacher's salary."

Poate hoped there would be other MoUs in the future, but wondered if the Government thought it 'got its fingers burnt' on this one. The AEU, he said, would be 'fishing' for a new MoU, especially on issues like class sizes and workload for teachers.

Poate would like to get the current MoU items written into certified agreements that, under current federal industrial legislation, have a lifetime of three years. Awards are difficult to change under current industrial legislation, which means it is easier for the union to gain protection for teachers' working conditions through the development of certified agreements. Poate explained that even the pay nexus, if achieved, would not change the Award. It would be a certified agreement.

Asked about the affect of the MoU on Tasmanian classrooms, Poate said he thought it would have an effect but it was too early to tell yet. "Security of employment must be having a settling effect," he claimed. "When you have a more satisfied workforce, you have better output. It will improve morale in schools."

"(Under the MoU), principal contracts have ended therefore," Poate said, "there is the ability to re-establish a 'complementarity' to the professional connection between teachers and principals." He saw that under contracts there would have been a rift between principals and teachers, which would have been very poor professionally, so the Principals' Incentive Program (PIP)

would be a better way of improving principal leadership. In Poate's time with the union he said he had never seen an agreement like the MoU, or so many industrial matters addressed so favorably in such a short period of time.

Poate saw the MoU as potentially a great leap forward for schools; "With (increased) teacher numbers morale in the primary school will be lifted. There will be a greater role for specialist teachers. The consultative mechanism will have an effect on schools because if we can talk about problems it means we can solve them before they become real problems. That will help maintain morale in schools," Poate said, "Again the big one (contentious issue) is the nexus. Much morale will be riding on that." He added, "So far the MoU is a gamble which has paid off for both teachers and education in this state."

Poate claimed the MoU was, "Certainly a big coup for the union. They've had a number of changes to the working conditions for teachers in a very short period of time. The MoU is clearing a lot of heavy industrial issues. The one remaining, assuming remaining items on the MoU are adequately fulfilled, will be class sizes, that second dimension to the two dimensional problem of workload."

Poate saw the union as having been preoccupied in the last few years with 'basic' industrial concerns. He believed the union should now be able to look more closely at the actual working conditions of teachers in schools and in classrooms.

"In the past industrial matters have taken up an inordinate amount of this organisation's resources. If the union could redirect that effort to making classrooms more pleasant workplaces, by insisting on good behaviour management strategies for example, the status of teachers would improve and

the long-term future of education in this state would be enhanced,” Poate concluded.

### **Nick Evans**

Nick Evans is Industrial Advisor to Education Minister Paula Wriedt. The Minister’s Office is a physically small office with only two other advisors and the Minister herself. Evan’s involvement in the MoU has a noteworthy history, as up until the last election he had been a leading industrial officer with the AEU. He was part of the negotiating team which met with the then opposition (ALP) members of parliament to draft and negotiate the MoU document, seeking along the way – or – in the process, to get the best outcomes for education and the union constituency. In the past, Evans explained, that had always been to influence what those parties would put into their policy, rather than to create a specific agreement between the union and, in this case, the ALP. Evans saw the MoU as a very significant document. In over 17 years of teacher union experience in Tasmania and the ACT he had never seen an agreement as formal or as wide-ranging as the MoU.

Evans saw the security of employment issue as most significant for teachers and for the credibility of the Labor Government. It is one point of the MoU that seems to have been all but achieved. The reduction of teacher contact hours in the primary school he also saw as a milestone. Overall, Evans viewed the MoU as signalling a key relationship change between government and teachers to one based on mutual respect. Evans acknowledged readily that the MoU had its difficulties. Not the least of which had been the initial resistance from the DoE on the issue of permanency for teachers.

Like Poate, Evans said that the culture of the DoE was changing, yet it is hard to believe that significant change could pervade a whole department overnight. “The DoE chiefs have changed and that is a start to achieving cultural change,” Evans claimed. “What remains is for a new way of working to properly permeate all levels.”

His job in the ministry has shown him that the union view may be a little simplistic: Wanting everything on the MoU to be delivered very quickly. Evans acknowledged that the salary nexus part of the MoU was the key sticking point between the Government and the Union, and he hoped that it does not usurp some of the great gains for teachers in the MoU.

According to Evans, the salary nexus was now in Minister Patmore’s (Industrial Relations Ministry’s) hands. The difficulty here, in Evans’ view, was that if Tasmanian teacher salaries were linked with Teacher salary rises in other states it would result in Treasury and the Government not knowing exactly what the full cost consequences would be for the State. Even when they estimated approximately what that could mean, there would be no doubt it would be expensive. Evans comprehended ‘the reality’ of being in government. He stated the need for the Government to push for more time on such a complex and expensive issue. In his view, it is no longer simply a matter that can be determined within one DoE or ministry but necessarily involves the Premier, Treasury and the Government’s Department of Industrial Relations, plus many people and different ministries have to be consulted.

Just as the AEU is angered when not consulted on issues affecting the union, so too are relevant sectors of the Government and Treasury. Evans considered



it appropriate that the salary nexus part of the MoU was now in the hands of the Minister for Industrial Relations.

Evans hoped that teachers and the union would understand the necessity to proceed more slowly on this issue as, despite the delay, the Government's commitment remained. For Evans, this aspect of the MoU was simply an agreement signed in opposition, with the best of intentions, that now does not fit neatly with the realities of being in government. According to Evans, an opposition party signed the MoU and did so without a lot of thought about the practical underpinnings of what that might mean for a government. Given this, the Government was nonetheless happy with what had been achieved to date within a short timeframe, he said.

Evans saw, for government, the security of employment issue as having been quite a difficult matter. In general terms, his job entailed liaising between the DoE and the union and ensuring that there is a common understanding of what the Minister thinks the Agreement means. In specific instances, Evans said that his job was to understand an individual teacher's situation and the DoE's standpoints and advise the Minister accordingly.

As with Poate, Evans acknowledged that the MoU was very industrially-focused and that the Government needed to focus its attention on the needs of students and other stakeholders as well as teachers. Although the interests of both frequently converged, this was not always the case and to some extent the MoU had distracted the Government from some of those other issues, he said. Inclusion, and the Early Childhood Review were examples he gave. "They are going on, but the items included on the MoU have taken some precedence," Evans said.

Amidst this, the AEU expects to be heard and AEU officers ring the Minister's Office frequently because they know Evans is there, and, as he was a long time industrial officer with the AEU, there is an expectation that they will be heard. Evans can not blame them for holding this expectation. He remembers what it was like trying to ring the Hon. Sue Napier's (previous Minister's) office. Apparently it was a waste of time, as the AEU just would not gain a hearing.

Evans was hopeful that there could be further MoUs with the ALP, but that next time Labor would be looking at a more two-way agreement; an agreement that is more broadly educational rather than narrowly industrial. In that sense it's a reasonable possibility, since much of the backlog of industrial matters should have been dealt with under the first MoU. He saw a new agreement as perhaps growing naturally out of the consultative process now in place, and apparently working well, under the current MoU.

Evans' view of the current Education Minister was that she did not want to make the mistakes of the previous one. He noted that New Directions, a major policy of the previous administration, was implemented without proper consultation with teachers. According to Evans, Minister Wriedt wanted help from teachers in deciding what the curriculum should be and their assistance in making it work.

When asked about the affect of the MoU on Tasmanian classrooms, Evans was quite positive. Even though the MoU was an industrial agreement and had been under criticism from the DoE and former Minister Napier, it had some valuable effects at classroom level, Evans claimed. The current Minister's belief, according to Evans, is that reducing the teaching load of primary

teachers will improve classroom teaching through teachers feeling that their work is valued and having more time to organise their learning program. So, it may not be a revolutionary effect, he claimed, but it will have an impact on what goes on in classrooms.

It may seem a small thing, Evans noted, but a reduction in teaching load for teachers in any sector of Tasmanian education had not happened in a very long time. There was also the valuing of teachers by making them permanent employees, Evans stated. “Both these things are significant signals for the way the Labor Government views teachers,” he said.

These gains are something that Evans would not like to see underestimated amid the difficulties evident with the salary nexus arrangement. He saw that the union could well force a falling out with the ALP over the nexus arrangement. On the other hand, the goodwill that has been built up by seeking to involve the union and addressing issues like security of employment, principal contracts, and genuinely looking at the transfer policy might mean that the union values its relationship with the Government. Evans felt that eventually a reasonable arrangement would be arrived at about the nexus, but maybe not in the timeframe first envisaged by either the AEU or the Government.

Evans indicated a little uncertainty about the DoE’s true acceptance of the MoU. Whilst they had to accept it and implement government policy, he noted that they could be doing this a little begrudgingly. Some of the problem apparently relates to the fact that it was an agreement reached with a party in opposition which did not have access to the resources of the DoE. Even so, the Government, in opposition, had taken a philosophical stand regardless of what

the DoE may have thought about it and was now intent on maintaining that stance.

Further, Evans said it was a legitimate position for parent groups and other people to question what the current Government held for them and their interests. He added that the Tasmanian State Schools Parents and Friends Association had been quite supportive of the MoU because they recognised that some of the issues were important for teachers' morale and this was a significant factor influencing what went on in schools.

### **Graham Harrington**

Graham Harrington was Deputy Secretary for Education (head of the schools sector) since 1991 (see Appendix G). He had previously been a high school principal. Harrington retired from the DoE early in 1999. During his time with the DoE, Harrington noted that most policy initiatives emanated from the DoE, rather than from the Government. Typically, the bureaucrats would suggest policy initiatives to the Minister of the day and usually, but not always, the Minister would accept them. Sometimes, he said, an idea that began in a school grew to become system level policy.

According to Harrington, this was the traditional process of policy formation and development under successive governments, Labor and Liberal. He further speculated that in most Tasmanian government departments, the process was similar, and remains similar, even under the current Government. He argued the people who knew most about education were the people in the DoE, not the politicians. Harrington said he had a highly significant role in

policy development because he was at the interface between whoever was developing the policy at departmental level and the Minister or government of the day. He had an influential say in what was actually put to the Minister and what was not.

The current Government came into power with a MoU which was not widely publicised, Harrington claimed, and most governments came to power with a policy platform that they had taken, very publicly, into an election and also had been analysed very carefully by the DoE.

When there was a new minister, the DoE had already analysed their party's policy, Harrington said. He further explained that such analysis would necessarily contain the DoE's biases. He claimed that at least the process was an open one because the policy had been published. This Government, however, had come in with a Memorandum of Understanding and had not conferred with the DoE prior to its development, Harrington claimed. He said that all the DoE knew about the MoU was through the press. The DoE therefore had no role in the formulation of the MoU.

Harrington said, "All we knew was that every now and then we'd get a letter from the union that said, 'You would be aware that this is part of our agreement' In the first days of the new Government we were not even given a copy of that agreement".

Harrington understood that the MoU was about improving teachers' working conditions and that it was an industrial agreement between the Government and the union, to the exclusion of the DoE. He acknowledged that the MoU was just a more precise articulation of much of what was in Labor Party policy

before the last election, but saw a major difference in that election policy was open to public scrutiny and the MoU was not.

The DoE, during Harrington's time in the job, was used to making contingency plans based on broad, publicly known, election policy, and not on a narrowly publicised industrial agreement. Harrington further stated that a lot of things, which happened under the MoU, would not have happened if the DoE had had its way.

Permanency for teachers was one example Harrington cited. The DoE required a level of flexibility in order to staff schools adequately, according to Harrington, and for a long time enrolments were declining and the DoE did not want an excess of permanent teachers in a few years time. Also, he said, with the move towards Local School Management, principals did not want too many permanent teachers.

With more permanent teachers there were more likely to be people teaching outside their area of expertise, Harrington claimed. He further noted that if there were more permanent people then there would be a greater number of transfers, as the DoE could not fill vacancies with 'temporaries', since it had to deploy the permanent labour force first. Harrington did not like the DoE's transfer policy (this policy was developed by the DoE in consultation with the AEU) and he said, neither did the district superintendents. They saw it as an encumbrance on themselves and also on teachers, Harrington claimed, as they frequently had to be transferred against their will.

There were, Harrington noted, restrictions under the State Services Act on the DoE's ability to maintain a pool of temporary teachers. Pressure was frequently coming from the AEU for the DoE to follow the requirements of

this Act, and according to Harrington, argument existed within the DoE on the issue of permanency and the transfer policy.

Harrington was concerned that just prior to his retirement from the DoE, the Government was taking its advice almost entirely from the union, and not from the DoE at all. He was used to being overruled by a minister, but this scenario a different one. He saw that the DoE was being restructured and DoE personnel were having no say in this process at all. The Government named the positions that were to be abolished, where previously, if there had to be positions abolished, the Government had left it to the DoE to decide which positions, Harrington claimed. Moreover, Harrington indicated it caused a considerable degree of tension, especially among middle management people.

