
by

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THIS THESIS IS ALL MY OWN WORK

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACE  AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
ACER  AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH  
ACTCTF  ACT COMMONWEALTH TEACHERS' FEDERATION  
ACTSA  ACT SCHOOLS AUTHORITY  
ANU  AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
ASAT  AUSTRALIAN SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST  
ATF  AUSTRALIAN TEACHERS' FEDERATION  
CCTA  COMMONWEALTH TEACHING SERVICE  
IACTSA  INTERIM ACT SCHOOLS AUTHORITY  
NEF  NEW EDUCATION FELLOWSHIP  
NSWTF  NSW TEACHERS' FEDERATION  
PPA  PRIMARY PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION  
SPC  SECONDARY PRINCIPALS' COUNCIL  
STA  SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION  
SWOW  SCHOOL WITHOUT WALLS  
WEF  WORLD EDUCATION FELLOWSHIP
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the interaction of people during the planning and implementation of a radical change in Australian education: the creation of a decentralised, participatory school system in Canberra. The motives and priorities of the groups of stakeholders involved in the change - the parents, teachers and administrators - are examined. The members of the parents' group initiated and campaigned for the establishment of a decentralised, participatory school system for reasons, it is argued, derived from their membership of the New Middle Class. The teachers, represented in events by their union, were largely preoccupied with their concerns to improve working conditions and secure their fragile status as professionals: priorities which at times brought them into conflict with other stakeholders. Senior administrators in the Commonwealth Department of Education together with those in the Authority, were the members of the other key group of stakeholders; with some notable exceptions, their priorities determined by their role as advisors to their Minister and their background and training in bureaucracy.

Achieving change is much more than passionately believing in an idea and campaigning to have it adopted, as the parents discovered. The social, economic and political context in which it is situated, which can change over time, and the congruence of the idea with other people's ideology,
interests and agendas all play a part in determining the final outcomes.

The first part of the thesis uses an Australian adaptation of a strategic planning model as a framework to explain the process used by the parents' group to plan the change they sought; the scene is set, the main characters identified and the decisions that were made and the actions taken to establish a new and different school system examined. The second part of the thesis is focused upon the implementation stage, and the consequences of decisions made during the planning stage are revealed when the expected outcomes are modified as different groups facilitate or obstruct participation.

This thesis argues that while fundamental change occurred in the new school system, by 1980, the vision of a new democratic, participatory school system in the ACT was not realised in its original form, because, during the planning, the proponents of the change did not completely understand the ideology, interests and agendas of all the key stakeholders' groups, including their own, nor the influence these would have on the achievement of full participation in the school system. Nevertheless, the fact that the ACT Schools Authority was established with administrative structures unique in Australian education systems, was at that time, remarkable; and its legacy, the belief that bureaucracy can be challenged and participation should occur, endures.
FOREWORD

This study of the ACT Schools Authority is concerned with events so recent that most participants are still living and many still active in the organisation which has evolved from the Authority of the 1970s. My role as author requires clarification as I was indirectly (for the most part) involved in many of the events discussed. I was not however, a neutral observer. In the mid-sixties when moves to establish a new Authority first began, the proposal to build a school system different from any other in Australia was exciting to teachers like myself.¹ It seemed a brave, ambitious project, first because it set out to break established patterns and second, because parents initiated and directed the campaign with the help of others they co-opted to their cause. As a teacher, I was drawn to the proposal for change because it offered an opportunity for everyone involved in public schooling to become partners in making important decisions. Like many others I saw much that needed remedying. The needs of many children did not appear to be met by their schools, which I attributed to a wide range of causes, including a serious lack of resources both material and human, the NSW curriculum which was inflexible and did not meet the needs of all students, and most significantly, an administration which appeared unsympathetic to innovation. The sixties were years when all manner of social traditions were challenged; as they passed into the seventies and the new school system became a reality, I drew closer to the scene of the action when, in late ¹This study is focused upon primary and secondary schooling, Kindergarten to Year 12. It does not include the administration of pre-schools or post-secondary education.
1973, several other teachers and I were seconded into the Office of the new Authority to plan and implement new approaches to curriculum. Some years later the hopes of the 1970s gave way to the doubts of the 1980s. As principal of a Canberra primary school I realised the vision of a decade earlier was disappearing as limits were placed upon participatory administration, not only by newcomers, but by some who previously had campaigned enthusiastically for a new Authority. The story of the ACT Schools Authority was of great personal interest and I had lived and breathed the hopes and dreams of those who were involved in this new system. When they faded, it was important for me to understand and to record what had happened, and I began to consider writing the story of the genesis and early years of the Authority before valuable information was lost, but my inexperience in undertaking a project of this scope led me to realise that I needed guidance to do it in a scholarly fashion and do justice to a remarkable episode in the history of Australian education. I therefore sought to carry out this task as a doctoral student and began work on this thesis late in 1982.

When I began this study, therefore, it was not as a disinterested observer and it required considerable effort to examine the evidence with a scholarly detachment and to remain uninfluenced by preconceived explanations. I started by examining the contexts within which this movement arose and developed its vision. What were the origins of the notion of democratic participation in education? What in the larger social context of the mid-sixties allowed the idea of an independent education authority to capture people's
imagination? How did changing economic and political pressures affect opportunities and influence the attitudes of those involved? It seemed that such a powerful vision for a different school system deserved a more positive outcome, and it is true to say that I was disappointed that I had seen almost every attempt to change marked by suspicion and struggles. Although a teacher in the system, I was critical of many actions taken by the teachers' union, and strongly favoured the parents' vision of democratic participation as a leading principle of the education system. I sought to investigate reasons for the conflicts I had observed; as I studied theoretical explanations of power I sought to understand the motivations of the different groups involved for supporting or opposing the changes to a school system. I was concerned to investigate the roles played by the bureaucrats and the politicians involved after the 1975 change of government, and the suspicion that, from simple unwillingness to share power, some of them deliberately obstructed moves towards the democratic participation that the parent activists campaigned for so strenuously.

A perspective developed from administrative experience led me to seek an explanation of the early successes and later failures within the theory of organisational change. I returned to the Authority's Office for a second period from 1985 to 1989 to work as an educational administrator before returning to the field as a secondary school principal, which led me to the study of theoretical and practical aspects of change relevant to my work. I had already applied models from the literature on
organisational change in my work as an administrator; when I came to explore the history of the system in which I work, I found that my focus upon models of change, offered a possible explanation of events.

As I studied the activities of the groups principally concerned with realising the project of the parents' group, namely the teachers and the bureaucrats, it became clear that, even when they took action which limited or frustrated aspects of the grand design, there was more involved than mere conservatism and self-interest. The groups were not monolithic and the influence of individuals was significant. People acted according to different perceptions of what ought to be done in a changing context, arising from proper concerns and different cultures. It also seemed that the groups not only had differences but also a great deal in common; this led me to use the idea of the New Middle Class. I re-examined my perception of the parents' group with whom my sympathies directly lay, and the characteristics of its members. They were located in a particular time, place and class, and I was concerned to ascertain how this influenced the content of their vision: if other groups had particular interests and limitations to their perspectives, perhaps this group did too. I questioned how their ideals and interests related and to what extent one drove the other?

This thesis therefore investigates why the movement for an independent authority arose, and why it took such a radical form; why, after some years, it had such a remarkable success; why conflicts arose which, while much of the vision remained,
also frustrated a great deal of it; and in particular, what was the nature of the groups involved and how they interacted with each other under the pressure of a period of intense political and economic change, to bring about the education system as it was in 1980.

This study has involved extensive consultation of sources, oral and written. The writing of contemporary history about the organisation in which I am employed has posed certain difficulties because I have been a participant in events, and attaining a scholarly 'distance' from personal recollection is never easy. Against this, written and oral source material has been available and plentiful. No difficulties were presented in obtaining the necessary data and I was given access to all necessary Authority documents. I made considerable use of the files of the ACT Schools Authority and the Department of Education, Minutes of Authority Council meetings, and other Council and Authority committees. Discussion and position papers prepared for meetings, and minutes, newsletters and papers written for ACT Teachers' Federation meetings were rich sources. Newspaper articles, reports and letters were invaluable commentary upon events and issues, particularly for 1966 to 1973. Several of those directly involved made their collections of papers, letters and minutes available. Commentaries were also available from the numerous official reports and reviews carried out by members of the education community for seminars, conferences and private study. Oral evidence was used to help locate additional sources, for generating questions, and for focusing upon important lines of enquiry, and later, to
corroborate evidence or to clarify questions which were not answered satisfactorily by the written sources. With few exceptions, interviews were recorded.

In the writing of this thesis there are many people to be thanked. Dr Ann Hone of the University of Canberra, together with Dr Hector Kinloch of the Australian National University, and later, upon Dr Kinloch's retirement, Dr Geoffrey Bartlett, also of ANU, supervised this study and their advice and encouragement were invaluable. Dr Campbell Macknight of the ANU read a late draft and offered helpful suggestions; Ms Beverley Pope and Ms Elizabeth Rogers were considerate enough to read early drafts. I am most indebted to those who generously lent me their collections of private papers and other documents: Dr Milton March, Mr Richard Lee, Dr Barry Price and Dr Richard Johnson, and especially Mrs Catherine Blakers who unstintingly gave me much useful information about the events in which she was involved. I am very grateful to the many people who provided me with the oral evidence required for such a contemporary study. I wish to thank Dr Bill Donovan, Professor Hedley Beare and Professor Phillip Hughes who encouraged me to begin this work and especially, Dr Greg Hancock, former Chief Education Officer of the ACT Schools Authority, who supported me by providing access to all the official papers and files that I would require. I acknowledge my gratitude to the ACT Schools Authority for allowing me to carry out this study and I thank the many officers within the Authority, both teachers and Australian Public Service staff, who provided me with advice,
support and help. Finally I thank the members of my family and my friends who in their many ways encouraged and supported me throughout the course of this study.

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2 The former Authority is now the ACT Department of Education and Training.
CHAPTER ONE.
INTRODUCTION

In 1966 a group of parents whose children attended Campbell Primary School challenged the existing administration of ACT schools. They perceived various deficiencies in the school system, then run by the NSW Department of Education, and attributed them to the inability of an unwieldy, inflexible bureaucratic administration to respond to local needs; in doing so, they set themselves against what was then the dominant organisational style for Australian school systems. In August 1966, these parents decided to act in order to improve the schooling their children were receiving. By November they had joined forces with academics, principals, teachers and other interested citizens and formed a small planning group, to organise a seminar at which they expected to establish a working party to prepare a proposal for an independent education authority for the ACT. So it was done, and a year later the Working Party, chaired by Sir George Currie, produced a report, An Independent Education Authority for the Australian Capital Territory, which became known as the Currie Report. This not only argued for an independent authority, but went far beyond that to provide a blueprint for a participatory, decentralised school system completely different from any other public school system in Australia.¹

¹ G. Currie (Chair), An Independent Education Authority for the Australian Capital Territory, Report of a Working Party, Department of Adult Education, ANU, 1967. There is no adequate terminology to distinguish between the two major sectors of schooling; the school systems which are open to all children and which are (almost) wholly funded from the public purse (State or Commonwealth), and the group of schools - systemic and non-systemic - which are funded to some
This Report became the platform for a working group to begin action to establish a new school system. From 1967 until 1972, the small planning group of Canberra parents, academics, teacher unionists and principals, engaged in a determined campaign to pressure the government and successive Ministers for Education and Science, as well as their educational advisers, the senior officers in the Commonwealth Department of Education and Science, to establish a new democratic and participatory education system in the ACT, independent of NSW. The campaign was prolonged, and success came not solely because of their efforts, but in 1972 the breakthrough came when the Prime Minister announced that the ACT would have its own education authority. The preliminary planning stage was over and the government took over the preparation for implementation of the new system.

In 1972 and 1973, the government began to set in place some of the basic administrative machinery, including, for example, the formation of a Commonwealth Teaching Service to be administered by a Commissioner; meanwhile the teachers moved to form their own ACT union. In early 1973, the new Labor Government changed original plans to hold an enquiry

extent from the public purse and to a greater or lesser extent from fees charged for tuition. This second sector comprises a wide range of schools - from Roman Catholic systemic parochial schools to private non-systemic institutions. The past practice of distinguishing between public and private or independent schooling is not strictly accurate; nor is the use of government and non-government schooling as in fact, all schools are to some extent government funded. For the most part, however, throughout the thesis, the more commonly accepted terms, government and non-government, are used for the sake of convenience.
into ACT education as a basis for making decisions about the new system and instead established a panel chaired by Mr Phillip Hughes, Head of the School of Teacher Education at the Canberra College of Advanced Education (CCAE), to assess responses to a Commonwealth Department of Education paper which set out some proposals for the structure of a new ACT school system. The previous December, a Working Committee chaired by Dr Richard Campbell and set up by the former Minister for Education and Science, Mr Malcolm Fraser, to examine the proposal for secondary colleges in the ACT, submitted its final report to Mr Kim Beazley, the new Labor Minister for Education. This Report, Secondary Education for Canberra, recommended the separation of the last two years of secondary schooling and the establishment of secondary colleges in the ACT for Years 11 and 12. In May 1973, the report of the Assessment Panel, A Design for the Governance and Organisation of Education in the Australian Capital Territory, was released and recommended administrative structures to support a new school system designed along the decentralised, participatory lines suggested in the 1967 Currie Report. The government accepted most of the major recommendations of what became known as the Hughes Report and in October 1973 the Council of the Interim ACT Schools Authority held its first meeting.

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2 The Canberra College of Advanced Education (CCAE), is now the University of Canberra.
Council members began immediately to prepare for the commencement of administration from the beginning of 1974.

The first years of the interim Authority, however, saw major contests between teachers, parents and administrators as they attempted to establish new places for themselves and to operate in a school system radically different from anything then existing in Australia. The teachers limited the extent of parent involvement by opposing an active role for school boards in selection of staff for schools. By contrast, when there was agreement between the major partners, change was achieved, as the restructuring of secondary education demonstrated. The economic downturn of the mid-1970s abruptly halted the process of establishment by restricting resources, and threw further strain upon the original alliance. In the mid-seventies also, the Legislative Assembly, then expecting (somewhat prematurely) to take over the government of the Territory, instituted an Inquiry into ACT schooling which questioned certain of the practices which recently had been established. Lengthy reports were produced, but as self-government was delayed for almost twelve years, they had no immediate effect. In 1977, after considerable delays, the permanent Authority was established. By this time, parents and teachers were criticising the lack of decentralisation and genuine participation in decision-making openly, and major contests occurred over the proposed closure of schools and the transfer of an alternative secondary school, the School Without Walls, into a building previously occupied by Ainslie Primary School. By the end of 1980, many struggles later, whatever else had been achieved,
the parents' original dream of a participatory, decentralised school system remained largely unfulfilled.

The establishment of the ACT Schools Authority was a break with tradition in Australian education. In many ways it was unique. An education authority with a participatory, decentralised administration governed by a committee of citizens was such an aberration that it is worth explaining its rise which began in 1966, and its fall, evidence of which was visible at the end of the 1970s. In its original form it lasted from October 1973 until 1987, but the years 1973 to 1980 were crucial. In those years the foundation of the organisation was laid and practices and patterns for its future operation were established. By 1980, the optimism of the seventies had dissipated as the economies forced by the government curtailed the long period of growth of resources in education. The pessimism which resulted appeared to fuel complaints about the failure to change the style of administration as the approaching decade brought not renewed hope but a prediction of further economies. By the end of 1980 two significant players in the ACT education world of the 1970s had departed: Phillip Hughes of the Hughes Report, the first Chair of the Council of the ACT Schools Authority, and Hedley Beare, the first Chief Education Officer; two educators who fought to achieve non-bureaucratic administrative structures. New key players were about to enter the scene and a different style of administration was about to begin, which was to result in 1987 in the demise of the Authority Council which had been established to provide a formally constituted structure to enable participatory decision-
making in the ACT school system. This study ends in 1980, therefore, because for the ACT Schools Authority it marked the end of an era.

There have been many attempts to describe the new system as it developed. One of the first was an unpublished paper submitted as part of a Master of Education degree in 1971. In 1978, Phillip Hughes was co-editor of a useful book comprising chapters written by participants and observers about features of the new system. A helpful monograph, The Game Changed, was written by Di Mildern and Bill Mulford, examining the consequences of changes to policy in matters such as religious education and secondary student assessment. Most accounts of the establishment and early years of the ACT Schools Authority examine specific features, in many cases for review or evaluation purposes. Other analyses of the system include unpublished theses for Master of Education degrees which

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5 The ACT Schools Authority Council was disbanded on the 15 September 1987. ACT Schools Authority Council Executive Support Unit, ACT Ministry of Education, Statement, 13 February 1991. The ACT Schools Authority became the ACT Department of Education in 1989.

6 C. Burnett, The Movement for an Independent Education Authority for the Australian Capital Territory, Unpublished paper, submitted as a partial requirement for MEd., University of New England, 1971. I found this paper to be especially helpful for its overview of the early years of the school system.


describe organisations and associations connected to the school system as well as innovations and modifications to practices in schools or the Schools Office.\textsuperscript{10} One recent PhD thesis, using a sociological paradigm, examines the development of the new administration of the ACT Education Authority in relation to the social change theory of Jurgen Habermas and concludes that social betterment resulted.\textsuperscript{11} Most accounts of the early years, however, have been written using organisational theory for analysis. No work has spanned the total period of this study from an historical perspective.

Studies of movements for democratic participation in Australian public school systems in the nineteenth century reveal a continuous saga of struggles between groups of people about many issues including centralisation versus decentralisation. While denominational groups contested the move to secular and centralised public school systems during the

\textsuperscript{10} 'Schools Office' was the term given to the administrative centre of the organisation. D. C. Mildem, The First Two Years: Decision Making and the Council of the Interim Australian Capital Territory Authority, Submitted as field study in partial fulfilment of the requirements for MEd., CCAE, 1976; D. E. Morgan, The Restructuring of Senior Secondary Education in the Australian Capital Territory, Submitted as field study in partial fulfilment of the requirements for MEd., CCAE, 1977; B. Dooley, The Development and Role of the Australian Capital Territory Secondary Principals Council, Submitted as a field study in partial fulfilment of the requirements for MEd., CCAE, 1977; D. A. R. Lusty, The ACT Primary Principals Association 1965-1976: Its History, Role and Development, Submitted as a field study in partial fulfilment of the requirements for MEd., CCAE, 1978; G. J. McNeill & M. E. March, ACT Teachers Federation 1972-1976: Development and Activities, ACT Schools Authority, 1979, Submitted as field study in partial fulfilment of the requirements for MEd., CCAE, 1979; R. J. Lane, The Development and Implementation of the ACT Schools Accreditation System, Submitted as field study in partial fulfilment of the requirements for MEd., CCAE, 1980. In the late 1970s, the Research and Evaluation Section of the Schools Office arranged for a number of these Field Studies to be printed and circulated within the system.

nineteenth century, some observed that there appeared to be almost an inevitability about the development of bureaucratic education systems compatible with the general belief about an Australian penchant for bureaucracy. In this century, a move for a change from bureaucratic administration of public schools shortly before the 1939-45 war presented a major challenge to the form and consequences of Australian educational administration, but the war diverted attention from this cause and the nascent movement for reform was overtaken by the need to redress the extreme post-war shortages of human and material resources for education. Centralised bureaucratic administration continued.

Other studies of education systems written within sociological and organisational theory frameworks have suggested questions to be explored and issues to be considered. Michael Pusey's study of bureaucratic administration in the Tasmanian education system, for example, was particularly


useful for its emphasis on the significance of bureaucratic procedures for determining the style of organisation.\textsuperscript{14}

Historical studies of changes in other school systems revealed a major difference between the Australian context for the change and those overseas. The long tradition of English and American local government is missing in Australia. American educational historiography deals with apparently similar struggles for change in school systems, investigates attempts to change schooling, and discusses the influence of bureaucracy upon schools. However, in the case of the struggles for devolution of responsibility to school boards, for example, the different North American political, educational and social context makes it difficult to draw parallels with the ACT. North American studies such as Katz's \textit{School Reform: Past and Present}, and \textit{Class, Bureaucracy and Schools}; Tyack's \textit{The One Best System}, and Gittell's \textit{School Boards and School Policy: An Evaluation of Decentralization in New York City}, which examine the issues of bureaucracy, centralisation, and moves for parent participation, were useful for suggesting questions to be explored and areas for focus when analysing Australian studies.\textsuperscript{15} Raymond Callahan's \textit{Education and the Cult of


Efficiency, for example, provides helpful clues to be pursued in the history of Australian bureaucracy.16

While existing accounts of developments in the ACT school system are helpful in understanding the events of the years 1966 to 1980, there is more that can be said using a combination of questions drawn from straight history - how, what, why - with questions generated by the literature on strategic planning of change in the field of educational administration. Thus, this thesis represents a change from the usual case studies in the literature on educational administration, as well as from the previous studies of this school system. It does not, however, set out to prove a hypothesis about change; the use of a model of change in this study is a device to help explain what occurred. Creators of strategic planning models assume that change will be successful when it is carefully planned so that the outcome is clearly specified, the situation (which includes the people who will be affected) is examined for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the necessary strategies are devised to cover problems which might arise, and detailed plans are made to carry them out. The process of change is divided into a series of steps and stages, but generally there are two main stages: the planning stage and the implementation stage.

The planning stage begins when someone identifies a problem which suggests the need for a change. Methods are devised to assist the people steering the change ('change-

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16 R. E. Callahan, Education and the Cult of Efficiency: A Study of the Social Forces that have Shaped the Administration of the Public Schools, University of Chicago Press, 1962.
agents') to assess the gap between what exists and what is required, to examine the situation in which they are placed and to identify and examine factors which might assist or impede the achievement of the possible outcome. An important part of the planning process is for the change-agents to set out their long-term goals in a statement ('vision statement') which describes specifically what is to be achieved. Action plans are devised which set out the strategies to achieve the intermediate goals deemed necessary in order to achieve the final outcome ('vision').

The implementation stage is reached once the structure of the change (the 'product') is in place. In this case, the announcement made in 1972 that the ACT would have its own school system marked the end of the planning stage. What further planning did occur was no longer carried out by the original small group but came under the Federal Government and its Department of Education and Science, and took the form of initiating structures for the new system; in effect, the commencement of an implementation stage.

In strategic planning, the implementation then should work so that there are results to be seen ('outputs'). The strategies devised during the planning stage should ensure that implementation is successful and that the desired outcome is realised; to achieve this, during planning, problems likely to arise in the implementation process should be identified and strategies devised to overcome them. If the expected results occur and the desired outcome is achieved, the strategic
planning can be said to have been successful. In the case of the ACT Schools Authority, it will be seen that modifications to the desired outcome had their genesis in actions taken during the planning process.

In very general terms, the various strategic planning models follow the same principles. Tim Dalmau's adaptation of North American models, especially drawing upon Roger Kaufman's work in educational strategic planning, is the one used in this study. Kaufman's model resembles most others, although the terminology differs, but goes beyond them by incorporating an emphasis upon the importance of a long-term goal with an ultimate benefit for society. Kaufman's model is attractive, therefore, first because it deals specifically with educational change and secondly because, as Kaufman rightly


19 Kaufman, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-17. Kaufman describes the main organisational elements in his change model in terms of 'inputs', 'processes', 'products', 'outputs' and 'outcomes'. He uses terms such as needs assessment and analysis, problem or need selected for resolution, system analysis, strategical, tactical, long-range, and operational planning, organisational efforts, organisational results and outcomes to describe the steps in his model. R. Kaufman & J. Herman, 'Strategic Planning for a Better Society', *Educational Leadership*, 48, 7, April 1991, pp. 4-8.
says, many strategic planning models are reactive and start at too low a level: that is, they have a short-term view and deal with immediate problems rather than examining what should be and then devising changes to be made.\textsuperscript{20} Those who attempted so ambitious a reform of public education in the ACT certainly started from an immediate problem, but then went on to campaign for changes which went much further, in a remarkable effort of idealistic optimism. Dalmau's Australian adaptation of the Kaufman model is therefore particularly apt for the present study.

The complex interactions of three main groups within the Canberra community are fundamental to the story of the ACT Schools Authority, namely parents, teachers and administrators; in terms of strategic planning theory, these were the principal 'stakeholders'. The boundaries among these three groups were sometimes blurred, but they were sufficiently distinct to play separate roles in the development of the Schools Authority, each group having particular stakes in terms of the model being used.\textsuperscript{21} This is not meant to suggest that individuals within the groups did not play unusual or different roles. No group is monolithic and as would be expected, individuals acted idiosyncratically at times. The individual parts played by key people are examined in this study when they arise. These, however, cannot be purely understood in local terms, being part of Australia-wide, in some respects world-wide, groupings. To help explain the actions, certain sociological concepts are used.

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{ibid.}, p. 8
\textsuperscript{21} The stakes held by the members of the three groups are described in chapters 5 and 6 below.
The literature on the New Middle Class, to which all three groups belong, sheds particular light on the parents' group. The teachers' positions as members of a whitecollar union together with their strong desire for professionalism helps to explain their actions, and the literature on bureaucracy helps in understanding the administrators. Other stakeholders emerge for brief periods, the members of the Legislative Assembly and the employers' group, but their parts were much less significant in the period of this study than later, and confined to specific events or times.

There was also an outside group which played an important role in the establishment and fortunes of the Authority - the federal politicians, especially the successive Ministers for Education who, with others in Cabinet, decided the timing of the establishment of the Authority, its structure and its funding levels. Their involvement, however, was at a different level. They were not intimately connected with events in the same way as the parents, the teachers and the administrators who influenced the formation and outcomes of the Authority, and their decisions and actions were mediated by the other main groups within the Canberra community. For the purposes of this study, therefore, centred as it is upon community politics, while they are recognised as influential, they are not treated systematically as one of the key stakeholders' groups.

22 In 1972, under the Whitlam Labor Government, Ministers for Education and Science became Ministers for Education.
Despite these thematic elements, however, a broadly chronological account is used because, like all change processes, it took place over a period of time, beginning with the identification by a group of parents of the need for a change, their planning process, including the articulation of their desired long-term outcomes, their campaign to have their outcomes accepted, the implementation stage with its attendant contests and the frustration of the desired long-term outcomes.

During the period being studied, the administrative arrangements and responsibilities for ACT education changed. These structural rearrangements are described as they arise during the course of events in this study, but as they were often complex, and changes were frequent, it may be useful at this point to provide a brief chronology. In 1966, the Department of the Interior was responsible for ACT education, but the Commonwealth paid the NSW Department of Education to service ACT schools in regard to staffing, curriculum and examinations. School furniture and furnishings were funded by the Commonwealth and smaller items of equipment were supplied from requisition lists sent to the NSW Government Stores. Physical structures and property however were managed differently. The Commonwealth Office of Education administered a school building program for the ACT (and Northern Territory) in addition to its other responsibilities for administering various federal funding projects, subject to the design requirements of the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) which was responsible for the planning and development of Canberra while the Department of the Interior
(later the Department of the Capital Territory), the ACT's municipal manager, was responsible for maintaining the grounds.

These arrangements continued until February 1968, when the recently established Commonwealth Department of Education and Science took over the Department of the Interior's responsibilities for ACT education. The previous arrangements with NSW for staffing and curriculum were continued, the planning and building of schools was jointly managed by the Department of Education and Science and the NCDC, while the development of school grounds remained with the relevant section in the Department of the Interior.

In April 1972, a first step was taken away from the NSW system with the creation of the Commonwealth Teaching Service (CTS) to set up a career structure for teachers in Commonwealth schools. The following year, after the election of the Whitlam Government, federal involvement in education increased as the Commonwealth Schools Commission was set up, in large part to establish programs to distribute Commonwealth funds, but for the most part, its influence on the ACT school system was indirect except through the Innovations Program where it dispensed funds directly to schools.

The crucial change, with the origins and outcome of which this thesis is concerned, came in January 1974, when the ACT system was separated from NSW, and administered by the
Interim ACT Schools Authority under the Federal Minister of Education, advised by officers within the Department of Education. Management of the schools building program remained unchanged, and the CTS Commissioner continued to be responsible for recruiting and appointing teachers to Commonwealth territories and administering the new peer assessment process for determining eligibility for promotion. Arrangements for staffing the new Authority were complex. It drew its officers from two different services: teachers employed under the Commonwealth Teaching Service Act and public servants, their numbers controlled by the Public Service Board, employed under the Public Service Act. After 'staff ceilings' were introduced by the Whitlam Government in 1975, the Prime Minister's Department also became involved in staffing.23

The permanent ACT Schools Authority was established on 1 January 1977 under special ordinance, but responsibility to the federal Minister for Education remained and the CTS Commissioner retained his former responsibilities for peer assessment and recruiting. The permanent Authority's allocations of funds were determined by Treasury, and the Auditor-General approved financial procedures. The NCDC continued to be responsible for the planning and building of schools in accordance with design briefs developed by officers in the Authority after consultation between other interested parties. In 1978, the Authority devolved some financial

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23 The interim Authority in conjunction with the Department of Education became responsible for equipping schools
responsibilities to schools through heavily regulated 'self-management funds'. Schools became responsible for purchasing smaller items of equipment and the Authority established procedures for centralising the purchase of large items and equipment.

Until 1974, curriculum for ACT schools was provided by the NSW Department of Education and instruction supervised by departmental inspectors. After 1974, the Authority introduced school based curriculum development and school boards were given responsibility for approving curriculum determined at the school. Major curriculum policies at the system level were developed by the Council of the Schools Authority. In 1974 and for part of 1975, the Council was advised on curriculum policy by a sub-committee, the Curriculum Working Party. In 1975, it was replaced by one of the Authority's standing committees, the Education Programs Standing Committee, which included members of the community. Thus by 1980, the Council of the ACT Schools Authority had assumed a major part in deciding policy previously determined by officers within the Department of Education.

This study ends at the turn of the decade with the ACT school system also at a turning-point. Some still hoped that the 1980s would realise the vision of the 1960s, although it was apparent that this would not be as easy as the original movers had once expected. It would require a strong commitment to the original vision especially from the system's leaders as well as
from all the key groups who would be involved, parents, teachers, administrators. The further task of relating and explaining the development of the Schools Authority in the 1980s, would require a further study.

This thesis, then, investigates the problems, and disappointments, of a remarkable attempt to change the administration of education, focussing upon the complex interaction of a number of groups within the Canberra community, and how the groups' interaction helped to determine the kind of system that emerged. For those who shared the vision of a different kind of system a case study helps to explain the gains and losses and is therefore central to historical understandings. While this thesis draws on concepts from the fields of sociology and educational administration, this change to ACT education, like all other changes, takes place in and was conditioned by its own historical context. The circumstances in the ACT were unusual; in geographic, demographic and socio-political characteristics the ACT differed from the rest of Australia. The timing of the initiation and implementation of the change were also important to what eventuated. What was attempted, and in part achieved in the ACT was an aberration in the history of Australian education; a hiccup in established patterns. It began humbly with a small group determined to improve conditions for children in ACT schools and it is with these parents in the suburb of Campbell that the study begins.
PART ONE: PLANNING.

CHAPTER TWO.

THE CAMPBELL PARENTS ORGANISE

The first public indication that people had identified a problem in the ACT school system occurred in 1966. The Canberra Times published a letter from a group of parents of students at Campbell Primary School which was direct in its message.

Sir - We are greatly concerned at the increasingly obvious defects of our school system. The conditions which disturb us will be familiar to many other parents, and we believe it is time to protest at a situation which, so far from improving, gives every indication of becoming worse...

The letter criticised Canberra's public school system for having large classes, primary principals teaching full-time, unsatisfactory procedures for appointment and transfer of staff, prolonged delays in filling teacher vacancies, and unqualified and untrained teachers.

We believe that the situation is one which neither parents nor responsible leaders in education can be content any longer to accept as satisfactory.

We feel that we must try to discover remedies and provide for our children an education which will effectively lead them to develop fully as individuals and as members of our community. We hope that if other parents are dissatisfied with their children's education, they will also make this known by letters to the newspaper so that the
community as a whole can take steps to improve the situation.¹

This letter was the end result of the refusal of the NSW Department of Education to grant a request for improved staffing. Earlier that year the principal of Campbell Primary School had announced to 'an unusually large and very silent P&C meeting' that in face of an acute teacher shortage, the Department of Education would enforce the requirement for a minimum enrolment at primary schools for a non-teaching principal.² Campbell Primary was new and growing: it was not yet large enough to warrant a non-teaching principal. The principal was therefore expected to return to full time class teaching in addition to his administrative duties. To Campbell parents this appeared to be detrimental to the welfare of students and absurd in a school with rapidly increasing enrolments.

In early July, ten days before the published letter, one of the parents, Catherine (Cath) Blakers, had written to the President of the Campbell Primary School Parents' and Citizens' (P&C) Association criticising the NSW Department of Education's change in staffing policy and urging Campbell parents to protest vigorously.³

¹ H. Appleton and 12 others, letter to editor, Canberra Times, 14 July 1966, p. 2.
³ The Parents' and Citizens' Association exists as a community support for a school. It has a major fundraising function, but on occasion, engages in pressure group activities. It therefore has potential for various kinds of political action. In the ACT, local branches or
This seems to me such a retrograde step in Australian education and one which must affect adversely all children and through them, their parents, that I would like to ask that the Campbell P&C Committee take up the matter and protest in whatever ways are likely to be most effective.

May I suggest that, since other parents have also expressed concern, a Special General Meeting be called to discuss the forms which this protest might take.

She then requested that the special meeting discuss a number of proposed actions such as:

1. Approaches to other schools (and there will be many others similarly affected) in an effort to organise a combined public meeting of all interested parents. To this could be invited representatives of the Department of the Interior, NSW Education Department, and possibly also interested political candidates.
2. An organised campaign of letters to newspapers together with as much other publicity as can be obtained.
3. Deputations to Senator Gorton and Mr Anthony.

At that stage, Blakers was suggesting the possibility of solving the problem by putting pressure on the NSW administration. It is clear from her letter that she saw the problem in no mere parochial terms, and the need for other ACT schools and their P&C associations to combine, preferably under the umbrella organisation, the P&C Council, if anything were to

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4 In 1966, matters to do with ACT education requiring Commonwealth intervention were managed by officers in the Department of the Interior.
5 Senator J. Gorton was Minister for Education and Science; Mr D. Anthony was Minister for the Interior.
6 C. Blakers, letter to J. Aitken, President, Campbell P&C Association, 4 July 1966, handwritten copy, Blakers MSS.
be achieved; it also demonstrated that she was thinking in terms of an ambitious campaign. As requested, the Campbell P&C President called a meeting of parents, a sub-committee of which drafted the letter published in the *Canberra Times* on no less auspicious a date for radical change than the 14th July.

Within a week of the letter appearing, the protests took a different turn. The Campbell Primary School P&C sub-committee wrote to the President of the P&C Council. This letter added more fundamental criticisms, citing the 'monolithic, highly centralized structure of the Departments of Education in the States resulting in an approach to children, teachers and parents at best impersonal, at worst, inconsiderate and inefficient'.\(^7\) It hinted also for the first time that the parents were considering a fundamental change to the administration of the school system:

> It seems likely that for one reason or another, we will have an opportunity to set up a new system of education in the ACT in the future. It would be tragic if, when the time comes, the decisions taken were based, not on a genuine desire to provide the best kind of education, but on what was expedient or convenient or merely cheap. This could easily happen unless the community as a whole becomes aware of the issues at stake and convinced that interest and pressure are capable of achieving results.\(^8\)

The letter in the *Canberra Times* was followed by others in that paper which supported their claim that there were problems in ACT schools and described the effects of the staffing

\(^7\) C. Blakers, Convener, Campbell P&C Sub-committee, letter to President, ACT Council of P&C Associations, 20 July 1966, signed by Blakers and others, Blakers MSS.

\(^8\) Blakers and others, 20 July 1966.
difficulties. For example, it was not uncommon when teachers were absent for their students to be redistributed into other teachers' classes as additional students. Alternatively, teachers were often expected to teach two classes when other teachers were absent. Parents criticised such arrangements, for example:

Sir, ... Last Friday the 5th class teacher of Hughes Primary School was unavailable - a relief teacher took over for approximately half an hour and then was recalled. This left the Headmaster in charge of his own 6th class plus the 47 pupils of 5th class.

... There are adequate qualified teachers available, in the Woden Valley, for temporary work, but they are not being called upon...

S. McLennan  
(Mother of 5)⁹

Trained teachers were frequently unavailable for long-term vacancies and their positions were often filled by a series of short-term casual teachers. This led to considerable disruption for students:

Sir... Men of science have long accepted that homo sapiens is a most adaptable being. The local education authority seems bent on trying to verify this educationally. Children who entered the kindergarten year at North Curtin school last year and who have been transferred to South Curtin school have had nine teachers since September last year... An experiment in adaptability it may be but education it is not.¹⁰

In August, the *Canberra Times* helped the parents' cause by publishing the first of many editorials citing deficiencies in the

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administration of ACT schools. Titled *A Shortage of Everything* the final paragraph declared:

Neither the Commonwealth nor the State Governments can afford to go on blandly offering fringe benefits in education without tackling the basic problems of the teacher shortage and the need for a comprehensive school building programme. Parents who are concerned for the quality of school education must hammer at governments until they act.\(^{11}\)

While Canberra schools were not unique in Australia in experiencing staffing problems, the Campbell parents responded immediately to what they perceived as a major setback in the schooling provided for their children. Their actions, once they identified the problem, suggest an unusually confident and skilled group of citizens. They lost no time in enlisting the help of others with the specialised skills and knowledge required to further their cause as we shall see later. For example, they consulted various groups who, they believed, shared their concern for the quality of schooling in the ACT and who had useful information and expertise in running public meetings, including academics from the Australian National University. Canberra in the mid-sixties had an unusual population and a high proportion of public service personnel.\(^{12}\) The expertise they were to demonstrate in the years ahead suggests that the group of parents and those they co-opted to plan the change can be better understood as not merely citizens of what has frequently been described as a middle-class city but as members of a

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\(^{11}\) *Canberra Times*, 13 August 1966, p. 2.

\(^{12}\) The composition and unique quality of the ACT population will be elaborated further in ch. 4 below.
specific middle class group often described as the new middle class, which characteristically places great emphasis on acquiring the kind of education necessary to obtain and transmit particular skills and knowledge and is markedly expert in the arts of organisation, advocacy and publicity. In 1966 Canberra, the Campbell parents perceived their children to be suffering from inferior schooling and moved to have this remedied, exploiting the particular skills of their class. The means to effect the remedy, however, was not yet within the immediate control of residents of Canberra.

The Campbell parents had initially sought redress for the problems from the NSW Department of Education because, in the mid-sixties, it administered Canberra schooling by an agreement made in 1913. When the Australian Capital Territory came into being on 1 January 1911, all schools, both sites and premises, became the property of the Commonwealth Government. In 1913, the Prime Minister and the NSW Premier reached an agreement that, provided the Commonwealth reimbursed the NSW Government for its expenditure, the NSW Education Department would continue to administer schooling in the ACT by the appointment and control of teachers, the inspection of the schools, and the direction of instruction in accordance with the

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14 Commonwealth Government passed the *Seat of Government Act* and the *Seat of Government (Administration) Act* under which NSW law as at 1 January 1911 continued, so far as applicable, to apply to the Territory, but subject to any ordinance made by the Governor-General. In 1915, the *Jervis Bay Territory Acceptance Act* was passed.
NSW Public Instruction Act of 1880 and subsequent Regulations. The Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs would carry out and pay for the erection, repairs and maintenance of all school buildings.\textsuperscript{15}

In 1966 these arrangements were still in force. ACT schooling followed the NSW pattern in all essential matters. The NSW Department which administered ACT schooling from 'the dark brown corridors of Bridge Street', was a centralised bureaucracy, running a school system larger than any in the United States with the exception of New York.\textsuperscript{16} It was represented in the ACT by visiting school inspectors. An Education and Welfare officer located in the Department of the Interior had the oversight of ACT schools, while other sections within the Department of the Interior managed such other matters as the establishment of school grounds. By August 1966 the ACT school population was almost 24,000.\textsuperscript{17} There were 700 government school teachers serving thirty two government schools. To Bridge Street bureaucrats, the ACT, although growing very rapidly, was a small education region; these figures were


\textsuperscript{16} Words used by T. J. O'Connell, a local primary school principal, to describe the impression of remoteness of decisions made by administrators in NSW for children in Canberra in 1966. Transcript of interview taped by Media Section, ACT Schools Authority, before O'Connell's retirement, c.1976.

\textsuperscript{17} Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Education and Science, Report for 1969, AGPS, Canberra, 1970.
significant, however, to citizens in a town conscious of a distinct and separate identity and marked by its separation from NSW in other matters.

The staffing problems experienced in Campbell were widespread across Australia. The shortage of teachers as a result of low birthrates during the Depression years was compounded by the rapid growth in student numbers caused by large scale immigration and the post-war baby booms which lasted into the sixties.\textsuperscript{18} Resources for education were in heavy demand. Schools became crowded as students sought to improve their future employment prospects with better qualifications and parents could afford to extend their children's education.\textsuperscript{19} In Canberra, the effects of these difficulties took their toll and accounted for a large number of the complaints in the Campbell parents' letter to the \textit{Canberra Times}. The prolonged delays in filling permanent posts with qualified staff, and the shortage of relief staff for casual vacancies, were compounded by the pressures for additional teachers caused by the implementation of the Wyndham scheme in 1962 which changed secondary school structures and added another year to schooling. Cath Blakers remarked much later that in Canberra, as in the rest of


\textsuperscript{19} See for one explanation of this, D. Bennett, 'Education: Back to the Drawing Board', in G. Evans & J. Reeves (eds), \textit{Labor Essays}, Drummond, Melbourne, 1982.
NSW, the Wyndham Scheme 'demanded not only highly qualified teachers to cope with the new and complex courses and syllabuses - especially in science and mathematics - but also added a year to secondary schooling... The results could only be described as chaotic'... These problems were especially noticeable in Canberra because the retention rate at Canberra high schools was higher than for the rest of Australia. Cath Blakers was so concerned about the demands placed on subjects like science by the introduction of the Wyndham Scheme that, although herself not trained in science, she founded the ACT Science Teachers' Association and arranged a program of talks and courses for secondary teachers at which leading scientists provided teachers with up-to-date information.

Another parent describes parents' perceptions of the situation in the schools in the mid-sixties.

[There was] frustration engendered by the situation [which] was quite bad. It was bad in NSW and it was worse here because... the lines of communication were long and nobody ever felt any great responsibility for the ACT... a general feeling that education was in a bad situation... It was... frustration and annoyance that was built up owing to some very bad decisions that galvanised activity enough to start a reform movement... intense frustration with the very bad treatment of Canberra schools over two or three years... I just remember we were losing on every issue for two or three years... [There was] a general recognition that we were

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20 Blakers, op. cit., p. 27.
21 E. Sparke, Canberra 1954-1980, AGPS, Canberra, 1988, p. 145. The retention rate for secondary students in Canberra continued to increase and remains significantly higher than for the rest of Australia.
getting a rotten deal from NSW and that our children were not being properly looked after...23

The fine new schools erected by the Commonwealth in the ACT, a notable feature of the landscape, were seen to be in stark contrast to the quality of the curriculum and administrative support provided by the NSW Department. Cath Blakers, whose youngest child was soon to enter high school, had taught in NSW and Victoria and was critical of the mediocre education being provided within such attractive buildings, and of the inflexibility of a department which applied staffing rules so rigidly that in a rapidly growing primary school a principal would be expected to teach full-time.24 For decades, the Australian style of bureaucratic administration of education in the states had been criticised for inflexibility.25 Transfers and promotions were decided centrally. Teachers seeking promotion were assessed, placed on lists by date of eligibility for promotion, then offered promotion positions on the basis of seniority.26 School syllabuses were produced centrally, and the system relied upon visiting school inspectors to monitor performance.27 Canberra parents blamed the isolation of the NSW administration from Canberra schools with, as it seemed to them, their special needs, and the

24 C. Blakers, Interview, 3 May 1983.
27 ibid., p. 361.
lack of consultation between the parent communities and the administration, for many of the difficulties.28 While the uniformity and regularisation of a bureaucratic administration offered some advantages, in particular, the provision of universal schooling with standard curricula for all children both rural and urban - from which Canberra itself had benefited in its earlier years - ACT parents believed that the benefits were outweighed by the remoteness and rigidity of bureaucratised administration, a view supported by educators visiting from overseas.29 Blakers was later to describe the NSW administration as 'the archetype of Australian patterns of education administration - large, highly centralized, impersonal, rigid in its administration by formula and precedent; secretive in its fear of challenge and criticism'.30

Thus at the start of the movement for change, the Campbell parents proposed a 'new system of education' in the ACT to 'improve conditions in our schools' in order to provide 'the best kind of education'.31 Following the suggestions made by Cath Blakers, the sub-committee of the Campbell P&C began to plan

31 C. Blakers, Convener, Campbell P&C Sub-committee, letter to President, ACT Council of P&C Associations, 20 July 1966, signed by Blakers and others, Blakers papers.
how to gain support for their project. They enquired whether the P&C Council would be willing to take on 'enlightening the community by lectures, discussion, controversy and publicity'; 'channelling and directing the influence of other interested groups'.

The sub-committee's letter to the President of the P&C Council indicated that Campbell parents believed that the NSW Department's bureaucratic style of administration exacerbated the problems in ACT schools: the notion of educational administration as a service to children in schools, it suggested, had become lost. Lascelles Wilson, Head of the Department of Adult Education at the ANU who was to become involved in the move to change ACT education was to say later:

Our State systems of education have never shared responsibility in these ways. They have completely excluded people. They regard them as a nuisance. ... And the near perfect education system, from the administrator's point of view, is almost certainly one in which the school children are all orphans. In fact our State Education systems have tried to act on the presumption that if all children are not orphans, they ought to be.

Thus, by the end of July 1966, the Campbell parents had considered two options. The first was to put pressure on the NSW department to make the necessary improvements to ACT schooling. Within a very short time, however, they had decided upon a much more radical option. In mid-August, Ron Hughes,

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32 Blakers and others, 20 July 1966.
33 Statement made by J. L. J. Wilson in copy of summary of seminar, author not stated, Blakers papers, [1969].
President of the P&C Council, reported that the Department would not allow the ACT to have better education standards than NSW, announced that the answer was an independent ACT Authority, and stated that the question would be discussed by the District Council's first annual conference in November.\textsuperscript{34}

In arriving at their solution, it is interesting that the Campbell parents did not consider either sending their children to existing non-government schools, or creating a new private school which met their needs. An increasing number of parents were to take the first course, and enough followed the second to create new schools, of various kinds, by 1980.\textsuperscript{35} During the fifties and sixties, however, Canberra's non-government schools were also experiencing severe staffing and financial difficulties. Although the two grammar schools charged high fees, the girls' grammar school had ongoing financial difficulties.\textsuperscript{36} In addition to the high fees, some parents were deterred by the association of the grammar schools with the affluent and the associated

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Courier}, 18 August 1966, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{35} In 1972, a group of parents opened a new high fee-paying private school in Canberra, the AME school, to provide an alternative to the existing schools in Canberra. In 1973, the School Without Walls, a small alternative secondary college was opened as part of the government school system. In 1978, a small cooperative early-childhood school (pre-school to year one) was commenced under the Authority's auspices and staffed by Authority teachers. It had first begun as a cooperative neighbourhood school outside the Authority in 1976. In the late seventies and early eighties a number of small Christian schools were opened in Canberra as well as a third private non-Catholic secondary school, Radford College.
\textsuperscript{36} J. Waterhouse, \textit{A Light in the Bush: The Canberra Church of England Girls Grammar School and the Capital City of Australia, 1926-1977}, Canberra Church of England Girls Grammar School Old Grammarians Association, 1978, passim. The fees were high, relative to no fees in public schools and much lower fees in Catholic schools; however they were less than the highest fee-paying prestigious private schools in Sydney or Melbourne.
image of elitism; in any case, these schools did not have enough vacancies for the children of all parents dissatisfied with the NSW system.\textsuperscript{37} The religious emphasis in the Roman Catholic schools deterred non-Catholic parents, and these also suffered the same staffing shortage as Government schools, exacerbated by the decline in the number of religious vocations at a time when Catholic students were increasing; state aid was also in its infancy. Indeed, the staffing and financial problems in Catholic schools were so serious, that in the early seventies, Archbishop Cahill proposed that the ACT Parish Boards of Education should consider whether 'to withdraw from Catholic schooling at certain levels'.\textsuperscript{38} Federal funds for capital improvements such as science facilities and libraries in the 1960s provided some help to the secondary non-government sector, but most non-government schools had difficulty in matching the education provided in government schools until the establishment of the


Schools Commission in 1973.\textsuperscript{39} Parents seeking a non-government school education would have been forced to consider sending their children to private boarding schools, which was even more expensive. Di Mildem, a secondary teacher who later worked in the Authority and wrote about the establishment of the new system, recalls that non-government schools would have been seen as not in keeping with the standard of living which had prevailed in Canberra at the time:

After all, sending to a Catholic school in those days would have been a backwards step for non-Catholic parents because their classes were even bigger and their resources even more limited [than government schools] and that left [only] the two grammar schools, and boarding schools were beyond the pale... \textsuperscript{40}

Nor was the establishment of new schools in 1966 as easy as it became during the next decade with the administration of federal funds through the Commonwealth Schools Commission.\textsuperscript{41} Additionally, the change-agents were passionate supporters of


\textsuperscript{40} D. Mildem, Interview, 24 June 1986. D. Mildem was later to co-write with W. Mulford, \textit{The Game Changed: The Educational Policy-Making Process in the ACT}. Monograph 7, The Educational Policy Process at State Level, University of Melbourne, 1980.

\textsuperscript{41} Non-government schools which opened after 1968 were: AME School, (1972); Mawson Seventh Day Adventist School, (1972); Trinity Christian School, 1980; O'Connor Christian School (1980). The years stated indicate when students were first enrolled. Source: Non-Government Schools Office, ACT Department of Education, 29 April 1992.
the government school system on ideological grounds. Blakers recollects that they were 'unequivocal in [their] contention that government schooling could and should provide schooling of high quality to meet the differing needs of children as individuals rather than as units in a formula'.

John Riddell who joined the campaign in 1968, himself a product of private schooling in England, claims that the campaigners were 'against state aid and fairly biased against private education'. His own view which he believes was shared by most if not all of the other activists was that government schooling offered a more socially beneficial education because it allowed students to meet a far wider cross-section of society than in private schools. 'Government schooling, therefore, is not elitist, the level you reach is very much more up to you than up to other people'. He argues that the campaigners did not support state aid but felt it was the government's job to provide a system of education which 'should be the very best system of education that could possibly be afforded. If parents then opt out of that system of education they should not be subsidised'. Hugh Waring similarly, argues strongly for the democratising influence of mixing with a cross-section of Australian society in sending children to government schools.

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43 By private schooling Riddell explained he meant what in England is called the [fee-paying independent] 'public schools'. He sees an irony in this opposition to private schooling: 'Funny, because a lot of people I was associated with were also from private schools'. John Riddell's quotations in this paragraph are all from interview given 20 November 1991.

44 He defined elitism as 'special treatment without merit'.
There is no component or facet of a democracy that's more important than a school system. None. And if all children go to a common school system you have the ability to transfer mores and all sorts of values, and the values that are transferred in the Australian public schools were pretty good... You've only got to believe there is merit in the vast majority, preferably the whole lot, of children going through that state system...⁴⁵

Years later, Cath Blakers explained that the root question was whether public education was conformist by nature or merely by tradition... or whether public education could provide schooling of high quality with the flexibility and diversity to meet the differing needs of children as individuals and members of the community.⁴⁶

While the historian might find such sentiments congenial, they should not be taken at face value: it is not difficult to make out a case that they went with elements of narrow sympathies and broad self-interest. Most parent communities are concerned for their own, and the ACT parents were no exception; the NSW Department, responsible for sharing limited funds fairly to all regions, some far more needy than Canberra, was aware that the Canberra parents' concern for education was focused upon the little affluent territory in which they lived, as Henry Schoenheimer, education correspondent for the Australian, at a later date, was to note.⁴⁷ An unacknowledged residue of nineteenth century sectarian conflicts over colonial schooling which had defined the 'community' in terms that omitted the

⁴⁶ C. Blakers, 'If Wishes Were Horses... p. 3.
bulk of Catholic students, could well account for their assumptions that public schooling should have a monopoly, or at least preferential access, to government funding. There were signs of a sympathy for the plight of Catholic schools in the ACT, but as events reveal, nothing eventuated. The change-agents did not acknowledge that their children were already favoured by comparison with other students in NSW, by having parents with the very knowledge and expertise which made them able to become involved in such a move for change; there was no overt recognition that Canberra's children would be further advantaged from the additional government support required to improve their schooling.48

This only suggests that the parents' group and their supporters were no more able to shed class perspectives, local self-interest and past attitudes than others in society. What set them apart was their increasing boldness of thought and willingness to spare no effort to achieve more than just some limited benefits for their children. What might have been just another middle-class demand, through daring and determination, allied to an idealism which transcended self-interest, became instead an effective movement for long-term educational reform which went far beyond the reformers' own class, with benefits for, if not all children of their community, at least for that large

48 Handwritten copy of letter to C. Cutler, NSW Minister for Education, 12 October 1966. Letter is signed by over twenty people, from various Canberra suburbs, some signatures obscured; C. Cutler, NSW Minister for Education, letter to C. Blakers, 27 October 1966. Letters discuss a request for special consideration for permission to employ additional relief teachers available in the ACT. Blakers MSS.
majority which attended public schools; and limited to the ACT only, it is true, but still a remarkable achievement, and perhaps all that was then possible.

To achieve this, however, the parents' group had to overcome the lack of any solid institutional or professional base and a fluctuating membership, create its own enduring identity, and become genuine change-agents with a clear vision in order to guide the change-process. They had to focus others' discontent with the school system into an effective force, gain acceptance for their proposal for an independent education Authority, and develop a clear idea of what would be their distinctive solution to Canberra's education problems. Finally, they had to draw up and pursue a clear strategy for realising their vision.
CHAPTER THREE.
THE WORKING PARTY'S VISION

By the end of August, the moves for change were gathering momentum. The advantages of creating an independent education authority were being discussed openly, and the Campbell parents were ready to begin more formal planning. Blakers and another Campbell parent, Lois Perry, met Lascelles Wilson, Acting Head of the Department of Adult Education at the ANU, to plan a public seminar on the proposed topic *An Independent Education Authority for the ACT*. Wilson agreed to enlist the cooperation of the New Education Fellowship, an organisation of educators and others interested in schooling, the Australian College of Education, a professional association of educators from all sectors and levels of education, and the P&C Council.¹

The next task for the planners was to formulate a clear statement of the desired outcome ('vision statement') which could become a reference for later planning of strategic activities.² Ideally, it should reflect the context of the proposed change and take into account likely problems; it should also be directed to the expected long-term benefits for the society in which it is situated. It was important that the

¹ J. L. J. Wilson, Acting Head, Department of Adult Education, ANU, letters to C. Blakers, 24 August 1966, 14 September 1966, Blakers papers.
vision statement should establish a purpose for change and inspire others to co-operate in making it.

This group left very little to chance in planning the November seminar on 'An Independent Education Authority for the ACT'. It was timed for the week following a P&C conference on the same topic. Members of the planning group were organised to speak at the seminar and opportunities were made for open discussion. The meeting was expected to lead to the formation of a Working Party to plan the details of a new school system. Lascelles Wilson, Cath Blakers and John Burns, a Campbell parent and Reader in Applied Mathematics at the ANU, planned the membership of the proposed Working Party carefully. Invitations were sent to those identified as possible members. Fourteen people including academics, Campbell parents and school principals from the government and non-government schools accepted the invitations before the seminar. The Working Party was expected to produce a report which would provide a strong argument for the establishment of an independent education system addressed to education policy-makers at the highest levels, as well as to the wider Canberra public. In effect, the report would become an instrument for persuasion.

