In the late 1980s a new concept entered the educational lexicon. 'Award restructuring' was presented in ringing terms. Laurie Carmichael, the general secretary of the Metal Workers Union stalked the country, telling everyone that award restructuring marked a new era in the productive and social life of Australia. The promise of the developments sparked the imagination. At an education conference at Sydney University in 1987, Chris Lloyd, then a Metal Workers Union research officer, commented on the educational implications of award...
restructuring. Just imagine, he said, what the effects in education would be if paid training leave was established in industrial awards and generalised across the workforce. If all employees underwent further education and training. If all workers became students.

Clearly, if paid training leave had become an award condition, it would have had significant implications for the provision of education and training. But the promise of policy reform which is lived in the imagination is not always realised in the practical processes of policy formulation and implementation.

Between 1989 and 1991 negotiations around teacher award restructuring were at their height. The outcome was a new classification for teachers, the Advanced Skills Teacher, an improved salary scale benchmarked to other occupations with some pay increases, and improved professional development.

By 1993 the bubble appeared to have burst. Award restructuring had disappeared from public view. The concept of award restructuring seemed to lose its meaning and drop out of the educational vocabulary. In this context, talk about award restructuring seemed faintly anachronistic, as if it referred to a bygone age.

The question that begs to be asked is, what were the effects of award restructuring? What was its significance?

Looking back now, from the mid 1990s, I believe that we are in a position to begin to tentatively assess the impact of award restructuring. Furthermore, I would argue that it is imperative that we do so. We desperately need to reassess the implications of award restructuring as an era in ongoing processes of educational and social change so that we can better understand current developments in education and position ourselves, more strategically, in the practical politics of education reform.

This paper takes up this agenda. It begins by presenting an overview of award restructuring in Australia and the way award restructuring played out in relation to school teachers. In the second section of the paper I consider the impact of award restructuring in education and begin to tease out the broader implications of the award restructuring era in Australian education reform.

Award restructuring: An industrial relations development
In a simple sense, award restructuring is a particular late 1980s product of the Australian system for conciliating and arbitrating industrial disputes. As Niland notes, this industrial relations system which was established at the turn of the century is quite distinctive. It has encouraged one wit to observe:
... that if Australia's zoology could produce creatures as unusual as the duckbill platypus and the kangaroo, it is only to be expected that our sociology would foster something as exotic as the conciliation and arbitration system.
(Niland, 1992: preface)

The broad framework for the Australian industrial relations system was established after the great strikes of the 1890s and laid down in the constitution. The federal government of the time, and four state governments, passed legislation to establish statutory industrial tribunals charged with the responsibility for mediating the relationships between employers and employees by way of compulsory adjudication of industrial disputes. According to John Niland, an advocate of more decentralised industrial relations, these origins have

... increased the likelihood that the system would take on particular features: comparative wage justice, wage indexation, the uniform distribution of productivity and, perhaps most significantly, a strong sense of duty toward the public interest and a greater concern for whether productivity was distributed equitably and uniformly than with the processes of efficiency that might enhance productivity in the first instance.
(Niland, 1992b: 28-29)

As this characterisation suggests, the old system of industrial relations was premised upon the recognition of conflict between capital and labour. It sought to extend the common law basis of employment, that is the individual employment contract, through judge-made law which recognised and drew out the rights and duties of the industrial parties, and redressed the bias inherent in individual employment contracts which tended to advantage employers (Plowman, 1992: 39). It was, as the first President of the Industrial Arbitration Court, Justice Higgins, stated, 'a new province of law and order'.

Wage fixing was originally based upon a basic wage. This was defined, in 1907, in terms of the 'normal needs of the average employee regarded as a human being in a civilised community' and assumed that the employee had a wife and three children (Greenwood, 1974). Since then the concept of the basic wage has been overturned but wages have been indexed, in different ways, to the cost of living. In this respect there has been a concern with equity, although as women workers have argued for decades, equity has not extended to equal pay for women or equal opportunity at work (Walby, 1990; Probert, 1992).

This system of industrial relations was imposed upon employers who contested its imposition rather than shaping its character. It
encouraged a high level of unionisation and extensive award coverage but, because of its centralised character, unions developed only weak organisation at a workplace level (Lansbury and Niland, 1992). Similarly, employers focused upon the centralised system, developing their political lobbying skills and gaining access to regulatory institutions rather than developing good management practices at the enterprise level (Plowman, 1992). Employers have continued to contest the centralised industrial relations system since its inception, particularly in hard economic times when they have argued for wage-fixing to be based upon industry's capacity to pay rather than on the basis of employee need.

Castles (1987) has argued that this development of a centralised system of conciliation and arbitration was one of four major planks in a 'domestic protection' public policy framework which has structured social life in Australia for much of the twentieth century. This public policy strategy aimed to protect Australia from external pressures. Its core elements were laid down, partly, in the divisions of powers in the 1901 constitution which allocated responsibility for defence, immigration and customs and excise to the federal level of government. It was further consolidated through government activity in the early years of the century with the expansion of tariff protection and the system of conciliation and arbitration. There was 'protection-all-round' because tariffs created sheltered industries and enabled a high wage standard to be institutionalised in those key industries which was then generalised, through policies of comparative wage justice, across the workforce. A 'soft bargaining environment' developed in which employers in protected industries could avoid industrial disputes by acceding to workers' pay claims and then seek recompense by arguing for increased protection (Plowman, 1992). Plowman argues that this protective policy framework acted as a disincentive to the development of industry attuned to production efficiency and encouraged capital under-investment (Plowman, 1992). Or, as Curtain suggests, it created a policy regime that recognised the public interest and was concerned about equity, at least for wage earners. It led, as Castles (1987) has argued, to the formation of a 'wage-earners welfare state' which was associated with a labourist ideology, taking the male employee in the heavy manufacturing industry as the social norm for the organisation and allocation of social welfare.

