
President's Report to PESA 2006

Welcome

Imagining ourselves in Sydney... welcome to our annual conference, this year back in familiar territory after last year's foray to Hong Kong. At the time of writing this report, preparation is well under way for the Sydney conference, under the careful scrutiny of one Jim Mackenzie (who has maintained his good humour throughout) and the team. As the main event of the society, it is great to see the continued interest and strong contributions from such a large number, particularly when many of those participating are new members over the last few years.

I reported last year that current projects had all been moved along, with the society looking sustainably stronger as a result. That momentum has continued, with more projects coming to fruition over the last year and the Exec positively bubbling with excitement about possibilities within a well-funded future.

Financial

PESA was incorporated last year in Western Australia and now has tax-exempt status, so we have a number of administrative and reporting requirements, including preparation and audit of our financial accounts each year, and an annual report to Inland Revenue about our affairs. My thanks to our treasured secretary Bruce for handling administration and managing communication with the powers-that-be in these matters over the last year.

Having seen the draft financial statements for the 2005-2006 year, I'm pleased to say that our finances are in a healthy state, better than they have ever been, although I'll leave the detail to the Treasurer to share post-audit. Our membership has almost tripled over the last three years, journal subscriptions and royalties are on the rise, conference attendance has been exceptional, and our bank balance has continued to grow.

Member subsidies and grants

Eligible members who presented at Hong Kong last year will have had the benefit of the special member subsidy for travel and accommodation. Taking PESA to Hong Kong was a strong promotional move by the society to reach out to a wider audience, and under Derek's management last year, very effective in attracting a huge number of new faces to the conference. This year, we return to the normal subsidies for retired members and graduate students. Maintaining support for these two groups is partly an acknowledgement of their past and/or future contributions. Equally though, it is about getting PESA represented in a positive light in academic circles. Those people who benefit from such a subsidy are invited to speak loud and long about their good fortune and prosperous status. They will also be permitted to refund their emolument if it they find it too objectionable to be mere marketing fodder for such a scurrilous international enterprise as PESA Inc. Well done the recipients!

Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia Scholarships

The PESA doctoral scholarships are now in place. As members you will have been notified through our official organ that two scholarships were awarded earlier this year. Congratulations to Linda Graham and Sandy Farquhar as our inaugural recipients of the new award. Details of their projects are available as an announcement on the PESA website and both recipients will be presenting at this year's conference. We recently sent out the first

round of publicity for next year's scholarships and expect a similar enthusiastic response as last year.

Educational Philosophy and Theory

PESA is well represented and continues to be richly financed by the success of our journal, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. On behalf of the society, I want to thank Michael Peters for his entrepreneurial spirit and the academic direction he has provided for the journal. We have been going from strength to strength and, as Michael's report attests, will continue to do so. The journal now accounts for two thirds of our income and helps us sustain a good relationship with Blackwell, who last year donated an additional AUD\$3,000 towards the conference in Hong Kong. Our thanks and appreciation also go to the editorial team, the contributing authors and the team of reviewers (many of whom are PESA members), whose commitment we rely on for the level of professionalism and the final quality of publication, even though the articles are now handled online in the submission and review process.

Michael has produced a comprehensive report on the journal, for presentation at this year's annual general meeting. He will also address the conference on recent developments and proposed changes in the world of academic publishing, with particular reference to the impact of such changes on PESA and EPAT.

Website

Our website (www.pesa.org.au) has continued to develop as a vehicle for communication for the society (both internal and external). New on the home page since last year are links to application forms and announcements about the PESA scholarship, and a link to the online PESA forum. We also have a ~~regues'~~ gallery 'hall of fame' listing of society fellows, past presidents and past journal editors, and a resource page that is growing slowly but steadily.

The PESA forum (www.pesa.org.au/forum) is still in a nascent phase although the *PESA Exec* section has almost 70 postings about various bits of Exec business, which will be useful for future Exec members as a record of what has happened and why. Another thread of the forum was set up to promote an Asia-Pacific network among a selected group of participants, although contributions have been minimal to date.

I'm thrilled to see other members have started discussion threads on areas of their own philosophical interest, and look forward to more general use of the technology as a communal meeting place for *Philosophy of Education*. I have deliberately posted the discussion about the proposed essay competition there to draw members' attention to the forum process. PESA members can register and contribute¹. Various levels of privacy are available if required, and I hope we see the forum develop, as it provides immediate coverage of issues discussed, while retaining some history of the discussion. From small acorns... etc.

Online payment of membership fees

For reasons outlined in my last annual report, the publishers of our journal, Blackwell, now manage our annual subscriptions: sending reminder notices, collecting payments on our behalf in any currency (via their secure website), and then passing them on to us as a bulk payment along with payment of royalties from the journal. In effect, society membership is now separated from conference attendance, and can be paid for in any currency from anywhere. The new collection mechanism begins this financial year, and at the time of writing

¹ The secretary emailed details of the registration process to members recently. A secure registration process was instituted to block spam registrations and the like. Instructions will be emailed again from time to time.

this report, I understand Blackwell has sent out notification of subscriptions due. In the new membership renewal process, memberships are still approved by the Exec as per the rules, after which details are passed on to Blackwell for collection of the membership fee and inclusion on the list of annual subscription reminders.

General

This report is my swansong as president, after three thoroughly enjoyable years in the role. In spite of doom and gloom projections we were hearing about philosophy of education a few years ago, it seems that our society is now flourishing. Through our unashamed marketing and academic exuberance, the word is getting about that PESA is a society worth belonging to and a joy to support. I'll be doing my best to ensure PESA maintains that momentum as I think we are onto a winner!

My thanks to the Exec for the voluminous discussion, debate and development work throughout the year, and also to the members who continue to support the society through their writing and conference presentations. As per the PESA rules, no announcement can be made about the new Exec until the AGM, although from the nominations it is clear we will have a good crew in the Executive seats again next year. I wish the new and the incumbents all the best in their role. I'll be staying on as immediate past president and look forward to meeting you again in Sydney, to enjoy the bonhomie and philosophical repartee that has become synonymous with PESA.

Peter Fitzsimons

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