3 J. L. J. Wilson, letter to C. Blakers, 14 September 1966, Blakers papers; R. St. C. Johnson, Interview, 23 April 1991.
4 Department of Adult Education, Acceptances of Invitations to form a Working Party to report on the subject of An Independent Education Authority for the ACT, Typewritten document, with handwritten comments, (n.d.), Blakers MSS. The names of suggested members for the Working Party on this list were, as stated: Sir George Currie (Chairperson), Mr J. L. J. Wilson, Mrs G. E. Blakers, Professor D. A. Brown, Dr J. Burns, Dr J. C. Caldwell, Sister Clare, Brother Darmody, Mr G. Hughson, Professor R. St C. Johnson, Mr J. C. Lane, Mr P. McKeown, Mr T. O'Connell, Mr K. Townley.
The correct choice of person to chair the Working Party and produce such a report was crucial. On behalf of the parents' group, Cath Blakers invited Sir George Currie, who was retired and living in Canberra, to chair the public meeting. The organisers also planned that he would chair the Working Party. As Blakers later observed, 'Sir George Currie's acceptance of the position of Chairman of the Working Party was of fundamental importance to the seriousness with which the subsequent Report and the continuing campaign were accepted during the following years'. Sir George was experienced in planning and remodelling the structures of educational institutions. As Vice-Chancellor at the University of New Zealand, he had initiated organisational changes, and he had chaired a Commission of Inquiry into New Zealand education which recommended proposals for formal decentralisation with far-reaching effects on New Zealand schooling. In 1963 he had chaired the Commission on Higher Education in Papua and New Guinea. Mr (later Sir) Paul Hasluck, Minister for Territories, describes how this came about:

I gave the Prime Minister my view that we should set up a commission with a person of some eminence as chairman to report to the government on all matters of higher education in Papua and New Guinea with reference to a proposed university... It was very lucky for the

6 C. Blakers, in P. Hughes & W. Mulford (eds), The Development of An Independent Education Authority, ACER, 1978, p. 36.
Territory that Sir George was available and willing to set aside some other requests for his services in order to help us... It was a very good commission.8

Sir George, described by Hugh Waring as 'a man of considerable charisma', had a record of taking an independent stand when he believed it was warranted. Hasluck and other advisers to the Currie Commission had suggested a university college operating under the control and guidance of another Australian university as the model for Papua New Guinea; instead, the Currie Commission 'was adamant that the new university to be established in PNG would be autonomous'.9 Sir George had therefore demonstrated his ability to advocate radical change without losing the respect of senior politicians. He seemed the right person to guide the Working Party successfully towards producing a report which was expected to design a different kind of school system in the ACT.

The Canberra Times reported both the P&C Conference and the public seminar.10 As expected, the seminar participants endorsed the formation of a Working Party to produce a report on the proposal for an independent education Authority for the ACT. Acceptance of this proposal was primed by parents' criticisms of the conditions in ACT schools discussed at the P&C

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8 P. Hasluck, op. cit., p. 388.
9 Quotation, H Waring, Interview, 3 January 1992. Waring was later to become heavily involved in the planning and implementation of the new school system. V. Lynn Meek, The University of Papua New Guinea, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, London, New York, 1982, p. 70.
10 Canberra Times, 5 November 1966, p. 3; 7 November 1966, pp. 3, 9; 14 November 1966, pp. 1, 3.
Conference the previous week. The Working Party membership was increased when representatives from the teachers' union made it clear they did not believe that principals spoke for all teachers. The planners were apparently unaware of the significance of this protest as a portent of future difficulties with teacher unionists about representation. Teacher unionists were added, as well as other people suggested at the seminar. As expected, Sir George Currie was chosen to chair the Working Party.

The Working Party held a series of meetings during 1967, and in December, released its Report, *An Independent Education Authority for the Australian Capital Territory*, setting out a blueprint for a new system. Copies were submitted to the Minister for the Interior, the Minister for Education and Science, the NSW Minister for Education, the secretaries of their departments, and Mr Jim Fraser, the member for the ACT. Front page headlines and generous coverage in the *Canberra Times* ensured wide publicity and discussion in the ACT remarkable for an unofficial report. Interstate newspapers devoted considerable space to reports and commentary.

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11 Department of Adult Education, Australian National University, Papers Given at the Seminar on An Independent Education Authority for the ACT, Canberra, 12 November 1966, Johnson papers.
12 Discussed in ch. 9 below.
13 C. Blakers, Interview, 3 May 1983. See Appendix 1 for membership of Currie Working Committee.
16 The *Age*, 11 December 1967, p. 6; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 December 1967, p. 4; *The Australian*, 'Experts want an adventurous
editorial in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, under the title, 'Fresh wind from the Monaro', commented enthusiastically upon the plan, and suggested that it might assist other states to improve their school systems.\(^{17}\)

The *Currie Report*, as it became known, consisted of a number of parts. A summary of the argument was followed by a list of recommendations and a section headed 'Suggestions for Further Consideration'. A number of sub-committee reports were included as appendices. In the last two parts of the Report, innovative ideas for Australian education were explored. As the desired outcome of the change process, the authors portrayed a completely new style of organisation for an ACT education Authority, which was not borrowed from any particular school system but was an amalgam of features derived from the English local education authorities, the New Zealand school system, some decentralised school systems in North America, models for decentralisation proposed by Australian educators, and the many recommendations for improvement of Australian schooling made by visiting overseas educators during the previous three decades.

The authors emphasised Canberra's uniqueness and sought an Authority designed for its special needs 'based on its function as the National Capital, its population and occupational patterns, the compactness of its area and the fact that it [was] a

\(^{17}\) *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 December 1967, p. 2.
fully planned city'.\textsuperscript{18} They portrayed the ACT as a place with a distinctive character of its own and therefore entitled to a new and different education system which would be responsive to local and changing needs. It was not considered appropriate for the ACT to continue to conform to a state-wide school system administered in a uniform fashion with no provision for adaptability or flexibility in its policies, curricula, examination and organisation. The authors argued

\ldots that the education system should not be a highly centralised one, nor one which conforms to a rigid pattern, though it should certainly be a coherent one, in that it should provide logical development from one stage in education to the next, as well as the correlation between the various sections.\textsuperscript{19}

They noted that as the ACT remained a part of NSW for the purpose of education, this meant that it followed 'a standard pattern in many vital issues' which, at that stage, 'should clearly be matters for self-determination'.\textsuperscript{20}

The quintessence of the Report was a strong aversion to bureaucratic administration and a strong preference for replacing it in the ACT with democratic participation in educational administration through an autonomous Education Authority. It maintained that 'it should not be assumed that an ACT system of education should automatically follow the centralised pattern characteristic of Australian states at present'.\textsuperscript{21} 'Experiment, change and development tend to be

\begin{footnotes}
\item[18] Currie Report, p. 4.
\item[19] ibid., p. 10.
\item[20] ibid., p. 5.
\item[21] ibid., p. 6-7.
\end{footnotes}
slow and procedures cumbersome'. The Working Party considered that the NSW Education Department's administration of ACT schools suffered from a rigid conformity to procedural rules and regulations in staffing appointments, transfers and promotions, remarking that 'the central authority seems remote, and its decisions often arbitrary'. The following criticisms were then used to present the case for a different type of system:

... Local responsibility and local initiative are clearly restricted in many fundamental areas of education ...
... In addition many valuable contributions which the local authority is prepared to make in the light of local needs are restricted or have to be abandoned because they depart too sharply from general policy or practices in the State systems...
... In the present arrangement there is no real provision for adaptation or flexibility ...

The authors sought ACT responsibility for a new and different education system, calling for the establishment under an Act of Parliament of an autonomous Authority to provide

a system of public education which embraces pre-school, primary, secondary and technical education as well as such specialised fields of education as migrant education, evening and technical college adult education, psychiatric educational clinics, special schools and classes for handicapped and retarded children and ancillary library facilities.

The idea of autonomy was taken yet further: it was proposed that the new system would provide an imaginative solution 'based on the needs of the individual' which would 'by its own

22 ibid., p. 4.
23 ibid., p. 4.
24 ibid., p. 5.
25 ibid., p. 9
nature be flexible, experimental, and varied.\textsuperscript{26} Diversity and independence, the very antithesis of the existing arrangements, were important principles.

The differences between individuals and their varying needs would be reflected in the diversity of educational theory and practice to be seen in the schools themselves which should function, as far as may be practicable, as independent organisations growing out of and appropriate to the needs of the community they serve, and united by an acceptance of those fundamental aims and principles which should be common to all.\textsuperscript{27}

Throughout the Report, accommodation to community needs, parent participation in schooling, independence and exercise of responsibility were reiterated in different contexts. For example:

... the schools should be as diverse as seems appropriate to the community and to the need for experiment and development. The corollary of this is that the schools themselves should have a large measure of independence and that each should be regarded as a professionally competent institution.\textsuperscript{28}

The Working Party suggested that a Board of Education should administer the system with parent and teacher representation, characterising it 'as a controlling and co-ordinating body which should, by the judicious delegation of its authority whenever possible, ensure that it does not become too centralised.'\textsuperscript{29} In summary, they said,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} \textit{ibid.}, p. 7.
\item \textsuperscript{27} \textit{ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{28} \textit{ibid.}, p. 11.
\item \textsuperscript{29} \textit{ibid.}, p. 12.
\end{itemize}
The government system of education, then, is visualised as one of high quality, based on free schools which are largely independent and responsible: one which offers freedom of choice to parents and in which their participation is a vital element; one where the controlling Authority itself is flexible, adaptable and sympathetic.\textsuperscript{30}

In 1967 this was a brave vision, and it was clearly enunciated. Such a system was completely different from any then existing in Australia. Those who proposed it could point to no successful prototype. Although six years were to pass before moves were made to implement some of the recommendations, the vision was to remain remarkably constant. The principles enunciated were to be repeated frequently in a variety of forums during the years leading up to the establishment of the new Authority, and eventually in the philosophical statements which established the new school system. The design for the new system was not just claiming that there was a legitimate voice in education for parents as an extension of a natural right, but also proposing benefits for the effectiveness of the system. The desired long-term outcome was for a school system which was improved by the contribution of both teachers and parents, and therefore benefited from the additional wisdom accessible to it. It met the strategic planning model's requirement for an outcome which would benefit the society in which it was situated.\textsuperscript{31}

However radical and even daring in its content, and despite the fact it originated from a private, \textit{ad hoc} committee, the

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{ibid.}, p. 11.
Currie Report, which resembled conventional government-sponsored reports in format, acquired a quasi-official status, and received such wide publicity that it could not be ignored. The great public interest which greeted the release of the Report certainly did not pass unnoticed by the Minister for Education and Science, Senator (now Sir) John Gorton. In December 1967 he issued a statement that a separate ACT system of education was 'almost inevitable', although it gave no date for implementation. He commented that the committee had made a useful contribution to public discussion on education in the ACT, although he did not agree with all its suggestions. A number of propositions were described as 'very sensible', 'particularly the suggestion for greater parent participation on the governing bodies of individual secondary schools', and greater autonomy for individual schools within a common pattern of education was a 'worthwhile goal'. Senator Gorton then indicated that he was not convinced that all Canberra citizens had yet accepted the recommendations and that he envisaged a more limited scope for the controlling body, but added that 'if the goals are ultimately accepted by the community, I think they can be brought about by some type of advisory body in the sense that the Universities Commission is an advisory body'.

A further encouraging development came in February 1968 after Senator Gorton became Prime Minister, when the administration of ACT education was transferred from the

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32 Ken Jones, former Secretary, Department of Education, Interview, 3 February 1987.
33 Canberra Times, 12 December 1967, p. 3.
Department of the Interior to the Department of Education and Science; here it came under more senior administrators, in a new department, created after the 1966 federal elections, which legitimated the Commonwealth's growing *de facto* power in education.\textsuperscript{34} Suddenly the ACT was located within the arena of national educational policy-making. Mr Malcolm Fraser who followed him as Minister for Education and Science linked the *Currie Report* with the management of ACT education within his Department and stated, 'there are some ideas I want to study more clearly.'\textsuperscript{35}

The *Currie Report*, launched with such encouraging responses, provided a vision statement which would become the basis for the development of further strategic activities and marked an important achievement in the change process.\textsuperscript{36} Hugh Waring is emphatic about its importance:

> You mustn't underestimate the effect of that *Currie Report*. It's a remarkable document. It's liberal and yet it's practical in many ways and it showed a vision of something different... It was a blueprint - a pretty rough blueprint, but nevertheless it [gave us] the strategy...\textsuperscript{37}

It reflected four aims of those working for change. The first three were strongly articulated: an education Authority independent from NSW administration; a democratic, participatory administration; school structures and

\textsuperscript{34} Canberra Times, 27, 28 February 1968. Also, see G. Harman & D. Smart (eds), *Federal Intervention in Australian Education*, Georgian House, Melbourne, 1982, p. 24.

\textsuperscript{35} Canberra Times, 13 March 1968.

\textsuperscript{36} The ideology of the people who wrote the *Currie Report* will be discussed in ch. 5 below.

\textsuperscript{37} H. Waring, Interview, 3 January 1992.
curriculum more appropriate to the needs of Canberra. The fourth aim was implied: more resources for ACT schools.

According to Dalmau's strategic planning model, the preparation of this report should have been made in conjunction with a careful analysis of the context and of the key people to be involved in order to devise activities to overcome threats and enhance the opportunities. All the circumstances should have been checked to ensure that there were no obstacles to the planners successfully pursuing their goal. For example, there should have been firm evidence of support for the longterm outcome from the people who would be most affected. The vision had to be shared by those involved, otherwise, according to strategic planners, the implementation stage would almost certainly run into difficulties. An examination of the elements which should have been checked is the next step in this discussion.
CHAPTER FOUR.

ANALYSING THE CONTEXT

By the end of 1967, the parents' group was ready to plan and carry out strategies to achieve the radical change they had advocated; as change-agents, they needed to consider very carefully the situation in which they were placed. Would the context support it? Did others want it? Was everyone who would be involved in agreement about it and the effects upon themselves and others? The Currie Report had emphasised the unique characteristics of the national capital. It claimed that Canberra possessed

a distinctive character of its own as a community... based upon its function as the National Capital, its population and occupational patterns, the compactness of its area and the fact that it [was] a fully planned city... [Its] system of education should reflect and be appropriate to its own particular character'.

Eric Sparke, in his history of Canberra, cites statistical and other evidence which supports the parents' view that Canberra in the mid-sixties was different from other Australian cities. In the workforce, for example, public service and defence represented about thirty two percent, community, professional and business services over sixteen percent, and the construction industry some thirteen per cent. In what was designed to be a political, administrative and education centre, the development

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1 G. Currie (Chair), An Independent Education Authority for the Australian Capital Territory, 1967, p. 4. The notion of community will be further discussed in ch. 5 below.
of commerce was secondary and industry, outside construction, was negligible. Canberrans earned more, spent more, owned more motor vehicles, built more expensive homes; not least, they were more educated, the proportion of the population with tertiary qualifications being twice the national average. In the sixties, the population was reaping the benefits of its educated, cosmopolitan composition. Many residents travelled widely as part of their work, on overseas postings or to conferences. Sparke observes that Canberra during the 1960s was a politically aware and mentally stimulating society.3

One of the many unusual characteristics of this, the biggest inland city in Australia, was the large construction program. An 'astonishing range of projects' had been completed: among others, the Academy of Science, Bendor and Scrivener dams, Civic Offices and Civic Square, the Law Courts, Reserve Bank, Menzies and Chifley library buildings at ANU, the Monaro Mall, Canberra Theatre Centre, and Lake Burley Griffin, completed in 1964 as a central focus of the city.4 The positive and negative features of an expanding city were rapidly appearing: a rising skyline, expensive clubs and candle-lit restaurants, traffic congestion and the installation of traffic lights, cinemas open on Sundays, TABs, and television stations. Between 1958 and 1965, Canberra had changed 'from a semi-rustic town to an integrated, if still small and incomplete, national capital'.5

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3 Sparke, op. cit., p. 145-146. The statistics in this section are taken from this source unless otherwise indicated
4 ibid., pp. 103, 141.
5 ibid., p. 103.
The large building program matched the growth in population which, between 1958 and 1965, had more than doubled to over 86000; the annual growth rate averaged a 'remarkable' 11.8 per cent and was expected to continue.6 During the 1960s the birthrate exceeded the national average and a quarter of the total population was aged between twenty and thirty five.7 The problems with the school system were accentuated by the rapid population growth rate; there were many families with young children in schools just at the time the NSW Department of Education was undergoing severe difficulties.8 By 1966 the census figures indicated that the population had grown to over 93000.9 Geographically, however, Canberra was compact; it took less than half an hour to cross town. The expansion of the city was closely supervised and controlled by the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) which 'agonised over all development, large or small' and 'sought to control the complete environment of the city in a way rarely, if ever, attempted elsewhere'.10 New residential areas were planned, built and populated before more areas were developed, sometimes developed and settled within months as whole departments were relocated from Melbourne.

A town dominated by public servants, and which was so obviously a carefully-contrived government artifact, encouraged expectations which help explain why the Currie Report emerged in Canberra, and not somewhere else. While so many of the

6 ibid., pp. 104-5.
7 ibid., p. 145.
8 ibid., p. 145.
9 ibid., pp. 105, 145.
10 ibid., p. 129.
population had been brought from elsewhere (often unwillingly), there were still vestiges of the approach that citizens outposted from the large cities of the eastern seaboard to this frontier town in the semi-arid inland deserved special treatment. Demands for government intervention came especially easily in a public service town where the dominant class had already been provided with fine school buildings for its children, subsidised rents and mortgages for its homes and a generous number of free trees and shrubs for its gardens.

The design of the city, organised into such distinct units, especially when these were created so rapidly, may also have made it easier to accept the idea of a new education system decentralised into similar 'neighbourhoods'. As later events were to confirm, the notion of neighbourhood was important to residents. A planning concept, it was also a physical reality. Canberra's design, which evolved into the 'Y-plan' in 1967, was formulated upon a number of small geographical regions with regional shopping centres and community facilities in addition to the smaller neighbourhood shopping centres. It was also in large part a social reality. The lack of family connections and the distance of most of its citizens from their former social networks in other states or countries meant that Canberra's residents were forced to develop new friendships in order to maintain a social

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11 John Riddell, one of the campaigners for the new school system agreed that this assumption was probably accurate. J. Riddell, interview, 20 November 1991.
life; in this period some 700 voluntary organisations flourished.\textsuperscript{13} For many members of families who were engaged in paid work outside the home, their colleagues provided some social contacts, but members of families setting up in new neighbourhoods in the sixties also frequently developed strong community ties as they were forced to depend upon each other for entertainment and social life, although in the mid-sixties this was less than in previous decades.\textsuperscript{14} Families in new suburbs were drawn together in their shared endeavours, a 'true frontierland', as Alan Fitzgerald was reported as saying.\textsuperscript{15} The local school was frequently one of the first buildings erected in a new neighbourhood and, in the early years, formed a focus for the burgeoning local parent community. As Blakers describes the neighbourhood of Campbell in 1966 it was:

\begin{quote}
a moderately middle-class suburb with a healthy mixture of government and private housing, and with a population drawn from different States and from a range of occupations, while retaining a strong element of military and civil service. Yet the striking feature of the Campbell population (as in other new Canberra suburbs) was that they all lived in new houses - government or privately built, were all much the same age and were in the process of bearing and rearing many children. Gardens had to be hewn at week-ends from the Campbell rock, and costly topsoil overlaid, continuously watered and laboriously weeded to produce durable lawns for roving crowds of children and their dogs. In the circumstances, there developed a neighbourly spirit which, in the early 1960s, acquired a community base in the raising of funds for preschool committees. From there it extended naturally to the primary school and later to the high school.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Sparke, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 146.
\item \textsuperscript{14} J. Brough, 'The Last of our Pioneering Public Servants', \textit{Canberra Times}, 10 February 1991, p. 19.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Sparke, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 146.
\item \textsuperscript{16} C. Blakers, 'A Participant Observer View of the Establishment of the Authority', in P. Hughes & W. Mulford, \textit{The Development of an}
Most residents of Canberra worked in secure, well paid employment. The demographic statistics noted above indicated that the majority of the population were in occupations with higher salary levels than elsewhere in Australia. The thirty two per cent in the public service and defence forces, as well as university academics, were tenured until resignation or retirement with superannuation benefits, rare in other occupations, while the sixteen per cent who held positions in community, professional or service occupations generally had at least adequate if not generous remuneration.\(^{17}\) One quarter of the population had been born too late to experience the difficulties of the Depression years except, perhaps, as young children, and in the boom years of the sixties, the memories of the Depression were almost three decades in the past.\(^{18}\) In the years between 1958 and 1965, Canberra was a boom town; 2900 job transfers from Melbourne took place, 8000 houses became 17000, university undergraduate enrolments increased from 560 to 2400 and student numbers at the new technical college doubled to 4000.\(^{19}\) In this period, described by Sparke as a new 'golden age', life in Canberra with its higher salaries, low rates, low rents and a planned environment must have seemed very golden indeed, and although it was sometimes acknowledged that for a 'submerged tenth' of the population, as an ANU sociologist described them, circumstances were not so fortunate, even they

\(^{17}\) Sparke, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

\(^{18}\) One quarter of the population was less than 35 years of age. Sparke, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

\(^{19}\) Sparke, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
had significant benefits from the unique character of their city.\textsuperscript{20} The 1960s were years of economic expansion and as one of the campaigners, John Riddell, noted, for most of Canberra's citizens there seemed little reason to believe that this would change within a decade. It seemed it 'would go on forever... Australia was indeed the "lucky country"... '\textsuperscript{21} A downturn in the economy with possible unemployment for themselves or their children would not have been a likely topic of conversation; such circumstances provided a kind of security which allowed citizens in Canberra to accept an opportunity to become daring in their imagination and to experiment. In a period when so many other changes to society were occurring, a program to introduce a new and different school system would not have appeared impossible.

Canberra was also completely different from the other large provincial towns in NSW because it was the location of federal government. To have education administered by NSW was anomalous, when everything else was administered by the Commonwealth government, another name for Canberra. The system of government was complex. Parliament delegated the capital's management to federal departments and agencies but as Sparke points out, Cabinet did not baulk at making arbitrary decisions affecting ACT residents.\textsuperscript{22} Parliament also had a continuous presence in the capital through the various parliamentary committees which were frequently set up to

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{ibid.}, p. 146. Sparke quotes an ANU sociologist, Dr Frank Jones. (No citation)
\textsuperscript{21} J. Riddell, Interview, 20 November 1991.
\textsuperscript{22} Sparke, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 274.
investigate matters affecting the ACT. The political representative of the people of the ACT in the Federal Parliament was the very popular Labor member, Jim Fraser, who had a substantial personal following, largely because he kept very close to local issues and the concerns of his constituents.

Two bodies administered most of the Territory's functions: the National Capital Development Commission, responsible for planning and building, and the Department of the Interior (later called the Department of the Capital Territory), which acted as municipal manager. As a result, the various Ministers of the Interior had 'a powerful hold' on the city. Other aspects of Canberra were managed by a variety of departments. Ruth Atkins suggests that it would be difficult to exclude any federal department or agency as a factor in Canberra's administration. The result was, as Sparke said, that 'Canberra had no 'government' in the accepted democratic sense but only an administrative labyrinth'. There was no single body to coordinate Canberra's management and financing.

Democracy for the citizens of Canberra took the form of an ACT Advisory Council, established in 1930 with four nominated

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23 Sparke notes that, constitutionally, the Commonwealth's powers over the ACT resided in the sections vesting it with the Seat of Government and the power to make laws for it (Sections 125 and 50(i) and especially in Section 122); ibid., p. 273.
24 See R. Atkins, The Government of the Australian Capital Territory, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1978, p. 13. Jim Fraser remained the federal member until his death in 1970, when he was replaced by Kep Enderby, a local barrister. The representation was increased in the next decade to two senators and two members of the House of Representatives.
25 Sparke, op. cit., p. 274.
26 Atkins, op. cit., p. 8.
27 Sparke, op. cit., p. 275.
members and three elected members.\textsuperscript{28} It was limited to advising the Minister of the Interior on ACT matters and therein lay its downfall. Powerless and ineffectual, it was rarely taken seriously and was usually regarded with indifference by the Canberra public. The Advisory Council had been established as a temporary expedient until self-government occurred; the indifference that Canberrans exhibited towards the Advisory Council, however, was matched, if not surpassed, by their apathy towards the notion of self-government.\textsuperscript{29} This unconcern, Sparke claims, did not arise from a dearth of information or publicity about self-rule, nor from any lack of public awareness, the Canberra community being at least as politically sophisticated as any in Australia; the reason, he suggests, appeared to be 'enlightened self-interest - Canberrans knew when they were well off...'\textsuperscript{30} They had no major complaints about the administration of the city, they were suspicious of the self-seeking motives of those who advocated self-government and most of all they suspected that it would cost them dearly.\textsuperscript{31} On the other hand, although there was no formal requirement to do so, the NCDC, which was after all central to the physical and social development of Canberra, published its plans and invited public

\textsuperscript{28} Over the years the numbers of elected members rose to eight but they remained part-time. The four appointed public servants retained their voting rights to the end. In 1974, Cabinet replaced the Advisory Council with a larger, wholly elected Legislative Assembly of 18 part-time members in preparation for self-government. Sparke, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 278-282.

\textsuperscript{29} This was to be demonstrated in a referendum on self-government held in November 1978, when ACT citizens voted to retain the status quo in government. Following the referendum, the Legislative Assembly was renamed the House of Assembly in 1979.

\textsuperscript{30} Sparke, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 272.

\textsuperscript{31} The financial consequences for the ACT when self-government finally occurred in the late 1980s confirmed the increase in costs brought about by the privilege of democracy for Canberra residents.
comment on its planning proposals and to this extent, Canberra residents were provided with a kind of participation, more than was customary in most other cities. On the rare occasions when they were seriously dissatisfied about some aspect of life in Canberra the citizens apparently felt empowered enough to protest and to pressure for change, as exemplified in the move for change which is the subject of this study. In the absence of an effective structure of local government, the educated, travelled, confident and politically astute Canberra residents felt free to 'go it alone', if necessary, to adopt a 'do-it-yourself' approach.

Canberra in the mid-sixties, then, was a unique setting demographically, geographically, socially and in its form of government. It was an atypical Australian context in which to plan the creation of a radically different school system, and the authors of the Currie Report took this into account in their argument.32

The idea of an independent ACT school system of some kind was not new. During the 1950s at least one officer in the Department of the Interior in Canberra had voiced opinions about the possibility.33 Because it was anomalous, the NSW administration of ACT education had been accepted as a temporary arrangement. The troubles in education, coming precisely when Canberra had acquired a much more positive

32 Currie Report, pp. 4-6.
33 G. F. Wynn, ACT Services Branch, Department of the Interior, letter to E. L. French, Senior Lecturer, School of Education, University of Melbourne, 11 February 1958, Wynn MSS, private collection held by ACTSA.
identity and a population large enough to have a school system of its own, helped give wide acceptance to the idea. The increasing sense of indignation that people were feeling is expressed well by John Riddell.

Canberra had reached a certain size... [It] started feeling different from Sydney... There was a wave of change - a wave of nausea against the NSW government which was obnoxious at that time...We felt alien...34

On a number of occasions, members of the ACT Advisory Council had made unsuccessful attempts to have this matter considered by the Commonwealth when criticisms of particular aspects of ACT schooling were brought to their notice or when it was suggested that ACT students should be trained in a local teachers' college.35 Earlier that same year, the Advisory Council had passed a resolution requesting ministerial consideration of an independent education Authority for the ACT which had been rejected.36 Canberra residents displayed their customary indifference to Advisory Council business and at that time the issue did not catch their attention.37

Criticisms of the 'monolithic, highly centralized structure of the Departments of Education in the States' were also not

37 For a description of the ACT Advisory Council and Canberra citizens' perceptions of its operations, see Sparke, pp. 269-272.
new. As Appendix II in the Currie Report pointed out, Australian educators had long been vocal in seeking improvements to the administration of schooling. As far back as the 1930s they had pointed to the lack of democratic participation in government organisations and the bureaucratic administration of state education systems. The enthusiasm for reform to schooling generated by the huge New Education Fellowship Conference organised by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) in 1937 which drew 8600 individual enrolments and arranged some 300 addresses, had reinforced the push to change the over-centralised rigid administration: as Spaull was to comment later, it was 'almost akin to a giant revival meeting in which Australians came away with their worst suspicions confirmed about the state of Australian education, but resolved to make amends'. The themes of the conference, 'the culmination of efforts by a small group of intellectual reformers', were repeated by the keynote speakers as they travelled through the Australian states and helped to kindle the desire for reform. The Second World War had interrupted this

38 Blakers and others, 20 July 1966.
mounting enthusiasm, and the central government control required by the war effort strengthened centralised bureaucracy. After the war the impetus for change was lost as wartime shortages and post-war reconstruction changed the focus for reform to a demand for federal funding.

Eventually, after more than a decade of concerted pressure from teachers' and parents' associations, Prime Minister Menzies had begun to provide it by initiating legislation in 1964 for federal grants to be made to both government and independent secondary schools for science laboratories and science teaching apparatus. The Currie Working Party members had connected the various castigations by overseas educators in the post-war years of the bureaucratic administration of education to the special needs of a unique town to make an argument for a change to ACT schooling, and, as the federal government which their city existed to serve became more and more involved in education, they were confident of eventual success.

The broader context of the mid-sixties also supported this optimistic approach. According to one of the campaigners, in general terms, at that time 'there was a degree of

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42 Australia. Department of Education and Science, Report for 1967-68, Canberra 1969, p. 26-29. This Secondary Science Facilities Scheme was followed by a similar scheme for libraries, the Secondary Schools Library Programme, and a pattern was established for Federal funding to schools in the states.

dissatisfaction with the status quo.' The advent of Vietnam and of Nimbin, John Riddell argues, led to 'a glorious time of relatively peaceful revolt [which] changed society enormously'. Movements for participation in school systems were occurring overseas in the sixties and seventies. The vision of the radically different public school system described in the *Currie Report* was in keeping with a climate of change that fostered hopes that change in education was appropriate and possible. Many authors have written of the social upheavals of the 1960s in Australia and overseas, with the concomitant questioning of traditional practices, including those within the field of education.

As David Bennett later pointed out, during the 1950s and 1960s increasing prosperity for more people and the expectation of longer secondary schooling for more students led many parents to expect that their children would be able to better themselves through credentials which would provide opportunities for upward mobility and access to better jobs.

[The] mid-1960s represented the high point of faith in education and the expectations of that period now seem hopelessly unreal. Education was expected to establish an equal society, maintain economic growth and promote

national prosperity, while at the same time providing everyone with higher incomes, interesting jobs and a pleasant middle-class life.47

While ACT schools, as part of the NSW administration, encountered similar problems, ACT parents shared the same expectations for their children's education as, or even higher expectations than, other Australian parents and were highly critical of what was offered. The Currie Report stated: 'Australia has never been in the forefront of western nations in its financial recognition of the importance of education. It has indeed some claim to being regarded as an underprivileged country in this respect'.48 They were merely restating the outspoken observation of one of the visitors to Australia in 1963. 'If God had wanted to create a poverty-stricken shambles with the greatest educational inequalities possible in an affluent society, He would have invented Australia.'49

Blakers later summarised the dissatisfaction with schooling in the mid-sixties, stating that:

... the pressures for change in the provisions and processes of schooling were becoming evident. The Second World War and the comparative affluence which followed it changed social expectations and attitudes. Educational qualification became more than ever the key to a good job, money, status and presumably happiness. A more socially mobile and ambitious population demanded that schooling,

and education generally, provide the avenue to educational qualification not just for the few as previously, but for all.50

The parents' desire for participatory structures also echoed an increasing demand for participation in all areas of government, which, as John Docker points out, had been initiated in this century during the years before the second world war when Professor John Anderson and his followers in Sydney attempted to define and promote the notion of participatory democracy.51 By the late 1960s the theme of participation was appearing in political statements, echoing similar demands being forcefully voiced overseas, especially in the tertiary education sector. Fitzgerald and others suggest that this was part of a worldwide trend as trade unions in many countries sought worker participation and university staff faced demands for student participation.52 David Bennett later commented, that as

part of a growing desire to participate in decisions about their own lives... many parents became less inclined to take for granted the judgments of teachers and principals, while the great centralised bureaucracies which administered state schools seemed inefficient and unresponsive.53

In the sixties therefore, belief in the efficacy of schooling for improvement of life chances was widespread. This provided a supportive climate which encouraged the members of the Working Party to consider making a radical change and may possibly have obscured the magnitude of that change. The solution to their perceived problem was proposed very early; barely weeks after the need had been publicly identified. Almost eighteen months later, when the Currie Report was published and the planners had created a structure around this proposed solution, their assessment of need focused mostly upon the strengths of their argument and the opportunities presented by their solution. They debated the arguments they thought would be used to counter their solution by making assertions which they substantiated with statistics and other information which supported their views, as, for example, in the argument they mounted that the ACT was large enough to sustain its own system.\footnote{Currie Report, pp. 63-66.} They did not examine potential threats to a decentralised, participatory school system, for example, difficulties that would be faced by a non-bureaucratic organisation in a milieu of government bureaucracies. Instead, they justified their case by using the arguments of other educators who had advocated similar changes to the state education systems. If they were to be successful in achieving their task, there was another important part of the context yet to be examined, the key stakeholders who would

\footnotetext{1983, p. 114. The importance of participation to the parents' group will be discussed at greater length in ch. 5 below.}

\footnotetext{54 Currie Report, pp. 63-66.}
be affected by the moves for change. Not least in importance were those who had a large stake in the goal that had been set, who had identified a problem and suggested the solution: the change-agents themselves.
CHAPTER FIVE.

THE PARENT GROUP

In the space of eighteen months significant progress had been made: from the publication of a letter in the Canberra Times, a solution had been proposed, a working party had been formed and a report written which set out the design for a school system radically different from the usual bureaucratic model. Such an advance suggests an unusual group of people were involved; confident, imaginative people with exceptional knowledge and skills. It was remarkable that this group was to become a stable, continuing group despite the lack of any connections beyond this particular interest; still more, when considering that it was to be six years before its members were to see the establishment of a new Authority. To achieve such a major change, the change-agents had to have the cooperation of the other people who would be affected; moreover, the better they understood the priorities of the other stakeholders, the more successfully they could identify potential resistance, plan strategies to overcome it and bring their plan to fruition.\(^1\)

In seeking to explain the outcomes of their interactions with other groups of stakeholders, however, it is not enough for the historian merely to examine actions and responses in relation to a strategic planning framework, nor, as has been suggested above, to accept at face value the reasons they offered for their

behaviour. Hugh Waring states they were 'a bunch of people who had no axe to grind,... just people of integrity working for the good of the community,... articulate and capable people...' In discussing the change-agents, the historian must do more than accept their self-perceptions as active, public spirited, liberal minded citizens of an unusual city, as indeed they were. The historian must also try to understand them from the outside as well as the inside; must locate them as group members whose minds were shaped within the cultures of their class, time, place and gender. In so disciplining herself, the historian escapes as far as possible from the dangers of contemporary history (not least, the historian's personal sympathies) to better explain the extent and limitations of what they achieved. If there is a lesson for change-agents, it is that not only must they understand the ideology and interests of other stakeholders, but must also know themselves.

In 1966, when the Campbell Primary School parents began their campaign, they thought of themselves simply as members of a community, concerned about community schools. To a degree, this was true. They were not an occupational group, but a body of parents whose first priority was changing the administration of schools for the long-term benefit of children and this common aim was what gave them unity. As Blakers put it, in Campbell in 1966:

most families felt a vested interest in the school system, and it was an interest which was not dissipated by any substantial attendance at non-government schools... As with most P&C Associations, the same 20 or 30 families

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formed a reliable and dutiful core, sharing the chores of office as need arose. But there was, behind the appearance, a potential of community interest and energy which could be tapped if the occasion arose.3

In co-opting other people, the parents' group sought at first those with what they considered special expertise in education, principally (and significantly) academics from the Australian National University. Once the Currie Working Party was formed, the membership, while heavily weighted with academics, also included principals and teachers from government and non-government schools.4 Then, as the pressure for change moved beyond the confines of Campbell, other Canberra parents became involved. After the Currie Report was produced, the remnants of the Currie Working Party continued to meet informally to plan new strategies, its membership changing as people moved in and out of Canberra, or left because of work or family commitments.5

In the second half of 1969, some people enthused by a P&C seminar were invited to join and the group was enlarged, eventually evolving into the ACT Education Working Group which 'came into being, without inauguration or formal intent'.6 Its purpose was 'to improve the quality of education in the ACT and in Australia, and at the same time to establish equality of

5 At this stage the group was unofficially called the Working Group.
6 M. E. March, 'Policy Development for Public Schools in the Australian Capital Territory', in A. Hone et al. (eds), ACT Papers on Education 1982-83, p. 41; Blakers, op. cit., p. 40. Unless inappropriate in a particular context, for the sake of simplicity in this study, the core group in its various manifestations will be designated the Working Group.
educational opportunity as a basic principle of Australian and
A.C.T. education'.

Blakers noted that it was:

an informal group which operated without agenda, minutes
or finance. It met only when required; sometimes not for
months on end. It discussed courses of action in broad
terms, and left it to members of the group to implement or
organize according to their own interests, strengths and
time available.

The parents, and those they co-opted, however, had
priorities for education which arose not just from parenthood
and public spirit, but from membership of a particular section
of the middle class especially important in Canberra, which is
not only a middle class city, in the sense that the extremes of
the social scale are not represented in Canberra to the same
degree as in other large cities such as Wollongong or Newcastle,
but the city of a particular kind of middle class. Rather than
belonging to the business middle class or the petit bourgeoisie
they came from the large, amorphous social group called
variously the New Middle Class, the New Class, the white-collar
class, think-workers, mental workers or the Professional-
Managerial Class, that is, professionals, managers, academics,
clerical administrators and service providers of all kinds.

For the sake of simplicity the term 'New Middle Class' will be used.

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7 C. Blakers, ACT Education Group - Reorganisation, and ACT Education
Working group, (Per ardua ad arduissima), typewritten copies, (n.d.),
Johnson papers.
8 Blakers, op. cit., p. 40.
9 See C. McGregor, 'Class', Good Weekend, 10 October 1987, pp. 36-63
esp. p. 51.
10 See ch. 4 above. Less than four years after the release of the Currie
Report, of the 63,669 employed persons in the ACT, approximately
41,802, or sixty five per cent were employed in work which could be
classified as belonging to middle class occupations. 'Approximately',
because the work classifications do not specify to the finest detail the
nature of the jobs within the classifications. The broad classifications
include: communication, finance and business services, public
The conception of a New Middle Class has been the subject of hotly contested debates.\textsuperscript{11} It arose because changes within the rapidly expanding middle class have led to a development (some would say departure) from traditional Marxist class theory of two major opposing classes with a diminishing residual 'middle' class. Its membership is usually defined by occupation and includes the more skilled or technically qualified people who work in service roles in industry and government organisations, those who are trained as professionals, and those in the information business, specialist administrative, sales, technical and professional employees of the large corporations and the public service, together with senior managers and officers in the armed services with technical skills and knowledge, members of the 'helping' professions and such people as engineers, academics, accountants, auditors, senior government officials, inspectors, editors, and reporters.\textsuperscript{12} Its administration, defence, community services, entertainment and recreation. The classification, 'other' (total 1933) is not included because of the uncertainty of what this might include. The total number of persons employed in government occupations was 35,812 which represented 56 per cent of the total employed population. Source: 1971 Census, Population and Dwelling Characteristics, Sheet 3, Tables 14, 15.


\textsuperscript{12} Gouldner, \textit{op. cit.}, Table 1, p. 15. In contrast, the Ehrenreichs, for example, suggest that what they call the Professional-Managerial Class includes people with a wide range of occupations, income levels, power and prestige, and claim that occupation is not the sole determinant of membership of the new middle class, citing examples
members do not align neatly with either capitalist or working class.\textsuperscript{13} So diverse is this class that it is composed of sub-groups or competing factions: it is as Dale Johnson describes it, 'a fragile unity of diverse social elements in which various stratifications enter...'.\textsuperscript{14} Within it can be found technocrats as well as intellectuals 'whose interests are primarily critical, emancipatory, hermeneutic and hence often political'.\textsuperscript{15}

The core group of campaigners which evolved from the Currie Working Party bore strong similarities to a New Middle Class elite sub-group of intellectuals.\textsuperscript{16} The Currie Working Party contained four professors, four school principals, and four other members with doctorates including Sir George Currie, while in the Working Group, eight were academics. Six were from the ANU, Dr Don Anderson, Professor Noel Butlin, Dr Alan Barnard, Dr Chris Duke, Dr Alan Davies, and Professor Richard

\footnotesize{of difficulties in assigning people to class. See P. Walker, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 13. Also, see R. J. O'Dea, 'The Expanding Role of the Professional Association in Industrial Relations', Australian Quarterly, 40, 1, March 1968, pp. 42-43. O'Dea uses data which demonstrates that the most rapid growth in white collar fields lies in the employee professional, technical and public administration groups and not in base clerical activity.  
\textsuperscript{14} Johnson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 181.  
\textsuperscript{15} Gouldner, \textit{op. cit.}, especially p. 48. Gouldner perceives these as two elites within the New Middle Class.  
\textsuperscript{16} Gouldner uses the terms 'humanistic intellectual' and 'technical intelligentsia' to describe two sub-groups within the New Middle Class. For membership of the Working Group see Appendix 2. As noted above, the term 'Working Group' refers to the core group which derived from the Currie Working Party with minor changes in membership, became the Working Group and eventually evolved into the ACT Education Working Group.}
(Dick) Johnson; and two were from the CCAE, Phillip Hughes and Margaret Robinson.\textsuperscript{17} Two were principals, Milton (Mick) March and Terry O'Connell, another, Dr Clare Hughes, a secondary teacher.\textsuperscript{18} The others included Cath Blakers and those from the ACT Council of P&C Associations, Netta Burns, Hugh Waring, Kath Abbott, John Riddell and Ken Townley.\textsuperscript{19} At different times, John Riddell and Ken Townley were P&C Council Presidents; Kath Abbott, the President of Red Hill P&C Association. Most parents were university graduates. Cath Blakers had won an Exhibition from secondary school to study for an Arts degree. John Riddell and Ken Townley were graduates of London University, Hugh Waring, of Sydney; each was employed by the government.\textsuperscript{20} While possession of a degree, even at a time when it was much rarer than it later became, does not necessarily qualify people as intellectuals, those who desire to acquire or impart intellectual knowledge, or work in areas founded upon some theoretical conceptualising, usually require academic credentials.

\textsuperscript{17} Dr Don S. Anderson, was from the Education Research Unit; Professor Noel Butlin and Dr Alan Barnard from the Economic History Department in the Research School of Social Sciences; Dr Chris Duke and Dr Alan Davies, from the Centre for Continuing Education; and Professor Richard (Dick) Johnson, Department of Classics. Phillip Hughes, Head of the School of Teacher Education, and Margaret Robinson, School of Applied Science, were both from the Canberra College of Advanced Education.

\textsuperscript{18} Milton (Mick) March, was Principal of Narrabundah High School, Terry O'Connell, was Principal of North Ainslie Primary School, and Dr Clare Hughes, was a teacher from Telopea Park High School.

\textsuperscript{19} Netta Burns worked in the Labor Party's office in Canberra. She was married to a senior academic.

\textsuperscript{20} Kath Abbott was one who did not have a university degree. All teacher and departmental representatives had degrees. A significant number of the campaigners in the Working Group had higher degrees.
In characteristic New Middle Class fashion, members of the Education Working Group were connected with professional or special-interest associations. Two in particular were important: the World (formerly New) Education Fellowship (WEF) and the ACT Chapter of the Australian College of Education (ACE).\(^{21}\) Despite differing tendencies, the WEF being more radical, the ACE more conservative, members of both organisations worked together harmoniously within the parents' group.\(^{22}\) The WEF brought together progressive, professional teachers, the parents of school children and others interested in education for the purpose of promoting international understanding.\(^{23}\) Articles in the WEF's Australian journal, *New Horizons in Education*, usually were related to WEF principles: a concern for relationships, especially in schools; learning as responsible members of a society; and the relation of the individual, through personal service and vocation, to the community. Many articles, especially some reports by visiting overseas educators, were critical of aspects of Australian schooling. WEF views about the place of the school in the community were radical for Australia at the time but in harmony with the vision for ACT education described in the *Currie Report*.\(^{24}\) In November 1966, Dr Ivan Turner, Principal of Sydney Teachers' College, spoke on the case for an ACT Education Authority; the following autumn, *New

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\(^{22}\) J. Caldwell, 15 April 1983. A member of the Currie Working Party, Jack Caldwell joined the New Education Fellowship in the late 1950s. G. Hughson, another member of the Currie Working Party, also belonged to this organisation.


\(^{24}\) Articles from this journal were cited in the *Currie Report*. 
Horizons in Education published his address on a proposal for a local education authority for the Illawarra region of NSW.25

By contrast, the Australian College of Education was a national body of practising educators, founded in 1959 in Melbourne 'as a professional community of educators, with the objects of fostering educational thought and practice, and upholding high standards of ethics, commitment and service to education... consonant with the promotion of intellectual freedom and honesty'.26 In the 1960s, many members were academics, senior educators from the non-government sector and senior educational administrators within state departments of education.27 During the 1960s the ACT Chapter of the College was a group of predominantly senior male educators which lent it a different emphasis from the World Education Fellowship.28 Dick Johnson and Terry O'Connell were both members, and Terry O'Connell, especially, was instrumental in liaising between the Canberra Chapter and the campaigners' group. John Riddell

27 The founding President was Sir James Darling, educated at Repton School and Oriel College, Oxford, and Headmaster of Geelong Grammar School from 1930.
28 Personal observation. In 1970, I joined the ACT Chapter of the Australian College of Education and served on its committee. My memory is that for some time I was the only woman, and the only practising classroom teacher, on the local chapter committee.
Another association which produced some of the most committed parent campaigners and gave them some elements of an institutional base was the ACT Council of P&C Associations. Members were delegates from the school P&C Associations, and in turn, this body was eligible to send two delegates to the national body, the Australian Council of State School Organizations, and its yearly conferences. The P&C Council, the official political arm for parents of government school children, did not become mobilised in the ACT until the Campbell parents began to campaign for a new Authority: it then became a very effective pressure group. Another P&C member, Alan Menere, was the P&C Council President when the campaign was beginning. A senior treasury official, he was actively involved in the initial planning during his term as President of the P&C Council, but less actively so after 1968 and did not join the Working Group. P&C Council members worked closely with the Education Working Group through Ken Townley, Netta Burns, John Riddell, Hugh Waring, Alan Barnard, and Kath Abbott. Ken Townley, a geologist who worked in the Bureau of Mineral Resources, was for a time President of the P&C Council, and like both Riddell and Waring, was for some years a delegate from the ACT P&C Council to the national body. Married to a teacher with children in the school system, he became committed to

29 Riddell greatly admired Terry O'Connell and says of him: 'We felt we were in the presence of the great...'

the vision of a participatory, democratic school system. Townley served also on the Campbell Committee, which designed the structure of the secondary college system, where his ability to see issues from both the parents' and teachers' perspectives made him particularly effective.\textsuperscript{31}

John Riddell worked in the Bureau of Statistics as a demographer specialising in population geographies: like Townley, he served as President of the P&C Council, and was a member of the Campbell Committee. He became involved in the campaign for orthodox reasons, parents' interest in their kids' education. When they started going to high school I thought I should start going along to P&C meetings. Almost immediately I became involved with early issues. We were concerned about some aspects of the NSW education. I wanted to become more involved. I thought the way to do this was to stand as the school's delegate to [P&C] Council. There was an election. I was elected by default as President. I went in as a completely new boy'.\textsuperscript{32}

He became one of the campaigners in 1968 when, after his election as President, Cath Blakers literally tapped him on the shoulder and told him his priority should be 'to get us our own Authority away from NSW. I was impressed', Riddell recalls, 'because it tied in exactly with what I had been experiencing'.\textsuperscript{33} Riddell comments that he, Hugh Waring and Kath Abbott from the P&C Council together with the other campaigners then 'became involved in quite a bitter campaign'. In December 1968, he formed a group of parent

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{31} B. Peck, Interview, 20 May 1983.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Riddell, Interview, 1991.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Riddell, Interview, 1991.
\end{itemize}
and teachers, the Parent-Teacher Council, to hold round-table discussions on relevant matters and establish semi-official links with parents, teachers and departmental officers.\textsuperscript{34} This agenda meant in fact that they put 'enormous pressure on the bureaucrats' and 'made their lives a misery'. It was 'not a personal thing', Riddell claims, 'they [the bureaucrats] were doing their job.' Hugh Waring recalls that Riddell was particularly effective as a networker:

John's strong point was that he was good at something not too many Presidents [of the P&C Council] have been good at, that is carrying [information] out to the community. He had public meetings out in the suburbs and out in the schools and we went out and spoke on all contentious issues and so there was built up a good framework of general support which we didn't have before. He was very valuable because he was a political animal and he had the social time to spend endless hours in meetings at distant suburbs... and he never lost his enthusiasm.

Hugh Waring's explanation of how he himself became involved in the P&C Association was:

I started off just going to P&C meetings, probably about 1955. My wife said I should take an interest in them, find out what they are doing... It was a joke in the family... I went along and I became so interested that I got involved in it for 25 years or so... She often regretted that.\textsuperscript{35}

The father of seven children, he served as Vice-President, Secretary and member of Executive of the P&C Council and on the Council of the Authority from April 1975 until the mid-1980s, its longest serving member. Waring, a soil scientist, was with CSIRO for most of his involvement in ACT education. He

\textsuperscript{34} Canberra Times, 9 December 1968, p. 8; Max Badham, Interview, 9 January 1984.
\textsuperscript{35} It was actually 30 years.
maintained an interest in the teaching of science and curriculum in schools, as well as an empathy with teachers who he believed encountered difficulties akin to his in research.

I saw teaching was a somewhat similar business. You're dealing with a particular type of person who is a good teacher... Education is a very peculiar business and it is run by a bureaucracy and you're striking the same kind of blind alleys and brick walls that a researcher meets... The whole gamut of inability to understand the special nature of the approach required to do good research... You notice it particularly with bureaucracy controlling education.36

John Riddell describes Hugh Waring as

an interesting person who didn't actually lead but was there pushing and prodding all the time... he seemed to have no ego. He was a magnificent man... quite outstanding. His involvement in educational matters was far longer than the rest of us... He never pushed himself forward... he was quite outstanding in his thinking... He had a clarity of thought; once he had thought a thing out clearly he just absolutely mastered it.37

Members of the New Middle Class often occupy professional and managerial positions. Some of the parents' group held positions of influence within important occupational and social structures and used their social and professional contacts in the campaign. Some met senior bureaucrats and politicians informally in their social networks, as was not uncommon in Canberra.38 For example, Mr (later Sir) Richard Kingsland, Secretary of the Department of the Interior in 1966, was Cath Blakers' neighbour: very early in the campaign, some of the Campbell parents discussed with him the possibility of

36 H. Waring, Interview, 3 January 1992. All quotations by Hugh Waring are from this source.
38 C. Blakers, Interview, 3 May 1983.
recruiting additional relief teachers.\textsuperscript{39} When the Department of Education and Science was established, through her networking, Cath Blakers, herself married to a very senior public servant, knew Sir Hugh Ennor, the Permanent Head, and a number of senior administrators in the Department including Ken Jones and Keith Coughlan.\textsuperscript{40}

The group included senior figures in academic circles who spoke with authority about educational matters and contributed special knowledge and skills. Their influence on the Canberra scene, while no doubt related to the importance of education in the New Middle Class, may also have been helped by the status that academics held in the late fifties and sixties after Sputnik when there was a virtually unquestioning acceptance of the importance of tertiary education and a corresponding expansion of universities. While some academics left once the work of the Currie Working Party was ended, others joined the Working Group. Lascelles Wilson, Head of the Department of Adult Education which at that time was 'very community oriented', was the first academic to join the group.\textsuperscript{41} Cath Blakers had previously given an Adult Education course, but knew nobody else at the University and approached Wilson for help in organising the November public seminar. Wilson in turn involved other academics, Dick Johnson, Professor Burton and Dr

\textsuperscript{39} C. Blakers, 'If Wishes Were Horses... The Parent Role in a Participative System of Schooling', in ACT Schools Authority, \textit{The Challenge of Change: A Review of High Schools in the ACT}, Canberra 1983, p. 3; also, in Hughes & Mulford, p. 33. Richard Kingsland was sympathetic, but the NSW Department of Education would not consider allowing Canberra schools to be more privileged than NSW schools.

\textsuperscript{40} Blakers, Interview, 1983.

\textsuperscript{41} Blakers, Interview, 25 February 1992.
John Burns, in the Currie Working Party, as well as Terry O'Connell. After the distribution of the *Currie Report*, Wilson organised a second seminar in 1968; sometime later, he left Canberra to work in Sydney.\(^42\)

Richard Johnson, Professor of Classics at the ANU, and a member of the Australian College of Education, was also involved from the beginning, and served on the Currie Working Party. A father of children in Catholic schools, he also supported government schools, liaising between the two systems, and assisting officers in the Catholic Education Office to prepare for the changes planned for government schools.\(^43\) He discussed the possibility of the inclusion of non-government schools within the new ACT school system in a number of forums. For example, in an article he wrote for the *Canberra Times* in 1970, he discussed the report of the Advisory Committee on Education in Papua and New Guinea which proposed substantial government support to religious schools to be incorporated into that education system, and drew parallels between that report and the ACT's *Currie Report*, stating that 'in paragraph after paragraph, the report recommends in principle for Papua New Guinea what the people of the ACT have for years wanted for themselves'.\(^44\) He was later to play a very important role when the system was established, easing the passage for recognition

\(^{42}\) Blakers, Interview, 1992.
\(^{43}\) Strictly speaking, at the time, the Catholic schools were not organised into one system, but this term is commonly used for the sake of simplicity.
of the new secondary colleges by the ANU and the older universities in the state capitals.45

Another academic and also an ordained minister of religion, Dr Richard Campbell, was not a member of the Working Group but became involved in the parents' campaign during the early seventies through his work as a member of the P&C Association. Member of the Department of Philosophy at the ANU, he became particularly prominent later when he chaired the Working Committee on Secondary Education and later still when he chaired the Authority Council.46 A particularly effective speaker and committee-man, he was not averse to speaking his mind when, for example, as member of the P&C Council, he criticised the government's policy, stating in one outspoken letter to the editor of the Canberra Times, 'The Minister's considered statement, the outcome of months of deliberation, therefore proves to be unreasonably myopic. With the present state of schooling in such sad decline, one almost despairs for the educational future of our children'...47

To the Working Group, academics brought particularly valuable specific skills and knowledge. Dr Alan Barnard, for example, an economic historian at the ANU who joined the Working Group in its later years, was a member of the P&C Council and was later to serve on the Authority Council.

45 See ch. 11 below.
46 After the period of this study, Campbell was Head of the Philosophy Department from 1982 to 1986.
47 R. Campbell, letter to editor, Canberra Times, 14 October 1970.
Hugh Waring especially admired his writing skills and relates how he recorded P&C policy discussions:

A decision had to be made on what the [P&C] Council view was... and all of them were difficult and there was no precedent... On the weekend we would argue it out and on Monday or Tuesday we would have a document of seven or eight foolscap pages, or 10 or 15, whatever was necessary, outlining the arguments that had gone on and the conclusions that had been made and the reasons why, and that was Barnard. He was on his own, absolutely on his own. There was nobody as good as Barnard at that...We were never at a loss for a written submission on any aspect of education.48

Don Anderson, father of three children in the school system, worked in education research at ANU, and was drawn into the campaign by Cath Blakers.49 Waring testifies to his contribution:

He was a great help because he had access to literature. It was he who brought up the numbers that showed the disastrous situation in the schools... It even shut the teachers up. I mean the [Teachers] Federation, they were so dreadful... And that was one of the strongest weapons in favour of change, so [we] can't underestimate Anderson and some of his associates. They were people who could gather real ammunition.50

Professor Noel Butlin of the Department of Economic History, ANU, had a younger son in high school and was involved with his local P&C Association.51 His expert knowledge contributed useful information to the Education Working Group's campaign. In four articles published in the Canberra Times in May 1970,

49 Blakers, Interview, 1992.
50 Waring is referring to the results of a student survey which provided important data for decisions by the Working Committee on Secondary Education. See ch. 11 below. Waring, Interview, 1992.
51 Blakers, Interview, 1992.
he argued a strong case for the economic viability of a new independent education Authority and provided statistical evidence which demonstrated that the taxes of ACT residents could support a much higher quality schooling than it had. He also argued for education as an act of investment: 'It is improbable that there is any other investment from which a higher rate of return can be expected.'

While various academics from the ANU made significant contributions to the campaign, the Canberra College of Advanced Education, which during the campaign period was small and very new, with staff busy establishing its identity as a local institution of tertiary standing, contributed only one member to the group, Phillip Hughes, Head of the School of Teacher Education. A member of the Education Working Group in its later stages, he played a major role towards the end of the planning period when he chaired a Panel to assess responses to a Departmental paper which led to the production of the seminal document which became known as the Hughes Report. He continued in a leadership role as the first Chairman of the Authority Council.