From the 1960s to the 1980s the strategy of domestic protection began to unravel, under the impact of global economic and political developments. Domestic protection it was argued was an inappropriate public policy strategy and there were moves to reduce tariff protection and open up Australian industry to the chilly winds of international competition. This erosion of protection has accelerated in the 1980s and has had significant ramifications in the industrial relations system.
In the 1980s the old centralised system of industrial relations underwent major and rapid transformation toward a more decentralised pattern of collective bargaining. This trend is evident in many industrialised countries but, as Curtain (1992: 1) observes, what makes the Australian reforms distinctive is, firstly, the emphasis on workplace bargaining within a centralised wage-fixing framework and, secondly, the cutting-edge role played by the trade unions in these reforms. What has emerged is a system of industrial relations which has been characterised as 'managed decentralism' (Lansbury and Niland, 1992), although in the 1990s it is being pressed further toward more decentralised enterprise bargaining (Easson and Shaw, 1990; Niland, 1992b). Out of these developments, in the mid 1980s, came 'award restructuring'.

Already, by the 1980s, the centralised system of industrial relations was coming under pressure as the social organisation of the long post-World War 2 boom unravelled. The end of full employment, the oil shocks, and stagflation, that curious combination of increasing unemployment and inflation, all indicated the end of what has been termed the keynesian consensus based upon demand management (Freeland, 1986). After the constitutional coup against the federal Labor government of Gough Whitlam, a national country party coalition government, under Malcolm Fraser, was returned to office. It was committed to monetarism and the strategy of 'fighting inflation first'. This meant that unemployment and the strategy of 'fighting inflation first'.

The Hawke Labor government which took office in 1983 faced a complex situation. On the one hand the traditional keynesian approaches to public policy appeared to offer little purchase on the problems facing Australia which had their origins, substantially, in the processes of global economic, social and political restructuring. On the other hand, the monetarist strategies of Fraser, and their more elaborated forms in Thatcher's Britain and Reagan's America, had little appeal because the major burden of restructuring was placed upon the shoulders of working people. Yet keyensianism had been discredited and the emerging orthodoxy was informed by the laissez-faire, free market, assumptions of neo-classical economics. The prevailing beliefs, increasingly shared by both major political parties, assumed that:

* the Australian economy had been performing badly over a long period in comparison to other countries;

* levels of taxation were too high and a major disincentive to
productivity;

*public expenditure was too high and was militating against private
economic activity, especially in the productive and export-oriented
sectors;

*the public sector was inefficient because it is not subject to
competition and the discipline of the market.
(Burke, 1991: 95)

There is good evidence which contradicts these assumptions (Burke,
1991). However, by the 1980s this emerging economic rationalist
orthodoxy had become an almost bipartisan approach for framing policy
development. Differences remained between the Labor and Liberal
Parties in terms of the priority given to poverty relief, equity and,
in industrial relations, in the extent to which deregulation was
pursued.

Against this backdrop of global and national instability, and emerging
economic orthodoxy, the labour movement, through both the Labor Party
and the unions, debated a public policy framework which would move
beyond domestic protection but not endorse the conservative, monetarist
strategies of Fraser, Thatcher and Reagan. The outcome was a
negotiated Prices and Incomes Accord. The Labor Party committed itself
to use fiscal and monetary policy to stimulate employment, while the
unions agreed to restrain wages so that government policies would not
be inflationary. As Ewer, Hampson, Lloyd, Rainford, Rix and Smith
(1991) noted, the Accord provided:

... a curious blend of labourism and more progressive possibilities, as
if with a few cosmetics, wage earners security could be resuscitated
for one last waltz. Arbitrated wage indexation and the maintenance of
tariff protection for the 'foreseeable future' were nominated in the
original Accord. To these tenets of labourism were added various and
worthy social security initiatives, but these were not integrated into
a commitment to a universal welfare system.
(Ewer et al, 1991: 16)

When the Labor government was returned to office in 1983, the Accord
became a central plank in government policy. At a National Economic
Summit Conference shortly after the election, government, employers,
unions and other community groups affirmed their support for a
centralised wage fixing system, something which had been opposed by the
previous Fraser government. Following this articulation of support and
a national wage claim submitted by the ACTU, the Industrial Commission
formulated national wage guidelines which reaffirmed that wage
determinations should be indexed against the Consumer Price Index. But
rapidly these guidelines came under pressure. By 1985 the Government
had negotiated a variation to the Accord which weakened wage indexation by discounting wage increases against the CPI and converting productivity based wage claims into a claim for improved occupational superannuation. The effect was to link wage outcomes to productivity increases and encourage more decentralised bargaining at an industry and company level (Curtain, 1992: 3). It also marked the Labor Government's abandonment of full wage indexation and a major threat to the Accord.

