

President's Report

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Welcome to new members who have joined us as a result of attending the 2004 conference. We are particularly delighted to have so many new members from outside Australia (25% of those who attended the conference were from other parts of the world) and also new members from schools, government departments, adult and vocational learning environments, early childhood centres, research consulting agencies and, of course, universities. I trust AARE continues to be a forum in which you are able to make a contribution to education research as well as benefit from the contributions of others.

There is a lot more I could say about the composition of the membership, which I will save for future newsletters. For now it is worth noting that member numbers are currently at their highest in the 35 year history of the Association, with just over 1300 members. This alone has given the Executive cause for reflection on whether the ways in which we organise ourselves requires revision and even what it means for AARE in terms of its purposes and activities. These are themes I take up below and which the Executive is giving considerable thought and is informing its planning throughout 2005.

We have a new look Executive this year with several new faces and some old ones as well! A full listing is printed in this issue of the newsletter for your information. Please contact us and/or the AARE Office if we can help you with any AARE matter.

I am honoured to be President in 2005 and look forward to working with the Executive, SIG Coordinators and general members, on the challenges that currently face us. In my mind, there are at least three broad agendas that need to inform the work of the Association in 2005 and perhaps beyond 2005 as well.

These involve:

- 1) an engagement with the politics of education research in Australia; particularly this year with the quality research agenda being advanced by DEST but also with Quality research issues more broadly;
- 2) developing and implementing strategies to engage the membership in both the Association's (i) public agenda and in its (ii) operations; and
- 3) a more 'domestic' agenda focused on 'tidying up' some of the Association's practices, aimed at making them more efficient, effective, transparent and communicative.

These are big tasks, particularly for an Association that operates on the good will of volunteers. It may be that in the future, AARE will need to appoint a part-time Executive Officer. At the very least these tasks suggest the need to involve more members in managing AARE affairs.

In the rest of this Report I would like to expand on these challenges; to air them and invite your responses. Some of these matters I foreshadowed in the conference brochure inviting members to attend the 2005 Annual Conference. There I noted that the critical questions posed by the Committee to frame the 2005 Conference are also ones we need to ask of ourselves as an Association. Your thoughts will be invaluable as the Executive undertakes to develop a Strategic Plan for AARE during 2005.

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**President's Report
continued**

1. Quality Research

If ever there was an issue that the Association needed to address, it would have to be 'quality research'. This is where AARE needs to live up to its claim to be the premier association of education researchers in Australia and a major voice in the nation re research matters generally. Indeed, I think the Executive has a responsibility to the membership and to education more broadly to mount such a contribution. There would seem to be a window of opportunity (which will close sometime in mid to late 2005) for us to meaningfully contribute to this agenda. However, engaging with political agendas such as this means not just *responding* to issues raised in the media or by government but also, and more importantly, being *proactive*. We need to do the academic work we do well, informing public agendas with our research understandings.

Implied in these comments, and applied to the current context, is a distinction between Quality (big Q) research that is 'demonstrable and justifiable' and quality (small q) research narrowly concerned with the current 'politics of quality', with re/disciplining researchers. In my view, given our composition and resources, our best contributions are those that are targeted and purposeful (eg. on Quality (big Q) research) rather than those that simply respond to the multiple, varying and sometimes transient and sensationalist agendas of others (eg. quality (small q) research). It is not that the agendas of others should be off our radar screen. Rather, our responses to these others need to be informed by and part of our commitment to the long-term interests of Australian education research and, therefore, strategic in their execution. In 2005, then:

1.1 AARE has opportunity to contribute a response (in April/May) to the DEST position paper (due Feb/March) on quality research in which we can put AARE's position re this and Quality research issues more

broadly. Barbara Preston <barbara.preston@netspeed.com.au> is heading up the drafting of our position paper. She is keen to receive input from members by the end of April or earlier if possible. Please get involved in this important contribution to the debate.

If ever there was an issue that the Association needed to address, it would have to be 'quality research'

1.2 Our Cairns focus conference in mid-2005 on 'Quality in Education Research' (convened by Rob Gilbert) is also aimed at taking up the Quality research agenda, bringing together those within our membership and interested others in a forum where the big issues as well as more pragmatic matters can be addressed. Three keynote speakers will be presenting – Lyn Yates (Aus), John Furlong (UK) and Adrienne Alton-Lee (NZ) – and other presentations, symposia, panels and workshops have been organised as well, with a clear intent to produce material that can contribute to the on-going discussion. This will be a small conference (by comparison with our annual event) but it will be attended by a sizable group of key players. Those with responsibility for education research in their institutions will find the conference invaluable, both in terms of opportunities to contribute and ways to benefit. See AARE's website (www.aare.edu.au) for more details on the conference and facilities to register online.