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52 Canberra Times, 'The Decline in ACT Education', 7 May 1970, p. 2; 8 May 1970, 'Cheap Teaching for the ACT', 22 May 1970, p. 10; Quotation from article, 'Facts Favour a Separate ACT Education System', 22 May 1970, p. 2. Other academics also had articles published on education in the Canberra Times. Grant Harman, a Research Fellow in the Education Research Unit, for example, wrote of the problems of Australian education supporting those who argued that reform was urgently needed. G. Harman, 'Education in Trouble', Canberra Times, 2 June 1971, p. 2.

53 The CCAE (now University of Canberra) opened in 1967; in 1971 the first students attended classes in the School of Teacher Education (now the Faculty of Education).

54 See ch. 8 below.
The reason why so many ANU academics were members of the parents' group (although they were only a small proportion of the whole) can only be a matter for speculation. Membership of the Working Party was by invitation and parents may have believed their involvement lent especial credibility to the cause as well as contributing skills to the campaign; while few of those involved in the campaign had any direct expertise about schooling, academics were certainly accustomed to talking publicly about education. Perhaps they were attracted by the opportunity to become involved in a new educational enterprise which would not only benefit their own children but future students; perhaps they were able to become involved because they had more control over their time than most people; perhaps the smallness and compactness of Canberra in the sixties meant that academics could draw upon a close network of colleagues for this kind of involvement.

Whatever the reasons why they became involved, it is clear that the academics demonstrated New Middle Class expertise in the use of special knowledge and skills, referred to in the literature on that class as 'cultural capital'. As Gouldner argues, managers, educators, professionals and others in this class possess distinct market advantages and special privileges and powers because they own a disproportionate share of cultural capital in the form of credentialled expertise.\textsuperscript{55} The New Class, according to Gouldner, is also a 'speech community' and speaks a 'special

\textsuperscript{55} Gouldner, p. 19.
elaborated linguistic variant' characterised by what Gouldner describes as the 'culture of critical discourse'.\(^{56}\) While academics had no monopoly of this New Middle Class attribute, it was certainly one of their professional strengths. The Working Group's possession of outstanding skills in communication was noted by various people. Many years later, Cliff Burnett, a school principal during the 1970s, commented that the activists were an elite, and remarked upon the high quality of their writing and their submissions.\(^{57}\) One of the senior administrators, Alan Foskett, later observed that the 'quality of the people was very obvious; they were, in a way, an elite group of people.'\(^{58}\) Riddell states that Cath Blakers 'worked behind the scenes as a thinker, a superb thinker'. He adds: 'Alan Barnard, Kath Abbott and Cath Blakers were way ahead of me... very well read.' Waring remembers Kath Abbott as a superb communicator who could express human emotion and genuine sentiment better than most people... She could do it extremely well. And she wasn't ambitious to become the most powerful person in the community. She just had a passionate belief in the power of education for Australia.\(^{59}\)

The articulation of the parents' cause was helped by John Allan, editor of the *Canberra Times*, which, in some respects, qualifies as a stakeholder. Cath Blakers visited him at the start of the campaign, explained that parents wanted to improve ACT

\(^{56}\) *ibid.* Emphasis omitted.

\(^{57}\) C. Burnett, Taped recording of talk given at a staff seminar, School of Education, Canberra College of Advanced Education, [1982]

\(^{58}\) A. Foskett, Interview, 2 June 1987.

\(^{59}\) Kath Abbott's only child was in the government school system.
schools and asked for his help in publishing letters and articles. Allan, who had children in the school system, shared the parents' view of the importance of education.\textsuperscript{60} Cath Blakers describes him as a farsighted man, who 'recognized education as an issue of public importance and was prepared to allow the newspaper to reflect concern and stimulate thinking and discussion'.\textsuperscript{61} During the 1960s and early 1970s, the \textit{Canberra Times} had a reputation as one of Australia's leading newspapers and its journalists wrote thoughtful articles on current issues and debates.\textsuperscript{62} It provided the change-agents with an important means of publicity; from 1969, the Working Group and the \textit{Canberra Times} collaborated in a 'systematic arrangement of articles on various aspects of education'.\textsuperscript{63} In some respects the \textit{Canberra Times} was the New Middle Class newspaper for a New Middle Class town.

But the New Middle Class is more than a class which has a particular facility for communication: it also has distinct perspectives and concerns, which have been summed up in the phrase, 'cultural capital'. Capital, as Pierre Bourdieu points out, need not be strictly economic, but may take many forms: symbolic, cultural, social or linguistic as well as economic. The acquisition of credentials is the means by which the culture of the New Middle Class becomes capitalised because New Middle Class occupations are not directly hereditary and each generation must acquire the cultural capital required to fill

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{60} Blakers, Interview, 1992.
\textsuperscript{61} Blakers, in Hughes & Mulford, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{62} Today, this material has tended to be syndicated from leading British and North American newspapers.
\textsuperscript{63} Blakers, in Hughes & Mulford, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 41.
\end{footnotesize}
those occupations. The preparation required for children to acquire credentials is especially important for New Middle Class occupations: for them, education transmits not only basic skills and social training necessary to earn a living in a particular society, but also qualifications which give access to exclusive groups high in income and status; and it is through education that the New Middle Class reproduces itself. It was not, of course, solely this particular class which held such concerns, especially during the 1960s, when increasing prosperity for more people and the expectation of longer secondary schooling encouraged parental hopes generally of upward mobility for their children. For those within the New Middle Class, however, it was especially strong; as David Bennett later commented, this desire did not come only from those who wished their children to achieve the status they themselves had lacked; it came also from those who already possessed some degree of privilege and wished to be assured that they - that is, their children - would not lose it.

Schooling, therefore, was crucial for passing on cultural capital to New Middle Class children. Given the unusual concentration of New Middle Class occupations in Canberra, it becomes clear why changing an unsatisfactory education system became such a priority for so many parents, and produced changes on a scale unseen anywhere else.

66 It also may partly explain why the editor of the Canberra Times saw education as an important issue for his newspaper.
Among members of the sub-group of intellectuals within the New Middle Class with a deep concern for education, like the parents' group, some commonality of ideology and interests would be expected. In fact, the unity of the group was one of its most remarkable features.\textsuperscript{67} John Riddell states that there were no disagreements about aims, 'only sometimes about tactics and these were very minor.' There was 'a remarkable coincidence of approach and views'. For such unity to exist there had to be a shared purpose and a commonality of values and beliefs, an agreed system by which the world is represented or understood: that is, a shared ideology.\textsuperscript{68} The Working Group's ideology came under the rubric of 'liberal education', the descriptive term used by one of its members.\textsuperscript{69} Their philosophy of liberal education was first enunciated in the \textit{Currie Report}.\textsuperscript{70} 'The General Aim' states:

First, we are a democracy and we can assume that our education system will be founded on this base; in other words, that it will reflect the view that to a democratic

\textsuperscript{67} Each one of the former members of this group who was interviewed spoke of the harmony among members and the strong feeling of unity within the group. This contradicts David Truman's belief that 'complete stability within any interest group is a fiction': he argues that groups suffer from internal disputes which are produced and reflected in, struggles for leadership. D. B. Truman, \textit{The Governmental Process}, Knopf, New York, 1951, p. 156. There is no evidence that at any time members of the Working Group suffered from a lack of cohesion or were engaged in leadership struggles. Indeed, the group was remarkable for the members' claims that no one individual carried out a leadership role, but that a number of members in turn acted as leader when one was required.

\textsuperscript{68} 'Ideology' as it is used in this discussion does not imply a false representation of the world, or as some claim, a 'false consciousness'. I prefer Tim Rowse's view that in a very important sense, ideologies are authentic 'in the sense that they are composed of experience - an individual subject's lived relationship with the world'. T. Rowse, \textit{Australian Liberalism and National Character}, Kibble Books, Malsmsbury, Victoria, 1978, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{69} Hugh Waring used this term to describe the campaigners' philosophy for the new system.

\textsuperscript{70} Part II, pp. 35-42.
State the individual is important, and that the State itself is composed of and for these individuals.\textsuperscript{71}

In a sub-section, 'Guiding Principles - The State and Education', can be found such statements as:

Our education system should, therefore, aim at providing, as far as possible, education of the highest quality, for all, irrespective of their financial or social standing, their origins, or the area in which they live.\textsuperscript{72}

In other parts of this section the authors argue for a recognition of the differences in individuals, for developing all types of talent, for providing for the gifted, the average, the slow and the retarded, the eccentric and the non-conformist; for providing 'a balance between Science and the Humanities'; for encouraging a diversity of educational theory and practice, within a coherent and integrated structure.\textsuperscript{73} There is encouragement of participation by parents; of an Education Authority which 'must be a body representative not only of parents, community and the educators, but also of those sections of Government' with an interest and a contribution to make; and recognition that the quality of the education will be no higher than that of the teachers who teach in it, and of the need to 'make of Teaching the profession it has not so far become'.\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{71} Currie Report, p. 36. The explanation and examples in practice of such concepts as individualism, equal opportunity, the state and the like in the relevant documents are consistent with the theory and discourse of liberalism.
\textsuperscript{72} ibid., p. 38.
\textsuperscript{73} Quoted words, ibid., p. 39.
\textsuperscript{74} ibid., p. 41. Punctuation as written.
Cath Blakers, in consultation with others, later recast these statements into the philosophical basis for the new system, published by the Council of the Interim Authority as its first official document, which as Hugh Waring claims, best articulates its concept of liberal education.\(^7\)

The words are Cath Blakers', she wrote the whole damn lot herself, and it is a document of integrity and of liberalism in education and it shows a complete understanding of state education. It was the talk of people like Cath Blakers that made me passionate for what she was saying, and that inspired a whole lot of people.\(^8\)

Fundamental to the parents' ideology, was a belief in the importance of establishing a high quality government school system accessible to all children. All Working Group members shared this view, including Dick Johnson whose own children attended Catholic schools.\(^77\) Concomitant with that, was acceptance that NSW had failed to provide such a system and that, therefore, it was necessary to create a new independent school system for the ACT. There was agreement also that the \textit{Currie Report} described the kind of school system which should be created.

\(^7\) Interim ACT Schools Authority, 'The Guiding Aims and Principles of the ACT Schools Authority, Information Statement Number One, 6 November 1973; \textit{Canberra Times}, 5 November 1972. See Appendix 6.

\(^8\) Information Statement Number One was later expanded by Catherine Blakers (in consultation with many other people) into a document which set out suggested practice called 'Guidelines to Relationships Within the System', published by Interim ACT Schools Authority, 1974.

\(^77\) R. St.C. Johnson, 'Possibilities for Integration of Independent Schools into an ACT Educational Authority', Classics Department, ANU, 1 August 1969. This paper begins by abrogating the need to make a case for an ACT Education Authority because 'it assumes that case has been accepted in the interests of the majority of the Territory's students...'
In their conception of a new kind of school system the notion of 'community' was crucial: if the individual was one pole of their thinking, this was the other. A term with almost a numinous quality, it was invoked as a talisman of intrinsic worth throughout most documents and discussions which described the kind of school system which was desired. The *Currie Report* uses the term 'community' in several ways: broadly, to signify society as a whole, as in 'The education which we give to our children now will make the community of the next generation', and, 'A system of education which sets out to serve a community... can function only as an integral part of the community'; and more narrowly to refer to the unique and special nature of Canberra and to the people who live in the ACT, a 'developing and progressive community', with 'a distinctive character of its own as a community', seeking 'to establish a system of education appropriate to the community'.

Although the *Currie Report* envisages school councils (boards) which respond to the needs of the community and seeks to provide the opportunity for 'community involvement', in the Report itself there is only a suggestion of the use of community in the sense that the authors of the later *Karmel Report* encouraged grass roots 'community involvement' with people in their small local communities becoming a part of the life of their schools.

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79 ibid., p. 41; *Karmel Report*, p. 13, p. 9 ff. P. Karmel (Chair), *Schools in Australia*, Report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, Canberra, 1973; *Karmel Report*, p. 13, p. 9 ff. 'Community' is a term used frequently in the *Karmel Report* and is also not precisely defined. The term 'school board' was adopted when the Authority was established in order to avoid confusion with the
the word is overworked, suggests that the use of 'community'
by the campaigners referred to their work in the education
community where there was a 'community of interests and a
commonality of interests.'\textsuperscript{80} Such use of 'community' provided
the parents with both psychological and political advantages. It
enabled them to see and present themselves as operating
beyond the class system; they therefore avoided questions
which asked whether money should be spent on the children of
the affluent, whether in public schools or not, and sidestepped
the awkward issue of the needs of Catholic students in the
'community'.\textsuperscript{81} Without the advantages of being attached to an
organisation or occupational structure and unable to plead their
case on grounds of expertise or responsibility, the parents had
to justify their claim in other terms, and this was what was
available within their culture. It was a necessary part of their
claim for independence from NSW administration, that Canberra
was a 'community'; it was a necessary part of their claim upon
public and official attention that in some way they spoke for the
'community', and demanded for it its rightful place in the
transmission of its culture to its children.

\textsuperscript{80} Riddell, Interview, 1991.
\textsuperscript{81} The proportion of ACT parents who sent their children to non-
government schools varied from twenty seven to thirty per cent
during the period 1965-1969. Source: Australia, Department of
Education and Science, Report for 1969, Canberra, 1970, p. 73; ACT
Schools Authority & Commonwealth Schools Commission. \textit{Choice of
Schools Study}. ACT Schools Authority, Canberra, 1985. Who should
comprise the collectivity was a question raised on two occasions by
Henry Schoenheimer, Education Correspondent for the \textit{Australian}
newspaper: the first, shortly after the publication of the \textit{Currie
9; 16 September 1969, p. 10.
This is not to suggest that they used the term in cynical consciousness of its value for them: rather, that it sprang from their perspective, and the rhetoric available to them. It was also reinforced by certain elements in their personal experience: in some cases quite individual. Cath Blakers realised the significance of community for parents when she became involved in her child's kindergarten while living in a small village at the foothills of the Dandenongs.

I realised how important institutions could be in people's lives as a community focus... It also provided a human scale to life in contrast to the large scale of life generally. Community also contributes to the life of other people as well as one's own - through a period when other sources of support are disappearing, for example, churches and family.82

More generally, there was the parents' sense of absence of 'community' in a new suburb and the importance of creating it; literally from the ground up, as Cath Blakers' testified in her remarks about a neighbourly spirit growing with new gardens as they were hewn from the Campbell rock.83

Beyond that, community had a place in the traditions of nineteenth-century Australian state-schoolers, who often did live in districts, even isolated communities, and, in days before multiculturalism, could take it for granted that they were 'the community'; and so justified an exclusive claim upon government money for themselves. Certainly there is a tradition in the state-school lobbies for government school parents to see themselves as the community, and Catholic and

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82 Blakers, Interview, 1992.
83 See ch. 4 above.
others as outside it, especially in times of scarce resources when there is competition for funds. There was also, however, a place for 'community' in contemporary concerns; a more recently fashionable flavour to the parents' concern for participation in the 1960s which reflected a worldwide movement for more 'grass-roots' involvement. The antecedents of the events of 1968 - protests in France, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia, the USA and Australia - were already evident, established patterns were questioned and the judgements of senior bureaucrats were challenged.\textsuperscript{84} The emphasis upon the individual and upon democratic foundations, the notion of education for all and an acceptance of diversity, reflected concerns for liberal democracy at that time. The parents' commitment to community participation was consistent with a wider movement which, as C. B. MacPherson explains, began with nineteenth century liberal democracy and evolved into a search for a model of participatory democracy in this century.\textsuperscript{85}

To a degree, they recognised these facts. John Riddell recognises 'community' as a political word: 'It's sometimes used by people who are trying to say that everyone agrees with them. [They say] this is what the community thinks because it's their reading of what they'd like the community to think'.\textsuperscript{86} However, Riddell claims that there was 'very little opposition' to the move for an independent education Authority in the ACT.

\textsuperscript{84} See D. Bennett, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 169.
\textsuperscript{86} Riddell, Interview, 1991.
He recalls a few individuals who strongly opposed the change and caused a 'bit of friction'; but believes they were 'a very small minority of extremists'. He strove to overcome such resistance. He met with Catholic parents in their individual school communities and states that he met a lukewarm reception which indicated a certain indifference to the move for change. He believes that generally, the Catholic school people 'didn't feel terribly threatened or involved'. Despite the parents' focus upon government schooling, they considered the interests of non-government schools; the possibility of incorporating willing non-government schools into the government school system was seriously discussed. There was no vocal protest of any note to suggest that the Canberra public disagreed with aims of the campaign; in the finer details of their plan, however, the campaigners held some expectations for the future school system which were not questioned in the early enthusiasm for participation and change, but which were to be challenged later. On the other hand, in a period which would see increasing financial pressures upon all schools, the word 'community' was useful in claiming that the increasing sums being given to Catholic and other private schools belonged properly to state schools; the alternative idea, that the affluent middle class majority of state-school parents in the affluent middle class city of Canberra should also pay fees, was unthinkable.

87 Eventually the campaigners rejected the notion because such a major innovation might put at risk the stability of a new authority which was intended to incorporate many other changes. Waring, 1992.
88 The issue of who the parents represented and the challenges to the finer details of the parents' plan will be discussed further in later chapters, see esp. chs. 10, 15 below.
A narrow focus is revealed also in comments about participation by Hugh Waring. He explains that before the campaign

the lack of interest was largely due to the fact that people were completely helpless - had no influence and no input whatsoever. Teachers, principals, school inspectors, departmental [officers], politicians - nobody took any notice of parents unless you could make a gigantic demonstration and even then they did just enough to quieten it down.

Waring then comments about the period after the Authority was established and there was no expected burgeoning of active involvement by parents in school boards and P&C associations:

... increasingly as time went on we had to cope with a number of peculiar attitudes. One was... "Whom do you represent? After all, the majority of parents aren't interested, don't come along and don't vote. We have difficulty getting a representative elected on the Board so how can you possibly say, 'You're representative?'" There was no question that used to annoy me more. The point is, I don't care what movement you look at... any movement in any democracy anywhere in the world... the majority of potential members don't belong and are not active, but the fact that people don't rise up in revolt against us and vote against us, and the fact that if they're given an invitation to vote and it's a very clear invitation and it's widely publicised and they don't, well that's their decision.89

There is not a little irony in these statements. On the one hand, a few parents earnestly seek participation for all parents and believe that if only the structures can be changed to allow for parent participation all parents will take the opportunity to become actively involved. When this does not happen, they use the same justification that many a school principal accused of

89 Waring, Interview, 1992.
not being more open to parent involvement has used, which is basically: 'They can, but they don't want to, and that is democracy and it's their choice.' Whether made by beleaguered principals or frustrated parents, it reveals an approach to participation which has relevance to what the parents were seeking to achieve. It certainly calls into question the extent to which specific groups represent the community, and highlights difficulties in adequate representation of all sections of society.

'Participation' and community were interconnected: clearly, no participation, no community. While participation, too, was part of a tradition, and a fashionable concern, it was also related, again, to experience: these were, on the whole, laymen who had acquired more importance precisely by 'participation', especially in schools. For the women, 'participation' was one of the limited ways they could acquire more power and influence in society at the time; for them it may have had a special, albeit unconscious, significance. Again, this concern for participation went with a genuine belief in doing good for others than themselves; an altruistic approach which was liable to lead them to underrate the distinct interests and cultures of other groups; and to overlook the fact that, if they and the general body of parents, whom they constructed in their own image, were to exercise any substantially increased power in education, it might not be welcome to others, especially those whose occupational dignity and autonomy were likely to be affected.
CHAPTER SIX.

CONFLICTING PRIORITIES

Having assessed the context and produced a vision statement, the change-agents were ready to devise and carry out strategic activities to achieve their goal. It was now essential for them to convince others that their proposals were appropriate and necessary. They had become a constituency; they had a group and a place in the proposal to change ACT education, and all this had been accomplished in a remarkably short time. Now they had to reach out to the leaders of opinion in Canberra and to members of influential organisations; more broadly, to those particular sections of the New Middle Class which had to be persuaded to cooperate in creating an Authority in the spirit of the Currie Report. Strategic planning theory would have had them go further: to analyse systematically the interests, concerns, priorities and outlook of other key stakeholders.\(^1\) They did not do this, and this was to cause difficulties later. Nevertheless, they did obtain a substantial degree of support, enough for this stage, from the teachers, an important group of stakeholders whose cooperation was essential.

Teachers were seen as natural allies from the start. The teachers and parents shared the same attitudes to state education; the teachers, like the parents, had a lot to gain from the proposed change. Teachers were not yet organised into one

group; the organisation to which most teachers belonged, the NSW Teachers' Federation, at that time in the ACT, was divided into two separate branches (called associations).

As with the other groups, there is a danger in thinking about this group as homogeneous. Teachers in the different sectors, at different levels in the hierarchy, pre-school, primary, secondary, male and female, young and old, demonstrated markedly different attributes, their commitment to unionism varied, and some sent children to non-government schools. Many were also parents, but their agreement with their union's priority that improved working conditions should be the basis for determining appropriate courses of action identifies them as members of the teachers' group.

If the notion of the New Middle Class is a useful explanation in understanding the parents' group, its value is more uncertain in the case of the teachers, who do not fit smoothly into the New Middle Class, in part because of the wide range of levels, from two-year trained classroom teachers to administrators in schools and the Office. Using occupational criteria, principals and senior office administrators fit into middle class groups, but the class locations of the various other levels in the teaching hierarchy remain the subject of dispute. If teachers are not yet comfortably located in the New Middle Class, however, neither do they fit within other middle class

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groups or in the working class; they are best described as in transition to the New Middle Class, especially in the 1960s when this study begins, when their average levels of tertiary education and training were much lower than they became later. Studies which examined the occupational backgrounds of teachers' fathers have shown that in the early 1960s, teaching was an occupation which provided a means of achieving upward mobility.³ Later studies indicated that over a decade, the proportion of teachers from professional, business and clerical backgrounds had increased, supporting suggestions that occupationally, teachers may be moving into middle class groups.⁴ Teachers express this uncertainty about their changing class location in a preoccupation with being considered a 'profession', for as Bessant and Spaull explain, sociological research shows that socially mobile groups tend to adopt the values of the group to which they aspire.⁵ Teachers' organisations may use the term somewhat loosely, but it is equated strongly with 'middle class'.⁶ ACT teachers, therefore, had strong beliefs about how they should be treated and were

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³ See R. M. Pike, "The Cinderella Profession": The State School Teachers of New South Wales 1880-1963, PhD. thesis, Research School of Social Sciences, ANU, 1965, esp. ch. 5. Pike argues that (in the early 1960s) state school teaching still has a particular pull on children from working class homes and farming families - it is still a 'poor man's profession'.

⁴ G. W. Bassett, 'The Occupational Background of Teachers - Some Recent Data', Australian Journal of Education, 15, 2, June 1971, pp. 211-214. Bassett compares two studies; one based on 1958 data and one carried out in 1970. He discovers there is a substantial increase in the proportion of student teachers drawn from professional, business and clerical backgrounds and a corresponding fall in the proportion of student teachers drawn from small business tradesmen, agricultural, semi-skilled, and manual backgrounds. While the data basis can be argued; the sole use of fathers' occupations, for example, a case for a trend towards teachers in transition can be argued.


⁶ ibid.
over-sensitive to perceived threats to their fragile professional status: the potential existed for them to resist strongly any form of parent participation which encroached upon their role as professionals. Paradoxically, however, it is through their union, a working class organisation derived from the lower status of their recent past, and from the working class origins of a large proportion of teachers, that they have sought first to secure, then to defend, middle-class status as a profession. As Spaull notes, the stance of the NSW Teachers' Federation had always maintained a primary and continuing concern with the material well-being of teachers in the belief that 'professional status is unlikely to be achieved unless teachers are able to maintain with dignity their position in society'.

In 1967, almost every teacher in the NSW state system, including those in the ACT, belonged to the NSW Teachers' Federation which represented teachers in the industrial and political arenas. As Robert Pike observes, the Teachers' Federation gained the reputation of being 'an outstanding example of a union which relies very largely on applying pressure to Governments'. In 1943, it had taken a different path from any of the other state teacher unions, affiliating with the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), a move which many saw as making a definite commitment to the Australian Labor movement. From that time, the NSW Teachers' Federation...

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Federation became more organised and aggressive. Although its motto was 'strength in unity' it had a long history of internal dissension. Bessant and Spaull note that it produced

the most sustained and spectacular factional struggles... A left-wing faction of communist sympathies gained control of the Federation in the early 1940s. For nearly eight years, the NSW Teachers Federation ruled without serious criticism because of the substantial gains it won for teachers.

In defence of its belligerent stance, it argued that 'the only guarantee that teachers shall have professional status, that teaching shall really become a "high calling" is that teachers shall engage in strong trade union action'. As Pike declares, teachers have for many years linked professionalism with middle classness and through their union activities have actively sought professional status.

The NSW union was also very conservative. As Bruce Mitchell remarks, from the late 1930s until the early 1970s the cult of unity tended to silence debate within the union on controversial educational topics. The union's policy was that no resolution of a meeting or opinion expressed by an individual member could be publicised or circulated under the union's name unless it had first obtained the approval of the union authorities. This form of control stifled educational

9 Pike, op. cit., pp. 195-196, quotation, p. 196. In the 1930s another group of teachers, the Affiliated Teachers' Union (ATU), which began as a small 'radical' group of teachers in Victoria, also affiliated with the trade union movement; see Bessant & Spaull, op. cit., p. 20.
10 This was often reversed; 'unity in strength'.
13 Pike, op. cit., pp. 381-399, esp. 284, 394.
discussion. It was equally conservative on the structures of education in NSW, for it 'never challenged the centralized staffing and administrative system, or the hierarchical promotion and authority structure of New South Wales public education; and in 1973 it rejected a ministerial proposal to alter some of these elements'. This union stance, and the ideology and loyalty to their union, represented the union experience and outlook of most ACT teachers. Palmer states that:

"generations of teachers absorbed the philosophy that you get nowhere without more and more teacher action and that unity is strength. A "good" Teachers' Federation's executive is considered to be one representative not only of shades of opinion, but of every level - infants, primary, secondary, technical teachers' college lecturers, heads ... To be a "good Federationist" is to accept this one in, all in approach."

There were real advantages to be gained for teachers by separating from the NSW Department's administration of ACT education. The teachers who had a commitment to teach as well as they could and gain the best for their students - and this was, by far, most teachers - saw an opportunity for improvement to the conditions in which they worked and therefore to the quality of schooling which they could offer, in a system which promised a radical new deal; and anything was better than the present situation. The prospect of the new system being established engendered a spirit of

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14 B. Mitchell, Teachers, Education and Politics: A History of Organizations of Public School Teachers in New South Wales, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1975, p. 211.
optimism.\textsuperscript{17} For teacher unionists, the hope of participation in policy-making offered considerable benefits to teachers accustomed to long-standing battles between their union and the NSW Department of Education.\textsuperscript{18} While parents sought participation for all parties in the proposed new structures, however, it is doubtful whether most teachers saw beyond the concerns of their own order. Mick March commented much later that the parents' and the teachers' motivations for participation in the move for change 'were partly associated with ensuring a share of power for their respective associations should a separate education Authority be formed in the Australian Capital Territory'; he adds however that 'the total proposition they [teachers] supported...went beyond the range of existing policy of the constituent organizations'.\textsuperscript{19} It was therefore in the teachers' interests to collaborate with the parents' group in their campaign to break away from NSW and create a new system. If ACT teachers shared the same agenda as parents, therefore, they did so for different reasons located in different mentalities. ACT teachers participated in the campaign and the planning process for the new order as members of a powerful union and their interests were aligned to those of their union: better working conditions and the securing of their rights as members of a

\textsuperscript{17} This view was commonly expressed in staffrooms and at meetings of teachers at the time. It was not formally recorded.
\textsuperscript{18} See McNeill & March, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 103-105. The formation of a union which spoke for all teachers is addressed in ch. 8 below.
\textsuperscript{19} M. E. March, 'Policy Development for Public Schools in the Australian Capital Territory: Early Aspirations and Later Developments', in A. Hone \textit{et al.} (eds), \textit{ACT Papers on Education 1982-83}, CCAE, 1983, p. 41. During the period of the campaign, Mick March was deputy principal then principal in Canberra secondary schools. He was a member of the pressure group which campaigned for the Authority.
profession. Thus, the motives and priorities of this group of stakeholders differed markedly from those of the other stakeholders' groups.

In 1966, the Campbell parents had recognised the importance of this large group of stakeholders when they included principals and teachers, government and non-government, on the Currie Working Party; all members, including the teacher unionists, signed the Currie Report. A year after it had been distributed, in November 1968, a sub-committee of the ACT Teachers' Association reported generally in favour of its proposals.20 The Currie Report, however, did not clearly explain the details and extent of participation by the parents in the new system, in particular, the part to be played by parents on school councils in selecting staff for schools, and this topic was not discussed in the teachers' report. The omission was significant.21

The approval of this section of Canberra's teachers for the Report was an important advance for the parents' cause as an expression of support from a significant group of stakeholders. On the basis of this, and the fact that the teachers involved in the campaign evidently wanted a change of administration as eagerly as the parents, apparently for the same reasons, the planners took the teachers' agreement at face value. During the early part of the campaign, most

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20 ACT Teachers' Association, An Independent Authority for the Australian Capital Territory, Report of a sub-committee, November 1968. The ACT Teachers' Association was the ACT primary teachers' branch of the NSW Teachers' Federation.
parents appeared to believe that the teachers did not object to a participatory system because all members of the Working Party were signatories to the Report, including the teacher representatives. They therefore were not too dismayed when, on 23 April 1968, the President of the NSW Teachers' Federation, J. Whalan, wrote to the Canberra Times and to a member of the Working Party, 'emphasizing the opposition that teachers would show to a separate education system in the ACT... especially to a system which might involve parents on school boards'.22 Most parents appear to have assumed that any lingering doubts would soon be dispelled once the system was established and its virtues became evident. However, there is one suggestion, perhaps sharpened by hindsight, that parents were aware quite early that ACT teachers feared community participation. Hugh Waring states:

The teachers had these nightmares... of the funny people taking over a school... Right at the beginning they were never in favour of true community participation....We [the parent campaigners] knew that if the community could be persuaded and politicians could be persuaded the teachers would have to fall into line...23

This statement reflects the parents' strong belief in the inherent value of community involvement. It also negates the status of teachers as professionals; ultimately, teachers are the community's servants. Whether or not they were aware during the planning stage of a potential for opposition from teachers to community participation, the campaigners miscalculated by not

22 Blakers, op. cit., p. 38.
questioning the teachers' agendas and underestimating the strength and significance of their allegiance to their union and their desire to be seen as professionals.

The position of the other key group of stakeholders, the senior administrators, or bureaucrats, was more complicated. Senior bureaucrats, while generally established within the middle class, were also in transition; in their case, however, from 'old' middle class positions to the elite sub-group of technical intelligentsia within the New Middle Class. As members, or potential members, of the New Middle Class, the bureaucrats used and valued 'cultural capital', in their case, the technocratic skills required in management and administration for productivity. Over the next decade, their qualifications increased; not only from tertiary education, but from attendance at courses focused upon improving their management skills. Nevertheless, the bureaucrats, like other stakeholders, were not homogeneous; and, unlike the teachers who acted and spoke en masse through their union, they were not bound within such a body but were individuals working within an organisation.

The change-agents required the cooperation of the administrators to achieve their goal. They had to deal with a

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25 This movement was to accelerate in the later period of the study when new management techniques and complex information technology rapidly began to infiltrate old style bureaucracies.
26 The provision of five hours study leave for public servants assisted this trend; as Head of the Professional Development Section in the Authority in the 1980s, I observed a generous provision of training programs (in addition to university courses) especially targeted at senior public servants, for example, the EDS Scheme and the SES Programs.
specific group of bureaucrats, not just the broad group; those directly involved with ACT education, at this stage, essentially, the senior officers in the Department of Education and Science. While the change-agents criticised the NSW administration of Canberra's schools, they had decided from the start that they would achieve nothing by working on the NSW administrators, and concentrated their efforts on the federal administrators.27

The planners were well aware that political considerations weighed heavily in the decisions made by politicians and their advisers who were constrained by the concerns of the politicians. The views of Commonwealth Ministers for Education and Science and officers in the Department to the proposed changes were influenced by their political positions relative to the States. They were relative newcomers in the area of state education resource provision, and were anxious to avoid any state-federal rivalries. It was therefore most important to them, that the federal government did not appear to favour the ACT over the States.28 An editorial in the Canberra Times was to comment caustically that most of the Ministers for Education and Science since 1967 were

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27 There was irony in this; in the end, it was to be the NSW administrators and their Minister who, suffering the effects of a severe shortage of teachers, questioned the existing arrangement for supply of NSW teachers to ACT schools, tipped the balance for the Minister for Education and Science and the Commonwealth administrators, thus influencing them to create an ACT education Authority.

28 Jones, Interview, 1987; R. A. Foskett, Assistant Secretary, Territorial Planning and ACT Education Services Branch, Letter to D. Fairbairn, Minister for Education, 27 September 1971, Australian Archives(ACT): CRS A1642 T11, Department of Education File, 70/5681; Blakers, p. 46.
reluctant to put a proposition to a Cabinet walking in dread (sic) of those self-seeking State interests which wrongly contend that there is unlimited money available for education in the ACT while schools in the States languish in poverty.29

While parents, teachers and administrators clearly were stakeholders in ACT education, the position is not so clear with the Federal politicians who, as the dispensers of funds for ACT education, could also be considered as stakeholders; Ministers of Education and Science in particular were ultimately responsible for Canberra's schools, and it was they who must ultimately be persuaded by the ACT campaigners.30 Their involvement, however, was qualitatively different from that of the parents, teachers and administrators, who were permanent members of the ACT community, and were personally affected by the proposed changes: parents because these would be reflected in the lives of their children, and teachers and administrators, because their conditions of work would be altered. Federal politicians, lacking such personal involvement, could view events in ACT education in a more relaxed fashion. Doubtless they influenced the actions of bureaucrats behind the scenes, but it was rare for them to intervene directly, and with a few important exceptions, they tended to be reactive rather than proactive as far as the process of change was concerned. Indeed, as politicians, their actions were mediated by pressure from the

30 The financial arrangements and responsibility would change once self-government in the ACT was achieved. The Ministers for Education during the campaign years were: Senator J. G. Gorton, 13 December 1966; Mr J. M. Fraser, 28 February 1968; Mr N. M. Bowen, 11 December 1969; Mr D. E. Fairbairn, 22 March 1971; Mr J. M. Fraser, 20 August 1971.
key stakeholders' groups.\textsuperscript{31} Perhaps most important of all, they had a great deal else to do, not least, the Minister for Education and Science, with responsibilities throughout the entire Commonwealth in a new and growing area of federal activity, so that the internal politics of the small ACT community was only a minor part of their busy lives.\textsuperscript{32} While their involvement is discussed, therefore, the focus is upon the interactions of the key stakeholders' groups within the Canberra community.

Not surprisingly, the federal politicians' priorities appeared to be to ensure their continuity as members of the government while attempting to respond to the most pressing of the public's demands as satisfactorily as possible within existing constraints, especially those determined by the economy and the political system.\textsuperscript{33} At the start of the campaign, there was no Minister for Education and Science and the States had primary responsibility for education, but times were changing rapidly: as one commentator later observed, the election campaign of 1960 was the last where matters of education did not receive prominent attention.\textsuperscript{34} Despite strong demands for more funds

\textsuperscript{31} The politicians who played a visible role in the affairs of ACT education were the Ministers for Education; they were, however, advised by their Cabinet colleagues on major issues.

\textsuperscript{32} Di Mildern makes in relation to the Authority, that Canberra was microscopic in terms of size, and therefore, of importance, compared to the rest of Australia. She states: 'I really think the power brokers in Canberra regarded the Authority as they regarded a gnat'. The former Minister for Education and Science, and Prime Minister, Mr Malcolm Fraser, stated that he felt unable to contribute to the research for this thesis because it was 'too long ago to recall with any accuracy'. Interview, 31 March 1992.

\textsuperscript{33} Quentin Willis suggests that in the clear absence of a strategy for education, the performance of Menzies and the Liberal Party appear as reactions to needs and pressures concerning education. Q. F. Willis, 'Menzies and Australian Education', \textit{The Educational Administrator}, [1], 2, October 1974, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{34} Willis, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 18.
to be allocated to the states for schooling, it was not until 1963, another election year, that Prime Minister Menzies introduced, amongst other initiatives, the Commonwealth secondary schools science laboratories scheme. As a capital assistance program not committed to recurrent funding, it was a cautious step; to later commentators, the government during the 1960s seemed reluctant to make any further funding commitments to schools other than capital programs. It also revived the risky issue of state aid, dormant for most of the century.

The expansion in federal funding, however, continued: in Malcolm Fraser's words, there was an 'explosive growth in the demand for education' to which policies must respond. By the mid-sixties, education had become a government priority. As Quentin Willis observes, education moved from seventeenth out of nineteen items of policy in the official platform drawn up by the newly formed Liberal Party in 1944 to second on the list after defence in 1965. The Liberal-Country Party government, in power throughout the campaign, entered a new phase in 1966 when Prime Minister Menzies retired from politics. As the Currie Working Party was being established in December of that

35 G. Harman & D. Smart, (eds), *Federal Intervention in Australian Education*, Georgian House, Melbourne, 1982, p. 22. Until this Scheme was introduced, federal funds had been directed to the tertiary sector. Prime Minister Menzies had invoked the constitutional clause which protected states' rights; Section 96 of the Australian Constitution.

36 Harman & Smart, *op. cit.*, p. 24. Harman and Smart suggest the Liberal-Country Party Cabinet wanted to limit funding to the tertiary sector, with the exception of relatively inexpensive capital programs which clearly targeted 'identifiable national educational problems'.


38 Willis, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
year, the Holt government created the new Department of Education and Science; an encouraging sign which suggested the government viewed Commonwealth administration of education as important. 1969, another election year, saw the government pressured by Labor policy on education which promised increased funds to all schools, a Schools Commission to guide government policy on funding needs, a teacher training system which offered allowances with fees, and improvement to teachers' salaries. Educational opportunity for all, together with the opportunity for all Australian children to reach their full potential were the themes of Labor's policy. A difference in the political agendas for education between the Liberal government and the Labor opposition was apparent, but it was high on both.

As far as the federal politicians were concerned, however, there was no particular interest in a new school system in the ACT; the idea of Canberra as a 'social laboratory' came with the Whitlam government in 1972. Besides, it was important not to give the impression of special treatment for bureaucrats and their children to the States. On the other hand, they were not opposed to a separate ACT education system: indeed, they assumed it would eventually happen. The problem remained, however, for the campaigners to capitalise on this, in the specific case of the ACT: small, electorally insignificant, having no powerful State Parliament, and commonly regarded as 'privileged'.

The administrators had a specific place in the decision-making apparatus and were doing the best job they could with the responsibility for Commonwealth education. Their decisions, however, had consequences for ACT education, and for their own careers. They also had concerns of their own about ACT education: some were opposed to the change, or willing to accept only limited change. Catherine Blakers recalls that 'there were always people in the Department with serious reservations; some were not in favour at all'. Many bureaucrats in the Department shared the government's view that the ACT would not be able to manage its own system until teacher training was provided for ACT teachers in Canberra and until arrangements were made for a teaching service which could offer an adequate career structure. One of those who initially had difficulties with the notion of a participatory education Authority was Alan Foskett, also a Campbell resident. His views did not appear to change for several years: in 1969 he was still unconvinced that the ACT needed its separate school system. In a departmental

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40 Johnson, Interview, 23 April 1991.
41 Blakers, Interview, 1983. Comments were made by a number of people during interviews which indicated that there were officers within the Department of Education and Science who actively opposed or attempted to block the moves towards an independent education authority for the ACT. These officers cannot be identified.
43 C. Blakers, Interview, 3 May 1983.
44 R. A. Foskett, Assistant Secretary, (Territorial Planning and ACT Education Services Branch), Educational Planning for the Growth of Canberra, Department of Education and Science, Canberra, 1969, mimeo, 22pp., Johnson papers. In a previous paper, Foskett acknowledged that eventually there would be a need for a separate education system. Canberra Quarter of a Million; The Impact on Education, Department of Education and Science, Canberra, January 1969, mimeo, 21pp. In the September paper, Foskett observes that the Commonwealth partnership with NSW has worked well and is likely to continue to do so for some time to come. He discounts the notion of the
planning paper, Alan Foskett described the possibility of an independent Authority as 'feasible at some point of time in the future' and stated that he thought that the 'partnership between the Commonwealth Department of Education and Science in the ACT had worked well, and [was] likely to continue doing so for some time to come'. He suggested also 'that some of the changes being sought by specific groups could be achieved under current administrative arrangements'.

Foskett later acknowledged his reluctance to support a change. 'In a way I became a bit at odds with the Currie people. I think they were trying to bring about change in the late sixties and early seventies too quickly.' He explains his mixed feelings about the proposal for the new Authority:

I had to develop a certain amount of ambivalence for multiple-hat situations... By then my commitment to the ACT as a national capital was very evident and very important to me... I had a lot of sympathy with that group [the Working Group] and I could see what they were doing fitted in with my ideas... the ACT having an increasing identity of its own... but still having a great regard for the people who were operating, people like Vic Armstrong [NSW inspector of schools]... So, a difficult path... Couldn't opt out of one or other...NSW was trying to do its best.'

Foskett acknowledges that he did not support the vision for a participatory administration at first. 'I was still influenced by the autocratic ways of the NCDC. Initially I found it difficult to

45 Foskett, Educational Planning for the Growth of Canberra, p. 8. This document, although not published as a public document, was made widely available.
46 Foskett, Interview, 1987. Foskett also did not agree with some of the later administrative arrangements suggested in the Hughes Report.
feel comfortable with the concept.48 He then describes how he modified his view.

Deep down I think probably I was the sort of person who'd feel comfortable with the idea that you had to have consumers in a school system... Pretty soon after I got into it, I began to see... you had to define a client [in order] to write the brief for what you wanted, whether it was an educational brief or a building brief or whatever...49

Foskett was one of the administrators who had ideals of their own for reforms, especially in secondary education, which were to have considerable importance in achieving the parents' goals, even going beyond them. Foskett and Neil Edwards, in the Territorial Education Branch responsible for the planning and building functions for ACT schools, were keen to use the planning and building functions of the Department as a means of introducing educational innovations into the ACT.50 In the case of Neil Edwards, a senior officer in the Department, this may have been partly the result of having investigated new pedagogy in education over a long period of time. Edwards was initially educated in psychology and theology during the late 1940s. After graduation, his work in the ministry involved him in visiting schools and he became interested in education. He returned to Sydney University, obtained a Diploma of Education in 1950, and then joined the NSW Department of Education. He also finished an additional year of an honours Bachelor of Arts in Education preparatory to commencing a Master of Education. His field of study was educational psychology and educational administration and one of his contemporaries during this period

was Bill Walker who was to play a key role in later events as a member of the Hughes Assessment Panel. He was then offered a position in the Commonwealth Office of Education in Sydney. From 1964 until 1967, Edwards was posted to the London office where an earlier interest in group work in teaching was rekindled by attendance at an International Conference in Stockholm on group work in schools. After his return to Australia, Edwards worked for a time in the Northern Territory, and thus became aware of the South Australian developments in open plan schooling. These seemed to him a logical progression from group work in the classroom, as open plan design was intended to make possible more flexible approaches to teaching. His enthusiasm for open plan schooling was supported by his superiors, especially Alan Foskett who was also enthusiastic about the Tasmanian developments in Matriculation Colleges and saw these as potential models for changes to schooling structures in the ACT.

Alan Foskett came into the Department by a different route. From 1950 until 1967 he was involved in Canberra's planning, first in the Department of National Development and then in 1958, with the National Capital Development Commission where he rose to Acting Secretary and Manager. In 1967, he

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51 1952-1953. Bill Walker, who became Professor of Educational Administration at New England University, was a staunch supporter of the campaigners. He spoke at their seminars on the subject of an independent education authority for the ACT. He was one of the members of the Hughes Assessment Panel established by the government in 1973 to make proposals for the governance of the new Authority. See ch. 8 below.

52 Later, the term 'open plan' was replaced by 'open space' then subsequently, by 'flexible space'.

was in charge of the ACT Education Branch in the Department of the Interior and transferred with it into the Department of Education and Science when it was formed in 1968. He first came into contact with the members of the Currie Working Party soon after he took up office in 1967, although he already knew Cath Blakers and the other Campbell parents as a fellow parent and resident of the same suburb. That was 'the beginning of a long association; acrimonious at some times, constructive at others'... Foskett's main contribution to the new system in his view and that of Neil Edwards, was his commitment to establish secondary colleges in the ACT: he originated the proposal and saw it through to the design briefs for the first colleges.

Despite such differences of aim or timetable, most campaigners' perceptions of the administrators were positive. Catherine Blakers recalls that they were generally supportive, although she added, 'Doesn't mean they understood what we were getting at.' John Riddell, too, acknowledges that, while there were some who attempted to block the changes, most of them were 'all right'; he perceives that one or two surreptitiously supported the moves for change, and accepts that the bureaucrats were innovators in respect to the establishment of secondary colleges:

They took the initiative on colleges. We considered the rites of passage a three-part thing; four-four-four, rather than six-four-and two. The bureaucracy came up with

55 Blakers, Interview, 1983.
56 Riddell is comparing a pattern of four years of early primary, four years of upper primary-junior high school and four years of senior high school with what eventuated: six years of primary, four years of high school and two years of secondary college.
the secondary college thing and we embraced it enthusiastically.⁵⁷

Hugh Waring also speaks positively about the senior departmental administrators. While he was critical of some of their decisions, especially those concerning the structure which was finally decided for the Authority, he states that they were 'biased in favour of change in the early stages - I doubt that we could have made any change without them'.⁵⁸

Even had the Department been as fully persuaded of the need for an independent ACT system as the campaigners, however, and even if it had been as high on their agendas, a more fundamental problem lay beyond it. The kind of system the campaigners wanted was directly and openly opposed to bureaucracy, and in this they were expressing something important in the culture of their section of the New Middle Class.

Administrators were even more deeply involved with their own culture. For them indeed it was central to the careers they had chosen, the work influences which had shaped them and the expertise which had brought them success.

There is some evidence that the change-agents had some understanding that administrators inevitable saw things differently. Dick Johnson, for example, in an article

published in the *Canberra Times* in March 1970 in which he discussed the findings of a report on education in Papua New Guinea, observed that, from the ACT's point of view, the report (prepared by a governmental advisory committee chaired by W. J. Weeden of the Department of Education and Science) had a major defect: it was concerned solely with administrative questions and explicitly disclaimed any attempt to examine the aims and methods of education. Johnson postulated that a principal weakness of the Department might be that it saw 'all Australian education as an administrative problem, and not in terms of educational goals'.

An adherence to administrative perspectives was essential to bureaucratic practice. Despite the background in education that some senior officers possessed, they were administrators first, educators, in a few cases, second. Senior administrators in education departments were trained in a culture of bureaucracy which emphasised hierarchical control. This, together with government regulations and the expectations for following standard procedures, could be expected to be inconsistent with a proposed participatory administration. Officers employed under the Public Service Act belonged to a career service which required transfer between departments for

60 Sir Hugh Ennor came from a university background; Neil Edwards and Brian Peck had teaching experience. Both Alan Foskett and Ken Jones emphasised that their background was in administration, not education.
61 The topic of the culture of bureaucracy and its implications for the administrators and the Authority will be discussed at greater length in ch. 14 below.
diversity of experience. The planners feared that these officers would not be able to develop an allegiance to the new organisation and its new form of administration; this could be detrimental to an organisation which intended to operate in a radically different style. When it was eventually agreed to establish an independent Authority, the planners urged the government to establish it with its own specially selected staff on the model of the Commonwealth Scientific And Industrial Organisation (CSIRO) and the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC). As Peter O'Connor argued:

The Federation believes that the Authority could be expected to develop an independence and corporate identity that would prove extremely attractive to many prospective employees. The Department of Education appears to have over-looked the possibility that an Independent Schools Authority will attract competent officers in much the same way as the N.C.D.C. and C.S.I.R.O. have done.

Research evidence that showed many senior administrators in the 1970s belonged to an educational and social elite lends weight to the campaigners' belief that administrators accustomed to operating in certain ways would find difficulty in adapting to a different form of working. This evidence is congruent with Gouldner's thesis that senior administrators are members of an 'old' class, the older elite of the bureaucracy,

62 P. W. O'Connor, letter to E. G. Whitlam, Prime Minister, 8 November 1973, File 74/139, ACTSA.
63 P. W. O'Connor, General Secretary, ACTCTF, letter to K. E. Beazley, Minister for Education, 8 November 1973, File 74/139, ACTSA; P. W. O'Connor, letter to E. G. Whitlam, Prime Minister, 8 November 1973, File 74/139, ACTSA.
the "line" officials whose position depends simply on their rigorous conformity with organizational rules, obedience to their superiors' orders, the legality of their appointment, and sheer seniority.\textsuperscript{65}

It is therefore likely that however rational their express objectives might have been, the senior administrators in the Department would also have been influenced by a certain cultural reluctance to accept so different a form of administration.

As an important group of stakeholders, the administrators, then, had different priorities from the teachers. For the parents, the teachers were allies for the immediate future. The bureaucrats needed persuasion, but were potentially valuable allies. At some time in the future, however, when it came to bringing to realisation the vision of a participatory, democratic system and making it work, there existed possibilities of differences that would be significant. These were not really foreseen, at this stage.

\textsuperscript{65} Gouldner, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 50.
CHAPTER SEVEN.

THE CAMPAIGN

The planning stage to this point had achieved much in a very short time. In strategic planning terms, the change-agents were ready to embark on the strategic activities phase, which, in contrast to the rapid progress made in one year, was to take the form of a slow-motion campaign which lasted five years and passed through three identifiable stages. It was prolonged because, even when generally sympathetic, administrators and politicians saw no need for haste, especially during the first stage which was focussed on a demand for an inquiry into ACT education. The change-agents faced the challenge of maintaining momentum in the first two stages but this problem disappeared in the third, when the administrators' agendas for reform in conjunction with external events, brought administrators and politicians to the position where they decided that the time for an independent ACT education Authority, the necessary first step towards realising a far grander design, had arrived.

The first stage of the campaign began when the remnants of the Currie Working Party who eventually formed a pressure group, the ACT Education Working Group, met to plan strategies for communicating the Currie Report's proposals to key people within the Canberra community, and persuading them that the proposals were both worthwhile and achievable. The Working

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1 The definition of pressure group is similar to the one used by Trevor Matthews, 'Pressure Groups in Australia', in H. Mayer (ed.), *Australian Politics: A Second Reader*, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1969, p. 236. For
Group members were assiduous networkers, communicating with the education community through members who belonged to organisations such as the Australian College of Education and the P&C Council. Membership of other groups allowed a 'many-pronged approach to discussion' as well as providing an opportunity for feedback with a range of people in the ACT, and comments on issues by representatives of several organisations generated the appearance of wide public concern. To extend the network, a small new group, the Parent-Teacher Council, was formed in May 1970, by John Riddell. P&C parents such as Riddell, Hugh Waring and Kath Abbott held round table discussions about educational issues with teacher unionists including Peter O'Connor, Max Badham and Errol Sweaney. This informal group continued to meet until the Liaison Committee was formed in 1972.4

many people the term 'pressure group' implies an inappropriate or even illegitimate use of force to secure benefits for a small number of individuals; to overcome this opprobrium the more neutral term 'interest group', is often substituted. See D. B. Truman, The Governmental Process, A. A. Knopf, New York, 1951; G. S. Harman, 'Pressure Groups and Australian Education', The Australian Journal of Higher Education, 4, 2, December 1971, pp. 137-147. For studies which analyse the structures, composition, and processes in which pressure groups operate, as well as their place in the political system, see, P. B. Westerway, 'Free, Compulsory and Secular', A. Spaull, 'The NSW Teachers' Federation's Role as a Pressure Group in Educational Politics', and E. K. Brabrooke, 'It Can't Happen Here - Or Can't It?' in G. S. Harman & C. Selby-Smith, Readings in the Economics and Politics of Australian Education, Pergamon Press, Rushcutters Bay, 1976, Chs. 7, 8, 9 respectively. Some writers distinguish between 'interest groups' and 'pressure groups', others use the terms interchangeably.


3 Quoted words, Blakers, Interview, 1983; remainder of sentence, H. Waring, Interview, 3 January 1992.

4 Max Badham, Interview, 9 January 1984. See ch. 8 below for information about the Liaison Committee.
Their campaign had just begun, however, when, early in 1968, a senior administrator in the Department of Education and Science advised them that before any action could be taken by government they 'must go out and change public opinion', that is, convince the Canberra public at large of the desirability of their proposals.\(^5\) It was not sufficient to gain formal acceptance from the relevant organisations.\(^6\) As senior departmental officers advised the Minister for Education and Science there was little choice but to follow this advice. While Working Group members had hoped to persuade as many people as possible to their cause, the task of gaining public consensus for an independent education Authority, let alone one so novel, appeared daunting.\(^7\) Apart from the effort required to convince the public of the benefits of changing a familiar system, whatever its obvious defects, for one unknown and untried, and of the need not only for assent but for action, the change-agents were concerned that the public might become divided on the issue, with strong negative reactions generated as a result.\(^8\)

The group devised a clever strategy which was to give its campaign a new focus. Rather than risk polarising opinion for and against its proposals, it reformulated the campaign's immediate purpose, which now became 'a public, expert and wide-ranging Enquiry into a separate ACT system of education'.

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\(^5\) The officer was Keith Coughlan, Senior Assistant Secretary, Educational Facilities and Territorial Education Division. C. Blakers, Interview, 3 May 1983.


\(^7\) C. Blakers, Interview, 3 May 1983.

\(^8\) Blakers, Interview, 1983.
This was a goal that could be supported by all those who were dissatisfied with the system as it was, but who were not ready to accept the notion of a separate, let alone a very different, school system. Thus the Working Group regained control of the political agenda by altering the immediate direction but not the ultimate objective of the campaign. Now they were to put their New Middle Class skills in communication to good use in a wide range of written and oral forms. In this, they were actively helped by a very powerful ally, John Allan of the *Canberra Times*, whose support Cath Blakers enlisted at the beginning of the campaign. Allan had children in the public school system, was interested in educational issues, and doubtless could see that frequent reporting of the progress of events in a lively local campaign would benefit his newspaper. The *Canberra Times* published many editorials about current educational issues, and obstacles encountered by the Working Group would often be followed within days by pertinent comment on page two. An examination of the editorials written during one year, 1970, reveals a series of arresting titles which depict a sad saga of troubles in the education system: 'Protests in the Schools', 'A

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9 Quoted words from Blakers, *op. cit.*, p. 39. John Riddell wrote to Malcolm Fraser, drawing his attention to the new request for an inquiry; Fraser replied that he had passed his Department to 'investigate and advise on problems inherent in the present system'. M. Fraser, Minister for Education and Science, letter to John Riddell, President, ACT Council of P&C Associations, 23 July 1969, Blakers papers. In terms of a strategic change model, they shifted the focus for agreement from one 'strategic goal' (gaining acceptance for the change from P&C associations) to a different 'strategic goal' (information from an Inquiry to support the need for a separate school system for the ACT).

10 C. Blakers, Interview, 25 February 1992
National Scandal', 'Education Crisis', 'Treated with Contempt', 'A Problem Shelved', 'The Teachers Strike'.

Members of the Working Group or colleagues in connected groups and associations used the correspondence section of the *Canberra Times* to draw attention to a significant issue or a specific event. Regulars such as Blakers, Kath Abbott, John Riddell and Ken Townley frequently wrote letters to the editor arguing their case. Abbott could be relied upon for a no-holds-barred approach.

Sir, ... If anything were needed to demonstrate the corrupt complacency of those politically and administratively responsible for state education in the ACT, the recent statements by the Minister for Education and Science and the inspectorial staff perfectly fit the bill.

These letters in turn generated support for the campaign from other members of the public who wrote of their dissatisfaction with the NSW administration of their schools. The letters covered a range of topics including philosophical and scholarly issues as well as more immediate, local concerns. Teachers, for example, expressed despair at the situation.

Sir, ... I resigned from teaching at the end of last year. I had taught science for 18 years and had been a science master for the past 7 years, the past 5 at Canberra High School.

I resigned because I could no longer stand helping to prop up an education system which is falling around our ears.

