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SEAA. The challenge of change.

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Introduction

In 1982 The Social Education Association of Australia (SEAA) (1) was formally established at its first national conference in Melbourne. SEAA's achievements in its first 21 years have been impressive but, like many other professional educational bodies, by the beginning of the 21st century it faced major challenges from its educational and political environment. It is an appropriate time to reflect on the achievements of SEAA and its capacity to adapt its structures and methods to respond to its changing context.

This paper attempts to outline the events and forces leading to the establishment of SEAA and chart the way the organisation has responded to its changing educational and political context. Finally, as in any 21st birthday reflections, after celebrating SEAA's achievements it attempts to identify some of the challenges which will confront SEAA as it leaves adolescence and confronts the new challenges of a mature organisation.

The information on which this case study is based was gathered from a variety of sources. Key figures on every executive since its formation were interviewed including former & current SEAA Presidents from six states and territories. Other interviews were conducted with activists and researchers in the field of social education in Australia. Most of the information drawn upon was taken from SEAA's archives in Melbourne and the private archives of David Dufty in Killcare, Central Coast, NSW especially the SEAA journal, *The Social Educator*, and minutes of SEAA executive and conference organising committees.

Scholarship in curriculum development recognises that curriculum development, in its widest sense, is a contested process with contending ideologies and interests attempting to influence or control what is legitimately communicated to students. (Longstreet & Shane, 1993) Large numbers of teachers are, or have been, members of teacher professional or subject associations, and the importance of these organisations seems to be acknowledged explicitly or implicitly. For example Marsh's model of curriculum development lists subject associations as 'superordinate forces' in the political process around curriculum (Goodson, 1994). Despite this acknowledgement, there is very little written on the role of interest groups in general in determining educational policy, but the literature on subject associations is even more sparse. Searches of the literature revealed very few studies of subject associations in Australia and few models of studies which attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of specific organisations. The literature search revealed very little in Australian or International journals in education, curriculum, educational administration or educational policy. Even special editions of journals devoted to educational policy on interest groups had few articles on professional /subject associations. (Mawhinney 2001, Poole, 2001, Johnson 2001, Cummings 1993) Subject associations' own journals contain few articles analysing the structure, function or goals of the associations themselves. These seem to be matters for discussion at Annual General Meetings or executive meetings, not for discussion amongst a wider audience (Davis, 1996).

This failure to sustain a professional discussion about the role of subject associations is a pity since subject associations have a critical potential role as teachers take greater control over the accreditation and direction of their own profession.

The Antecedents

Constitutionally schooling in Australia is a state government responsibility and the position of social education in the curriculum varies from state to state. In the postwar period till the end of the 1960s, there

was no national social education organisation nor any perceived need for one. In this period primary schools in most states taught an integrated social studies which consisted mainly of British history and some Australian and world place geography. In secondary schools in most states the students studied as electives or compulsory subjects separate history and geography and perhaps commerce, economics or politics. Teachers identified with their specific disciplines and there were no peak organisations bringing together secondary history, geography, economic and politics teachers. History and geography subject associations had close links with academics teaching in the main metropolitan universities within that subject area. There were few attempts to incorporate the newer academic disciplines of sociology, anthropology or political science and a failure to integrate the insights from the different disciplines to focus on key issues for young Australians. Where integrated social education/social studies subjects were taught, they were generally targeted at providing life skills for intellectually less able students. They lacked academic credibility and status within the school, often described as 'social slops' or a 'vegie' or 'Mickey Mouse' subject (Dufty 2002). These integrated subjects never went as far as matriculation and were often taught by teachers with no specific qualifications in the social sciences. In NSW for example it was not until 1983 that the Board of Senior School Studies approved a cross-disciplinary social education matriculation subject, *Society and Culture*.

One notable exception was the offering of Asian Social Studies as a 7-10 elective in NSW from 1967 and the accompanying establishment of the Asia Teachers Association bringing together teachers from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds with a shared interest in teaching about Asia.

By the late 1960s other subject associations had established successful national organisations. The Australian Science Teachers Association (ASTA) had established a permanent office and secretariat in Canberra by 1967. The Australian Federation of Modern Languages Teachers Associations had, with the addition of NSW in 1962, all states as members. The first edition of the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT) journal was published in 1945 and the Australian Association for Teachers of English (AATE) was established in 1964, Social educators were a long way behind.

To understand the process by which social educators were to attempt to make good this deficit it is important to consider firstly developments around secondary social science in Victoria starting with the Burwood, *the teaching of the social sciences at the secondary level* seminar, followed by the establishment of the Social Education Materials Project (SEMP) and the Victorian Association of Social Studies Teachers (VASST) as they impacted upon thinking about secondary teaching. The second development stems from NSW and the role of the Saint George Social Education Council in promoting innovation in primary school social education.

The 1967 UNESCO seminar on *The teaching of the social sciences at the secondary level* held at the Burwood Teachers, College in August-September 1967 contributed to the advent of SEAA in a number of ways..(Reynolds, 1999, Dufty 2002) The seminar was chaired by PH Partridge, a Professor of Social Philosophy and former Director of the Research School of Social Sciences, Institute of Advanced Studies, ANU. The other two principal organisers were Bill Connell, Professor of Education at Sydney University and Chair of the Australian UNESCO committee, later to be made a life member of SEAA, and Sam Cohen, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Macquarie University. Burwood brought together an outstanding group of seventy educators from across Australia for two weeks in Melbourne to look at the place of an integrated social science in the secondary curriculum. Essentially the purpose of the conference was to find out whether and how it might be possible to structure a secondary course drawing upon the range of social science disciplines to assist secondary students better understand and participate in society. (Partridge, Connell & Cohen, 1969)

The conference was extremely influential. Firstly, it inspired a very careful conceptualisation of the field of social science education and contributed to number of academic publications attempting to outline what a secondary social science subject might look like and how it might be taught. (Dufty, 1970 & Partridge, Connell and Cohen, 1969; Hunt 1971) The seminar benefited from the participation from the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) which later established the National Information Centre for Social Science. This centre produced a number of key research papers identifying the sorts of skills that might be taught in a secondary social science course and identified practical ways in which these skills another outcomes might be evaluated (Piper, 1976 & 1977). A number of subsequent curriculum projects involving

the writing and trialling of units of work acknowledged the contribution of the Burwood conference. The Monash project (Hunt, 1971) worked in junior secondary schools in Melbourne. The Senior Social Science Project headed by Bill Connell and David Dufty from Sydney University and Sol Encel and Dexter Dunphy from University of New South Wales prepared and trialled units of work suitable in senior high schools in Sydney (Cox, Encel & Hill, 1975).

Secondly, the conference brought key bureaucrats from all the states most of whom returned to establish committees on the teaching of social sciences in secondary schools in their own states. Not all these committees were successful in establishing integrated social education courses but certainly there were successes within a decade in Tasmania, (*1975 Soc science K-10*), Western Australia and Victoria. Former participants in the conference formed a powerful national network. In 1968 representatives of the state committees met in Sydney twice to develop plans for a national committee (Partridge, Connell & Cohen, 1969).

Thirdly the conference recognised that the successful implementation of social science curriculum would require the professional development of a cohort of teachers capable of understanding and creatively and effectively implementing any new integrated syllabuses. A National Committee on Social Science Teaching (NCSST) was established in 1970 with Geoff Spring, later to head both the Northern Territory and Victorian Education departments, as executive secretary. One of the NCSST's first achievements was to produce a lively tabloid magazine, *Studies of Society*, which was distributed to secondary schools throughout Australia. *Studies of Society* was edited by Ross Cleaves, Marion Russell and then Frances Wood whose salaries were paid by the technical schools section of the Victorian Department of Education. This was a very influential publication and, while initially it was most widely read by teachers in Victorian technical high schools, some of the exemplary practices discussed in its pages were adopted in a variety of subjects in schools across Australia. (Lewis, 2002)

Another approach to professional development was suggested at the Burwood conference. At the conference Dufty, a Sydney University academic with a recent doctorate from in social education from Stanford University, advocated forming a national organisation (Tonkin, 1982). Later, in a chapter in Dufty's ground breaking book, *Teaching About Society*, Brewer, the President of the Tasmanian Association for Teachers of Social Studies and social studies specialist in the Curriculum Branch of the Tasmanian Education Department, also advocated formation of a subject association as a means of giving social education teachers a conduit for contributing to the national agenda in social education. (Dufty, 1970: 400-401). Dufty's paper at the Burwood conference expressed that hope that a national organisation would break down some of the state & subject matter boundaries without eliminating the prospect of disciplinary strands. He considered the potential for involving New Guinean social educators in the conferences & argued the need for parity of esteem with other subject associations. Dufty listed some possible names for the organisation and suggested topics for themed editions of the association journal including Asian Studies , Aboriginal Studies, Citizenship and morals, Australian history, political parties. Most of these suggestions proved to be ahead of their time. One other suggested topic, New Guinea, indicates a region where the interest of social educators has waned.

Dufty's proposal was not supported by the majority of the conference. However, Warren Brewer, who also attended, later echoed the suggestion and referred to the Victorian Commercial Teachers Association as an example of how the organisation might be resourced, with a permanent full-time secretariat with its own premises, energetically producing a quality publication, as a model (Brewer, 1970).

If curriculum innovation in social education was to require intellectual rigour, administrative support, and teacher professional development, it was also clear to the Burwood participants that quality contemporary Australian teaching resources would also be necessary. With the help of the American National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Dufty had organised a display of American social science teaching resources at the conference. In 1974 the NCSST approached the interim council of the Curriculum Development Centre on the basis of a survey they had conducted into teaching resources deficiencies in social education and asked for funding for a resources development project. The result was the Social Education Materials Project (SEMP), the CDC's first major enterprise (Piper, 1997).

Eight separate, largely autonomous teams of secondary teachers, seven sponsored by Education departments and one by the Headmasters Conference of NSW were co-ordinated by a former Victorian Inspector of History, Colin Tonkin. The resources were trialled in schools and published by a variety of private and government publishers. They encapsulated a new pedagogy. They confronted issues which were contemporary and occasionally controversial. The materials were less teacher centred, less content centred, more concerned with skills especially research (drawing on the social science tradition) and activism (drawing on the social problems approach). Their preparation involved a lot of national networking by the writing teams so SEMP had a sense of being an incipient national secondary organisation. (Jones, 1977; Lewis, 2002) Many of the participants were to play an active role in SEAA in coming years. Although they had no neat curriculum niche in many states, the materials were often used in secondary classes in other subjects like English and History.