The ACTU responded by seeking a basis for a new Accord. Recognising the severity of Australia's balance of payments crisis and vulnerability to the international economy, a mission was sent overseas to examine the solutions that other small, vulnerable economies had developed to deal with the pressures of a globalised economy and political restructuring. The mission's report, Australia Reconstructed (ACTU/TDC, 1987) noted that:

While there is broad agreement as to the nature and extent of our balance of payments problems, there is considerable debate in Australia about the best way to solve them. The experience of other countries shows that there is a range of policy responses that could be adopted to tackle balance of payments constraints and their underlying causes. Some of these have met with success, others have failed .... the ACTU was concerned to examine those countries which had overcome balance of payments constraints in ways which produced low unemployment, low inflation and economic growth which is more equitably distributed. (ACTU/TDC, 1987: xi, emphasis included)

The report of the ACTU/TDC mission made a number of proposals for macroeconomic and microeconomic reform. It advocated a corporatist, consensus based approach to managing Australia's economic crisis by negotiating and actively pursuing a set of national economic and social objectives, including a commitment to full employment. It proposed that these objectives should be achieved by maximising economic growth and development through innovative tripartite management and the removal of impediments to change. Such consensual management would depend upon creating a stable economic context through a prices and incomes accord, strategically guided trade and industry policies, measures to encourage productive investment and industry restructuring programs. Two areas of discussion are particularly pertinent to the consideration of teachers' work and award restructuring being addressed in this book. The first related to labour market policies, the second to wages policy.

Firstly, and in line with its second term of reference, the mission reconsidered the 'implications of technology, work organisations, education and productivity for international competitiveness' (ACTU/TDC 1987: xi). The mission argued that industry restructuring and a
commitment to full employment would be furthered by pursuing active labour market policies which recognised the core significance of skill formation. Building on the Swedish experience, the report notes that active labour market programs tackle unemployment not simply by providing passive cash support to the unemployed, but by actively promoting skill formation, effective job placement and reduced labour market segmentation. The aim of such policies is to balance the supply and demand of labour across industries, locations and occupation in the context of rapid cyclical and structural change (ACTU/TDC, 1987: 107). As the report notes,

The most striking aspect of active labour market policies is the emphasis placed on skill formation, skill enhancement, skill flexibility and overall training.

(ACTU/TDC, 1987: 107)

This press for skill formation has been a significant force in the politics of education since the late 1980s up to the present in 1994. Its most striking effects has been in stimulating activity in the vocational education and training sector and raising a range of complex cross-sectoral issues related to educational provision and resourcing (eg. Henry and Taylor, 1993; Burke et al, 1994). More relevant here, the question of skill formation has become central to discussions about reform related to teachers and their work.

Secondly, the mission recommended that Australia should retain a centralised wage fixing system (Recommendation 2.1) on the grounds that, on the basis of experience in countries like Sweden, economic adaptability is not incompatible with centralised labour markets. Rather, it argues, what is critical for rapid response to changing economic circumstances is a consensus-based approach to the determination of wages and incomes, and their relationship to prices, and this is facilitated by the existence of a centralised wage fixing system (ACTU/TDC, 1987: 50). The report illustrates this with reference to the Accord, arguing that centralised wage fixation enabled the union movement’s commitment to wage restraint in return for the government’s promotion of policies which encouraged economic restructuring, employment growth, and over time, enhanced living standards.

The significance of the ACTU’s stance is underlined when, in the report, it states:

The real significance of this [continuing support for the Accord] is that the Accord has shown itself to be resilient and adaptable. It has evolved from a rather prescriptive document to a process of negotiated decision-making which encompasses the commitment of both the Government and the ACTU.
(ACTU/TDC, 1987: 50, emphasis included)

The point is that what is being valued is the development of an adequate process for negotiation which will permit problem defining and solution generating, rather than the definition of particular solutions for implementation which, given the inevitability of change, will date too soon and become fetters on the processes of reform.

In the light of the mission's findings, the ACTU recommended the establishment of a two-tiered wages system at the November 1986 Special ACTU conference. This was accepted and submitted to the National Wage Case in March 1987.

The acceptance of the ACTU's proposed two-tiered wages system by the AIRC put the broad outline of award restructuring on the industrial relations map. It permitted a first tier, across-the-board, wage increase of $10 per week for all workers covered by federal awards. A further 4 per cent wage increase was made dependent upon efficiency increases which were defined through a Restructuring and Efficiency Principle. This focused attention on, for example, the revision of restrictive work practices, the introduction of multi-skilling or broad-banding, reduction of demarcation barriers and the introduction of new classifications within awards.

In the 1988 National Wage Case the ACTU, argued that the Restructuring and Efficiency Principle had facilitated industry restructuring and that such a principal, but broader and longer term in scope, should be implemented. The Business Council of Australia was, simultaneously, campaigning for greater 'flexibility' and argued, successfully, that restructuring should be widened so as to permit changes which affect industry competitiveness. As Ewer et al (1991: 42) note, this call for flexibility was ambiguous. It coincided with growing employee interest in flexible work arrangements, such as permanent parttime work and flexible hours, but also permitted the trade off of award conditions for pay increases. It meant that

... the battle over restructuring would be between a system of national awards and training standards, and enterprise bargaining over skills, training and wages outside industry awards.

(Ewer et al, 1991: 42)

At the 1989 National Wage Case the AIRC accepted a 'blueprint' approach to award restructuring proposed by the ACTU. The ACTU's Blueprint stated:

The aim of such a review [of awards] is to establish:

i) a simplified and modern award structure;
ii) the removal of obsolete classifications, cover new classifications;
iii) the broadbanding of a range of jobs under appropriate single classifications; 
iv) career paths for all workers within the award; 
v) links between training, classifications and wages.

