

Pam Ryan and Laurie Murphy Receive ISEA Awards from the Director-General

Pam Ryan, School Education Director in Orange, and Laurie Murphy, School Development Officer in Tamworth have received the ISEA's 2007 Awards for Excellence in the Administration of Public Education from the Director-General at a well attended ceremony in Bridge Street.



Director-General, Michael Coutts-Trotter meets ISEA Award recipients, Pam Ryan and Laurie Murphy



Laurie Murphy addresses the Award ceremony gathering



Presidents, Norman McCulla (former ISEA), Geoff Scott (PPA), Juho Looveer (ISEA) & Jim McAlpine (SPC)



Magda Pollak discusses the ISEA Award with Pam Ryan

The Director-General, Mr Michael Coutts-Trotter, congratulated Pam and Laurie on receiving the Awards and commented on the significance of their work within their regions and across the DET. He also remarked on the honour that came from being recognised by one's peers (in this case the ISEA) and that it was important for the fine work of DET administrators in the field to be acknowledged. (con't page 2)

Working Together for Education

Pam Ryan's Award was based on her promotion of collaboration between five secondary schools in the Orange Group of schools in partnership with TAFE, through her leadership of the e² project.

Laurie Murphy received the Award because of the service he had provided to schools over several years and recently his promotion of quality teaching and learning through a range of technology applications.

Among the large audience were many ISEA members, senior DET executives, former colleagues of Pam and Laurie and representatives of the NSW Teachers Federation, the NSW Secondary Principals' Council, the NSW Primary Principals' Association, the Association of Retired Inspectors of Schools and Senior Educational Administrators. Several tributes were read from ISEA members and former colleagues.

Reports of the use made by Pam and Laurie of the financial grants that accompany the ISEA Award will be published in ISEA newsletters during the year.

ISEA Awards for Excellence to be Offered Again in 2008!

Given the success of the inaugural ISEA Award for 2007 and the quality of the projects put forward by the applicants, the ISEA State Council has decided to offer the Award again in 2008. It is believed that the Award plays an important part in recognising the fine work of so many senior administrators in the DET.

Details and application forms for the 2008 Award will be made available to members in the near future.

ISEA Seeks DET's View on a New Salaries and Conditions Award

The ISEA has sought an initial meeting with the DET to gauge the Department's attitude to a new Salaries and Conditions Award for Chief Education Officers. As the current Award expires at the end of 2008 a new award, covering the years 2009–2011, is due to be negotiated. CEO members are invited to indicate the items in the present Award that need revision and additional conditions that should be considered. Estimates of the salaries that should be sought over the period of the Award can also be forwarded to the Executive Officer by the 18 April 2008.

Not Too Late to Join the ISEA Study Tour

It is not too late to join the ISEA study tour to the USA and Canada to be conducted over the 2008 third term NSW school holidays. The tour, which is open to ISEA members and colleagues, will visit schools and educational systems and institutions in the USA cities of Chicago (Illinois), Kalamazoo and Lansing (Michigan) and the Canadian city of Toronto. Visits to the Henry Ford Museum and the Greenfield Village in Detroit and Niagara Falls in Ontario will round out the tour.

Estimated costs for the tour are \$4800 inclusive of international air fares, internal train and coach travel, accommodation and some meals.

ISEA tours are open to participants from state and regional offices, schools, colleges and universities. The attached brochure contains details and the schedule for the tour and an expression-of-interest form. Further information can be obtained by phoning the ISEA Executive Officer on 9181 5879 or 0418 669 501. The closing date for expressions of interest for joining the tour is 4 April 2008.

ISEA Hosts Superintendent from British Columbia

The ISEA recently arranged meetings and visits for Dr Keven Elder, Superintendent of the Saanich School District in British Columbia, Canada. Keven, who assisted with the ISEA study tour to the USA and Canada in 2006, was visiting Australia and New Zealand during the Canadian winter school vacation. Meetings with school education directors, school development officers and school principals were organised. A meeting with the Director-General, Michael Coutts-Trotter rounded out Keven's tour.

The success of British Columbia in improving student learning performance outcomes was of particular interest to the Director-General and other senior DET officers.

ISEA Secretary on the Mend

ISEA Secretary, Brian Jarman is on the mend after undergoing major heart surgery recently. Brian, a long-time and life member of the ISEA, is expected to return to his DET position in North Sydney Region in approximately 6 weeks. The ISEA wishes Brian a speedy and full recovery.

Newly Appointed CEOs Attend Induction Meeting

Eight newly appointed Chief Education Officers recently attended an induction meeting conducted by the DET in cooperation with the ISEA. The new CEOs, drawn from various units across the DET, were presented with a range of materials, contacts and information to assist them to adjust to their new roles.

Ann McIntyre, Director of Professional Learning, addressed the group about the professional learning opportunities available to them and Bev Charlton, Principal Industrial Officer explained the Salaries and Conditions Award under which CEOs are employed. Regional Director, Lindsay Wasson, and Directors Rob Randall and David McKie were on hand to provide advice and information from their functional areas.

Representatives of the ISEA's State Council provided the newly appointed CEOs with information about the programs and services available to ISEA members and provided materials and contacts for future use.