1.3 An occasional Review of Australian Research in Education (RARE), to be published in the second half of 2005 (editors, Jill Blackmore, Jan Wright and Valerie Harwood), provides further opportunity to engage with this agenda in ways that enable

education researchers to consider their practices and how these impact on their work. The publication will be an edited collection of leading international authors in the field and will be launched at the 2005 Annual Conference in Parramatta.

1.4 AARE continues to develop and maintain relations with other associations and organizations where our interests overlap. For example, AARE recently joined the Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS), which is currently conducting a research project, commissioned by DEST, to identify new measures for the HASS sector. (See details in this issue on how members can contribute to this research.) Meetings with ACDE and ATEA have also been held and are planned, specifically to collaborate on advancing the Quality research agenda. Other national and international association connections are also possible and are being pursued.

What other avenues and/or structures do we currently have through which we could pursue a Quality research agenda? For example, we are developing a plethora of SIGs (16 at last count). How can these be involved in advancing the conversation? One SIG is running eWorkshops (using WebEx technology) on QR issues related to the interests of the SIG. What other SIG activities are possible / desirable?

2. Engaging and regenerating ourselves

I want to make two observations and raise associated questions, which I think point to our need to develop strategies that address these, rather than just drift along hoping it will all work out.

2.1 The last few years have seen the exiting of members from the Executive who have been around for a while. We are losing talent and institutional memory. Notwithstanding the talented people recently elected to the Executive, what are we doing to encourage talented people to continue to take their places in the

future? What can we do? What is the current leadership (in the Executive, in the SIGs, etc.) doing to replace itself? How are we preparing the Association for those who will come after us? Who are the next potential treasurers, secretaries, presidents, newsletter editors, journal editors, SIG coordinators, and so on? How can we be preparing them now? How might we employ a **'shadow cabinet' strategy** to ensure the ongoing smooth operation of the Association? How can we develop

a strategy of building leadership density?

I was heartened last year to see 8 people standing for the 4 general Executive member positions in 2005 but also recall that no one nominated for another specific position, which was later filled by appointment by the Executive. I am also reminded of the difficulties new Executive members (including those with designated positions) recently faced trying to work out what AARE is and how it operates, its purposes and intentions. Will the new Executive members in 2005 encounter this all over again? What can we do to help them and others? Should we be developing positions like treasurer-elect or assistant treasurer for example? Similarly, should we be placing a sunset clause on some positions as we do with the presidency (3 years of president-elect through to immediate past president) and the journal editorship (no more than two periods of office = 6 years)? How should we address similar issues of rotating members through our sub-committees (eg. the doctoral thesis award sub-committee) to avoid burn out but retain knowledge of procedures and processes?

2.2 The last couple of years have seen a dramatic rise in the number of SIGs and our general membership is also rising. To

what extent are they engaged with the Association's agenda(s)? Do they need to be? Do we want loose connections within AARE (between SIGs, members, Executive, etc) more like AERA or do we want a stronger commitment to and within the Association? How do we manage either of these? Are/is the Executive's agenda(s) connecting with the membership and SIGs? What is the role of SIGs in convening the annual conference? What encouragement are we giving / can we give SIGs to run seminars, workshops, and so on throughout the year? How are we helping them to find their place?

3. Domestic issues

At our recent Executive meeting (February 2005), I proposed (i) a re-visiting of roles; (ii) the establishment of some working groups; and (iii) some urgent outstanding decisions to be made. At the meeting I argued that:

3.1 It's important that every person on the Executive (including general Executive members) has a designated role with associated on-going tasks. These need to be explicit to the person in the role, to others on the Executive and to the broader membership. Some of these roles and tasks we already know and some are already recorded.

However, we need to revisit them to check that they are still serving our purposes and then spread knowledge of them widely. We also need to articulate those roles, tasks and procedures that have remained implicit. What roles do we need? Do we have them all covered? Do our members know what we are doing and why?

3.2 There are a couple of revision/decision tasks that require us to establish some working groups, to address:

- (i) the constitution;
- (ii) the rhythms of AARE, including its meetings and their specific purposes;
- (iii) the strategic plan;
- (iv) the budget;

- (v) our methods of communicating with members, including the newsletter, the website and broadcast emails; and
- (vi) how we canvass and generate interest in expected vacancies on the Executive?

I throw these ideas up for discussion and debate. Some are matters that have been with us for some time. Some we are working on and close to resolution, others less so. The list is not exhaustive and the above might well need to take a back seat to other more pertinent or pressing matters. The thrust of the above, however, is an invitation to use 2005 to take a good look at ourselves and what we are doing; to alter what needs alteration, to add what needs addition and to delete what needs to be deleted. The Executive's desire is to leave AARE in a better position than when we joined it, to ensure as far as possible that AARE has a positive future. To that end we are working on a Strategic Plan we hope to present to members during 2005. We welcome your input into these and other matters you think should be on our collective agenda.

