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**President's Report**

Welcome back and best wishes for the new year, 2010. I hope your work situation is satisfying and rewarding!

As I write, the *My School* website saga unfolds, with press knocking on the front doors of schools identified as low performing on the basis of their NAPLAN averages. The information on the site is quite limited but much fuss has been made about the government providing it in such a public way. No doubt it will become mundane after the initial headlines, but to have this complication on Day 1 of the school year makes these interesting times indeed!

My congratulations go to Cheryl Ballantyne for her "Award for Excellence". In addition to her School Development Officer role she simultaneously manages the major project. Her capacity to multitask has been very impressive!

Please consider the nominations for the "Potential Award" as described below. There are many people in junior positions or relieving in senior positions who can demonstrate how they would perform in such appointments. You may think of one in your area who could be a prime candidate for this recognition and encouragement

**Barry Laing, President**

**Cheryl Ballantyne Wins ISEA's Top Award**

Cheryl Ballantyne, School Development Officer, Western Sydney Region, is the recipient of the ISEA's 2009 *Award for Excellence in the Administration of Public Education*. Cheryl nominated *The Bridges to Understanding: Western Sydney Region China Strategy* as her project for the Award.

*The China Strategy*, was initiated in 2006 by the former Western Sydney Regional Director, Lindsay Wasson, with an agreement to pursue joint projects of cooperation between the Region, the Ningbo Municipal Education Bureau in China & the University of Western Sydney. The Strategy has been further developed to reflect the commitment & agreed directions of the current Regional Director, Greg Prior, and Huang Shili, Director-General, Ningbo. (Continued p. 2)



*Cheryl Ballantyne (Centre) with Selection Panel members Brian Powyer (Convenor) and Dr Joy Murray (Sydney University)*

*Bridges to Understanding*, is underpinned by a strong commitment to the value of global education through shared educational endeavours that promote inter-cultural understanding & reciprocal benefits for partner organizations. The strategy is set to expand in 2010, through a partnership with the Huangpu Education Bureau in Shanghai.

### **Existing and Planned Projects under the China Strategy.**

**The Ningbo Volunteer Program** is the first of its kind in Australia. Each year up to 10 graduates are selected by Ningbo Municipal Education Bureau to spend 18 months in Western Sydney, volunteering in primary & secondary schools to support the teaching & learning of programs in Mandarin language & Chinese culture, whilst completing a Master of Education (Honours) at the University of Western Sydney. The program is in the second year of completing a Master of Education (Honours) at the University of Western Sydney and will continue to the end of 2013.

**Sister School Relationships:** Currently six Western Sydney schools have signed sister-school agreements with schools in Ningbo. It is planned to expand the sister school program in 2010 to incorporate professional learning and leadership development for staff and shared cultural learning, supported by technology, for students. In 2010 there will be scope for schools in Western Sydney to develop relationships with schools in Ningbo or Huangpu.

**Annual Cultural Exchange Program:** In 2008, 30 students from Ningbo performed at Western Sydney Region's performing arts spectacular, PULSE at Sydney Opera House. In 2009, 35 students from Western Sydney performed with their Chinese peers at the Ningbo Grand Theatre. In 2010, the *Bridges to Understanding Concert* will be held on 9 August in Sydney Town Hall. It is likely to include students from Huangpu schools, as well as students from Ningbo and Western Sydney schools.

**Confucius Classroom:** A Confucius Classroom is a centre of excellence in the study of Chinese language, society and culture. Under a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2009 between the NSW Department of Education and Training and Hanban (the central education Ministry of the Chinese Government), it is planned to establish a Confucius Classroom in a Western Sydney School to commence operation in 2011. The classroom will have the technological capacity to offer outreach programs in Mandarin language and Chinese culture and society to students in schools across the Region.

**Significance of the Program/Activity/Event at Local/System Level:** *Bridges to Understanding* has strategic links to the Commonwealth Government's National Asian Languages Studies in Schools Program, the Department's Bilingual Education Program, and two Memorandums of Understanding between NSW Department of Education and Training and China, signed in 2007 and 2009. At the local level the strategy provides students in Western Sydney schools with exposure to Mandarin language & Chinese culture and the potential to engage in educational activities which cross cultural and national boundaries.

The selection panel for the Award was impressed with the significance of the Strategy to the nation's interests and to the teachers, schools and graduates involved in its projects. The possible extension of the Strategy to other DET regions was seen as a real possibility, given its ready take-up and success in the Western Sydney Region.

The project clearly meets the criteria for the Award and Ms Ballantyne, a member of the ISEA, has played, and continues to play, a leading role in its development, management and improvement. An evaluation is being designed by Ms Ballantyne and that will add value to the project and enhance her reputation as a professional educator.