In a particularly bizarre political episode, SEMP was catapulted into media attention in February 1978 when the materials were banned from schools in Queensland, even before all the materials were published. (Smith & Knight, 1978). Marsh and Stafford (1984) have argued that part of the reason for this was the weakly organised defence of SEMP by committed educators against attacks by Christian fundamentalists who saw SEMP, like MACOS as part of a secular humanist plot. For many activists in social education, particularly in Queensland it was apparent that progressive forces in social education needed to be organised in a national teachers' association if they were to be effective lobbyists.

Throughout the 70s there was a dramatic increase in the quantity and quality of teaching resources for social education both at primary and secondary level. The Curriculum Development Centre led by Malcolm Skilbeck provided some leadership in conceptualising the case for, and potential shape of , a national core curriculum. It also supported the publication of materials like *Discovering Aboriginal Culture* by Don Williams with Alan Fidock which provided excellent multi media resources drawing upon reputable anthropological sources and credible primary sources for students to analyse. In 1976 NCSST was amalgamated/absorbed into the CDC.

Other curriculum resources were developed through cooperation between government agencies and commercial interests e.g Ted Myers' Children in Asia produced by Qantas and the Asian Studies Co-ordinating Committee in 1979.

While the SEMP materials were banned in Queensland, they were eagerly adopted by many schools and their use was demonstrated in a variety of professional development activities organised by the Victorian Association of Social Studies Teachers (VASST). VASST was established in 1970 and its membership reflects its origins. It remains the largest and longest established social education teachers' organisation in Australia. At its peak it had over 1000 members mainly secondary and initially mainly Technical School teachers. In the 1970s around a third of Victorian secondary schools were technical high schools and their humanities subjects were not as focussed on matriculation. Humanities curriculums 7-10 were very flexible and many schools not only integrated the various social science disciplines, but also integrated English into a combined social enquiry and communication subject. The technical education section of the Department of education provided VASST with an office and an executive officer. In Victoria almost all the in-service was provided not by departmental officers but by government subsidised subject associations. (Lewis, 2002; Perkins, 2002)

Effectively what was to be the first Victorian executive of SEAA came out of SEMP and VASST. Colin Tonkin had been the CDC's National Co-ordinator of SEMP & was well connected with the State curriculum bureaucracies and teacher education institutions as well as the emerging Federal educational bureaucracy. David Francis had been SEMP National Evaluator, Laurie Lewis, Team leader for the Department of Education Victoria Urbanism unit and VASST President, was to become Treasurer and John McArthur, first editor of *The Social Educator* had been on the Victorian Race and Ethnic Relations Team.

On the one hand the dynamic leading to the creation of SEAA came from developments in secondary education promoted most strongly in Victoria and strongly supported by VASST. In other states there was no such strong social education movement in secondary schools. However a second major impetus for a national social education subject association was simultaneously coming from primary schools in NSW.

This parallel impetus was from the St George Council for Social Education in Schools formed 1971. This body was to change its name a number of times in the following 30 years as it tried to widen its scope and respond to changing nomenclature of the subject in NSW schools but will be referred (affectionately) throughout as the 'NSW Council'. The success of the Council is tribute to the accuracy of Margaret Mead's claim 'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.'. Reynolds' study of the role of subject associations in curriculum change in social education subjects in NSW pays tribute to the prominent contribution made by certain key individuals who demonstrated commitment over a long time. In the story of SEAA's origins one of the key contributors was Norman Baker .

Baker was appointed inspector of schools in rural NSW in 1969 and soon after awarded a 5 month Public Service Board fellowship to study social education developments in New Zealand and the US. Baker visited some of the most innovative projects in the USA at a time when the US jealousy of Sputnik had resulted in massive investment in educational projects, initially in sciences and mathematics but eventually in social education. He later invited some of the most innovative educators out to visit Australia and helped build continuing links between Australian social educators and the American social science education movement.

The 60s & 70s was a time of great educational freedom both in Australia and overseas. In Britain the child centred education movement had been popularised in the writings of AS Neill & the experiences of his school at Summer Hill. In Australia Whitlam's Schools Commission established the Innovations program (1974-81) which attempted to provide financial support for schools and communities to experiment with programs which met their children's needs (Fraser, 1983). School retention was increasing. Schools and professional development were being more generously resourced. There was a stream of new teaching resources available in schools. Relations between government and non-government schools were changing along with their funding. There was a much greater interest being shown by the Federal government in schools.

In the 70s the role of Inspector of Schools was a key one in curriculum development. The position provided some authority and legitimisation but also provided Baker with opportunities to identify good practice and 'lighthouse teachers'. Baker had a considerable reputation for networking and encouraging talent among teachers in his region. His 'no negativism' policy encouraged innovation. Senesh summarised him well. 'Amazingly I found here, and I tell you very sincerely and bluntly, that Mr Baker is not a person but an institution (Senesh, 1977).

Baker attracted a keen group of extraordinarily talented teachers many of whom (for example Margaret Simpson, Dawn Brien, Sandra Newell, Bev Stubbs, Marilyn Kelly & David Nelson) made a substantial contribution to curriculum development. 'I appreciate North America and I appreciate where I live, but I have never seen so many creativity bulgings anywhere in North America than I have seen here in this district and I tell you this with absolute sincerity' (Senesh, 1977:2.). While a number of teacher educators from the Colleges of Advanced Education established by the Menzies government from 1965 were part of the early executives, it was these classroom teachers formed the core of the NSW Council for thirty years. While the Council was to attract a large and devoted membership and publish its journal, the *Social Education Bulletin*, for thirty years, it never attracted the same support from the Department of Education that VASST did in Victoria and was never able to establish a professional secretariat.

One of the Council and Baker's early initiatives was to bring the USA upper primary curriculum package *Man: a Course of Study* (MACOS) to Australia. MACOS was, and still is, the most expensive primary school social studies curriculum project ever undertaken and based on the learning theories of psychologist Jerome Bruner, it used resources that were world class and never patronised the students. They included some of the best available ethnographic footage of Netslik Eskimo life as well as field work resources adapted from the work of primatologist Irven de Vore. The psychological basis was visionary incorporating cooperative learning, constructivist pedagogy, a wide range of simulations and value clarification exercises.

Prior to teaching the year-long course, teachers were required to undertake a week long in-service. In 1972 Baker invited Frances Link to Sydney to run the first accredited MACOS in-service in Australia. Later accreditation courses were held throughout NSW and interstate and soon a national MACOS academy was founded to accredit Australian teachers who had undergone the program. Even though MACOS was later to

be banned in Queensland and withdrawn from a number of private and government schools in NSW and other states, it had a profound influence on social education teaching at primary level in Australia (Freeland, 1978, Smith & Knight, 1978). The high cost of the materials meant that many schools grouped together to purchase and exchange the materials and cross-school networks of enthusiastic teachers developed. A number of innovative curriculum projects were strongly influenced by its philosophy, e.g. Margaret Simpson's *People of the Western Desert*, and Dawn Brien's *Towards Baruya Manhood* dealing with Baruya people of New Guinea studied by the anthropologist Maurice Godelier. Both programs drew upon brilliant ethnographic film making by Ian Dunlop. Years after teachers who were no longer using MACOS would talk about 'MACOSing' their teaching...using 'MACOS' as a verb. (Baker, 2002)

Just as the open-ended syllabus requirements in Victorian Technical schools enabled great innovation, NSW's 'skeletal' 1975 Curriculum Social Studies Guidelines gave creative teachers great flexibility and encouragement to incorporate exemplary units or resources like MACOS and *People of the Western Desert*. Two decades later more structured syllabuses with highly specific outcomes removed much of the opportunity for innovation. They also removed the demand from teachers for assistance in responding to the flexibility (Reynolds, 2002).

From its inception the Council built on the links that Baker had established on his 1969 visit to the United State to invite a stream of prominent US scholars including Jack Frankel (1976), Lawrence Senesh (1977) and Jim Davis (1978) and New Zealanders, John Buckland (1979) and Tony McNaughton (1975) to address conferences and workshops of social education teachers. Although some social educators were sceptical of the value of hosting these 'superannuated yanks, (Land, 2002), these guests made a major contribution in providing conceptual clarity & structure and pedagogical advice in a field where innovation may have overstepped coherence. (Baker, 2002)

One of the things that was impressive about Bruner & Senesh was that they were both established social scientists (Senesh in economics and Bruner in social psychology) but they made a research commitment to show how the key ideas from their disciplines might be learnt at elementary school level. Funding for these Title 3 projects was a consequence of the Sputnik phenomenon where the US was investing some of its greatest intellectual capital into transforming its educational system. Clear attention to a conceptually driven coherent enquiry basis for social education. Senesh had established the Social Science Education Consortium and written the program *Our Working World* which included a range of classroom examples where concepts like division of labour/ monopoly or competition could be discovered by very young children through inquiry and experiential strategies.

A number of the American visitors to the Council workshops were sponsored by the national U.S. social education body, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) The NCSS had been in operation since 1921. It was initially fostered by the National Education Foundation and the History Teachers, but by the 1960s it had a large professional office, quality publications including its journal, *Social Education*, and a membership of educators who, by and large saw themselves firstly as social studies teachers and only secondly as particular disciplinary specialists (Alexander 2002, Dufty 2002, Nelson 1995). Many Australian social educators had attended or were to attend the annual conference of NCSS and saw the clear advantages that could come from a well organised, professional subject association. The leadership of the NCSS had on various occasions expressed support for the establishment of a sibling organisation in Australia.

Baker was an advocate of networking at the local, national and international level. By 1979 the Council felt the need to promote networks of social educators by promoting a fully national conference. The first *Australasian conference of social studies associations* was held at Basser College University of New South Wales in July 1979. It was addressed by John Buckland from the North Shore Teachers' college in New Zealand with over 120 attending including 42 educators from outside NSW. A steering committee was established to examine a proposal that steps be taken to form an Australasian Association for Social Studies/Social Science (Baker 1979).