Associate Professor Trevor Gale
President, Australian Association
for Research in Education
PS: Thanks to Peter (AARE
Newsletter Editor) and Libby
(AARE designer) for the new-look
AARE NEWS!



**See details
of Focus
Conference
following.**

ECER 2005

The next European Conference on Educational Research will be held at University College Dublin on 7-10 September 2005. The Postgraduate and New Researchers' Pre-Conference will take place on 5 & 6 September. Further details on ECER 2005 and the Call for Proposals will appear on our website
<http://www.eera.ac.uk>

CALL FOR RESPONSES TO DEST FUNDED PROJECT ON RESEARCH QUALITY AND IMPACT

AARE recently joined the Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS).

You may be aware that CHASS is currently conducting a research project, commissioned by DEST, to identify new measures for the HASS sector. The project has a reference group of 12 people, only one of whom is from the field of education.

The project is guided by the following question: Should research grants be given on the basis of papers and citations or are there better and fairer ways of measuring quality and impact of research in the humanities, arts and social sciences?

CHASS is looking for new ideas, new ways of measuring quality and impact, and would be interested in your views on the following five questions, **by the end of March**. This may be one of the few ways in which your voice and **the distinctive voice of education** can be heard on these matters. Please take the time to send your comments to Jonathan Powles <jonathan.powles@anu.edu.au>

1) Research outcomes in humanities, arts and social sciences take a wide variety of forms. In addition to books and scholarly articles, research may result in artistic works; film and multimedia works; policy reports for the public and private sector; opinion and analysis in the popular press and other media; and others.

Question 1: What are the implications of this diversity for any genuine assessment of the value of research in the sector?

2) Many measures already exist for assessing the quality of research, such as citation impact, and peer review such as is conducted in the British Research Assessment Exercise.

Question 2: What forms of assessment of quality are most appropriate for humanities, arts and social sciences research in Australia?

3) Assessing the "impact" of research in our sector is both more difficult and, arguably, more important than for research in the scientific disciplines. Beyond its impact in the academic world, humanities, arts and social sciences research may contribute to policy development; inform the public at large on issues of social and cultural concern; make scholarly, artistic and commercial contributions to the nation; and, through research-based education, shape the thinking of the next generation of Australians.

Question 3: How is the value of this impact best assessed?

Question 4: How important is it to evaluate this impact, as opposed to simply evaluating "quality" in purely academic or artistic terms?

4) Humanities, arts and social sciences research is publicly funded from a wide variety of sources. As well as university block grants, and contestable research funding through the ARC and other bodies, research may be commissioned by government departments or the private sector. It can be funded through national, state and local bodies, from arts grants by the Australia Council, to locally-funded community history initiatives. Both the funding and the research itself tends to be jointly managed between the public and private sectors. Research funded in these diverse ways has equally diverse goals - and therefore, different measures of success.

Question 5: How is this diversity best captured in any set of measures of quality and impact?

Responses to any or all of these questions are welcome, however lengthy or brief. **Closing date for comments is the end of March**. They should be sent to: jonathan.powles@anu.edu.au

Dr Jonathan Powles

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YOUR COMMENTS INVITED ON 'SOFT' EDUCATION RESEARCH

No doubt you have noticed recent comments in the media calling into question the veracity of education research and social research more generally. The Executive thought it might be useful to use these media claims as stimulus to encourage debate, an open sharing of perspectives and also get some interesting material into our newsletter. Using the distinction made in the President's Report, the focus here is on Quality (big Q) research that is 'demonstrable and justifiable' rather than quality (small q) research narrowly concerned with 'the politics of quality'.

Taking the general proposition being aired in the media and by some politicians, then, that education research is 'soft', we invite responses (up to 500 words) from your discipline area or SIG, arguing in the light of its research agenda and record.

Please send your responses (in MSWord) to Peter Jeffery <pjeff@aare.edu.au> by 31 March for collation and printing in the April issue of AARE News. Unfortunately, late submissions cannot be accepted.



See Focus details below.



AARE 2005 ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The 2005 AARE Conference Committee and the President and Executive of AARE invite you to attend the Association's Annual International Conference, to be held at the historic Parramatta Campus of the University of Western Sydney.

The emergence of an inclusive knowledge-producing society often troubles students, parents and teachers. Fair-minded policy-makers and democratically inspired politicians are equally worried and frustrated. Finding ways to nurture and harness the creative power and passions of all human beings baffles and bothers all such responsible education policy actors, leaders and researchers.

Together we are struggling to put education and human creativity to work in making the inter-generational transition to a new global ordering of so many things.