In considering award restructuring there are three associated steps.

First raise the minimum rate in minimum rates awards to ensure that the restructuring is on an equitable base (Minimum Rate) 
Second, broadbanding by establishing across industry six to eight skill levels (The Framework) 
Third, provide the means by which upward mobility occurs through education, training and service (The Careers Structure). (ACTU, 1989) 
Yet in terms of the political struggle over what counts as ‘flexibility’, the tide turned against the unions. The AIRC broadened the guidelines for restructuring along the lines proposed by the BCA. The concept of award restructuring became a means of not only enhancing workers' opportunities for skill formation and career progression but also a means of enhancing the competitive edge of industry. It permitted the renegotiation of working hours (including provision for 12 hour shifts), penalty rates, manning levels and a review of sick leave provisions.

The 1989 National Wage Case maintained the two-tiered wage system and laid down a Structural and Efficiency Principle which showed elements of both the ACTU and BCA campaigns. In return for wage increases, employers and unions in industries covered by awards were required to review their awards to ensure that they were appropriate to the requirements of modern industry in a competitive economic environment. The principle stated:

Increases in wages and salaries or improvements in conditions ... shall be justified if the union(s) party to an award formally agree(s) to co-operate positively in a fundamental review of the awards with a view to implementing the measures to improve the efficiency of industry and provide workers with access to more varied, fulfilling and better paid jobs. The measures to be considered should include but not be limited to:

- establishing skill-related career paths which provide an incentive for workers to continue to participate in skill formation

- eliminating impediments to multi-skilling and broadening the range of tasks which workers may be required to perform

- creating appropriate relativities between different categories of workers within the award and at enterprise level

- ensuring that working patterns and arrangements enhance flexibility
and the efficiency of the industry

including properly fixed minimum rates for classification in awards, related appropriately to one another, with any amounts in excess of these properly fixed rates being expressed as supplementary payments

updating and/or rationalising the list of respondents to awards

addressing any cases where award provisions discriminate against sections of the workforce.

(Plowman, 1992: 176-7)

The National Wage Case was followed by a series of negotiations focused at enterprise level, some of which by-passed the local union. This trend to enterprise bargaining was consolidated with Accord Mark IV, shifting the focus of award restructuring to enterprise restructuring (Ewer et al, 1991: 56-59; Plowman, 1992: 178-81). For some this represented 'Light on the Horizon' (Niland, 1992: 25); for others, 'Restructuring Derailed' (Ewer et al, 1991: 44).

Award restructuring in education

Award restructuring impinged on education in a forceful way from September 1987 ACTU Congress when Bill Kelty (ACTU) and Rob Bluer of the Australian Teachers' Union argued that the ACTU should present the changes in teachers' salaries and conditions as special cases crucial to economic survival. But it was not until after the 1989 National Wage Case that the question of teacher award restructuring became centrally established as a mechanism for redressing the impoverished state of teachers' careers.

The plight of teachers has been well documented (eg. Burke, 1991). As Foggo comments:

Between 1983 and 1988, by the ACTU's own figures, teachers at the top of the classroom scale throughout Australia had lost 12.75 % in real wages. Sixty percent of our nation's teachers were marooned at the top of the classroom teaching scale, with little opportunity to progress through jammed promotion structures and for those who had no desire to take the promotion route, then quite simply they had reached the end of the incremental progression available to the classroom teacher. The challenge for the ATU was to find a mechanism which could best develop career paths, Real Career Paths, for Australia's teachers and attempt to rejuvenate a profession which was losing many of its experienced members, failing to attract high calibre entrants and exhibiting increasing levels of stress and low morale, symptomatic of a neglected and 'set upon' profession.

(Foggo, 1992: 87)
These uninspiring career structures had been made more problematic by the waves of educational restructuring which had engulfed teachers through the 1980s as schools and school systems sought to deal with the challenges of increased retention (Seddon and Dear, 1992) and the commonwealth government drive toward a national framework for schooling (Dawkins, 1988; Angus, 1991).

The press for teacher award restructuring was further facilitated by changes in the context of education industrial relations. For much of the century teachers had not been subject to the centralised industrial relations system. Working conditions and salary rates amongst state school teachers had been determined through agreements struck with state governments, their employers. Private school teachers had, similarly, come to agreements about pay and conditions with their private school employers. In the 1920s this informal status was confirmed when the High Court determined that school teaching was not an industry and, therefore, teachers fell beyond the reach of the centralised industrial relations system. This ruling was overturned in 1968.

The recognition of teaching as an industry fuelled a number of changes in the teacher unions which enhanced their capacity to represent teachers in the industrial relations system. In particular, the federal teachers union, the Australian Teachers' Union (now the Australian Education Union), was strengthened and, the ATU affiliated with the ACTU. As Angus (1991: 79) comments, this federal structure for teacher collective bargaining, coupled with the federal government's press for national education policy (Lingard, 1991), presented the state government teacher employers with a dilemma. On the one hand, arguing that teacher industrial relations is a state matter leaves the teacher employers out of national education policy deliberations which, in the late 1980s, were, in any case, underway. On the other hand, participating in the formulation of national education policy about teachers' work signals that the states' powers in school education have been eroded. This dilemma was a stimulus to the formation of a teacher employer forum.