Harrington explained that soon after coming into government the new Minister asked the DoE to see what they could do about a rearrangement of district boundaries with the view to abolishing a school district. Whilst still in the draft stages this initiative was 'leaked' from the DoE, which caused the Minister some embarrassment. Blame for this leak fell on the DoE's senior bureaucrats, Harrington claimed.

Harrington saw that this levelling of blame was appropriate. He saw that he, and others in senior positions, were paid high salaries to accept the blame from government when matters went awry, indeed that it was 'part of the job.'

The problem for Harrington and other senior officers of the department at the time was that they were locked out of the decision-making process. It seems that they began to feel a little of the way people in schools felt when the previous Government imposed the New Directions policy on them, with no consultation. Their expertise had gone unrecognised and they felt unvalued.

It was not clear to Harrington why the DoE should have been so excluded from running its own affairs. After all, from his perspective there had always been amicable relations with the union. In fact, Harrington had, some years ago, been a union executive member himself and was quite in praise of some AEU innovations over the years, although he did not specify which ones.

He saw that the AEU's prime purpose was to look after the working conditions of teachers. He saw this as necessarily so, but also their Achilles heel.

At this point in Tasmania's educational history, Harrington saw the union as reacting to the immediate situation rather than having a long-term view of education as a whole. "It (the AEU) operates to prevent progressive change," he claimed.

The inclusion policy (for mainstreaming children with major disabilities) issue was an example cited by Harrington to illustrate the AEU's anti-progressive stance. The union had not rejected the inclusion policy outright but had been critical of it in terms of resource provision and the difficulty for classroom teachers whose work intensity was already high. From the DoE's perspective, according to Harrington, the AEU had difficulty in grasping the importance of the inclusion policy for children.

Similarly, Harrington saw the reduced contact time for primary teachers as the AEU and the Government pushing their own agendas, without concern for the betterment of education as a whole. The extra funding for primary schools was a good thing, according to Harrington, but there was no discussion (with the DoE or with schools) about how this would be spent. Because of the MoU, Harrington said, the money was specifically earmarked for reducing teacher



contact hours, yet if the issue were looked at honestly there would be far better ways to spend the extra funding.

Indeed it was probable, Harrington argued, that many primary school principals and teachers, if asked, may well have wished to spend the extra funding on what they saw as more pressing needs such as, for instance, more literacy tutoring or a behaviour management program.

Harrington saw that once a policy like the MoU was in place, both AEU and the Government seemed to lack the flexibility to implement it sensibly.

Harrington's biggest regret about Tasmanian education, and he said he was a passionate believer in public education, was that there had been, at the time he left the DoE, no long-term strategy for it, from either the Government or the AEU. The DoE he said, was willing to work with both the Government and the AEU toward that end. Harrington indicated that the parent bodies also needed to be included in the development of this vision.

Harrington suspected that the current Labor Government was a lot more conservative in the true sense of the word than the Rundle Liberal Government. He saw the Rundle Government as having been quite progressive as far as education was concerned. The Rundle Government had worked closely with the DoE to cultivate that, he said. Harrington saw that the DoE was highly regarded by Rundle; that he liked the things they were doing, particularly the Outcomes based approach to education, and that the Rundle Government supported education with better funding than the current Labor Government.

The New Directions policy was set to be implemented and even the non-sale of the Hydro Electric Commission (this public asset sale was aimed at

financing New Directions) would not have stopped New Directions, according to Harrington, as so much work had been done behind the scenes to secure it. According to Harrington, Minister Napier believed strongly in the DoE's new innovations and genuinely wanted people, including the Opposition, to agree with her.

Harrington noted that the new Government saw the senior bureaucrats of the DoE as too closely aligned with the previous Government, so the Government turned strongly to the union for advice and information rather than to the DoE. When the DoE raised any objection to aspects of the MoU it was seen as anti-government.

Yet, the big weakness in New Directions, according to Harrington, was that it was all kept secret. No consultation took place with people in schools. "Governments, when they are making the big decisions, don't consult. This (Labor) Government is not consulting," he said.

There were other problems Harrington found with New Directions, like principal contracts for instance, but the big problem for him was lack of consultation. "Education really demands consultation," he stated emphatically. (The other two interviewees were in agreement with this)

Consultation with teachers was the key, in Harrington's view, but not with the AEU. He did not see them as reflecting the views of teachers as a whole. He considered that only those teachers who were ardent unionists made AEU policies, so the policies were out of touch with teachers' 'real' needs.

On what affect the MoU might have on Tasmanian classrooms, Harrington said it would certainly have a good effect on the conditions of work for teachers. From the AEU's point of view he saw this as a very good idea. Yet

he saw that this was based on the somewhat simplistic assumption that if you made things better for teachers, then the children would be better off. Harrington concluded, "...you can do better than that for children".

## **CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUES ARISING FROM THE INTERVIEWS**

### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses the issues brought to light by the interviews outlined in the previous chapter. It does this through these subheadings : The Cultures of the Three Centres of Power; Education Funding and Teacher Industrial Matters; Permanency for Teachers; The Agreed Importance of a Culture of Effective Communication; Power and Ethical Practice; The MoU as a New Venue for Policy Discussion; The Consultative Mechanism; Timeline and Lack of a Pay Nexus: Implications for a Further MoU: Reduced Contact Hours and Maximum Class Sizes; Principal Contracts and Effective Principals; the MoU and the Future of Public Education; and The Curriculum. A summary and conclusion then completes this chapter.

### **The Cultures of the Three Centres of Power**

Three key centres of power in Tasmanian education have joined together to implement the Memorandum of Understanding [MoU], namely the Department of Education [DoE], the Labor Government and the Australian Education Union [AEU]. Importantly, to fully understand these organisations it is necessary to appreciate that they each have their specific cultures and histories. Similarly, the background and capabilities of each of the key players from these sectors becomes an important factor in the degree to which each organisation is instrumental in achieving its aims and the extent to which cooperation is possible across sectors.

It is clear from the interview with Nick Evans that Minister Wriedt and the current Labor administration hold some basic traditional or core Labor values about the dignity of employees, in the terms of their having just employment and working conditions. The AEU, through Mike Poate's articulation, appears to share a similar set of values. Somewhat in contrast, Graham Harrington holds a view that the DoE was comprised of the people who, because of their departmental experience and pivotal roles in public education, know most about what was best for public education in Tasmania. Harrington believes that the DoE are the people in the best position to determine education's overall needs as they deal with these matters continually and also have dialogue with education's practitioners on a daily basis. Poate, in contrast, believes that the union is well positioned to know the needs of teachers and principals in schools as it has some 94% of them as members. In addition, he claimed that he is in frequent discourse with teachers and principals on a myriad of industrial and professional issues. Those members' views and experiences thus inform the day to day running of the union.

For the purposes of this study, the three interview participants representing each of these three key centres of power made it clear that, so far as teachers were concerned, there were identifiable industrial issues and matters of a more professional nature. All three agreed that for a better education system more than industrial issues needed to be considered when policies were implemented. The differences between the interviewees on this matter seem to revolve around the differences about the extent and significance of what is solely an industrial issue and what is both industrial and professional, as evidenced by its perceived impact on the classroom.

The DoE, AEU, and the Government have essentially different ways of viewing education and its needs. For the AEU, industrial issues must take precedence. Their charter (see Appendix C) requires that industrial matters come first. As Poate indicated early in his interview, once such industrial matters have been cleared up adequately, the union could then focus on more professional matters. It is not that the union has scant concern for matters of a more professional nature but simply that teacher welfare matters take precedence, in accordance with the AEU's charter. According to Poate there has been a large backlog of these industrial matters from the time of the previous Ministry for Education, then led by The Honourable Sue Napier. Teachers have since had to regain in some cases, according to Poate, what had been taken away by Napier.

A process of conversion to permanent employment status, for example, had existed prior to Napier's ministerial term. Yet, without consultation, following advice from her departmental seniors who believed there was no such thing as an impending teacher shortage, Napier dismantled the process of teachers gaining permanency after a successful, unbroken four years of service. According to Poate, Napier also behaved provocatively towards teachers by dragging out their pay case over a couple of years. This provocation was furthered when, on the eve of the Industrial Commission ruling, she made a media statement in which she claimed that public school teachers were not worth as much as their private school counterparts as they did not work as hard and enjoyed greater job security (Napier, 1998). This statement Napier partially retracted claiming that she regretted the way it has been taken.

Poate's position is saying, in effect, that if teachers are given some dignity in their employment then they can be focused on being truly professional, rather than having to defend themselves as professionals, as well as their pay and their employment conditions, at every turn. Poate's belief is that if teachers are treated well then professional issues and practices will be more prominent in their minds.

The union's prime function as a pressure group is to secure the best conditions it can for its members and, as long as they operate within accepted guidelines, their role is usually acknowledged as a legitimate one (Mathews, 1976).

It is difficult, without conducting an investigation, to ascertain from the work of Herzberg (1966) whether teachers, if given fair treatment on industrial matters, would necessarily become more devoted professionals. Yet it would seem likely, given the research by Dinham and Scott (1996), that in an unfavourable industrial climate teachers would be less than completely devoted to the professional aspects of their work.

Through Harrington's comments, the DoE's view can be seen, wherein the expediency of deploying resources across a school system is its first priority. It is able to treat teachers fairly only in so much as its own resources and government policy allow this. From this standpoint many in the DoE could argue teachers would never be entirely happy, in an industrial sense, and permanent employment is not something they should expect.

However, resources and government policy are not the only given factors. We see from Argy (1998), the culture of a bureaucracy is central to how it deals with its people and their concerns. For a bureaucracy to treat teachers entirely instrumentally has implications for teachers' trust in that bureaucracy and can

result in reduced teacher commitment (Bishop, 1998), and a subclass of temporary teachers (Spaull and Hince, 1986).

The employment of teachers at local school level, under global funding arrangements, though far from actually happening in Tasmania, has been a change mooted by DoE senior administrators, although not necessarily Harrington, following the influential work of Caldwell and Spinks (1988). Such policy has already become a reality in public sector education in Victoria.

It is easy to see why a government, through an education department, might like to see local school hiring of teachers, as it would then be relieved of a difficult and costly task. That government and department could then be relatively distanced from teacher industrial matters. This would, however, be likely to distance such a department further from the concerns of schools. If Victorian public education is any guide, some principals and school councils would like it too. It would enhance principals' power; in particular to employ and work with the kinds of teachers they'd like. It is not a change that should be undertaken lightly as the parochial interests that could come to the fore in many small communities may censor political, industrial, curriculum and other educational matters quite severely.

The larger issue of global funding put forward by Caldwell and Spinks (1988), whilst providing schools, or at least principals with greater autonomy, has profound implications for the ability of differing schools to achieve equitable financing. It may well be that concerns about equity outweighed possible gains to be made from greater local autonomy for senior education bureaucrats in



Tasmania, in the wake of research that refutes the efficacy of aspects of Caldwell and Spink's model (Whitty, *et al.*, 1998).

### **Education Funding and Teacher Industrial Matters**

Education is usually a 'hot' issue for any state government, as evidenced by all major parties launching detailed pre-election policy about what they will do for it if elected. One difficulty associated with this is that the real issues are hidden behind the political rhetoric. It could be argued on this basis that if public education has to wait around for a truly visionary government to come to its rescue then it might be too long to wait.

The current Tasmanian Government would like to be seen as a pro-public education government and, judged on certain criteria, it is. The many items on the MoU which have come to fruition so far, for example the consultative mechanism, commitment on teacher numbers, security of employment for teachers and the abolition of divisive principal contracts as well as continued commitment to information technology in schools are examples of this. Yet it can be argued that it is a very conservative Labor Government, true to some traditional Labor values, but very much afraid to over spend. The Government feels constrained by Treasury and a shortage of funds from the Federal Government. Put simply, this Government's view of education appears to be that it will do what it can but sufficient money just is not available to fund education the way they would like.

The current projected spending, in Tasmania, on education is slightly less for the 1999-2000 fiscal year than the previous budget under the Liberals (ABS, 1999). On this basis, Labor is unlikely to be seen as the saviour of Tasmanian

public education, but it could be seen to be pro- teacher as it has cleared a number of long outstanding industrial matters very quickly through the MoU. Many of these matters have not been expensive to resolve and clearing them up like this simply signals a value stance that is similar to the AEU's.