Coming together at this Conference provides opportunities for us to ask four interrelated questions. These concern the work of education in fostering the creativity present in

students, whether they be orphans, or have intellectual disabilities or were once the beneficiaries of Whitlamesque interventions in education:

1. Where are we going in framing the development of an inclusive knowledge-producing society? What on Earth is happening now for which human beings have to use our creativity?
2. Who is gaining and who is losing under current educational changes, and by which mechanisms? Who benefits and who is disadvantaged by the driving forces that are reshaping the education of the public?
3. How desirable are these developments? If education is concerned to nurture and harness the creative power and passions of all human beings, is this desirable? What tradition of values, what moral heritage might we bring forward to inform and form our strategic thinking and acting on the connections between education and the creativity now required of all human beings?
4. What, with/in prevailing constraints, might educational researchers, leaders and policy actors possibly do? By way of critical self-reflection, how do our own thoughts and actions constraint these possibilities? What range of possibilities are suggested by the rich array of evidence produced by quality educational research?

The 2005 AARE Conference site is steeped in history, at various times having been the colony's first home for orphaned children, later an institution for people with intellectual disabilities, and now

plays host to the Whitlam Institute. Do you remember November 11, 1975? For many that too is now history.

What are the qualities of a generative educational research that brings forward the traditions that history has bequeathed us?

Michael Singh
AARE 2005 Conference
Convener

Post-graduate and Early Career Researcher News

Election of Postgraduate Representatives

The AGM of the PG & ECR Special Interest Group (SIG) saw the election of our new representative to the Executive Committee Kelli McGraw. Sue Smith has continued as the other postgraduate representative for this year in the second of a two year term. Both postgraduate representatives will receive funding to attend all Executive meetings this year, the first of which was held in Melbourne over two days in February.

August Workshop

Following the success of last years Web-Ex workshop, we have in mind a possible workshop for 2005 linking up with existing innovative discussions of research issues taking place around Australia. One possibility suggested by a fellow postgraduate member is the issue of ***intellectual property*** in educational research. The member noted that this issue is not explicitly identified in Education as other faculties and is an area of concern. If you have any other ideas or issues you would like to see addressed in this years workshop, please contact either Sue or Kelli on the email addresses below.

Sydney Conference

The **Post-graduate and Early Career Researcher pre-conference workshops** have been established as a way of supporting PG & ECR members research, as well as providing a space for specific issues relating to our research and work practice to be discussed. Last years pre-conference workshop on Networking was well attended, extremely relevant and thoughtful (as well as social!), and the success of the symposium held during the conference provided a great framework for us to build on this year.

A theme is currently being developed for this years pre-conference workshop and our key themes to-date include a seminar or workshop on *integrating research into everyday life* and possibly also a *writing workshop*. Again, we welcome any suggestion from YOU about what issues/topics you would like to see covered.

ALL Postgraduate and Early Career Researchers going to the conference should keep an eye out for:

- Sunday Pre-conference Workshops
- Research Symposium during the conference
- Mentoring program (available when you register for the conference to facilitate post-graduate student and early career researcher networking by connecting you with a mentor)
- The PG & ECR SIG AGM
- 'Not The Conference Dinner' – cheap, delicious, friendly and FUN!

This AARE website carries a call for **award nominations** – one of which assists students with travel to the conference based on the merit of their work, and another which recognises outstanding work by ECRs. **We encourage you to consider applying!** To see if you're eligible, you can read

all about the awards in this edition of the News, or read more at www.aare.edu.au.

Please don't hesitate to email either Sue or Kelli with any questions, suggestions, or to join the PG & ECR SIG
suesmith2122@yahoo.com.au
k.mcgraw@edfac.usyd.edu.au

NEW COORDINATOR OF SIGs

I have enjoyed and been highly stimulated by my experiences since being elected to the executive. Was an eye-opener to see the diversity of matters handled by the executive and the importance of many of these for Australian education. Of particular importance is the issue of how AARE provides a voice for educational researchers in a national research environment largely driven by non-educational interests.

One of my duties on the executive is coordination of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs). Between conferences, the SIGs and their members have a crucial role in representing AARE and pursuing the objectives of AARE. While the SIGs have a formal place in AARE, their activities are in many ways the life-blood of AARE. For example, SIGs provide research training for experienced and early career researchers, engage in collaborative research projects, respond to national agendas, and foster collegiality between members. Arguably, these activities are best done at the SIG level and the vitality of AARE is highly dependent on the SIGs being active both at conference and perhaps more importantly, between conferences.

Rob Cavanagh
Curtin University of Technology
R.Cavanagh@curtin.edu.au



Don't miss it.

Educational Leadership & Management SIG

Our SIG held its first SIG symposium at the 2004 conference in Melbourne. The SIG is keen to try to coordinate/develop some further activities this year, including a bigger and better Symposium in Parramatta. So could all existing SIG members please ensure their contact details are up-to-date – please confirm and forward these to Neil Cranston at n.cranston@uq.edu.au. Also, any new members are most welcome – please make contact with Neil at the email address above.