As a result of a request from the Basser conference organisers, the NCSS arranged for Anna Ochoa, a former NCSS President, to moderate the next conference and advise on the name, objectives and activities of a national organisation. This second conference at the Australian National University in May, 1980 included a number of planning seminars for what was initially to be called the Australian Council for Social Education

(ACSE). The final conference of social studies associations and social studies leaders was held at Macquarie University in Sydney in 1981 where educators from every state finalised the framework for a national organisation whose structure has varied little until today.

The structure and aims of a subject association for the social education required careful thought. One contributor to the conceptualisation whose thoughts were acknowledged by Tonkin in the early days of SEAA was Richard Gross. In 1976 Gross, from Stanford University, a former President of NCSS, visited Victoria as visiting scholar at Monash University. While he saw examples of impressive practice, he identified three main adversities to the establishment of effective social education programs in schools. These three adversities were as follows. Firstly school organisation, where little time was available in primary schools for social education and it had little status in secondary schools there being no matriculation social education subjects. Professional development of teachers was limited. Public school principals interested in promoting social education were not empowered to select suitable staff. There were no integrated social education syllabuses or consultants to help teachers develop their own integrated syllabuses.

Secondly Gross lamented the absence of fully integrated scope and sequence models for social studies field. He suggested the adaptation of USA models which integrated the various social science disciplines. In Australian secondary schools most teachers still identified as subject specialists.

Finally Gross noted that teacher preparation and instruction was failing to provide primary teachers with either sufficient depth of knowledge of the social sciences or a coherent conceptual structure to enable the integration of the disciplines. Study of individual disciplines then tended to be content rather than problem based. Innovation, where it existed, tended to be 'do your own thing' rather than coherent conceptually sound challenging education. The little innovation Gross saw tended to be in Victorian Technical High schools where it lacked status and coherence.

Gross foresaw that overcoming these adversities would be difficult within a federal education system. He was prescient. Almost thirty years later the curriculum mapping exercises have overcome problems of integration and coherence but there are few integrated social science subjects at matriculation level and most secondary social educators still see themselves as narrow discipline specialists.

Gross concluded...

'In this situation therefore it would seem the thorough and rapid progress may be attained in Australia through the evolution of the NCSST into a single nationwide organization of lower school teacher administrators and university personnel many of whom will remain loyal to elements of tradition and to their specialized disciplines, but all of whom have an overriding concern for the social education of children and youth through the central vehicle of social studies.' (Gross 1976 ?)

Other Australian participants in the social studies movement expressed similar hopes. For example Warren Brewer writing in Dufty (1970) said 'If teachers see that first they are educators of students secondly that the area the curriculum assigned to them purports to educate students for and about society and thirdly that those considerations should transcend subject disciplines, then we would have the unifying threads of association.'

Colin Tonkin, elected SEAA's founding President at the inaugural Melbourne conference attributed high importance to Gross's observations in shaping the momentum for SEAA. He also saw the Burwood conference of 1967 and the leadership role of the Saint George Council as critical. The relevant question in his view is why it had taken so long for the organisation to be formed.

Tonkin's objective, like that of most of the founders of the SEAA, was not that SEAA would compete with existing subject associations in the social education areas of history, geography and economics but that SEAA would come to incorporate them all as happened in the USA.

Tonkin for example concluded his paper at the conference as follows.

'Shall it be that we will see here the attainment of an amalgamated organisation serving all social education personnel as Richard Gross challenged us to achieve? We hope so. And shall it herald that to which he also alluded- namely the coming of age of Australian teachers in the field who will henceforth see themselves

first and foremost as social studies mentors rather than as defenders of empires of single social disciplines. Again we hope so !' (Tonkin, 1982)

Tonkin's dream was never to be achieved and there is no evidence that the single discipline subject associations were ever formally invited to join SEAA and indeed the major organisations, the History Teachers' Association of Australia and Australian Geography Teachers Association always dwarfed SEAA in membership size. Many teacher educators maintained active membership of both SEAA and HTA or AGTA and there were to be a number of conferences organised by SEAA in collaboration with other single discipline subject association. However resistance to the integration of the social education disciplines in Australia was strong, especially in NSW. (Barcan, 1971) The AHTA and the AGTA were strong organisations, generally well led with large memberships and the support of academics from their disciplines in most universities. These debates took place in the pre-SEAA period and were still taking place for example over Asian Studies (Dufty v Fitzgerald) & Geography (Wilson in Geographical Education) in 2002. Perhaps this debate was a useful one in clarifying the area but the other national subjects associations like those in mathematics and science did not have the same demands of delineating and justifying their subject area. Their energies could be devoted to servicing needs of teachers and students.

The Early Years.

The inaugural conference of what was first called the Australian Council for Social Education but finally SEAA was held in Melbourne in 1982. Under the Presidency of Colin Tonkin and with John McArthur as inaugural editor, the organisation had its first 33 members by the end of the conference. There was strong involvement from lecturers at Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs), Keith Harbour, Gavin Faichney and also from Laurie Lewis, Curriculum Officer from the Department of Education as Treasurer and financial guru. Norm Baker, SEAA's first life member, did not attend.

The aims of the organisation as expressed by Tonkin at the conference have changed little in the 21 years of SEAA's existence but many are a long way from achievement. Tonkin saw the ACSE as providing a national network for social educators, a body to assist and involve classroom teachers, a structure to assist existing state bodies to increase the status of the social studies educators. It would promote research into social education, develop a quality national journal and increase international links with social education organisations.

SEAA's management model included an executive housed in a single state for ease of organisation, an advisory committee comprised of representatives from each state and territory which met rarely outside of the biennial conference but which contributed to discussion and was circulated by mail on important decisions and a conference organising group from the another state responsible for planning the next conference. The structure was designed to facilitate communication in an organisation with no budget and essentially dependant on the goodwill of education bureaucracies and Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) & universities in enabling staff to travel and have time to devote to the organisation. The suggestion that SEAA might adopt a federal structure with state bodies like VASST & HSIE Council affiliating with SEAA and providing a combined membership in the way that most successful national subject associations operate was rejected. The larger successful state organisations, most notably VASST felt, probably reasonably, that, with their large membership, their members' affiliation fees would be contributing disproportionately to financing SEAA. On the other hand there was a fear that a large SEAA might be a potential competitor with VASST. In Laurie Lewis's recollection the first Victorian executive never saw SEAA as becoming a mass organisation but remaining as a small co-ordinating body, with some political clout at the Federal level. (Lewis 2002)

The structure adopted by SEAA had some advantages. It eliminated the risk of long term domination by a clique or faction. The executive rotated between states at roughly a ten year cycle Few people have served on the inner executive twice. SEAA never had to worry about eliminating the dead wood, its problem was a lack of expertise, experience and continuity in the executive. Nor was there any conflict between elected officials and paid staff. There were no paid staff ! However despite the initial misgivings of some members of the VASST executive that SEAA would become a rival to their successful state organisation, VASST provided generous support to the fledgling organisation with the Executive Officer of VASST often spending up to a day a week on SEAA business and Laurie Lewis, President of VASST also serving as treasurer of

SEAA.(Lewis, 2002) The first two years of SEAA were managed very well and by December 1983 there were 172 members.

Fifty one people attended the second conference at Kelvin Grove, Brisbane in 1984 and elected an executive chaired by Ray Land with Reg Burns as editor. Most of the executive except Richard Smith, one of the outstanding intellects of the social education movement, were employed in some consultant capacity by the Queensland government. This was an irony given the hostility shown by the Queensland government to progressive social education most notably in banning MACOS and SEMP. (Freeland,1978, Smith & Knight 1979) The political scene in Queensland was satirised at the conference when Jo & Flo Bjelke Petersen appeared at the conference in the guise of Keith Harbour & Tony Hepworth and delivered a speech in rhyming couplets. Throughout the years many of the leading roles in organisation was played by members who were employed as curriculum bureaucrats in their home state (for example Land in Queensland, Lewis in Victoria, Fazio in Western Australia). There are different opinions as to whether this has resulted in any problems of self censorship.

The early pattern also reflected gender relations of the period. The executives tended to be predominately male with a capable female secretary, in this case Kath Kelly. This caused some minor concern with feminists and Margaret Simpson recalls being urged by Mary Kalantzis at Brisbane to stand for the executive to reduce the male domination.. It was not until 1999 that SEAA had its first female President, Ros Manley. By June 1984 there were 150 SEAA members and SEAA had a comfortable bank balance of \$5,000, enough to float the next conference at Adelaide but not enough to employ a professional secretariat.

Growth

By 1984 SEAA seemed successfully established. The executive was young and enthusiastic but had been schooled in the debates and political infighting around the MACOS and SEMP battles in the 70s. Representatives had met with sibling organisations in the US (NCSS) and Britain (ATSS) and had undertaken the demanding task of defining the scope of the organisation in *Social Education for the Eighties*. The debate over the draft of this document was a central preoccupation of Brisbane conference and Richard Smith's concerns about the draft publication influenced the conference moderator, Bill Connell to refer the conference comments to an editorial committee charged with rewording the document. The editorial committee included David Dufty, Tony Austin, Malcolm McArthur David Prideaux and Barrie Wells. They received helpful feedback from Colin Tonkin and Frances Wood, the former editor of *Study of Society*. This document was widely circulated and was critiqued in *The Social Educator* by David Mahoney. Ray Land argued that the document was still defensible almost twenty years afterwards. (Land 2002) A tradition of constructive & invigorating national debate over the nature and direction of social education was being forged through SEAA which was, for many activists, the highlight of their involvement in the organisation.

1984 also saw the publication of the first of the frequently revised Social Education Directories with contact details for curriculum consultants, academics involved in the teaching social education in teacher education courses and social education organisations. In 1985 *Social Education and the Community* a monograph building upon the theme of the 84 conference was also published. Despite the executive being based in Queensland, it was quite clear that SEAA was working as a national organisation. It contained articles from Queenslanders Ian Whelan, John Fien, Jane Williamson, Michael Garbutcheon Singh & Rob Gilbert but also by Gavin Faichney, and John McArthur from Victoria and David Prideaux from South Australia.