The March 1987 National Wage Case, which had led to the two-tiered wages system, required unions to negotiate with the teacher employers over the award of the second tier 4 per cent pay increase in return for productivity increases. Durbridge (1991) comments on the "notorious "second tier" requirements:"

... for a 4 per cent increase, employers gained cost offsets which ranged from the ludicrous (laundered hand-towels in Queensland), the industrial (the NSW Medowbank decision), the structural (eliminating deputy principals in the ACT) to the painless (electronic funds transfer everywhere). This round was characterised by pettiness,
obstruction and delay. More than anything, it discredited the wages principles, poisoned their relationship to education and revealed the use to which they could be used put by employers interested only in cutting costs.
(Durbridge, 1991: 85)

This experience was one important element in the context of teacher award restructuring. It meant that teacher unions embarked on award restructuring with a view to resisting trade off's as well as embracing a professional agenda aimed at enhancing the conditions of teachers' work and students' learning (Durbridge, 1991). In addition to this, at the 1988 National Wage Case, the AIRC released the Structural and Efficiency Principle with the reminder that this new principle of award restructuring was not intended to 'be applied in a negative cost-cutting manner or to formalise illusory, short-term benefits' (Plowman, 1992: 176). Teacher concern was illustrated in the unsuccessful '15% without restructuring' campaign waged by the Western Australian teachers' union (Durbridge, 1991). It indicated a growing teacher commitment to gain recognition and recompense for changes in working conditions over the previous years, rather than seeing salary increases only being tied to further reform. In 1988 Dawkins released his 'Strengthening Australia's Schools' (Dawkins (1988) which mapped out a national agenda for educational reform, closely tying education and training to national economic objectives. He flagged the importance of the reform of teachers and teaching. At the same time a range of reviews and discussion papers (eg. Schools Council, 1989; 1990 Australian Education Council, 1990) began to emerge which took up the imperative of teacher reform. The Schools Council's (1990) 'Australia's Teachers: An Agenda for the Next Decade' explicitly linked the reform of teachers' work to the opportunities provided by the new industrial relations environment. At the state level, the pace of reform was also rapid, characterised particularly by devolution which permits greater decision making at the school level (Harman, Beare and Berkely, 1990).

In this context, the ATU launched its teacher award restructuring campaign. At the ATU conference, in 1989, it was agreed that a national claim for nationally consistent, benchmark, salary rates for teachers and the introduction of a new career classification, the Advance Skills Teacher (AST) would be submitted on behalf of both the state and independent school teachers through their unions. This was the first time that the state and private school teachers had united in their pursuit of improved salary and conditions (Foggo, 1992). The benchmark salary rate provided an upfront salary increase aimed at recompensing teachers for lost income. It was required by the AIRC as an aspect of restoring appropriate relativities between different occupational groups under the structural efficiency principle. The AST classification was aimed at linking wages and skills accreditation, and
so overcoming promotion and salary disadvantage experienced by teachers with non-graduate preservice qualifications. It was justified in the following terms:

That experienced teachers should be able to illustrate a range of skills against known criteria to an appropriate body of their peers for the purpose of classification as Advanced Skills, such validation to be achieved by self-documentation. In that sense, progress to Advanced Skills Teacher would be 'automatic' rather than dependent upon undertaking a range of extra duties or inspectorial assessment.

That these criteria should allow a diversity of pathways to be followed and be participation-based rather than based upon additional performance.

That in illustrating such skills it was inappropriate to have to accept the assumption that only a predetermined number of teachers could do so (arbitrary quotas in other words) and thus pit individuals against each other.

That access to Advanced Skills Teacher classifications should not depend on any specific preservice qualifications.

That tenure should be dependent upon the continued meeting of skills-based criteria and that the classification be a substantive career step which rewarded skilled teachers and provided incentives for all teachers to develop and maintain those skills, in conformity with the Structural Efficiency Principle.

That the classification apply to classroom teachers in order to maintain the most skilled professionals in the task of teaching rather than administration.

(Durbridge, 1991: 88)

Reports on the progress of the teacher award restructuring negotiations reveal a complex process which was played out at both federal and state levels. Foggo (1992: 90) describes it as ocean-like 'troughs and peaks'. Durbridge (1991: 88) characterises the process as 'Two years of intensive disputes and negotiations' marked by both pragmatic raison d'etat and obstruction.

The difficulties in the negotiation process were rooted in the new political context established by award restructuring. This inaugurated a three-way politics between the state government teacher employers, the teacher union and the federal government. It brought tensions over employer - employee relations into collision with state - federal relations.

The 1901 federal constitution allocated responsibility for education to the states. This responsibility has been fiercely protected,
particularly since the 1960s when the federal government began to play an increased role in education. In the late 1980s, with Labor in office federally and in the majority of states, concern about states rights was muted, although still evident. However, there was concern because the Federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training, appointed in 1987, was energetically pursing a national education reform agenda across all sectors of education and training. There was a powerful emphasis on the 'national interest' and the notion that the purpose of education, as an 'industry', was to enhance skill formation and the international competitiveness of the Australian economy. It lead to the development of national goals for Australian schools, national curriculum and other national education initiatives. While many in education saw these developments as strengthening managerialism in education, they were also seen as strengthening the hand of the federal government vis a vis the state governments' traditional responsibilities in education. Durbridge (1991: 88) records the comment of a senior Industrial Relations person who said, 'After all, if the states lose control of education and health they'll have no reason for existing'. In the 1990s, the politics around states rights have been accentuated because there are now a majority of non-Labor state governments while Labor still holds office federally, albeit, in the education portfolio, less energetically.