See call for AARE academic awards 2005 on AARE website



AARE is a member of the National Education Forum (NEF)

The NEF was established in 1992 and currently has more than thirty members – teacher unions and other professional associations (including all the major national subject associations), parent organisations, and organisations whose members are (primarily) from university faculties of education such as the Australian Council of Deans of Education, the Australian Teacher Education Association and AARE. Member organisations are listed on the NEF website, with links to the organisations' own websites.

The NEF is primarily a forum for representatives of member organisations. There is a full day meeting three times a year, each of which usually includes presentations on and discussions about several major issues of significance to teacher professionalism – to individual teachers, teacher educators, researchers and to the member associations themselves. The National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership

<http://www.niqtsl.edu.au/> is currently high on the agenda. Other matters have included professional standards for teaching, political parties' education policies, and major initiatives of DEST (schools) and state level authorities and organisations. NEF position statements, minutes of NEF meetings and other materials are on the NEF website www.nef.edu.au.

The NEF provides AARE with a link to a wide range of education organisations and an opportunity to participate in a stimulating forum.

Barbara Preston
AARE Executive member and
NEF representative

RECENT DOCTORAL THESES IN EDUCATION

This is the column in AARE News dedicated to publishing news on recent doctoral theses in education.

The PDF and the thesis - Universities are now often requiring completing research students to lodge both the traditional bound copy of the thesis – and an electronic version. So the thesis is very much a part of the vast amount of research literature available electronically. It is now possible to quickly locate a thesis, then browse or search it in portable document format (pdf).

The pdf thesis can be an excellent source of information – and is an important resource for research students.

With all this technology, it is also interesting to ponder some questions, such as what skills may be needed for more

elaborate electronic production (for both students and supervisors)? What will a 'good pdf thesis' look like? And, will it become something that examiners will require/expect/need? These questions became far less pressing when I desperately tried to get hold of a thesis from overseas that wasn't available electronically. I am still awaiting the arrival. But I think that, after all this waiting, when I open the wrapper, it will be a very good read.

Education Research Theses Collection available from the Cunningham Library, Australian Council of Educational Research. At: <http://cunningham.acer.edu.au/dbt-w-wpd/sample/theses.htm>. Digital theses can also be accessed via the Australian Digital Thesis Program, coordinated through the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL). <http://adt.caul.edu.au/>

This issue of Recent Doctoral Theses in Education includes two abstracts. The first is an abstract submitted to me by Elizabeth Hartnell-Young, for her PhD thesis titled "Towards Knowledge Building: Reflecting on teachers' roles and professional learning in communities of practice," The University of Melbourne. The second is by Michael Furtado for his PhD thesis titled "Funding Australian Catholic Schools in New Times: Policy Contexts, Policy Participants and Theoretical Perspectives," the University of Queensland.

Please consider sending me abstracts of recent doctoral theses! Abstracts of completed doctoral theses can be sent to me at: vharwood@uow.edu.au

Guidelines for your submission can be found in AARE News Issue 42 (available on AARE's website).

Valerie Harwood
Executive Member

Dr Elizabeth Hartnell-Young (PhD)

"Towards Knowledge Building: Reflecting on teachers' roles and professional learning in communities of practice"
PhD Conferred August 2004
Department of Education Policy and Management, The University of Melbourne
Supervisor: Professor Peter Cuttance

The purpose of this study was to identify the forms of teachers' professional practice that enhance knowledge building, in order to inform teacher development policy and pre-service education. Knowledge building is based on a constructivist approach to learning and teaching, and this, with the spread of computers, is said to have changed the role of the teacher in the classroom: from the expert dispensing knowledge to the facilitator of learning.

Using an ethnographic approach based on observation and reflective conversation, the study identified current and emerging roles of teachers using computers with students. Three substantive roles were identified: designing the learning environment, managing people and resources and mediating student learning. A fourth role, improving practice, captures the workplace learning that is recognised by all teachers in this study. Teachers demonstrated these interdependent roles to varying extents, individually and, in some cases, collaboratively. Many had moved past facilitation to knowledge building, and there were hints of specialisation that could lead to a future separation of roles.

By recording single instances of emerging practices as well as the more frequent occurrences, the findings indicated a range of characteristics pertaining to each role, presented as a framework, which can inform teacher education and lifelong learning. In turn, these were considered in light of Wenger's (1998) theory of communities of practice, in terms of individual classrooms and of

schools as constellations of communities. Knowledge-building teachers were members of deep and strong local communities whose task was co-constructing knowledge. They recognised that technology could be used for consumption, (re)production and creation purposes, and they used open frameworks, which allowed students to explore and construct knowledge. They also acted as brokers, crossing boundaries to communicate with other communities. Technology was a medium for this communication, and a means of managing and storing knowledge objects.