This collection of articles was intended , according to Ray Land's introduction, to be a guide 'for policy and practice' but, while articles by Fien and Williamson included ideas for teaching about the community at the secondary level, the tone of the SEAA monographs continued to be more about policy than immediate practice. *The Social Educator* was read by members strategically located in most state government curriculum bodies. This was to be the first of a series of SEAA monographs which were seen by many as being both ahead of their time and influential at least in policy making circles. (Land 2002) It was difficult to get figures on the distribution of this and later monographs or any research into the extent to which teachers found them useful. No attempt was made to survey members to see how they used the monographs. Some practising primary teachers like Margaret Simpson felt that SEAA was ignoring their needs and at risk of being a talking shop for academics and bureaucrats.

SEAA had successfully established *The Social Educator* as its newsletter, later to expand into the journal, which was providing an effective channel of national communication with useful accounts of resources, conferences and constructive debate on a range of issues including *Social Education for the Eighties*. Debates were also developing about what its membership profile should be. Should it be trying to have a mass membership of teachers and if so, did this potentially put it in competition with state social education organisations given that many teachers would not want to join more than one subject association? Others argued that SEAA should leave professional development to state based organisation and it should concentrate on involving its core membership of education bureaucrats and teacher educators in agenda setting and lobbying. This debate was to be an on-going one with implications for the journal. Should it publish classroom activities or analyse policy and practice ... or both ? Don Alexander argued that the result was often a mis-match by default. What the teacher members wanted was teaching ideas whereas most of the articles submitted to the journal were analytical articles by teacher educators (Alexander, 2002).

The 1986 *Bound for South Australia. Global Australia* conference was co-hosted with the history and geography teachers of South Australia. This set something of a precedent for co-operation between the associations at a national level. SEAA also obtained British Council financial support to invite Professor Ian Lister to speak, balancing some of the US dominance of the organisation's thinking. Lister travelled extensively throughout Australia on his visit, a tangible benefit of the existence of national networks. He provided a focus on political literacy and it is reasonable to conjecture that the sort of debate about political education and citizenship promoted by SEAA contributed to the later Federal interest in Civics and Citizenship in the 90s, culminating in the Discovering Democracy project.

The 1986-88 South Australian executive chaired by Malcolm McArthur with Marie Modra as secretary was beginning to confront a different political/educational climate. The liberal, child centred paradigm of the 70s was being challenged by a far more hard nosed vocational emphasis characterised by Susan Ryan, Minister for Education in the first Hawke government

' I've been able to change the debate and you will now find that the debate is much more about the relationship between education and the economy' (Reynolds, 1999).

Later her successor as Minister John Dawkins was to push the vocational barrow more energetically, abolishing the Schools Commission and the Curriculum Development Commission. The move to economic rationalism was soon to affect both the resourcing of education and curriculum priorities .

Despite SEAA's attempt to maintain the momentum by producing a monograph each year (*Social Education and Information Technology* No 2 edited in South Australia and *Social Education and Political Literacy* No3 edited by Laurie Lewis,) and, despite the healthier bank balance of \$13,241 that the South Australian executive handed over to the Sydney conference planning committee in 1987, there was a sense that the climate for social education was changing.

The 1988 Turning Point Conference was seen by many as one of SEAA's most successful, and confronting. Over 280 people attended the conference held at Sydney University. The conference focussed on holistic education and rejected the emphasis in much of education upon narrow intellectualism. It was attended by a wide circle of people including representatives of a variety of alternative education centres. For some, a number of the speakers like Brian & Cherie McCusker who explored alternative realms of consciousness was too esoteric 'the universe is consciousness structured in nine main levels with many sub-levels.' (Dufty H & D, 1988). However, Robin Richardson brought probably more passion than any other keynote speaker at a SEAA conference. Graham Pike and David Selby provided practical demonstrations of the relationship between content and method in global education and ushered in strong links between many Australian social educators and their Centre for Global Education in York. Richard Bawden challenged participants to consider holistic education well beyond the narrow boundaries of the social sciences. The conference had an element of the revivalist meeting with a number of activities designed to facilitate participants engaging with their spiritual dimension. There were some divisions about the path that SEAA was taking well summed up by Bev Stubbs & Sandra Newell...*you weren't required to accept some of the alternative views expressed but that did challenge our thinking.*(2002) In a sense, from SEAA's perspective, the conference represented a last celebration of holistic learning involving the brain and spirit prior to the juggernaut of economic rationalism symbolised in Great Britain by the 1988 Education Reform Act with its fetishisation of outcomes, reinstating of tight central government control over curriculum content, promotion of separate subjects of History and Geography and introduction of national assessment. In retrospect the Turning Point

was the last hurrah before Australian education succumbed to the new managerialism.(Pusey, 1991).

The NSW executive, and particularly its President, David Dufty, from 1988-1990 was particularly energetic. There was an attempt to bring the state representatives together more frequently to develop a more pro-active approach to promoting social education priorities. Fifteen members of the wider executive and 4 other members met at the O'Connell Education Centre on 20-21st October for an executive meeting and to develop a proposal for a national in-service on political education. Various government bodies including the Parliamentary Education Office, the Commonwealth Electoral Commission and the Attorney-General's Department were developing high quality teaching resources for political education in schools. However the resources were not being used effectively in schools because they were not targeting existing school courses and the teachers were not receiving professional development in their use. Gilbert had commented that, compared to other subject associations, SEAA was strong on raising critical issues but poor at converting these ideas to practice. He advocated the development of a well researched model of professional development that could be implemented at a national level. His criticism was probably still as valid a decade later. It was hoped that Minister Dawkins might be favourably disposed to funding a SEAA initiated national professional development program in political education.

By 1988 there was an awareness that the Commonwealth government was playing an increasingly important role in educational priorities and resourcing teacher professional development. SEAA's future viability and growth would require greater access to Federal education bureaucracies. The revolving state based national structure was not a good way to develop permanent and effective links to the Canberra educational bureaucracy.

The following year in July 1989 many of the executive met again at the Australian Curriculum Studies Conference (ACSA) in Canberra and participated in the Social Education Special Interest Group organised by Kerry Kennedy. ACSA had been established in 1983 to link subject associations with an interest in curriculum in Australia. The use of the bi-ennial ACSA conference as a venue for executive meetings in the alternate year between SEAA conferences was extremely convenient for academic and bureaucrat members of the executive who could usually find some funding to attend these conferences at no expense to SEAA. The establishment of the Special Interest Group within ACSA did, however, raise questions of duplication of function and over the years ACSA produced and distributed many challenging papers on topics like Aboriginal and Asian Studies, Civics and Citizenship. Many special editions of its journal *Curriculum Matters* were devoted to these topics. This raised the question of whether the Australian social education scene could be spread too thinly and whether a different relation between SEAA and ACSA might have been developed reducing duplication.

Professional subject associations depend for their success on what they offer their members in return for their membership fees. SEAA members received copies of the journals and monographs and reduced conference fees. Other subject associations have been more successful in organising events for students, competitions for them, prizes for teachers etc. The Australian Science Teachers Association for example has run a wide range of competitions for students and teachers with a variety of attractive prizes including the opportunity to participate in overseas conferences. (Pattie with Colvill,2001) Sponsors have included the Australian Industries Development Association, the mining company CRA, BHP and Westinghouse International. The Victorian and National teaching organisations in business studies and commerce have also been particularly successful at gaining corporate sponsorship.

Malcolm McArthur made a number of suggestions to the new executive of ways of making SEAA membership more attractive and, in 1989 the executive successfully completed negotiations begun by Malcolm McArthur for the first and most substantial competition for SEAA members. On the recommendation of the NCSS, SEAA was invited to select and send two members to participate with USA & Canada social educators on a 16 day tour of Japan funded by the Keizai Koho Foundation. Applicants were required to be SEAA members who had not previously been to Japan, to guarantee that they would write a report for the SEAA journal *The Social Educator* and prepare a teaching unit about Japan. The first successful applicants, Professor Christine Deere from University of Technology, Sydney and Sue Milner, a teacher at the Central Coast Grammar School went on June 1989. Subsequently some 28 Australian educators, including many who have played a major role on the SEAA executive, have visited Japan as part of the scheme and articles about Japan have been a major feature in *The Social Educator*. The scheme has

not only contributed to SEAA's interest in Asian Studies but also created strong personal links between former participants from Australia and the USA and Canada.

A key function of a professional organisation is, and should be, the promotion of the subject area. There is a general consensus that lobbying has not been one of SEAA's strengths. The 1988-90 executive was more active in this respect than others. At a state level it made representations to the Metherell government over a proposal to remove a social science subject as part of the compulsory core of secondary education subjects. Federally, Laurie Lewis wrote a submission for SEAA to the Senate Standing Committee on Employment Education and Training inquiry into Education for Active Citizenship. In it he argued for a more skills, and participatory notion of citizenship whereas subsequent Federal Governments have favoured a model of political education based on transmission of the history of political institutions. Part of the submission was included in the Committee discussion paper. It is difficult to identify the specific effect of this and other submissions by SEAA members upon the Federal government over Civics and Citizenship but certainly subsequent resources at least paid lip service to notions of participatory democracy. SEAA contributed to the pressure to ensure that the Discovering Democracy program of the 90s and 2000s paid the same attention to professional development as it did to resource development.

But probably the most significant contribution of the 88-90 executive was in the area of publications. No monographs were published in this time but there were substantial pre-reading publications for the conference and post conference proceedings and 1990 saw the publication of *Social Education for the 90s. A Basic Right for Every Person*. This publication was subject of some debate within the organisation and sought to update the material in *Social Education for the 80s* and incorporate some of the criticisms of the earlier document. It also built upon earlier work in South Australia by Malcolm McArthur and Peter Leverenz by including a framework incorporating the major areas of knowledge skills and experiences in social education appropriate for all Australian students. Some of the debate within SEAA about the document centred on defining the scope of social education and the appropriate sources of insight into human societies. Dufty was concerned that some versions of the draft were too narrow and positivist and closed to more creative, expressive and holistic ways of social understanding. Educational leaders like Ken Boston and Garth Boomer with South Australian connections were aware of the document and were later to have a major role in the CURASS national curriculum mapping project. The process of dialogue in writing the document generated some powerful critical thinking and collaboration (Perkins 2002) and the document was to prove quite influential. The document has been drawn upon in most state reviews of social education curriculum and probably influential in assisting introduction of inter-disciplinary social and environment courses in junior secondary in every state except NSW in the 1990's (Marsh 2001).