We are getting the kind of education system we deserve. Only our children are not.

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Cath Blakers kept in contact with John Allan and arranged for information to be provided to residents of Canberra through regular features.\(^\text{14}\) As a result, from the late 1960s the \textit{Canberra Times} published substantial articles on education at frequent intervals in its 'Education Series'. In 1971, the 'Occasional Series on Education' began and continued into the 1980s. Under headings such as 'The Chance for a Different ACT Education Pattern', 'School Councils: Test for Tomorrow', writers kept up the publicity for the campaign.\(^\text{15}\)

Cath Blakers herself wrote prolifically for the \textit{Canberra Times} during the campaign and contributed many articles about education. In the first article, 'Getting the Facts on Education', she argued that lack of statistical information made it difficult for people to learn about changes in education and encouraged Canberra citizens to become involved in education in order to become informed.\(^\text{16}\) In the first of a series of three articles, 'ACT Education: Why Change?', she developed an argument for the establishment of a new school system responsive to changing needs of children and 'capable of adapting its attitudes and procedures to a world of rapid change'.\(^\text{17}\) In the second, she spoke of educational opportunity and argued the case for a new school system in which 'the requirements of a good modern education are provided.... and in which no child is penalised for


poverty'. In the last article, she concluded by stating that some of the most significant improvements of a 'well developed system' required not more money but 'fundamental changes in aims, attitudes and organisation'. Other articles dealt with problems in syllabus and examinations, staffing of high schools, the 'bland and reassuring' official comment in the face of concerns expressed by teachers, and the need for a commission of inquiry along the lines recommended by the *Currie Report*.

Members and friends of the Working Group and other citizens not connected with the campaign contributed articles supporting the push for an inquiry, and directly or indirectly, the campaign for a separate school system. In May 1970 Noel Butlin, Professor of Economic History in the Institute of Advanced Studies at the Australian National University, wrote a series of four articles for the *Canberra Times*, presenting a solid case for the economic feasibility of establishing a new school system in keeping with the sentiments articulated in the *Currie Report*: 'Here is a society wealthy enough to support a high level of education, one actually contributing through income tax

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20 Blakers, 'Setting syllabuses to fit the need', *Canberra Times*, 4 August 1969, p. 2; Blakers, 'Staffing in ACT Schools - Part 1: Stability is key to quality, *Canberra Times*, 25 March 1970, p. 2; Blakers, 'Staffing in ACT Schools Part 2: Archaic methods breed discontent', *Canberra Times*, 26 March 1970, p. 2. Here, in her allusion to the matter of official inquiry, Blakers conflates references to inquiry in the *Currie Report* and later events. The Prefatory Note to the *Currie Report* makes only a general statement about future inquiry: 'to suggest lines of thinking which, it is hoped, may be investigated at an official level'; *Currie Report*, p. 2. The push for an official inquiry into education began some months after the *Currie Report* was distributed, in 1968. Blakers in Hughes & Mulford, p. 39.
sufficient for a substantially higher educational service.' Butlin argued that the ACT was 'compelled to accept a second-hand service with no option to amend...' The series ended predictably with a call for an inquiry into the desirability of an ACT education Authority.21

Although these came from many different writers, the extent to which they spoke as one voice is remarkable. Writing from such individual perspectives as school principal, university academic or parent, the authors gave examples from their own experience which supported the arguments of the Currie Report's main recommendations, and supported the case for an official inquiry. In many respects, Butlin's authoritative series summarised their case: education in the ACT was in a sad state, education as an important investment for the future was being overlooked, the citizens deserved better, they could afford it, and an inquiry was needed to gather information as a basis for change.

Public conferences or seminars were used to stir interest about current issues and developments in the campaign. The first seminar held in November 1966 had brought the proposal

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21 N. G. Butlin, Canberra Times, Series of four articles, Part 1, 'The decline in ACT Administration', 7 May 1970, p. 2; Part 2, "Cheap" teaching for the ACT', 8 May 1970, p. 10; Part 3, 'Financing government schools in the ACT', 21 May 1970, p. 2; Part 4, 'Facts favour a separate ACT education system', 22 May 1970, p. 2. Part 1 used statistics to establish a measurable decline in educational services in the ACT; Part 2 made a case for improving services by the provision of additional funds together with major changes to the bureaucratic model of administration in the ACT system; Part 3 raised questions about the ability of the ACT to finance an improved education system; and Part 4 demonstrated that the ACT not only deserved a new system of education but had the resources to make it possible.
to change the ACT education system to public notice and established the Currie Working Party. The release of the *Currie Report* was followed by another in March 1968, again organised by Lascelles Wilson and chaired by Sir George Currie. Following this seminar, the *Canberra Times* reported that Terry O'Connell stated that an independent education system in the ACT would be 'a quite tremendous opportunity to influence the quality and type of education throughout Australia and, in fact, throughout the world'. O'Connell's words demonstrate the high level of optimism characteristic of the group at that stage. In 1968, the campaigners arranged with the President of the P&C Council, John Riddell, for a panel of speakers consisting of P&C members and four Currie Working Party members to argue their case at P&C meetings during winter and spring of that year. On 28 June 1969, the ACT Council of P&C Associations collaborated with the Working Group to organise another public seminar, officially opened by the Secretary of the Department of Education and Science, Sir Hugh Ennor. Professor William Walker, Department of Education, University of New England, spoke in support of an independent Authority. The seminar ended with participants resolved to press the Minister for Education and Science for an inquiry as a matter of urgency.

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22 ANU, Department of Adult Education, Seminar on an Independent Education Authority for the ACT, Programme, 2 March 1968, Johnson papers.
Indeed, all this public activity could not be an end in itself. It did have a separate longer-term value, in generating a consensus, or at least an acceptance, among the Canberra public at large that was essential if the new departure was to be anything more than the NSW system in miniature, and especially as it was predicated upon widespread public involvement. More immediately, however, it was a means of persuading bureaucrats and politicians that the Working Party represented a majority demand, that it would not go away, and that it was time for the *Currie Report* to become part of their active agenda. The campaigners therefore made a point of inviting senior administrators to their seminars and conferences in order to ensure that the lines of communication with them were always open.26 They also wrote papers and prepared submissions on topical educational issues in order to provide decision-makers with information.27 For example, in a substantial submission for the Government's Inquiry into Teacher Education, the Working Group members put their case for an inquiry into ACT education, and for good measure, included the *Currie Report* as an Appendix.28 They met frequently with politicians to keep their

26 Blakers, Interview, 1983.
28 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 July 1971; The Senate Inquiry was in response to the shortage of teachers and the decline in numbers of student teachers. Earlier that same month, the NSW Government had initiated a similar inquiry into teacher education. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 July 1971. ACT Education Working Group, Submission to the
cause before them, but not, curiously, with Jim Fraser, MHR, then
the ACT's sole representative in Parliament, a well-liked and
highly esteemed man, considered by many more as a Canberra
than a Labor man, who had remarked on the *Currie Report* that
he had been advocating 'for years' the establishment of an
independent Authority and an ACT teacher training institution.²⁹

When he died in May 1970, during the subsequent by-election,
the Working Group obtained the support of local politicians and
candidates at a public meeting for their proposed inquiry into
education in the ACT, but nothing came of it.³⁰

This curious neglect of local politicians was to cause some
difficulty later, deriving perhaps from that common Canberra
suspicion of politicians that would be so clearly expressed almost
a decade later in the overwhelming rejection at a referendum of
local self-government.³¹ Nor did the Working Group become
involved in party politics, although some of its members did:
John Riddell, for example, was to join the Labor Party in the 'It's
Time' fervour of the pre-Whitlam era, and others who were
delegates to the Australian Council for State School Organizations
from the ACT Council of P&C Associations, became involved in
politics as part of their role in that group.³²

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²⁹ *Canberra Times*, 12 December 1967, p. 3; J. Riddell, Interview, 20
November 1991. Riddell acknowledges that the campaigners did not
seek the help of local politicians but could offer no explanation for
this. He knew Jim Fraser; 'he was fantastic, yet we never used him'.
³⁰ Blakers, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
³¹ The referendum on self-government was held 25 November 1978.
Ministers were another matter: 'We were forever going to see Ministers', Cath Blakers recalled later, and welcoming new Ministers (who changed frequently) with submissions became a regular Working Group ploy. The Ministers concerned were not unsympathetic; the problem was rather that they and their advisers saw some practical difficulties, and although it was widely expected that the ACT would acquire self-government and therefore its own education Authority, they did not have the same sense of urgency about it as the Working Group.

In 1967, the campaigners faced the task of persuading the new Minister for Education, Senator (later Sir John) Gorton, and to this end they provided him with a copy of the *Currie Report*. There was a belief among departmental administrators that Senator Gorton was sympathetic to the campaigners' cause. Many years later, Neil Edwards, a former senior administrator within the Department of Education and Science, considered that it was 'patently clear' that Senator Gorton was sympathetic to the campaigners' cause.

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33 Blakers, op. cit., p. 42. A detailed submission from the Working Group on 'The Commonwealth Role in Australian Education' and on proposals for an education authority for the ACT greeted Malcolm Fraser on his return to office as Minister for Education and Science in November 1971. A lengthy submission also awaited the new Minister for Education in the Whitlam Labor Government, Kim Beazley, on his first day in office, in November 1972. C. Blakers, Interview, 3 May 1983; Documents from Blakers MSS. The submission to Kim Beazley comprised a two-page outline of the Working Group's proposals for the immediate establishment of an independent education authority for the ACT, a history of the Education Working Group, and the group's repeated requests for an inquiry, suggestions on the administrative procedures which might be followed in setting up a new education authority and the form it might take, and for good measure, a copy of the 1971 submission to a previous Minister for Education and Science on the Commonwealth's role in education.

seized with the notion that education was pretty important... Senator Gorton felt it was inappropriate that the Department of Education of Science should have responsibility for education nationally yet not take responsibility for the education in its own Territory... One of his first actions as Prime Minister was to transfer ACT education into the Department of Education and Science.\(^{35}\)

Alan Foskett, endorsing Edwards' remarks, spoke of Gorton's 'burning desire' to have territorial education within the Department of Education and Science against the view of senior officers in the Department of the Interior.

Dick Kingsland [(later Sir) Richard Kingsland, Secretary of the Department of the Interior] believed that ACT education should be in the department looking after community events. Dick was winning until the change of government...\(^{36}\)

The signs for changed arrangements to federal funding of ACT schools in an ACT school system, however, were not especially promising as the Liberal government's record was to avoid an on-going commitment to provide funds to schools; and in any case, on the death of Harold Holt, Senator Gorton became Prime Minister at the start of 1968.

\(^{35}\) Neil Edwards, Interview, 9 October 1986. The Commonwealth Department of Education and Science was formally established on 13 December 1966. Sir Hugh Ennor took up his appointment as Secretary and Permanent Head of the Department on 13 January 1967. The Head of the Education Division in the Commonwealth Office of Education, Ken Jones, became First Assistant Secretary and W. J. (Jock) Weeden, formerly Director of the Commonwealth Office of Education, became Senior Assistant Secretary in the Department. According to Foskett, there was a special camaraderie between those who came from the Commonwealth Office of Education into the Department.

\(^{36}\) A. Foskett, Interview, 2 June 1987. Foskett is referring to the change in Prime Ministers when Gorton became Prime Minister after Holt's presumed death and moved ACT education into the Department of Education and Science.
Expectations were raised after a public seminar in March 1968 which dealt with the *Currie Report's* proposals, when the new Minister for Education and Science, Malcolm Fraser, stated that he 'hoped that in the long term education in the Territories - particularly the ACT - could be developed as a model for the States'.

In June 1968, he announced that a school for teacher education was to be established at the Canberra College of Advanced Education, which, like Senator Gorton and the Departmental administrators, he had considered essential before an independent school system could be established. Any encouragement derived from this was diminished three months later, when a letter from Malcolm Fraser to Peter Nixon, Minister of the Interior, was tabled at the September Advisory Council meeting. Although Mr Fraser considered an independent education Authority 'almost inevitable' at some time, that time was clearly not at hand. The letter raised a number of problems, including the need to train enough teachers and ensure them adequate career opportunities, and stated:

> In my opinion the existing arrangement under which education services in the A.C.T. are provided, in partnership by the Commonwealth and the New South Wales Education and Technical Education Departments is working very well... In our continuing examination of the most appropriate methods of providing education services to meet the needs of the A.C.T. we shall keep well in mind the recommendations of the Working Party..."
Subsequently, the *Canberra Times* reported Malcolm Fraser as stating that any Authority 'would be responsible to the Minister for Education and Science, and would not be independent of government but probably would have a powerful advisory body including community interests in the A.C.T'. In 1969, an election year, there appeared to be a possible breakthrough: Malcolm Fraser introduced a per capita recurrent scheme of financial assistance to independent schools, which created the precedent of recurrent funding to both primary and secondary schools, but when, after the elections, Mr Fraser became Minister for Defence and Nigel Bowen replaced him as Minister for Education and Science, the campaigners had to start over again.

By September 1970, the planners' hopes were high that the inquiry for which they had been pressing, would be held. Mr Bowen was known to support it, the Department of Education and Science having drafted a Cabinet Submission in favour of it. However, on 9 October 1970 he made two announcements: first, the good news, that the government had decided to establish a Commonwealth Teaching Service; then the bad, that the government had decided not to hold an inquiry 'for the

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41 For further information about federal funding during this period, see Harman & Smart, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
Ken Townley, P&C Council President, condemned the government's decision:

It is quite incredible that a responsible Government should be so blind to the need for educational advance that it knocks back even an inquiry into something which could have been of incalculable value. Such an inquiry would benefit every child in Australia. This sort of narrow parochial and chauvinistic attitude is going to rebound (sic) to Australia's disadvantage in the next 20 years.\textsuperscript{45}

The planners were bitterly disappointed and responded to this decision with strong protests in letters published in the \textit{Canberra Times}.\textsuperscript{46} Students also were roused to protest. One student at a local high school wrote:

At present they [young Australians] are being exploited in a way that makes a farce of the term "democratic government". If Mr Askin had fulfilled his promise of the 1965 State elections by setting up an Education Commission run by educators, not public servants, the present crisis would not have resulted.\textsuperscript{47}


Several days later, the *Canberra Times* reported that the Minister of Education had said that he 'would welcome the establishment of an advisory body through which the community could formulate ideas on education', and that administrators in the Department of Education and Science were prepared 'to develop ideas on what form an advisory body on education in the ACT should take in consultation with the ACT Council of P&C Associations'. The P&C Council rejected the notion of an advisory body and continued to press for an inquiry.\(^{48}\) The government attempted to negotiate with representatives from parent groups for the establishment of an advisory body but was unsuccessful.\(^{49}\) Another change of Minister in March 1971, when David Fairbairn replaced Mr Bowen, brought no change of policy: in July the new Minister reiterated the decision not to hold an inquiry 'for the present'. The Working Group members despaired of years of effort when he then queried whether there had been a general demand for a separate Authority in the ACT. They had barely started to prepare their response when Malcolm Fraser returned to the scene as Minister for Education and Science in November 1971; they organised for his return to be greeted with petitions for an inquiry from parent and community organisations.\(^{50}\)

The government's rejection of an inquiry marked the beginning of the campaign's second stage. Despite Mr Fairbairn's scepticism, the Working Group had, in fact, made some progress

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\(^{49}\) Blakers, *op. cit.*, p. 42.  
\(^{50}\) *ibid.*
with the public. Two months after Mr Bowen's announcement, in November 1970, the Albert Hall had overflowed with people at a public seminar on 'Education - What Now?'. Under the headline, 'Second try for ACT Inquiry', the Canberra Times reported that a 'capacity crowd of more than 700 people in the Albert Hall voted unanimously to call upon the Minister for Education and Science, Mr Bowen, to resubmit to Cabinet the submission for an Inquiry into ACT education'. As a result of the meeting, secondary students enlisted support for a petition to Parliament, which, when it was presented, contained more than 10,000 signatures. Nor did concerns about education subside. The number of letters of complaint about the problems in the schools reached a new peak in 1971, as teachers and parents wrote of an impending crisis in the staffing of NSW schools and documented what became known as 'the crisis in education'. The Canberra Times used them to castigate the administrators:

The fact that the Department of Education and Science so far appears to be unmoved by either the volume of expert testimony and analysis pointing to a crisis in A.C.T. schools or by the persistent expressions of concern and despair by teachers and the public can only be attributed to incompetence or indifference.

A second editorial was equally critical, describing the Department as 'reduced to the extremity of resorting to

53 For example, letters and reports published in a period of three months on the topic of a staffing crisis included: Canberra Times, 24, 29, 30, (three letters) 31, July 1971; 2, 17, 19, 21 August 1971; 23 September 1971.
54 Canberra Times, editorial, 'Evidence of Failure', 26 June 1971.
expedients forced on it by a situation over which it has lost control...55

Another hopeful development, of considerable importance in later years, came as a windfall for the Working Group from within the department itself, where senior officers had come to favour the creation of separate secondary colleges for students in the last two years of high school. The idea had been around earlier: the Currie Report had rejected it, but without any full discussion, and it did have some possibilities of advancing the more open and communal style of education which the Report had favoured. The matter had received a more public airing in March 1971, when the Canberra Chapter of the Australian College of Education organised a public seminar on secondary colleges, involving members of the Working Group. The proposals of senior officers in the Department of Education and Science to build secondary colleges in the ACT were discussed by participants at this seminar who included members of parent-community groups, teacher organisations, the full range of educational institutions as well as NSW Department of Education and Commonwealth Department of Education and Science officers.56

In November, the Department went further, and established a committee, innovative for Australian education at that time: the Working Committee on College Proposals. With Malcolm Fraser's 'specific approval', Alan Foskett, Bruce Campbell and

55 Canberra Times, editorial, 'Education by Expediency', 7 July 1971.
56 See R. Campbell, (Chairperson), Secondary Education for Canberra, Report of the Working Committee on College Proposals for the Australian Capital Territory, Canberra, 1973, p. 3.
Neil Edwards delivered papers on the proposal to three groups of stakeholders; parents, the Secondary Teachers' Association, and the Secondary Principals' Council.\footnote{57} Neil Edwards recalls that 'from those three groups we got an agreement that it was worth proceeding with a working party... and Malcolm Fraser approved...'. As a result, the Campbell Committee was widely representative of ACT education.\footnote{58} Five members of the Working Group were on the Campbell Committee as delegates or alternate delegates and Working Group members contributed submissions and letters to the Committee as individuals or members of the ACT Council of P&C Associations.\footnote{59} The Committee was charged to examine and report on the restructuring of secondary schooling to provide for the introduction of secondary colleges in the ACT.\footnote{60} Because his senior officer, Alan Foskett, was unable to attend, Neil Edwards presided at the first meeting. The first task was to select the person to chair the Campbell Committee.\footnote{61} Neil Edwards states:

I began by saying, "We need to determine who is going to be chairman. The department will provide secretarial support". The others said, "We assumed the Department will chair it".

\footnote{57}{Alan Foskett was particularly encouraged by an enthusiastic reception to the idea at a meeting at Telopea Park High School where he spoke to parents at the invitation of the principal, Alec MacPherson. Quotations in this section on the establishment of the Campbell Working Committee are taken from interview given by Neil Edwards, 9 October 1986.}

\footnote{58}{It included representatives from the ACT Council of P&C Associations, the ACT Secondary Teachers' Association, the Technical Teachers' Association, the ACT Secondary Principals Council, the NSW Department of Education, and the Commonwealth Department of Education. For a list of members of the Campbell Working Committee see Appendix 3.}

\footnote{59}{P. Hughes, C. Duke, ACT Council of P&C Associations, submissions; R. St.C Johnson, T J. O'Connell, D. Anderson, letters.}

\footnote{60}{Campbell Report, p. iii}

\footnote{61}{Quotations in this section on the establishment of the Campbell Working Committee are taken from interview given by Neil Edwards, 9 October 1986.}
I said, "No, the department will not chair it". This was completely unexpected. Richard Campbell's name was put forward. I next asked Richard Campbell how he felt [about accepting the role of chair]. He said, "Yes. I would only be prepared to do it on condition I become independent and I'm no longer seen as a representative of the [P&C] Council." I said, "OK", and so Richard then became the chairman.62

In April 1972, the first Australian study to examine students' attitudes to their schooling, commissioned by the Committee, revealed that more than 80 per cent of ACT 5th and 6th form high school students favoured the introduction of secondary colleges, and, to the shock and dismay of the Committee, nine per cent of fourth formers, five percent of fifth formers and four percent of sixth formers indicated that they 'hated school'.63 In May 1972, the P&C Council formally stated its commitment to supporting in principle the introduction of secondary colleges with governing councils 'containing a minority of parents, having certain defined responsibilities, and answerable to an independent ACT education Authority which was not part of a government department and which comprised educators and representatives of the community'.64 In June 1972, Mr Fraser announced that the Campbell Committee had presented an interim report which recommended the

62 It is not clear who nominated Richard Campbell to chair the committee: Edwards believes it was one of the P&C representatives, but is unsure, Ken Jones states that the 'administration' [Department of Education and Science] chose him and Campbell himself says that Edwards nominated him.

63 The survey further revealed that seventeen per cent of fourth formers, fifteen per cent of fifth formers and eighteen per cent of sixth formers tolerated school with difficulty. D. S. Anderson & D. G. Beswick, Canberra Secondary School Survey 1972: The proposal to introduce fifth and sixth form colleges in the ACT, First Report, Education Research Unit, ANU, Canberra, April, 1972; Campbell Report, p. 128; Canberra Times, 19 April 1972, pp. 1, 16.

64 Canberra Times, 3 May 1972, p. 7.
introduction of secondary colleges in the ACT. In Neil Edward’s view, there were many 'extraordinary things' about the Campbell Committee and the eventual acceptance of its recommendations for the establishment of secondary colleges:

The administrators from the Minister down... knew perfectly well that if we did this it was going to cost more money. It was known right from the start. Malcolm Fraser was quite clear that was what was going to happen. But it was argued it was justified on the grounds of value for money in terms of the educational and social advantages of the whole thing. The other thing unusual about it... It was initiated under Malcolm Fraser’s administration. It was carried on with his full approval. It reported to him while in progress. It made its main recommendations long before the Report came out in August of that year. It was accepted by him. Then there was a change of government and it all came back to Beazley and he accepted it too. All of that is pretty remarkable.65

What was perhaps equally remarkable, and encouraging to the parents' group after so many years of seemingly fruitless struggle, was the nature of the Committee. Although later events were to demonstrate that bureaucrats often had difficulty in relinquishing their accustomed modes of administration, the process which Neil Edwards had begun was decidedly participatory. A committee that included administrators, parents and teachers was quite novel in Australia. It established the precedent of a committee chaired by a non-administrator to enable consultation of parents and teachers on educational decisions in the ACT; previously, Ministers for Education had made decisions about schooling after receiving advice from their senior administrators. The process chosen to establish the committee suggested bureaucrats had potential for flexibility about future administrative arrangements. Members of the

Campbell Committee remarked later that it worked by consensus and this also encouraged hopes that participation in the school system was possible.\textsuperscript{66} Neil Edwards recalls the mode of operation and the efficiency of this Committee with some pride. In noting that the Wyndham Committee that planned the restructuring of secondary schooling in NSW took four years to produce its report, he states:

Our Committee did it over three terms. There were thirty plus meetings of the full Committee - goodness knows how many other meetings... We worked hard. For the first term - about the first ten or twelve meetings, people took stances. They took stances according to the interests of their own particular group. And it was still worthwhile to have spent all that time on people taking stances, getting it out of their systems, being criticised, reconsidering their stand, because in the second and third term we got down to hard work, and in the end, a unanimous Report. Now that was rather extraordinary and I think it was a good example of Richard Campbell's management and it was also a good example of how you achieve a situation in which you break free of the need to adopt stances which people have naturally got.... It's very natural to adopt stances - it's their role.\textsuperscript{67}

By the time the \textit{Campbell Report} was distributed, the planners guessed that they had almost reached the end of the campaign.\textsuperscript{68} A shortage of teachers had forced the South Australian government in 1970 to give notice that over a period of five years it wished to withdraw its teachers from schools in the Northern Territory. NSW too was suffering a serious

\textsuperscript{68} R. St.C. Johnson, Interview, 23 April 1991. Dick Johnson states that campaigners had discerned a change in administrators' attitudes towards the proposed Authority early in 1972.
shortage of trained teachers magnified by the demands of the Wyndham Scheme, which led in 1971 to a 'crisis in education', documented in many letters to the press in Sydney as well as in Canberra.69 On 12 November 1971, the NSW Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Science, Charles Cutler, wrote to Malcolm Fraser suggesting that the existing arrangements for staffing ACT schools might have to be changed in the near future, and seeking discussions between the Commonwealth and NSW Education Department officers.70

This letter was a catalyst. With a similar request from South Australia as a precedent, Malcolm Fraser began discussions with his departmental officers about the timing and procedures for establishing an education Authority in the ACT. Allan Foskett had previous knowledge that such a letter would arrive; he had a first draft of a Submission to Cabinet ready by 15 November, and Departmental officers began negotiations with NSW administrators for the transfer of ACT education and announced that discussions on the employment of teachers in ACT schools had begun between Commonwealth and State Departments of Education.71 Briefing Notes for Mr Fraser that

69 The implementation of the 1957 report of the Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Schooling chaired by Dr Harold Wyndham. (Wyndham Report).
70 C. Cutler, NSW Minister for Education and Science. letter to M. Fraser, Minister for Education and Science, 12 December 1971, File 74/42, ACTSA.
accompanied the Cabinet Submission set out the reasons why the government should agree to the establishment of an ACT Education Authority: one, the NSW Education Department was reluctant to continue to supply teachers for ACT schools; two, the proposals were known to many people including teachers' representatives; three, it would be embarrassing for a Commonwealth Minister to ask the NSW department with its staffing problems to reverse its decision; and four, there was public pressure in the ACT to break the link with NSW.\textsuperscript{72}

The NSW Department's request for a reconsideration of staffing arrangements in the ACT was timely because it provided the bureaucrats with a solution to difficulties they were experiencing in introducing educational innovations into the ACT school system. While Commonwealth administrators wanted to emulate South Australia and negotiated with the National Planning Development Commission for the erection of open plan schools in the Commonwealth school building program, the inflexibility of the NSW transfer and promotion procedures made it difficult to staff these schools with specially trained teachers.\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{72} Department of Education, Ministerial Briefing Notes: Cabinet Submission, Operations of Schools in the ACT, Department of Education, (n.d.), File 74/22, ACTSA.
\textsuperscript{73} Edwards, Interview, 1986. See also, N. R. Edwards, [Director, Advisory Services, Territorial Planning and ACT Services Branch, Department of Education and Science], Primary School Building in the ACT and NT, \textit{Education News}, June 1972, pp. 17-23; D. W. Hood, [Education Liaison Officer in the United Kingdom for the Commonwealth Department of Education and Science, 'What Future for Open Planning?' \textit{Education News}, December 1972, pp. 25-28. The history of open plan schools in the ACT and the difficulties expected for the appropriate staffing of these schools under NSW transfer and promotion procedures was information commonly discussed by teachers, principals and inspectors during the early 1970s. I was one of several teachers in 1973 who were asked to provide in-service courses for teachers wishing to teach in these schools. There was, however, no guarantee that trained 'open plan' teachers would be
As the result of a complicated administrative arrangement an open plan unit for two teachers at Campbell Primary School was established.\(^{74}\) Although this unique arrangement worked well because of the cooperation of the various people involved, the Commonwealth officers anticipated difficulty with staffing other 'purpose-built' open plan schools. A transfer and promotion system which placed teachers in schools according to their suitability was required. The introduction of secondary colleges posed even more problems. Unlike open plan schools, they could not be introduced by the simple expedient of building architecturally different styles of schools, requiring major changes in staffing arrangements and curriculum provision which the NSW structure of secondary schooling did not easily accommodate. Alan Foskett who had initially become interested in secondary colleges, discovered that they had been considered for Newcastle, but that the NSW Department of Education had rejected the idea because it would have been too difficult to introduce on a system basis, and it was not prepared to consider it for just one region. He then decided that Canberra was a most suitable place to establish secondary colleges:

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\(^{74}\) They arranged for the Campbell parent community to request an open plan unit for their school. Shortly afterwards, when Duntroon school was closed, Campbell Primary School offered to take the Duntroon students. This justified the building of the new open plan unit which opened in 1969-70. Edwards, Interview, 1986.
I thought Canberra had great advantages as a place for secondary colleges. I looked at the demography and the social backgrounds of the students who would be students and saw that in a planning sense, we could do it easily. If the ACT had its own system it would provide the way to introduce secondary colleges. The plans for open plan schools and secondary colleges were concurrent, but they were not related to each other except that both Neil Edwards and I saw the planning and building function [of the Department] as the way we could do new things in the ACT. The only way to hook them in was if the ACT had its own system. A new system was where we could make them happen.75

Circumstances in the wider political sphere also supported a decision to separate from the NSW administration of education. The balance of power in the government was delicate; the Liberal-Country Party coalition had gained a narrow majority over the Labor Party in the 1969 elections and education was emerging as an important political topic in the lead-up to the December 1972 elections. It was a general view among departmental officers that Malcolm Fraser was one of the more competent Ministers for Education and Science and this reputation enhanced his political ambitions.76 With elections looming and the government facing possible electoral defeat, it was therefore in Mr Fraser's interests that his Department

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75 Minutes, 6th Meeting, ACT Education Planning Committee, 3 March 1971, Australian Archives (ACT): CRS A1642 T8, Department of Education and Science File, 70/2214; Canberra Times, 24 November 1970, p. 15. R. A. Foskett maintains that he 'brought about secondary colleges' by initiating the first discussions, supporting the notion and the eventual recommendations of the Campbell Working Party. This view is supported by another former departmental officer, Neil Edwards, who referred to the development of the concept of secondary colleges as 'Foskett's baby'. Foskett was in turn supported in this initiative by another senior administrator, Keith Coughlan. Edwards, Interview, 986.
76 Edwards, Interview, 1986.
should be seen to be effective, and to support the campaigners' initiative to form a new ACT education Authority.

By early 1972, Departmental officers had written papers that examined various models for the new Authority, and by mid-February informal agreements with NSW officers had been made. Changes to the NSW Department's senior administration brought further reason for haste; the Acting Director-General of Education, Mr Buggie, was reported to be anxious for a quick decision and a short change-over in order to avoid problems during a transition period. Between February and March 1972 the Commonwealth administrators worked quickly to complete discussions with their NSW counterparts and to prepare the Cabinet Submission. After considerable discussion about the most appropriate kind of inquiry to precede the establishment of the Authority, on the advice of his Department, Mr Fraser decided to refer the details of a new Authority to the Joint Parliamentary Committee. The final factor which led to Malcolm Fraser's decision to establish the new Authority had been the request from NSW to discuss different arrangements for staffing of ACT schools and he had hoped to make the

77 An Education Authority for the ACT, two drafts of an unsigned, undated paper, ACTSA File 74/22. (Its place in the file suggests the date of writing.) Models discussed included: generalisations about Education Authorities in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada; a Commission along the lines of the NCDC; a Commission along the lines of the proposed ACT Health Commission; and the ACT Education Working Group's model. The second draft suggested that no overseas model was entirely suitable for the ACT. M. Fraser, file copy of letter to C. B. Cutler, NSW Minister for Education and Science, n.d. [December 1971], ACTSA File, 74/22; H. K. Coughlan, Minute to J. M. Fraser, 17 February 1972, ACTSA File 74/22.

78 H. K. Coughlan, Note for File, 7 February 1972, ACTSA File 74/22.

79 Operation of Schools in the Australian Capital Territory, File copy of Cabinet Submission, (n.d.), ACTSA File 74/22.

80 As it turned out this submission was not completed.
announcement by June 1972, because teachers wishing to transfer in and out of ACT schools had to notify their intentions by the end of June in order to be included in the NSW transfer arrangements. As NSW and Commonwealth administrators had agreed upon a timetable for transitional arrangements that required ACT teachers to nominate at some time in 1973 whether they preferred to stay with the NSW Teaching Service or change to the Commonwealth Teaching Service, the Commonwealth administrators wanted to have an announcement of new arrangements made before the end of June to meet the NSW staffing schedule deadline and to allow sufficient time to conduct an inquiry.81

By mid-March the Department was ready to go ahead, but had to wait for the NSW administrators to discuss arrangements with the NSW Teachers' Federation.82 In March, for those who had not already guessed, Malcolm Fraser remarked that the 'situation surrounding the demand for an inquiry into ACT education and for a separate education Authority for the Territory had changed rapidly since the government's decision of 1970 against such an investigation'.83 The letters from both Commonwealth and NSW Ministers took longer than expected to move through the NSW system; by 9 May, the important letter from Charles Cutler to Malcolm Fraser agreeing to arrangements

81 The proposed arrangements included a five year phasing-in arrangement.
82 H. K. Coughlan, Minute to R. A. Foskett, 16 March 1972, ACTSA File 74/22.
83 Canberra Times, 15 March 1972, p. 3.
had not arrived and there was some agitation in the Department.84

During this time of waiting, in April 1972, the Commonwealth Teaching Services (CTS) Act established a teaching service under a Commissioner and made possible the employment of teachers as ACT members of a Commonwealth Teaching Service. The Department of Education and Science commissioned the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to investigate and to prepare a report for it by July to contain 'recommendations for the course that the Commonwealth Teaching Service should follow'.85 In August, the government released Teachers for Commonwealth Schools, prepared by W. D. Neal, Vice-President, Planning and Development, University of Alberta and W. C. Radford, Director, Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). Neal and Radford supported significant features of the parents' vision for Canberra's

84 R. A. Foskett, Agreement with New South Wales Department of Education on Withdrawal of teachers from the ACT, Minute to Malcolm Fraser, 21 March 1972, ACTSA File, 74/22. Foskett explains that Mr Fraser's letter to Mr Cutler (dated 8 March 1972) had been delayed in reaching Mr Cutler. R. A. Foskett, Discussions with New South Wales Department of Education, Minute to Sir Hugh Ennor, 22 March 1972, ACTSA File 72/44. Foskett expresses concern that there may not be rapid action in dealing with Mr Fraser's letter. H. K. Coughlan, Note to R. A. Foskett, (Handwritten, marked Urgent), 9 May 1972. The Note asks Foskett to contact Mr Buggie (or another senior NSW officer) to inform him of the Department's concern at the delay. The Note also states that the cleared version of the Cabinet Submission will be placed in Coughlan's safe and that Foskett should submit the Submission to the Minister and Cabinet as soon as the letter from Mr Cutler arrives. The agitation at the delay is quite clear. There is no suggestion that the delay was caused by anything more than the complexities of decision-making within a large state bureaucracy.

schooling including parent and teacher participation on school boards, and acknowledged that the general pattern of organization and staffing in Australian schools was 'rigid and unimaginative'. There were some contradictions between recommendations for delegation of responsibilities to school boards and the recommendations concerning staffing within a career service; the smooth establishment of a democratic, participatory system was obviously going to depend largely upon what was negotiated between teachers and administrators during the implementation period. However, by the time this Report was distributed to education bodies in August, the momentous event for the campaigners had occurred.

In mid-July the arrangements had been completed at both the NSW and Commonwealth ends. On the 18 July 1972, Malcolm Fraser made the long-awaited announcement that the ACT Schools Authority would be established from the beginning of 1974 and that an inquiry would be held by the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the ACT to report on its powers and responsibilities and the form it should take. Banner headlines in the local press proclaimed: 'Government Taking over Teachers'; 'ACT Gets Own Education Body'. A Canberra Times editorial followed, perhaps a little ungraciously, 'The Australian Capital Territory is to have a statutory Authority to administer

86 Neal-Radford Report, pp. 43-44, quotations, p. 82. While Neal and Radford made recommendations that were innovative for Australian school systems, namely peer assessment of teachers for promotion and the reduction of promotion levels into four broad bands, however, they retained a hierarchical career-based structure. pp. 87, 46.
87 Neal-Radford Report, p. 46.
89 Canberra Times, 19 July 1972, p. 3.
primary and secondary schools, and pre-schools, and not before time.' The editorial concluded with a restatement of the vision first described in 1967:

... The system should be free of bureaucratic immobilities which have been largely responsible for bringing education in the States to such perilous positions. It should be flexible, experimental, capable of absorbing ideas. It should involve the people of the ACT at all levels, including parent, teacher, and perhaps student participation in school government, because schools that are not part of the community tend to be irrelevant to the community. Most of all the authority should be capable of producing, as the bulk of its end product, worthy, developed and happy adults.91

Thus, in July 1972, six years after the Canberra Times published the Campbell parents' letter which drew attention to their concerns about ACT schooling, the campaign was over. It had been remarkable for the commitment, unity of purpose and harmony of members of the parents' group. While over seven long and generally frustrating years it could be expected that energy and commitment would wax and wane and members would lose coherence of purpose, there is no evidence that this occurred; Cath Blakers described the campaign as 'a period of doldrums and frustrations interspersed with intense activity and some exciting moments of demonstrable achievement'.92 Two important factors appear to explain the Working Group's success in maintaining purpose and commitment. First, its structure was flexible in order to cater for individual needs. According to Blakers, it met only when required, 'sometimes

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92 Blakers, op. cit., p. 40.
at frequent intervals, sometimes not for months on end'. It discussed courses of action 'in broad terms, and left members of the group to implement or organize according to their own interests, strengths and time available'. What was equally important, according to Blakers, 'any member could be assured of support from others when it was needed'.\footnote{Blakers, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 40.} Such a flexible structure could only have worked with a group of able people who shared a common purpose. Second, there is no doubt that the campaigners were convinced that the ACT was a unique place and deserved its own school system. That the campaign successfully endured for the length of time it did and that its members remained staunch in their purpose and their goal was due to the agreed ideology about the need for improved schooling for their children and the type of education system which would best deliver it.

Cath Blakers' part in the campaign was particularly significant. She effectively articulated the group's ideology and was, in effect, the unofficial leader of the movement for change; other members of the Working Group have acknowledged her especial importance.\footnote{Richard Johnson, Interview, 23 April 1991; H. Waring, Interview, 3 January 1992.} In 1966, she identified the problem and its solution; then, with others, she guided the movement for change through the establishment of the Currie Working Party. She enlisted the help of people like Lascelles Wilson, Sir George Currie, and John Allan, editor of the \textit{Canberra Times}. In addition to writing many letters and submissions connected with educational matters, she
coordinated the publication of articles by members of the public on educational issues and was the principal author of the *Guiding Principles and Aims of the ACT Schools Authority* which has remained the unofficial manifesto for the system. Her collegial style was probably why she conceived a participatory, consultative structure for the new system; indeed, the Working Group modelled the participatory style it sought for the Authority.

To the outsider it appeared that the Working Group was following a well planned, politically strategic path. Peter O'Connor remarks that he has no doubt that 'they knew what they had to do.' For the activists themselves this was not the case. Blakers comments that if, in retrospect, 'there appears a coherence of pattern in the process, this was not readily apparent at the time' and claims that it was 'rather a question of many people doing what seemed right or logical or merely necessary as the occasion arose'. She claims there was no special knowledge of politics beyond that possessed by most people in Canberra and emphasises that 'the Working Group was not a political cabal'.

95 IACTSA, *Guidelines to Relationships in the System*, 1974; Minutes of ACTSA, 28 October, 4 November 1974, Item 5, p. 9; Minutes of Meetings, Curriculum Working Party, 3 July 1974, Item 9, p. 4; 24 July 1974, Item 4.5, p. 2; 31 July 1974, Item 4.5, [p. 3]; 4 September 1974, Item 4.10.1, p. 3; 18 September 1974, Item 5.6, p. 2. Again, Catherine Blakers did this as a member of Council and a member of the Curriculum Working Party but she was the instigator of this document and the force behind its completion.
96 P. O'Connor, Interview, September 1986.
97 Blakers, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
98 C. Blakers, Interview, 3 May 1983
suggests that Sir George Currie 'seemed to have more [political] knowledge than anyone'.

To what extent the Working Group was responsible for the creation of an independent school system is arguable, but the organisational structure adopted for the Authority can be attributed to the Working Group's persistence in demanding a democratic, participatory administration. Burnett is correct in suggesting that the passage of time from the distribution of the Currie Report, (in his view, an 'extremely radical' document for its time), to the government's decision in 1972, allowed the ideas in the Currie Report to be discussed, refined and disseminated. It is very likely that without such a period for people to become used to the new proposals, the ACT would have been a replica of the NSW school system. It is most unlikely that this departure from conventional administrative style would have been conceived by the government or its advisers. Ken Jones claims that the Working Group did not influence the Department's decisions but the frequent references in the Departmental documents to the members of the Working Group and their Reports and Submissions suggests otherwise. It is very possible that the government's care in not specifying in 1972 the actual form of the new Authority was in large part a result of the planners' determination in insisting upon a decentralised, participatory system. In this respect at least, the strategic

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100 C. Burnett, Taped recording of talk given at a staff seminar, School of Education, Canberra College of Advanced Education, (n.d.) [1982].
activities of the change-agents can be said to have been most effective. It was now time for the implementation process to begin and the new decentralised, participatory structures to be established.
PART TWO: IMPLEMENTATION.

CHAPTER EIGHT.

THE STRUCTURAL CHANGE SET IN PLACE

In 1972 a crucial point had been reached; the planning stage was over and the structures of the new education Authority, so long desired by the planners, had now to be decided and put into place.\textsuperscript{1} The process of implementation of the structural change is most important and can affect the final outcome, positively or negatively. Ideally, the change agents should remain in control of this early part of the implementation to ensure that the structural change is carried out according to their plans. However, it is not unusual for other stakeholders to become involved as the planning ends and the change moves into a new phase. It is at this stage that the commitment of all stakeholders to the vision is important so that as others become involved, the structural changes are not modified.

The creation of a new school system was a major change in the history of Australian education and all who were to be affected were concerned to protect their interests, as subsequent events reveal. Something as politically sensitive as the establishment of an education authority, publicly funded, accountable to government and expected to operate as a democratic, participatory organisation within a government

\textsuperscript{1} In strategic planning terms, this represents the first step in the implementation stage; the creation of 'the product'.
context, could no longer be managed by members of a pressure
group comprising parents, academics and teachers; it had to be
managed by an agency of government, in this case, by
administrators from the Department of Education and Science.
At this stage of such a radical change, not only politicians and
administrators would expect to become involved; in a system
that espoused participation, the other key group of stakeholders,
the teachers, would also want to have a significant say in what
structures were established. Therefore, the process to be
adopted was a test of the planned consultative decision-making
administration, and the actions taken during this early
implementation stage, very important in establishing a tradition.

The announcement of the government's intention to
establish an ACT school system did not mean that the Working
Group saw its task as finished. Although the goal of a new
Authority was now in sight, its precise shape had yet to be
negotiated and members of this group, as well as other groups,
wanted to be represented on the significant decision-making
bodies.2 There was no guarantee that without a model of a
democratic participatory school system to emulate, centralised
bureaucratic forms of administration might not prevail and that
administrators would introduce a structure that would make
decisions 'not on the education needs of children', but on grounds
of 'political expediency or on administrative ease or efficiency, or
in accordance with comfortable and carefully selected

2 M. E. March, 'Policy Development for Public Schools in the
Australian Capital Territory: Early Aspirations and Later
Developments', in A. Hone et al. (eds), ACT Papers on Education 1982-
statistics'... The Education Working Group intended to remain involved during this early implementation process.

The first move by the government and its administrators was to initiate a process for consultation. In September 1972, the Minister established the Liaison Committee on Education Changes, more commonly referred to as the Liaison Committee, which included two representatives from the ACT Council of P&C Associations; a primary and secondary principal; three nominees of the Teachers' Federation; an inspector of schools; a representative of the Advisory Council and two officers of the Department of Education. At the inaugural meeting chaired by the acting director of ACT Education in the Department of Education and Science, Brian Peck, the committee agreed that it should disseminate information and make sure it had appropriate feedback from all groups, with an emphasis upon a two-way flow of information, suggestions and proposals. It was also agreed that Brian Peck should obtain the Minister's approval to an additional member representing the community to be

3 ACT Education Working Group, Commentary on An Education Authority for the ACT - A Departmental Paper, c. May 1973, p.1, Blakers Papers. Documents which comment on the style of educational administrators in Australia include; ACT Education Working Group, Submission to M. Fraser, Minister for Education, November 1971, Blakers papers; C. Blakers, 'If Wishes Were Horses'... in ACT Schools Authority, The Challenge of Change, Canberra, 1983, pp. 5-7.

4 Information about the procedures and discussions of this committee was provided by M. Badham, former member of the Liaison Committee and the Parent-Teacher Council, Interview, 9 January 1984. The members were: Kath Abbott and Alan Barnard (P&C Council); Max Badham and Arthur Judd (Primary, Secondary Principals Associations); Neil Dilley, Richard Lee and Peter O'Connor (Teachers' Federation); Scott Campbell, Inspector of Schools; Ken Fry (Advisory Council); Cornelius (Jack) Lenihan, Department of Education and J. Cullum, Secretary. Note that the P&C members were also members of the Working Group.
drawn from the ACT Education Working Group. Subsequently, Cath Blakers joined the group in this role.

Such a government-initiated committee of parent and teacher representatives working with administrators in making decisions about education was a startling departure from the usual practice in Australian education of bureaucratic decision-making by senior departmental officers. Previously, the mechanism for teacher and parent input had been potentially adversarial, that is, the union or the P&C Association would respond to decisions made by the State Departments of Education. The institution of the Liaison Committee boded well for a participatory approach to administration.

After the government's announcement that the new Authority would be established, the Working Group continued to press for a wide-ranging inquiry into ACT education, hoping that the design and implementation of any new system would be soundly conceived and introduced gradually after thorough planning based on the findings of a comprehensive investigation. The Working Group believed it would be 'disastrous' if the new system was established in the ACT without 'independent, comprehensive and expert enquiry' into such matters as: the 'aims of education on which the system should be based'; the 'role of the teacher in the achievement of these aims'; the 'role of

5 Minutes of Liaison Committee Meeting, 14 September 1972, Department of Education File 72/4129.
6 At the fifth meeting, 23 November 1972, Minutes of Liaison Committee Meeting, Department of Education File 72/4129.
the parents and the community'; the 'role of the school'; the 'role of the education system; the 'framework and administration of the system which will allow the achievement of the aims'; and the 'financing of education in the ACT'.

However, the long delay between Mr Fraser's announcement of a proposed Joint Parliamentary Committee inquiry and any subsequent action, caused the campaigners to become concerned about the preparation and timing of the Authority, and to doubt that the inquiry would prepare the way for a different kind of system. The Member for the ACT, Kep Enderby, called on Mr Fraser to widen the terms of reference for the inquiry, stating: 'I believe the terms of reference should be wide enough to include an inquiry into the nature and quality of education in the ACT'. He was supported by the Australia Party candidate, Alan Fitzgerald, who asked whether the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the ACT was the proper body to conduct an inquiry into education. 'It seems to me that the inquiry will have nothing to do with the philosophy of an independent system', he said. 'We will end up with a scaled down version of the six State systems, rather than beginning anew as we could'.

Delays in forming the Parliamentary inquiry, however, critically shortened the time for preparation for a new

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8 ACT Education Working Group, Education in the ACT, Submission to M. Fraser, Minister for Education and Science, November 1971, Blakers papers.
9 J. W. M. Riddell, President, ACT Council of P&C Associations, letter to M. Fraser, Minister for Education and Science, 15 August 1972, Department of Education File 73/4777, held ACTSA.
11 ibid.
Authority, and the President of the ACT P&C Council wrote to the Minister about parents' concerns. John Riddell argued that to fulfil its functions responsibly:

a Statutory Authority will need to be fully prepared before it assumes them. It will need, that is, to have formulated basic policy, to have chosen its executive officers and to have established an administrative framework. It is better by far for this to be done on as clean a slate as possible. Yet it is clear that the Standing Committee could not begin to consider this reference before well into 1973 and it is unreasonable to expect legislation before the end of 1973 at the very earliest. This timing will impose a very heavy and unnecessary handicap on the Statutory Authority. We believe that to delay the establishment of that Authority beyond the middle of 1973 is potentially disastrous...12

Not only did the parents fear that the Authority's administration would be started precipitously, but there was a danger that the Department of Education might begin administering the Authority on an interim basis from the beginning of 1974 and make policy changes without consultation, with serious effects on the operation and administration of education in the ACT.13 They therefore pressed for a smaller expert inquiry along the lines of the Neal and Radford inquiry. In October 1972, W. J. Weeden took up a position as acting Commonwealth Teaching Service Commissioner, and decisions began to be made which would determine the nature of the future school system.14 Malcolm

12 J. W. H. Riddell, President, ACT Council of P&C Associations, letter to M. Fraser, Minister for Education and Science, 15 August 1972, Department of Education File 73/4777, held ACTSA.
13 Minutes of Liaison Committee Meeting, 23 November 1972, p. 2, Department of Education File 72/4129.
14 Canberra Times. J. Riddell, letter to editor, 20 September 1972, p. 2; W. D. Neal & W. C. Radford, Teachers for Commonwealth Schools, AGPS, Canberra, 1972. W. J. Weeden before his retirement was a senior officer in the Department of Education and Science. A year later, C. J. (Jack) Lenihan was finally appointed as the permanent
Fraser rejected the planners' request for a small expert inquiry and tried to reassure them.

You know, however, that my department is already involved in policy formulation for and administration of A.C.T. education. It is quite capable of continuing this function during an interim period and, in addition, of providing by arrangement the services presently available from N.S.W. The department already has extensive consultative arrangements to ensure that the views of all interested groups are considered when educational policy is formulated and I would expect this to be expanded if the circumstances mentioned above arise... I foresee no very great difficulty in options being kept open for the authority during an interim operation...

The parents did see great difficulties, and the acknowledgment of the possibility that the start of the Authority might be under Departmental administration did not allay the parents' concerns; they continued to urge a small expert inquiry.

The elections in December 1972, the change of government, and a new Minister for Education, Kim Beazley, postponed matters further. On the other hand, the Whitlam government ushered in the prospect of a new deal for Canberra's citizens. Brought up in Canberra, Prime Minister Whitlam spoke of it as the political and administrative centre of Australia: 'Apart from its established role as the national capital and seat of government, Canberra was also important to my Government's urban and regional strategy. It stood out as a rare case for the

Commonwealth Teaching Service Commissioner. Jack Lenihan also had been a senior administrator in the Department of Education and Science; in 1969, the Director, Establishments and Finance Branch.

15 M. Fraser, Minister for Education and Science, letter to J. Riddell, President, ACT Council of P&C Associations, 6 September 1972, File 73/4777, ACTSA.
16 C. Blakers, in P. Hughes & W. Mulford (eds), The Development of an Independent Education Authority: Retrospect and Prospect, 1978, p. 43.
exercise of unfettered and undisputed Federal planning powers'.

His Minister for Urban and Regional Development, Tom Uren, planned to make Canberra a 'social laboratory', and the first tentative moves towards self-government were started. The mood of this time was innovatory.

The Labor Party's success at the elections meant that the former politicians involved in the change process had been replaced. All the signs suggested the Whitlam government supported self-government and local participation, and the change of government could therefore be interpreted as a positive event. The Whitlam administration had a different approach to education from the previous government: in 1969, the ALP Federal Conference had resolved to establish an Australian Schools Commission to provide funds to the states for schools, and before the elections in 1972, the Labor Party had constantly highlighted the educational inequalities in Australian schools. In the run up to the elections, Whitlam put education on the political agenda and spoke of redressing inequalities through the creation of a Schools Commission. The policy statement of the ACT branch of the Labor Party discussed ACT education on its first page, 'welcomed the decision to establish an Education Authority', supported the need for an inquiry and echoed key

18 Sparke, *op. cit.*, chs. 10, 11.
19 R. Atkins, *The Government of the Australian Capital Territory*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1978, p. 68. There is virtually no reference to the changed political circumstances in the written evidence or interviews pertaining to this time, nor to the possibility of self-government. John Riddell commented he was later surprised when he discovered that the majority of people in Canberra were not in favour of self-government.
ideas in the *Currie Report:* the 'Education Authority should include representatives of teachers, parents and students', and 'individual schools should have a greater measure of autonomy'. The proposed new Authority, however, was not a subject for action or discussion prior to the elections and items on political issues in education were directed to national topics such as the provision of Commonwealth funds to non-government schools.

In February, because of the delay caused by the elections and the change of government, and the backlog of work for the Joint Parliamentary Committee, departmental officers discussed with the members of the Liaison Committee the possibility of replacing the inquiry in its original form with a small expert inquiry. Fearful that with all the holdups, the Authority's establishment would be postponed indefinitely, the Education Working Group reversed its former stance and indicated to the Department that it would argue for establishment without a prior inquiry. A *Canberra Times* editorial supported this new viewpoint, suggesting that a temporary statutory Authority be

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20 ACT Branch Australian Labor Party, Policy Statement, 23 May 1973, File 74/6, ACTSA. John Riddell appears to have been the only campaigner actively caught up in the political changes; he joined the Labor Party in the fervour of the Labor Party's 'It's Time' campaign period prior to the 1972 elections.
21 Department of Education and Science, Final draft of note to the Minister for Education, Discussion of Establishment of Education Authority with Community Groups, (n.d.), File 74/6, ACTSA. As is the case with most file copies of Departmental notes, and minutes, the status is not indicated, but in this case, the file copy is initialled by B. Peck which suggests that it was most probably prepared by B. Peck for signing by the Departmental Head.
set up immediately and that an inquiry should be held pending the establishment later of a permanent Authority.

It is almost certain that a proper inquiry, which would collate the mass of material already in existence and gather new material as well, could not be completed, that its report could not be processed and the required legislation drafted and adopted in time for beginning the 1974 school year.23

The Liaison Committee discussed the three options which were proposed: an expert inquiry, an Interim Authority plus a concurrent inquiry, or, the Department's preference, a discussion paper with reactions from the public followed by the establishment of the Authority.24 The Department favoured the third option chiefly for administrative reasons, believing it necessary quickly to establish a body to administer education in the ACT in 1974 and that it would be difficult to find at short notice people who could conduct a full-time inquiry.25 The representatives on the Liaison Committee from the parents' groups, the Advisory Council and the Teachers' Federation favoured the second option because they feared that any kind of inquiry which preceded the establishment of a new Authority would allow further delay in which important decisions could be made by the Department which could be difficult to undo later.26 They therefore wanted the Authority established without delay and an inquiry commenced as soon as possible. The P&C representatives stressed that an expert inquiry had long been

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26 P. O'Connor, 10 September 1986.
expected and that this was more important than making administrative arrangements for 1974. However, the Minister for Education, Kim Beazley, favoured the third option, the small expert inquiry following a circulated Departmental discussion paper; after discussing this with the Minister for the Capital Territory, Kep Enderby, who was in a difficult position caught between the wishes of the Department of Education and its Minister and the citizens of the ACT, announced that an independent committee, similar to the representative Campbell Committee, would be formed to carry out an inquiry. The nature of the inquiry was decided in March 1973. The Minister for Education announced that an Assessment Panel of four people would be established to assess and report in May on responses to a discussion paper prepared by departmental officers, 'An Education Authority for the ACT', which described their proposal for an interim Authority to be established as soon as possible after the panel had reported to the Minister.

[The interim authority's] emphasis would be on forward planning, investigation and inquiry. This approach would free those involved in developing policies for the future system from responsibility for day to day administration. The interim authority would be constituted along similar lines to those proposed for the ultimate authority... The duration of its existence would be determined by the recommendations of the panel.

...It would not, however, assume any of the present responsibilities of the Department, nor should it be involved

27 Minutes of Liaison Committee Meeting, 22 February 1973, p. 2, Department of Education File 72/4129. Canberra Times, 9 February 1973, p. 3; K. E. Beazley, Minister for Education, final draft of letter to E. G. Whitlam, Prime Minister, (n.d.), File 74/22, ACTSA; K. E. Beazley, Minister for Education, final draft of letter to Minister for the Capital Territory, K. E. Enderby, (n.d.), File 74/22, ACTSA. Richard Campbell later described this kind of situation as 'the Enderby syndrome' when he was discussing a similar difficulty which Senator Susan Ryan experienced as Minister for Education.
in the detailed administrative arrangements for the A.C.T. education system for 1973.\(^{28}\)

The paper suggested a six-person statutory Authority chaired by a full-time educationalist as its chief administrative and education officer with five other part-time members.\(^{29}\) A wide range of committees would be established to consult with the public, and a statutory committee would advise on educational policy. The paper suggested that 'schools would have more formal independence and responsibility than is the case at present' and supported the notion of school councils.\(^{30}\)

Phillip Hughes, Head of the School of Teacher Education at the Canberra College of Advanced Education, and a member of the Education Working Group, was appointed to chair the inquiry to assess responses to this paper, together with David Hunt, President of the Tasmanian Teachers' Federation, W. G. (Bill) Walker, Professor of Education at the University of New England, and Ken Fry, an elected member of the ACT Advisory Council.\(^{31}\) The inclusion of Ken Fry caused some controversy because his name had been added by the Minister after members agreed at a Liaison Meeting on the names of three experts in education to be invited on to the panel. The manner of the decision-making revived fears that decisions would be made in ACT education on

\(^{29}\) 'Educationalist' was the term used in the paper.
\(^{31}\) *Canberra Times*, 16 March 1973, p. 1; *Canberra Times*, 21 March 1973, p. 3.
non-educational grounds. Cath Blakers wrote to the *Canberra Times* in protest:

> It is of the utmost importance to the wellbeing of a new system of education in the ACT that decisions affecting it should be made, and should be seen to be made, for educational and not for extraneous political reasons. Australian education has suffered for too long the effects of the latter kind of decision-making. Does anyone care enough about education to ensure that the patterns are not simply repeated in the ACT?