This study was supported by ARC Linkage Grant No C77906981

**Dr Michael Furtado (PhD),
Funding Australian Catholic
Schools in New Times: Policy
Contexts, Policy Participants
and Theoretical Perspectives.
University of Queensland.**

The thesis explores the replacement of discourses of the public good in New Times, emphasising a needs-based, compensatory/redistributive policy rationale, by an alternative based on discourses of entitlement. It then recounts the role of the substantial Catholic system in Australia in making such a replacement possible in terms of the policy, now transcendent, favouring the increased Commonwealth funding of non-government schools.

In doing this it explores the contradictions and tensions inherent in such a position in terms of the strategies employed by Church authorities to initially quarantine their schools from the equilibrating effects of such a policy but inevitably resulting in their recent capitulation to full membership of the independent school funding policy arrangement, regardless of its potentially negative policy effects on their schools.

The thesis demonstrates the failure of such a policy to safeguard the interests of those aspects of Catholic schooling committed to and reliant upon compensatory educational

rationales, especially in terms of funding in return for educating the marginalised, and the pressures that such an oversight place on low SES diocesan systems.

The thesis reasons that there are better alternatives in New Times to save both the deregulatory principle as well as the notion of education as serving a common Australian good rather than the positional sectional interests of some Australians over others.

It does this by proposing that Catholic and similar systemic universal-purpose type schools be brought within the aegis of an expanded and deregulated but choice-driven and fully-funded public education system, as in New Zealand, all of the British Isles educational jurisdictions, some of the Canadian provinces and large parts of Western Europe, all of them OECD countries with substantial high quality religious-character preserving school systems in the public sector.



**Quality
in
PhD
theses
--- at
Cairns.**

**See Coming Events on
AARE website**

**research directors
and deans will
attend.**

**The conference for
quality people!**

**"...reliable,
transparent and
efficient
assessments of
research."**

Introduction to the AMSIG seminar program

The AMSIG is running a free series of seminars accessible from anywhere in Australia and the rest of the world via WebEx real time interactive meeting system. See www.webex.com

The seminars will be conducted for one hour each on-line on the third Thursday of each month from April 21st to September

A number of members of AARE in Australia or other countries will conduct participants through a consideration of issues and provide information and demonstrations of scientific techniques which educational researchers can and should employ in their professional work.

These seminars will feature experts in the field speaking and teaching from Australia and overseas as appropriate. The technology used for the seminars will permit interactive work including exercises to be completed between sessions.

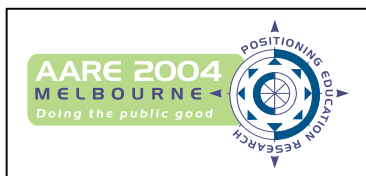
Why are we having these seminars?

There is considerable evidence of misunderstanding of quantitative issues. Educational researchers must be aware of quantitative strategies (available for at least the last 40 years). There are problems with research design, in measuring change and problems with assessments used.

**Free enrolment form on
AARE website.** GOTO AARE home page, select <Coming Events> and follow the links

You will need a broadband [for preference] internet connection and a phone to call a 1800 number Visual is by internet and audio is by phone.

**Full details of the whole
seminar series are available on
AARE website www.aare.edu.au**



2004 Conference Report

Last year's annual conference, held 28 November to 2 December 2004, was AARE's largest ever, with approximately 1200 registrations and 1000 papers presented over four days. Twenty-five percent of those who attended were from outside Australia and many attendees were researchers from outside university contexts: teacher-researchers, bureaucrats, research consultants and so on.

The conference theme, 'Doing the public good', was well prosecuted by the three keynote speakers (Sally Power, Anthony Petrosky, Linda Burney) and by the Radford Lecturer (Richard Teese), each advancing the conference agenda and provoking considerable debate. Several individual papers, symposia, panels and forums also took up the theme, along with exploration of other matters of education research, many of exceptional quality.

The conference program also provided for a number of special events, such as the President's Reception, the Gala Book Event (with two books launched and many others featured, all by AARE members), Teachers Day, and the Public Forum that concluded the conference. The presence of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) was also evident in robust strands and well attended meetings.

Media coverage of the conference was the largest in the history of the Association, with several feature articles appearing in national newspapers and AARE members interviewed on radio stations around the country. Sponsorship of the conference was similarly the highest on record, including in-cash and in-kind support, contributing to the success of the conference.

As with most conferences, there were some unforeseen difficulties. Thank you to most who responded with grace and bore with us as we worked our way through these. We are grateful too to those who identified these issues on the evaluation forms along with recognition of the conference highlights. Information from these forms and other reports have been passed on to those organizing the Parramatta conference in 2005 and the Adelaide conference in 2006.