All three interviewees were clear that the MoU was quite narrowly an industrial agreement, but also that it clearly had, by valuing teachers and their working conditions, at least some potentially positive effects in the classroom. The author's interaction with teachers indicates, at least anecdotally, that classroom teachers are aware that the MoU is in place, and that under it many consider they are being treated with greater dignity. Both Poate and Evans acknowledged this to be the case and also that it was too early to see an overall improvement educationally. The dissenting view came from Harrington who claimed that the benefits to education under the MoU were minimal.

Poate outlined that the charter of the union (see Appendix C) places industrial issues ahead of professional concerns and that the MoU was about clearing up a large number of significant industrial matters that had been outstanding, under the previous Government, for some time. In this sense it was not to say that professional issues were not involved in the MoU, but merely that the prime focus of the agreement was on industrial matters.

### **Permanency for Teachers**

The issue of permanency for teachers has, in recent years, risen to the top of the Tasmanian AEU's industrial agenda. The pool of temporary teachers reached 19.2% in 1998 under the previous Government's education ministry, led by Napier. The DoE claimed at the time that the percentage of temporaries

was much lower but the new minister Wriedt subsequently acknowledged in the Parliamentary Estimates Committee that the union's estimates of the number of temporary teachers were more accurate (Hull, 1999). This meant that temporary teacher levels had increased by more than 50% in three years. With contracts for principals already in place, in 1998, some pessimistic teachers were expecting that all staff would ultimately be on a limited tenure. Nick Evans also acknowledged the main focus of the MoU to be industrial, and that the Government had a commitment to looking after teachers in that regard. He also pointed out how those industrial matters had very real professional consequences; not the least of these was the status of the teaching profession in the community.

Evans indicated, for example, that the current Government saw the previous Government, both in its own actions and through the DoE, as having devalued the teaching profession by increasing casualisation. There is thus a convergence of position between Minister Wriedt and the AEU on this issue of casualisation. The commitment to looking after employees first leaves those within the DoE who may not have such views, having to reassess their own values. In short, there is a cultural difference at the core of this matter between the DoE and both the Government and the AEU, as evidenced by their completely different ways of seeing teachers.

The move towards a casualisation is nationwide and not specific to the state education system. The same calls for greater flexibility have been the called for by private industry throughout the recent decade (Argy, 1998). Yet these standards should not necessarily be a relevant yardstick for public sector teacher employment. The people with whom public education is competing

most directly and locally are the private schools (Marginson, 1997a) and they are able to offer their employees permanency, usually automatically after a probationary period of a few months. This situation means that enthusiastic young teachers have the option of accepting a succession of temporary positions in the state system for a number of years or taking up permanency in the private system within a few months. It would seem the private schools know this and benefit greatly from it, often getting their 'pick' of the best graduates.

The effect on the morale of most teachers left 'toughing it out' in the state system for years before attaining a permanent job would appear to be negative. Furthermore, Tasmania no longer exists in isolation from competitive global labour market conditions. Australian teachers are currently given employment preference in the UK where, as detailed earlier, salaries for non-promoted teacher positions reach A\$100 000 per annum (AEU 1999b). At a practical level, even if Tasmania can not pay teachers that amount it might at least need to entice people to stay here with job security and favourable conditions of employment. There is also the concern that creation of a sub-class of teachers (Spaull and Hince, 1986) does little for teacher morale; even the ones who have permanent employment status.

Harrington's main concern about greater levels of teacher permanency was that there would be more teachers teaching outside their area of expertise, as schools had to make do with staff they had rather than fill gaps in expertise by employing temporaries with particular skills. This view presumed, of course, that a temporary teacher with the required skills would be available as and where required. However, the trauma of teachers having to teach outside their

area of expertise remains a real one, particularly in a secondary education system which continues to provide curriculum offerings in, traditionally, separate discipline areas.

Harrington noted that the DoE had not known of the impending teacher shortage and had continued to operate as though there would continue to be a constant and plentiful supply of teachers to fill. Yet, significant papers (Preston, 1998) on teacher shortage had been published and formed part of the basis for the AEU's position on the permanency issue. This seems to indicate a significant deficit in the DoE's planning and estimates, the very domain that Harrington laid claim to as a deficiency in AEU thinking.

In contrast however, a view of the future of schools presented by Townsend *et al.* (1999) claimed that the increasing global communication networks and computer-based learning might lead to fewer teachers and a radically different approach to curriculum. Townsend *et al.* claimed that with the Internet teachers' input into student learning is marginalised. They further argued, in a technologically determinist way, for a much more learner-directed curriculum necessitating fewer teachers than Australia has today.

It could be argued conversely, that there is as great a need as ever for the young to receive close guidance in their learning since the information super highway, in itself, cannot guarantee 'arrival at learning' or even the vehicle of appropriate knowledge.

However, it is much more an economic argument that is being postulated by Harrington wherein teachers are seen as instruments to be employed as and when necessary. The extent to which this benefits public schools must be

weighed against the social and organisational costs of a profession and teachers who are significantly dissatisfied by a lack of job security.

Perhaps the answer to this problem might lie in matching more closely the output of particular kinds of teacher skills with projected needs. The University of Tasmania and DoE might form a closer relationship on this issue. As there is currently seems to be little dialogue of this kind between the DoE and the University, it would seem to indicate a deficit in DoE forward planning. Even so, the right mix of skills would also need to be coupled with an effective transfer policy.

If the predictions of Townsend *et al.* (1999) are accurate about the future of learning then the technology-dominated world in which there are fewer teachers and more machines will require a quantum shift in the way teachers ply their trade. This will have massive industrial and professional implications, which will need to be worked through by teacher unions, university faculties of education, governments, and educational administrators. Some teachers may not survive the change without extensive retraining.

### **The Agreed Importance of a Culture of Effective Communication**

All three interviewees described the paramount importance of effective communication and consultation between centres of power in education. Evans explained that the new Government had as a top priority, improving the relationship between the Government and people employed in schools. Harrington concurred with the importance of this when talking about where the New Directions policy of the previous Government had failed, he said: "Education really demands consultation. It's part of a culture of teachers."

Poate was pleased to note recently improved communication when he said, “...there is certainly now a much closer relationship between this union and the minister’s office and the DoE.”

Communication is more likely to be effective when the parties involved are speaking a similar ‘language’, or in other words, have at least some commonality of values. A genuine spirit of cooperation is required to ensure effective communication (Schmuck and Schmuck, 1997), without which the politically stronger are likely to be forcing their agenda on the rest.

On the part of the Minister’s office and the AEU there has recently been clear common ground. The Minister’s concern about the department’s initial hostility to the new Government was outlined by Harrington when he said that the relationship between the previous minister, Napier, and the DoE seemed to be viewed by Labor as one that was too close.

Recent analysis of Australian bureaucracy shows that Tasmanian Labor was wise not to view the bureaucracy as impartial. Argy (1998) outlined how senior bureaucrats considerably influence decisions by altering public opinion through media manipulation and influence policy by the weight of their expertise. Argy further pointed to a modern trend toward lack of permanent tenure for senior bureaucrats, and subsequent short-term thinking, which means senior bureaucrats are becoming increasingly politicised.

Mike Poate spoke about the culture of the DoE and claimed they were used to playing ‘Yes Minister’ with Napier and seemingly getting their way at nearly every turn. Nick Evans said of the DoE: “Involving and consulting have not been the way they’ve operated under previous governments. We’ve had to work hard with them to get them to understand that this is a different way of

approaching our relationship with the union and with teachers generally. They have, over time, come to terms with the fact that this is a different approach.”

Harrington reminded us that the role of the DoE is to implement government policy, not the other way around. Recent history at least would suggest that the DoE had been used to being consulted even if not calling all the shots itself. Harrington indicated a certain amount of resentment among senior bureaucrats that they were ‘locked out’ of the initial decision-making process following the installation of the Bacon Labor Government.

Just how far the DoE has come towards genuine cooperation is difficult to say, as these are still relatively early times and significant reculturing of a bureaucracy may take at least two terms of office. However, a check of relevant documents by the author showed that many of the senior bureaucrats who were with the DoE at the time of the new ministry have now left.

New positions have been created and the minister has spent much time on working through the DoE’s concerns and the Government’s requirements. Poate described the DoE’s attitude to the union, as a result of those meetings with the Minister, as a ‘sea change’. “They had initially been negative but by the end of their seminars they were actually thinking of new ways in which they could make teachers feel more appreciated,” he said.

Poate claimed that this change has not left the DoE without input, but rather has meant that the senior people in the DoE now ring the union if they have any concerns or see a potential problem. In most instances, Poate claimed, the matter is then cleared up by consultation so as to ensure it does not become a problem. Moreover, Poate indicated there is keenness on the part of the DoE to have open channels of communication and recognition of the importance



for education of a mutual understanding of the legitimacy of these stakeholders' roles.

### **Power and Ethical Practice**

It would seem that, at this point in time, the DoE policies do not have built-in ethical practices or an overarching ethics policy that could inform policy development. Potentially, this could be problematic for teachers and education. Personal and political agendas could too easily take precedence over ethical practice (Bottery, 1992).

For example, the DoE could be committed to the funding for the inclusion of students with disabilities into mainstream schools on a genuine needs basis. This would solve most of the difficulties now associated with the inclusion policy which surround a funding program that focuses on category "A" children first, and if any money is left then some category "B" children receive that. The pool of funds is small and those who must share it are many. Thus, it appears to be a less than wholly ethical approach to providing the funds necessary to properly include children with disabilities into mainstream schools.

The DoE continues to implement government policy as it exists at the time, seemingly with no moral or ethical policy to prevent, or at least bring into question, draconian government initiatives. It seems therefore that Harrington's fear, that a 'Kennett style' government could attain power in Tasmania, marginalising the AEU and coopting the DoE towards achieving its agenda is a real one.

There are some factors that might prevent or limit the impact of such a scenario. One such factor might be a genuinely functioning culture of consultation and real mutual respect between the DoE and the union, coupled with a code of ethical conduct observed and believed in by both the union and the DoE. Nonetheless, ethical practice is embedded in the culture of an organisation rather than simply a set of rules (Bottery, 1992).

To this end it might be necessary for the current Government to radically restructure the DoE to break down its hierarchical nature. Again it would have to be careful about how it did this, as it would likely be difficult to change a large hierarchical organisation. Research shows (Wilenski, 1978) that one important contributing factor here is that older, more senior bureaucrats are markedly less critical of the status quo on questions of efficiency, fairness of practice, and ethical questions than lower ranking and younger officers. Also, the transitory nature of modern senior bureaucrats as pointed out by Argy (1998) may have a less than positive effect on their ethical behaviour.

The third factor is school principals. They occupy a very powerful position in the Tasmanian state education system. Compared with their Victorian counterparts, who have been coopted by the Liberal Government (Bishop and Mulford, 1996; 1999; Spaul, 1997) with (what seemed at the time like) greater power and attractive contracts, Tasmanian principals have permanency and remain employed under award conditions. Contract employment for Tasmanian principals was abolished under the MoU. This allows principals to operate relatively free from direct government manipulation. Coupled with the fact that nearly all Tasmanian principals are members of the AEU, this means that the relationship between teachers and principals is, in one sense, much

more professionally equal than was the case in Victoria. It would be hard, though clearly not impossible, for a government to reverse all of that.

Principals' position in the bureaucracy allows them to interpret government and DoE policy in their own way. It is up to teachers, the AEU, and the Principals' Associations to keep principals on track as far as fair, equitable, and consultative decision-making is concerned.

A code of ethics for principals and indeed all sectors of the Tasmanian public school system, might be a development worth pursuing, yet it is usually a culture of 'fair practice' which ultimately has the greatest positive effect on ethical behaviour (Bottery, 1992).

### **The MoU as a New Venue for Policy Discussion**

Much of the essence of what is contained in the MoU would, in the past, have been found in Labor education policy. The MoU provides for a point of focus for both the Government and AEU and formalises regular meetings between the two parties to discuss, in depth, matters affecting teachers and education. The MoU brings a greater urgency to resolving key industrial issues. It could also be seen as a way of getting teachers 'back on side' with Labor, the party who, when last in government in the late 1980s, oversaw the CRESAP (1990) review of education and its subsequent, dramatic funding cuts across the whole system. The MoU is, in that respect something of a peace offering to teachers, signalling Labor's return to more traditional pro-public education values. Clearly, there is a key relationship-change being sought currently, brought about by a greater valuing of the teaching profession through the items on the MoU.

The consultative processes established under the MoU may be its most important features. There is an attempt at achieving openness in these processes, both from the Government under the MoU and through the Government reculturing the DoE by the instructions and guidance it provides. Nick Evans highlighted this aspect when he said: “It’s a significant goal of the minister. She wants to see that the department is open, responsive, and consultative.”