While at the policy level *Social Education in the Nineties* made a major contribution, SEAA's most successful publication at the classroom level and its major financial success was the *Greenhouse Alert. A Learner's Handbook*. The team working on this project out of Sydney was led by David & Helen Dufty with assistance from Sandra Newell, Bev Stubbs and Bob Walshe. Department of Arts, Sport, Environment Tourism and Territories (DASETT) funding of the production and distribution of *the Greenhouse Alert* to every school in Australia made this the most successful promotion of SEAA in schools. It drew upon the publication skills of Bob Walshe, a former teacher and editor, who had overseen the expansion of the Primary English Teachers Association to become a formidable publishing house. Walshe had a long term interest in environmental issues and had posed the question, 'What is the most important issue confronting young people in the 1980s?' He argued that the answer was global warming and he set out to encourage students to attack that issue. The impact of the publication on the Australian debate on global warming can not be identified but was probably huge. (Dufty & Dufty 1989)

It is difficult to make an accurate summary of changes in SEAA's financial position over time. SEAA's assets were often shared between the executive and the committee organising the conference. Assets fluctuated with payments for conferences and since, conferences did not occur at the same month every two years, trend analysis isn't easy. However, the royalties from the *Greenhouse Alert* earned more than \$11,000 for SEAA and placed SEAA's finances on a sounder footing. In July 1989 SEAA had over \$20,000 and this represents SEAA's strongest financial position ever.

Not only was the Greenhouse publication a great promotion of SEAA and a sound financial venture, but it was drawn upon in schools across Australia. At Margaret Simpson's Sylvania Public School over 500 visitors attended their Greenhouse Alert Day on 1 September 1989 to see exhibitions with every class in the school focussing on a different fundamental need for human life on the planet. (Simpson, 1990)

By 1988 it was becoming clear that further expansion of SEAA's activities could not be expected in an all voluntary role. Drawing on the experience of VASST, the Victorians organising the 1990 conference suggested the establishment of a paid secretariat to handle the administration, communication and record keeping. The NSW executive explored the economics of employing Walshe to maintain the initiative of the Greenhouse Alert. The failure of the organisation to take decisive action on the question of executive structure and executive support at this crucial time when funding was healthy and the two major state organisations, VASST and St George council were both strong was probably critical for the failure of SEAA to further expand in the next decade. The lack of paid executive support might explain the sense of a number of executives being fully occupied in keeping the organisation afloat rather than achieving its critical objectives. For example in 6/12/87 Dufty received a letter from one of the previous South Australian executive apologising for non-attendance at the 88 conference and wishing the new executive good luck. 'I hope the newly elected executive proves to be effective and supportive. In my opinion the SA executive has proven to be little more than token.'

One failure was Dufty's inability to get support for the Human Basics (HUB) project. Effectively this was an attempt to argue that the push for basics epitomised in Thatcher's Great Education Reform Bill of 1988 was short-changing children by suggesting that only mathematics and literacy were basic. Dufty argued for a value based social education component in what was described as 'basic' in the same way that Cope & Kalantzis & others were to broaden the notion of literacy to multiliteracies. (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000) Another initiative at this time was an attempt to establish a Pacific Circle Association of Social Education as a means of networking social educators in north America, New Zealand and Australia. Despite some correspondence this body was never established although in 1994 the NCSS established the International Assembly within its organisation (Tucker, 1996).

The Victorian conference committee determined to bring the organisation closer to school teachers by giving the 1990 conference the theme *The Classroom Connection*. The theme arose from a concern by some Victorians that, while the Turning Point conference had been inspirational, there was a need to focus SEAA's work directly on the work of teachers and classrooms. 'We had gone to the heights and now we needed to involve the classroom practitioners. We needed to move from the WHY to the HOW.' (Perkins 2002) Some of the correspondence around the conference reflected part of the debate around *Social Education for the Nineties* that Dufty's notion of social education was a little too much about an individual's spiritual journey rather than about helping students analyse the society in which they lived. McArthur and Leverenz from South Australia were also keen to see SEAA do more to celebrate and build upon the best social education occurring in the various states. Some of the most interesting discussion in the SEAA correspondence relates to this debate over how holistic social education should be. Dufty was encouraging a greater synergy with the creative and expressive arts through exploring the human condition through the arts like poetry, drama and ethnomusicology whereas others were keener to see the organisation better meet the more prosaic needs of classroom teachers..

This mirrored the debate within SEAA about the appropriate scope of the organisation. Some argued that the organisation's role was ultimately to improve the quality of social education in schools whereas the Sydney conference raised the possibility of involving a wider audience of non-school based social educators in a more general movement of social change. One obvious example of non school teachers with a community education role were development education agencies and organisations sponsored by individual or groups of overseas aid agencies like Red Cross, Community Aid Abroad and World Vision. These bodies were involved in the promotion of understanding of global inequality not just through schools but through various youth and community organisations. While this debate did not go far within SEAA, other subject associations including the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) took the opportunity to widen their membership beyond school teachers. They attracted sports coaches, gym instructors etc as a means of increasing membership and readership and developing synergies between schools and other fitness providers. Similar debates occurred in other subject associations like the Australian Association of Environmental Educators.

The Classroom Connection conference at Melbourne University in association with VASST was attended by 121 people. Ray Anderson, the new President, continued the pattern for tertiary social educators to have strong links with the USA. Anderson's doctorate was from Stanford like Dufty's. Greg Birchall and Bill Connell also had close links to the NCSS. The Vice President, Wayne Perkins, was also President of VASST and continued the close links between VASST and SEAA. Michael Norman's keynote addressed the need for teachers to consider their students' perspective when planning social education programs and Humphrey McQueen's analysis of totalitarian implications of contemporary capitalist marketing stressed the need for an education that encouraged critical and responsible dissent. The conference was brilliantly synthesised in a performance of Playback Theatre.

The 2 1/2 year period of the executive in Victoria represented a turbulent time in Australian educational history. In 1990 the Australian Education Council (AEC- State and Federal Ministers of Education) began an initiative to develop a national curriculum mapping exercise. In contrast to the British case where the national government could impose a national curriculum, the AEC intention was firstly to map existing practice and look for common features with a view to facilitating a more co-ordinated approach to syllabus planning. Following the mapping, the next step involved writing a Design brief in which the two areas of Studies of Society and Environmental Education were amalgamated into what has continued to be called Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE). Finally a National Statement was to be written based on the Design brief. This process was similar to that followed in other learning areas and has been discussed elsewhere (Marsh 1994, Marsh 2001, Ellerton & Clements 1994, Land 1991). In SOSE the process which involved SEAA members in successfully tendering for the writing project ended in considerable controversy. (Gilbert et al 1992) By 1992 the tender for the National statement on SOSE had been let and the SOSE project started based on a team from the Queensland Department of Education and the Australian Federation of Associations for the Study of Society and Environment. (AFSSE). At the October 1992 meeting of CURASS, (the body representing the Heads of Curriculum and of Assessment in the various states and territories), it was decided not to release the Queensland draft Statement but to use a team of curriculum officers from NSW and South Australia to revise and expand upon the writing brief. This draft was completed by January 1993 then trialled, validated and the statement completed by June 1993 (Gilbert et al 1992, AEC 1994,a & b). Ultimately the whole process of national curriculum development was terminated for largely party political reasons at the Perth AEC meeting in 1993(Foley 1993). However, except perhaps for NSW, the process had a major impact on SOSE syllabuses throughout Australia. (Marsh 2001)

The Federal government was providing money to national peak learning area organisations like the Australian Literacy Association through the National Professional Development Program (NPDP) Responding to this opportunity for financial support, after an initiative by John Fien, SEAA joined with AGTA, HTA Australian Association of Environmental Education (AAEA) and Business Educators of Australia (BEA), to form a peak organisation, the Australian Federation of Societies for Studies of Society and Environment(AFSSE), to speak on behalf of the entire learning area and distribute funds amongst the organisations. There was little discussion of this organisation through the journal. The executive moved rapidly to help form the new organisation. (Anderson 1991) AFSSE had as members two representatives from each organisation and funds were generally divided equally between the member organisations despite the different sizes of their membership. The AFSSE executive ratified its constitution on 4th April 1992. The peak body was to provide an opportunity for networking by the organisations and later use of a web site to direct people to their respective sites.

AFSSE was to highlight some contradictions in SEAA's membership. On the one hand SEAA was the only national organisation that claimed to represent the integrated teaching of social studies in primary schools, in this sense representing thousands of primary school teachers across the states. By the mid 90s, in most states (except NSW & to a lesser degree Victoria) during junior secondary school students studied an integrated society and environment subject in the junior secondary years 7-10. (Marsh 2001) Only in NSW were the other disciplines taught as separate subjects in the junior secondary school. The other members of AFSSE had their core constituency in the senior secondary school. Yet the HTA and AGTA were large organisations with many more members, strong publications and conferences.

The size of SEAA's membership is difficult to track despite bi-enial reporting, partly because records don't always differentiate between financial and non-financial members. Normally however the organisations has a

consistent base of teacher educators and curriculum consultants and a floating body of teachers who join when the conference is held in their own state but do not renew their membership. Membership has usually been highest in the state which hosted the previous conference. Through the 90s SEAA, as constituted, could only speak for a membership of between 100 and 200, relatively few of whom were teachers. This severely weakened SEAA's negotiating strength within AFSSE and with various government funding bodies. The contradictions were obvious when for example in 1995 AFSSE took on a number of projects writing primary materials in Futures, Technology and Global Issues. In a sense, at the primary school level AFSSE was injecting an unnecessary extra layer of bureaucracy between SEAA and federal funding bodies. This positioned SEAA with a residual role, as the association responsible for those areas of the secondary social education curriculum that other than history, geography, business or environment. By contrast, Tonkin and Dufty's original vision was of a SEAA which, like NCSS, synthesised those other subjects and, ideally, subject associations.

While this represented a dilemma for SEAA, in practice AFSSE functioned very amicably and efficiently, a tribute to some of the major actors including Peter Leverenz. There was also a practical motivation for cooperation. Disunity or withdrawal from the organisation would threaten access to NPDP or other Federal funding.