The constitutional division of powers has also lead to the formation of distinct education systems and state government teacher employers who are protective of their differences. It has meant that the teacher employers entered negotiations with no history of a common national approach to education. Indeed the smaller states had traditionally been subordinated to the demands of the larger states in discussion of national reform (Angus, 1991: 80). They were divided and unable to reach common agreements, unlike the teacher unions who had resolved a working relationship through the process of transforming the Australian Teachers Union into the Australian Education Union (Foggo, 1992: 91). The federal Minister was influential in bringing the Ministers for Education and the teacher unions to negotiation and, in mid 1989, called a meeting to establish a new organisation to collectively represent the state and territory government teacher employers. This Standing Committee of the Conference of Ministers of Education carried out the negotiations with the union.

Funding was a further complicating factor. Under then current agreements, the federal government provided about 10 per cent of state school funding and over 50 per cent of non-government school funding. A salary component was provided to states, through the recurrent grant, in an agreed proportion to the CPI. The federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training pressed the benchmark salary principle in Cabinet which agreed to a level of $37 200. But this caused problems for the states and territory governments because, while
the federal government always supplemented funds to the level determined by the AIRC, prior to this determination the states teacher employers argued that they did not know where the money to fund salary increases would come from (Foggo, 1992: 92).

These tensions in state-federal relations were accompanied by concerns related to the new industrial framework for educational reform which was developing with the structural efficiency principle. As Angus (1991: 80-81) notes, the teacher employers were supportive of national teacher registration and the portability of qualifications. They accepted that comparable salary structures could be realised through the federal industrial commission in a way which was not possible through the state industrial tribunals, and recognised that the teacher union was already organised on a national basis and could resort to the federal commission for a salary determination. But there were four major concerns.

Firstly, there was concern at the cost implications of a national award. This depended partly on the willingness of the federal government to provide the necessary supplementary funding to pay salary increases. It also related to the implications of an award specifying uniform working conditions across the states. Staff student ratios are currently different across the states. The fear was that a national award might compel the state governments to bring those class sizes into alignment. As Angus suggests, this could be enormously costly if pupil numbers were reduced per teacher, although, as more recent education reform has shown, common ratios could be benchmarked by increasing pupil numbers per teacher.

Secondly, there was concern at the implications of a nationally unified approach to education reform. Particularly, at its implications for encouraging lowest common denominator approaches, reducing diversity between state systems and enhancing the capacity of large states to disproportionately influence patterns of reform.

Thirdly, there was concern that the industrial relations framework would shift the locus of power away from the Ministers for Education. Traditionally, industrial relations in education had been limited to questions of pay and the classifications constituting career paths. Class sizes, hours, and other arrangements of schooling were determined through the powers vested in Ministers and their departmental heads, and effected through regulations derived from the education acts. If the teachers award specified such conditions it would redistribute power from the Minister to the industrial commission. Furthermore, the regulations had served to perpetuate the status quo whereas industrial agreements, such as in Western Australia, had been more strategic, aimed at shaping future educational practice. The fear was that the agreements would extend the range of issues which could be determined within the industrial framework well beyond that which had prevailed.
Finally, there was concern that the locus of power was being drawn entirely away from education. The political effect of the industrial framework was to strengthen the hand of the unions, reducing the influence of parents and other educational interest groups. But the teachers union was only an affiliate of the ACTU and, by all accounts, not always well received by the rest of the union movement. Yet it is at this peak level that the broad industrial framework was being negotiated, between the ACTU, employers and the federal government. These broader constituencies were creating the framework for all industry (substantially on the basis of the metal industry experience). Education was simply encompassed by it with little opportunity to shape it. As Angus (1991: 81) notes, 'For education systems, traditionally self-managing and insulated from other industries and sectors, the intrusion of national wage fixing policies could have a profound effect'.

Despite these difficult issues, agreements were struck and ratified by the AIRC. By the beginning of 1991 a benchmark salary rate had been set for all teachers. AST was operating in three systems and being established elsewhere. Three-year trained teachers had gained access to graduate pay rates on the basis of their experience or 'soft' inservice education requirements. Although in a number of states there were continuing campaigns and disputes about the interpretation and implementation of the agreements (Durbridge, 1991: 88-89).

At the end of 1990, private educational consultant Dean Ashenden presented another view of award restructuring through the Frank Tate Memorial Lecture (Ashenden, 1992). In this address he noted:

Twelve months ago few teachers had even heard of award restructuring, a process which now seems set to deliver to teachers substantial benefits, including re-organised ('broad banded') salary structures, improved pay (with lifts of several thousand dollars a year at the top of the automatic promotion scale), improved professional development, and above all a new kind of position for teachers to aim for, the 'advanced skills teacher' (AST). AST's, it is hoped, will keep professional expertise in the classroom and boost the status of the profession. They will certainly give a further lift to many teachers' salaries.