There are several possible observations with significance for AARE's future that could be made about the conference. Here are just three on which to reflect:

1. The annual conference continues to be one of the most significant activities of the Association. Indeed, for many, the conference *is* AARE. ("I'll see you at AARE" is a common expression among members.)
2. The conference continues to be a landmark event on the education research calendar within Australia and its universities, and increasingly beyond both.
3. With increased quantity, issues of quality are also appearing with respect to the research presented. These are matters that also resonate with the current Quality Research agenda.

What do these (and other observations) say about the health of AARE and its future? What things do we need to adjust in response to contemporary times within and outside educational institutions and given a changing, growing membership?

Thanks to the Conference Committee for its considerable efforts in organising the conference. In many ways it is a rewarding experience but it often comes at a cost, particularly of time. All members of the

Committee were volunteers, without remuneration or special privileges, and each undertook their tasks as add-ons to the regular work within their institutions. We do well to remember that AARE depends on contributions such as these.

Finally, I am sure I speak for the entire 2004 Committee in wishing the 2005 Committee well for the coming conference. We look forward to being there, carefree!

Trevor Gale
Convenor, 2004 AARE Annual Conference

PRESENTATIONS PUBLISHING, PDF AND PARRAMATTA

The WWW, the CD and the server computer at Parramatta that will make your presentation appear on the screen can't have files of the same name on it.

Every paper must have a unique code/file name.

At Melbourne 2004 we had 200 files handed in called AARE.ppt or AARE.doc. Each of these would over-write each other had we tried to put them into the same folder on the computer.

To illustrate the problem here's a true story.

I was in the technicians' room while one of them was loading files ready for the next three presenters in room G111.

"Oh! leave it alone please," cried the techno to his computer. "What's happening?" I asked. He replied, "I'm loading the file using the papercode and the speaker is in the room ahead of time and he's changing it back to his name each time".

This then went on several times back and forth - techno calling the file its unique name and speaker busily changing it back again.

"Just a minute, I'll run round to the room and ask him to leave

it alone," said the techo. "I've been doing that all morning" he said as he disappeared up the corridor".

Meanwhile at the Registration Desk a presenter said to me --

"These computers at Melbourne are crazy. They keep losing my file and I have to keep typing it in again!"

Now, when we come to collating all the files of the papers [as opposed to the "presentations"] we find that people have called their papers a rich variety of idiosyncratic or boringly unimaginative repetitive file names. Like aare.doc !!

We asked people to save their file as PDF. We thought that was not too much to ask. [We are in good company -- see the item in this NEWS about some universities requiring that theses be published in PDF].

However, here we are in March 2005 and the papers presented at Melbourne are still not finally collected and arranged for publishing on the CD mainly because people had so much trouble making PDF files with the correct name.

We asked people to name their file "papercode.pdf" and send it to us. We received at least 12 papers called just that -- PAPERCODE.pdf.pdf rather than something like RON04111.pdf

Let us all learn from this experience. In future --

please make the file name of your presentation the papercode [whatever it is].ppt

Your paper's file name is - papercode [whatever it is].pdf and nothing else.

Peter Jeffery
--- trying to collect and publish your work for you.

AARE WEBSITE REPORT

How big is AARE website?

- There are 256,741 different major words on the website
- These are contained in 4,455 documents,
- amounting to 284,850 kbytes [285 mbytes][

How well used is AARE website?

- AARE website has received 5.5 million hits since March 2004
- The site averages 500,000 hits per month
- It is possible to trace usages down to individual research papers
- The full range of papers back to 1989 are being used
- AARE Office supports researchers seeking bibliographic details with the help of the ACER archive of all hard copy papers and the Australian Education Index
- The site also permits basic information about the Association to be accessed by members and non-members

How do people come to AARE website?

The site stats show --

1. direct hits [from people typing the URL]
2. aare.edu.au - index [front / home page entry]
3. google
4. google
5. yahoo
6. ht/search [AARE site search facility]

Where from?

- Australia 31%
- US Commercial 21%
- Unresolved 18%
- Network? 13%
- United Kingdom 2%
- US Educational 2%

- New Zealand 1.5%
- Canada 1.1%
- Singapore 1%

AARE has recently introduced, after a period of 6 months of design work and testing -- **webforms** for the collection of information on conference papers and symposia proposals. These are being used now for AARE 2005 Focus Conference and AARE 2005 Conference - Parramatta.

The website is performing its primary function of providing members with access to functions and information they need to operate within the AARE context.

The website also allows members of the wider research community to access AARE members' work.

Peter Jeffery
Hon. AARE Website Manager



Quality in Educational Research: Directions in policy and practice

Current policy developments in research management and funding have powerful implications for directions in educational research in Australia. Among these developments is the Australian Government plan to develop Research Quality and Accessibility Frameworks for Publicly Funded Research.

Attend AARE Focus Conference. See over and insert leaflet.