> More than this is at stake. A system of education such as is envisaged in the departmental paper is based on the concept of co-operative relationships in education. It involves the frank exchange of views and discussion leading to consensus or, where necessary, compromise.\(^\text{32}\)

A letter on the same subject from Kath Abbott was more forthright:

> Now that education in the ACT is up for grabs one must admire the standing starts by the early claim-jumpers. Their energies have not been noticeably dissipated in the five-year search, but now the rush is on there they are bright-eyed and bushy-tailed.

> The raid by the ACT Advisory Council is a classic. Its batteries recharged by the vision splendid of itself in the full panoply of self-government, it has been power-assisted by the Minister for the Capital Territory to oversee the experts approved by the Minister for Education.\(^\text{33}\)

Kath Abbott's letter exposes contradictions in the meaning of participation and community noted above: in this case, about the role of elected community members *vis a vis* the role of education 'experts'.\(^\text{34}\) It is very curious that proponents of a democratic system of education wanted to exclude

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\(^{33}\) *Canberra Times*, 27 March 1973, p. 2.

\(^{34}\) See discussion on participation and community, ch. 5 above.
democratically elected politicians; it perhaps exemplifies Canberra's disdain of local government and local politicians. It is also important because she recognises a potential for stakeholders to compete for influence in decision-making which in turn implies that she believes there was not complete agreement among stakeholders' groups about the operations of the new structures. Hugh Waring took the view that Ken Fry was probably chosen for this task because he was a person of political influence in the community, liked by the people and doing a competent job. He speculates that some people were worried about an elite group of parents 'thrusting their way along' and wanted to put a brake on them. 'You wanted a bit of normality so you put in a person with a reputation as a run-of-the-mill average politician... somebody... who has his feet down there among the ordinary population.'

The form of inquiry chosen by the government, an Assessment Panel, was not what members of the Education Working Group had sought originally. They had hoped for a wide-ranging inquiry which would examine education in the widest possible terms, reveal the needs of public schooling and make recommendations about education based upon valid research; the kind of rational, theoretical (rather than operational), thorough investigation which would be expected from a group with a substantial proportion of intellectuals. However, there were promising signs that the government was prepared to support the notion of a non-bureaucratic organisation because both Hughes and Walker had been staunch

advocates for the notions contained in the *Currie Report*, including decentralised, participatory structures.36 The inquiry invited public submissions, and the Education Working Group prepared to respond.37

While the Assessment Panel was meeting, the Report of the Working Committee on Separate Schooling for Years 11 and 12, *Secondary Education for Canberra*, generally called the *Campbell Report*, was tabled in Parliament in May 1973.38 The Campbell Committee went beyond the *Currie Report*, and recommended new secondary education structures. The *Currie Report* had recommended major changes to secondary schooling, rejecting the creation of separate schools for senior students for the last two years of secondary education, with the 1968 teachers' report taking the same view.39 By 1972, there was a change in attitude towards secondary colleges, as they were later to be called. There was considerable support for the departmental administrators' proposal for separation of the last two years of secondary schooling, and the signatures of teacher representatives on the Campbell Committee implied that there

36 Bill Walker had spoken at public meetings in support of an independent education authority along the lines of the *Currie Report* and Philip Hughes was a member of the ACT Education Working Group.
38 R. Campbell, (Chair), *Secondary Education for Canberra*, Commonwealth of Australia, 1972. See Appendix 2 for membership of Campbell Working Committee. *Canberra Times*, 11 May 1973. The Report was completed the previous December. An interim Report was presented to the former Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, in June 1972 and in August of that year he had indicated his support for the main recommendations in the interim report. *Canberra Times*, 15 August 1972, p. 2. The formation of this committee was discussed in ch. 7 above. The outcomes of this report are discussed in ch. 11 below.
was support also from secondary teachers in the teachers' union. With strong opposition removed for a major change to secondary schooling structures, the Campbell Committee recommended that secondary colleges for Years 11 and 12 should be established. It also endorsed other features of the Currie Report: the development of curricula to meet students' needs, the replacement of external examinations with some form of internal assessment; and the establishment of school councils.

The justification for the introduction of the new secondary structures in the Campbell Report also reiterated many of the Currie Report's arguments. For example, both reports argued that Canberra was a unique place with special needs; the Campbell Committee backed this with statistics on types of occupation, affluence, and migrant composition. It quoted Don Anderson and David Beswick who stated in the report of their survey that 'Canberra differs from other communities in the

41 Campbell Report, chs. IV, V, VI.
42 'Management and service occupations account for almost 80 per cent of the workforce... In the A.C.T. roughly one in three persons employed come under the provisions of the Public Service Act, and 62 per cent are employed either directly by government or in government instrumentalities and their statutory bodies', p. 10; 'In Canberra, 44 per cent of married women are engaged in paid work outside the home. Here again, the pattern of employment differs from that found in Australia as a whole. For example, in Canberra more than half the women employed are in clerical jobs, whereas nationally the ratio is only one in three', p. 14; 'The average wage earned is 20 per cent higher than the national average'; 'The migrant character of the population is intensified in the Canberra community', p. 16.
very large proportion of the adult population which has itself completed secondary schooling and has tertiary qualifications'.

The Campbell Report was unequivocal about parent participation in staffing decisions at the school level. Where the Currie Report had been ambivalent about this, stating in one section that 'principals should be appointed by the Board [of Education] in close consultation with School Councils, and that the staff should be appointed by the Board following recommendation by the principal and the School Council', and in an Appendix that a 'suitably constituted Appointments Committee' should be created to administer staffing for schools, the Campbell Committee, however, proposed that school councils should be closely involved in the process of selecting new staff members for key posts. We have argued elsewhere of the need for staff to be recruited as far as possible on the basis of their suitability for the particular positions in question and on their commitment to the educational philosophy and objectives of the college. As the formal agency responsible for determining and furthering these objectives, the council should make recommendations on appointments.

This idea, completely new for Australian public education systems, had now been proposed by a committee which included four secondary teachers and three secondary principals. It was yet to be seen whether all stakeholders would agree, including the teachers who, in their 1968 Report, had chosen the easier option of an Appointments Committee, and had avoided

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discussion of a role for school councils in selection of school staff.45

In May 1973 also, the government received the report of the Hughes Assessment Panel, *A Design for the Governance and Organisation of Education in the Australian Capital Territory*, which became known as the *Hughes Report*, which had assessed the responses of more than one hundred submissions from groups and individuals to the Department's discussion paper.46 It set out an organisational structure for a public school system completely different from anything which then existed in Australia, with a committee (the Council of the Authority) as the governing body.47 Its authors saw the task of the Interim Council of the Authority as essentially different from that suggested by the Department of Education officers in their discussion paper. As well as acknowledging the need for the Council to be involved in forward planning, conducting or sponsoring enquiries and investigations, they recommended that it should develop policy for the changeover, become involved with the operation of the present school system as soon as

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46 P. W. Hughes, (Chairperson), *A Design for the Governance and Organisation of Education in the Australian Capital Territory*, AGPS, Canberra, 1973. The organisations which replied were diverse and included: various P&C Associations; the ACT Advisory Council; the ACT Education Working Group; the ACT Regional Board of Catholic Education; the Australian College of Education; the Australian Council of State School Organisations; the Canberra Church of England Girls Grammar School Board of Management and Parents and Friends Association; the Scripture Union; the Craft Association of the ACT; the Women's Electoral Lobby Education Committee; the Young Men's Christian Association, Canberra.
47 The Northern Territory school system was also a new system but in some essential matters it remained a typical state-type system.
possible, and assume total responsibility for the administration of the system from the beginning of 1974.\textsuperscript{48} The \textit{Hughes Report} endorsed the Currie Working Party's notions of democratic participation in the administration of the new school system.

The evidence received, our investigations in New Zealand, and our experience and discussions have all helped to convince us that a wide participation in the governance of education is desirable and that it is realistic to plan for it in view of the nature and aspirations of the Canberra community.\textsuperscript{49}

It acknowledged and endorsed the major findings of the \textit{Currie Report} and built an organisational structure around the vision first described six years previously. Bureaucratic administration was once again castigated:

The traditional Australian pattern has been to reserve decision making on major policy issues to the head office of the State Department of Education, the schools being left to make decisions only on relatively minor matters. This practice has had the effect of restricting variety and innovation in education, with the result that Australian schools have too often become less adaptable and flexible than a rapidly changing world requires. It would be unfortunate if the schools of the A.C.T. system were permitted to develop in a similar mould.\textsuperscript{50}

The authors spoke of innovation and experimentation, of change from traditional Australian educational organisations, but especially of a decentralised system, with powers devolved to school councils and with parents and teachers involved in decision-making processes at school and system levels. It covered a very broad range of topics: new structures for the

\textsuperscript{48} Hughes Report, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{49} ibid., p. 41.
\textsuperscript{50} ibid., p. 4.
Authority; the government of individual schools; future relations with non-government schools; the relationship of the Authority to other educational institutions in the ACT; and suggestions for interim arrangements.\textsuperscript{51} It recommended that a single education Authority should be established, responsible for the time being to the Minister for Education. A central representative committee, the Council of the Education Authority, would have eight part-time members: two government nominees, two from the ACT Commonwealth Teachers' Federation, two from the ACT Council of P&C Associations, one from the Canberra Pre-School Society, and one from the ACT Advisory Council. A professional head of the Authority, the Chief Education Officer, would be an ex-officio, full-time member.\textsuperscript{52}

Participation at school level would occur through school councils [boards] which would be responsible for the determination of broad school policies, budgeting and control of funds, employment of professional and non-professional staff, maintenance and minor extension of school buildings and encouragement of experimentation with curriculum.

We believe that the degree to which flexibility and adaptability are achieved in the schools of the Australian Capital Territory will be a function of the degree to which school boards are delegated powers to make important decisions affecting their own schools. Indeed, we believe that the Authority's fundamental role should be to

\textsuperscript{51} In regard to non-government schools, while encouraging the development of closer relations between the Authority and non-government schools, the Hughes Panel believed the time was not right for the Authority to have responsibility for non-government schools, including funding or administration.

\textsuperscript{52} Hughes Report, especially p. 42.
centralise in its office only those functions which clearly and obviously cannot be carried out by school boards with a reasonable degree of economy and efficiency.\(^53\)

Considerable powers were to be devolved to school boards. The Hughes Panel believed that public schools should be at least as free to budget and expend public funds as the independent schools.\(^54\) In the matter of staffing, the Panel took the notion of parental involvement in appointment of teachers for schools even further: it envisaged school boards employing 'such combinations of experienced and inexperienced, long-qualified and newly qualified, full-time and part-time teachers' as it required above a basic establishment within its allocation of staffing units.\(^55\) As far as teacher assessment was concerned, the Hughes Panel remarked that it was 'a proper function of school boards to facilitate the assessment of teachers by making provision for members of staff to assist with assessment'.\(^56\)

The *Hughes Report* endorsed the *Currie* and *Campbell Reports'* proposals to replace secondary final examinations with a different form of assessment. Members of the Hughes Panel stated that they did not believe that examinations set by tertiary bodies such as universities or colleges should be allowed to restrict curricular experimentation in the schools. We recommend that as soon as possible after its appointment the interim Authority call a meeting of representatives of higher education institutions in the Territory with a view to introducing admission schemes based on principal's (sic) recommendations, standardised

\(^{53}\) ibid., p. 64.  
\(^{54}\) ibid., p. 67.  
\(^{55}\) ibid., p. 69.  
\(^{56}\) ibid., p. 73.
achievement tests, moderation devices and other experimental procedures.\textsuperscript{57}

A decade later, Blakers declared that the recommendations of the \textit{Hughes Report} reflected a consensus among interested groups - government, community and professional - on the principles upon which the ACT education system should be based.

... And, as a corner-stone of such a system, the active participation of parents, together with teachers and administrators in the governance and operation of the system at all levels. In short, schooling was seen as a collaboration of parents, teachers, students, administrators and the community for the benefit of every child and all children in schools.\textsuperscript{58}

Hugh Waring's explanation of Ken Fry's inclusion on the Hughes Assessment Panel, quoted above, is pertinent to Blakers' emphasis on the principles embedded in the \textit{Hughes Report}. Waring, like the other members of the Working Group, was very concerned to avoid elitism in education. In speculating about the reasons for the government's insistence that Fry be a member of the Panel, Waring suggested that there was a perception of the campaigners as an elitist group. As noted previously, the accuracy of this speculation has been confirmed by many other people. In the extract quoted above from Blakers' later work about this period there is a reiteration of the inherent worth of active participation, of collaboration by the community.

Questions are again raised: how is she defining community? Which parents were represented in the consensus? What sorts of parents would participate in the new structures in the future?

While all the evidence suggests that Blakers and the other

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{ibid.}, p. 92.
\textsuperscript{58} C. Blakers, 'If Wishes Were Horses ... p. 5. The syntax is as written.
members of the Working Group hoped that all parents would become involved, to what extent were their expectations influenced by their perspectives as New Middle Class intellectuals? Would most parents have the same confidence, the same skills, share the same views about schooling? Waring's comment implies recognition that others perceived the parents' group as unusual, as not representative of most people. To what extent was the campaigners' idea of participation derived from their remarkable ability to debate policy issues, evaluate complex information and present sophisticated written documents; skills which would be required for effective participation 'in the governance and operation of the system at all levels', the form of participation with which they were comfortable and which they recommended? Conversely, to what extent would this form of participation present a daunting challenge for parents with limited English, for example? What proportion of the inarticulate, uncertain, uneducated parents would take advantage of the opportunity to collaborate in the schooling of their children? The future was to provide answers to these questions.59

Thus, three major reports, the Neal-Radford Report, the Campbell Report and the Hughes Report reiterated and extended the expectations of the members of the Currie Working Party. After seven years, the vision of 1967 had remained remarkably constant. Indeed, the authors of the two later reports

59 This issue is discussed again in ch. 15 below.
acknowledged the influence of the *Currie Report* on their findings.\(^{60}\)

May 1973, a month for major reports, produced yet another document of national significance for education, *Schools in Australia*, usually known as the *Karmel Report*.\(^{61}\) It too supported devolution of responsibility, equality, diversity, and community involvement; its findings were entirely compatible with those expressed in the *Campbell* and *Hughes Reports*. Its significance for the ACT was the indication that the views of the stakeholders who held the purse strings, the politicians, were in harmony with those who were making decisions about the new ACT structures. The Labor government's acceptance of the *Karmel Report* with its themes of community participation, choice and diversity and devolved decision making, augured well for a new school system which espoused similar notions in its philosophy.\(^{62}\)

Thus, by mid-1973, the Authority's formal structures had been conceptualised. It is interesting to reflect upon the aspect of gender in the process to this point. The campaign to change the school system was initiated by a woman, Catherine Blakers. Together with another mother, she proceeded to consult with a number of people to investigate the possibilities for change.

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\(^{60}\) *Hughes Report*, p. 17.


\(^{62}\) IACTSA, Information Statement No 1, November 1973. The ACT received some other financial benefits from the Schools Commission which implemented the Karmel Report's recommendations, for example, Innovations Grants funds; however, as a Territory already receiving Commonwealth funds it was prevented from receiving benefits from most of the programs.
Before long she had formed an informal group which included people other than parents at Campbell school, and formulated a short term and long-term plan for change. A larger group which she was instrumental in establishing, (the Currie Working Party) and of which she was an active member, worked with her to conceptualise her long-term plan into a document which could be used to inform, enthuse and inspire others. She then worked with an augmented group to bring about the realisation of the long-term plan for change. That her strategy was sound is evidenced by the fact that the group in which she played a key role remained cohesive and focussed for the duration of a long campaign. If the experience of a writer about pressure groups is accurate, that most pressure groups have problems with cohesion caused by dissension over leadership, this was most unusual.63 Not only did the Working Group not have leadership struggles: not one person since has claimed leadership, and each has said that leadership passed around the group when required without formal decision or discussion. Some people have been singled out for leadership qualities or special contributions by others - in particular, many people have testified to the role behind the scenes that Catherine Blakers performed so well, and many people have suggested that her incisive mind and her networking abilities were indispensable for the group's work - but no one person is mentioned as the leader.

63 D. Truman, *The Governmental Process*, Knopf, New York, 1951, p. 156. Truman (who prefers to use the term 'interest group' instead of 'pressure group') states that complete stability within an interest group 'is a fiction'. He argues that all groups experience 'continual altercations over policies' and that these disputes both produce and are reflected in struggles for leadership.
However, when the goal was close to being realised, the next stage was taken over by men. The politicians and the administrators in the Department of Education and Science were, without exception, male. The two consultants who suggested the structures for the Commonwealth Teaching Service, Neal and Radford, were male. All of the Campbell Committee with one exception - an alternate delegate - were male. The Hughes Panel consisted of men. The Federation's President, Deputy President and Secretary and were all male. To a large extent, despite the Currie Report's recommendations, the men who devised the formal structures which were introduced for the Teaching Service and for the Statutory Authority structure of the new school system retained traditional, hierarchical patterns.

In this change process, therefore, at the risk of over-generalisation, it can be argued that women initiated the change and men structured it. Does this support the contention that women work differently? That they use informal, non-authoritarian networks and tend not to rely on formal, hierarchical patterns? That this differs from men who use competitive, power-seeking approaches in their work? It must be asked: what might have happened if women had been able to

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64 The membership of the ACTCTF Council in 1974 was: President, Richard Lee; Deputy President, Ian McPhee; General Secretary, Peter O'Connor. The Executive included two women, one from the primary sector, Margaret Dempster, one of the authors of the 1968 Report prepared by a sub-committee of Federation in response to the Currie Report, and Sandra Cullen from the pre-school sector. A third woman was on the Executive until May 1974 and was then replaced by a man. Appendix VIII, G. J. McNeil & M. E March, ACT Teachers' Federation 1972-1976, MEd thesis, CCAE distributed as report, ACTSA 1979.

65 Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that women played a major role in initiating and designing the change and men almost exclusively structured it. The point being made remains the same.
take a major role in the structuring of the new system? For example, what would have happened if the terms 'gender-inclusive' or 'gender-balance' had been in vogue when consultants were being chosen to write a report to structure the Teaching Service; when members were being decided for the Liaison Committee, the Campbell Committee, and the Hughes Panel in the early 1970s? Indeed, to put a proposition that is almost unthinkable, what would have happened if the structures had been devised exclusively by women, instead of by men? Would they have been different and what would have been the Authority's fate by the end of the period being studied? But that is to anticipate the next part of the story.

Thus, to this point, the organisational structure for the Authority had been decided by a form of consultative process. True, there was not a wide-ranging inquiry which had carefully researched what was needed as a basis for decision making, nor was there a thorough preparation period which ensured that a sound foundation was laid. The inquiry had been limited and the preparation period was the time that remained between the holding of the first meeting of the Council of the Interim Authority in October and the rest of that year. Nevertheless consultation of a kind had been carried out in a manner unknown before in Australian state government schooling, and the administrators who had taken over the implementation process from the planners had attempted a form of participatory administration; at least, as far as this part of the implementation was concerned. It remained to be seen whether the administrators could implement the other part of the parents'
expectations for the new Authority; decentralisation of administration including the devolution of resources and decision-making to schools.
CHAPTER NINE.

THE TEACHERS BECOME ORGANISED

In the campaigners' efforts to achieve the new Authority, as has been suggested above, there was one major oversight: in neglecting to examine other people's priorities, the parents' group overlooked the possibility that other groups of stakeholders might resist the full implementation of decentralised, participatory structures. In the case of the teachers' group, they failed to see that teachers supported the creation of an ACT school system as much because they sought to be released from the bureaucratic constraints of the NSW Department of Education, and favoured a system which promised more autonomy in keeping with their aspirations as professionals, as from any strong belief in the value of democratic participation in education by all partners, including parents.¹ Nor did the parents' group recognise the traditional dependence of teachers upon their union and its importance for securing suitable working conditions and professional status. Constrained by their own ideology, class membership and cultural perspectives and encouraged by the consensus achieved in discussions by the members of the Liaison Committee and the Campbell Committee, the parents assumed that others shared their belief in the intrinsic value of participation. They did not conjecture that their view of participation might be constructed within a particular ideological framework derived from their class location, in their case, from their position as New Middle

¹ P. O'Connor, Interview, 10 September 1986.
Class intellectuals. They accepted at face value the apparent support of teachers for the proposed participatory administration, dismissing teachers' fears about parents wanting to hire and fire in the belief, as Hugh Waring states, that 'teachers would have to fall into line' once the new system was established.2

The potential existed, therefore, for the new administrative structures to be challenged by stakeholders who disagreed with the parents' expectations for participation. It could be predicted that at an appropriate time, dissatisfied stakeholders would move to strengthen their position and jockey for a place where they could most successfully influence decisions and protect their interests. As soon as there were definite signs that an Authority was to be established this occurred: early in 1972, the teachers' group appraised its position for representation on significant decision-making bodies, and decided to become organised for action.

Most ACT teachers belonged to one of the two local branches of the NSW Teachers' Federation: the ACT Teachers' Association which comprised primary teachers and the Secondary Teachers' Association. The latter's senior officers, the President, Peter O'Connor and the Vice Presidents, Mick March and Dick Lee discussed the formation of an ACT teachers' union to deal with the expected changes.3 At the time two established

3 When the ACT branch of the NSW Teachers' Federation split in two in 1959, the primary teachers retained the branch's former name, the ACT Teachers' Association. The other branch was the Secondary Teachers' Association.
unions were involved in negotiations on behalf of ACT teachers: the Australian Teachers' Federation (ATF), a 'loose-knit federal structure representing most Australian state teachers' organizations', which was negotiating the changeover to a Commonwealth Teachers' Service on behalf of all teachers employed in Commonwealth territories, and the NSW Teachers' Federation which was involved in discussions about developments occurring in the ACT.4 The ATF, considered 'relatively indecisive' by many state teachers' unions and perceived by its critics as a 'glorified club' for the leaders of state teachers' organizations, had a difficult role as a national body attempting to reconcile the diverse interests and practices of the various state unions.5 It was a markedly different body from the militant NSW Teachers' Federation, linked to the labour movement by affiliation with the NSW Labour Council and one of only two of the teacher unions in Australia registered with the Australian Council of Trade Unions.6

4 All but two state organisations were affiliated to the ATF. The two exceptions were the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Union and the Technical Teachers' Union of Victoria. Victoria, had several teachers' unions as the result of breakaway groups and internal dissenion including, the Victorian Teachers' Union (VTU), the Victorian Secondary Masters' Professional Association (VSMPA) and the Affiliated Teachers' Union (AFT).


6 The other union was the Affiliated Teachers' Union. As would be expected in a whitecollar union, these affiliations with the labour movement have been strongly contested among NSW Teachers' Federation members.
Early in 1972, while the ACT union leaders were discussing the possibility of establishing a local union, meetings were held between senior NSW Departmental officers and NSW Federation officers about conditions of service for ACT teachers; in April, senior officers of the ACT branches of the NSW Federation joined the discussions. At that time, circumstances in NSW raised doubts among ACT teachers that the NSW union was the most suitable body to negotiate on behalf of ACT teachers. In 1968, the NSW union had held its first strike and relations with the NSW Department of Education were at their lowest during the early 1970s. As reprisal against the Federation for its intransigence in industrial matters, besides considering its deregistration, the Department had withdrawn facilities for automatic deduction of union members' fees from salaries, thus causing the Federation some financial hardship. In 1972 the election of a Canberra-Queanbeyan teacher, Len Childs, as President of the Federation, exacerbated the difficulties. Childs was not supported by the majority of the executive and administrative staff, and internal conflicts contributed to the external problems. As McNeill and March point out, there was some suspicion that members of the NSW Teachers' Federation executive would block the initiatives of the ACT union in order to frustrate their President whose election had been strongly supported by Canberra teachers; with its current difficulties the Federation was unlikely to encourage ACT members to leave the NSW administration and, consequently, the NSW union. For all these reasons, ACT teacher unionists believed the Federation

was not the appropriate body to deal with local issues and became convinced of the need to form a local union.

In August 1972, the ACT Commonwealth Teachers' Federation was formed. In keeping with whitecollar union tradition, the ACT union leaders were hesitant about the use of the word 'union' for teachers who aspired to professional status. They followed the practice of designating the new organisation a 'Federation' although no other bodies were to be federated; to all intents and purposes it was a union. It made moves very early in its history to affiliate not only with the Australian Teachers' Federation, but with the Trades and Labour Council of the ACT and with the Australian Council of Trade Unions; like the other teacher unions in Australia it did not affiliate with any political party. These actions were consistent with the ambivalence of whitecollar union members for overt displays of traditional 'working class' industrial action. While it has been generally agreed that unions, whitecollar or manual, exhibit a range of behaviour both militant and non-militant, teachers' unions were still subject to the conflicts between professional duty and industrial solidarity common to many whitecollar

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9 ACT Teachers' Federation, Urgent Notice, Inaugural Meeting, 3 August 1972, Price papers. The name was later changed to the ACT Teachers' Federation (ACTTF). From this point, the ACT Teachers' Federation will be referred to as 'the Federation'. Other state teacher unions will be identified by their state titles.

10 McNeill & March, op. cit., p.130-131. There were to be structural difficulties (ACT a territory as opposed to a state) with affiliation with the ACTU. There would have been difficulties with the membership in attempting to affiliate with any political party, for example, the Australian Labor Party. While some members had a strong Labor Party connection - for example, Peter O'Connor was a member of the Labor Party - according to Peter O'Connor, about half the membership probably had Liberal Party sympathies. P. O'Connor, Interview, 10 September 1986.
unions, because, as C. Wright Mills argues, whatever unionism means to individuals, organisationally it brings whitecollar workers into labour as a pressure group.11

A retired secondary principal, Errol Sweaney, started work as an interim secretary and managed the organisation while the constitution was being drafted.12 Dick Lee, a secondary teacher in the middle years of his teaching career, was elected President and took up this office full-time in 1974. Peter O'Connor, a young secondary school teacher, was subsequently appointed as general secretary. Both Lee and O'Connor knew the other stakeholders well, having served on the Liaison Committee and the Campbell Working Committee. Other teachers who had been involved in planning for the new Authority also had leading roles in the union. One was Mick March, a secondary principal,


involved in planning for the new system as a member of both the ACT Education Working Group and the Campbell Working Committee. Other union leaders included Keith Lawler and Barry Price from the secondary sector, the latter destined to become an administrator in the Authority. While the Federation reflected a strong orientation to the needs of secondary teachers, union leaders from the primary sector such as principals, Ian McPhee, Max Badham and Rud Rimes, and infants' mistress, Margaret Dempster, played important roles in this planning stage. All the union leaders had in common a history of active involvement in the NSW teachers' union and a strong commitment to establishing an independent education Authority. Nevertheless, once more, an important structure which would become a crucial part of educational politics in the ACT was to be largely created by men; if the previous male-designed structures were anything to go by, rather than being democratic and participatory it would be a traditional, hierarchical form of organisational structure.

The early decisions made by the union leaders suggested future problems; either that ACT teachers did not fully understand the implications of working within a participatory administration in the future, or that they believed traditional adversarial unionism would be required. The choice of a

13 The term 'infants' mistress' became defunct once the Authority commenced operations. Infants' departments were merged with primary departments to form primary schools. All head teachers were designated 'principals'.

14 A few women were involved, for example, Margaret Dempster, but not usually at the highest levels; most women were not in decision-making positions within the union. The men who guided the early days of the union were for the most part, secondary teachers.
stereotypical structure for the Federation implied conventional attitudes about unionism. The NSW union's structure matched that of the bureaucratic NSW Department; although only a fraction of the size of the NSW union and expected to operate within a participatory administration, the Federation's structure also retained similar hierarchical and centralised features.\textsuperscript{15} The decision-making structure was organised on a functional rather than a geographic basis and suggested a concern for sectional status - pre-school, primary, secondary - possibly reflecting its creation by secondary teachers. Three associations corresponding to the main sections of the teaching service, a Pre-School Teachers' Association, a Primary Teachers' Association and a Secondary Teachers' Association, were obliged to submit their demands to the central bodies, their autonomy restricted by their dependence upon central bodies such as the executive for funds, the constitutional limitations on the qualifications of their members, their rules of government and their rights to communicate directly with outside bodies.\textsuperscript{16} As in NSW, the supreme policy-making forum was the annual conference. Between conferences, Federation was controlled by council, and between council meetings, by the executive. Major policy decisions were made by council or conference. Each association elected delegates to conference, council and executive, the number of delegates allowed being related to the number of financial members. Even the constitution of the ACT union was modelled on that of the NSW union: in almost

\textsuperscript{15} The initial structure lasted until 1976 when schools became branches of the union and elected representatives directly to Federation council. The other conventional centralised union structures were retained.

\textsuperscript{16} McNeill & March, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 133.
identical fashion, only the last of the objectives made mention of 'the cause of education'. All political channels with external bodies were monitored by the Federation's council for its executive on behalf of the whole membership.\textsuperscript{17}

While this structure ran contrary to the parents' proposal for a decentralised community-based structure for the system, it also contrasted with the structure of the parents' representative body, and pressure group once the Working Group disbanded in mid-1973, the P&C Council; with a membership of elected delegates from school P&C Associations, it was a democratic participatory body organised on a geographic representational basis consistent with proposed school-based decision-making. In comparison to the Federation, it was disadvantaged: it had a constant turnover of members; its membership embraced a diversity of beliefs about education and therefore was not as unified and harder to mobilise; it was not as rich, and being unable to threaten the withdrawal of labour if crossed, it was not as powerful.

From its earliest days there was no initiative from within the Federation to adopt an innovatory structure to match the expected change in the Authority's administrative style. The determination of the teachers to establish a strong traditional union, by implication to prepare for expected contests with the new Authority, was the first overt indication that there were possible differences in agendas between the teachers and other groups of stakeholders. Certainly, once the new union was

\textsuperscript{17} ibid., pp. 133, 188-192.
created, its members moved quickly to establish its control over the local situation by preventing other unions from negotiating on behalf of ACT teachers. The first to go was the NSW Federation, the direct result of the formation of an ACT Federation. The new union then took action to remove the Australian Teachers' Federation (ATF). The senior officers of the ACT union had established sound working relations with officers in the Department of Education and Science, including the acting CTS Commissioner, and had discussed the new arrangements with Ministers.18 Senior Administrators in the Department of Education and Science were anxious to avoid discussions with the militant NSW Teachers' Federation and keen to involve ACT teachers' organisations in advisory and consultative bodies.19 Therefore, the acting CTS Commissioner, W. J. Weeden, a senior Departmental officer with long experience in Commonwealth education, did not consult with the ATF or the NSW union about ACT schooling matters, but dealt directly with the Federation, using the mechanism of a Commissioner's Advisory Committee for formal consultation which did not include representation from the ATF or the state teacher unions. This was not accepted by the ATF without protest; as its General Secretary complained:

There seems to be a tendency in the Commonwealth Service to emphasize that members of committees do not

18 ACTCTF, Meetings of Teacher Representatives with ACT Commissioner for CTS, 30 October-1 November 1972, Price papers; Minutes of ACTCTF, Executive Meeting, 1, 7 December 1972, E. 72.12.1; Minutes of ACTCTF, Executive Meeting, 30 October 1973, E. 10. 51; Minutes of ACTCTF, Council Meeting, 8 May 1973, C. 73. 54; Minutes of ACTCTF, Council Meeting, 14 August 1973, C. 73. 88.
19 Ken Jones explained that the militant leadership of the NSW teachers' union was a deterrent to departmental officers working with that union. Interview, 3 February 1987.
represent any body although they have been nominated by them but rather they are members in their own right. Such a point of view is entirely unacceptable to the Australian Teachers' Federation... I am therefore concerned at not being informed of the business on the 27th and 28th of November and I understand that neither the S.A.I.T nor the N.S.W.T.F. was informed... [I]f the Committee is to be acceptable meetings should be convened only through the parent organization concerned.20

The ATF protest was unsuccessful, the acting CTS Commissioner continued his current arrangements and the ACT union responded to the ATF's request with the resolution that 'Dr Smith be advised by letter that the A.C.T. Commonwealth Teachers' Federation regarded itself competent to express the view-point of teachers in the A.C.T'.21 Thereafter, the destiny of ACT teachers was controlled by the ACT union. Ironically, its leaders learned from this contest, however, and used the ATF's arguments in its dealings with Authority committees, insisting that only the Federation spoke for teachers in ACT government schools and directing Federation representatives appointed to committees to adhere to Federation policy.22

Parent members on the Working Group observed the teachers' efforts to build a strong, unified union. There was considerable sympathy for them as having suffered under the NSW Department of Education's administration, and parents understood the desire to form a strong body to speak for all

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20 G. Smith, General Secretary, ATF, letter to J. Weedon, Acting CTS Commissioner, 27 November 1972, quoted in McNeill & March, op. cit., p. 191. (SAIT was the South Australian teachers' union).
22 This practice of binding members to union policy was to prove a special difficulty for parents and administrators on bodies such as the Council of the Authority and its standing committees.
teachers. The place of unionism in a democracy was taken for granted; a strong body of teachers would help withstand any pressures to retain bureaucratic administration and there was no expectation that a strong union would create any serious difficulties for the new system from within. To that stage, the parents had worked closely with Terry O'Connell, an exceptional educator whose breadth of vision reassured them. They did not realise that Terry O'Connell, although a unionist, to a large degree followed his own star; on the occasions he was at odds with the union it bore with him because he possessed useful skills needed to assist with union projects.23 The parents were also reassured that the union leaders' acceptance of new directions for secondary colleges on the Campbell Working Committee meant they would respond to reasoned argument. John Riddell who had Labor sympathies recognised that the teachers were changing in their approach to issues - 'We were dealing with a unionised as opposed to a committed group'.24

The Federation leaders, well aware of their importance as stakeholders in the system which was about to be established, and determined to ensure that the union would be powerful enough to support teachers, were assiduous in ensuring that their officers had ready access to departmental officers for the most recent information. The Federation was represented on the Liaison Committee along with principals, but from its inception, it attempted to assert a monopoly on departmental

23 For example, Terry O'Connell played a major role in the 1974 Work Value Inquiry as a member of the Inquiry Panel which eventually resulted in a large salary increase for teachers. McNeill & March, op. cit., p. 327.
access in order to secure its position as the sole voice of ACT teachers.\textsuperscript{25} It moved decisively to prevent other teacher groups with access to officers in the Department from continuing to enjoy this privilege, suggesting to officers in the Department:

Consultation could be achieved in a number of ways. The Department might supply the Federation with copies of all material related to any aspect of A.C.T. education. In addition, both parties could meet on a regular basis at mutually convenient times.

Previously, the Department has been cooperative in arranging dialogue with the A.C.T. Teachers' Association and the A.C.T. Secondary Teachers' Association.\textsuperscript{26} The Federation proposes that consultations with these associations be directed through it. On any particular meeting, arrangements would be made to include appropriate representatives. This proposal also includes the A.C.T. Pre-School Teachers' Association. No significant change from the present situation is anticipated except that all meetings shall be regarded as discussions between the Federation and the Department.

The Federation stresses that the Department ensure that proposals or decisions be raised in the first instance with the Federation ... [and not] with the Primary Principals' Association, the Secondary Principals' Association, or the Infant Mistresses' Association...\textsuperscript{27}

The Department was asked to send the Federation copies of correspondence with any teachers' association including the principals' associations, and these associations in turn were asked for information as to their dealings with the Department. Individual submissions by various teachers' associations to such

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{25} McNeill \& March, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 193. The terms 'departmental' and Department refer to the Commonwealth Department of Education (and Science) unless otherwise specified.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{26} As noted above, before the ACT Teachers' Federation was established, ACT primary teachers belonged to the NSW Teachers' Federation branch called the ACT Teachers' Association.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{27} P. O'Connor, General Secretary, ACTCTF, to R A. Foskett, Assistant Secretary, Department of Education and Science, 26 September 1972, quoted in McNeill \& March, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 193-194.}
\end{footnotes}
bodies as the CTS, the Department of Education and Science and the Schools Authority were discouraged. The Federation informed the Industrial Arts Teachers' Association, which had approached the Commissioner on its own behalf, that the Federation had established consultation with the Commissioner on behalf of all teachers and that members of this association should work within the Federation to obtain the benefit of this consultation. The Primary Principals' Association which had made its own submission for principals' allowances was advised by the union that only the Federation was recognised by the CTS Commissioner and the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission to negotiate salaries and conditions for all CTS members working in the ACT.  

By restricting participation within the Federation and establishing a powerful position as the sole official representative association for teachers in any future bargaining, the union leaders signalled that in practice they did not share the parents' expectations about participation; they inferred that in all circumstances, a mass community of teachers should be able to assert authority over principals. In these early stages, well before it was to begin its union interactions with other individuals and agencies in a new Authority, there were clear warning signals that the Federation leaders expected participation in the new system to become adversarial.

28 *ibid.*, p. 195.
29 Perhaps this edict was related to the belief that workers should be able to dictate conditions for all.
The Secondary Principals' Council did not submit to a loss of status without a struggle. Principals became aware that a power struggle was on and 'had to show themselves to be a powerful force which should be consulted on important issues when the new system eventuated'.\textsuperscript{30} As Brian Dooley somewhat cynically remarked later, the principals recognised that 'a new race was underway with all contenders seeking to participate in this new collegial system'.\textsuperscript{31} Under the NSW Department, it had been the custom for inspectors to consult with the principals' associations on current issues rather than with the teachers' union. Secondary principals did not wish to lose such advantages, yet began to fear that the Secondary Principals' Council 'would be propelled out of the proposed participatory structure'.\textsuperscript{32} Its members believed that teacher consultation should not be confined just to the union which was concerned generally with teachers' conditions of service, but should take place with representatives from various teacher associations, especially, of course, the Secondary Principals' Council.

The Primary Principals' Association also considered rebellion. A notice of motion was tabled at a meeting in April 1973 suggesting that 'the Principals of the A.C.T. constitute themselves as a professional body, which will provide a regular forum for discussing professional matters, and a means of

\textsuperscript{31} Dooley, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 24.  
\textsuperscript{32} \textit{ibid.}, p. 23.
promotion of the views of its members'. The Association also suggested inviting an amalgamation with the Secondary Principals' Council in order to form an association within the Federation on condition that:

the next Annual Conference of the C.T.F. approves a system acceptable to the [Primary Principals] Association for independent submissions through the Federation on matters such as the representation of Principals on the departmental committees, salary awards, assessment of schools and teachers.

The last sentence of the proposal held the bite:

That if the Annual Conference of the C.T.F. [Federation] will not approve an independent voice, a reconsideration of the constitution of this Association be made with a view to establishing it as a fully autonomous institution.

There was not universal support from all primary principals for a motion which would divide the union in its formative stages. When the secondary principals displayed a lack of enthusiasm about amalgamation with the primary principals, the idea was dropped.

Again in 1972 the Federation demonstrated its determination to represent all teachers in decision-making. The Teaching Resources Centre Advisory Committee, established in 1970, operated with principals as teacher representatives. When the representation was being reconsidered in 1972, the

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34 ibid.
35 Comments made by several primary principals, 1984.
Federation was approached by the primary and secondary principals to include one of each as Federation representatives. As Dooley describes, the Federation executive launched 'a delicate negotiation' and eased the principals off the committee by insisting that the Federation was the only body to represent teachers. The Secondary Principals' Council 'was politely thanked by this Advisory Committee for its help in the past and told that it was no longer required on this committee'.

The ease with which the Federation was able to secure its position as the sole voice for teachers and to exclude any other teacher groups from positions on various committees is remarkable. It appears that no departmental officer, for example, was prepared to challenge the union's right to speak for all teachers, not only in industrial matters but in all aspects of educational decision-making in the ACT, even when a tradition existed of consulting other teachers' groups like the Secondary Principals' Council, and even when it seemed appropriate and wise to have access to this knowledge and experience. Perhaps it was convenient to continue the NSW convention of dealing with just one organisation, perhaps the cordial relations established with Campbell Committee members had led departmental administrators to assume that Federation's leaders would continue in the same spirit; certainly, Peter O'Connor and Dick Lee were personable and persuasive young men. O'Connor acknowledges they 'wanted to take charge of the change as much as they could', especially to prevent what O'Connor believes was the parents' 'thinly veiled'

36 ibid.
wish to 'hire and fire' teachers. By 1972, involvement in traditional unionism had given them status among their colleagues and unprecedented opportunities to exert control over decisions about ACT schooling. As strong unionists, O'Connor and Lee inherited suspicions about parents, principals and administrators; as well as needing to establish themselves as the union's leaders and secure their power base, they might well have been reluctant to deviate from the established procedures of a militant parent union. Whatever the reason for the administrators' acquiescence in the Federation's insistence upon speaking for all teachers, by the end of 1972, the Federation had established itself as the sole body for negotiations with other stakeholders about decisions to do with teachers and principals. Its methods had revealed that it was prepared to assert its control in a forceful manner.

Early in 1973, the issue of parent involvement in selecting staff for schools was introduced at a Federation council meeting. This subject had been raised in the *Currie Report*, but the teachers in their response to the Report had not commented directly. At the Federation council meeting, reservations about parent participation in the selection of staff for schools were discussed. A resolution was passed supporting in principle the concept of school boards provided that the professional autonomy of school staffs was safeguarded; a rider expressed caution about the operations of school boards and stated that

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37 P. O'Connor, Interview, 10 September 1986.
38 ACT Teachers' Association, An Independent Education Authority for the Australian Capital Territory, Report of a sub-committee, November 1968.
none should begin operation in 1974 until satisfactory agreements regarding their role had been reached with the Federation. There was little doubt that this issue had the potential to become contestable, but for the time being, the union kept a watching brief.

The Federation's reservations about parent participation surfaced again in June 1973, after the Hughes Report had been tabled in Parliament. While the Federation leaders refrained from stating views on parent selection of staff in most forums until the Authority was set in place, they indicated some reservations to Departmental officers in their response to the Hughes Report and to members of the Liaison Committee. Dick Lee also intimated his reservations to other members of Federation executive, saying that the Report reflected the views of teachers generally, except on selection of staff. He asked:

Even if we could be convinced that there was no real threat to our concept of a career service in this proposal, are we prepared to support an educational reform of such magnitude at this stage?

In June 1973, the Federation attempted to delay matters by requesting a transition period of at least eighteen months before the boards exercised any executive function, and suggesting an Appointments Committee of teachers with no parent

39 Minutes of ACTCTF, Council Meeting, 10 April 1973, c. 73. 4. 4.
40 Minutes of Liaison Committee Meeting, 7 June 1973, p. 2, Department of Education File, 72/4129; ACT Commonwealth Teachers' Federation, Initial Reactions to the Hughes Committee Report, Paper presented at the Ministers' Liaison Committee, 21 June 19733, File 73/4777, Department of Education, held ACTSA.
41 Minutes of ACTCTF, Executive Meeting, 5 June 1973, President's Report.
involvement be established for the current staffing round.\textsuperscript{42} At the end of June 1973, in discussions with colleagues in the Department, Brian Peck noted that the formation of the CTS meant that recommendations on staffing contained in the \textit{Hughes Report} could not be implemented without some administrative adjustments. He suggested recommending to the Minister that school boards be given the fullest possible role in the selection of staff within the limits imposed by CTS Act provisions which preserved teachers' career opportunities. This meant that school boards would participate in the selection for particular posts as the Authority's agents and make nominations for appointments.\textsuperscript{43} Two days later, in another note replying to a request from Ken Jones, Peck suggested a six-step process to protect the career service interests of teachers while meeting some of the parents' requirements for involvement of school boards in staff determination and selection.\textsuperscript{44} One influential departmental officer, therefore, was willing to meet the parents' expectations for school board selection of staff. However,

\textsuperscript{42} Minutes of ACTCTF, Council Meeting, 13 June 1973, c. 73.6.3.
\textsuperscript{43} B. Peck, note to R. A. Foskett, Assessment Panel Report, 26 June 1973, File 73/4777, ACTSA. This note appears to be have no status beyond that of written discussion of possibilities from one officer to another. There is no record on file of other discussions on this matter.
\textsuperscript{44} The importance of a career service to teachers will be discussed in ch. 10 below. The process Peck proposed began with school boards putting their requirements for staff to the Authority, possibly according to some prescribed staffing formula. The Authority then coordinated the system-wide requirements, endorsed each staffing proposal, prepare a list of needs and special requirements and communicated all this to the CTS Commissioner who advertised the posts. Eligible applicants would submit their applications to the Authority for positions advertised \textit{en bloc} or to individual schools if appropriate. He suggested that administrative problems in relation to powers of the Commissioner to delegate could be easily overcome in order to allow the applications to be submitted to schools, for example, the Authority could use a particular school as its agent where that board's interests were involved. B. Peck, Note to K. Jones, Secretary, Department of Education, 28 June 1973, File 73/4777, ACTSA.
discussion on 1974 staffing arrangements was delayed for some months.

Following the release of the *Hughes Report*, the Federation again signalled that it was positioning itself to act in adversarial fashion within the decision-making structures when it challenged the Hughes Panel's recommendation for two teacher representatives on the Schools Authority Council. The union successfully took action to persuade the Minister's advisers that in order to keep a balance of school and lay representatives on the Council, there should be three, rather than two, teacher union representatives, and organised a mass meeting on the issue.45

On 11 September 1973, the Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, announced at a press conference that Cabinet had decided on the form and operations of the statutory body to administer ACT government schools from the beginning of 1974, to be known as the ACT Schools Authority. Kim Beazley then stated that in reaching this decision the government had accepted the major recommendations of the Hughes Assessment Panel. The Authority would be responsible to the Minister of Education, and a council of ten members would have overall responsibility for the system. The council’s membership would include one full-time member, the chief professional officer, and nine part-time members, three to be nominated by the Teachers Federation, two by the ACT Council of P&C Associations, one by the Canberra Pre-School Society, and two by the Minister for

Education. Schools were to have their own councils (later called boards to avoid confusion with the Authority Council) to include the principal and members nominated by teachers, parents, the Schools Authority, and in some cases, students, with delegated powers 'to enable them to take responsibility for the policies and administration of schools'. Staffing of schools was to be arranged in accordance with the *Commonwealth Teaching Service Act*. An Interim Authority would be established immediately along lines similar to those proposed for the permanent Authority, with access to the resources of the Department of Education to assist in planning and administration. The announcement of the new Authority by the Prime Minister underlined the importance of this new project for his plans to make Canberra a social laboratory, a testing place for social reforms.

Less than a month later, on 8 October 1973, the members of the Council of the Interim Authority were named. They included some key figures in the ACT Education Working Group who had planned and campaigned for a different kind of administration: the Minister nominated Phillip Hughes and Catherine Blakers, the P&C Council nominated Dr Alan Barnard and Kath Abbott, and the Federation sent Max Badham (primary principal), Mick March (secondary principal) and infants' mistress Margaret Dempster as their nominees. Ken Fry represented the ACT Advisory Council, and Ailsa Curtis, the Pre-School Association.

47 ibid.
Apart from some sabre rattling in the teachers' union, to this point key stakeholders had not attempted to challenge the implementation of the new structures; Federation's concern for membership numbers, however, implied that a balance of power on the Council would be important and suggested that the Federation was preparing itself for contests.\textsuperscript{49} It remained to be seen if and how they would mount their challenge.

\textsuperscript{49} Mick March later observed that until the representation on the Council was altered in 1976, the effect on the balance of power as a result of the Federation's extra member influenced voting results on some issues and therefore the course of events. M. E. March, 'Policy Development for Public Schools in the Australian Capital Territory: Early Aspirations and Later Developments', in A. Hone et al., \textit{ACT Papers on Education 1982-83}, CCAE, 1983, p. 43.
CHAPTER TEN.

THE LIMITATION OF PARENT PARTICIPATION

In October 1973 when nine members of the Interim ACT Schools Authority sat around the Council table for the first meeting, the new administration was due to start in less than three months.\(^1\) The teachers' union was in a strong bargaining position; once the Interim Council was established and ready to plan for the new administration to start the following January, the teachers moved to protect their interests. The parents' desire for participation in the system was to receive a major setback.

The signs were optimistic at that first Council meeting.\(^2\) There was a widespread belief that the new school system would receive favourable treatment from the Labor government which, in a period of enthusiasm for social reform, was prepared to finance educational initiatives. The justification for this view was largely the government's decision to establish the Schools Commission in order to implement the findings of the *Karmel Report*.\(^3\) Expansion of government support was evident, and the

\(^1\) In strategic planning terms, the 'product' was created and ready to begin producing 'outputs'.
\(^2\) Although for some years the governing body of the Authority dropped the title 'Council', it will be referred to in brief throughout this account as 'the Authority Council' or the 'Council'. The Council of the Interim ACT Schools Authority actually had a membership of ten people, but the tenth member was its executive officer, the Chief Education Officer, not appointed until 1975. For a list of those present at the first meeting of the Council of the Interim ACT Schools Authority and the agents or agencies they represented see Appendix 3.
\(^3\) P. Karmel (Chair), *Schools in Australia*, Report of the Interim Committee for the Schools Commission, AGPS, Canberra, 1973, (*Karmel Report*). This report recommended that a total of 660 million dollars should be allocated to government and non-government schools in the states for 1974 and 1975. See also, G. S. Harman & C. Selby-Smith
expectation of continued growth and development in education extended to the infant Authority. The easing of the teacher shortage and a beginning of a decline in school enrolments, and other early signs of an end to the long post-war economic boom, were not yet topics for general discussion. Planners in the Department of Education still forecast continued growth in Canberra's population as though the current economic situation would continue indefinitely.⁴

Education had become news. In a policy statement of 29 April 1974, the Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, stated:

The parents of Australia will know - and history will record - that the greatest single achievement of our government in its first year was to change the face of education in Australia, and to change the basic attitudes of the Australian people towards education.⁵

In 1969 and again in 1972, the Australian Labor Party included the notion of participation in its 'Platform Constitution and Rules'.⁶ The government's endorsement of community participation, choice and diversity and devolved decision making, suggested positive support for a school system which

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⁴ See, R. A. Foskett, Some Aspects of a Schools Authority for the ACT, Talk given to the ACT Chapter of the Australian College of Education, 13 September 1973, pp. 8-9, Australian Archives (ACT): CRS A1640 T2, Department of Education and Science File 71/3550, for a senior public servant's forecast of continued expansion in ACT schooling.


espoused similar ideas in its philosophy. The inherent contradictions between some of these themes were overlooked in the excitement of new beginnings. The multiple meanings given to the term 'community' in the Karmel and Hughes Reports, as well as by the different stakeholders in the ACT, were not questioned. The policy statement of the ACT branch of the Labor Party echoed key ideas in the Currie Report: 'the Education Authority should include representatives of teachers, parents and students'; 'individual schools should have a greater measure of autonomy'. The Whitlam government made it clear that it was committed to extending self-government and local participation in the ACT. The milieu appeared propitious for the operation of school boards.

There was not uniform agreement within the Department of Education about the role that school boards were to play in the new system. In June 1973, the Acting CTS Commissioner, W. J. Weeden, wrote to the Secretary of the Department, Ken Jones, querying the intentions for school boards as set out in the Hughes Report, and stating that in his view, the Hughes Panel clearly did not understand the provisions of the Teaching Service Act. He reported that the two academic members of the Panel (Hughes and Walker) had stated that there had been criticism of the constraints that the CTS Act would place on education

8 These contradictions were discussed in relation to the Currie Report, in Ch. 5 above.
9 ACT Branch Australian Labor Party, Policy Statement, 23 May 1973, File 74/6, ACTSA.
authorities in obtaining the kinds of teachers they might wish to have in their schools. Weeden emphasised that it had always been clear from the wording of the CTS Act that it was the Commonwealth Teaching Service and not the ACT Education Authority which would be providing teachers for schools and that the career rights of teachers had to be protected. He added that, although the members of the Panel sought to delegate responsibility for staffing to the Authority, which in turn might delegate certain of its powers to school boards, the Panel did not appear to have considered the possibility that even one school board might not function effectively and have to be disciplined or disbanded. Weeden appeared to be disturbed that the Hughes Panel did not propose any major controls on school boards. He recommended that the Minister should be advised so that when he announced his decision following the Panel's Report, he did it in such a way as to indicate that the rights of teachers would be protected, that all school boards would be subject to supervision and control, and that those that did not function responsibly and effectively would be replaced. The tone and content of Weeden's minute indicated that he was concerned about the autonomy that boards might expect and the powers that they might assume, especially with respect to those formerly held by teachers. It also illustrates a bureaucratic mindset about control, something which was to cause trouble later. Despite Weeden's concerns, however, while the Cabinet submission suggested

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reservations about financial powers of the Authority and the school boards, it also stated that 'the fullest possible power and responsibility will be delegated by the Authority to the [boards] consistent with their being part of a Commonwealth statutory authority'.

On the other hand, Brian Peck did not appear to share Weeden's anxieties. In a minute to Ken Jones about the provision of staff for schools under the ACT Education Authority, Peck stated he saw no difficulties in the Authority using appropriate school boards for arranging interviews and participating in selection panels. He suggested procedures consistent with the CTS's and the Authority's responsibilities for using school boards as agents where the board's interests were involved. In a second minute, which discussed concerns raised by the Public Service Board about proposed arrangements for the new Authority in the Cabinet submission, Peck answered its concerns about the staffing powers of school boards by pointing to the safeguards contained in the CTS Act and in the use of the term 'delegated' in respect to powers offered to school boards, arguing that the Act's provisions ensured that the Authority would have the necessary control over staffing matters, while at the same time giving boards a role in assessing the need for staffing variations and in the selection of teachers for promotion or specialist positions. His understanding of the parents' desire

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12 K. E. Beazley, Minister for Education, For Cabinet, Establishment of an ACT Schools Authority, Submission No. 575, Minute, 10 September 1973, Department of Education and Science File 73/4777, held ACTSA.  
13 B. Peck to K. Jones, Provision of Staff for Schools under the ACT Education Authority, Minute, 28 June 1973, Department of Education and Science File 73/4777, held ACTSA.
for participation was revealed when he added, that without a role for boards in selecting staff for their schools, the opportunity for schools to develop individually would be substantially reduced.\(^{14}\)

By this time members of the P&C Council, and Brian Peck, were well aware of the teachers' concern for their professional status and their anxiety that this would be threatened by lay involvement in school board selection of staff. Dr Alan Barnard, President of the P&C Council, wrote to Peck:

> At one extreme, they fear arbitrary, non-professional criteria of selection will be adopted. This... feeds greedily on oft repeated "horror stories" drawn primarily from the least liberal parts of the U.S.A. and wholly ignores the fact that the unique feature of the School Boards recommended for the A.C.T. is the representation of teachers' professional interests. We do not believe teachers are genuinely unable to trust their colleagues to protect professional standards. We do know they fear the unknown and that only experience will dispel that fear.

> At the other extreme, they fear the destruction of a career service and perversion of career promotion...\(^{15}\)

Barnard stated that the P&C Council understood the teachers' apprehension, 'though we consider it to be entirely misplaced', and argued that their fears provided 'no valid ground for departing from the objectives enunciated by the [Hughes] Panel'.

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\(^{14}\) B. Peck, [to K. Jones]. Comments by Public Service Board, Minute, (n.d.), Department of Education and Science File 73/4777, held ACTSA. Brian Peck also outlined the likely involvement of school boards at two meetings of the Liaison Committee describing again the constraints of the CTS Act on the operations of school boards in staffing matters. Minutes of Liaison Committee, Special Meetings, 21 June 1973, 4 July 1973, p. 3, Department of Education and Science File 72/4129.