SEAA's political leverage would be increased if its membership structure enabled it to speak for more members. Most national subject associations like the ASTA & the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT) are organised on a Federal basis. Members join their local state or territory branch which is affiliated with the national organisation. Each state /territory organisation sends delegates to the national executive. In this sense the national organisation's membership includes the total of the states' members. Yet SEAA involved individuals joining separately and getting separate membership entitlements. Compromises have been proposed at various times in SEAA's history whereby individuals would still join SEAA separately from this state body (where such a body existed) but the state body would be encouraged to affiliate with SEAA and the body would pay a per capita affiliation fee. If all state bodies were to affiliate, this would enable SEAA to speak on behalf of its affiliated organisations at a national level.

While this compromise had promise, in practice it never operated optimally despite some tinkering with the arrangements for a number of reasons. Firstly it was not clear which associations should affiliate. In some states e.g. Western Australia there were a number of possible candidates (McDonald et al, 1993) In Victoria it was clearly VASST. At times other states had no state association. In other cases like NSW there was a primary body and at least two secondary bodies, Asian Social Studies and Society & Culture, which saw little advantage in a national affiliation. The fact that under its Federal system Australia's states had distinct syllabuses meant that many state secondary subject organisations were based specifically on a particular state syllabus e.g. International Studies and Politics in Victoria, Society and Culture and Aboriginal Studies in NSW, many could see no advantage to their members of affiliating with a national organisation when no other states taught their subject. Nor was it easy to demonstrate what affiliates received in return for subscriptions.

A later solution to this problem was to produce a newsletter which could be inserted into the various affiliated state publications and included information relating to networking but not the substantial articles from *The Social Educator*. Some affiliate organisations felt their members weren't interested in receiving the journal and SEAA could not afford to send the journal to all affiliates without a much more substantial affiliation fee. Alternative regimes for sharing publications were discussed but different affiliates had different requirements. Administrative challenges blocked implementation. For example, should the Federal or state body distribute newsletters? Others were reluctant to affiliate for resource reasons. In July 1998 the NSW Council expressed their reluctance to pay affiliation fees for two reasons. Firstly they did not think their members would be interested in the national publication since few of the articles had any direct relevance to their predominantly primary school classroom teacher members. Secondly some on the Council executive felt that SEAA had access to sufficient funding through AFSSE not to require additional affiliation fees from cash-strapped state organisations. A major problem for the 99/2000 executive was collecting fees from affiliates. Only the two territory associations forwarded their levy (Manley 2002).

While this structural problem was identified rather early in SEAA's life, the failure to take the hard decisions to restructure the Federal organisation had high long term costs.

SEAA became affiliated with another national curriculum body during this period. The National Education Foundation was established as a result of efforts by ACSA to try to ensure that teacher professional organisation had some access to decision making about the national agenda. It was intended to be a peak lobby group representing the profession including unions and subject associations. Wayne Perkins represented SEAA at the inaugural 7 December meeting.

No further monographs were published in this period. However, following the death of SEAA's inaugural President, Colin Tonkin, the Victorian executive decided to complete one of Colin's unfinished projects, *World Perspectives on Social Education*. Colin had been preparing a publication celebrating good teaching practice in global education. Prior to his death he had written an introduction and structured the book. While it was not possible for the Victorian executive to gather chapters from practising teachers illustrating classroom applications of world perspectives, chapters were contributed by leading overseas global educators Kenneth Tye and Robin Richardson and Australians including David Dufty and Malcolm McArthur. The publication indicated the high esteem in which Tonkin was held globally and the loss to SEAA organisation occasioned by his early death.

Another Federal government educational initiative which was to impact upon SEAA was the disbanding of the Asian Studies Council in 1992 and its replacement by the Asia Education Foundation (AEF). The AEF dynamically attempted to encourage good practice in Asian Studies teaching in primary and secondary schools across the country and contributed to SEAA conferences and publications.

1992 also saw the publication by SEAA of the Audit of Development Education Resources (Hill, Hall & Buchanan, 1992) which was funded by AUSAID . Designed to assist teachers to locate and evaluate teaching resources dealing with development issues, the audit was published in hard copy and also on disc to enable easier searching. A summary of some of the more highly recommended resources was published in *The Social Educator* of August 1993.

The 1993 conference was held at Griffith University in Brisbane. Don Alexander was elected President and Kath Kelly took on the position of Vice-President. Ian Lowe addressed the conference about some of the environmental challenges facing Australia and George Negus spoke at the conference dinner.

SEAA had used the facilities of Education House for the printing and distribution of the journal which Wayne Mueller edited. But by the nineties it was obvious that the move to corporatisation of schools was leading to the decimation of support services for teachers from Education departments across the country. Don Alexander wrote in *The Social Educator* of the pleasure that the Minister seemed to be taking in sending staff of Education House back to schools. While in Queensland this was mainly due to a decentralisation of teaching support, in most states support for curriculum and professional development was being dramatically reduced. Similar things were happening in Victoria as the Rialto building was being evacuated by the Kennett government and the numbers of consultants in the NSW Department of Education had also been reduced. One of the outcomes of this shedding of professional support staff in the departments of education was a reduction in the pool of individuals willing and able to take leadership positions in teachers' organisations at the state and national levels.

The place of professional development in schools was also changing in ways that would impact on SEAA. Enterprise Agreements in various states had reduced the resources devoted to Professional development. In NSW, for example, the overall majority of funding was devoted to school based in-service on two pupil free days a year. While teachers might choose to attend conferences during their school holidays, in many states school's budgets did not extend to paying the conference fees. New priorities in school based professional development seemed to include discipline and classroom management, information technology, outcomes and employer legal responsibilities such as child protection legislation. There was less support for teachers who wished to attend conferences based on their personal curriculum interest.

In 1993 the Queensland executive took the decision to incorporate SEAA as SEAA Inc for reasons of liability. This move was ably steered by Cheryl Sim. Incorporation was later to cause its own problems. One of the conditions of incorporation was that the executive officer of the incorporated organisation had to be resident in the state in which it was incorporated. Moving the SEAA executive from state to state had a

number of problems and this became one of them. Subsequent executives did not have executive officers in Queensland and the time and cost involved in changing the state in which it was incorporated seemed a low priority. Five years later Ros Manley, then SEAA President when the ACT took over the management of SEAA, recalls receiving letters from the Queensland government threatening legal action for failure to meet the terms of incorporation.

The movement of SEAA from state to state had a number of advantages. It gave the organisation exposure in most of the states and shared the responsibility for decision making widely over the long term. It gave a lot of people a sense of ownership of the organisation. However these advantages were outweighed by the major disadvantages. The constant movement delayed the organisation's maturity. The minutes are replete with expressions of frustration as new executives wait for files or information from previous executives. New bank accounts, postal addresses, letterhead, new publishing arrangement, new part-time clerical assistance had to be organised. Stored publications had to be shipped from state to state. Each new executive reinvented the wheel. Valuable time and energy was spent by executives doing things at the expense of a more pro-active approach to achieving SEAA's objectives. Long term planning was made difficult since executives from one state were reluctant to make decisions binding on other states, yet some decisions required long lead times. Journal editors might solicit articles for special editions which are outside their time of office.

The structure sapped the energy of the activists in the state who controlled the executive and placed barriers against other states contributing to the decision making and activities of the organisation. Presidential reports, motions at executives meetings, suggestions at specially convened meetings frequently advocated the establishment of an executive with representatives from all/most states and a permanent office /address but the decision was never taken. (Leverenz 2002, Fazio 1999). Ros Manley had anticipated that the Canberra 2001 conference would have made this decision when no state would take responsibility for the executive, but the decision was never made when at the last minute the Victorian group decided to take responsibility. (Manley 2002)

Similarly, the editorship of the journal, *The Social Educator*, had moved every two years with the executive. This meant that people contributing articles, or publishers submitting books for reviewing would frequently be sending material to out-dated addresses. Arrangements for printing and posting the journal had to be changed every two years. Editorial policies and practices changed every two years. Indeed editorship changed far more frequently than that since a number of editors had to resign during the term of their state's occupancy. Colin Hindson in South Australia returned to the Pacific on a consultancy. WA used over 3 editors in the two years of their occupancy. Greg Birchall moved to World Bank consultancy in Indonesia. Many of those people who volunteered had had no previous experience editing a subject association journal and by the time they felt they had mastered it their term was over. A number of editors, including Bill Driscoll & Rick Williams argued that it would be far more efficient for the editorship to operate on a timetable independent of the executives and for the printing and distribution arrangements to be constant. With the advent of email and electronic submission of articles and desk top publishing there was, they argued, no need for the editorship to be located with the executive or with the publishing and distribution centre. Relieving the executive of most of the responsibility for editorship would help spread the workload of the organisation. The advice of these experienced editors was not acted upon. It is hardly surprising that one of the common criticisms made of new executives was the length of time it took for them to get their first edition of the journal out. Given that for many members, the arrival of the journal was the only tangible evidence of the effectiveness of the organisation, late or infrequent arrival of the journal contributed to loss of members.

The Queensland executive was conscious of the structural weaknesses of SEAA. Don Alexander for example recommended that SEAA be reconstituted as a national body with state branches and that the Queensland social studies teachers' organisation become *SEAA Queensland*. Alexander also suggested that SEAA would be strengthened by trying to attract more members in non-school social education organisations in a manner similar to ACHPER and the Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE). Kath Kelly suggested that the constitution be changed to incorporate the President elect and the past president in an effort to develop some continuity. The major difficulty of acting on these recommendations was that the constitution could normally only be changed at the national bi-ennial conference and that generally those most involved, the out-going executive were reluctant to impose a structure upon the in-coming executive.

The recommendations were not acted upon but the inadequacies in the organisation sapped the energy of the activists.

The Queensland executive faced a dilemma in 1993. At the Seeking Global Citizens Brisbane conference in January, Lyndon Leppard had volunteered Tasmania as the host state for the 1995 conference provided some other state was willing to host the executive from 95-97 since there were insufficient resources in Tasmania to fill the executive positions. South Australia under Peter Leverenz had agreed to stand for the executive in 95. At the same time negotiations had commenced with the NCSS to hold an international social studies conference in Australia in 1997. Gavin Faichney had been a regular attendee at NCSS conferences and was on the executive of International Assembly of the NCSS which had been established in 1994 and had been involved in the negotiations which it was thought would bring over two hundred American social educators to Australia. The Queensland executive gave provisional support to the idea of the conference which it was agreed would be held in Sydney in the North American summer.