### **The Consultative Mechanism**

The formal consultative mechanism part of the MoU is potentially its most important item. Under this arrangement the AEU meets every two months with the minister and other government representatives to discuss educational matters. Meetings to date had been very fruitful according to both Poate and Evans.

The disempowerment of teachers that results from constantly being told ‘how to be’ by their employer has a significant dampening effect on teacher morale and job satisfaction. In a paper comparing North American and Australian findings on teacher empowerment Bishop and Mulford (1996) conclude that top-down reform and a perception by teachers that the ‘centre’ really cares little about them leads to poor implementation of educational reform.

Yet, the process of consultation needs to be widened, as the consultative mechanism needs to exist between all stakeholders in education. It is most immediately important that genuine discourse is generated between the DoE and teachers so that both sectors can benefit from the sharing of their expertise and policies can be mutually shaped rather than be informed by only one

partner in the process. The DoE might claim, as did Harrington, that it has always had a good rapport with teachers and schools, but the problem is that the very structure of the DoE means that consultation typically happens in particular ways and has done for years.

Harrington noted that, in his time with the DoE, most policy initiatives emanated from the department itself, rather than schools. He also described how he would get out into schools and ask teachers what they thought about various policies. He would first ask a district superintendent to nominate a school and then it would be through the principal that he made contact with teachers. It was a form of consultation that respected the chain of command down through the bureaucratic hierarchy and not necessarily a reliable means of tapping teacher opinion. Under such circumstances, it was possible that the impression Harrington received was not a broad one. When viewed against Fullan's (1993) notions of how to effect real educational change, Harrington's approach seems to lack an inclusiveness of teachers as 'change agents'.

As the DoE tends to operate in this top-down way, it seems reasonable to question its ability to regularly respond properly to sound initiatives developed by teachers in schools. On the other hand, bureaucrats by nature of the fact that they are not at the 'chalk-face' of teaching, and no matter how they do their job or how the DoE is structured, would appear to some teachers to be 'out of touch'. At this juncture, what appear to be of greatest import are the factors that enhance trust between the various partners in the process in public education (Bishop, 1998).

### **Timeline and Lack of a Pay Nexus**

Like all agreements, the MoU is a finite arrangement. For the Government Evans said that the MoU has a life over the Government's term of office. Further, Evans noted that teachers should not expect all MoU items to be implemented immediately, especially the pay nexus, as it is the most difficult. Evans seems to be making this interpretation of the wording of the agreement, as the Government would like more time.

The MoU specifies that negotiations on a pay nexus would be aimed at being completed by the end of 1998. 'Aimed at' clearly does not mean 'achieved' in Evans' view, yet it is now nearly twelve months later and still there have been no serious negotiations on the nexus, and teachers may become disillusioned.

Labor, in office, now finds delivery of all promises, particularly on the pay nexus arrangement, a little less than straightforward, partly perhaps because other agencies have come into play; namely Treasury and the Department of Industrial Relations. These agencies are apparently concerned about the possible flow-on effects to other government departments if teachers were to get such an arrangement.

The AEU has to deal directly with Minister Patmore's Department of Industrial Relations Office and relations with that office apparently have not been good. Industrial Relations Officers seemed to Poate to be 'doing a lot of stalling.'

If so, it may be the start of a larger problem about teacher recognition, because every item that has gone through Minister for Education Wriedt's office has been achieved amicably, according to Poate. It is noteworthy, however, that these are items that have required little or no extra funding. The core problem

with providing higher salaries to teachers is just that such a pay arrangement has implications beyond the Education Portfolio. Teacher pay is such a 'big ticket' item that it would seem, delivery on it will inevitably be slow. This is disappointing for teachers who spent a number of years and large amounts of AEU resources and funds fighting their last wage justice campaign. This disappointment may take a bitter turn, as teachers perceive the irony of politicians receiving a pay increase in the near future, under an already established nexus arrangement.

Both Evans and Poate remain hopeful that an acceptable pay arrangement for teachers will eventually be arrived at. The Government wants more time and the AEU would like to see more prompt action, but neither is so removed from the other at this stage as to not understand the same basic premises.

### **Implications for a Future MoU**

Evans outlined how Labor in opposition did not have a clear view of what it would be like in government trying to implement the pay nexus aspect of the MoU. The claim is that things look far more complex now they are in government. Both Evans and Poate said that they would expect Labor to be more wary of entering into precise agreements of this kind in the future. That is not to say that further MoUs are not likely under Labor but rather that Labor would be looking for a more reciprocal agreement next time. Evans gave the example of where the Government may require teacher cooperation with the implementation of a given new curriculum initiative in return for certain industrial gains for teachers. Poate agreed in principle with this notion as he

said it would be possible to look more closely at professional issues now that significant industrial ones had been largely cleared up.

### **Reduced Contact Hours and Maximum Class Sizes**

For Poate and the AEU one large industrial matter remains unresolved: the issue of class sizes. Contact hours are written into the award and will soon be part of an industrial agreement having a life of three years. Class sizes are only limited in the kindergarten by departmental regulations and in technical subjects where safety with machinery is an Occupational Health and Safety concern. There is also a recommended reduction in class sizes where children with disabilities are included. Even so, the interpretation of these class size limits at local school level appears to be a little 'rubbery'. Class size limitations are not currently part of the industrial award, or any industrial agreement, so even where they do exist they do not have the force of law behind them.

Like contact hours for teachers, class sizes have a direct bearing on a teacher's ability to do justice to his or her students. Although some conflicting research results about the value of smaller class sizes has been found (Marginson, 1997b), it would seem that a larger class may be 'manageable' for a few exceptional teachers but, in the main, it becomes very difficult for most teachers do justice to large classes. Although it is an industrial issue from the outset class sizes have real professional and educational implications.

Optimum class sizes are difficult to specify as they may vary according to the type of class and the individual students that make it up. The situations of Tasmanian teachers are a relative rarity in Australia, in that they have contact



hours stipulated in their Industrial Award. Poate was under no illusion about the difficulty of achieving a stipulated limit on class sizes. They are the two sides of the same issue and, as Poate indicated, 'nailing' both sides down is difficult for the union, as it has been trying for years to achieve this. It is expensive for government as it locks them into certain expenditure on education. The current situation is that funding cutbacks can subtly offset an upward creep in class sizes. With both class sizes and contact hours for teachers having stipulated limits there would be no room for government to skimp on funding, as any reduction in funds would have a direct bearing on the ability of a school to run its full diversity of educational programs.

Nevertheless, a reduction in primary teaching loads represents a significant change. A reduction in teaching loads has not happened in the last 15 years. Getting maximum teaching loads written into the Award was an important development but that process actually meant increased loads in some sectors. At this point, some primary teachers had their working conditions improved, as apparently there were huge discrepancies between individual teachers and schools as to contact hours.

At least by having contact hours written into the Award teachers were provided some parity of working conditions between schools. The existence of contact hours in the Award is tenuous, especially under current federal government industrial legislation which provides for 'Award stripping'; a process that allows only a limited number of items to be included in an industrial award.

The MoU provides a reduction in face to face teaching time for primary teachers, bringing them, when the MoU is fully implemented, to 44 hours per

fortnight contact time, a reduction of two hours. Secondary teachers currently have a maximum of 40 hours per fortnight. Closing this gap gives the primary sector improved status similar to the provision of equal pay across the sectors achieved, in the United States, many years ago (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Further, these maximum contact hours may represent some understanding on the part of the employer about the intensity of teachers' work under School-Based Management [SBM] as noted by Whitty, *et al.*, 1998; Bishop, (1999); and AEU (1999a). It is since the time of SBM that these maximums have been negotiated.

Harrington agreed with the other two interviewees on the issue of primary teachers having to teach more hours than secondary teachers. He concurred that it was difficult to argue that there should be any difference in contact hours between the sectors. His qualification on this was that he did not believe that primary teachers actually wanted a reduction in contact hours. He thought that, if given the option, they would prefer to have the money spent on more pressing professional matters. His argument was that the AEU was out of touch with what teachers actually wanted and needed.

### **Principal Contracts and Effective Principals**

All three interviewees saw the abolition of principal contracts under the MoU as a good thing. Poate saw the really 'hard edge' of these contracts as schedule eight. This was the part that gave principals bonuses of 5% extra salary for improved literacy and numeracy outcomes in their schools. It can be argued that such an incentive represents extra salary for principals for, in effect, what comes in part at least from the work done by teacher. It is easy to see why

anyone closely involved with education would see that as an unfair or incomplete development. Although principals have long felt that they make a difference in producing motivated teachers, better leadership, and better programs, Tasmanian principals did not seem to favour this kind of incentive being included in the contracts. Rather, it was apparently put there at the insistence of The Honourable Tony Rundle, the Liberal Premier. It appears that this was the most ideologically loaded clause within, what to some might have seemed, a larger ideologically motivated initiative. Principal contracts were aimed at making the state education system mirror some aspects of private sector management practices in the expectation that it would lead to better schooling. Cooption of principals, through contracts, towards the ideological stance of the government was also apparent in Victoria in the late 1990s (Blackmore *et al.*, 1996).

The agenda on the part of the Government seems to have been one aimed at controlling principals. The Victorian Government under the Kennett administration is an illustration of how this system, when fully implemented, can be used to control principals, a group who had previously been outspoken on the needs of public education. Under contracts they would get greater remuneration but be loath to speak out on any issue for fear of losing their contract. Research by Bishop & Mulford, (1999) suggests that Victorian cooption of principals under Schools of the Future has had quite negative effects, including for example, a reduction in trust at school level of principals by their teachers.

The final contract system agreed on in Tasmania was brokered by the AEU. It did not have as many of the clauses that would arguably create division

between teachers and principals as the Victorian model (although the pay bonus for school performance was one), but many Tasmanian teachers, through their Union expressed fears that it would still have a silencing affect on principals. In the Tasmanian system principal contracts did not run long enough to demonstrate the full extent of that possibility.

Along with the AEU, the DoE and the Government, principals as a group might be considered a fourth key centre of power in Tasmanian education. They form the important link between DoE and classroom. At school level they are the most senior educators responsible for interpreting departmental policy. Their collective power lies in their ability to either sell policy ideas at local school level or merely pay lip service to policy initiatives that they do not like. Many principals can be very helpful to teachers in keeping them informed on issues of importance to them and they can also act as a buffer on matters that may only be a nuisance to them (Bishop and Mulford, 1996; Heck and Marcoulides, 1996). Principals, at their best, provide excellent educational leadership and have a collegial relationship with their staff in the running of the school, and the management of ever-present processes of change (Fullan, 1993). Enhancement of these desirable qualities in principals requires a close professional relationship between principal and staff. The contract system could be seen as creating a rift between the two (Bishop & Mulford, 1999). So too might the view of principal as 'business manager' rather than 'educational leader' (Bishop and Mulford, 1999). There is no evidence in the literature of teachers favouring such a development. However, there is growing evidence of the importance teachers place on having principals who are knowledgeable

curriculum (Bishop1998; Bishop and Mulford, 1999) and instructional (Boardman, 1999) leaders.

Clearly, some of the important issues mentioned by Harrington need closer investigation. From the DoE's perspective of trying to manage Tasmanian public education, Harrington saw some difficulties presented by the MoU. Some of those issues have been discussed already but by far of greatest concern to Harrington was the importance of a long-term view of education in this state.

### **The MoU and the Future of Public Education**

Whilst the MoU deals with the immediate industrial concerns of teachers through the AEU, it has 'a life' which is, at best, the lifetime of the current Tasmanian Labor Government. In this sense, the MoU provides no guarantees for the long-term future of public education. Harrington's view of the current focus of the AEU in Tasmania as too narrowly industrial may have some merit. Moreover, whilst the AEU has made gains under the MoU there seems little to ensure that a government in the near future can not undo these and worse.

In terms of strategic planning, the AEU needs to ensure first of all that it can withstand a hostile government that refuses to make payroll deductions of union subscriptions from teachers' pays. Drawing upon the experience of what happened in Victoria, cessation of payroll deductions in early January would have the union in a dire financial state.

The AEU also needs to enter into regular meetings with the DoE, the principals and parents associations, for example the State Schools Parents and

Friends Association (a state body of school councils does not yet exist) to ascertain common ground on long term views of the state education system. It should be more difficult for a government to make unfavourable changes if parents, principals, the AEU and the DoE have clearly developed and agreed long term views. Harrington is possibly correct in predicting that this will require some flexibility, particularly on the part of the AEU given its prime focus, as evidenced by its charter, is industrial.