\(^{15}\) Dr A. Barnard, letter to B. Peck, 22 June 1973, Department of Education File 73/4777, held ACTSA.
While some might query a kind of professionalism which is graded and sorted according to levels of service and status, to a public servant like Peck, it was Australian orthodoxy, and consistent with the career service patterns of those members of traditional professions who were becoming incorporated into the public sector. A career service in teaching, like those of other public sector professions, in the early 1970s, meant assurance of continual employment, a system of promotions determined and selected according to clearly established procedures, and the certainty that if a teacher reached a particular level this would be maintained for the rest of the teacher's career.\textsuperscript{16} To teachers, allowing lay persons on school boards to select them appeared to undermine their career security by making it possible for a pool of surplus teachers to occur if numbers of schools changed staffing requirements unexpectedly; consequently, teachers resisted the notion of 'hiring and firing', a bogey which haunted teachers' discussions about school board powers. As teachers have traditionally equated professionalism with middle classness, this threat raised underlying class insecurities, and perhaps the vestiges of working class fears about boss and worker relations.\textsuperscript{17} Certainly, as increasing numbers of teachers became graduates and more were recruited from the middle class, the expectation of professional status would have become accentuated.\textsuperscript{18} Megali Larson argues that one of the major

\textsuperscript{16} This was a period before the terms 'redundancy' and 'voluntary early retirement' became mooted.
\textsuperscript{18} This was very relevant in the ACT where the new system introduced a requirement for all teachers entering the service to be
characteristics that all professions and would-be professions have in common is their determination to maintain their relative superiority over and distance from the working class.\textsuperscript{19}

New Middle Class parent activists were surprised by the strength of such fears because they saw themselves as colleagues and fellow members of a community rather than as industrial bosses. As Hugh Waring explains:

\begin{quote}
The greatest battles we had in public and in private [were in] trying to persuade the Teachers' Federation they had nothing to fear. They imagined they'd be lynched on the streets and there would be hiring and firing and all sorts of things going on. Right from the start they had nightmares about participation... They had great fears of what a participatory system meant. They wanted to minimise the influence of parents in any official way in regard to schools.\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

The parents were fighting ideological beliefs equally as strong as their own. The idea of being judged by lay people made teachers feel vulnerable: it downgraded their expertise and diminished the value of their services. They were committed to demonstrating what were perceived as the attributes of a profession; in this matter, the possession of a body of knowledge and techniques acquired after a period of training and credentialling. In a society in which, as Harold Perkin claims, the role of professionalism and the influence of a professional ideal

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item Category A status (four years trained). In addition, teachers were expected to be Category A status for promotional eligibility by 1990, in some areas initially, but later extended to all teachers. As a consequence, many teachers, primary and secondary, upgraded their qualifications.
\item H. Waring, Interview, 3 January 1992.
\end{itemize}}
is growing, this was important to teachers. Understandably, parents were bewildered and dismayed by what they perceived as unreasonable behaviour.

We felt put out. All of us knew these teachers so very well, they knew us all, and yet they didn't have enough confidence to actually take their courage in both hands and take a step that had possibilities... and even if you gave them some guarantees that appeared to be good guarantees they still preferred to stay as they were because it was safe... Some people I know who were outstanding citizens of Canberra did their best to persuade the leading teachers to take less of a dog in the manger... approach without success...22

Again, perhaps, members secure in their class location were unable to reassure those who were not.

As a subject, professionalism is fraught with contradictions, misconceptions and myths. Originating with entrepreneurs who offered their services in areas such as medicine and law and fostered notions of altruism and service in order to gain the trust of potential clients and create a market for their services, professionalism has become transformed into an ideology in which it is identified as intellectual, learned, collegially regulated, altruistic and service-oriented.23 New recruits to professions are socialised by their colleagues into this professional ethic, and in adopting this ideology, become controlled by it.24 Teachers also have been enticed by the

21 H. Perkin, The Rise of the Professional Society, Routledge, London, 1989, p. 355. Although Perkin was referring to society in Britain this development can be generalised widely to the United States and Australia, for example.
22 Waring, Interview, 1992.
23 The so-called 'traits of professions'.
ideology of professionalism and others use it to control them. When in more recent years, government bureaucracies increasingly institutionalised service entrepreneurs in such fields as medicine, law, social welfare, and psychology, and work situations changed, new ethics replaced the old, but a residual ideology has remained, creating new contradictions and conflicts. Occupations providing service within these organisations have become transformed into occupational pressure groups with the important task of maintaining, protecting, and improving conditions of service, using unions as a mechanism to accomplish this.

Teachers who engage in industrial activities are therefore in opposition to this ideology and frequently criticised for undermining professionalism: there is a perceived dichotomy between the two which can be attributed to attitudes about social position and contradictions in the teachers' ideology. This dichotomy is a traditional perception, one which is sometimes used against teachers in order to constrain their actions; as already noted, a form of control. Hugh Waring states the traditional view:

There is a conflict between trade unionism and professionalism, whether it's a teacher or anybody else, and it's to their disadvantage when they push their trade unionism and their negativism because people get sick of them and it causes... violent reactions...²⁵

The concepts of career and professionalism are entwined, but to preserve a career service, teachers have to be prepared to act industrially. Bound by the ideology of professionalism which

appeals to such notions as altruism, responsibility and service, teachers are criticised as unprofessional when they resort to industrial behaviour in order to protect their career service conditions.26 This is especially noticeable as the proportion of women in what is usually designated as a 'caring' profession increases; they are especially susceptible to such an accusation against them, both as 'carers' and as 'professionals'. Thus are teachers trapped. The purposes of unionism and professionalism overlap and as Bruce Mitchell notes, the traditional approach to teachers' organisations which sees them caught between mutually exclusive patterns of behaviour, professional on the one hand and industrial or trade union on the other, is open to question.27 Mitchell questions the difference between teacher unions and so-called professional organisations, claiming that traditionally, the latter

are those which confine themselves to academic, scholastic, and theoretical aspects of education, avoiding contact with any topic which relates to political or financial matters, or bears on the welfare of teachers. By this definition it is "professional" to discuss the educational role of the school library, but not to ask governments to build or stock libraries; it is "professional" to talk about educational aims, subject matter, curriculum construction, and teaching methods, but not to complain about crowded classrooms, poor equipment, libraries without books, ill-trained teachers, and low salaries.28

28 Mitchell, op. cit., 1975, p. 214. Other occupations have similar problems; recent actions of established 'professional' associations like the Australian Medical Association raise further questions about traditional views about professionalism.
Mitchell conflates political and industrial in this extract: his "non-professional" examples are questions of a political nature. It is union or industrial behaviour which is traditionally criticised for being non-professional: that is, the politics in action which conflicts with the niceties of professionalism. Nevertheless, Mitchell's argument is correct; industrial and professional boundaries are blurred. It could be most unprofessional for a teacher to ignore certain conditions in which students are expected to learn, for example.

As Mitchell then suggests, teacher unions are

like craft unions of the nineteenth century and associations of medical practitioners today: a trade union and a professional association at the same time; generally conservative in professional matters although potentially radical in the industrial field; and political in almost every sense except being committed to a political party.29

NSW teacher unionists were accustomed to taking industrial action to protect their working conditions and a threat to professionalism was sufficient cause. In the 1970s, parent involvement in school decision-making was a radical concept for NSW teachers accustomed to a centralised, seniority-based transfer and promotion process, and definitely not encouraged by the NSW Teachers' Federation, as evidenced in April 1968 by a letter from the President of the NSW Teachers Federation to the editor of the Canberra Times in response to an editorial supporting the concept of school boards:

29 ibid., p. 215. Increasingly, the last statement is open to question also as more unions and professional organisations are seen to influence political party decision-making.
Their [school board's] function would be to act as a bridge between the community and the schools, and especially to bring to the discussion of educational policies and administration the views of people in the real world outside the school. To be effective, these boards must have real powers and responsibility, and the bureaucrats must be prepared to divest themselves of some of their control. If this seems a lot to ask, the rewards are considerable: the beginning of a new era in Australian education.\textsuperscript{30}

Jack Whalan, President of the NSW Teachers Federation, replied to the editorial by restating the NSW union's view:

It is, however, a far cry from "expressing an opinion" to participating in administration through a school board in an independent system. Boards, as you state, must have real powers and responsibility to function effectively, but teachers would be most reluctant to have the administration of their appointments, transfer, promotion, conditions of service, etc., controlled by any board on which there was more than token representation of local citizens.\textsuperscript{31}

The editorial had suggested that parent participation would help to bring the 'real world' into the school. As teaching methods changed and new trends such as open plan schooling were introduced, parents increasingly believed that schools were out of touch in some way. Schools seemed sheltered from life as Hugh Waring suggests:

They haven't been out in the hard world. Teachers deal so much with the forming mind and that ideal - that great possibility for potential that young people have - they [teachers] don't learn the sordid details of knife-throwing competition and the rough reality of life out there when people kick you and get away with it... Promotion in the Public Service; there was no method too brutal to give a

\textsuperscript{30} Canberra Times, 15 April 1968, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{31} ibid. The NSW process is explained in the handbook for Teachers; see NSW Department of Education, Handbook: Instruction and Information for the Guidance of Teachers, NSW Government Printer, 1962, p. 124-137.
person you didn't like from getting a job (sic). Whereas teachers still seemed to think by and large that the community was good and they only had to explain things to [people]. And [then] they'd feel shocked when they noticed base ingratitude or complete misunderstanding. I just think they weren't tough enough. I think they don't become tough enough because they move in a group to a greater extent than other groups do, so they reinforce their conceptions... And then when they're not with other teachers they're with young developing people who in themselves are a bit starry-eyed and haven't lost their ideals to any great degree...32

Not only did teachers have to suffer the stereotypes of trendy lefties or union thugs; in this case they were perceived as naive idealists. The meaning was plain: in the view of some, teachers were apart from real life and community involvement was necessary to keep them in touch.

Teachers were vulnerable to unrealistic demands made by Canberra's educated, articulate parents with high expectations for their children's schooling. As aspiring professionals defending their working conditions, they were very anxious about parental scrutiny and prepared to do whatever necessary to avoid this. While they had expressed reservations about parental involvement in selection of staff at a Liaison Committee meeting and to departmental administrators following the circulation of the Hughes Report, it was not yet official union policy.33 On the evening prior to the inaugural Interim Authority Council meeting, they challenged the extent of parent participation on school boards by deciding to hold a special

33 Minutes of ACTCTF, Council Meeting, 10 April 1973, c. 73. 4. 4; Minutes of Liaison Committee Meeting, 7 June 1973, Department of Education and Science File 72/4129.
conference early the following month to reappraise the promotions and appeals process and establish Federation policy.\textsuperscript{34} The union leaders then established a practice that was followed faithfully in the future: make arrangements for a policy to be decided then direct union members to follow it.

The NSW Department's impersonal and mechanistic transfer procedures had compelled parents to seek a radical solution; by late 1973, they had an almost passionate conviction that meaningful participation demanded they have a role in staff selection, especially of principals.\textsuperscript{35} Alan Barnard, the President of the P&C Council, stated its views in another letter to Brian Peck in July 1973:

...unless School Boards have responsibility for the functions outlined in para. 5.5 of the Panel's Report they will be empty vessels and the central features of the structure recommended by the Panel will be destroyed. Council would not, and could not, accept such a denial of the very essence of autonomy and participation... Arguments based on the requirements of existing legislation or on sectional apprehension cannot of themselves be sufficient grounds for rejecting the concept of a School Board selecting its professional staff.\textsuperscript{36}

School boards with powers of teacher selection became a real test of devolution from the centre: they symbolised to parents that power sharing was really going to happen.

\textsuperscript{34} Minutes of ACTCTF, Council Meeting, 9 October 1973, c. 73. 10. 5.
\textsuperscript{35} Minutes of Liaison Committee Meeting, 21 June 1973, Department of Education and Science File 72/4129.
\textsuperscript{36} A. Barnard, President, ACT Council of P&C Associations, letter to Brian Peck, 26 July 1973, Department of Education File 73/4777, held ACTSA.
Teachers recognised the symbolic importance of such powers to school boards and were equally determined that this form of power-sharing would not happen. Years later, Peter O'Connor recalled the former fears about hiring and firing and, ironically, applied an idiosyncratic interpretation of democracy to justify his reasons for restricting parent participation.

There were a lot of people in the teaching ranks who were very concerned about parental control... Some groups in the parent movement wanted full hire and fire right away at the board level but I was prepared to remain consistent with the notions of democratic involvement.37

At the first meeting of the Authority Council, Alan Barnard raised the matter of staff selection for schools. Brian Peck, who had been seconded to the Interim Authority from the Department, warned Council that the timetable for staffing of schools for 1974 was very tight and cautioned against the involvement of school boards in 1973 as this would delay the appointment of teachers for the following school year. Phillip Hughes, newly elected to the Chair, suggested that it might be unwise for the Authority to become involved in such a major administrative operation when it should be concerned with formulation of policy. The Department of Education's proposal to establish committees to process transfers and promotions, and the pros and cons of school board involvement, were then discussed.38

By this meeting, members of Council were aware of teachers' anxieties about staff selection. At this meeting,

37 P. O'Connor, Interview, 10 September 1986.
38 Minutes of IACTSA, 10 October 1973, Item 6.5, p. 5; Item 8, p. 6.
teachers did not reveal the extent of their concern, nor the actions they were planning to prevent school board involvement in staffing; the next week, however, the Federation executive had met and passed resolutions which finally set out its position:

This executive sees no role for School Boards in the selection of professional staff other than in an advisory capacity connected with the formulation of specific advertisement ...

...that the General Secretary inform the Permanent Head of the Department of Education of Federation Policy on this matter.39

In the long drawn out struggle which was about to begin, the Federation had a clear advantage. Because the P&C associations were focused upon the establishment of school boards, the parents on Council were not backed by a powerful organisation; they had only their convictions about the prime importance of parent involvement to support them. Moreover, there were less of the original activists directly involved in these kinds of decisions now as former parent campaigners whose children had left the school system were now replaced by new parents. Only three of the parents on the former Working Group remained directly involved: Cath Blakers, Alan Barnard and Kath Abbott.40 Most of the academics had also withdrawn with the exception of Phillip Hughes, and Alan Barnard who was a P&C nominee to the Authority Council.41 No longer united in a

39 Minutes of ACTCTF, Executive Meeting, 16 October 1973, E. 73. 10. 27.
40 Hugh Waring worked for the school system in the P&C Association and returned as P&C nominee to the Council in 1975 when Kath Abbott withdrew for health reasons. Netta Burns had left the Working Group in the late 1960s, and Dick Johnson, Ken Townley and John Riddell were no longer directly involved.
41 Blakers was involved as a Ministerial nominee on the Interim Authority Council, Dick Johnson returned in 1974 to become very heavily involved in the establishment of secondary colleges, Ken Townley retired from work and died less than a year after retirement.
pressure group, they had to negotiate with union members who were directed to follow union policy and possessed a powerful weapon in the threat of industrial action.

Once the parents realised that the teachers were determined to oppose the selection of staff by school boards, a contest began. On the second day of an adjourned meeting, the Authority Council established a four-person working party which included Mick March, one of the three Federation Vice-Presidents on Authority Council, to develop procedures for the participation of school boards in the selection of staff. The Federation executive met on the evening of that second day and was informed that the Secretary of the Department of Education had decided that no parent or lay representatives would be appointed to the promotion committees being formed for 1974. The executive authorised Mick March and Peter O'Connor to represent the Federation at preliminary discussions with the CTS Commissioner on the matter.

The teachers' opposition eventually forced members of Council to modify the final draft of 'Guidelines for School Boards' circulated to schools early in November. The sections concerning the parental role in staff selection were equivocal, with statements such as:

school boards will play a more limited role than has been envisaged by some people ...
Interim Council believes that school boards should play some role in the selection of staff ...

42 Minutes of IACTSA, 22, 23 October 1973, Item 6, p. 5.
43 Minutes of ACTCTF, Executive Meeting, 23 October 1973, E. 73. 10. 41.
[Authority Council] recognises the importance of the position of teachers being fully protected.\textsuperscript{44}

By November, parents in the school system realised that one of the most important features of the participatory administration was under threat. The first move to oppose Federation came from the interim board which had been already been established at Terry O'Connell's school. \textsuperscript{45} It objected to statements in this document:

The Interim Board found it difficult to accept that it would "be responsible to the Authority for the School's effective operation"... but would "have no direct role in staffing schools for 1974"...
It cannot... escape the conclusion that the implied policy for staffing in 1974 cuts sharply across a central principle underlying the whole movement towards the ACT School's (sic) Authority, that of the right of Schools, through properly constituted Boards, to determine and carry out specific educational programmes...
It sees staffing as the key to its operation and urges that your Authority consider means by which the Interim Board may influence the selection of staff for 1974.\textsuperscript{46}

The school board's executive officer (and school principal), Terry O'Connell, former member of the Currie Committee and the Education Working Group, signed the letter.

A Federation executive meeting, held 20 November 1973, discussed a letter from the President of the P&C Council on staffing and promotions procedures for 1974, complaining that a

\textsuperscript{44} IACTSA, Guidelines for School Boards, Canberra, 1974.
\textsuperscript{45} Terry O'Connell, a strong advocate for school boards, had established a school board in his school well in advance of the requirement to do so.
\textsuperscript{46} T. J. O'Connell, Executive Officer, North Ainslie Primary Interim School Board, letter to P. Hughes, Chairman, ACTSA, 2 November 1973, March Papers.
departmental officer had refused a request for parent representatives on placement panels and suggesting instead that parents with teacher qualifications might be acceptable to the Federation. The P&C Council objected to the proposition that only parents who were professionally qualified would be able to make an effective contribution to staff placement. The President added:

Council considers that the staff placement procedure for 1974 provides an opportunity to begin the fusion of separate elements of the education system to demonstrate that the cooperation and mutual assistance that is contemplated for future ACT education is feasible.47

Two more school boards tried to persuade the Authority Council to provide for a role for parents in selection of staff, the first urging it to set procedures for parent selection of staff in motion immediately, the second stating that the school board believed it 'of paramount importance that school boards participate in staff selection'.48 The latter argued that failure to permit this 'would severely reduce the status of the school board' and 'nullify the principles that have led to their institution'.49 The Council responded with an outwardly neutral stance; it decreed that no action could be taken at that time, 'but that the Authority expected to develop approaches in the future which recognised the principles outlined in the North Ainslie School Board submission'.50 The Authority's working party was

48 M. F. Newman, Chairman, Red Hill Interim School Board, letter to P. Hughes, Chairman, IACTSA, 26 January 1974, March Papers.
49 N. T. Armstrong, Executive Officer, Hackett Interim School Board, Submission to F. R. Smith, Acting Chief Executive Officer, IACTSA, 7 February 1974, March Papers.
unable to resolve the issue and the Federation continued to resist the most limited lay involvement in teacher selection. When the Authority sent schools a set of procedures for the selection of principals which allowed candidates to consult with the chairpersons of school boards, the Federation protested to the acting Chief Education Officer, Frank Smith, threatened a strike for early September, and decided to approach the Minister for Education, Kim Beazley.51

The matter dragged on through the rest of 1974. The P&C Council protested strongly against the watering-down of the initial expectations of parent involvement in staffing and blamed the Federation. A letter from the P&C Council's general secretary to Frank Smith expressed 'deep concern' at the manner in which parent involvement in selection of staff was being conducted and stated that 'what has happened is more an expression of the policy of the Commonwealth Teachers' Federation and some of its members, both inside and outside the Authority'.52

Compromises suggested by the Authority Council were rejected by the Federation which passed a resolution at its annual conference rejecting any move to give school boards 'the power to decide on any professional matters including any part whatsoever in the selection of school staff'.53 This became

51 IACTSA, Circular 74/51, 20 June 1974; Minutes of ACTCTF, Executive Meeting, 4 June 1974, E. 74. 6. 2; Minutes of ACTCTF, Executive Meeting, 4 June 1974, E. 74. 6.2; P. W. O'Connor, letter to F. R. Smith, 1 August 1974, March Papers; Minutes of ACTCTF, Executive Meeting, 10 September 1974, E. 74. 9. 3.
Federation policy, binding upon all members including those on the Authority Council. Sanctions were imposed upon members seeking positions or on selection panels who sought to consult with board members in any way about selecting staff. The selection process came to an abrupt stop. To enforce parent participation at that stage, the Authority would have had to take drastic action, possibly standing down intransigent teachers and facing prolonged strike action by the union. When it came to the point, the Council was not prepared to force the issue. The teachers remained obdurate.

Into this unhappy scene in 1975 arrived Dr Hedley Beare, the newly appointed Chief Education Officer. Having weathered the mopping-up exercise which followed Cyclone Tracy in Darwin, he was now confronted by another stormy situation, brought about by different, if no less challenging circumstances. Beare was quickly followed by Commonwealth Teaching Service officers who were deployed to Canberra as a consequence of the destruction to Darwin caused by the cyclone. Early in 1975, the first hints of economic and employment troubles could be detected, but the ACT school system was still expanding, some Canberra teachers exercised their option to return to NSW, and teams of Authority officers continued recruiting interstate for teachers. By February, the number of unfilled promotions positions in schools was growing and Hedley Beare explained to the Authority Council that if attempts were made to fill these positions a confrontation with the Federation would follow, something he did not want because the cooperation of all parties in the ACT system was of prime importance. He noted also that
because the ACT school system was being observed by all other systems in Australia, he did not want to subject the Authority to negative criticism by the other states.\textsuperscript{54}

Many members of the Authority Council opposed Hedley Beare's stance. Ivor Vivian suggested that school boards would probably prefer the Chief Education Officer to make appointments rather than see the Authority accept the Federation's line.

If the participation of Boards in staff selection is cut out it makes a "sham" of the Authority's wish to decentralise decision-making. Before a decision is made on Dr Beare's proposal the Council of the P. and C. Associations should be consulted.\textsuperscript{55}

Mick March pointed out that the process up to the stage when it was stopped had led to some breaches of confidence by school boards.\textsuperscript{56} Kath Abbott reminded members that the Federation had broken an agreement that decisions would not be made until the procedures were evaluated and reviewed, supported by Alan Barnard who added: 'Dr Beare's proposals do not represent a compromise - they would be seen simply as an acceptance of the Federation's line'.\textsuperscript{57} Eventually it was decided to review the procedures and not fill positions until acceptable procedures were developed. Peter O'Connor wrote to Hedley

\textsuperscript{54} Minutes of IACTSA, 17 February 1975, Item 4.1, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{55} Minutes of IACTSA, 3 March 1975, Item 3, pp. 3-6.
\textsuperscript{56} The issue of confidentiality was important to teachers who feared that in a small locality like Canberra a situation could arise where information about teachers' strengths and weaknesses could be passed around the schools and the community. To what extent this was an imagined fear is difficult to assess. There is no evidence concerning the number or the nature of the alleged breaches of confidentiality.
\textsuperscript{57} Minutes of IACTSA, 3 March 1975, Item 3, pp. 3-6.
Beare suggesting procedures which included teacher selection panels but omitted school board representation.⁵⁸ After the Authority Council failed to find a compromise, the Chief Education Officer prepared a paper setting out procedures similar to those proposed by the Federation. Parent members of Council strongly opposed them.

During 1974 and 1975, several drafts of the Schools Authority Ordinance were circulated to all interested parties; the first in 1974 with statements suggesting the involvement of school board members in selection of staff. Initially prepared by the Parliamentary Draftsman on advice from officers in the Department of Education and the Authority, and significantly delayed from the late-1973 to early-1974 dates originally suggested, it was proceeding through a number of consultation stages with various interested agencies and organisations, including the Council of P&C Associations and the Teachers' Federation; eventually it was expected to pass through parliament to the Governor-General.⁵⁹ In response to a 1974 draft, in a letter to the Minister, the P&C President contested certain of the points made in a previous draft, which the Council argued had widened 'the gap between ideals and practice' protesting that 'it is understood that even the nominal participation now remaining is under threat'.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ The Authority was originally to be established by an Act of Parliament, but the Prime Minister decided to establish it under an ordinance in readiness for self-government. K. N. Jones, note to R. A. Foskett and B. Peck, 3 July 1973. Department of Education and Science File 73/4777, held ACTSA.
⁶⁰ H. Collis, letter to the Minister for Education, K. Beazley, 13 August 1974, File 74/105, ACTSA. Brackets are included as written.
In March 1975, the Education Committee of the ACT Legislative Assembly, which had replaced the Advisory Council in July 1974 in anticipation of self-government, discussed the latest draft and wrote to the Federation seeking its views on certain matters. The Federation promptly replied that parent involvement in selection of staff should be deleted from the draft.

Until the draft Ordinance was circulated, school board selection of staff had not been an issue in the local press. Peter O'Connor's article, 'Teachers Have Their Say on the Proposed Schools Authority Plan', criticised various provisions in an early draft, including the issue of staff selection, stating that one significant difference between the Federation and some other groups in the Authority was the extent to which a school board should have control over professional activities within the school. He reiterated the Federation's view:

Teachers are... opposed to school boards being given powers which can generally described as the "hiring and firing" of staff. The federation has never objected to school boards being able to specify the types of staff it might require to implement the policies of a school and, indeed, all school boards have been given this opportunity this year.

Furthermore, the federation has supported the principle of consultation with a school board staffing sub-committee prior to the publication of a provisional promotion or transfer involving that school.

61 The role of this new body of eighteen elected part-time members which introduced new stakeholders into ACT education will be discussed further in ch. 13 below.
63 P. O'Connor, letter to editor, Canberra Times, 9 September 1974, p. 2.
While O'Connor's reiteration of the 'hiring and firing' bogey might seem a ploy to work on imagined fears, teachers saw ambiguity in what appeared to be mutually exclusive statements in an article written the year before by Alan Barnard:

There is no point in a [school board] developing its own educational program if it cannot match its teachers with it. School selection of professional staff is essential. There is no question of councils hiring and firing.64

Teachers questioned whether School Boards could match teachers and school programs without hiring and firing.

In early 1975, Phillip Hughes, Authority Council Chairperson, tabled a letter signed by Hedley Beare and himself which he wanted distributed to schools. This explained to teachers the situation as perceived by the Council, and intended to provide access to information from a perspective different from that of the Federation.

Before the 1975 appointments were completed, the CTF [Federation] withdrew its co-operation, thus making it impossible to continue with current appointments. Their proposal, in the circular to schools, effectively establishes a central appointment system on the traditional state basis ...

This issue may well be central to the question of whether the ACT can develop a system of more flexibility and more involvement than is customary in Australia.65

The Council debated the wisdom of sending out the letter. Eventually a version which modified criticisms of the Federation was circulated to schools; a most unusual act.

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In April, the Council discussed the proposed procedures finally debating the crucial question: should there be a confrontation with the Federation? Three positions were taken: the teachers wanted no part of parent participation in selection of staff and no confrontation; the lay members wanted parent selection of staff and were prepared to confront Federation; Hedley Beare argued for the Council as a body of conciliation which aimed at the 'art of the possible' and opposed confrontation.66

The rift between the parents' group and the other stakeholders was exposed. Cath Blakers asked if the Authority still agreed with the basic philosophy of decentralising considerable decision making, stating she did not see the Authority's role as that of a broker, and reminding Council members that they were nominees, not representatives, of their organisations.67 Alan Barnard expressed doubts about the Chief Education Officer's proposals. Mick March suggested referring the proposals back to the interested parties in the hope of achieving cooperation with Federation. Phillip Hughes said this was possible only if they were referred back as policy prior to promulgation. Cath Blakers suggested that the Authority was in danger of becoming 'some sort of Conciliation Commission and for its reputation and integrity it should not refer the proposals back as a further suggestion for consideration.'68 Once more

66 Minutes of IACTSA, 7 April 1975, Item 3.2, pp. 4-7.
67 Minutes of IACTSA, 7 April 1975, Item 3.2, pp. 4-7; Hughes Report, 4.13, p. 48.
68 Minutes of IACTSA, 7 April 1975, Item 3.2, pp. 4-7.
decisions were delayed; the Council decided to accept the paper setting out the proposals as Authority policy for further discussions with Federation and the P&C Council. Nevertheless, the struggle was almost over. Once more the Federation called a special conference which ratified its earlier policy; any further attempts by Authority Council to retain parent involvement in selection of staff were doomed. The Federation had won.

At meetings of Council, members expressed sadness and anger. Blakers made acerbic comments to the effect that 'the ACT Commonwealth Teachers' Federation had made it clear that this procedure would be acceptable provided that the Chief Education Officer adhered to the policy of the Federation'. Alan Barnard stated that he was 'immensely saddened by the inability to get away from sectional interests and devise methods that suit the schools' organizational functions and needs'. Mick March reminded Council that the teachers union felt strongly on the matter and would stand fast if discussion of individual applicants for jobs took place at the school board level.

As in the former campaigning days, the Canberra Times had kept its readers informed by publishing articles and letters. In May, when the matter was virtually decided, Peter O'Connor justified his stance in comments to a reporter. He stated that a

69 Minutes of IACTSA, 7 April 1975, Item 3, p. 4.
70 This decision was reconsidered in the mid-80s and in 1984-5, a role for school boards in selection of principals was introduced.
71 Minutes of IACTSA, 21 July 1975, Item 8, pp. 6-7.
72 Minutes of IACTSA, 21 July 1975, Item 8, pp. 6-7.
73 Minutes of IACTSA, 21 July 1975, Item 8, pp. 6-7.
small clique was determined to secure for school boards the right to interview and select teachers, and warned that the Federation 'would oppose strongly any attempt to destroy the career structure developed by the Commonwealth Teaching Service'.

O'Connor's phrase, 'a small clique' indicates an outsider's perception of the parents' group which totally denies their representation of the community as a whole and negates their ideology of participation; perhaps it also hints at class antagonism between New Middle Class parents and upwardly mobile aspiring professionals. A parent responded defensively in a letter to the editor.

Many members of school boards felt the 1974 procedure to be reasonable - perhaps these are the small clique to which Mr O'Connor refers...

It is incredible to suggest the non-teacher members of the boards are in any way interested in interfering with the career structure nor to see how (sic) any request to be involved in staff selection can be interpreted as an assault on the career structure of the CTS.

In July 1975, a sub-committee of the ACT Council of P&C Associations condemned the latest draft of the Ordinance in an article published in the Canberra Times. Interstate writers also commented on the ACT decision. Joan Kirner, President, Victorian Federation of State School Parents Clubs, wrote:

What a pity for schools in Australia that the Teachers Federation's final stance has set back the cause of real

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74 Canberra Times, 31 May 1975.
75 R. J. MacDonald, letter to editor, Canberra Times, 14 June 1975, p. 2
76 ACT Council of P&C Associations sub-committee, 'A Unique Opportunity Frustrated by the Bureaucracy', Canberra Times, 29 July 1975, p. 2.
school-based decision making for government schools as many years as the Hughes Report thrust it forward.\textsuperscript{77}

But it was an old campaigner, John Riddell, who most bitterly expressed the parents' disappointment when the battle was finally lost. Using the \textit{Canberra Times} once more to convey his views he declared:

The federation's decision serves to ensure that the ACT schools' system is back fair and square among the orthodoxy of the century-old States systems. Random allocation of teachers by teachers ensures random philosophy, random achievement, uniformity and centralisation of decision making. Professionalism has been called the greatest barrier to change. The conservatism of the so-called left-oriented leadership of the teachers puts them on an equal standing with the other professional leaders who have so effectively euchred social progress during the last few years.\textsuperscript{78}

Some time later the President, Keith Lawler, wrote to Hedley Beare to clarify the Federation's attitude towards representation on Council, explaining that the Federation was 'at the moment' committed to participate in the Authority and its committees as a constructive contribution to educational progress in the ACT. He argued that the Federation could not in any way accept any suggestion that the decisions of the Authority were binding on the Federation, observing that criticism of Federation's role on Council arose whenever industrial action loomed. He suggested that the correct procedure in such instances was for formal negotiations to take place between the Federation and the Office,

\textsuperscript{77} J. Kirner, President, Victorian Federation of State School Parents Clubs, letter to editor, \textit{Canberra Times}, 18 October 1975, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{78} J. Riddell, letter to editor, \textit{Canberra Times}, 5 August 1975, p. 2.
during which proceedings, the Federation would be viewed as an independent body negotiating on behalf of its members.

Continued assertions that "because we are in it we must abide by its decisions" will only serve to exacerbate any rift between the Authority and the Federation, and rather than improve the operations of the Authority as a body of consultation between all interested groups, will change it quite rapidly into a sectional battleground. Indeed, such assertions may lead to the Federation having to withdraw entirely from the Authority in order to preserve its independence of action and integrity.\(^7^9\)

Many people found the conservative attitudes of the teachers' union difficult to comprehend when the union leaders had apparently fought so hard for a new kind of system. There was a sense of betrayal: that teachers had withdrawn from previous agreements. Mick March, one of the former teacher members of the Working Group later explained that

the commitment to the pressure group was more personal than associational. Influential opinion leaders from the parents' group and from the teachers' group became involved. They sponsored the pressure group activities as individuals rather than as formal representatives of their organisations. Their motivations for belonging were probably different but in both cases were partly associated with ensuring a share of power for their respective organisations should a separate education authority be formed in the Australian Capital Territory. The total proposition they supported however, went beyond the range of existing policy of the constituent organisations.\(^8^0\)

The Federation's actions were consistent with its charter as a trade union. In his book, *Management and Unions*, Alan

\(^7^9\) K. J. Lawler, President, ACTTF, letter to H. Beare, 13 May 1976, File 76/921.

Flanders points out that the 'first and over-riding responsibility of all trade unions is to the welfare of their own members... A union collects its members' contributions and demands their loyalty specifically for the purpose of protecting their interests as they see them, not their alleged 'true' or 'best' interests as defined by others.'

Others viewed the conflict from a different perspective. Di Mildern, a secondary teacher who was seconded into the office in 1973, leaving the CTS in the mid-seventies to join a government department as a senior administrator, believes that the blocks which occurred were a refusal of various interests to share power. 'I think the crucial issue was whether we were going to have a bureaucratic, seniority-based, staffing pattern or whether we were going to have devolution of responsibility to select staff.' Mildern believes that the failure to achieve full participation had negative long-term consequences for the system and accounted for later problems. Explaining this, she asserts 'I think that probably soured the whole thing. That to me has been the key.'

Ironically, the teachers' ideological contradictions meant that although the union's fight had been to secure professional status, it was on grounds of non-professionalism that it was criticised, one critic being no less than the Chief Education

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82 Di Mildern was recognised by many as possessing very good analytical and writing skills. Her rise within the bureaucracy was very swift. After she left the Authority, within a relatively brief time she rose through the Senior Executive Service to very senior positions.
83 D. Mildern, Interview, 24 June 1986.
Officer. In an article on autonomy, co-ordination and accountability, Hedley Beare lamented the action of the teachers. 'Sometimes I feel we have a group of educators here all chanting with William Blake:

"I will not cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand  
Till we have builded here a New South Wales  
In Canberra's green and pleasant land!"84

He continued:

I detect in the A.C.T. a mindless perpetuation of all these things ... I find teachers trying to maintain an industrial rather than a professional interface with the organization and the public, and so on. ...In other words, I find a love/hate tendency in the A.C.T. for people to want the very system they asked to be replaced.85

For him there was a dichotomy between unionism and professionalism:

a "professional association" is a group of professionals who join together to develop or preserve the profession. To be particular, an association of educators will want to assert at all times the educational arguments for some policy or action, that is, how the policy or practice affects the child or is in the best interests of the child or the student. In the terms I used earlier, it will argue from the viewpoint of public service, client needs, and its own ethics.

A union, on the other hand, is a group of people who have banded together to win concessions for its own members. A union is oriented to itself, a collective force to bargain collectively and to win its way by means of its solidarity and its power to coerce. Its arguments will be couched in terms of members' rights, members' conditions,

84 H. Beare, 'Autonomy, Co-ordination and Accountability', in W. Mulford et al. (eds), Papers on ACT Education, 1974-5, CCAE, Canberra, 1975, p. 115. (Beare's emphasis).
the well being of the worker. Its stance is industrial rather than professional.86

His words expose the contradictions in the concept of professionalism; they also demonstrate that the Chief Education Officer, too, espoused a traditional ideology of professionalism.

The contest over the role of school boards in staffing ended the illusion that teachers and parent groups were united in their aspirations for the new administration of ACT schools. Both had desired the change; the contest over school board selection of staff revealed that they had sought it for different reasons. By their actions the teachers confirmed that a major group of stakeholders had not shared all parts of the parents' vision, and, being now consolidated as a local power bloc, was determined to enforce its view. The parents had wanted a kind of participation which would involve them in important decisions at the system and school levels. They now realised that their participation would be restricted by what the teachers would accept. The teachers had their own priorities for a different kind of system and as far as the union was concerned (and it spoke for all teachers) the interests of teachers were paramount; if they coincided with the interests of the other stakeholders, well and good. It was now to be seen if there were any goals which the teachers would help other stakeholders' groups to achieve.

CHAPTER ELEVEN.
SECONDARY EDUCATION RESTRUCTURED

From 1967, when it was first aired in the Currie Report, all campaigners had shared a general dissatisfaction with secondary schooling in the ACT. Hugh Waring, a member of the Campbell Committee, recollects that it was apparent to parents that there was 'a rotten situation in the schools', especially the alienation of the senior students. It was obvious to anybody - the drover's dog - that things were crook'.1 The Currie Report, more circumspectly, identified the main problem as the curriculum, which was considered inappropriate for the full range of secondary students: it failed to meet the needs of all students, particularly those who did not go on to tertiary education, there were not enough opportunities for students to develop personal responsibility for their learning and senior students were not exposed to a wide range of experience.2

As far back as 1967, the influence of examinations upon the curriculum was identified as the heart of the problem.3 The Campbell Report, after careful inquiry, concluded that 'the evidence shows that the external examination in its traditional form is neither effective, nor reliable, nor predictive...'4 By their nature, it argued, examinations could not treat the broad

1 H. Waring, Interview, 3 January 1992.
3 Currie Report, p. 50.
4 Campbell Report, p. 67.
spectrum of learning that had occurred, especially in the affective domain, and were forced to rely on testing small, random samples of information. Research evidence was offered to demonstrate that examiners' marks were unreliable, that is, unable to meet the requirements of experimental consistency, and that the ability of various 'subjective' or 'objective' types of tests to select 'those students who will succeed in the next stage of their proposed careers' was unsubstantiated. There were also considered to be serious negative effects from the influence of examinations upon the curriculum for students, teachers, education in general and, ultimately, society. In a city dominated by the New Middle Class, with its especial concern for cultural capital and educational qualifications, and having the highest secondary retention rates in Australia, these were, as the Campbell Report noted, matters of especially widespread concern.5

The parent activists, John Riddell claims, were aware of some of the other possibilities for schooling through their reading, and some, like himself, had been exposed to some of the more radical educational thinkers in the late 1960s through involvement with such organisations as the Australian Council of State School Organizations.6 Hugh Waring had characteristically strong views about secondary curriculum: he wanted a general education for all students until they were 17 or 18, opposing the idea of diverting less academically able

5 'Along with this general situation of high occupational mobility and competition for status, the pressure on students to achieve higher educational levels to equip themselves well is compounded in Canberra...' See Campbell Report, pp. 17-20; quotation p. 12.
students into vocational training institutions before then. 'It's very easy to lead people off from general education. Certainly people who are not good scholars ought to be given the opportunity for a general education. They oughtn't to be siphoned off and told that to make money to live all you need is to have useful subjects that relate to some technical job.'\(^7\) At this time too, teachers were learning about overseas educational innovations, including changes to curriculum and structures in primary and secondary schooling, in graduate and non-graduate courses at the CCAE.\(^8\)

The campaigners had revised their opinions about secondary colleges during their long campaign. In 1967, they had sought independence from NSW, more resources for schools, and a kind of education for ACT students which reflected the special needs of a unique community; they had rejected the notion of separating the last two years of schooling.\(^9\) With the establishment of the Authority, however, the first had been achieved, there was promise of the second, and they were ready to focus their attention on secondary schooling, believing it to be the area most in need of change. By 1974, the creation of secondary colleges was seen to be the answer. The withdrawal of former reservations was largely the result of extensive discussion by members of the Campbell Committee when representatives of key stakeholders' groups became convinced

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7 H. Waring, Interview, 3 January 1992.
8 Di Milden recollects that she was one of many people who were influenced by the College's early Masters' courses. She recalls they studied accounts of structural and curriculum innovations that were occurring in educational institutions such as Countesthorpe College in the United Kingdom. D. Milden, Interview, 24 June 1986.
of the advantages of establishing secondary colleges. This process of discussion had begun earlier in March 1971, at a public seminar organised by the ACT Chapter of the Australian College of Education on *Secondary Education: Some Facts about Junior and Senior High Schools*, where participants could listen to more developed arguments in favour of restructuring secondary education, air their views and ask questions. Keith Coughlan, Head of the Educational Facilities and Territorial Education Division, addressed the seminar, putting the Department's case on the need for efficiency in the use of resources.

This question of the efficient use of resources is not the most important of the factors which have led some of us in the Department of Education and Science to question whether the present organisation of our schools provides the best education for our 16-19 year olds... I think we are faced with a situation in which the pressure will be on education systems to increase rather than decrease the options available to students. If this is the case, one is forced to ask whether our present organization of education is the most efficient way to achieve this objective.

The Campbell Committee gave representatives from key stakeholders' groups another opportunity to argue and reach consensus. Its key recommendation was that 'secondary education in the ACT be restructured in ways to be further specified, along the lines of four year high schools and

10 'Campbell Committee' was the popular name given to the Working Committee on College Proposals for the ACT, chaired by Dr R. Campbell.


The body of the report discussed in detail the functions and purpose, implementation, curricula, staffing, administration and facilities recommended for these new institutions.

The findings in the student survey commissioned by the Committee that at least twelve per cent of fourth, fifth and sixth form students were strongly alienated from school provided the most convincing argument for secondary colleges. Ron Lane records in his study of the development of the college accreditation process that, according to a teacher member of the Committee, the findings on student alienation 'hit us like a bolt from the blue'. The creation of a secondary college environment that would combat student alienation became a guiding principle of the Committee, the members of which were convinced that these findings represented more than mid-adolescent disaffection.

The Campbell Report's recommendations had the support of the groups represented on the Committee which included the P&C Council, the Teachers' Federation, and the Secondary Principals' Council. Hugh Waring relates how the P&C Council made policy decisions about matters which had arisen during meetings of the Committee:

We agreed with colleges. About nine or ten people on the P&C Council mainly, with some invitees, sat down for whole

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13 Campbell Report, p. 115.
14 ibid., p. 176.
weekends and argued and debated within themselves about this thing. And we read up the subject, how it had gone in England, how the Americans - it was thoroughly debated. Decisions had to be made on what the Council view was...\textsuperscript{16}

Secondary teachers realised that the introduction of secondary colleges would offer new career possibilities and better working conditions, including a more pleasant working environment. The prospect of developing courses for the new colleges in collaboration with academic experts in specific curriculum areas to cater for the different needs of students for tertiary preparation, employment requirements and leisure and recreational needs, was exciting in itself and offered something more of 'professional' status. There were rumbles of dissatisfaction from some teachers who believed that high schools would suffer, or saw the colleges as elitist.\textsuperscript{17} Their opposition, however, was not formal, organised or vocal, was contrary to the wishes of influential members of the union and was not sufficiently powerful to prevent the proposal from proceeding.\textsuperscript{18}

Like the Currie Working Party, the authors of the \textit{Campbell Report} identified examinations as a major problem for secondary curriculum and endorsed the \textit{Currie Report's} recommendations that curricula should be independent from such external institutions as universities or examination boards

\textsuperscript{16} Waring, Interview, 1992.
\textsuperscript{17} 'Elitist' in terms of 'creaming off' the best secondary teachers, and being provided with superior buildings and resources; not in respect of students.
\textsuperscript{18} This dissatisfaction apparently was not documented. This information has been gathered from informal conversations with teachers about this period.
in order to escape from the existing situation where 'the present syllabuses in Forms I-IV cater for only a proportion of the school population and Forms V and VI are organised largely for the minority who will proceed to a tertiary institution. A different kind of assessment was expected to allow teachers to provide a curriculum better suited to the needs of students not proceeding to tertiary education; presumably, the most alienated students. The alternative recommended was some form of continuous assessment, moderated by 'an impersonal external test... devised to measure aptitudes across the whole spectrum of endeavour...'. Not every member of the Campbell Committee wanted to remove an option of final examinations in the first years of the secondary colleges. Hugh Waring was more cautious.

I personally argued in the [P&C] Council - and almost got it agreed to - that we should have pushed for a year of both examinations and assessment, because I know how tenaciously the Australian population believes in examinations. If you [ran examinations and assessment] parallel you would have very strong arguments. You could base your statistics upon the results of those years where you ran both - but of course it would have cost money and I was outvoted even at the P&C Council on that.

19 Currie Report, p. 50. Under the administration of the NSW Department of Education, assessment and certification of ACT students was managed by two statutory bodies in NSW: the Secondary Schools Board which controlled the assessment and certification of Year 10 students, and the Board of Senior School Studies, which controlled the assessment and certification of Year 12 students. This latter body was responsible for arranging the externally set and marked Higher School Certificate public examination and issuing the Higher School Certificate; a statement of attainments of students at this examination. The Currie Report broached the idea of different arrangements.

20 Campbell Report, pp. 68-70. Suggested tests for moderation were the Tertiary Education Entrance Project (TEEP) and the Australian Scholastic Aptitude Test (ASAT).

In 1973, the *Hughes Report* endorsed the *Campbell Report*’s recommendations, noting that 'the proposal to restructure secondary education will be a factor of utmost importance in educational planning in the next decade', and added that examinations set by tertiary bodies should not be allowed to restrict curriculum experimentation in schools.22 From that point in time, the restructuring of secondary education became equated with removing external examinations. The passion which many people concerned with education felt in the mid-seventies towards what they believed were the negative effects of school examinations was in large part stimulated by current writers on education. John Holt's book on schooling in the United States, *How Children Fail*, had been published in 1970; Ivan Illich's *Deschooling Society*, in 1971.23 These, and other books of that time, convinced many teachers that certain of the accepted practices in schooling, for example, examinations and testing of particular kinds, benefited only a few able students; the others not only did not benefit, but suffered harmful effects, sometimes permanently. Academics were members of the parents' group: during this period, the question of examinations and assessment was also being evaluated and contested at the ANU, as well as other universities. The occasional student eruptions like the student events at ANU in 1974 emphasised the idea of student alienation. John Riddell states that many of

the parent campaigners were well read on current schooling issues; he had been very impressed by Illich.24 While the replacement of external examinations with some form of internal assessment was considered important for allowing teachers more freedom to develop different courses for students, it was also expected to provide teachers with professional autonomy; another powerful incentive for change.

While there seemed to be widespread support for secondary colleges - after all, this concept had been aired for some time without substantial opposition - the proposal for internal assessment had not been tested widely. The views of senior administrators in the Department of Education were not known, although they were aware of others' desire for it from the various reports and discussions.25 In commissioning and accepting the Campbell Report the politicians had signalled their acquiescence in a major restructuring of secondary schooling, but how far they were prepared to go was again not known. Internal assessment was therefore vulnerable to external rejection. However, it was considered such a fundamental part of the expectations for restructuring, that to have rejected it could have seriously imperilled the whole enterprise. As Mick March was to comment some years later, it was 'not possible to

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25 N. Edwards, Interview, 9 October 1986; A. Foskett, Interview, 2 June 1987. The Department had three representatives on the Campbell Working Committee; over the period of the deliberations of the Campbell Working Party six departmental officers had been involved and therefore knew of issues debated during discussions, two as alternate members.
divorce decisions on assessment from decisions on curriculum'.

Once the *Campbell* and *Hughes Reports* had been accepted, there could be no question that the new Authority was authorised to begin reforming secondary education. By the time the Council of the Interim Authority first met in October 1973, parents and teachers were ready to begin planning for change; already briefs for the new colleges were being devised and it only remained to decide structures, curriculum and of course the form of assessment. Previously, in the case of teacher selection, parents had been defeated by the teachers' union in seeking full participation. To effect the desired changes to

27 Minutes of ACT Education Planning Committee, 14 August 1970, Australian Archives (ACT): CRS A1642 T8, Department of Education and Science File 70/2214; Minutes of ACT Education Planning Committee, 3 March 1971, Item 12, Junior Colleges: Report, Australian Archives (ACT): CRS A1642 T8, Department of Education and Science File 70/2214. Like most of the Department's advisory committees, this committee brought together officers from other sections within the Department, and officers from other Departments and agencies which had a stake in designing and planning of schools in Canberra to discuss relevant matters with senior officers. The senior officers would be advised by these committees and decisions would then be made, or if requiring government approval, referred to the Minister for Education. This committee was chaired by R. A. Alan Foskett, Assistant Secretary, Territorial Planning and ACT Education Services Branch, and in 1971 its members included: B. C. Campbell, Advisory Services Section; K. J. Curtis, Management Division, NCDC; N. R. Edwards, Director, Advisory Services Section; J. E. Fairbrother, NSW Staff Inspector of Schools; J. H. Geldart, Advisory Services Section; Monsignor J. P. Kelly, Director, Catholic Education Office; G. E. Mosely, Planning Division, NCDC; J. D. W. Pain, District Development Division, NCDC; R. Ward, General Education Facilities Branch; K. F. Bourke, Territorial Planning and ACT Education Services Branch. Appendix 3, Committees in Education in the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory, Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Education and Science, Report for 1971, AGPS, Canberra, 1972; Minutes of ACT Education Planning Committee, 16 December 1971, Item 8, Colleges: Progress Report, Australian Archives (ACT): CRS A1642 T8, Department of Education and Science File 70/2214.
secondary education would require the cooperation of all key groups of stakeholders; the result of the process would demonstrate the effectiveness or otherwise of participation in action.

The supporters of change were located in strategically useful places. The President and Secretary of the teachers' union, Dick Lee and Peter O'Connor, as well as a Vice-President and member of the Authority Council, Mick March, had been members of the Campbell Committee. Its membership had included as alternative representatives, Kath Abbott and Alan Barnard, community members on the Authority Council; one of the two senior administrators in the Office, Brian Peck, had also served on it. Doug Morgan and Mal Lee, the secondary teachers seconded to the Office in 1974 especially to provide administrative support once the Authority decided to proceed, were also committed to the changes proposed.28

As soon as the Interim Authority Council began planning for 1974, the proponents of the restructuring established a group of influential stakeholders to manage the changes to be made. The interim Council established a sub-committee, the Curriculum Working Party, which became, in effect, another pressure group. One of its tasks was to plan the changes to secondary schooling.29 Its membership included several key people from Working Group days which meant that it had in its

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28 The staff in the office will be discussed below, see ch. 14 below.
29 Minutes of IACTSA, 12 November 1973, Item 6.7, pp 7-8. The present author was a member of the Curriculum Working Party. For membership of this body, see Appendix 4.
repertoire a range of effective tactics already tried and tested, and the confidence of the members who had been successful in their earlier campaign. These included Catherine Blakers, Mick March, who chaired the meetings, and Phillip Hughes, Head of the School of Teacher Education, Canberra College of Advanced Education, one of the two major local tertiary institutions which received ACT secondary students, as well as other representatives from the CCAE and ANU who supported the directions being taken. Strong support for the Working Party was provided by Professor Johnson, a former Working Group member, and Chair of the ANU Admissions Committee, who also had strong links with the Catholic school system. Both Phillip Hughes and Dick Johnson belonged to networks of influential people within their respective institutions as well as in other academic institutions outside the ACT which helped the planners to gain the acceptance of academic institutions for the proposed changes to assessment. Dick Johnson, who supported the planners throughout the period of changes to assessment, was especially helpful with information on how to negotiate the passage of the new assessment procedures with university bodies.30 Because it advised the Council on major policy decisions in many important areas (curriculum being defined widely) the Curriculum Working Party became a powerful body. There were considerable delays in the appointment of senior officers for the Authority, but curriculum policy could not wait, and in the absence of a Branch Head, the Working Party took charge of it, and also began planning for a system of internal

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30 For a later comment on the new system see, R. St. C. Johnson, 'Canberra Without Examinations', Education News, 16, 11, 1979, p. 28.
assessment and certification for Year 10 students in 1975 and Year 12 students in 1977.31

Time was short. As the procedures had to be devised quickly, they had to be acceptable to those who would be affected without major revisions. The Curriculum Working Party sought to consult with as many experts as time allowed and used the Queensland experience which had replaced examinations with moderated internal assessment as a guide.32 The Council decided to employ ACER as a consultant.33 Mick March commented later that at that stage most of those planning the changes then knew what they wanted to do, or at least the direction in which they hoped to go. They did not quite know how to do it, or whether the general public would fully support them. They all knew that whatever the decision, there was going to be a great deal of hard work involved for all concerned.34

Following what had by now become standard practice, a large public meeting was held on 26 June 1974, on 'Examinations: What is the Alternative?'. Bernhard Rechter of ACER presented a paper, 'Decline and Fall: Recent Changes in Public Examinations in Australia', which stated that, with some exceptions, there was general movement away from external examinations. He also

31 The safeguard of access to the NSW Higher School Certificate examinations in 1977 was to be negotiated should plans become delayed.
suggested using ASAT as a scaling device for internal assessment. A second meeting allowed more detailed information to be given to a wide range of invited representatives from selected groups. The first meeting was well attended and Rechter's address favourably received. At the second meeting, apart from the Employers' Federation, few objected to the points he raised. He told some members of the Curriculum Working Party that he 'felt the climate was favourable' for removal of examinations.

Submissions were invited at the meetings but of those received, only those from the Employers' Federation and the Principal of the CCAE opposed teacher assessment. The lack of

35 Those invited included secondary principals, the Federation, the Australian National University, the Canberra College of Advanced Education, the Canberra Technical College, the P&C Council, the Employers' Federation, the Public Service Board, the Apprenticeship Board, School Board Chairs, and all non-government school principals. Minutes of Curriculum Working Party, 5 June 1974, Item 7, [p. 3]; 12 June 1974, Item 4, p. 2; 21 August 1974, pp. 2-3; 2 October 1974, Item 8, pp. 3-7; March papers; Minutes of IACTSA, 10 June 1974, Item 4, p. 4; 5 August 1974, Item 5.6, pp. 6-7; 9,14 October 1974, Item 4.9, pp. 7-8; Canberra Times, 24 June 1974, p. 2; P. Thompson, Assessment for Australian Capital Territory Secondary Schools, ACER, Hawthorn, 1974.


37 Minutes of Curriculum Working Party, 21 August 1974, Item 5. The substance of the CCAE's opposition is not recorded. There is uncertainty about the number of submissions which were received and evidence varies according to sources. Although the Curriculum Working Party Minutes do not specify the actual number received it can be inferred that at least four were received. According to Mildern (who was working in the Office at the time) and Mulford, submissions were received from: ACT Council of P&C Associations, ACT Employers' Federation, The Principal, Canberra College of Advanced Education, The Assistant Principal, Canberra College of Advanced Education, The staff of Watson High School, The Headmaster, Daramalan College, Mr A Casimir, Ms C. Hughes, and Mr T. Parkes. This number could not be substantiated from available evidence. D. Mildem & W. Mulford, The Game Changed: The Educational Policy-Making Process in the ACT. Monograph 7, The Educational Policy Process at State Level, University of Melbourne, 1980, p. 48. The ANU
opposition following the public meeting justified continuing to develop alternatives to external examinations. ACER prepared a report in October 1974 which set out options but made no specific recommendations and a College and High School Planning Committee was established to work out the practical details of internal school assessment for Years 11 and 12. The ACER report was distributed widely in preparation for a seminar of invited representatives on the 19 November 1974, and for a public meeting on the 25th, which was publicised throughout the school system and in local newspapers. By this time also, all but one of the non-government schools in Canberra had agreed to the new arrangements. Secondary teachers on the Curriculum Working Party had visited all schools to convince them of the benefits of changing. Canberra Church of England Boys' Grammar School chose not to become part of the new arrangements but to retain the NSW Higher School Certificate Examination.

was reported to have stated that it did not consider it necessary to lodge a submission 'as long as the Authority was following what they had asked of the Campbell Committee'. Minutes of Curriculum Working Party, 31 July, 1974, Item 5, pp. 2-3. The ANU spokesperson is not identified.


39 The ACER report was sent to secondary school staffs, chairpersons of secondary school boards, high school P&C Associations, primary schools, the Technical College, the Employers' Federation, the Apprenticeship Board and the Public Service Board. Minutes of College and High School Planning Committee, 6 November 1974, Item 4.a.