These plans were somewhat upset when, due to staffing changes, the Tasmanians withdrew their offer to organise the conference. After finding the South Australians also unable to organise the conference at such short notice, the executive contracted David and Helen Dufty to organise the conference for Sydney in 1995 as a pre-cursor for the international conference in 1997.

The Queensland executive did not publish any monographs but Wayne Muller provided substantial, themed editions of the *Social Educator* on Indigenous peoples and education, world perspectives on Australia and the natural and built heritage which served a similar function. While the publication focus for the Queensland executive was the journal, they did distribute to members a copy of *Invasion and After* published by Queensland Studies Centre at Griffith University with a number of articles by prominent SEAA members including Ray Land the editor and former SEAA president. These articles were written in response to conservative media reaction to proposed curriculum changes in Queensland describing the arrival of Europeans as an 'invasion'. This publication reflected the persistent highly charged ideological struggle in that state over the content of social education curriculum going back to the banning of MACOS and SEMP in the 70s. It also raised a number of issues about the place and proper perspective for Aboriginal Studies in the Social Education curriculum which had been a contentious issue in the sacking of the Queensland writing team involved with the CURASS SOSE profile.

A proposed monograph on the Republic suggested by Rob Gilbert was abandoned due to the other commitments of those suggesting the idea. This was a pity since the topic was an excellent one to illustrate the value of an inter-disciplinary, forward looking investigation of a controversial issues which was SEAA's forte.

SEAA's membership of AFSSE in this period provided them with access to NPDP funding. In 1994 it received its share, \$10,800 for use in paying for executive travel to the annual conference and also to the VASST in 1994, another of the few occasions when SEAA executives could meet between Bi-ennial conferences. This period also saw some clarification of SEAA policies on publications and on funding of conference attendance.

The South Australian executive took over control in a smoothly organised transition following the *Vision Values and Realities* conference at Sydney in January 1995. The conference picked up on David Dufty's interest in Values education flagged in his unsuccessful HUB initiative and revisited in his contribution to the editing of the Social Education in the Nineties document. The keynote speaker was Bob Stahl, former President of the NCSS and the conference was attended by representatives of the NCSS staff to negotiate details of the 97 International conference. One of the first initiatives of the new South Australian executive was to put together a response to the Beazley ministry, Civics Expert Group's report *Whereas the People*. The final document was written by Land and Kelly from Queensland and incorporated comments from Dufty, Hepworth, Hindson and Maye. It essentially developed a long standing SEAA concern that citizenship ought not to be seen as an accumulation of knowledge but a response to a political context drawing upon particular values including social justice and human rights. It rejected the suggestion that any new course was necessary. Instead it argued that, properly resourced, the teaching of civics could be strengthened in SOSE courses and across the curriculum and rejected the suggestion that civics was, or could

be, unproblematic. It called for a more reflective approach to civics as including an understanding of skills involved in the reflective engagement in controversial issues.

Surprisingly perhaps Civics and Citizenship remained a priority with the Howard Liberal government elected in 1996. Under Minister Vanstone and subsequently Kemp, the Civics Expert Group was reconstituted slightly as the Civics Education Group and funding was provided for the Discovering Democracy project.

According to Peter Leverenz, president from 1995-1997, one of the main achievements of the South Australian executive was bringing together the national body to Adelaide in October 1995 to plan a national system and secretariat. There was a strong cooperative ethos at the conference and a strong consensus of the need to restructure the organisation but the changes were not incorporated. One helpful decision however was to take advantage of the offer by VASST to keep the national archives of SEAA in their Victorian office to eliminate the need for the archives to be moved from state to state every two years. *'We are in better shape than we have ever been' 'The only reward we can offer is that we are making a difference through our influence in educational institutions.'*... *'The road less travelled is difficult but more rewarding'* (Leverenz 1997 President's report. This was coming closest to implementing reform but by the time of the national conference in 1997 the impetus was lost and ideas not acted upon.

During the South Australian period from 1995-97, two publications were produced. The first, *Tolerance*, was a set of teaching units for Level 6 secondary and the second was *Education for Responsible Citizenship* edited by Ray Land. These publications were to address the concern that SEAA was becoming a talking shop for academics and curriculum advisors and had little to offer classroom teachers. The second publication was also designed to challenge narrow definitions of an unproblematic citizenship rooted in knowledge of Australia's political history. The units in Land's collection attempted to show how citizenship was linked to environmental activism, multiculturalism and anti-racism... a broader more forward looking and unashamedly contentious citizenship. It was, in part, designed to demonstrate a central role for an integrated interdisciplinary, forward looking role for social education rather than cede the area of citizenship to history teachers as was often the preferred response of politicians on both sides of politics. The executive also prepared *Indigenous Issues and the New Millennium*, which was distributed later in 1999.

While over 200 people attended the June 1997 international conference at Sydney University, organisers expressed some disappointment at the low levels of attendance from north Americans. *'Many of them did not turn up for the papers they were timetabled to present and didn't bother notifying us so we could cancel. Most came for the junket'* (Newell 2001) Key speakers including Chris Sidoti from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Aboriginal magistrate and activist Pat O'Shane, social commentator Eva Cox and Pacific Islands educator Konai Helu Thoman ensured that the conference had a strong human rights perspective.

The 1997 International conference in Sydney brought a quiet but important change in the organisational cycle of SEAA. Western Australia took over both the executive and the organising of the national conference. Whilst NSW hosted 3 annual conferences it only held the executive once. It also meant that in the years following, the Western Australian, ACT and Victorian executives were to be responsible for both running the executive and organising the conference. This arrangement concentrated the workload in a way which both excluded those states outside the executive and imposed a very heavy burden on the executive responsible both for the conference and the broader organisation.

The new executive included teachers and bureaucrats and was led by Mike Fazio, with Gil McDonald and Vice President and Glenda Parkin as secretary. Funding did not permit any meetings of the national advisory committee and much of the work of the executive focussed on the conference and maintenance of the organisation. Auditing of the books was difficult with SEAA still incorporated in Queensland. There seemed little in the way of a documented management/procedures/policy for SEAA and no-one on the executive had previously been to a SEAA executive meeting or was familiar with its procedures. One of the executive's achievements was to produce an organisational manual for future executives. There was also a sense that SEAA was entering difficult times and its future was not secure. Government educational priorities were favouring technology education and vocational education in response to pressure from employers and parents concerned about their children's economic future. Managing relations with other Western Australian subject

associations absorbed a lot of the executive's thought. Attracting and retaining teachers as members from the comparative isolation of Perth was a daunting task. (Fazio, 2002)

The September 1999 conference in Perth, *Social Education and the New Millennium: The Challenge of Change* was a great success. While the speakers Prof Greg Craven on the republic, Aboriginal sports person and academic Cheryl Kickett Tucker, Noel Simpson Federal staffer responsible for the Discovering Democracy program and Brenda Robbins were all impressive, for Fazio it was the atmosphere, the networking, which was most valued. What he said about the Perth conference echoes views expressed by participants at most SEAA conferences.

'For me they weren't the highlights The highlights were the number of people who came from inter state, the collegiality of those people, the involvement of primary teachers within the conference and the fact that the number of other bodies that came on board and provided assistance, physical at times and financial .and For me they were more important than the speakers or the workshop. The feedback that I got was along those lines. For me the success was measured in participation' (Fazio, 2002)

A contingent of social educators from New Zealand attended the Perth conference and presented papers. Despite the positive fraternal relations between SEAA and New Zealand Social Studies Teachers Association there has been no suggestions of an merger between those organisations as has happened with some trans Tasman subject associations.

At the conference a new executive from the ACT was elected and for the first time SEAA had, in Ros Manley, a female president who was also a practising primary school teacher. Alice Haynes was elected vice President and Jo Adams secretary. This was probably the first time SEAA had an executive largely comprised on practising teachers. The ACT had a tradition of the various SOSE subject associations collaboratively organising a conference in January and the same committee essentially subsumed the SEAA organisations. The ACT executive was confronted with a number of organisational challenges. Treasurer, Sue Scerri took on the time consuming and complex job of equipping the organisation to deal with the Goods and Services Tax which meant that it was no longer possible for SEAA to pay money to anyone without an ABN number. Secondly, in 2000 SEAA was threatened with legal action by the Queensland Office of Fair Trading for not meeting the terms of its incorporation since it no longer had an executive officer resident in Queensland.

Again the organisation of the conference and reacting to various administrative demands made it difficult for the executive, all volunteers, to find time to be pro-active. Some negotiations were entered into with the Australia Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA) into the possibility of SEAA establishing a permanent national office and sharing their facilities & staff but nothing resulted from the discussion. (Manley, 2002)

The Canberra executive got good support from a number of the Federal Agencies with an interest in Social Education. Rick Williams from the Parliamentary Education Office edited the journal. Education officers from ACT Heritage Sites and the Electoral Commission helped. It was also successful in gaining Centenary of Federation funding of \$ 44,726 for a 5 week primary and secondary school tour by Theatre Company of their play, Post and Rail, explaining Federation which premiered at the Canberra conference at the Australian National University in January 01.

138 people attended the Canberra conference *Empowering our Youth –Celebrating Federation*. Of those surveyed most were primary teachers, most came from Canberra and most were from government schools. The three keynote addresses at the conference, one on the history of Federation by Harry Evans, the Clerk of the Senate, one by Humphrey McQueen, 'Federation in its time and ours' and the third, by Tony Townsend, 'Engaging students in the global classroom' were all published in the March 2001 edition of *The Social Educator*.

The Conference Convenor, Julia Ryan was a retired teacher as were the Duftys when they organised the Sydney conferences in 95 and 97. Retired social educators may be a valuable resource in the future given Australia's ageing demographic.

Issues like the GST and legal considerations around insurance and incorporation had made running a subject association a far more demanding and time consuming operation. With an ageing teaching service, subject

associations were finding it increasingly difficult to get volunteers to stand for their executives, especially as treasurer (Smith 2002). Creative, enthusiastic educators were reluctant to see their energies focussed on organisational maintenance. By the time the ACT executive had finished their term of office at the 2001 conference they felt burnt out (Manley 2002).