AMSIG REPORT

The Assessment and Measurement SIG proved a productive strand at AARE in Melbourne with a wide range of interesting and valuable papers being presented. A note of thanks is due to the AARE 2004 organizers and to Trevor Bond as Program Chair for the careful grouping of papers around similar themes that helped to ensure a degree of continuity for participants attending the strand. At the AGM a new committee was elected including Trevor Bond (JCU, Chair), Magdalena Mok (HKIEd, Program Director) and Debra Panizzon (UNE, Secretary). On behalf of the AMSIG members we thank John Izard, Rosemary Callingham for all their efforts, particularly during the difficult period of establishing the group within the AARE framework. An important outcome will be a series of AMSIG webex workshops for 2005 (more provided about these later). Finally, a reminder to AMSIG members for proposals to two important mid-year Conferences: the AARE Cairns focus conference and PROMS KL 2005. Best wishes to AMSIG members presenting in Montreal. AARE who wish to keep in touch with AMSIG should email the Secretary.

Wishing you a productive and safe year.

Debra Panizzon
AMSIG Secretary
dpanizzo@pobox.une.edu.au

AARE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The new Executive Committee for 2005 held its first meeting for the year on 23 and 24 February, in Melbourne. We welcomed new members Michael Singh (President-Elect, and convenor of the 2005 conference), Sue Dockett and Rob Cavanagh (general members), and Kelli McGraw (postgraduate student representative). The full list of current Executive members is available on AARE website.

The two-day meeting included a half-day facilitated session designed to help the committee develop a comprehensive Business Plan for the organization. The outcomes of this session will be worked on further by members of the Executive in the next few months, with the aim of finalising a Plan at the mid-year meeting. In conjunction with this, the committee is reviewing the Association's Constitution to ensure it reflects current thinking. Other items on the agenda for the February meeting were: relationships with other organisations on the domestic and international scenes (eg NIQTSL, NEF, and educational research associations overseas), evaluations of the 2004 conference and planning for the 2005 conference, reports from the President, the Treasurer, and other office bearers, evaluating the move to on-line publication of the AER, planning for a new issue of RARE due out at the end of this year, updating of the website, SIG developments, issues to do with postgraduate students and early career researchers, and 2005 nominations for AARE's awards.

The Executive plans to meet by Webex (telephone with computer visuals) in May and October, and to hold two further face-to-face meetings, one mid-year and one in November immediately before the annual conference.

Debra Cunningham
Hon. Secretary.

PAPERS COLLECTION 2005 FROM 2004 CONFERENCE

No fewer than five hundred full text papers have been added to the AARE website from the papers presented at AARE 2004 Conference - Melbourne. Even more members handed their hard copies of papers into the Association. These have been presented to ACER Cunningham Library, see below.

"Cunningham Library, ACER would like to thank AARE, and in particular Peter Jeffery, for the recent safe delivery of the hardcopy papers presented at the 2004 AARE conference.

As usual, these papers will be individually indexed in the Australian Education Index (AEI) over the next few months. AARE papers are a key component of the Australian educational research noted in the AEI.

To date over 5400 AARE papers have now been noted in the AEI, with over 3800 of these linking directly to the full text of the paper on the AARE website, making the work of AARE presenters easily accessible to those undertaking research on Australian education.

The AEI database is now more widely distributed than ever and available through extra database vendors, such as DIALOG DATASTAR, Informit (as A+Education), Transmission Books & Microinfo (Taiwan).

The print papers are held in the Cunningham Library, ACER where they are available to library users and available on inter-library loan should hard copy need to be consulted.

Cunningham Library, ACER looks forward to continuing this partnership with AARE for future conferences.

Stuart Hughes
Cunningham Library Australian
Council for Educational Research



See next page...



QUALITY researchers debating QUALITY in research.

**All universities
concerned with
QUALITY will be there.**

**High level debate
on new
QUALITY requirements.**

There are many more abstracts for the Focus Conference than are shown on the “Focus flyer” sent with this AARE NEWS. Carefully chosen symposia will be conducted at the Focus Conference. Plenty of time will be left for discussion. The Convenor Rob Gilbert will have a difficult task creating the Program.

The Focus Conference starts with the President’s Reception on Sunday 3rd July. All delegates should try to arrive in time for Sunday afternoon.

**Call for Nominations for the
Early Career Researcher Award 2005
and the Betty Watts Award 2005**

Closing date: October 30

To nominate for the Early Career Researcher Award or the Betty Watts Award, please send a hard copy of your paper with a covering letter to the AARE Office at PO Box 71 Coldstream 3770 Victoria. Also send an MSWord disk/digital copy attached to an email to aare@aare.edu.au clearly identified **AARE AWARDS**.

Full details at www.aare.edu.au

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All enquiries to pjeff@aare.edu.au