40 The reasons for Canberra Boys' Grammar deciding to retain the NSW examination are not recorded. Mal Lee, one of the secondary teachers planning the changes and a member of the Curriculum Working Party, speculates, however, that the Principal, Mr Paul McKeown, probably had several reasons; to cater for a large proportion of his NSW student boarders who would proceed to NSW tertiary institutions and NSW employment; to retain an examination for the benefit of overseas students requiring an examination qualification; to maintain a distinctiveness about his school which set
In October 1974 a framework for what would eventually become the ACT Schools Accrediting Agency was proposed in two papers circulated to schools for information and discussion; they proposed replacing the NSW Higher School Certificate examination in 1977 with a system of continuous assessment, provision of certificates and detailed profile reports to students at the end of secondary schooling. Evaluation was to be based on courses of study accredited by an agency to be established by the Authority and was to be moderated to provide a system-wide scholastic ranking of students. The responsibilities of the proposed accrediting body were certification of students, ensuring that college courses would be as academically sound as those offered in other high schools, and ensuring that assessment instruments were both valid and reliable.

An Assessment Working Party was established, which met first in November 1974 to examine the ACER Report and advise Council on procedures to be followed. Chaired by Phil Hughes, the membership included Dick Johnson and Mick March, with it apart from all other ACT schools; a conservative attitude to examinations on the part of staff and parents; the cost (time and money) of extending the curriculum and developing new courses required for the new arrangements; publicity given to high achievers in schools through press announcement of the top five per cent of students in the state - a large pool of students. (Under the new arrangements, each school was moderated and dealt with separately. He would have had to publicise the top five per cent in his own school instead of students in his school who were in the top five per cent in the NSW examination). Mal Lee, Interview, 13 April 1992.

42 IACTSA, 'Student Assessment', circular, No. 7412, (n.d.), March papers.
Doug Morgan as the executive officer. At the seminar and the public meeting, submissions were invited on the proposed arrangements, with a deadline for reply of two weeks, as decisions were required before the end of 1974 to allow planning to begin as soon as possible in 1975. Sixteen submissions were received which indicated 'reasonably wide support' for abolishing external examinations, varied responses about ASAT and serious questioning of the role and functions of the proposed Agency. Finally, in February 1975, a document entitled, 'ACT Procedures Alternative to the NSW School and Higher School Certificate Examinations' was submitted for the Minister for Education's approval. The Curriculum Working Party was disbanded, and replaced in May by the Educational Programs Standing Committee.

The Authority had now passed the point of no return on examinations. Time was desperately short for new arrangements to be ready for the new secondary college student entry in 1976: the change process could have been stopped but that would have meant a continued dependence on the NSW examination arrangements, at considerable expense, and postponing school-based curriculum development which required independence from external examination requirements. In February, however, a late objection came from the Legislative Assembly, expected very soon to assume the functions of government for the ACT. A letter to Hedley

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44 Minutes of IACTSA, 19 May 1975, Item 4.2, p. 3.
45 As it turned out this was premature: an ACT government was not set in place until May 1989.
Beare stated that the members of the newly-established Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Education Committee held 'some reservations regarding the rapid introduction of the school based assessment scheme', and suggested that the old and new systems should be run in parallel for a time.  

After discussion at Council, Hedley Beare replied, explaining that NSW certification would not be available to the ACT after 1976, and that a lack of time would preclude the Authority 'from deviating in any way, such as in the manner suggested by the Committee, from the present procedures'. The matter did not end there, however: dissatisfaction about Authority decisions on curriculum were to surface from this committee again a year or so later. Nor was it alone: in April 1975, the Canberra Times reported that the director of the ACT Employers' Federation, John Dallas, stated his federation's opposition to the abolition of external examinations. Hugh Waring's account of how this was regarded by members of Authority Council is instructive:

46 The Legislative Assembly was established in December 1974. I. F. McKendry, Clerk to the Standing Committee on Education, Legislative Assembly, Canberra, letter to Hedley Beare, 10 February 1975. The task of this committee was 'to examine specific areas of interest in the education field, and to conduct a continuing overview of all education matters in the Territory'.
47 H. Beare, letter to I. F. McKendry, Clerk, ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Education, 5 March 1975, March papers. Minutes of IACTSA, 3 March 1975, Item 2.9, p. 3, March papers. A letter on file from R. A. Foskett to the Minister for Education described departmental problems in dealings with the Legislative Assembly on educational matters. R. A. Foskett, 'ACT Legislative Assembly: Relations with the Department of Education and Interim ACT Schools Authority', note to Minister for Education, 24 March 1975, File 75/113, ACTSA.
48 See ch. 12 below.
49 Canberra Times, 23 April 1975, p. 17.
We had many arguments but we were never convinced by them. We were always satisfied it was a combination of factors like fellows who'd never had any inclination [for learning at school] themselves and who were now in an influential position in employment and they wanted things they'd never had in their own day (sic). They're looking at a group of students coming out in a time when it's no longer selective and 11 per cent of the people are getting Higher School Certificates. [It was] just the usual thing - the literacy of our students. A lot of the fellows doing the criticism are themselves products of my generation who are half educated... We never accepted that the system wasn't working reasonably well.\footnote{Waring, Interview, 1992.}

This statement further illustrates an ambivalence about participation identified previously.\footnote{See ch. 5 above.} There is an implied dismissal of the employers' comments as uninformed, an attitude sometimes displayed by teachers towards parents. It is interesting to see the same approach displayed by parents to another group of citizens; it is clear that the parents in this case could not have represented the total Canberra 'community'; that is, they did not represent employers, for example. The parallel between the previous impotence of the parents' and that of the employers' group is striking; in both situations, the people in control, rightly or wrongly, do not pay attention to the views of the other group and a major protest must be made in order to gain attention.\footnote{Later, the Employers' Federation attempted such a protest.}

Another unexpected setback came from Kim Beazley, the Minister for Education, who questioned the proposals, particularly the lack of examination options for students. As
the Minister was advised by senior officers within the Department of Education, this suggested opposition from officers within the Department.\(^{53}\) Hedley Beare was charged by the Council of the Authority to write a strong reply:

The Authority is not prepared to recommend institution (sic) of a public examination system for the ACT. Apart from the large costs involved in setting up and running such a system, the Authority is convinced that the alternative suggested in its papers carries all the advantages of such a system but avoids the known educational disadvantages. Furthermore, the Authority has been greatly heartened by the wide support it has had for the procedures outlined in its paper.\(^{54}\)

Fortunately this was accepted, the procedures were approved by the Minister, and the Schools Accrediting Agency was established after some difficulties over the structure and the numbers of representatives. The Authority wished to retain control of assessment and accreditation by establishing a body separate from, but responsible to itself to prevent a return to control by an external agency.\(^{55}\) Using the system for accreditation of courses at the CCAE as a model, it recommended establishing an agency of the Authority consisting of few members of high educational standing to deal with accrediting, assessment and certification for the system.\(^{56}\)

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\(^{53}\) Minutes of Curriculum Working Party, 4 September 1974, Item 6, p. 3. This was a view expressed by a number of people involved with the planning at the time.

\(^{54}\) IACTSA, 17 March 1975, Appendix F, March papers.


\(^{56}\) The membership was to include representatives from the ANU, CCAE, and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). The body was to be chaired by the Chief Education Officer. IACTSA, 19 May 1975, Appendix C. This document names Prof. Richard St.C. Johnson, Chair, Admissions Committee ANU, Dr Stuart Houston, Deputy Principal, CCAE, Dr John Dines, ACER, Mick March, Vice President. ACTCTF, Dr Hedley Beare, Chief Education Officer, ACT Schools
In August 1975, a power struggle ensued between the Authority and the Department over the legal standing of the Accrediting Agency. The Curriculum Working Party had learned in September 1974 that some officers in the Territorial Liaison Branch responsible for the administration of such matters as federal funds and registration of ACT non-government schools would support an accrediting agency provided it was an 'independent group with its own apparent prestige'. The Department had argued that as the Authority was administering assessment and accreditation for non-government as well as government schools, the Agency should be independent of the Authority like the Statutory Boards in the States. The Authority, however, was determined to avoid this, because such 'independent' bodies were vulnerable to being controlled by other external bodies, and a major reason for the proposed change to school based assessment was precisely to remove external influences over the examinations, and therefore the content, of secondary schooling. The Department obtained from the Attorney-General's Department a legal opinion about the Agency's standing which verified the Authority's operation of the Agency and concluded that:

... none of the views expressed above precludes non-government schools from a voluntary acceptance of the services of the Accrediting Agency. If the Agency were established under the aegis of the School Authority, there would be nothing to prevent the non-government schools

Authority, as the members of the first Schools Accrediting Agency. Minutes of IACTSA, 7 July 1975, Item 4.6, p. 2. As Mildem & Mulford point out, the Agency depended for its autonomy of action 'not on statutory provision but on the status of its members'.

57 Minutes of Curriculum Working Party, 18 September 1974, Item 5.10, p. 3.
adopting the course and assessment procedures approved
by the Agency ...\(^5\)\(^8\)

Hedley Beare wrote to Alan Foskett informing him that at
the Authority meeting held on 15 January 1976, the Authority
'reaffirmed its opposition to establishing the ACT Schools
Accrediting Agency as a legally-based body independent of the
Authority' and the Department did not pursue the matter
further.\(^5\)\(^9\)

By the end of 1976, only just in time for the following year,
all tertiary institutions had followed the lead of ANU by
agreeing to accept ACT students assessed and accredited in the
new manner.\(^6\)\(^0\) The restructuring was thus successfully
accomplished although the details of assessment and
accreditation procedures continued to be contested. The ASAT
test faced criticism for its effect on students' final scores, for its
uncertain predictive validity, for gender bias, and for the way it
was recorded on student certificates.\(^6\)\(^1\) Following some
criticisms, for example, those about gender bias, the ASAT test
was modified. Despite these difficulties, internal assessment
procedures were adopted, the Accrediting Agency functioned as

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\(^5\)\(^8\) R. A. Foskett, letter to H. Beare, 12 August 1975, March Papers;
Minutes of IACTSA, 29 September 1975, Item 7, p. 10; 15 January 1976,
Item 10, p. 5; 2 February 1976, Item 7, p. 5; E. J. Wright for the
Secretary, Attorney-General's Department, letter to Secretary,
\(^5\)\(^9\) H. Beare, letter to R. A. Foskett, c. January/February 1976, March
Papers. Alan Foskett explained much later that in the case of the
removal of compulsory examinations, he agreed entirely with the
philosophy but disagreed with the rapidity with which the
proponents for the change tried to obtain it. Foskett, 1987.
\(^6\)\(^0\) R. St.C. Johnson, Interview, 23 April 1991.
\(^6\)\(^1\) The details of this dispute are not relevant to the issues being
discussed in this chapter. See Mildem & Mulford, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-68.
planned and the ASAT test continued to provide an external form of moderation for ACT students.\textsuperscript{62} Although for many years teachers contested the use and application of ASAT, especially the recording of ASAT results on the Year 12 Certificates, the changes to the secondary structures, including internal assessment, were retained.\textsuperscript{63} Long after the period of this study, publicity about the difficulties in other states of managing external examinations focused attention upon the ACT system, and there were many who decided that all forms of secondary assessment had their advantages and disadvantages and the ACT model had much to recommend it.\textsuperscript{64}

To the campaigners in 1974, nothing epitomised their hopes for a new system more than the reform of secondary education. Caught up in this move was the crucial issue of assessment. The strong feelings evoked by examinations suggests that for all concerned, they symbolised issues of power and subordination. To students, examinations symbolised adult authority. To teachers, they were signs of bureaucratic and

\textsuperscript{62} R. Selby Smith (Chair), \textit{Certificates for Year 12 Students: A Review of the ACT Schools Accrediting Agency}, Report of the Committee of Review, ACTSA, December 1979, especially Chapter 4.


\textsuperscript{64} D. Anderson, 'Why exams failed the test in the ACT', \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 19 May 1987, p. 15. For a brief historical critique of educational trends with reference to the disadvantages of examinations see S. Smith, 'Each generation condemns the education of the next', \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 6 May 1987, p. 23.
academic authority, which negated teachers' autonomy, and therefore their aspirations for professional status and a secure middle class location. To parents, examinations as represented by the NSW Higher School Certificate, represented a barrier for their children to overcome in acquiring an appropriate New Middle Class education. To bureaucrats, they symbolised proper procedure, the application of regulated practice. To employers, they symbolised a measured, quantified, familiar level of attainment, giving an appearance of certainty in a period which had seen a liberalising of traditional certainties, not only in education. An externally determined quantification of knowledge could also be used to select job applicants.

The speed with which the changes were made renders this particular change process open to criticism. The minutes of Authority Council and Curriculum Working Party meetings reveal that the members were very worried that the changes would not be set in place before the colleges with their new teacher-developed courses opened in 1976, all the more because visitors from other overseas systems expressed doubts about the Authority's ability to meet the deadlines.65 Although attempts were made to gauge reactions from representatives of various groups before making decisions, the haste with which the changes were made did not allow time for all, especially employers who were not incorporated into the discussions where opinions were formed, to accept the proposed changes.

It is debatable of course, whether some people would ever have become reconciled to the changes, which may have influenced the key actors to make the changes without delay. Phillip Hughes was reported to have stated that substantial, deeply felt opposition would have been needed to alter the proposed changes.  

It is significant that one of the key persons responsible for the changes, Mick March, denies that there was an organised or carefully planned method of operating:

It may appear to the distant observer that the eventual emergence of the first issue of Year 12 Certificates in December 1977, with all its faults or triumphs was the inevitable result of a carefully predetermined plan, smoothly implemented and strongly supported by all inside and outside of the system. There may be some truth in that, but to those on the inside, desperately making it up as they went along in order to meet the incredibly tight schedule, there were times when the horizon was blurred and the support well nigh invisible.  

How was it, then, that a process of change which appeared to break the rules for strategic planning succeeded?

There were similarities in the techniques used to push this change through and those used in the earlier campaign. There was a committed body of people who acted as a pressure group (the Curriculum Working Party). There was a clear vision of what was to be achieved. Well-tried strategies were used to inform and persuade: speaking to groups of people, organising

66 R. J. Lane, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53.

67 M. March, Determining Policy for Student Assessment in the ACT, paper prepared for MEd course unit, School of Teacher Education, July 1978, p. 2, quoted in Mildern & Mulford, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
seminars, preparation of papers, consultation of experts. The change also benefited from what Mildern and Mulford have described as a 'national conventional wisdom in education fanned by a small national network of experts', including Peter Karmel, W. C. Radford, J. P. Keeves and W. D. Neal. ACT educators such as Hedley Beare and Phillip Hughes were party to this national conventional wisdom and as Mildern and Mulford suggest, were 'relatively free of the strong parochial norms developed over many years in the States'.

The most significant reason for success, however, was that, in this case, all key stakeholders' groups supported the restructuring of secondary schooling, which was compatible with the interests of influential people in the three main groups. They could not have carried this off as they did in the time available if they had been divided, or if most other people in the groups they represented did not support them. What opposition there was came from the Employers' Federation, some administrators in the Department of Education and the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Education, but this was not vociferous enough to alter the course adopted. In particular, the support of the teachers' union virtually guaranteed success. The details of the changes to assessment

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69 Mildern & Mulford, *op. cit.*, pp. 71, 79.
and accreditation were supported to a lesser degree, perhaps because, for some, their symbolic value was powerful, and these were contested for a longer period.

While this particular change was successful because a determined group of powerful people collaborated to gain their desired ends, to be fair, they believed that the *Campbell Report* had given them a mandate to do this before they began and they held two well-publicised meetings to make sure that the weight of public opinion was with them as they worked out the details. Like most changes achieved with speed and pressure, it left a minority unconvinced and resentful. Dissatisfied with the Authority's decisions about assessment, in late 1978, the Confederation of ACT Industry announced that they would hold their own literacy and numeracy tests. The solidarity of these three key groups of New Middle Class stakeholders enabled them to push the reform through, but the Employers' Federation and members of the Legislative Assembly, who had been omitted from the process by which a consensus had been created - and who were mostly from a different middle class and therefore, not part of the network of professionals and intellectuals who supported the changes - were to remain in opposition for some time.⁷⁰

Many people have said that high schools paid the cost of establishing secondary colleges. While teachers in the colleges enjoyed new buildings, additional resources, worked in a more informal less regulated atmosphere, developed new curricula,

⁷⁰ See ch. 12 below.
and dealt with older students who were past the compulsory schooling age and therefore were usually at college by choice, high schools remained essentially the same in their older buildings with fewer resources and the disadvantage of having lost their most mature students. While the new colleges had a clear purpose - preparing students for further education or employment - high schools appeared to lose their identity.

Richard Campbell himself acknowledged this much later. At a conference of secondary principals in the early 1980s, he stated that the title of the Report deliberately used the words 'Secondary Education for Canberra' to include the whole of the secondary school years. He acknowledges that the Report had a 'major deficiency'. 'While it spelt out a series of objectives for colleges as institutions it did not spell out a similar set of objectives for high schools as institutions.' Dick Johnson, while remaining firm that the college system fulfilled his expectations, also acknowledged this was at a cost to the high schools. Indeed, this became something of a commonplace: as Keith Scott, a *Canberra Times* journalist, was to comment much later, 'Dr Campbell, Dr Don Anderson, the chairman of the ACT Schools Authority, and most teachers themselves will admit also that the college system has had its costs and that one of the greatest was borne by teachers in the four-year high schools.'

71 R. Campbell, Taped Address to Secondary Principals Conference, 15 September 1981.
72 Johnson, Interview, 1991; Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 28. He cited one particular advantage for students. 'They can, within limits, interrupt their studies for a term or a year and resume them continuously, not having to catch up two years in one. For Canberra's highly mobile parent group of public servants, diplomats and academics this is a valuable advantage.'
73 *Canberra Times*, 'Canberra's secondary colleges among best in country', 22 June 1986, p. 2. See also other later commentaries, for
Commonplace or not, no action followed, despite a number of subsequent inquiries.\(^7^4\) The neglect of the needs of high schools was probably inevitable in the excitement and urgency of establishing the colleges, and fortunately for them, they were created before resources were cut as a result of the economic downturn. High schools were less fortunate; by the time their needs could be attended to, the exigencies of a continually reduced budget meant the cost was too high, and the optimistic climate of opinion which had encouraged so great an outburst of reform was succeeded by a bleak and punitive pessimism, at the centre of which were groups such as those who had been omitted from the formulation of the new directions.

There was to be another heavy penalty exacted by government against the ACT school system as a whole for this innovation: initiated by administrators in the Commonwealth Department of Education in a time of economic expansion, the colleges were to make the ACT system extremely expensive: Ken Jones was later to comment that on reflection, his department had allowed too many resources to be put into them.\(^7^5\) In a changed economic climate, the cost of the colleges was to become a major liability: the ACT fared poorly in

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\(^7^4\) A major review of high schools was held in 1983, chaired by John Steinle, Director General of the South Australian Department of Education. See, *The Challenge of Change*, ACTSA, 1983.

\(^7^5\) K. Jones, Interview, 3 February 1987.
comparison to the states' expenditure on education.\textsuperscript{76} The ACT was justified in pointing out that it could not match the economies of scale of the large state systems with which it was compared; nevertheless, the colleges made a major contribution to this disparity. But these were problems for the future; as an educational innovation it had few critics and the college system was seen to be an important successful outcome for the new system.\textsuperscript{77}

The planners were fortunate because they achieved the change in the dying stages of the long economic boom. To have delayed would probably have meant that the changes would not have been implemented as desired, if at all. The following chapters will examine the influence of the change in the economy upon the fortunes of the interim Authority and upon its proposed decentralised, participatory administration.

\textsuperscript{76} See 'Looking more closely at spending on education', Gay Davidson, \textit{Canberra Times}, 20 November 1985, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Canberra Times}, 27 April 1984, p. 6. A report (on the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs) which stated that the 'ACT had the best and finest government school system in Australia'; K. Scott, 'Canberra's secondary colleges among best in the country', \textit{Canberra Times}, 22 June 1986, p. 7.
CHAPTER TWELVE.
THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

The proposal for change to ACT education was conceived during a period of economic expansion and implemented during the last stage of an economic boom. During the long period from initial planning to realisation, the context changed. Change programs that depend upon government funding for completion are vulnerable to economic circumstances. For the rest of the decade, this recession influenced the implementation process. The priorities of stakeholders were to determine their response to this unexpected challenge, and in an economic downturn, the priorities of those who held the purse strings were predominant.

By 1975, the second year of the Interim Authority's administration, the Whitlam Labor Government was in deep trouble. From the early seventies, the escalation of oil prices and the downturn in other western economies resulting largely from the American financing of the war in Vietnam, had adversely affected Australian economic growth. Wage-price inflation and unemployment rose in Australia. The steady rise in the rate of inflation had accelerated and the Whitlam Government found it difficult to implement its reformist program of election promises while attempting to bring inflation under control. By 1975, the economic situation had deteriorated further, inflation and unemployment accelerated into what became known as stagflation; and the government was forced to consider steps to
restrict government spending.\(^1\) As the Whitlam government fought for survival, it gradually moved away from Whitlam's philosophy of social reform and expanded welfare provision and placed restraints upon government expenditure.

The first intimation of the consequences for the new ACT education system came in mid-1975. Besides the introduction of staff ceilings and other restrictions placed on government expenditure, Cabinet imposed an initial ten per cent across-the-board cut in 1975-76 financial estimates for specific administrative expenses.\(^2\) This was only the start: the Hayden Budget of 1975 further limited government spending. The Minister for Education, Kim Beazley, informed the Authority that the ACT would be allowed a maximum of 200 additional teachers above employment figures at 30 June 1975. Kim Beazley stated that the new ceiling would 'make it difficult to retain fully existing standards' but added that the Authority had been treated leniently. He informed the Authority of a significant cut to funds as well:

> After carefully reviewing the situation, I have decided that a reduction of $0.6 million should be made to the Authority's presently approved estimate for 1975/76 in partial recognition of the overall budgetary problem.

The letter ended on an ominous note.

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\(^1\) For a description of this period see, F. Crowley, *Tough Times*, William Heinemann Australia, Richmond, Victoria, 1986.

\(^2\) These items included general administrative expenses, travel and subsistence, office requisites and equipment, stationery and printing, postage, telegrams and telephone services, advertising, and other incidental expenditures; office furniture and fittings; consultants; and overtime. F. H. Wheeler, Secretary to the Treasury, letter to K. N. Jones, Secretary, Department of Education, 27 July 1975, March papers.
Looking to the future, I think it is important that expenditure proposals of the Authority should be considered in the light of overall standards of provision in the States and I suggest that at a later stage we might discuss appropriate arrangements for this purpose.  

To a system barely established and committed to various initiatives including secondary colleges, the financial and staffing cutbacks were devastating. In the national capital, where the ethos of a frontier-town mentality still lingered on, its citizens took for granted government-subsidised services and facilities. Additional resources for education had been part of the original demands for a new system: furthermore, the small ACT school system did not have the economies of scale of a large state system and required proportionately more resources than larger state school systems to function. While it had been Department of Education policy that the ACT education system should not be seen to be advantaged in comparison to the States, the Authority had inherited two educational services which the Department itself had created and which the States did not possess in the same form: the pre-school system, which it supported for children below compulsory school age and the secondary college system which used more staffing and material resources than the former senior years of six-year high schools. The colleges were disproportionately expensive, both in comparison to secondary institutions in the States and to the other sectors of education in the ACT, but the Department’s advocacy for these

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3 K. E. Beazley, Minister for Education, letter to P. Hughes, Chair, Interim ACT Schools Authority, 9 September 1975, March papers.
4 The greater expense of ACT education compared to the states was to be questioned by the Grants Commission during the 1980s.
5 Other states had pre-schools and Tasmania had some Matriculation Colleges but the funding arrangements were different from the ACT.
had implied a promise of federal funding support, and extra resources were required to maintain them. The government's forecast that it was going to peg the Authority's expenses to the State systems placed the Authority in a serious position: it could not employ the approved 200 extra teachers needed for vacant positions in the schools and for secondment to essential Office duties without increasing its salary bill, yet simultaneously, it had to effect savings of $0.6 million.6

Across Canberra, as the economic recession took its toll, public sector expenditure was restricted. Public service positions were cut. The building industry slowed down, major construction projects were postponed and members of the building industry and supporting service industries left the ACT for employment elsewhere.7 Schools began to notice 'declining enrolments' in the older residential areas. The latter occurred from the juxtaposition of several phenomena; the consequence of a declining national birth-rate; the loss of Canberra residents as well as a reduction in the number of new arrivals as jobs dried up; and a demographic shift of families as students in the older

6 The extra teachers were required because the new Authority had introduced a staffing formula which provided extra resources in teaching positions rather than in material resources in order to allow curriculum development responsibilities to be taken up, to cover vacancies left by teachers who wished to return to NSW (teachers had five years from the beginning of 1974 to exercise that option), to provide seconded teachers on rotation to the Office, to provide an extra assistant principal in schools, to cover the time allowed for relief for study leave (a new provision, later withdrawn), and for some supernumerary teachers to schools in special cases (later withdrawn), and other requirements. In addition, the ACT was still expanding and new schools were opening in outer areas. The 1975 staffing formula indicated that 150 additional teachers were required to cover vacant positions in schools. Minutes of IACTSA, 15 September 1975, Item 9, pp. 4-9. The introduction of the practice of seconding teachers into the Office will be discussed in ch. 14 below.

suburbs of Canberra left school and younger families moved to new suburbs where housing was cheaper. Employment became a major concern and the movement of established families to places outside Canberra where jobs were more easily available hastened the natural decline in the older suburbs. As the decade passed, some schools were forced to reduce staff and to withdraw curriculum options.8

During this period, it was clear that the interests of senior administrators in the Department diverged from those of the administrators working in the Authority. Traditional bureaucratic practice dictated that departmental officers should support government policy, in this case, the application of restrictions on spending. As an interim body, the Authority's bid for staff was included in the Department of Education's allocation. The Authority was disadvantaged in the bargaining process for additional federal funds: when staff ceilings were imposed upon the Department, the Authority was forced to compete with the Department for scarce resources, while other government bodies could argue a case for exceptional circumstances.

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8 ACTSA, Administrative Circular, 11 February 1977, March Papers. This circular drew attention to statistics which showed that for the ACT, only 150 more pupils had entered kindergarten class than had left Year 6 of the previous year, and that there had been a growth of only 650 students in secondary schools for the year. The effects of changing enrolments became obvious in 1979 when several primary principals were advised to transfer from schools which had once been large schools but had declined in enrolments to the point where student numbers would no longer support a principal at the top promotion level (Band 4).
This situation was not made easier when some departmental officers questioned the speed of changes being made in the Authority. The priorities of administrators within the Authority were to acquire essential resources and to ensure the survival of a new school system. Conversely, Departmental officers were under pressure from central government to restrict resource allocations. Departmental administrators' priorities were aligned with those of their Minister who had as his priorities the interests of government; the need to cut resources.

The problems caused by staffing and funding restrictions influenced events for the rest of the decade. Discussions by Council members about economic issues highlighted the different priorities among stakeholders' groups. Besides the problems in extracting necessary resources from government, the Authority also had to contend with Federation leaders who opposed any proposal for restricting resources to schools to meet government demands by threatening industrial action. Moreover, the

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9 Reference was made to these views of Alan Foskett, for example, in ch. 6 above.
10 K. Jones, Interview, 3 February 1987.
11 For example, when funds for casual relief staff were cut and provision of relief staff to schools was withdrawn towards the end of the 1975 school year, the Federation forced the issue, instigated industrial action and ordered a stop-work. Schools were closed in rotation as a means of protest. Minutes of IACTSA, 17 November 1975, Item 9, p. 5; Minutes of IACTSA, 19 November 1975, pp. 1-5; H. Beare, Circular to Principals, 19 November 1975, March Papers. This issue was resolved when discussions among Authority, Federation and Department of Education representatives led to the Treasury providing some extra funds for relief staff for schools. Minutes of IACTSA, 16 February 1976, Press Release. The Authority made the requested savings, inter alia, by reducing funds for salaries available for relief staff, by strictly applying the 1975 staffing formula, and by cutting funds for school supplies, curriculum and professional development. Minutes of IACTSA, 29 September 1975, Item 4, pp. 2-7; Minutes of IACTSA, 20 October 1975, Item 3.5, pp. 5-6; P. Hughes, Chairman, Draft letter to K. E. Beazley, (n.d.), c. 20 October 1975, March papers; Minutes of IACTSA, 20 October 1975, Supplementary papers.
introduction of APS staff ceilings in 1975 provided the excuse of insufficient staff to justify delays in developing procedures for decentralising functions to schools.\textsuperscript{12}

The change of government following the sacking of the Whitlam government in November 1975 did not ease the Authority's situation. Instead, led by the new Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, the new government began to demonstrate in practical ways that 'life wasn't meant to be easy' and imposed additional cuts upon government departments and authorities which generated publicity about the alleged demise of the so-called Canberra 'fat cats'.\textsuperscript{13} Interviewed about his ideas on education soon after taking up office, the Minister for Education, Senator John Carrick, spoke of 'substantially reducing the duplication, waste and inefficiency caused by the overlap of the Federal and State systems', and argued that there was 'a capacity for the saving of resources that could be transferred to more useful purposes'.\textsuperscript{14} The latter were unspecified. One observer wrote:

Reluctantly, one may conclude that the current belt-tightening within the ACT Interim Schools Authority is but the first symptom of what is likely to be a long and lean financial period for Australian education in general.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{12} Minutes of IACTSA, 29 September 1975, Items 6 and 13. For example, the devolution of funding responsibilities to schools was delayed considerably. This and other related issues are discussed further in ch. 14 below.
\textsuperscript{13} Crowley, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 309. Quotation attributed to Malcolm Fraser and frequently repeated by media during the economic downturn.
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Canberra Times}, 31 January 1976, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{15} D. Smart, 'Are the golden days of easy money now gone for good?' \textit{Canberra Times}, 23 March 1976, p. 2.
Early in 1976 it was clear that the politicians and their advisers in the Department of Education held different views from the administrators in the Authority or the parents and teachers in the system about the resource needs of the Interim Authority. The Prime Minister placed new financial constraints upon the public sector which led to a significant decrease in the Authority's staff numbers for the 1975-76 financial year and the Authority experienced serious problems as a result. In March, Phillip Hughes wrote to the Minister for Education, Senator Carrick stating, that as a result of staff ceilings, the APS office positions totalled 121 in comparison to the recommended minimum of 223. He argued that

... inadequate staffing and financial provision for certain areas of the Authority's operation in the early stages of its development may well be critical factors affecting the present efficiency and ultimate successful establishment of the Authority as an education service.

Repeated staff ceiling restrictions [are] placing the system at serious risk of collapse...

...If the government sponsored and administered system in the ACT, which is the first new educational system this century, is to flourish and not become a source of embarrassment and adverse criticism, some dispensations from staff restrictions are essential...

...I would welcome your most earnest and sympathetic consideration of what is seen by the Interim ACT Schools Authority as a critical problem in the establishment of an education service.

A month later, Hedley Beare advised Ken Jones that a stopwork was planned for ancillary staff in schools to protest

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17 P. W. Hughes, Chairman, IACTSA, letter to Senator J. Carrick, Minister for Education, 15 March 1976, March papers.
Authority members have also been very vocal during the past six months about the fact that during the crucial third year of the Authority the level of staffing in the Schools Office is not high enough to enable it to cope with the many developmental tasks facing it as a new school system...

... [A] survey in 1973 indicated that a foundation APS staff of 233 was needed to set up the Authority, [yet] the Authority still has only 137 APS staff, that is, 61 per cent of what it needed as a foundation staff. The Authority has expressed exasperation that the Schools Office has had to trade off staff to bolster the levels of ancillary staff in schools with consequential detriment to the total system. In short, the Council of the Authority has constantly expressed its own dissatisfaction at the level of APS staff within the Authority and the schools.\(^\text{18}\)

In May, Hughes wrote a five page letter to the Minister, pleading for special consideration for the staffing problems of the Office.

Experience in the Northern Territory system and elsewhere shows that it takes approximately five years for a new school system to tool up sufficiently to be a viable system. The third and fourth years... are critical, since these are the years in which the major build-up in the system's support services must occur. The growth at this stage is almost irreversible, because it has been caused by the system's second wave of demands produced by the successful work of the foundation staff. If resources and staff are denied in this latter stage of the system's formative years, then there is distinct possibility of system collapse, usually evident first of all in sickness from overwork, in resignation or in outwards transfer or migration.

Hughes went on to document the details of inadequate staffing in each section in the Office and the consequences for

\(^{18}\) H. Beare, Chief Education Officer, to K. N. Jones, Secretary, Department of Education, 28 April 1976, March papers.
the state of health of the officers in charge. The letter listed ten major services lacking in the organisation including major services recommended in the *Hughes Report* that had never been established.

The Schools' Office has had to cope with the onset of a new school year—more teachers, more students, 13 more schools— a numerical increase to overtax all the machinery to handle the salaries, personnel, school supplies, curriculum, certification, and other support services. I am therefore not seeking an unreasonable deal for the ACT system. I do believe that the first five years are crucial. We are half way through that development phase, but the system cannot survive much longer unless it is recognized that it needs life support systems early and urgently.\(^\text{19}\)

The second letter to the Minister bore fruit. A meeting was held at which the Minister, Hedley Beare, two officers from the Authority's Office and an officer from the Department were present.\(^\text{20}\) As a consequence, the Authority made some important gains. The Minister wrote to Hughes informing him that he would endorse a request to the Public Service Board for an increase of 32 in the Public Service staff ceiling for the Authority's office. He also made another important concession. Instead of the Authority's staff ceiling being included within the Department's staff ceiling, the Department of Education was to ask the Public Service Board to establish a separate staff ceiling for the Authority. This was a significant win for the Authority as it removed one of the major obstructions to obtaining increased resources. A further bonus was added when Terry O'Connell and another Authority officer negotiated with officers

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\(^{19}\) P. W. Hughes, letter to J. Carrick, 24 May 1976. March papers; Minutes of IACTSA, 24 May 1976.

\(^{20}\) H. Beare, Report of Meeting with Minister Monday 31 May, March papers.
from the Treasury for extra funds for the following financial year to allow for inflation and growth.21

This pattern of financial restrictions imposed by the government and contested by the Authority whenever it could present a case became the norm for the rest of the decade. Coming as it did in the initial stages of the implementation stage of the change process, it was much more significant than if the Authority had been given time to stabilise and deliver some of the expected outcomes. To pull back from a position of sufficient resources would have been much easier than attempting to acquire adequate resources in a time of government cuts.

Just after the successful negotiations were completed between the Minister and the Authority over an increase in the staff ceiling, a major contest in the system loomed. It began when Senator Carrick announced that as soon as possible the Department of Education intended to enlist

the services of a person or persons from outside the Territorial systems with a background in the philosophy and practice of teacher staffing in a range of educational institutions... to review arrangements for providing teaching staff in government schools in the ACT and the Northern Territory.22

During resource negotiations, the Federation adopted a conventional union role and acted to ensure that teachers' interests were protected at all costs. Senator Carrick's announcement made the Federation's leaders suspicious. It

appeared too coincidental that shortly after extra staff for the Office had been successfully negotiated with the Minister there was to be a review of professional staffing. Federation's interpretation was that the government was seeking justification for further restrictions to CTS numbers. The Federation condemned the review:

The obvious implication of this move, given the Government's general policy reductions in departmental ceilings, is that the Government intends to identify areas where staffing cuts can be made...

It described the review as the 'greatest single threat to the development of the A.C.T. government education system'.

In July, the Department announced that Dr W. D. Neal, Dean of the School of Teacher Education at the WA Institute of Technology, and A. T. Hird, Assistant Director-General (Personnel) of the Victorian Department of Education would conduct the review and report to the Minister by the end of August. The Federation was determined to obstruct Neal and Hird in their inquiries. A Federation ban that directed teachers not to talk to Neal and Hird unless a Federation officer was present hindered their access to teachers. The Federation bans caused delays, but Neal and Hird carried on.

In July, while the Neal-Hird enquiry continued, the staff ceiling for the school systems in both the Territories, and for the

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Department, allowed a total increase of 50 over the June 1976 ceiling, with directions that most of the increase should be allocated to support staff for ACT schools. In July, Authority administrators estimated that the system possessed only 60 per cent of the basic support staff required to make the ACT system functional and that the Schools Authority was dangerously understaffed in such important and basic areas as the Accreditation Agency, stores procurement, personnel, finance, and planning. An editorial in the Canberra Times was harsh in its criticism of the Minister:

The arbitrariness of the Government's policy on education in the ACT, which seems to derive only from a desire to save money in the absence of any rational estimation of needs, is further confirmed by its decision to hire two outside advisers to review the position of teaching staff in ACT schools...

It is almost inconceivable that the Minister for Education could be so ill-informed about the work of the Authority as to completely overlook the serious difficulties it is coping with in what is a pioneering role in the field of education.

At a July meeting of Authority Council, members were angered by a request for further cuts from the Secretary of the Department of Education, Ken Jones. Phillip Hughes commented that it appeared there would not be sufficient teachers for the new schools and colleges due to open in 1977. He pointed out

25 K. N. Jones, Secretary, Department of Education, letter to H. Beare, 2 July 1976, March papers; Department of Education, Press release, Staff Ceilings', 5 July 1976, March papers.
28 Although at this stage the growth of Canberra had slowed and in older areas the numbers of children of school-age were beginning to decline, new schools continued to be built in areas being opened up and the Office still required extra professional staff. The number of teachers in an average high school staff was about 40-60 in its peak
to Council members that the Minister's agreement to an extra 32 staff and a separate ceiling for the Schools' Office had been neutralised by this latest development and stated that the situation was unacceptable since it would make the ACT school system unworkable. Hughes was asked to write to the Minister once again, and immediately to release a media statement which explained the situation.29

This discussion was followed with public comment by Phillip Hughes. As a result, Hughes, Beare, Peck and other Office staff attended meetings with departmental officers and with Senator Carrick. The Minister expressed anger at 'having discussions between himself and the Authority conducted through the public press', and stated his annoyance at an imputation in the Canberra Times editorial that the lowered staff ceilings were covert devices for killing off the Authority.30 He declared it 'unethical' for a body responsible to him to endeavour to put him in such a position, and declared that it was out of keeping with the Westminster tradition. He argued that his 'ability to win concurrence in Cabinet for staffing concessions was considerably weakened by such action'. He stated that he refused to support a line when it could be interpreted that he was acting under duress in so doing and he was 'not prepared to tolerate a situation where a government instrumentality acted outside the Westminster tradition'. Ominously, he added that should the Schools Authority continue to do so, he would 'consider seriously

years; about 80 for colleges. A new primary school would commence with about 15 teaching staff and increase to about 25-30 in its peak years.

29 Minutes of IACTSA, 19 July 1976, item 6, pp. 5-6.
whether the Authority should continue to exist in its present form'. After some discussion, eventually the Minister agreed to take the necessary action with the Public Service Board, the Prime Minister, or with Cabinet to support a case if this was needed, provided the case was within the guidelines of economic restraint.\textsuperscript{31}

The Minister's priorities were revealed in this exchange. His public image and his political motives had been questioned. It was made clear that in applying pressure for extra assistance, the Authority was expected to protect its Minister's interests. Major constraints to democratic participation by a government body were also exposed: when the Authority's decisions clashed with government policy, the Minister's priorities were paramount. It appeared that the Authority could espouse a rhetoric of democratic participation as long as it did not include the Minister for Education. This, of course, put the Authority in an invidious position and illustrates the profound ambiguity inherent in the parents' ideal of participation.

In September, Hedley Beare reported to the Council that the Australian Public Service was to be cut by a further 2.5 per cent.\textsuperscript{32} A paper was prepared for the Council which set out recommendations on deployment of staff within the 1976-77 staff ceilings. After discussion, the Council decided to try and arrange an urgent meeting with the Minister to explain the

\textsuperscript{31} H. Beare, Report to Council: Staff Ceiling 1976/77, [July 1977], March papers.
\textsuperscript{32} Minutes of IACTSA, 13 September 1976, Item 12, pp. 7-8.
gravity of the situation. Phillip Hughes once more wrote to the Minister on 20 October, but on the same day, another event interposed. The Neal-Hird Report was released. The Minister announced that the independent inquiry had recommended that increased levels of teaching staff were needed in ACT government schools.

The suspicions of the Federation leaders about the Department's motives proved to be well founded. The Department was pressured from central government to cut down on extravagant use of resources and the review was intended to substantiate the belief within the Department that there were areas of staffing which could be cut. However, the Federation was wrong in supposing that Neal and Hird had acted for the Department. They had ascertained the facts about the staffing situation in the Authority as accurately as possible given the difficulties the Federation placed in their way. Neal and Hird strongly supported the case for more administrative staff for the Authority's Office.

The greatest deficiency in staffing in the Australian Capital Territory lies in the inadequate provision of personnel to the Schools Authority head office and to supply the necessary schools support services. We have made the point already that small school systems need all of the services found in the larger ones and that a proportionately higher level of provision might have to be

33 ibid.
35 K. Jones, Interview, 3 February 1987. Ken Jones confirmed that the Department believed that Neal and Hird would reveal surplus resources.
made in small schools systems in order to provide adequate staffing for the tasks to be done.\textsuperscript{36}

Their Report stated that there were real and exciting developments in the ACT school system which could have a major effect on Australian education generally. They commented that it 'would seem a pity therefore if schools were not staffed to the extent necessary to enable them to continue to develop...\textsuperscript{37} However, they did not let the Federation's powerful role in the system pass without censure. Obliquely referring to the Federation's obstruction of the review process, they criticised also the too rigid interpretation of the staffing formula in schools caused by the Federation's guidelines on class sizes and the maximum number of teaching periods allowed per teacher which appeared sacrosanct and unable to be varied. They added with some asperity, that

with respect to this matter and to certain others, the panel has had some difficulty deciding who was actually running the school system---the Schools Authority or the Teachers' Federation.\textsuperscript{38}

Ironically, the Authority was unable to use the findings of their report to the best effect.\textsuperscript{39} Neal and Hird were unable to provide an alternative to the rigid staffing formula or to suggest another way of allocating staff which allowed the most effective use of diminishing resources. The wrangling each year over staff ceilings and staffing formulas continued and the Authority

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\textsuperscript{36} Neal-Hird Report, p. 37  \\
\textsuperscript{37} ibid., p. 33.  \\
\textsuperscript{38} Minister for Education, Media Release, 20 October 1976; Neal-Hird Report, p. 36.  \\
\textsuperscript{39} Draft letter to Minister prepared for IACTSA, 6 December 1976, March papers.
\end{flushright}
battled to find a flexible and effective method of allocating staff to schools. It was still working on this at the end of the seventies.40

In this issue, the conflicting priorities of key stakeholders were demonstrated. Both Departmental and Authority administrators were bound by the politicians' priorities. The teachers and parents were concerned for the system's survival; the Federation, as always, focused on protecting its members' work interests, the parents, upon negotiating a delicate tightrope between publicly explaining the Authority's situation and cooperating with the Department and the Minister for adequate resources.

By the end of 1976, then, there were serious repercussions in the infant school system arising from a major unanticipated change in the economic context. In terms of a strategic planning process, a number of questions are raised about the effects of a major change in the context. Can the deleterious effects of a major contextual change be circumvented? While such a challenge presents unexpected difficulties, can these be

40 The staffing formula of the seventies used a complicated mathematical formula based on relativities between sectors and multipliers which took into account specific conditions of service, for example, relief time from face-to-face teaching and study leave. Its inflexibility prevented schools from adapting to changing circumstances or meeting special needs which arose. The Federation resisted the 'basket of resources' approach believing it would disadvantage the career prospects of its teachers. The building of safeguards into formulae to protect teachers' career interests again reduced the flexibility, negating the advantages gained. By contrast, the 'basket of resources' approach which Federation finally accepted in the mid-eighties built in more variables and generated staffing points which could be translated into numbers of staff according to seniority levels.
overcome with goodwill on all sides? Can the stakeholders rally together and put together a less ambitious but nevertheless effective change which meets the spirit of the proposed change even if it has to postpone or even to omit certain desired but less important features? Or does a major change in the context provide an opportunity for stakeholders who do not share the vision to block some of the desired changes? During the remainder of the 1970s the actions of stakeholders and their consequences suggest answers to these questions as far as the change program in the ACT is concerned. These consequences form the content of the following chapters.
The long period between planning and implementation produced another unexpected consequence for the ACT school system: stakeholders emerged who were critical of some of the changes which had been introduced into ACT schools. This unplanned development, which required the Authority to justify the changes which had been made to schooling in recent years, was related to the change in the economic context. It usurped the time and resources of administrators at a critical period and deflected the attention away from implementation. It was therefore an additional setback for the new ACT system.

One of the two new groups of stakeholders was the Employers' Federation, the same body which previously had voiced objections to the decisions made for assessment and reporting in the secondary colleges. The second group of stakeholders was the ACT Legislative Assembly. The local politicians were stakeholders in a different sense from the federal politicians; they were residents of the ACT, and, for a brief time, attempted to intervene in events through interaction with the other groups of key stakeholders in ACT education.

By 1977, most of the original parent campaigners had been replaced by parents of another generation of students. Stalwarts like Kath Abbott and Catherine Blakers were no longer on the Council of the permanent Authority and of the original members of the Working Group, only Hugh Waring remained to
represent parents' concerns and Mick March, the union's concerns. Phillip Hughes continued to chair the Council during 1977.\(^1\) Of the other campaigners, Terry O'Connell had just retired in January from ill-health, and Richard Campbell had become a Ministerial nominee on the Council, not a parent representative.\(^2\)

The parents of students in the late seventies had not experienced the circumstances which had led to the Campbell parents' decision to campaign for change. The former passion for the Currie Working Party's vision had almost gone. The parents of the sixties and early seventies had campaigned in a time of economic optimism when jobs were plentiful. The mid-seventies saw attitudes to education change throughout Australia. The innovative practices introduced during the late sixties and early seventies were challenged by what Hedley Beare described as a 'conservative backswing in education... occurring all around the world'.

The period of 1945 to 1955 was one of huge expansion in education, coinciding with reconstruction. It was in 1957, the year of Sputnik, that people started to look at what schools were doing, and that ushered in the 60's and the frenetic activity to reform schools. The 1970's have seen the obvious happen - the swingback of the pendulum. It has been associated with the hardening of the arteries over finance... These oscillations have always happened because public education has never been able to satisfy public demands, many of them unrealistic demands. The

\(^1\) He was succeeded by Ros Kelly in February 1978, and then by Richard Campbell in June 1979.
\(^2\) Terry O'Connell died the following November.
educator's fate is to suffer the seesaw effect between conservatism and innovation.³

Hedley Beare's analysis does not explain why particular educational choices were made for Canberra in the 1960s and rejected in the 1970s. For this, it is necessary to return to 1966. The Currie Report was a reflection of the great social changes of the 1950s and 1960s. It was a time of prosperity and of faith in the future. Many people's perceptions of their own social and economic future were expanded. Society saw prospects for upward social mobility enlarged, and education provided a means of achieving this.⁴ At that time, in a period of full employment, economic security, the anticipation of more time for recreational pursuits accompanied by a serious questioning of established social mores, parents sought the kind of schooling then seen as most appropriate to the needs of their children. Thus, for example, a system of university-dominated NSW Higher School Certificate examinations was considered to be inflexible and unresponsive to the special needs of students. In education, as in the wider society, theories of individual development, self-expression and cultural pluralism were coming into vogue. Encouraged by the interventionist approach of departmental officers like Neil Edwards and Alan Foskett to school building design, certain major curriculum and pedagogical changes had been made: organisational changes to classrooms

including team teaching and vertical (cross-age) grouping of students, the use of individualised instruction methods, and integrated curriculum which came under the rubric of 'open education'. Canberra was not alone in such changes: many Australian administrators and teachers responded to the changes and school systems planned and built new open plan schools which allowed more flexible teaching practices.\(^5\)

In the sixties, the parents' group which campaigned for the introduction of a new authority was responsive to the new approaches. For many Canberra parents, flaws in the existing schooling were obvious and the campaign for a new school system was launched to redress them. In that era of change, it was entirely in keeping with the members of the parents' group that they would want reform to encompass not only the school system governance structures, but other important parts of the schooling process, including the examination system.\(^6\)

By the mid-seventies, Australian parents generally became less optimistic about schooling as the economic climate changed. The importance of education for Canberra's parents was demonstrated by the continuation of a retention rate for

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secondary schooling markedly above the Australian average.\textsuperscript{7} Anxious for their children to receive an education which best fitted them for future life chances, parents became concerned for career opportunities and further education. Loss of economic security meant that qualifications became much more important in the changed economic circumstances which placed a high priority on credentials in a more competitive job market.

Coincidentally, at this time the \textit{Canberra Times} appeared to change its focus from national to local news. There is evidence of increased critical scrutiny of local issues including difficulties in the school system; the publicity about problems in the local school system at this time of employment uncertainty would have undermined parents' confidence about schools. As parents' doubts about schooling grew, they began to place a greater emphasis upon the utilitarian value of certain subjects.\textsuperscript{8}

Observers of the change in parental expectations for schooling during this period have offered various explanations for the criticisms of school curriculum in the seventies that fall beyond the scope of this study which is concerned with organisational changes.\textsuperscript{9} It is relevant, that the parents and local

\textsuperscript{7} Currie Report, p. 5; In 1974, ACT retention rate for Year 12 was 61.9 per cent. All other Australian states had retention rates of less than 35 per cent. By 1980, ACT retention rates were 66.6 per cent compared to the highest retention rates in the states, South Australia, 38.8 per cent and Queensland, 38.6 per cent; Commonwealth Department of Education and Youth Affairs, 'Apparent grade retention rates and age participation rates', Statistical Monograph No 3, 8th edn., Canberra: Statistics Unit, Commonwealth Department of Education and Youth Affairs, 1984.

\textsuperscript{8} 'Utilitarian' is used here in the sense of vocationally useful.

\textsuperscript{9} For example, two explanations which come from different perspectives are; L. Johnson & U. Ozolins (eds), 'Melbourne Working Papers 1979', Sociology Research Group in Cultural and Educational;
politicians who made these criticisms sought to undo some of the structural changes which had been made.\textsuperscript{10} In addition, parents' criticisms of the government system further polarised the attitudes towards public and private funding for schools in a time when the resources to be allocated were becoming less. Thus, in the mid-seventies, the context for the supporters of the new Authority became one of defensive anxiety.

The members of the Legislative Assembly were actively preparing for ACT self-government which was confidently expected to happen soon. Anticipating this, they sought to play a significant role in the affairs of the ACT. In preparation for self-government, the first ACT Legislative Assembly was established on 2 December 1974 to replace the former ACT Advisory Council.\textsuperscript{11} The part-time elected members of that first 1974-1979 Assembly included some who were destined to move on to higher things. Susan Ryan and Ros Kelly, were both to become Ministers in future Labor governments. A decade and a half later, Paul Whalan was to become Minister for Education in the first ACT Labor government, and Liberal member, Trevor Kaine, for a brief period, Chief Minister in an ACT Liberal-Residents' Rally coalition government.

In 1975, expecting a greater role in the affairs of local health and local education, Legislative Assembly members with

\begin{itemize}
\item In strategic planning terms, they hoped to alter the outputs.
\item The Liberal Party held a majority in the Legislative Assembly until 1979, when Labor held the majority.
\end{itemize}
special interests in those areas obtained positions on the Capital Territory Health Commission and the ACT School Authority. The Legislative Assembly also established a Standing Committee on Education and Health consisting of self-selected members with special interests in those fields. During the period 1975 to 1979, the Education and Health Standing Committee was chaired by Greg Cornwell. As he later explained, 'my chairmanship led me to decide that the Assembly should conduct a thorough inquiry into ACT education'.

On 22 October 1977, a public notice appeared in the Canberra Times which invited submissions on ACT education to the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Education and Health by 17 November 1977. A letter to the Chief Education Officer of the Authority from the ACT Legislative Assembly gave notice that a recent meeting had asked the Standing Committee on Education and Health to 'enquire into and report upon on all aspects, including the effectiveness and public acceptance, with special emphasis upon freedom of choice, of open plan and traditional teaching methods that exist in ACT primary and secondary government schools'. The letter to Hedley Beare continued:

The Committee has decided to invite your organisation to make a submission to its inquiry. Matters such as: the merits of open plan versus traditional methods of education, whether the government school system adequately prepares children for life and work and whether there should be a greater freedom of choice for

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12 G. Cornwell, Interview, 20 December 1991. All Cornwell's comments are from this source.
parents about the type of education their child receives, are all of particular interest to the Committee.\footnote{J. Arkle, Clerk to the Committee, letter to H. Beare, 25 October 1977; Minutes of ACTSA, 24 October 1977, File 77/1876, ACTSA.}

In case this was not thought to be sufficient, the letter suggested the 'list of topics should not be considered exhaustive' and informed Dr Beare that submissions were due by 17 November 1977.\footnote{J. Arkle, Clerk to the Committee, letter to H. Beare, 25 October 1977; Minutes of ACTSA, 24 October 1977, Part 1, Item 10, Part 2, Item 11.}

While the Authority Council agreed to supply preliminary information to the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee, to make further submissions as required and to write to school boards, P&C associations and the Pre-School Parents' Associations inviting them to prepare submissions also, it pointed out its lack of staff meant it was unable to prepare a submission within the time-frame set by the Legislative Assembly.\footnote{Minutes of ACTSA, 24 October 1977, Part 2, [Item 1].} A letter from Hedley Beare to the Secretary of the Department of the Capital Territory stated his concerns about the task: the terms of the Inquiry were 'alarmingly wide' and that to provide the requested information would take 'weeks of work'.

since there is no member of the Enquiry Committee who has formal teacher education qualifications it is obvious that the Committee will need to have much more detailed briefing and advice than the members themselves realise.\footnote{H. Beare, letter to L. J. Daniels, Secretary, Department of the Capital Territory, 9 November 1977, File 77/1876, part 1, ACTSA. The members of the Committee of Inquiry were: Greg Cornwell, Chair, John Clements, T. W. (Bill) Pye, M. Worsley, and Ivor Vivian. Cornwell, Interview, 1991.}

The scope of the Inquiry was extremely wide and reflected concerns about modern educational practices. In particular,
there was information sought about what was popularly called 'open plan schooling' which had been introduced into the ACT in the early 1970s. The public notice advertising the Inquiry implied a lack of confidence in the government school system practices. This was particularly significant because the system, initially established in response to parental pressure for a change from NSW administration, was barely three years old. Of particular concern for the new administration was that the assessment procedures of the recently implemented restructuring of secondary education were also questioned.

There is no doubt that the Standing Committee wanted to instigate an exhaustive Inquiry. Cornwell agrees that the terms of reference 'were quite broad'. There were in fact seven areas that the Committee wanted to investigate, each with the scope to warrant a separate Report. Over 150 submissions were received; after one year the Inquiry was not able to complete more than two of the proposed seven reports, the first on school design, completed in May 1978, the second on curriculum, completed by the end of 1978. As would be expected from such a large

18 There was general confusion about the term 'open plan' which was used to describe methodology rather than a building design. The accepted term for the kind of methods being described (though not necessarily more accurate) was 'open education'.
19 Sixty eight submissions were received from school boards, P&C Associations, staff of schools and students from identified schools; a range of professional associations, a selection of which included Career Education Association, History Teachers Association, Principals' Associations, Home Economics Association; other bodies, for example, ACT Teachers' Federation, ACT Council of P&C Associations, ACT Apprenticeship Board, ACT Right to Life Association, ANU, ACT Schools Authority, Department of Education, Department of the Capital Territory, Keep Out Religious Indoctrination Society; and over 40 individual submissions. (it is not possible to be specific about the latter as some submissions were cited from one person 'and others').
number, the submissions covered a wide spectrum of views about education. Almost all the submissions received addressed the matter of curriculum. Rather than a substantial groundswell of concern in the community at large, the Inquiry appeared to reflect a diffuse unease about trends in education. This was expressed, for example, in the call to 'go back to basics', or in a widespread anxiety about open plan schooling. According to the Report, there was some support for a concern about a perceived lack of education in the basic skills and for a need to establish a core curriculum, but it is difficult to assess the extent of this concern as the Report did not provide a statistical analysis of all the views expressed. Not surprisingly, in their submissions some schools reacted defensively to implied criticism; the reply of the principal, school board chairperson and P&C President of one school board committee stated that the Inquiry, 'seems to have been prompted by political reasons rather than a real concern for education'.