Prior to the conference the executive had approached all state representatives to see which state wanted to take on the national executive for 2001-3. No state volunteered. In NSW the Council, now named the NSW HSIE Council, was in the process of closing down despite having an extremely healthy budget and over 300 members because no-one was willing to stand for the executive. Many of the office holders had been on the executive since the 1970s and were approaching retirement. Hepworth has argued that SEAA contributed to the demise of the Council essentially by sapping the energy of its key organisers. (2002) There was a sense of pessimism about the future of SEAA. Manley anticipated that the bi-ennial general meeting at the conference would have to investigate electing an executive which drew on a number of states or seriously consider placing the organisation in recess.

Ultimately neither eventuated since, faced with the prospect of the demise of SEAA, at the Annual General Meeting Lindy Stirling, executive officer of VASST agreed with the support of VASST members present to take on the position of President with Libby Tudball as Vice-President and Gabrielle England as Secretary.

SEAA in 2001 found itself in a similar position to the one it had on its founding in 1980. Located in Victoria, generously supported by the efficient VASST organisation, it now had only a small membership of some 71 members and assets of around \$16,000 in 2000. However whereas in 1980 there has the kernel of a young enthusiastic national network in a supportive context, SEAA in 2000 was confronted with an ageing and overworked clientele many of whose main daily priorities were classroom management rather than classroom innovation. They were operating in a political context where funding for professional development in social education was scarce and the demands of operating a national organisation intimidating. Within Victorian high schools which were VASST's base, the Curriculum Standards Framework (CSF) I which had produced an integrated Year 7-10 Studies of Society subject for all students had been replaced by CSF 2 which provided for strands in the different disciplines. Tonkin's 1980 vision of a curriculum based on students' needs for a holistic understanding of society had not replaced the politics of specialised subjects fighting to retain their patch.

The Victorian executive responded proactively and promptly. With a \$5,000 grant from VASST they organised a National Strategic Review with representatives of all the states on the advisory committee in Melbourne. Chaired by an independent facilitator, the Review enabled Stirling to play devil's advocate and consider whether SEAA merited saving & if so, how. While the week-end enabled helpful networking and reduced the executive's sense of isolation it also led to a number of changes. Firstly the name SEAA was changed from the Social Education Association of Australia to the Social Educators' Association of Australia to indicate the importance placed on networking educators. Secondly the constitution was changed to enable the executive to be selected nationally, rather than from a single state, to increase participation and reduce the isolation which many states felt. Thirdly greater use was made of email in sharing minutes and consulting in decision making. A new, cheaper category of membership was introduced for those who wanted to access their journals and other correspondence by email. Most states agreed to organise SEAA dinners with guest speakers, often streamed nationally on the web to raise the presence of SEAA in the different states. These dinners were organised locally but financial arrangements and bookings were organised through the VASST office. SEAA paid VASST for executive services.

The SEAA executive also drew upon the national network to respond to arguments advanced by Bruce Wilson head of the Curriculum Corporation, the successor to the Curriculum Development council which had played such an important role in lead up to SEAA's creation. Wilson received wide media publicity for his suggestion that SOSE be dropped from the over-crowded primary curriculum to enable students to concentrate on developing the higher order thinking which, he argued, was the domain of single discipline subjects like history and geography. Clearly the philosophy that forms the rationale for SEAA's existence still needs to be defended twenty one years after its establishment.

Reflections.

There is an extensive management research literature on the life cycle of businesses. Kimberly, Miles et al suggests that organisations work through a life cycle.. for different periods of growth stability and decline as they might merge, be overtaken or effectively die out in response to a changed environment. Nothing so dramatic has happened with SEAA.

SEAA had a very carefully planned conception but the management structure it adopted did not permit it to achieve self sustaining growth. It made a substantial impact on networking and motivating teachers in the 80s and early 90s and had a real, though indeterminate, influence on national curriculum in Studies of Society and Environment. Unfortunately though, its failure to develop a corporate memory and a paid secretariat meant that successive executives became, much to their frustration, too occupied in organisational maintenance and reinventing the wheel, to play a pro-active role. Whereas the Australian Science Teachers Association established their permanent secretariat in 1959, SEAA in 2002 seems only now ready to implement that decision

SEAA's history has been remarkably harmonious. While there have been major debates at various times particularly over the lighthouse documents, Social Education in the 80s and 90s, these debates were remembered by the protagonists as stimulating, invigorating and contributing to their commitment to the organisation (Leverenz, Perkins 2002). Members came from different states and educational cultures and had different priorities for the organisation but for some reason the organisation was able to absorb these differences almost effortlessly. One would like to think that this is because social educators might have developed strategies for dealing with controversy and conflict constructively. But perhaps absence of conflict is a reflection of lack of power that SEAA had. There were no prizes for winning. Perhaps the structure, by ensuring that few people have ever been on the executive for more than a single two year term, removed much of the arena for conflict and meant that there was no entrenched power base, no revisiting old sores, no corporate memory or perhaps not enough passion.

The future

There is a high degree of consensus amongst former members of the SEAA executives as to the best way to confront SEAA's future. If SEAA is to have a future it will have to reassess its structure in the light of the unsympathetic educational environment in which it finds itself. Clearly the National Strategic Review of 2001 has suggested ways of simultaneously reducing the demands placed upon a small executive located in a single state and providing members and supporters in other states with a greater sense of ownership and opportunity to contribute. Improved forms of technology, emails, forums, web-casting, teleconferences etc should increase the potential for doing this.

As well, SEAA will need to develop a permanent secretariat to free the volunteers from most of the burden of organisational maintenance and enable them to pro-actively focus on achieving SEAA objectives. In the short and medium term it seems likely that VASST represents the best potential location for such a permanent part-time secretariat.

Both these changes would require improved funding. Unlike some other subject organisations, particularly ASTA with support from BHP & Shell in the past (Pattie, 2001) and those in business and commerce, SEAA has been reluctant to seek corporate sponsorship for its activities. As Leverenz said ' SEAA had a great brain and a terrific heart but a hopeless business sense' (2002) In the past SEAA has been critical of the compromises that might be expected from corporate sponsorship. Alternately it might attempt to follow the direction of associations like PETA and become such a quality publishing house in its own right that it is financially independent. It is unlikely that this could happen with an editorship changing personnel and location every two years.

In educational issues SEAA has persistently been in the vanguard. While it is difficult to prove the extent of SEAA's influence, its monographs for example have provide quality analysis of issues which later have become mainstream. Aboriginal Studies, Asian Studies, Citizenship, Information technology and multiculturalism were all addressed in the journal and monographs. Constructivism and productive pedagogy are all consistent with the type of teaching advocated in the pages of SEAA's journals.

A number of those interviewed suggest however that if SEAA aspires to impact upon the teaching of social education in the future it may have to respond more strategically to the needs of teachers in determining their agenda. For example primary teachers are looking for help in teaching across curriculum areas. To date SEAA has never organised a conference or publication with a subject association outside of the SOSE area despite great opportunities for synergies with English, Science and the Creative Arts for example. Secondary teachers are looking for help in strategies which challenge students while assisting in developing harmonious constructive learning environments. Publications with ideas for pedagogy for reluctant learners would be appreciated.

Strategically it will be importantly for SEAA to engage creatively with its competition. Numbers of students enrolled in social education subjects in secondary school are declining. There is a clear trend towards secondary students undertaking vocational subjects. For as long as youth unemployment remains high this trend is likely to continue. SEAA will need to explore synergies between work and social education using the work place as a lens through which social processes can be viewed.

The mode of delivery of professional development is also something which SEAA should explore. Traditional presentation of ideas through journals and conference papers still seem the favoured method used by subject associations but teachers' expectations and circumstances are changing and SEAA will need to explore other strategies for engaging teachers. Accreditation for professional development and the use of electronic media to reduce travel requirements associated with professional development all need to be explored.

Over the last decade there has been continuing debate about the role of teaching as a profession. The thwarted attempt to establish an Australian Teaching Council in the 90s (Kelly 1994) was followed in NSW by Gregor Ramsay's advocacy of an Institute of Teachers. The AEC's successor, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in its 1999 Adelaide Declaration the National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century signalled a commitment to enhance the status and quality of the teaching profession. MCEETYA has monitored the progress in different states towards the establishment of a professional teaching body to accredit teacher education and professional development programs and determine criteria for persistence in the profession (2002). There is some evidence in Mullins' 1999 research that secondary teachers are not enthusiastic about their subject associations playing a part in setting teaching standards. However, confronted with the strong possibility of the establishment of a national standards framework for the teaching profession it may be that this attitude will change and teachers will want a direct input into the framing of standards.

Subject associations in other key learning areas including science, mathematics and English are working in on collaborative research projects with universities to develop specific standards frameworks for their subject area. (Wright, 2001 a) If SEAA does not engage in this process social educators might find they have to respond reactively to imposed standards designed to achieve bureaucratic accountability rather than educational outcomes.

Within the learning area of society and environment at secondary level an important question will be whether teaching qualification in a single discipline is sufficient or whether teachers need to be qualified in teaching across the social science disciplines. What the appropriate qualifications might be will be an important debate for social educators and one which may test the harmonious relations between SEAA and the HTA, GTA & BEA evidenced in AFSSE. SEAA may find some support in this process from a variety of university departments including sociology, anthropology, social psychology, political science, and cross-disciplinary departments like Asian Studies and Religious studies. Other single discipline subjects like history, geography, politics or economics commonly have very strong support from academic departments at universities. This has rarely been the case in SEAA. Those academics involved in the organisation have almost exclusively been from teacher education rather than from the substantive disciplines and few people from the subject departments have chosen to write for the journal or give papers at conferences.

Endnotes

(1) SEAA's name was officially changed to the Social Educators Association of Australia in 2001

Interviews

The author conducted interviews with the following people either in person or by phone.

Alexander, Don (11/11/02)
Baker, Norm (11/9/09)
Dufty David (10/7/02)
Fazio, Mike (29/9 /02)
Land Ray (27/10/02)
Leverenz, Peter (4/9/02)
Lewis, Laurie(14/11/02)
Manley, Ros (17/9/02)
Newell Sandra (11/9/02)
Perkins, Wayne (15/10/02)
Reynolds, Ruth (10/9/02)
Simpson, Margaret(5/9/02)
Smith Pam(31/10/02)
Stirling Lindy (16/10/02)
Stubbs Bev (11/9/02)

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