That these are improvements, and that they were urgently needed, is plain. But how far do they take teaching toward becoming the noblest of professions? My own view is that the agreements now being struck will help a good deal in the short term, but contain only a few windows of opportunity for the longer haul. (Ashenden, 1992: 55-6)

Ashenden argued that award restructuring in education had become locked
into industrial trade-offs, between teacher employers and teacher unions, which did not tackle the core problems which made the practice of education unsatisfactory to both parties:

Both sides are suffering from a lack of improvement in the productivity of learning ... and to deal with it they will need to focus on exactly the thing their current negotiations ignore, the work that teachers do, and the workplace in which they do it. (Ashenden, 1992: 59)

Ashenden recounted how school education was `the last of the cottage industries' ((Ashenden, 1992: 60). The teaching labour process is organised so that individual teachers face fixed-size classes of students in standard classrooms, with little technology and a minimal division of labour. This organisation of work militates against what teachers' believe to be the real work education: teaching students to think. Its characteristics are: a low vertical, and high horizontal, division of labour; a classroom focus; limited scope for professional judgement; a constant expansion of work demands on teachers; and the establishment of a students' labour process of learning which shows low productivity because teachers, rather than students, take the responsibility for learning and supervision. The challenge for award restructuring in education, he suggests, is not simply to extend career opportunities and increase salaries for teachers, but to reconstruct the labour process of teaching by reorganising teachers' work in ways which increase the productivity of learning and the professional satisfaction of teachers.

Ashenden's intervention represented a broadening of the scope of award restructuring, much as was occurring at the national industrial relations level under the influence of the BCA's campaign for enterprise bargaining. This press for flexibility and workplace reform coincided with the education system trend to devolved school management which assumed that localising the management and control of the working environment would create better schools. Ashenden's intervention also presented a distinctive definition of the problems faced in education and began to outline solutions which went beyond those being negotiated between teacher employers and union. It therefore ran against the ACTU's commitment to privilege the process of negotiation between the traditional industrial parties over the promotion of particular problems and solutions.

In 1991 the teacher employers opened debate on a wide range of teacher award conditions as part of the flexibility component in award restructuring. Devolution in times of tight economic constraint, and an employer commitment to loosen the system to enable workplace restructuring, pose difficult questions about what notions like 'devolution', 'deregulation', 'productivity' and 'efficiency' mean in
a, predominantly, public sector service industry, like education, and in the context of an industrial relations framework sliding relentlessly toward enterprise bargaining. As Durbridge (1992: 99) comments, the union involvement in these discussions involved

... encroaching on enemy territory, or at least no-man's land. But the 'friendly fire' from the Labor Federal and State Governments has generally proved devastating to funding, class sizes and system support. A wider support base for public education must be built if it is not to be further damaged by the technocrats of Treasury. The experience that the unions gained in handling a national agenda on award restructuring may now be tested on a wider field -- the attempt to build a new mandate for democratic, universal education with the community, including labour, parents and business. (Durbridge, 1992: 98)

By 1991 a number of projects aimed at workplace reform in education had been established. In the same year, the federal Minister proposed a tripartite National Project on the Quality of Teaching and Learning (NPQTL). This was to be jointly funded for three years by the unions and employers and to be organised around a board with equal employer union membership. Its brief was to examine issues at the intersection of what usually counts as industrial issues and educational issues. The membership of the board was immediately contentious, partly because traditional interest groups in education, such as the Deans of Teacher Education, sought membership.

Three working parties were established under the auspices of the NPQTL. One examined teacher registration and portability of qualifications, another considered work organisation and led to the formation of the National Schools Project (Peacock, 1993). A third working party, the Working Party on Professional Preparation and Career Development, tackled teacher competencies. The findings of three research projects from this last working party were reported at an Australian College of Education seminar in May 1993 (Louden, 1993; Eltis and Turney, 1993; Abbott-Chapman, Radford and Hughes, 1993) But, by 1993, two of the three working parties had been decommissioned and the size of the NPQTL secretariat had been reduced. As Pope (1993: 6) comments, '... the promise of consensus-decision making, so strong in 1989, appears a lot less rosy in 1993'. Work on the National Curriculum had been thrown into turmoil by the stand off between the (largely Liberal) state governments and the (Labor) federal government at the July Australian Education Council meeting. The federal Minister, Beazley, announced the formation of the Australian Teaching Council, noting that the federal government and unions would establish this body 'with or without the support of the states'. He simultaneously advised that the NPQTL Working Party on Professional Preparation and Career Development had been disbanded. Members of the working party were notified by letter which informed stated that 'it was clear that an impasse had been reached on the NPQTL in regard to the implementation of the NTC
(National Teaching Council) proposal' (Pope, 1993).

Discussion
In overviewing award restructuring, I am struck by three features. Firstly, award restructuring seems very transient. It appeared on the stage of educational debate in the late 1980s and was proclaimed as the key to a new era in education. For a few years it was a big issue but, almost as quickly as it appeared in the public domain, award restructuring seemed to disappear from view. One sometimes heard mention of it, or echoes of its themes, emanating from governmental committees but, apart from that, it seemed to disappear without trace.

There were complicated mixed messages being conveyed by the notion of award restructuring. There were themes about the reform of work, economic policy, industrial relations, as well as education and training reform. The basic message which ultimately emerged out of these multiple themes, in school education at least, was a professional one, that award restructuring would provide a potent mechanism for reforming the work of teachers and, therefore, the practice of education. Other themes of award restructuring also coalesced around the notion of a new way of understanding the relationship between education and work, but this set of messages related to the convergence of general and vocational education and training always seemed to stand apart from the notion of teacher award restructuring which gained purchase in school education.

Finally, the disappearance of award restructuring seemed to involve the transformation of a particular reform agenda into wider questions of educational change. Specifically, award restructuring appeared to transmogrify into the National Project on the Quality of Teaching and Learning (NPQTL), into issues of school reform and decentralisation, and into outcomes-based education.