In many respects, public education is currently under attack from the federal sphere of government as funding is effectively being redirected into private schools (Reid, 1999). Moreover, state governments like the former Victorian Government are attempting to privatise government schools. Harrington's claim that the AEU is the only organisation opposed to global funding of schools may have been reasonably accurate. He saw global funding, including hiring and firing at local school level, as inevitable. Yet, it need not be if the vast majority of stakeholders in public education clearly articulate that they do not want it, even though the national trend appears to be toward global funding of schools (Whitty *et al.*, 1998; Marginson, 1997a). However, such a majority would need to be vocal as well as great in number.

To create such a presence in order to convince politicians about the worth of public education, a widespread public information/education campaign could be implemented by, for example, the AEU in conjunction with parents, school councils and principals' associations. The purpose of such a campaign could be to ensure that community support is there to both promote and defend attacks on public education. Clearly the AEU would be well positioned to take

a lead on this, and a massive, proactive, public education campaign would seem to lie ahead of them.

A decade ago, widespread public opposition to market-driven policies of governments in the western world would have seemed unlikely. However, flaws are beginning to appear in the pervasiveness of an ideology of marketisation (Argy 1998, May 6).

### **Curriculum**

The curriculum, as discussed earlier, is the content that teachers use in their classes and is highly prized by most teachers to the extent that they would like some ownership of it (Little, 1990). Yet, it has not been an area with which the teacher unions have closely concerned themselves. Further, there is no widespread stakeholder agreement on curriculum priorities for public schools. Evans alluded to the possibility of curriculum as an educational matter that the Government may wish to take up at some time. He used it as an example of the kind of thing the Government may wish to include in a future MoU. There is difficulty for the AEU getting too deeply involved in curriculum matters. On the surface they may not appear to have the expertise. However, among their membership they would presumably have some of the most proficient curriculum specialists in the state; it may simply be a matter for the union to locate them and coopt their assistance. Nonetheless, if successful agreement can be reached between the AEU and the Government on curriculum matters it may pave the way for similar formal understandings between all major educational stakeholders. It may be possible for a visionary pro-educational government to facilitate such formal agreement.

One big difference of focus will have to be overcome to get even part way to achieving this. That difference centres on the value of the largely behaviourist oriented outcomes based approach that had been so favoured by the Rundle/Napier Government and the DoE. This outcomes based approach was one of the aspects of the DoE's work that was quite admired by the Liberals according to Harrington, who was one of the chief exponents of it. It is worth noting that Labor governments throughout Australia have also favoured this approach. Poate was quite clear that he does not concur with the value of this approach claiming that it is hard to judge outcomes meaningfully. His major criticism an outcomes-based approach was that outcomes are judged in absolute terms and rarely adequately account for the disparate contexts of schools or the backgrounds and prior learning experiences of students.

Nonetheless, as neither Poate nor current AEU literature provide a detailed alternative to the outcomes-based approach, it could be well worth the AEU developing an informed position on this aspect of teacher professional concerns.

### **Conclusion**

The cultures of the DoE, AEU and the Ministry represent different ways of seeing teachers and education, though these perspectives are not as different as they might be under a different government. It would seem there is currently enough common ground to form meaningful dialogue and to put into place mechanisms that help to ensure an ongoing commonality of understanding, and perhaps even establish a shared vision for the future of Tasmanian Education. In different ways, all three sectors seem to have the future of public



education at heart. An understanding based on ethical practices and inclusive collaborative decision-making has the greatest chance of giving teachers the status and morale they need to recreate an education system. Teachers who feel genuinely empowered can develop far greater enthusiasm and vigour for solving the difficult problems of public education.

Public education funding is a 'hot' topic at election times but is frequently shelved once a government is in power. Influence from Treasury, combined with limited federal funds, reduces any state government's (and Tasmania seems poorer than most) capacity to deliver on any pledged teacher pay increase promises.

The MoU symbolises a way of looking at education and teachers. That is, it places their basic needs as employees first. The MoU is the work of a union (who under the previous Government was failing to get its industrial issues heard and failing to get a full hearing on educational matters) and a Labor Party in opposition (which held some traditional Labor values about how workers ought to be treated). More than a bundle of vague election promises, the MoU represents a new way of deciding key educational policy, and a relationship between the Government and teachers, based on trust. Failure to live up to the agreement could ultimately cause embarrassment for the Government and a loss of trust on the part of teachers. The lack of a pay nexus could have serious implications for the possibility of future MoUs.

Permanency for teachers and more equitable contact hours for primary teachers have already been achieved. This may not accord with the department's priorities for education. Nonetheless, the DoE must, in good faith, implement what is government policy. The process of reculturing that is

currently underway might ultimately result in the cooption of the DoE personnel plus better involve the Department in future government/union agreements.

The current Government has used MoUs in other public sector areas and with private sector companies to establish base agreements and/or ground rules for negotiations. It is not surprising that it would want further MoUs with the AEU, especially if educational reform is to remain important to Labor, and the current Minister remains.

Labor signed the current MoU in opposition. If there is another MoU it will, in all probability, be with Labor as the Government so it is likely to have some sharper edges, to be more specific and give less away without gaining something in return. The AEU will need to take that into account when negotiating the next one and try to see beyond its narrow industrial frame to the enhancement of the professional status of teachers and public education. The AEU is likely to want some further clearing of outstanding industrial matters (like class sizes as the 'other end' of the contact hours issue) before it concerns itself properly with matters of a more professional nature. It could be a major dilemma for the AEU trying to negotiate a new agreement whilst trying to uphold its priorities, as defined by its charter, and AEU Council, and interpreted by AEU Executive.

The interviewees in this study all saw the abolition of principal contracts as a good thing. Hopefully, principals will be concerned to show that they are educational leaders without the need for performance based contracts and pay bonuses. They need now to further consolidate their professional relationship with teachers.

Whilst the MoU addressed some very important issues for teachers and their union, there are a number of matters it does not deal with that will need to be addressed if the profession of teaching and public education are to advance appreciably.

Curriculum seems to be an issue on which the Government would like some future teacher cooperation. The AEU has not, in the past, seen curriculum as a high priority and may, if Poate's view is representative, indeed be at odds with outcomes-based curriculum approaches recently favoured by the DoE. The AEU may need to take a greater interest in this issue as curriculum is one of the main school-based means by which educational endeavour is focused and the shape of public education in the future is, in part, dependent upon it. Further, as Little (1990) found, teachers would like to lay some claim to ownership of it.

The next chapter focuses on the key issues arising from the MoU which were brought forward by the interviewees, that is, the pay nexus arrangement and long-term approaches to policy development and school progress. Chapter VII then contains the summary, conclusions and implications of this study.

## **CHAPTER VI: KEY ISSUES ARISING FROM THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

### **Introduction**

As a new way of approaching policy development and agreement on educational matters at government/union level, the Memorandum of Understanding [MoU] may well open up further possibilities for agreements between the various partners in education. However, as many matters could be considered worth including in such agreements, the MoU can be easily criticised for what it does not include, just as much as for what it does include. The strongest criticisms of the MoU and, indeed, the Australian Education Union [AEU], came from Graham Harrington who claimed that, at least initially, the Government shut the Department of Education [DoE] out of the decision-making processes that led to the development of the MoU. Also, Harrington claimed that the AEU and the current Government lacked a vision for Tasmanian education.

Nick Evans claimed, that although the MoU was on the whole a successful arrangement, the contents agreed to in it were now viewed, from the Government's point of view, as being too generous and that any future MoU would need to be a more 'balanced' two-way arrangement. Mike Poate, although generally pleased with the MoU, saw its biggest failing as being the present inability of the Government to deliver on the key issue of teacher salaries.

This chapter focuses on the key issues for education in relation to the MoU, namely, teacher salaries and long term approaches to decision making, and the future of MoU's in educational decision making, which were brought to light

by Poate, Harrington and Evans respectively. The final chapter, chapter VII, follows and contains the summary, conclusion and implications of this study.

### **Teacher Salaries**

Teacher pay is an ongoing issue in most parts of the western world. The intensity and complexity of teachers' work in the late 1990s as evidenced in the Senate Inquiry Into the Status of the Teaching Profession (Crowley, 1998) combined with the years of study required to become a teacher would suggest that it is not a well paid profession anywhere in Australia.

Nonetheless, Tasmanian teachers are now the third lowest paid of all state teachers; with only Victorian and South Australian teachers being lower paid. (AEU, 1999) As time moves on, new pay deals are expected to be negotiated in other states leaving the possibility of Tasmanian teachers being left further behind. Australian teachers are not well paid in comparison to countries, such as the United Kingdom, where a teacher shortage has driven pay increases for teachers and graduate mobility is evident (Simpson, 1998; Preston, 1998).

The status of the profession is dependent, in part, (Dinham & Scott, 1996) on the kind of remuneration it receives. Teaching qualifications, in Tasmania, now require four to five years of university education. With teacher registration currently being drafted such qualifications will become mandatory for teachers seeking work in Tasmania. Teaching currently remains on the low end of professional salaries. A Tasmanian teacher, four-year trained, on the middle of the pay scale, that is after four years experience, receives A\$38 500 per annum. Teachers on the top of the Tasmanian pay scale are only slightly

ahead of their South Australian and Victorian counterparts, with teachers at the same level in all other states earning more.

A pay nexus arrangement was promised under the MoU. The MoU, however, did not spell out precisely the calculation to be used to arrive at such a nexus. The MoU simply stated that negotiations on a pay nexus arrangement would be *aimed at* being completed by the end of 1998. By August of 1999, little negotiation had take place and no indication of any conclusion to the matter, at least in the short-term, seemed likely.

Despite the many gains for teachers under the MoU, the pay nexus arrangement may prove to be the linchpin in deciding the 'tone' of the future relationship between the Tasmanian ALP, as the current Government, and teachers. The Victorian teacher unions under the Cain Labor Government after a succession of industrial agreements shifted their concerns to mainly industrial issues. This move did not please all teacher members and resulted in major rifts within the unions (Spaull *et al.*, 1986). The amalgamation of major teacher unions in Victoria into the AEU did not halt teacher dissatisfaction with the new union and declining membership. The umbrella union focused firmly on industrial issues and internal power struggles further developed. One result of this was that teachers identified less and less with their union at a time when they perhaps most needed one. Victorian teachers are now the second lowest paid in the country and, due, in part, to low union membership, and have little industrial strength.

In a similar way the Tasmanian AEU needs to watch carefully that some individuals within the union do not see it become narrowly concerned with more industrially oriented matters in the wake of what may turn out to be a

failure on the pay nexus. [It seems teachers in Victoria in the mid 1980s, dissatisfied with the Cain Labor Government, became more industrially focused (Spaull, *et al.* 1986).] Teachers would see such failure as a major broken promise on the part of the Government. Moreover, another pay dispute would likely have strong implications for teachers as voters. It would also have implications for teachers' sense of trust in the current Government and its mode of conducting business. This trust, although as yet not fully tested, has been running high in the wake of the delivery of most of the other items on the MoU and the new climate for teachers of being heard on issues of concern to them.

The pay issue is important for many teachers, especially, for example, those who are providers for single income families. In June 1999, Tasmanian teachers received their final instalment of an awarded pay increase that, at the time it was awarded, put them at around the middle earning teachers in Australia, as compared to teachers in other states in relation to the other states. As other states continue to gain pay increases and Tasmanian teachers still have no clearly projected process for establishing pay increases, the 'organisational' memory of their most recent, long, pay dispute is likely to fuel disquiet. For example, early in August 1999 Newstead College Sub-branch of the AEU unanimously passed a motion condemning the Government for its delays in implementing the nexus agreement and urging Peter Patmore, Minister for Industrial Relations, to make implementation of the teacher pay nexus a priority. AEU President, Mike Poate had written to Patmore on June 10 1999 and had, by August, received no reply (Doherty, 1999).

The cost of the pay nexus, which is estimated to be in excess of A\$10 000 000, based on average pay increases of between \$1500 and \$2000 for each of the state's 5400 teachers (Doherty, 1999), has meant that the Government is not rushing to resolve it. Treasury was to develop economic modelling in an attempt to project future state incomes and expenses, according to Evans (it was unclear what kind of economic modelling) and include the nexus in its calculations. It seems unlikely that Treasury's conclusion will be that Tasmania can afford a nexus arrangement for teacher pay increases, and likely that the Government will attempt to use Treasury figures to show that such an arrangement can not be made. In such a scenario teachers will be left with whatever alternative offer the Government makes if, which seems unlikely, their union concedes that the nexus arrangement as laid down in the MoU was an overly ambitious product of Labor in opposition. The claim may be that now in government, Labor must grapple with unforeseen fiscal constraints. The Government might gamble that teachers will not put up a serious fight on the matter as after all the Government has been reasonably generous to them on the broad range of other matters covered in the MoU. Such an outcome would leave the AEU in a quandary as to what to do for their membership about a broken government agreement on such a key issue.