(Right) ISEA Treasurer Barry Laing meets with newly appointed CEOs Cheryl Ballantyne and Amanda McLaughlan

EPAC Case Continues in the Industrial Relations Commission

Late last year the ISEA, in conjunction with the NSW Teachers Federation, lodged a dispute in the IRC against the DET's plans to convert all Education Teaching Service (ETS) positions in the Employee Performance and Conduct (EPAC) Directorate to public service positions. This would involve all SEO1, SEO2, PEO, and CEO positions in EPAC being converted to their equivalent public service status.

The DET claims that this is necessary because the current EPAC public service investigators are not in receipt of the same salaries as the ETS investigators despite undertaking similar and mostly equivalent work. Further that teaching experience and education qualifications are not necessary to successfully carry out the work of investigating alleged cases of misconduct and inefficient performance by teachers in schools. This being so the current public servants, and others who aspire, are denied access to ETS promotion positions in the Directorate. The combination of these factors is causing dissension within the ranks of EPAC staff, the DET claims.

While accepting that a knowledge of the culture, curriculum, pedagogy, policies and relationships in schools is desirable, the DET claims that it is not essential and that factual information about schools can be gained, if needed, through ETS staff extraneous to the EPAC Directorate as investigations proceed.

The ISEA and the Teachers Federation in the 4 IRC hearings so far, and in meetings with the DET, have argued that in the interests of accuracy, thoroughness, and justice that it is essential for investigations into the conduct and/or performance of teachers to be informed by experience in schools and a knowledge of the teaching and learning process. It is accepted that investigative skills are important in the work of EPAC but investigations must always take account of the context. Only through experience and knowledge can it be certain that during an investigation the most perceptive questions are asked, the best sources of information are identified, and the available evidence is accurately analysed.

In rejecting the DET's proposal to access advice from ETS staff extraneous to the Directorate as investigations proceed the ISEA and the Teachers Federation said that the proposal risks opinion being sought after preliminary conclusions have been reached, loss of confidentiality, and unrealistic demands on busy staff in other functional areas. The need is for experience and knowledge to be applied to all investigations from the outset and not when much valuable information may have been missed or misunderstood.

The ISEA has explained to the IRC that the teaching profession is involved in the training, selection, deployment, supervision, development, improvement, promotion and appeal phases of a teacher's career and therefore it should be involved when a teacher's career and the reputation of his/her colleagues and school are under question. The profession has a right and a responsibility to be involved in the

investigation of complaints against its members. It has a major interest in ridding itself of those who have tarnished the reputation of its ranks and in protecting teachers from frivolous or malicious allegations.

The ISEA believes that the present balance of ETS and public-service positions in the EPAC Directorate is justified and has worked well. It agrees that the contribution of experienced and skilled investigators from fields other than education is desirable and should be retained. It also accepts that if salary and work-related inequities have arisen across the staff then they should be addressed. The ISEA has suggested that the inequities could be addressed in the following ways:

- 1) Raise the status (and therefore the salaries) of the public-service positions where it is shown the work justifies higher recompense.
- 2) Instigate an independent review of the work and organisational arrangements within EPAC in order to explore alternative options and staffing patterns for carrying out the work of the Directorate.

The ISEA has also suggested to the DET and IRC that the current CEO positions in EPAC should not be central to the dispute because the DET already advertises them without any requirement for school experience and educational qualifications. They therefore do not present a barrier to anyone, ETS staff or public servants, from applying and being appointed on merit. Thus there can be no sense of exclusion to these positions by any EPAC staff member, as is said to be the bone-of-contention with other ETS positions. In this way it is anticipated that a larger and better quality field will be attracted to apply for these positions and teachers, although they may be appointed permanently, would not be required to relinquish their right-of-return to schools.

The DET has rejected each of the alternatives proposed by the ISEA and the Teachers Federation offering only the deployment of 2 deputy principals for 2 years to EPAC as some sort of substitute for the loss of dozens of ETS positions, including 6 CEO positions.

The matter has now been referred back to the parties for further negotiation before returning to the IRC for a reporting-back hearing. Should there be no resolution by that time it is likely that the matter will be listed for full arbitration with the IRC then determining the staffing arrangements for EPAC.

The Teachers Federation has received more than 700 messages of concern and in support of its stance over the DET's proposal in this matter. The ISEA has also received messages of support on its stance and is confident of strong affidavits should the matter proceed to full arbitration.

Members are again encouraged to express their opinions about this matter to the ISEA. This is a very significant matter of principle as well as procedure and it is important that the voice of the profession is heard.

New Members Always Welcome

The ISEA is always open to new members. DET staff who have been or are currently employed at Chief Education Officer level or above for any length of time, are entitled to join. Currently the ISEA has approximately 200 members drawn from SES, Senior Officer or CEO positions as well as some members who have held such positions but have now returned to schools.

The ISEA conducts a range of professional and social activities for members including workshops, professional dinners and study tours as described above. Together with access to financial, legal, and industrial advice and private health insurance these professional-/development opportunities make the ISEA an attractive organisation for all senior officers in the DET.

An important feature of the ISEA is the collegiality and networking opportunities it affords and the role it can play in providing considered advice to the senior administration of the DET. For instance, members' opinions on policy and procedural matters are regularly gathered through surveys and questionnaires. Through these means the opinions of the membership can be related to the Minister, the Director-General and other senior officers of the DET.

A membership and salary deduction form is attached. Membership can be by fortnightly salary deduction or on an annual basis by paying a one-off fee. Membership of the ISEA, of course, attracts a taxation deduction.