These developments occurred because on the one hand, the processes set in train through award restructuring were used rhetorically as a potent resource to press particular agenda's in the politics of education. As Di Foggo, then President of the Australian Teachers' Union, notes, for unions other than the metalworkers, award restructuring presented practical dilemmas as well as promise:

There is no doubt that the issue of award restructuring caused an initial dilemma in the ranks of the non-metal unionists throughout Australia. In its early days the prospect of a new wages system based on award restructuring and having the metal industry award as its genesis seemed most peculiar to public sector unions, including teachers ... On closer examination however, the Australian Teachers' Union and its branches, as well as the Independent Teachers' Federation of Australia, found that there were opportunities in award
restructuring and that these opportunities offered us long overdue solutions to the problems that beset the teaching profession. (Foggo, 1992: 87)

Later, Ashenden, followed by the teacher employers, used the rhetoric of award restructuring, overlain by the new talk of enterprise-level flexibility and enterprise bargaining, to press agendas about redefining rigidities in teacher employment practices.

On the other hand, the processes set in train through award restructuring constituted a moment in history, an era when an array of agenda’s related to global and local economic, political and social restructuring come together to produce change and continuity in social and educational life.

Looking more closely at the era of award restructuring, I would argue that the processes of award restructuring have enhanced and accentuated the impact of that potent brew of broad, non-educational, political agendas in education. This has emphasised the contribution that education makes to the economy. In particular, the effects have been consolidated by confirming the connection between education, training and skill formation, institutionalising this connection in the linkages between awards and career structures, and dissipating the sites at which the practical politics over institutionalising this framework of educational provision and practice have to be fought out. The framework for educational practice is no longer determined in just the policy branches of government or in the AIRC, but is contested at every level of schooling, and at every school. What has been created is an immensely generative dynamic for change which has given rise to three major trends in education.

The first trend is toward changes in teachers working conditions. The AST was the most obvious expression of this but it has now been overtaken by the new enterprise bargaining environment and state governments’ moves to decentralise educational management. The outcome has been regressive for most educators: decreased job security, contracts, the erosion of leave and leisure time by professional demands. Even merit pay and perks have a downside, as Victorian Principals are finding. Contracts offer no security of tenure. They make people vulnerable and, therefore, compliant and submissive to government employer demands.

In school education this development has been contained by strong unions. In other sectors teachers' working conditions are not being sustained so well. In TAFE and the adult, community and further education (ACFE) sectors there have been major changes in working conditions. We wait to see how enterprise bargaining will play out in higher education.
The connections forged between awards, career structure, education, training and national economic priorities have fuelled a second set of developments related on the one hand to cross-sectoral articulations and, on the other, to pressures on the content and credentialling of education.

The cross-sectoral effects are huge. The expansion of workplace education, the development of operative level training and the privileging of literacy and numeracy have turned TAFE and ACFE on their heads. What counts as education in these settings is being transformed, albeit hotly contested. Schools experience these developments as school-TAFE links but, in many respects, remain a protected sector compared to the others.

The pressures for credentialling and demands for vocationally oriented content have fuelled the turn to outcomes-based education and training. Competency-based training is the best known version. But developments such as the Victorian Curriculum Standards Framework, linked to the Learning Assessment Project, offers a similar kind of technology.

The third development has been in the processes of policy formulation: federal, state, national and local enterprise levels. In these changes education has lost its policy field. It is now at the margins of economic and industry policy. In school and higher education one often hears complaints about the colonisation of education by industry. In TAFE this has always existed and is, now, not only being exploited more than ever but also is being used to extend the vocationalist agenda to colonise more and more of the other sectors.

In this policy field arguments about equity are subordinated to economic arguments about the bottom line. The language of class, of the struggle between capital and labour, has more meaning in this context than the language of gender and ethnicity. The key agency which can press an agenda for educational change - both because it has access to the policy forums and has links to the concerns of grassroots teachers - is the union. The privileging of consumers and professional associations in this environment is a dubious strategy because they lack a sufficient voice and cannot encompass the interrelated professional and industrial dimensions of the debate. They therefore cannot properly defend education.

In conclusion, it seems to me that award restructuring has been a mixed blessing. It has provided some tangible benefits but has also unleashed tremendous forces for change. What is now critical, I think, is to be clear that (1) industrial and professional agendas are running in tandem in educational reform and (2) that interrelated agenda is operating on a cross-sectoral basis. It is no longer enough for
educators to say they are professionals and neglect that they are only workers whose work depends upon industrial struggles. It is also no longer sufficient for educators to address the issues in their own sectors in a parochial way. This is because the protection of a space for a strong, critical and questioning educational practice depends upon the defence of that space across sectors. Educational practice can only be protected to the extent that it can be protected in every sector and this requires cross-sectoral understanding and organisation.

It is, I think, the unions which must bear the brunt of the practical politics of educational reform, partly because of their resources but also because of their history of involvement in recent policy formulation and their capacity to bring the professional and industrial issues together. Other agencies have a significant role in generating issues for the union from the bottom-up and in pressing the unions to move beyond traditions that are fetters on progressive change. This would include contesting unions' masculinist traditions but also pressing the unions to develop a more adequate structure for dealing with cross-sectoral issues and the interrelated industrial and professional agendas.

But the practical politics over education reform can only ever be effective if we people in education recognise the context in which we now work. If education is important and to be protected as a space for critical and courageous self-development, we need to recognise the interdependencies between cross-sectoral issues and the articulation of the professional and industrial, in a practical way. This means understanding and doing something about the way student learning conditions and the conditions for adequate public service are being bargained away on individual and professional grounds.

Notes
A number of state by state reports are collected in Riley (1992).

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