There have been many gains for teachers under the MoU, yet it must be remembered that the items on the MoU, other than the pay nexus, are relatively cost neutral. The most important change is that the DoE and the ministry are consulting the AEU now on a variety of issues. The DoE is at least in part, being 'recultured' by the Minister. Similarly, meetings between



the AEU and the Minister under the consultative mechanism apparently continue to prove fruitful, according to Poate.

For its part, the AEU has been patient. It had not seriously challenged the Government on the pay matter for many months and only in August 1999 did it express, through the Newstead sub-branch, some real frustration about the Government's inaction.

The AEU would not want a major industrial campaign placing the current gains of the MoU in jeopardy, as on so many matters the Government is acting consensually with the AEU on educational matters, under the consultative mechanism. There will, however, likely be strong calls from the AEU membership to hold Labor to its word. On Poate's estimation, many teachers and a number of AEU officers are not Labor voters. Even those who have been Labor supporters will have their allegiances challenged in the wake of a failed pay nexus. It needs to be noted that, although a state election is some time off, Labor holds government on about 900 votes in the two electorates of Braddon and Bass, and there are more than 900 teachers in those electorates.

Further, the Opposition is likely to attack the Government with claims that Labor's promises are larger than its capacity to govern effectively and/or that teachers deserve and would be treated better under a Liberal Government.

However, this would hardly be a credible claim as the former Liberal Government fought vehemently against teachers on their most recent pay case.

The spotlight will also be on the AEU as the MoU has provided a perception that the AEU is now much closer to the Labor party. Recently appointed Opposition leader Napier has already publicly expressed this claim. If the AEU allows the Government to get off lightly with a failed nexus, the

Opposition may point to this as further evidence of an unhealthy liaison between a union and a government that sells teachers short. It is possible, therefore, that the pay issue could also be quite divisive for the AEU.

It would be difficult to imagine an outcome on the pay nexus that could please all parties. Perhaps the most expedient course of action for the Government in the short-term, is to make teachers a pay offer that is projected to begin just beyond the next state election. It would seem with such stalling, it would have to be a fairly reasonable offer to be agreed to by the majority of AEU members. In doing so, the Government would have fulfilled its obligation under the MoU and it may be possible to renegotiate the nexus after the next election.

Teachers, through the AEU, will inevitably have to continue their case for wage justice as even a successful nexus arrangement has a limited life. From the Government's point of view, pay increases for teachers are inevitable to the extent that labour costs and costs of living continue to rise. Governments can, however, hold back such increases in the short-term to save money. It would save the AEU and the Government much time and money if they were not fighting protracted battles over teacher pay and allow them to get on with creating a shared long-term vision for public education. This, after all, was the purpose behind the inclusion of a salary nexus arrangement in the MoU. The big question though for the Government seems to concern whether there is enough 'clout' in the teacher pay issue at the next election. In the longer term, the greatest recourse to establishing pay justice for teachers must come, as Pocock (1999) suggests, through the public perception that they are worth it.

Pocock's study shows how workers have made great gains through the development of public concern about their unfair treatment.

Furthermore, as Preston's (1998) work points out, an impending teacher shortage may provide the DoE with the problem of attracting teachers to, and keeping teachers in, Tasmania. Especially given that this is a world-wide shortage, labour markets are becoming global and teacher salaries look more attractive elsewhere.

### **Long Term Approaches to Policy Development and School Progress**

Attempts elsewhere, for example Victoria, under Schools of the Future, to marketise schools seem not to have gained sufficient currency here in Tasmania. It may be that issues like equity were placed ahead of economic issues by governments and senior bureaucrats in the wake of research which showed that equity is a major casualty of a system of market deployment of educational resources (Blackmore *et al.*; 1996, Whitty *et al.*, 1998).

Despite the devolution involved in Local School Management, much real decision-making power still resides with the central authorities in Australian education systems (Whitty, *et al.*, 1998). Tasmania seems to be no exception to this.

Traditionally, the central authority, rather than individual schools, has taken responsibility for long term planning in Tasmanian education. New policy has been devised by the central authority and disseminated to schools via superintendents and principals. Whilst some teacher input has been sought, broad-based teacher input at the development stage of the policies has not

been common practice. Where consultation has taken place it would seem that it has been at the whim of the bureaucrats.

New Directions was an example of this. This document was, in part, a policy for the introduction of new technology into schools and had been devised between the Government and the DoE without consultation with schools, according to Harrington, whose job it was in part, to develop and oversee the implementation of New Directions. The DoE then set about gaining teacher and school support for the idea by publishing a series of 'update bulletins' sent to schools and public forums around the state. In these forums, parents, teachers, and members of the public were able to ask questions of the DoE senior bureaucrats concerning all aspects of the new policy.

A typical example of the policy development process in recent years has been the current Reporting to Parents policy. Devised by the DoE bureaucrats, by selecting what they deemed as 'best practice' in particular schools, this policy must be adhered to in all schools. Some schools feel that they are given only a very narrow freedom to interpret the reporting policy at local school level. Indeed, an AEU working group on the Reporting to Parents policy found that there was wide-spread misunderstanding about what were DoE requirements under the policy and what principals teachers and school communities could decide to do at school level. This lead the AEU to publish interim recommendations about how to interpret the guidelines pragmatically (AEU, 1997).

The reporting format developed for secondary students in the author's school under the Reporting to Parents policy recently involved nearly 2000 pages of reports being sent to parents on 150 students. This was a mammoth task for a

small number of teachers in a District High School. The local district superintendent hailed the reporting format as 'best practice': exemplary work. Reporting is clearly a very important part of teachers' work, but teachers felt, in this case less than fully empowered to construct their reporting in a meaningful way.

What parents require and can make sense of seems to be a matter for consultation, most appropriately, between schools and their specific communities. The DoE may claim that it has done this by allowing schools to interpret and make minor wording changes to the reporting criteria. The power of schools to meet their own needs seems to be too limited under Local School Management [LSM}. Some principals surely must feel this and be frustrated as they attempt to do the best they can for their teachers and local school communities.

An issue like reporting to parents is, on the spectrum of teacher issues, more towards the professional end than the industrial. Yet, issues of this nature, when poorly consulted, impact on teacher time and stress levels in ways that make them matters of teacher welfare and, therefore, as much industrial as professional matters.

Despite the AEU-DECCD Joint Workload Study (1997) the reporting issue had still not been properly resolved by April 1998, when the AEU suggested (AEU, 1998) that schools take a minimalist interpretation of DoE guidelines. This far from solves the issue as, such an interpretation might not make for meaningful reporting and, teachers feel professionally compromised by what appeared to them as a union 'work to rule'.

The allocation of time to tasks within schools and the educational priorities of a school need some hard thinking (Hargreaves, 1994). Reporting to parents may be an important issue for schools but may not require as great a time allocation as say curriculum development.

The reculturing of the DoE that Minister Wriedt has apparently begun following the MoU needs to go further than the senior levels. Amongst many things, reculturing needs to break down the bureaucratic hierarchical structure that ends in schools implementing inappropriate policy or doing so in ways that defeat the central purpose of such policy.

The Reporting to Parents policy problem may have resulted from quite simple communication difficulties somewhere between its inception within the DoE bureaucracy and its ultimate implementation in a particular school. The kind of communication that has taken place on this issue may have been very much one-way. This may have been particularly so at district level where the principal, in the example cited above, received the accolades for 'best practice' and quite likely did not offer that teachers in his school were less than pleased with the format. Teachers are disempowered when feel little ownership of an important aspect of their work. The study by Bishop and Mulford (1999) shows that teacher empowerment is also a major issue for Victorian teachers in the wake of centrally imposed policy.

The issue of Local School Management [LSM] and the attempt by Minister Wriedt to reculture DoE need to be examined much more closely in the local context if Tyack and Cuban (1995) are right about why educational reform has failed. Their claim is that merely 'tinkering at the edges' does not achieve any

lasting, broad-based change and that quite radical change is necessary for public education to improve.

LSM has given schools a number of new housekeeping matters to deal with but has not given them real power to prioritise as they see necessary at school level. Departmental priorities always take precedence. There is a call for this to be the other way around. It begs the question: If schools and teachers had full professional power over their work and the DoE facilitated this apolitically would things really be any worse?

For this to happen requires trust. There would need to be trust in principals and teachers from the bureaucracy and trust in teachers from principals and school communities. This is not to say that educational matters should proceed without accountability, but merely that teachers provide education and therefore might be best, or at least very well, positioned to develop it in the most positive and relevant ways (Fullan, 1993; Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

This cannot happen with teachers working in isolation from one another, as is frequently the case in the current system (Hargreaves, 1994). Nor can positive development happen where teachers are part of a hierarchical chain of command (Blase, 1993). Teachers and principals need to work collaboratively to harness their collective expertise and establish group goals and high, yet realistic, work standards. Principal attributes appear to be critical in establishing these conditions (Johnson, 1984).

Currently developments are not owned by the teachers who must implement them, so well meaning new policy like New Directions, or Reporting to Parents, even when taken on by enthusiastic principals is received as not so

well meaning by teachers. They see it as yet another imposition (Bishop & Mulford, 1999).

Educational change is cited as one of the greatest sources of stress for teachers (Dinham & Scott, 1996). Added workload and change of job role also reported by Workplace Standards Tasmania (McHugh, 1999) as typical sources of stress for teachers. Though each change taken on its own may seem a small one teachers are confronted with a plethora of them. In the 1980s there were at least two changes in the received wisdom about the basis for the language curriculum in Tasmania. A traditional, formal language curriculum was replaced by a strong emphasis on a Whole Language approach that was superseded by a back to basics approach resulting in the development of the Key Intended Literacy Outcomes [KILOs]. It was hard for teachers to keep up with all of this and still see that it was worthwhile change especially when they saw the effect on children's learning. In the time a child is in primary school, which is usually about seven years, the several upheavals in curriculum saw large numbers of children exiting primary school apparently unable to spell. Fullan's (1993) suggestion that teaching sometimes fosters a conservatism and resistance to innovation, especially where teachers are the recipients rather than the instigators of new methods, may partly account for problems like the ones outlined above.

Furthermore, appropriate professional development for teachers to assimilate change seems neither properly provided for by schools or the DoE. Nor is there any real incentive for teachers to undergo professional development in their own time. Dinham and Scott (1996) made recommendation of this in their study on teacher satisfaction, motivation and health.



Given the apparent failure of a hierarchical bureaucratic structure and a lack of empowerment for teachers it seems the whole question of type of leadership current within the state education might be worth questioning. The way in which leadership is conceptualised is important for the development of a more co-operative education. Leadership from a traditional perspective is viewed as an individual property; a set of behaviours and characteristics of the leader. This is a view that sees the role rather than the function of leadership as the central factor. Developments in the behavioural sciences outlined by (Schmuck and Schmuck 1997) argue that personality measures may not be reliable means to assess leadership and that it is not the means that is important but the process.

Leadership, in the co-operative sense, is seen as arising out of interpersonal exchanges and as the psycho-social property of the group. Whilst some personality characteristics (e.g. responsibility, vigour, persistence and self confidence) may be useful there are effective leaders who do not have these. Effective leaders may, therefore, be people who are flexible and insightful, who size up the group and use appropriate interventions, rather than particular personality types. If leadership is viewed broadly as behaviour which influences the group then it is possible to envisage a group that has as many leaders as members, given all are participating and contributing in meaningful ways. Not all behaviours may be functional (group or goal directed) leadership, but understanding the emergent leadership behaviours within a group can help it direct its leadership towards more positive ends (Schmuck and Schmuck, 1997). In short, school progress depends on utilising all available talent cooperatively.

### **The Future of MoU's**

The current educational MoU has been in place for twelve months, and its only major problem appears to be the teacher salary issue. It would seem that the MoU's greatest success and potential for the future, lies in the consultative mechanism, which formalises regular discussion between the AEU and the Government on educational matters. The greatest shortcoming of the consultative mechanism might be if it continues at the exclusion of the DoE, which after all, is the major vehicle through which any effective educational change in Tasmania would need to be channelled.