Ms Ballantyne expressed an intention to contribute part of the associated \$5000 grant to the conduct and extension of the project. She also intends to meet with Australian educators who are involved with similar projects to that nominated.

The Award will be presented to Cheryl by the Director-General at a ceremony to be conducted in Bridge Street at 4.30pm on Thursday 11 March 2010. All members & colleagues welcome. RSVP [ron.ikin@bigpond.com](mailto:ron.ikin@bigpond.com) by 9 March 2010

### **ISEA Award for Potential Senior Educational Administrators: Nominations Called**

The ISEA invites members to nominate DET staff members who are working in "Out-of-School" positions junior to that of CEO (or acting/relieving in a CEO position) who, through their outstanding work, demonstrate the potential to successfully undertake senior educational positions. The recipient/s of the "Potential Award" will be recognised at the ceremony for the ISEA's 2009 *Award for Excellence in the Administration of Public Education* as reported above.

The nomination form for the "Potential Award" appears on p4 of this Newsletter. Nominations are due with the ISEA Executive Officer by COB on 13 February 2010. Only one nomination per member should be submitted.

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## Review of Curriculum K-12 and The Centre for Learning Innovations

The ISEA was notified by the DET on the 26 October 2009 that a review, led by Lindsay Wasson, would be conducted of the Curriculum K-12 Directorate and the Centre for Learning Innovation in order to:

- Identify the critical curriculum services, the innovation capabilities and the products that are required for supporting NSW public schools into the future; and
- Propose an appropriate merger of functions and staff across the two directorates

The ISEA was given an undertaking that the staff of the 2 units would be consulted and that the Institute would be kept informed of the progress of the review. After several weeks, and in the absence of any requested information, the ISEA sought and was granted a meeting on the 4 December with Des Gorman (General Manager, Learning and Development) and Kate Sheehan (Director, HR Services and Systems). Unfortunately the meeting threw very little light on any of the questions raised by the ISEA. There were however undertakings to provide the ISEA with a statement of the process by which the review was to be carried out and an indication of whether an interim report, said to be completed by the end of 2009, would be made available to the staff and the ISEA. A statement of the process for the merger, as shown below, was finally provided in January.

There are significant educational and personnel matters at stake here. First the looming major responsibility the DET faces in implementing the 4 national curriculum statements ready to be distributed across all schools and teachers in the State in 2010 and the yet to be completed statements in the years to follow. State-tailored support documents and materials will be needed as well as a massive professional learning program. A huge task and not one to be tackled with a reduced or emasculated State Office level curriculum workforce, if that proves to be the outcome of the review. The already stretched regional curriculum staff cannot be expected to assume responsibility for the massive implementation program and materials that will be needed.

There is also a major personnel issue in the case of the CEOs who have been held in temporary positions for several years. The absence of consultation, the lack of a transparent process and no guarantee of access to the interim report has only to heightened the anxiety and frustration felt by the staff concerned. This has been a bone-of-contention for the ISEA for some time and one the DET will need to address before the review can be seen to be completed.

The ISEA will take up these educational and personnel issues in a forthcoming meeting with the D-G. The ISEA would welcome members' views on this very important issue in order to inform its case to the Director-General.

### Proposed Merger of Curriculum K-12 & Centre for Learning Innovation: A Process Chart for Curriculum K-12

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Meet with staff and explain proposed merger Invite feedback from staff at any time through their managers	GM Learning & Development Director Curriculum K-12	Term 3, 2009
Meet with stakeholder groups	GM Learning & Development Director HR Services & Systems	Term 4, 2009
Develop an interim paper for the Director General on proposed merger	Senior Project Officer, Lindsay Wasson	Term 4, 2009
Invite further feedback / input from staff at Curriculum K-12 through their managers.	Director, Curriculum K -12	Term 1, 2010 and ongoing
Meet with senior managers / team leaders of Curriculum K-12 to provide feedback from staff teams on proposed merger.	Senior Project Officer, Lindsay Wasson Director Curriculum K-12	Early in term 1, 2010 Date to be determined.
Meet with stakeholder groups with update on interim paper	GM Learning & Development Director, HR Services & Systems	Term 1, 2010
Develop a refined paper on the proposed merger for the Director General	Senior Project Officer, Lindsay Wasson	Term 1, 2010
Once directions, functions and structures are clarified, discussions will be held with individuals, teams, managers, department portfolios and stakeholders groups re: implementation	GM, Learning & Development Director, Curriculum K-12	Term 1 and 2, 2010

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