To not include the DoE in future consultative processes may be a perilous course of action for the AEU, as governments change and with them ways of consulting and governing also change. Yet, if the DoE is included as an equal partner in the discussion of teacher and educational issues, with both the Government and the AEU, then that forum has a greater chance of maintaining legitimacy after a change of government. The consultative mechanism could then be seen as much more than a 'cosy' relationship between the Labor Government and the AEU and may even have the DoE defend it as a valuable means of gaining broad input into educational policy. Further, it would seem that the 'reculturing' of the DoE by Minister Wriedt, noted by Evans, would not be fully effective until they were drawn in as equal participants in the formulation of educational policy.

Whilst the future of educational MoUs remains unclear, both Poate and Evans indicated a willingness on the part of their respective organisations to discuss that possibility. As all three interviewees concurred, the current MoU was a

coup for the Union. Future MoUs would be unlikely to provide such gains for teachers without some trade-off, or as Evans suggested, guarantees of teacher support for implementation of a new government educational initiative. In the light of the problems with the introduction of New Directions, outlined by Harrington, this would seem a practical approach for a government wishing to effect wholesale change to public education, without alienating teachers who will be required to effect such change. If anything like the proposed changes of Townsend *et al* . (1999) will be required to see public education cope with new millennium needs here in Tasmania, the AEU and teachers will need to find considerable flexibility. Research by Tyack and Cuban (1995) shows that, in a century of reform, governments and education authorities have failed to make many real or lasting changes in the basic structural elements of schools, it is, therefore, unlikely that any changes that are agreed to here in Tasmania will be a radical departure from school as we now know it. However, it remains possible that if changes are properly negotiated, rather than centrally imposed, they could be mutually beneficial for all stakeholders.

The reduction in trust among Victorian teachers due to mandated changes through Schools of the Future (Bishop & Mulford, 1999) clearly did not assist in developing the real partnerships (Linnett, 1999, Sept. 30) between teachers, principals, the Government and education authorities necessary for an effective public education system.

The Tasmanian AEU, for its part, seems to be attempting to operate in ways similar to the North American teacher unions, outlined by Bascia (1998), in forging partnerships between the union and educational authorities.

Formalising points of common understanding and providing a forum for discussion between stake-holders, of the kind initiated by the MoU and its consultative mechanism, may yet prove more fruitful than the proven failure of more bureaucratic (Blase, 1993) and centrally imposed (Bishop & Mulford, 1999) means of instituting change.

### **Conclusions**

The key concerns about the MoU brought into focus by the interviewees were the salary nexus arrangement (Poate and Evans) and co-operation for establishing long-term plans and policy development for the future of public education (Harrington, Poate and Evans). The future of MoUs was eluded to by both Poate and Evans as a preferred way of gaining a common understanding on some key issues of concern to both the Government and the AEU.

It would seem that if the AEU and the Government can agree on industrial matters (despite some differences over the time frame for a pay nexus), which would seem to be the more difficult concerns to achieve agreement on, then establishing MoU's on professional matters should be an easier matter.

Many teachers may not have the time or the inclination to participate directly in educational decision-making, nor would it seem practical for the DoE and the Minister's Office to consult all teachers on all matters. Yet, it would seem that with a level of trust, among teachers, in the DoE, the Minister and the AEU, it would be possible for them to focus properly on their work.

The AEU may have a pivotal role in both engendering trust in itself as representing the interests of all teachers and in helping to ensure that trust is

maintained between teachers and those other sectors. When the key partners in education do not understand each other it seems likely that children's educational interests will be compromised.

The following and final chapter contains the summary, conclusion and implications of this study.

## CHAPTER VII: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

### **Introduction**

In broad terms, this chapter considers the contribution this study has made, how the study responded to the original problem and implications which can be drawn from it. These issues are pursued through these sections: Summary of Methods and Procedures; Related Studies; The Central Problem; Summary of Findings; Conclusions; The Major Implication of the Study; Shortcomings of the Study; Possible Improvements to the Study; and Recommendations for Further Study.

### **Summary of Methods and Procedures**

An interpretative case study framed this investigation because of three conditions (Yinn, 1994): The study was concerned with how or why questions; the author had limited control over the setting; and the phenomena of interest were set in a contemporary natural setting.

Three leading educationalists comprised the study's participants. Selection was purposive because the positions of these people had held, or formerly held, meant that they could offer a view that was representative of their respective organisations. The three organisations, the Department of Education [DoE], the Australian Education Union [AEU], and the office of the Minister for Education, were the centres of power, which were involved in the drafting and/or implementation of Tasmania's educational MoU.

The purpose of this study was to elicit the perspectives, on the MoU and its implementation, of the three interviewees. The interviewees were seen as having expert knowledge as they were at the top level of their respective organisations.

The author was the primary instrument in this study because the instruments needed to be adaptable in order to interpret the evidence put forward by the interviewees and make informed assessments about the meaning and significance of that evidence (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Comprehensive briefings of the interviewees took place to ensure they clearly understood the purpose and content of the interviews and study.

The researcher endeavoured to understand the evidence articulated by the interviewees honestly, and operated within the guideline laid down by the Ethics Committee of the University of Tasmania at all times.

### **Related Studies**

Extensive investigations by the author have determined that there are no studies of a similar nature on educational MoUs in Australia. However, an extensive review of literature viewed the educational context of the MoU through these topics: **Education is an Important Public Investment** which looked at how public education is an important public institution and investment for a tolerant, democratic society. The agenda of western governments over the past two decades having seen the value of publicly funded education reduced.

**Public School or Private School – The Edges Blur** looked at the effect of marketisation of public schools in Australia and other western countries.

In **A Century of Reform** it was noted that little has changed about the daily interactions of students, teachers, principals, and bureaucrats, so there is a widely acknowledged call to make teachers central to the 'reculturing' of schools (Fullan, 1993; Tyack and Cuban, 1995).

In **Change and Work Intensification** it was shown that changes towards a devolved, market oriented approach to public education, along with major changes in the social fabric of western society, have resulted in work intensification, and not professional empowerment, for teachers (Fullan, 1993; Angus, 1994; Bishop and Mulford, 1996 and 1999; Whitty, 1998).

In **The New Role of the Teacher Unions and Self-Managed Schools**, Bascia (1998) and the AEU (1998) showed how, contrary to their traditional industrial focus, teacher associations in North America and Australia have recently shown great interest in developing partnerships with education authorities, aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning..

**Defining Teachers' Work** suggested that an understanding of the work that teachers do can provide insights into how education can progress (Fullan, 1993; Connell, 1995).

**Teachers' Work Commitment and Stress**, concerned the difficulty of some teachers, who often find that, despite their commitment, the stress associated with working unsupported can lead to burnout and frustration (Spaull and Hince, 1986; Fullan, 1993).

**Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction** focused on the work of Herzberg (1966) and how it may relate to teacher motivation and job satisfaction. The studies by Dinham and Scott (1996 and 1997) showed the importance of school based



factors and school leadership for creating supportive, inclusive environments for teachers.

**Teachers and Educational Change** highlighted the pervasiveness of change and the role of teachers as ‘change agents’ (Fullan, 1993; Hargreaves, 1991).

The necessity for changing the ‘core culture’ of schools is pointed out by Fullan (1993) and Tyack and Cuban (1995).

**In Reculturing Schools for Everyone’s Benefit** the ideas of Fullan (1993) and Hargreaves (1994) related steps toward placing teachers at the forefront of the change process.

**Support, Professionalism, Empowerment, and Leadership** focused on the need for governments and education authorities to support positive school-based changes and shared leadership aimed at empowering teachers and inspiring their trust.

**Teachers and the Curriculum** explored the notion of curriculum, which, being the tool with which teachers can make education relevant to the needs of a diversity of students, is central to the educational change process (Fullan, 1993; Connell, 1993).

**In Workload, Work Value, Work Intensity and Educational Reform** the necessity to balance teachers’ needs for professional autonomy, recognition, and satisfying and rewarding work with the needs of parents and students was examined (Gitlin, 1998; Connell, 1985 and 1993).

**Status, Professionalism and Job Satisfaction** examined how the status of the teaching profession needs to improve to attract people into a profession on the brink of a world shortage (Preston, 1998).

**Job Security as a Major Condition of Employment** demonstrated that teachers with temporary employment status are treated instrumentally by education authorities.

**Resources** cited the difficulties of improving schools under current funding and resourcing arrangements.

**Teacher Unions as Educational Pressure Groups** looked at the legitimate roles and affiliations of Australian teacher unions.

**Teacher Associations' Industrial and Professional Concerns** showed how Australian teacher unions, amidst their ever-present industrial concerns, have lobbied governments in defence of public education and sought cooperative approaches with educational authorities for the future of public education.

**Links between the Partners in Education** looked at how cooperation between the various stakeholders in education may assist development of a workable shared vision.

## **Summary of Findings**

### **The Contributions of this Research**

The interviewees indicated concurring views between the Minister's office, the DoE and the AEU about the value of public education. Each saw public education as vulnerable and in need of proper long term planning to ensure its future viability. Dissonance existed between the three sectors, yet this was not of the kind that other authors, such as Blackmore *et al.* (1996) and Bishop (1999) had found in Victoria under the Schools of the Future where distrust disallowed meaningful discussion of the key issues facing public education.

### **The Central Problem**

In some reports, the MoU is in itself relatively unimportant for solving the key problems facing education. Instead, it can be viewed as a symbolic action on the part of both a government and a union endeavouring to make clear their common understandings about the value of teachers' work.

The consultative mechanism part of the MoU is potentially its most valuable component. The Government's commitment to this component exceeded the AEU's expectations in that, Poate claims, the union initially asked for quarterly meetings with the Government and the Government upped the frequency of those meetings to every two months. This indicates a proactive aspect to the Government's role in the consultative mechanism and affirms that the Government is, at least to a degree, genuine about consultation, and not merely offering token consultation with teachers. This view of the Government's sincerity is supported by Poate's claim that meetings with government representatives under the consultative mechanism have, to date, proceeded extremely well from the AEU's perspective.

Through this, the MoU empowers teachers, at least in the short term, and to the extent that they are, for now, listened to through this union by government on a broad range of issues. It is difficult to ascertain the longer-term implications of this, although it would seem that if the Victorian experience, in the 1980s is any kind of warning there are many potential pitfalls to be negotiated.

A change of government may mean an end to anything resembling the current MoU, yet the more immediate concern is that the relationship between Labor

and the AEU may sour over the lack of a pay nexus for teachers. If the trust between the Government and the AEU were to break down the consequences for education may be dire as the experience of the teacher unions in Victoria under the Cain Labor Government in the 1980s shows. The unions became concerned almost solely with industrial matters in the wake of failed government agreements. This, in part, led to reduced union membership and assisted in seeing that the unions were marginalised under the subsequent Kennett Liberal Government. It appears that the disappointment of the unions under Labor was bitter for many, as they saw their potential industrial gains swept away.

Evan's claim that the Government may require a more reciprocal agreement under any future MoU has difficult implications for the AEU. A perception that there is too great a consensus between Labor and the AEU could be damaging as many teachers appear, according to Poate, to be non-Labor or swinging voters. They may not approve of such a close relationship between their union and Labor, especially if teachers appear to be getting little materially out of such a liaison.

Graham Harrington pointed out that the MoU is a long way from saving the future of Tasmanian public education, in that it is a narrow industrial agreement, which fails to address the disparate issues facing education. If the consultative mechanism is to demonstrate any lasting worth long-term plans for the security and development of public education, they need to be addressed in this forum.

The Tasmanian AEU will need to operate strategically if it is to nurture the potentially valuable process of consultation and recognition it has achieved

under the MoU. It needs to clearly show teachers that it continues to achieve for them both industrially and professionally, and for public education in general.

### **The Major Implication of the Study**

Reform of public management in OECD countries (OECD, 1995) is a concurrent development with increased local control over school activity. This is now typically combined with more effective steering of public institutions from the centre. Consultation on major policy directions, through processes like the MoU, suggests that this trend in the public administration process is now widely evident in Tasmania.

Theorists who are pro-teacher, like Fullan and Connell, would see that the MoU is a worthwhile agreement signalling a valuing of teachers, and to some degree public education. Yet, much more is needed if there is to be a genuinely public education in the longer term. Many pressures are coming to bear on schools from a community concerned, rightly or wrongly, about the relevance of our current education system in the face of an uncertain future.

### **Shortcomings of the Study**

Teacher industrial matters have not been studied as widely and as recently as many other education-related topics, so literature that provides an immediate context for the industrial aspect of this study was sparse and some of that which existed was somewhat dated.

Whilst the interviewees proved to be extremely cooperative and forthcoming with their sector's views on the MoU and its place in public education, it must

acknowledged that the study could have found more and different issues of concern.

The study was therefore limited to the key issues brought forward by three interviewees from key positions in their respective organisations, within the frame of a single interview, and in the light of the study's key research questions.

### **Possible Improvements to the Study**

Interviewing more subjects from each of the three key sectors plus a fourth sector, the state parent organisation, could have improved the breadth of information gathered. Had time permitted, a series of interviews may have given greater depth to the understanding of each interviewee's perspective. It could have included additional subjects from each of the three sectors and also from the State Schools Parents and Friends Association.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The consultative mechanism of the MoU is one of its most unique aspects. As this study drew to a finish, the consultative mechanism appeared to be working extremely well, according to both Evans and Poate, yet this period represents a very early time in the life of a new Government. It would be useful to know if this mechanism has longevity beyond the initial period of the new Government and, if so, what form it will take. Also, the processes of decision-making that take place within the consultative mechanism could form a worthwhile investigation.

At least some sectors of public education in Tasmania appear to be initially empowered by the implementation of the MoU and the Minister has set about changing DoE culture. It would be worthwhile to find out whether, at a system level, reculturing ultimately occurs. It would therefore be further worth knowing whether, for example, in a year from now, the DoE feels that it is an equal player in key educational decision-making and whether the DoE is content to share the role of key decision-maker with the other sectors.

Similarly, few studies have thrown light on the role and values of the State Schools Parents and Friends Association, yet it is potentially one of the key partners in the educational decision-making process.

A further approach for developing investigations initiated by this study would involve conducting research into how each educational sector deals with change.

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## APPENDIX A

### MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

### Between The State Parliamentary Labor Party and The Australian Education Union (Tasmanian Branch)

#### **Introduction**

The State Parliamentary Labor Party and the Tasmanian Branch of the Australian Education Union have entered into the Memorandum of Understanding which will take effect on Labor winning majority Government at the State election on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> August, 1998.

The Purpose of this agreement is to take the uncertainty out of the education system (schools and TAFE) and provide teachers and other education workers with a stable working environment which is free of industrial disruptions.

#### **1. Teacher Salaries**

- Labor will, immediately on coming into government, enter into negotiations with the AEU to establish a salary nexus between Tasmanian and mainland school and TAFE teachers.
- The Labor Party acknowledges that fundamental to reaching agreement with the AEU will be the maintenance of teacher salaries at least at levels relative to other States which existed on 28 May 1998.
- Negotiations on this issue would be aimed at being completed before the end of 1998.

#### **2. Security of Employment**

- Labor is committed to increasing the number and proportion of employees who have
- Accordingly, within 12 months of coming into office, Labor will in consultation with the relevant unions, develop a process to increase the number of employees who are permanent.



- Labor will negotiate with the AEU concerning the appropriate conditions under which sessional teachers can be employed in TAFE.
- Labor will review the DETCCD teacher transfer policy in its first year of office, and develop a further, incentive –based system to attract teachers to isolated schools or other schools which are difficult to staff.

### **3. Principals' Contracts**

- Labor acknowledges many of the problems associated with the introduction of Principals' contracts.
- No further Principal contracts will entered into pending a review of Principal contracts including widespread consultation with key stakeholders.

### **4. Teacher Numbers**

- Labor agrees to initially maintain at least the current student/teacher ratios in schools and TAFE with a view to improving them.
- Labor agrees that it will enter into negotiations with all the appropriate stakeholders to review student/teacher ratios and other associated conditions of service.

### **5. Consultative Mechanism**

- The parties agree that while Labor is in Government there will be a formal mechanism for ongoing consultation between the Government and the AEU over education and training and industrial relations issues.
- The forum will be convened at least on a quarterly basis and otherwise as required.
- Forum membership will include the relevant Labor ministers and representatives of the AEU.

Dated this                    *21<sup>st</sup>*                    Day of                    *August*                    ,1998.

Signed by:-

*Hon Jim Bacon*  
*State Labor Leader*  
*On behalf of the*

*State Parliamentary Labor Party*

*Mike Poate*  
*President*  
*Australian Education*  
*Union*  
*(Tasmanian Branch)*

## APPENDIX B

### RESOURCING OF EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA



## RESOURCING OF EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

Australia is facing apparently contradictory trends in relation to education. On the one hand, the importance of education in making Australia a 'clever country' is being asserted and demand for and participation in education is growing dramatically. On the other, most education systems are experiencing expenditure reductions.

Proponents of education spending cuts argue that there is no apparent connection between high expenditure and quality outcomes. This line has become so influential that, as one commentator has observed:

*In the late 1960s, when comparative data on expenditure levels were first becoming available, any Minister of Education shown to be spending less per student than another was shamed into spending more. In the 1990s, any Minister shown to be spending more is shamed into spending less.<sup>1</sup>*

### AUSTRALIA AS AN EDUCATION SPENDER

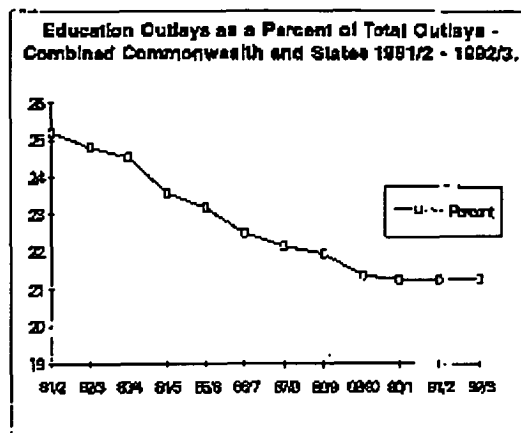
Australia is not a big spender on education by international standards. In fact, a recent OECD report placed Australia last of 18 OECD countries in per capita schooling expenditure relative to per capita GDP (see Table).

#### SCHOOLING EXPENDITURE PER STUDENT RELATIVE TO PER CAPITA GDP 1991

Sweden	37.2
Denmark	28.4
Norway	28.0
Switzerland	28.0
West Germany	27.9
Finland	27.4
Hungary	27.0
USA	27.0
Austria	25.0
Portugal	24.2
UK	23.4
France	22.7
Netherlands	21.1
Belgium	20.9
Spain	19.8
Japan	18.9
Ireland	17.9
Australia	15.9
Country Mean	23.9

(Source: OECD Education At A Glance, 1993, Table P7.)

Furthermore, education as a percentage of total outlays has been decreasing in Australia for over a decade (see Graph).



(Source: ABS 5204.0, Table 59)

An argument that is often run is that, even if Australia wanted to improve its public expenditure on education, it could not afford to – that it would place undue demands on an already overtaxed population. In fact, Australia is a quite low tax country – second lowest in the OECD (see Table).

#### GENERAL GOVERNMENT RECEIPTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF GDP - 1992

Sweden	60.2
Denmark	59.9
Norway	54.7
Netherlands	51.4
Austria	48.2
France	48.1
Germany	48.8
Belgium	43.8
Italy	43.7
Canada	43.3
Finland	42.7
Ireland	41.1
Spain	40.3
Greece	37.7
United Kingdom	37.4
Japan	34.0
Australia	33.3
United States	30.7
OECD Average	41.1

(Source: OECD Economic Outlook 1993, Table R16.)

APPENDIX C

AEU CHARTER

## Australian Education Union Tasmanian Branch

### Charter

The AEU Tasmanian Branch:

1. Exists to maintain and improve the working conditions and professional welfare of its members.
2. Is a professionally managed and democratic Union which provides maximum opportunities for membership involvement in its activities.
3. Provides a wide range of appropriate services and benefits to members.
4. Works towards ensuring a just and equitable society, including by promoting actively public education and training and unionism.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT**

## APPENDIX D

### STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this study.
2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
3. I understand that my part in the study involves the following procedures:
  - An interview of approximately 45minutes.
  - The possibility of follow up questions for clarification, by telephone..
  - Consent to publishing of results without anonymity.

.....

4. I understand that I am being asked these questions in my role as a senior figure in Tasmanian education. My personal opinion is not being asked for.

.....

5. I understand that every attempt will be made to represent information gathered truthfully and fairly.
6. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
- 7.a) I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without prejudice.

I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published.

Name of subject .....

Signature of subject ..... Date .....

- 
- 7.b) - I have explained this project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

Name of investigator

.....

Signature of investigator .....

Date

.....

## APPENDIX E

### INFORMATION SHEET FOR INTERVIEWEES



## APPENDIX E

### INFORMATION SHEET FOR INTERVIEWEES

**Who is conducting this study?**

Masters of Education student at University of Tasmania Jeff Garsed, under the supervision of Professor Bill Mulford.

**Who has been selected for participation?**

Three people have been chosen for participation. One person each from the AEU, the Minister for Education's office and the DoE head office.

**What is the Time Commitment?**

A single interview of about 45 minutes is all that is required with a possibility of a short extension. It may be necessary to ask some follow up questions for clarification, by phone, at a later date.

**What kind of study is this?**

This is a qualitative case study on the AEU and its negotiations, focusing on the Memorandum of Understanding with the Tasmanian Government.

It seeks to research the kind of conditions out of which the memorandum arose, how the points it covers have been progressing and what some of its implications might be. It is believed that this document may have important ongoing implications so the process of its development needs to be documented.

**Potential Risks**

Although anonymity and confidentiality will not apply, every effort will be made to ensure fair, honest and accurate representation will be made of all participants. As participants have the right to opt out or change the interview material at any time potential risks would seem minimal.

**Tape of Interview**

A copy of your interview will be made available upon request. Transcriptions will be provided to you and you have the right to make any changes you deem appropriate.

**The Right to Withdraw Participation**

The choice to participate is yours and the right to withdraw at any time is your choice and your decision will be respected.

**Ethics Committee Approval**

The ethics committee of the University of Tasmania has granted approval for this study to proceed.

**Ethics Committee Contact**

The Executive Officer of the Ethics Committee (University of Tasmania), Ms Chris Hooper, can be contacted on 62262763 for concerns or complaints about this study.

## **APPENDIX F**

### **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

## APPENDIX F

### SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

How would you describe your job/position in relation to educational policy making?

What do you know about the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)?

Does the MoU fit comfortably with all decision-making sectors in Tasmanian education?

What involvement did/do you have in the MoU?

How did MoU develop?

Who, in your view, does the MoU affect the most?

How has the MoU affected the:

DoE? (Are things done differently now?)

AEU? (Is morale different now? For whom?)

Government? (Are the promises difficult to keep?)

Do you see MoU as an ethically sound document?

Do you see MoU as a good thing?

Is the MoU working as it was intended?

Is it being implemented as intended?

How did MoU affect you/your job?

How did things work prior to the establishment of the MoU?

Was this effective?

How do you see things working now under the MoU?

What important aspects of education is MoU not addressing?

What improvements could you suggest?

How do you see the MoU agreement in the future?

Under Labor ? With a change of government?

Is there a likelihood of further MoU's?

And finally, what effect do you see MoU having in Tasmanian classrooms?

## APPENDIX G

### MEDIA RELEASE



## media release

This is a Department of Education, Tasmania media release. For media releases from the Office of the Minister for Education refer to the Department of Premier and Cabinet - [Media Releases](#).

### Media Release

#### ATTENTION: Senior Tasmanian educator retires

Friday 5 February 1999

One of Tasmania's most senior educators, Education Department Deputy Secretary, Graham Harrington, retires today after a career in Tasmanian education spanning more than 40 years.

Mr Harrington commenced his first teaching appointment at New Norfolk High School as a science teacher in 1959 after completing a Education Department studentship. His teaching career has included teaching positions at New Norfolk High, Cosgrove High, and Rose Bay High Kings Meadows High, Scottsdale High and Rosetta High.

Mr Harrington is nationally recognised for his contributions as the inaugural Principal of Bridgewater High School, which opened in 1975. Under his leadership the school developed a national reputation for its ground-breaking and innovative approach to the curriculum.

Education Department Secretary, Dr Martyn Forrest, said today that Mr Harrington had made an enormous contribution to the development of education in Tasmania, as a teacher, principal, and senior administrator.

"In the course of his significant career, Graham has been responsible for a number of very important system-wide initiatives."

"Graham has shown strong leadership to Tasmania's education community, and the strong focus we see in Tasmanian schools today on policies such as equity and inclusion are largely the result of Graham's work."

Dr Forrest said Mr Harrington's legacy to Tasmania's education system would be a lasting one.

Mr Harrington has held a number of senior position within the Education Department in Tasmania, as a regional superintendent and has been Deputy Secretary (Education) since 1991. He has also chaired several significant national projects, including the Australian National Report of Schooling (MCEETYA), the National Literacy Survey, and was deputy Chair of the Benchmarking Taskforce (MCEETYA).

ends

transmitted Feb 2, 1999

Further information: Zoe Fuman on 6233 7721 or 0407 504 840