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20 There is no evidence in the letter columns of the Canberra Times, for example, to suggest widespread concern about ACT education.
21 Instead of a statistical analysis of ACT submissions to provide evidence of concern in ACT schools, the Report cited evidence from a national study of Australian schools; J. P. Keeves, J. K. Matthews, S. F. Bourke, Educating for Literacy and Numeracy in Australian Schools, Australian Education Review, No. 11, 1978. The Report stated that some submissions were concerned with the emphasis on basic skills in school-based curriculum, others with specific aspects of schools' curricula. Comments were received on 'the role of the ACT Schools Authority, School Boards, P&C Associations, teachers, students and the community in the determination of a responsible curriculum'. Other matters addressed included standardisation of curriculum and of student assessment, external examinations, open learning and traditional learning areas as aspects of school design.
22 School Board Chair, President P&C Association, Principal, Giralang Primary School, Submission to Legislative Assembly Inquiry, (n.d.) File 77/1876.
There is good reason to believe that politics played a part. Support for or against holding the Inquiry appears to have been divided along party political lines. A Liberal member of the Legislative Assembly, Greg Cornwell, initiated the Inquiry, and the parts subsequently played by local politicians in these events were consistent with the natural tendency of Labor MLAs to oppose non-Labor moves and vice versa. This intervention by local politicians during the implementation process of the ACT Schools' Authority which brought them into direct confrontation with other key stakeholders' groups, marks them as stakeholders with a distinct group interest, although only for the brief period of this Inquiry. The proponents for the Inquiry demonstrated a fundamental conservatism about schooling which was manifested in opposition to newer educational practices. Greg Cornwell acknowledges that he was anxious about the standards of literacy and numeracy of students at the time and believed that the Department of Education's planning policy to build a belt of open-plan schools across Belconnen and the Tuggeranong Valley made it difficult for some parents to have a choice between open-plan and conventional school design. 'I took exception to that because a great many parents did.'

In comparing the failure of this challenge with the success of the campaign to establish the Authority, the differences between the two are clear. The genesis and outcome of the Legislative Assembly's Inquiry was quite unlike the demand for

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23 According to Cornwell, the Labor members in the Legislative Assembly, Paul Whalan, Ros Kelly, Peter Vallee and John Clements, opposed the Inquiry. G. Cornwell, Interview, 20 December 1991.
change in the mid-sixties which led to the *Currie Report* and then to pressure for the government to hold an Inquiry and eventually the establishment of a new school system. In the challenge of the mid-seventies, there was no focus of dissatisfaction about the bureaucracy to generate agitation for change, nor was there a similar crisis in education funding, despite cutbacks as a result of the economic downturn. The Legislative Assembly's Inquiry was instigated by an unknown number of disaffected parents and employers and steered by a few local Assembly members against the wishes of their political opponents. Indeed, there is difficulty in assessing the number and source of complaints which led to the Inquiry. Cornwell speaks of 'parents who were concerned' who wrote or spoke to him. He does not identify any specific groups of people except to say; 'employers, parents, built up this concern that decided me that I should have this Inquiry'. Cornwell states that the Inquiry 'was not out to get anyone' and there was no suggestion that 'schools were not doing their job'.24 Perhaps the Legislative Assembly's Inquiry was not able to achieve change because Canberra had little regard for local government initiatives.

Cornwell raises questions about the success of participation in ACT education. He later stated: 'I would be surprised if some of this hadn't resulted from a lack of opportunity to have views put forward. [It is] fair to say that in the existence of the Schools Authority right up until '87 we were still looking at that problem'.25 The establishment of the Legislative Assembly

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provided members of the public with a different mechanism for expressing dissatisfaction about educational (and other) matters. It is interesting to note that some parents found it easier to complain to their local Assembly members than to become involved at the school or system level. Unfortunately the lack of information about the kinds (and numbers) of people who complained does not allow further conjecture about the reasons they did not find it possible to participate in the system as the campaigners had hoped.\footnote{This aspect of participation is discussed further in Ch. 15 below.}

There was one group, however, which did notify its concerns to the school system: the Employers' Federation which had not become reconciled to the changes introduced in the restructuring of secondary schools. The director of the ACT Employers' Federation, John Dallas, forwarded a copy of its submission to the Inquiry committee to Hedley Beare. It revealed the employers' doubts about the changes that had occurred in secondary schooling.

It would seem to the Federation [of employers] that little heed has been paid by those concerned with schools to a growing and demonstrated need for a return to a more formal basis of education.

... formal examinations have been abolished in the ACT school system. As a result it is becoming increasingly difficult to assess the academic achievements of those students leaving secondary schools.

It is not sought to suggest that education should be principally directed by a labour market but it is proposed that this aspect must receive due recognition in the interests of pupils.
There is too much experimentation and variation in the courses within ACT schools.27

For the ACT employers, core curriculum and examinations symbolised control over schooling and a rejection of the recent trends towards liberalism of education (including 'trendy' teachers who espoused 'open plan schools', internal assessment, and experimentation in courses).

The intellectual, New Middle Class parent campaigners could hardly have been said to have represented the interests of business people. In traditional class terminology, the members of the Employers' Federation would be located in the petit bourgeoisie, of conservative bent (as demonstrated by the matters raised in the letter to Hedley Beare) and therefore unsympathetic to the democratic liberal educational ideology of the parent campaigners. Hugh Waring had already stated in connection with the secondary restructuring that he did not empathise with their views.28 The Employers' Federation represented a stakeholders' group with opposing views to the campaigners which emerged after the implementation of the Authority. Albeit a small group, as, indeed, the campaigners had been, it had the potential to disrupt the implementation process.

On the other hand, the members of the Legislative Assembly were such a diverse group that class location (or any other social categorisation) is difficult. The occupations of the non-Labor members who supported an Inquiry included a public relations

27 J. Dallas, Director, ACT Employers' Federation, letter to H. Beare, 16 November 1977, File 77/1876.
28 See ch. 11 above.
consultant with a private company (Cornwell), a former policeman (Ian Black), an auctioneer (Harold Hird), an ex-airforce public servant (Trevor Kaine), a specialist in medicine (Peter Hughes), a free-lance journalist (Maureen Worsley), a Canberra College of Advanced Education lecturer (Ivor Vivian), a retired public servant (Bill Pye), among others. The support for the Inquiry therefore cannot be explained as merely the actions of a disaffected group or dissatisfied group. The interests of ambitious Assembly members, seeking to establish themselves before the formation of an ACT government may have played some part.

Senator Carrick agreed with the Authority that the findings did not warrant major changes.

The opinion of the Schools Authority with which I agree is that the Assembly's recommendations do not warrant immediate major policy changes. Rather it would be appropriate for the report to be considered in conjunction with the reviews of the A.C.T. school system which are in progress and are proposed.29

There was no public protest. It is difficult to assess whether the results of the Inquiry would have had more impact if self-government had occurred at that time as expected. Apart from the study of the reports by the Authority Council and the Office, they received little attention from the public at large and were not taken up for discussion in the press.30

30 J. M. Grant, Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Education and Health, Report No. 2, Curriculum, Minute to H. Beare, 8 December 1978, ACTSA.
When asked what he saw as the consequences of the Inquiry, Greg Cornwell said:

The best I could say was that it raised a consciousness out there in the community... for example, in terms of the literacy and numeracy - you hear it discussed a great deal these days. I'm not sure we did a great deal in terms of design and siting... Whilst we didn't, I guess, really succeed in this core curriculum, I think it possibly helped to establish that there is a need for core curriculum.\(^{31}\)

On the basis of Cornwell's testimony the outcomes of the Inquiry were indefinite, to say the least.

The Inquiry did not stop the criticisms of open plan schools and the form of assessment in secondary education which removed examinations.\(^{32}\) To what extent the criticisms of secondary schooling practices were a price to be paid for the haste with which the secondary school restructuring changes were pushed through and for the Federation's obstructions to parental participation in teacher selection is arguable. Criticism of public schooling was not restricted to the ACT; whether some may have been averted if the parents had felt more ownership of the change made in schools is difficult to assess.

Criticism from the public and the politicians had an important negative effect upon the school system. Sensitive to external criticism and threatened by continued critical scrutiny

\(^{31}\) Greg Cornwell stated that he defines core curriculum narrowly in terms of literacy and numeracy.

of expenditure, the educational administrators retreated to safer ground. The spirit of optimism and the expectation of a development towards decentralisation of control became dissipated as senior administrators in the Department of Education and the Authority responded by a re-emphasis upon traditional methods of control including the invocation of efficiency measures. Administrators began to speak of accountability and review, although in terms of age the Authority was still very new and barely into a stage of development to justify a need for review. Evaluation and review, mechanisms for accountability, became the means adopted to meet the demand for measurement of outcomes.

The pressures for accountability and evaluation from government and the public were to influence approaches to educational issues for many years and to have a different effect on the school system from that planned in a time of expansion and optimism. Long-term reviews were to become customary, but expensive, methods of meeting demands for inquiry into cost effectiveness within the system; an irony lost on those making such demands upon the system. The Authority created an Evaluation and Research Section, staffed from the beginning of 1977, to meet the demands for evaluation. In April 1980, the Authority Council released for public comment its first discussion paper on school-initiated evaluation. As a result of this demand for accountability, by 1980, six years after

establishment, a considerable number of system reviews were planned, in progress or completed. These included a review of the ACT Schools Accrediting Agency, inquiries into both primary and secondary schooling, the evaluation of the School Without Walls (an alternative secondary school), a review of staffing in secondary colleges and a review of registered units and low demand accredited courses in secondary colleges.\textsuperscript{34} The next five years were to see the Authority become the most reviewed of all Commonwealth statutory authorities.

The external threat to the system posed by the criticisms which led to the Legislative Assembly's Inquiry resulted in the increasing dominance upon the operations of the system by a group of key stakeholders, the administrators, as they began to exert increasing control upon the system in an effort to justify accountability and efficiency. The economic downturn, together with the Inquiry, provided an opportunity for this group to influence the structures. This study moves on to examine the role of this stakeholders' group in the second half of the 1970s.

\textsuperscript{34} Other smaller scale reviews included: the pilot scheme for a new entry age and enrolment procedures, the study kit 'Aborigines of the Canberra Region', produced by the Authority; the ACT Mathematics Centre; and the statistical procedures used by the Accrediting Agency. The many reviews and evaluations carried out in individual schools are not included in this list. ACTSA, School Evaluation, Discussion Paper for Authority Council, April 1980, Lee papers.
CHAPTER FOURTEEN.

DECENTRALISATION RESISTED

Placing an organisation into an incompatible institutional environment renders it vulnerable to many pressures to conform and places in peril the survival of the organisation as originally conceived.¹ Katherine Newman's case study of non-bureaucratic organisations in the United States suggests that situating a cooperative or participatory organisation within an environment of hierarchical organisations with which it must cooperate, forces it to comply with certain regulatory procedures which in turn dictate the need for it to adopt a hierarchical structure. Non-bureaucratic organisations which cannot maintain independence from external control become encumbered with bureaucratic procedures in order to comply with requirements for financial accountability.² So it was to be with the ACT Schools Authority, placed in the heart of the Canberra government milieu.

Even before it began functioning, the Authority had pressures placed upon its operations by the other organisations within its context. The campaigners had a vision for a decentralised, participatory organisation, but their blueprint was brought into actuality by bureaucrats within the Department of

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Education. In establishing the Authority's structure, the senior administrators in the Department of Education were reluctant to transfer the full range of powers to the Interim Authority because they feared that the administration was unable to control their application.\(^3\) Ken Jones delayed transferring the planning and building sections from the Department to the Authority, first because he believed the Authority was taking on too much too quickly, and second, because senior officers in the Department of Education were aware that the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) was concerned to protect its own functions and powers as the body responsible for the planning, designing and construction of public buildings in the ACT, including schools. The NCDC wanted to avoid fragmentation of its control over such activities, for which the decision to establish a Housing Authority in Canberra had already provided a worrying precedent.\(^4\) Ken Jones wanted to maintain the good working relationship that existed between his department and

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\(^3\) Alan Foskett stated many years later that in hindsight, he believed that the Department of Education 'did try to keep the Authority too much under its thumb' and that there was 'certainly some paternalism ... whether justified or not, hard to judge'. Interview, 2 June 1987.

the NCDC and to establish the Department of Education as an effective client of the NCDC.\textsuperscript{5}

Once established, the Authority was required to follow conventional government procedures and regulations. Especially important were those which related to finance, and administrators in other government departments, and within the Authority itself, delayed the decentralisation of financial powers to schools until satisfactory procedures which met the requirements of the Commonwealth Auditor-General and the Department of Finance could be devised.\textsuperscript{6} The understaffed Authority, besides facing the legal difficulties of an interim organisation devolving the administration of public funds, had to grapple with adapting the financial procedures of government departments to a decentralised school system. Government agencies placed extra constraints upon the Authority with demands for procedures that fulfilled external expectations for efficient management although Authority administrators deemed them unnecessary.\textsuperscript{7}


\textsuperscript{7} For example, the requirement for accrual accounting procedures.
A new Authority also meant more stakeholders were added; senior administrators in a number of external agencies exerted some control upon its operations. In 1977, the Chief Education Officer listed twelve government departments which limited the Authority's power to act independently: the Prime Minister's Department placed limits on staff through 'staff ceilings'; Treasury determined allocations of funds; the Public Service Board created and monitored the number of clerical/administrative positions in schools and the Office; the Department of Education advised the Minister to whom the Authority ultimately answered; the Department of the Capital Territory and the ACT Health Commission provided services and determined policies affecting schools; the NCDC planned and designed schools; the Department of Construction built and maintained schools; the Department of Administrative Services acted as landlord for the Office and its warehouse; the Deputy Crown Solicitor interpreted the Ordinance and other regulations affecting schools; the Commonwealth Teaching Service Commissioner determined the career patterns and recruitment of teachers; the Auditor-General approved financial procedures. These constraints did not pass unnoticed by members of the community. As one correspondent to the *Canberra Times* remarked, 'I am not impressed by the title "ACT Schools Authority". It has the authority only to the extent allowed by [the Department of Education and the Public Service Board]

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through their advice to the Minister who is, under Section 6(3), all powerful.9

Much of the literature on modern organisations including bureaucracies, has originated from the United States. From the late nineteenth century on, large organisations, including school systems, adopted bureaucratic forms. As the large business giants developed between 1890 and 1920, a 'new breed' of professional managers took charge, modern administrative practices were invented, and an appropriate occupational culture developed, stressing rationality and efficiency.10 Management's first prophet, Frederick Taylor, developed a theory of scientific management and as Kanter explains, 'gave a name and a rationale to the concept of the rational manager who made decisions on logical, passionless analysis'.11

Scientific management has a close affinity with Weber's ideal-type of bureaucracy and was the model adopted by educational administration in the United States. As Raymond Callahan shows, the 'cult of efficiency' was considered appropriate for business corporations, with an emphasis on routines, order, logic, and cost analysis and an emphasis on a material product. However, when it was applied to educational administration, where there was no material product, results were extremely difficult to measure.12 Critics of this approach observed that the emphasis on efficiency, that is, speed with

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11 Moss Kanter, op. cit., p. 20.
12 R. E. Callahan, Education and the Cult of Efficiency, University of Chicago Press, 1962,
cheapness, did not ensure effectiveness, especially in service organisations which affected the lives of people and often required their agreement and commitment to the decisions of the organisation. Efficiency needed to be coupled with effectiveness, but this was not the approach adopted by scientific management. Bates' observation that educational administrators' focus upon efficiency 'legitimated the extension and consolidation of the bureaucratic control of education', suggests an explanation.\textsuperscript{13} It was also in the interests of educational administrators to adopt these methods because it allowed them to become 'executives', with more pay and status. Examining the effects of this cult of efficiency in the United States, Callahan declares that,

> when all the strands in the story are woven together, it is clear that the essence of the tragedy was in adopting values and practices indiscriminately and applying them with little or no consideration of educational value or purposes.\textsuperscript{14}

Despite major differences in context and historical backgrounds, the evolution of Australian and American educational bureaucracies was similar.\textsuperscript{15} Centralised bureaucracy, with characteristics described by Weber's ideal-type similar to those of large business corporations in the United States, had long been powerful in Australia. In NSW, in particular, educational administrators attempted to establish a state controlled school system which was efficient and more

\textsuperscript{13} R. J. Bates, 'Education, Community and the Crisis of the State', \textit{Discourse}, 4, 2, p. 63.

\textsuperscript{14} Callahan, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 244. This is 'technocratic rationality' which, Giroux claims, 'has governed the underlying principles in educational theory, practice and research in the United States'. H. Giroux, \textit{Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling}, The Falmer Press, London, 1981, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{15} See Bates, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 61-2.
accountable, for bureaucracy and efficiency were organisational partners.\textsuperscript{16} Early this century, Australian education administration began adopting the methods of large business organisations in an attempt to apply the objectivity of natural science methods to organisational management. This led to perspectives which reduced human beings to things or objects perceived as interchangeable parts in the system.\textsuperscript{17}

In order to understand the difficulties faced by those seeking to change procedures within bureaucratic structures it is necessary to recognise the importance of power within organisations. In his study of bureaucracy, Weber paid serious attention to bureaucratic power. He argued that it derived from the special knowledge bureaucrats possessed: the specialists' knowledge of disciplines essential to administration in the modern world, and the information they accumulated in their work which was frequently restricted by confidentiality and secrecy.\textsuperscript{18} Fearful of the tendency of bureaucracy to accumulate power until it controlled the policy and action of the organisation it was supposed to serve, Weber proposed mechanisms for

\begin{footnotesize}

\textsuperscript{17} See R. J. Starratt, 'Human Resource Management: Learning our Lessons By Learning How To Learn', in J. Anderson, \textit{Shaping Education}, Australian College of Education, Victoria, 1987. Starratt is suggesting that this approach is currently being strongly challenged.

\textsuperscript{18} Albrow, \textit{Bureaucracy}, p. 46. See also, G. T. Allison, 'Public and Private Administrative Leadership: Are They Fundamentally Alike in all Unimportant Respects?' in T. G. Sergiovanni & J. E Corbally (eds.), \textit{Leadership and Organizational Culture}, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1984. Allison declares leadership to be unnecessary because managers have sufficient authority through the use of bureaucratic power.
\end{footnotesize}
limiting the scope of systems of authority generally and bureaucracy in particular. One was collegiality, although he recognised it might slow decision-making. Others included the separation of powers, where different people or groups contributed to decision making; direct democracy; and the involvement in policy making of elected representatives.19

Other writers have also focused upon power in organisations, offering explanations for the development of the mystique about management practices which established and maintained the administrators' status. Gilbert Fairholm, for example, lists over twenty tactics used by respondents to a questionnaire on the ways they exercised power in organisations.20 Virginia Schein suggests that Machiavelli is still with us. 'His ghostly hand would seem to be behind memorandums that distort or omit information, meetings held to decide what has already been decided; coalitions formed covertly to block a decision and rewards promised but never fulfilled.'21 Schein argues that the way organisations function is similar to the political arena, with individual managers jockeying within for power and influence. She suggests that change-agents within organisations need to develop power bases and power strategies to counter resistance to change or to redistribute power. Some of the Canberra parents were well aware of the problem; Hugh Waring, for example, describes how his contacts

in other states as well as local contacts in the ACT gave him the kind of information which he could not gain from papers when he was on the Authority Council.

The Authority was trying to snow members... telling them half truths... It was continually a battle between the staff of the Schools Authority - always an argument as to where the Authority's power began and ended.22

Peter Wilenski, former head of the Public Service Board, observes that the influence of administrators in setting the agenda is a most important measure of power in government organisations and suggest that this subtle influence is perhaps the most important way that holders of power in society retain it'.23 He claims that public servants deny their exercise of power 'because once that is admitted the legitimacy of such acts, since they are performed by unelected officials, is undermined'.24 He describes the concepts of civil service neutrality, justification of a career service in terms of professionalism, continuity and frank and fearless advice as all ex-post facto justifications, self-serving attempts to hide 'the essentially political role of the civil service in policy formulation and implementation'.25

From the literature on power within organisations, then, it is apparent that power is an overt or covert feature of administration, which the structure of bureaucratic organisations

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22 H. Waring, Interview, 3 January 1992. Waring is using 'Authority' here to mean the administrators in the Office.
24 *ibid.*, pp. 51-2.
promotes. As Michael Middleton maintains, such organisations are 'patterns of power', and those at the peak of large organisations try to acquire and retain power; because they authorise and manage any changes to the distribution of power, decentralisation, which involves power-sharing, is not common.\textsuperscript{26} The parent campaigners however, wanted to transfer a great deal of power to schools where teachers and parents could have a share in the decision-making. They also sought power in decisions made at the centre through representation on the Council of the Authority. A tension existed between the desire for decentralisation of services and provision for a diversity of needs. The fair distribution of resources across the system required some means of control which in turn meant some centralisation. As Eva Etzioni-Halevy argues, bureaucratic administration exists to fill a need for the efficient and equitable management of resources.\textsuperscript{27} It made matters worse, that in the public debate they initiated, terms were inevitably used with less than bureaucratic precision. Decentralisation was frequently interpreted to mean autonomy for schools but this was not defined or elaborated to the satisfaction of all parties. The role of schools, the freedom from control, expectations for their dependence or independence upon and within the 'system' of schools was often debated, and the meaning of the term 'autonomy' continued into the next decade.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{26} M. Middleton, \textit{Marking Time}, Methuen Australia, North Ryde, 1982.
\textsuperscript{28} At the time of writing it still continues.
The radically different design for the new Authority required its administrators to operate in a totally different manner from those in all other Canberra authorities and departments. Accustomed to operating in a bureaucracy with a division of labour and specific allocations of responsibility, a well-defined hierarchy, written policies, rules and regulations and promotion and selection based on technical competence and seniority, the parents' expectations required administrators to undergo a profound cultural change.29

Bureaucrats, like teachers, were professionals working for the state. Both groups had travelled down the same path to professionalism, but the circumstances were very different. Initially, bureaucrats had to persuade society to recognise their expertise, their qualifications based on long years of training (at that time, mostly on-the-job-training), and their service as essential. The bureaucracy also was structured around a career hierarchy with regular salary increments, excellent superannuation, and in the 1970s, unparalleled job security.30 Like teachers, they had much to protect, but there was a difference. Bureaucrats, while very protective of their skills and expertise, did not share the teachers' defensiveness about themselves as professionals; rather, they wanted due recognition

as administrators, managers or executives (depending on their level). The reasons were several. First, except for the lower levels, particularly those which dealt directly with the public, they were much less visible than teachers and less open to criticism. Second, the term public servant encompassed a great range from base-grade clerks to the officers higher in status and remuneration than the most senior teachers. The beginner bureaucrat could always aspire to greater heights than the beginner teacher.

Although there were precedents for a climb from base-grade clerk (or equivalent) to departmental head, the top public servants more frequently came from the same background as their equivalents in the large business corporations, senior politicians, and members of the old, established professions: that is, they constituted part of what can be described as Australia's ruling class. Peter Wilenski, former head of the Public Service Board, notes that the Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration found in its study of the career service, that obviously disadvantaged groups (Aboriginals, migrants and women) were almost entirely absent from the senior levels. A disproportionate share of senior positions were held by persons educated at independent (private) schools.

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31 In the 1970s, the highest levels for members of the CTS were as principals of schools, with salaries, for secondary principals, just below the first level of the Second Division (later, the Senior Executive Service). To advance higher in the Schools' Office, a principal had to resign from the CTS and become a public servant.  
Wilenski described the senior members of the public service of the seventies as

male, white, Anglo-Saxon, predominantly Protestant and middle-class in its origins - a highly political group with strong views on major policy issues. By and large, because of its selection and promotion procedures and the results of 23 years of conservative government, it was a group with a tendency towards favouring the status-quo and moving forward with caution.33

These characteristics were of administrators as a group, the individual variety within which could matter a great deal. The most senior bureaucrat in the Department of Education, was its Secretary, Ken Jones, for many years a senior administrator.34 During the parents' campaign he had done much to establish a national role for the Department, one of his priorities being to establish the new Commonwealth Department's credibility in the states as a dispenser of federal funds. The relations of the Commonwealth with the states therefore coloured the attitudes of his Department towards education in the ACT, and it was important to them that Canberra schools should not appear to be treated more favourably than schools in the states.35 He had a

33 ibid., p. 120; Also see, P. Boreham, M. Cass, M. McCallum, 'The Australian Bureaucratic Elite: The Importance of Social Backgrounds and Occupational Experience', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 15,2, July 1979, pp. 45-55.
34 K. Jones, Interview, 3 February 1987. His first position as a senior administrator, was during 1959 to 1963 when he was Assistant Secretary in the Cabinet Secretariat. He then became a First Assistant Secretary in the Prime Minister's Department until 1966, when he transferred at that level to the Department of Education and Science, becoming Secretary in January 1973. *Education News*, 14,1, February 1973, p. 30. One of his officers, Neil Edwards, was later to describe Ken Jones as 'a very traditional sort of bureaucrat'. Interview, 9 October 1986.
35 B. Peck, Letter from Mr Willis, NSW Minister for Education, minute to Minister, Department of Education, 27 August 1973, Department of Education File 73/477, held ACTSA; K. E. Beazley, letter to, Mr Willis, 31 August 1973, Department of Education File 73/477, held ACTSA. This view is stated also in a letter from a senior administrator in the
delicate role in balancing the claims of the pressure groups and the realities of government, and during his negotiations with various agents and agencies, was cautious about deviating too far from established departmental practices, especially controls.\textsuperscript{36} His attitude to the establishment of an ACT school system was cautious. He strongly believed that the ACT should have its own teacher training institution and teaching service before it set up an independent authority.\textsuperscript{37} As an administrator, not an educator, Jones relied on his officers for advice about educational issues and maintains that officers in his department as well as himself shared the parents' vision for a different kind of education system. Nevertheless, he had the bureaucrat's belief that pressure groups did not understand Government responsibility, such as, for example, the priorities of budgeting and the necessity to follow established procedures in accounting for income and expenditure.\textsuperscript{38} Like senior administrators in other government departments, those in the Department of
Education exemplified a culture of management which influenced the fortunes of the Authority during the 1970s. Ken Jones's long experience as a senior bureaucrat, for example, clearly would have played a major part in determining the organisational structure for a new education Authority.

Thus, when the Interim Authority commenced administering ACT schools, it did not begin with a clean slate. It was already constrained by decisions made by bureaucrats within the Department of Education about its operation. The Authority was planned as a statutory authority responsible (until self-government) to the Federal Minister for Education; the same Minister advised by senior officers within his Department. In the early 1970s, there were many examples of such bodies. Most had in common a board or commission at the top; corporate status at law; separation of financial affairs from the central budget and from close Treasury control; separation of staffing affairs from the public service and from close Public Service Board control, and a substantial degree of decision making independent of ministerial control. This structure was chosen because it seemed to offer more flexibility than a conventional departmental structure which enabled it better to serve the needs of a client group in addition to meeting its responsibility to a minister. A statutory authority could decide

41 Wettenhall defined a statutory authority as an agency of non-departmental nature created by statute, more or less synonymous with statutory or public corporation.
its policy, practices and procedures within the charter specified in the establishing Ordinance or Act and was accountable through annual reports to parliament. The statutory authority structure, however, did not prevent conflicts between clients' demands and government policy. As events were to show, when such situations occurred, the statutory authority structure placed the Authority's Chief Officer in invidious circumstances.

When the governance of the new school system was being discussed prior to its establishment, Roger Wettenhall, then Head of the School of Administrative Studies at CCAE, predicted many political and administrative difficulties for this kind of organisation and remarked prophetically that it was unlikely that an education authority would be given the same measure of independence as many other statutory authorities. He believed that it would live in an area of divided responsibilities, would need to define the respective roles of the major agencies involved and reflect the balance of interests in the Authority. Wettenhall, who had come to the ACT after lecturing in public administration in Tasmania, was very critical of the government of the ACT in the early 1970s. 'I found it was administered as a colony... of the Commonwealth government.' 42 ACT education, he observed, was a colony of the NSW Department of Education. He believed that the solution was self-government, and did not consider it wise to establish a new structure for the Authority in isolation. He would have preferred a state-like structure for ACT education with some features designed to meet the special requirements of the ACT. He believed that participation should

be restricted to an advisory council, with responsibility for the executive management of schools devolved to semi-independent, representative school boards working in association with school principals and their staffs. Wettenhall acknowledges that 'at that point in time the notion of ACT self-government was generally unpopular' and his views of the appropriate organisational structure for the new school system were not accepted. 'At that time no-one was taking me seriously...'

The parents had a different conception. In their campaign for an independent authority, most people assumed that 'independent' meant independence from NSW, which of course was so. However, the campaigners wanted more than that. They wanted a statutory authority with complete financial independence so that it could run as a commercial enterprise, with the power to choose its own administrative (non-CTS) staff; that is, they wanted staff employed outside the Public Service Act. Hugh Waring comments:

There are many kinds of statutory authority...and we got the lowest form...We wanted something up there with true independence... I think the Pipeline Authority would be the highest form because it had the ability to run commercial enterprises itself... [We got] a statutory authority which merely had a Chief Education Officer appointment; there was no independence at all.

The final structure was determined by the conceptions and priorities of officers in the Department of Education, who, despite pleas from both parent and teacher groups, advised government

43 Wettenhall, op. cit., pp. 159 ff. In July-August, 1989, after self-government was introduced in the ACT, a structure for ACT education somewhat similar to that suggested by Wettenhall in 1973 was created.
44 Wettenhall, Interview, 1992.
that it was not feasible or wise for the Authority to employ its own clerical staff.\textsuperscript{45} They believed that it would be difficult for the Authority to recruit suitable staff in competition with the Public Service because separate employment for Authority staff placed in jeopardy certain privileges of Public Service membership. A public service career emphasised that to gain the breadth of experience required for career advancement, officers should expect to change positions and, if necessary, departments, as frequently as required. Commitment to a particular organisation or a position within an organisation, therefore, was not important, so newcomers to the Authority were not necessarily committed to the practices of a non-bureaucratic organisation. As Hugh Waring puts it,

\begin{quote}
... All those public servants could transfer in and out all the time and they'd have a career in front of them and life would be wonderful, and it was wonderful in the sense that they had no sense of responsibility to the Authority whatsoever. It was probably the seeds of the Authority's destruction.\textsuperscript{46}
\end{quote}

The decision that APS staff in the Authority would be employed under the Public Service Act was a major setback for the campaigners. Arguments that this would inhibit the independence of the Authority were in vain.\textsuperscript{47} Hugh Waring said:

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\textsuperscript{46} H. Waring, Interview, 3 January 1992.

\textsuperscript{47} P. W. O'Connor, Secretary, ACT Commonwealth Teachers' Federation, letters to K. E. Beazley, Minister for Education and E. G. Whitlam, Prime Minister, 8 November 1973, File 74/139, ACTSA. Peter O'Connor sent the Minister for Education a copy of a submission to the Prime Minister requesting on behalf of teachers and parents that the Authority be empowered to employ its own staff.
\end{quote}
We argued strongly for it and appealed against it, had interviews with ministers and got absolutely nowhere because the bureaucrats hate statutory authorities... They've always hated them because they are a little less under their influence, and the argument was that if the Authority was independent it would be too small to be viable; there would be no promotion - it would be a backwater...

However, the matter was never really negotiable as far as the Department was concerned; it was not convinced that employment under the Public Service Act would impose the constraints on the Authority predicted by parents and teachers. In any case, the Public Service Board's view was 'unequivocal; the Authority would be staffed under the Public Service Act'.

According to Wettenhall, there may have been other pressures on the bureaucrats.

I was a consultant on statutory authorities to the Coombs Royal Commission. I have seen a letter from Gough Whitlam as Prime Minister to Coombs, the chairman... You had the Prime Minister of the day saying to the chairman of that very influential royal commission: "I am of the strong belief, and I hope you will support me in this" (or words to that effect) "that unless there are compelling reasons to the contrary, all public officials should be employed under the Public Service Act." You would say there was pressure from the Prime Minister of the day... which wasn't related to the ACT Schools Authority..."
Wettenhall sympathised with the campaigners' wish for the Authority to employ its own staff but maintains that the Authority was given considerable independence. He points out that a department head works closely to a minister whereas the Authority was given a Chief Education Officer responsible to a national (not local) Minister, which, in effect, should have given the Authority far more autonomy than would be the case for a department. The Authority was also given a multi-member board with outside representation; a quite different structure from the usual departmental arrangements. However, Wettenhall does not believe that it would have been reasonable to expect the kind of financial independence the campaigners sought.

I think the ACT education people were very radical in what they were looking for at the time... The thing that's interested me a lot is whether you can make public bodies accountable to many different interests... Their ideas seemed very... idealistic, very impractical to me... Organisations don't work that way.50

That is of course the point that the parents were making; they did not want the Authority to be a conventional organisation. The campaigners knew that in Australia at least, organisations had never worked the way they were proposing.

Others also have criticised some of the campaigners' expectations for the Authority's structure. Di Mildern was very sympathetic for the general proposal and saw an opportunity for the establishment of 'a truly participatory system to do really good things'. However, Mildern believes that a number of people

50 Wettenhall, Interview, 1992.
were very naive when they seemed to be espousing a philosophy of complete independence for the ACT Schools Authority. Some people had a very different perception of a statutory authority. There was a belief that the Authority would not be in any way accountable to the Audit Act and would be free to use money as it saw fit and wouldn't be influenced by the Department and thought that the Department was acting out of order when it gave the minister different opinions and when the Public Service Board countermanded or influenced ideas about staffing levels and so on.\textsuperscript{51}

The comments of Wettenhall - an expert on public administration and government structures - and Mildern - an ex-teacher with practical experience in a bureaucracy at a very senior level - both highlight the very radical nature of the campaigners' proposal. It was clearly too unconventional for the system in which it was to operate.

The procedures used by the Department of Education to staff the Authority were inimical to its stated intentions. The new system was seriously understaffed and unable to carry out its essential functions without major difficulty, either in a bureaucratic or a decentralised fashion. Two administrators were transferred temporarily from the Department of Education in late 1973 to head the Interim Authority, Frank Smith, acting Chief Education Officer, and Brian Peck, former departmental representative on the Campbell Committee, his assistant. They were joined in January 1974 by seven primary and secondary teachers to work in the Office in order to carry out the

\textsuperscript{51} D. Mildern, Interview, 24 June 1986.
professional tasks of an education system.\textsuperscript{52} Another teacher, Barry Price, was already working as the head of the new Teaching Resources Centre and in 1974, a second teacher joined him to develop an in-service program for Authority teachers. Other staff were added later, but for the first year, the number of Teaching Service officers working in the Authority's Office remained less than a dozen. Only one of these teachers had any previous experience with office administration.\textsuperscript{53} Most were ignorant of general office routines or government financial procedures. While learning these, they attempted to take on the essential service and support tasks carried out by large well-staffed educational bureaucracies as well as planning for the establishment of a decentralised system.\textsuperscript{54}

Staff were not specially trained or selected to work in a participatory organisation, and the conditions under which the Authority began did not allow for recruitment of staff for an unconventional structure. In the 1970s, apart from the Chief Education Officer, appointed on contract for a specific period, both the CTS and the APS staff belonged to hierarchical career

\textsuperscript{52} Subsequently, Brian Peck was appointed substantively to a branch head position.
\textsuperscript{53} The Authority gravely lacked the knowledge and expertise of senior public service staff. For 1974, Brian Peck was the only substantive Second Division Officer appointed to the Authority. For 1975, there were two other Assistant Secretary (Branch Head) positions available, but these were filled for the entire year by officers on higher duties allowances. In 1976, an embargo on filling all Public Service positions delayed Dr John Grant's formal appointment to the Position of Head of the Curriculum Branch. P. W. Hughes, letter to J. Carrick, 24 May 1976.
\textsuperscript{54} As one of the original seven seconded teachers working in the Office of the new Authority, during the early months of 1974 I frequently observed the evidence of our lack of knowledge of public service procedures.
structures with security of tenure. Office staff were employed under two Acts, the CTS Act for the teachers, and the Public Service Act for the public servants who filled senior administrative positions and general clerical positions. The staff within the Authority therefore came from two very different cultures and had different loyalties. Both had to be involved in creating a new style in response to a different form of public control. The potential for conflict through division or polarisation of Authority officers belonging to different cultures existed from the beginning.

Both teachers and senior administrators were working for the government, but events have shown that teachers were very sensitive about their professional status; far more so than the administrators. Despite such similarities and the fact that both were working together to make the system function as well as it could, the administrators and the teachers at times saw each other very differently and there was friction. As one teacher commented who worked in the Authority's Office for some years, this was to be expected in departmental staff where one section was composed of bureaucrats who administered the system and another of teachers who were service providers. These two groups represented two different perspectives on policy decisions. The administrators gathered information and made decisions on the basis of what has been described as 'passionless

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55 The methods of transfer and promotion differed, however. In 1973, the CTS changed its methods of selection for promotion to a form of peer assessment, with emphasis on merit rather than on seniority. This contrasted with the APS structure which used both seniority and efficiency as the major criteria for promotion during the period being studied.
analysis'. The teachers saw, or heard, first hand, from visiting schools or discussions with colleagues, the personal and educational problems caused by decisions made at a distance from 'the chalkface'. For example, on the basis of the most efficient use of resources, it was possible to decide that, according to a staffing formula, once a school's enrolments fell below a certain number, the school should lose a teacher. In such circumstances, a family of several students leaving a school could mean that a teacher would have to be transferred. To the bureaucrat this was fair and reasonable if all schools were treated similarly. To teachers who know that for the loss of a few students (which might be made up by new enrolments in several weeks time) all the classes in a primary school will have to be reorganised with consequent disruption to teachers' planned programs and students' learning, the decision seemed unreasonable. The administrator's training has stressed an approach to decision-making based on rationality and a fair distribution of resources; the teacher's training has emphasised the effects of decisions on the people concerned. The two perspectives are in collision; it is very difficult for either side to understand the other's strength of feeling about such issues and friction is inevitable.\footnote{Another instance of similar problems between administrators and service providers are those which have occurred in Canberra in the last decade between health administrators and nurses. Another, rather trivial example, can be cited. Teachers in one part of the Office were accustomed to taking a half hour morning tea break in which they would sit together and discuss their work. The Office at that time had no areas suitable for this. There was no canteen area, no common rooms or suitable meeting rooms available, so the teachers arranged chairs around a table in a space in the middle of their work area and placed screens and pot plants in appropriate places to mark off the space. The conversations at these times were almost always about work related matters and the time was used constructively to solve problems and come to shared decisions. The}
Administrative staff in the Office were not necessarily there because they wanted to work in a non-bureaucratic organisation. During the interim period of the Authority, promotions and career opportunities were easy to obtain by transferring to the Authority, and in these years, officers were promoted into it in a time of expansion of the public sector. This later changed as economic constraints were placed upon government and the mobility of many officers was blocked. While younger officers with less experience of conventional bureaucracies might have been more adaptable to non-bureaucratic ways, policy and procedures were made by senior officers. In times when decisions were required quickly, it was not only easy to revert to an authoritarian centralised mode of operation, it was difficult to do anything else.\textsuperscript{58}

The practice of rotating teachers between schools and the Office for varying periods, also used in other state systems, did not change bureaucratic attitudes.\textsuperscript{59} The ignorance of teachers in the Office about forms of administration which offered alternatives to bureaucratic structures perpetuated the \textit{status quo} and negated any possibility of a challenge from that

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[58] Hedley Beare made a similar point: see H. Beare, in Hughes and Mulford, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 75.
\item[59] In the ACT version, teachers were transferred for some years into the Office for specialist curriculum roles, as well as to carry out administrative tasks.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Pfeffer offers a useful explanation for this kind of behaviour in organisations. He claims that 'instead of questioning the distribution of power, the making of certain decisions, or the following of certain rules of operation, these aspects of the organization [became] defined as part of the organization's culture and [were] seen and accepted by participants in the organization as a natural part of their membership in that particular social system'. The preservation of traditional practices in administration was reinforced by the expectation that teachers while working in the Office would accept the usual conventions of administrative practice, including secrecy, in matters being negotiated with Ministers or the Treasury.

Although the two cultures were in conflict in the Office, the teachers there became suspected by colleagues outside of having become bureaucratised; they were seen as 'outsiders' by teachers in schools, and an 'us and them' polarisation occurred. Even similar administrative tasks were seen to be different when performed in the Office and not in a school. The lack of support by Federation for its members seeking promotion while in the Office was partly explained by the attitude of teachers in schools to teachers in the Office. Ironically, the Federation, itself open to criticism as a bureaucratic organisation, was a stern critic of the failure of the Office to implement non-

60 At that time, local courses on management and administration were only beginning to become available for practising teachers in the ACT. Few teachers had studied educational administration as external students.
62 Minutes of IACTSA Meeting, 4 August 1975, Item 4, pp. 4-5.
bureaucratic practices. One year after the first meeting of the Interim Council, participants at the Annual Conference in November 1975, passed a resolution: 'This Conference views with concern the growth of the Schools Office as a centralised bureaucracy...'

The lack of Office staff meant that the usual organisational structure for a department was not established in the first year, the tasks being divided up by the few professional staff as best they could. A conventional departmental structure of four branches was planned: Curriculum Development and Research, Schools and General Policy, Special Education, Counselling and Guidance, and Management Services. As events transpired, various delays led to one position only being filled for some considerable time, that of the Operations Branch, headed by Brian Peck. For the best part of two years the Authority had only two second division officers to carry out the tasks of implementing the decisions of Council and other matters requiring policy planning and development in a new type of system that was introducing such innovatory practices as school boards and secondary colleges.

From the beginning there were delays in decentralising functions to schools. Lacking enough staff, the administrators barely managed to keep the new organisation functioning: staff were consequently overburdened and survived by adopting

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63 Minutes of ACTTF, conference, AC. 75. 11. 13.
64 For the period of this study, the branch structure remained essentially the same, although the tasks were reallocated at times, with a Planning and Building Branch added when these functions passed from the Department in 1977.
'crisis management'. This was significant, because during this period, the Federation was making its bids for power. The Federation leaders were concerned to protect their members' rights and conditions in the new administration, while inexperienced and overworked senior administrators were struggling to establish basic functions.

It is hardly surprising that, during the first two years, many things went very wrong. New schools were built and opened without furniture and such items as paper and chalk. One entrepreneurial primary principal negotiated a loan with his bank manager to purchase essential items for students to use in the first weeks of school. In the second year more teachers were seconded to help with professional tasks, but still not in sufficient numbers. A small number of liaison officers were appointed in the second year to act as communicators between the Office and school boards. They attempted to attend all school board meetings which placed heavy demands on their time. Teachers and public servants working in the Office persevered in the belief that it would not be long before additional staff would be appointed. As previously recounted, staff ceilings imposed by the government as a consequence of the economic downturn meant that the extra staff members were not appointed.

Because the Authority's administrators were preoccupied with the problems of establishing a new school system, as a group their influence on events was not immediately apparent. In the first year, a lack of administrative staff meant that

schools were largely left to their own devices. This might have been expected to have granted the desired non-bureaucratic administration of schools by default, as actually did occur in curriculum because the teachers seconded to the Office for curriculum work supported the notion of school-based curriculum decision-making; to some extent, their personal convictions were assisted by a lack of officers to carry out a centralised curriculum development role. In other administrative areas however, although insufficient staff meant that schools were left to their own devices, it also meant that the legal transfer of responsibilities to schools, particularly financial responsibilities, could not take place. Theoretically, school boards were to assume responsibility for financial management, but as no funds were made directly available to schools for this purpose, schools continued to be administered centrally in important areas. Normal government regulations designed to manage government departments were not appropriate for a decentralised school system, and the lack of staff delayed the development of new procedures to overcome the restrictions.66

By not directing resources to schools the administrators used a form of organisational power. This was the same kind of withholding power used by the Department of Education when it decided to delay passing on all the functions the Authority required to operate as intended. As Moss Kanter argues, such control over resources 'creates a monopoly on power and the effectiveness of the system is restricted.67 Jeffrey Pfeffer

66 H. Beare, in Hughes & Mulford, op. cit., p. 79-80.
67 Kanter, op. cit., p. 166.
describes this form of exercise of power as 'the discretion to control the allocation and use of the resources that the other party depends upon in order to translate the potential power resulting from the dependence into effective influence'.

Hedley Beare, the first Chief Education Officer, challenged such bureaucratic practices. Not long after Beare arrived in January 1975, he began to articulate his views on non-bureaucratic organisations. The son of a primary school headmaster, and an academic high flier from his high school days, Beare trained as a teacher in South Australia. During his student days, he demonstrated a propensity to be in the vanguard of action. He was elected President of the Adelaide Teachers' College Students' Representative Council, and then was chosen as one of two young teachers to tour South Australia on a campaign for recruiting new teachers with Albert (Albie) Jones, a future Director-General. After some years as a teacher and then an administrator, Hedley Beare earned a Master of Education degree and, with the encouragement of Albie Jones, won a Harkness Fellowship which gave him access to Harvard's prestigious Administrative Career Program and a doctoral program in educational administration. He returned to Australia with a reformer's zeal to put into practice what he had learned. 'At the end of the course we were virtually told we were missionaries. "You have got the Harvard name - now go out and do something with it."' From that point onwards, Hedley Beare 'dropped into pioneering jobs'. Albie Jones persuaded Hedley

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68 Pfeffer, op. cit., p. 99.
69 H. Beare, Interview, 8 September 1986.
Beare to take the job as chief educational administrator in the Northern Territory, from which position he was appointed Chief Education Officer for the new ACT school system.

An entertaining speaker on educational topics, Beare impressed those who knew him with his missionary approach to schooling. He saw teaching as a 'life amplifying force', and had strong convictions about effective processes in educational administration. As he was later to say:

I was never a conventional administrator. I saw organisation as something I create. It's not there to create me. If it's not doing its job and delivering the educational objectives - pull the component out that's not doing it - remodel it - and plug it back in. I used to describe myself as an anti-establishment person - I was there to keep the place honest as it were - to keep educational objectives high - I thought I had a way of doing that.70

Beare firmly believed that school principals should run the system, and that the goal of administration was to set up a non-bureaucratic system to support them and their schools. One of his major disappointments was that some ACT principals retained attitudes formed under bureaucratic administrations and behaved as though administrators were their opponents.71

It is fair to say that Hedley Beare was not typical of administrators in Canberra. The large government bureaucracies in many ways resembled the Weberian ideal-type, and Hedley Beare marched to a different drum. During his years in Canberra, he exhorted, cajoled, persuaded and encouraged the

70 H. Beare, Interview, 1986.
71 H. Beare, Interview, 1986.
Authority personnel, both teachers and public servants, to adopt a different mode of administration: democratic, participatory, devolved and non-hierarchical, in effect, what the original campaigners had in mind. In this, he was supported by another administrator who had come into the Authority by a different route, namely Terry O'Connell, a primary school principal who had been involved in the parents' campaign since his involvement on the Currie Working Party in the mid-sixties. In 1975 he transferred to the Office, later became a senior administrator and acted as Chief Education Officer during Hedley Beare's absence. Although trained in the NSW Department of Education, he was a maverick among NSW principals, having run a school which experimented with new practices despite the NSW Department of Education. A recognised innovator in education, he introduced a type of school board into his school well before such boards became accepted practice in the ACT, and encouraged teacher and parent participation in decision-making. As an advocate of non-bureaucratic practices, Terry O'Connell provided a different perspective on administrative matters from career public servants and Hedley Beare found in him a willing supporter for his ideas; as a senior administrator, he attempted to moderate incipient bureaucratic control in Authority administration until his death in 1977.

Despite the commitment of men like Hedley Beare and Terry O'Connell, their attempts to change the conventional model ran into serious obstructions. They were educators, not bureaucrats,

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72 Minutes of IACTSA, 15 March 1976, Item 1, p. 1, Item 5.6, p. 3.  
73 T. J. O'Connell, Transcript of interview taped by ACTSA Media Services Unit, c.1977; Education ACT, 2,1, February 1977, p.3.
and unaccustomed to dealing with the procedural intricacies of Canberra's administrative labyrinth.\textsuperscript{74} The great majority of administrators shared interests related to their experience as bureaucrats, their career expectations, and their desire to hold on to the power they possessed.

Other senior officers came to the Authority in a variety of ways. Brian Peck, involved in the early arrangements for the new Authority, and a senior administrator when Hedley Beare arrived, had been one of the architects of the system. An officer in the Department of Education and Science, he had occupied a relatively junior position for much of that time. As a former high school teacher in NSW he was well aware of the failings of that system. As he rose in seniority, he became closely connected with committees which influenced the establishment of the Authority, in particular, the Liaison Committee and the Campbell Committee. He transferred from the Department to work as one of the two senior administrators who were to set the new system up, and remained with it for several years, in charge of the Operations Branch.\textsuperscript{75} Having worked for many years in the Department, he crossed the boundaries of both the Department and the Authority and had loyalties to both.

Pat Thompson, a school principal seconded in 1974, remained in the Office and also became a senior administrator. Like Terry O'Connell, he brought a school perspective to a senior

\textsuperscript{74} In discussions, most senior administrators questioned whether the Authority should have been headed by an administrator rather than an educator. This was in contrast to parents and teachers, who wanted an educator, not an administrator.

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Schools Information Bulletin}, 7, 7 July 1976, p. 5.
administrative position. Another senior position, that of Curriculum Branch Head, was not filled for some time. Eventually, Hedley Beare recruited a colleague he had known in Darwin, Dr John Grant, to this position in January 1976. When the Authority became permanent and the Department of Education transferred the relevant planning and building functions, officers who had managed these functions in the Department of Education, including Neil Edwards, transferred with them.

As time passed, the complexity of the organisation grew. New functions were assumed and more staff were added. During this period also, the economic down-turn became evident and the Authority's expenditure was cut, reinforcing the administrators' emphasis upon efficiency and control. Decisions were sometimes made by those with access to the power-brokers outside the Authority itself. Hugh Waring describes an instance where a member of the Authority Council, a solicitor with 'direct communication channels to the Liberals', managed to cut through years of delay with the Ordinance to make the Authority permanent. 'It went on for years and years. It [the draft Ordinance] would come back and the Authority would patiently explain what it wanted... it would be sent back and it would come back again'. Waring relates how he and the other member of the Council were put on a sub-committee to sort this out. The other member telephoned Waring:

76 ibid.
77 Education ACT, 1, February 1976, p.7.
"I've talked to some people... about these regulations and I've managed to persuade them that they ought to stop their vacillating and put it through as the Authority said", and he said, "You don't mind do you, that I didn't get to you first?"... He'd got it through with a few minutes conversation with somebody at a sufficiently high level in the Liberal Party. I wasn't going to argue about how he did it.\(^78\)

Within two years of its establishment, there were complaints from parents and teachers that the organisation was adopting bureaucratic practices. The Chief Education Officer, becoming frustrated and disappointed, wrote of the serious problems in changing from a bureaucratic to a non-bureaucratic style of organisation, and commented that he found 'teachers trying to maintain an industrial rather than a professional interface with the organisation and the public...'\(^79\) In writing of the professional in a bureaucracy, Dr Beare stated:

Organisation man, it seems, has a suicide wish. He feverishly systematizes and codifies until he ties down the most powerful organizational or professional Guidelines with thousands of petty bonds. We are in a world of large-scale organizations, every one of which in some way has bureaucratic tendencies.\(^80\)

In 1977, when the permanent Authority commenced operating, and the government was placing tight restrictions on funding, Hedley Beare reorganised the Office. He replaced the traditional term 'Headquarters' or 'Head Office' with the designation 'Schools' Office' to make it clear that the main

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\(^78\) Waring, Interview, 1992.
\(^79\) H. Beare, 'Autonomy, Co-ordination and Accountability', in W. Mulford et al. (eds), Papers on ACT Education, 1974-5, CCAE, p. 115-6.
purpose of the Office was to service schools. To Beare, the choice of name was important because it symbolised an attitude to the role of the Office which he explained should be encouraged by an appropriate organisational structure which emphasised shared power, collegiality and cooperation at the expense of status and hierarchy, similar to those identified by Weber for undermining bureaucratic power.81 In the same year, 1977, Beare wrote a manual about organisational behaviour which he called *The Beare Eleven*, setting out eleven propositions about an educational organisation which formed the basis for its organisational style. It contrasted bureaucracy with participatory organisations and described specific administrative practices and organisational behaviours which were compatible with participatory organisations. Hedley Beare understood the resistance to a redistribution of power implied by changes in administration and candidly discussed such difficulties.82 One of the major problems in the new system, he asserted, had been the complicated and at times, bewildering devices which power sharing produced and in fact, made necessary. It is evident that he had read carefully on bureaucratic organisations and was clear in his own mind where he wanted the system to go.83

81 On the potential power of symbols, see Pfeffer, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-229. Interestingly, some years later, when the second Chief Education Officer was appointed, the name was changed to the 'Office of the Authority', representing a shift in attitude (and in practice) about the role of the Office.


Less than two years after his first article, however, he was still frustrated with the external forces he was combating. In an article, 'Roughness in the Road Ahead', he drew attention to the tendency to return to former practices, to 'old administrative frameworks'. He warned against 'creeping bureaucratisation', and of confusing 'consolidation and routinism with conservatism'. In a later article, he wrote of the restrictions placed upon the Chief Officer by internal and external pressures and demands, describing this as 'the impotence of the Chief Education Officer'. He reminded his readers that 'participatory decision making assumes that those involved will share responsibility for action' and no one person would be held accountable. 'But the major anomaly is that people tend to work the participatory structure while retaining their pyramidal form of reference. They therefore focus on the Chief Officer as the one who can take action, make decisions, or wield power, since in any other administrative arrangement he would be the one key decision-maker'. He perceived it as 'indeed an incredible assumption' that the Chief Education Officer could respond to such a flood of personal requests or be able to take action consistent with those demands because, he argued, 'participatory machinery and the bureaucratic hierarchical structure could not co-exist. The god in the machine is dead'.

85 H. Beare, 'Developments and Major Issues', in Hughes & Mulford, op. cit., p. 75.
86 Beare, 'Developments and Major Issues', in Hughes & Mulford, op. cit., p. 76.
The Chief Education Officer was constrained by structures created before the establishment of the Interim Authority. As Mildern and Mulford observed, his position was unusual because it did not 'fit neatly into traditional models of the distribution of authority and formal power'.\textsuperscript{87} The position was a statutory appointment made by the Governor-General: the incumbent was the only full-time member of the Authority Council, and the administrative and professional head of the school system. As Mildern and Mulford pointed out, the Chief Education Officer had to play two roles which at times conflicted. He was both the servant of the Authority and the supervisor of administrative and professional staff administering and operating the school system. The APS staff, including the senior administrators, were appointed under the Public Service Act and their allegiance was therefore to the government of the day, through the Minister of the portfolio in which they were located. Such allegiances could conflict with the intentions of the Council. This placed the Chief Education Officer in a difficult position relative to the Council, the Minister and his own staff.\textsuperscript{88} A glimpse of these difficulties was revealed in a letter written to Phillip Hughes in December 1976, in reply to a statement about the role Beare had taken in disputes. Beare explained his perception of his role.

Can I clarify one point in the letter. You referred to the fact that "the Chief Education officer has not been keen to involve himself in press statements on controversial issues". That is an accurate statement if the word "political" were substituted for "controversial". It seems to


\textsuperscript{88} Mildem and Mulford, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 21.
me that my role is to act as the principal adviser on professional educational matters to Council. I believe that statements which report Council's considered view, especially when they are of a political nature, should go through the Chairman of the Council as a collective State-type Minister for Education in the ACT, with the Chairman as its mouth-piece. The Chief Education Officer is therefore more in the position of the Permanent Head, who may make comment as an educator in his own right on educational and professional matters. However, he should not compromise his role by making political statements, for he thereby loses the power to act as the adviser to Council or to negotiate on the Council's behalf with groups holding diverse views on a particular matter.89

This letter demonstrates Beare's perception of his role as professional leader and adviser rather than as power broker. His perception was compatible with Ministerial perceptions of the role of the Chief Officer in government agencies. It was at variance with expectations held by the parents and teachers on Council. Their Chief Education Officer was considerably more outspoken than the usual civil servant, but they would have preferred him to be even more of an advocate for their views, even when these conflicted with official governmental policy.90

89 H. Beare, letter to P. Hughes, 12 December 1976, File 76/1168.
90 A decade or so later, well beyond the period of this study, the third Chief Education Officer reviewed the role of statutory authority councils: 'In my view, there had been a tendency in general for members of statutory authority councils to regard themselves as members of appointed government... Councils of statutory authorities are established to manage institutions on behalf of governments at the policy levels proper to those statutory authorities. Some councils allow themselves to come to be regarded as a kind of people's parliament quite often arriving at cross purposes with the government that appointed them. That is at variance with the Australian democratic system, which is a matter of ballot boxes, and not of appointed councils and committees'. E. Willmot, 'Times have changed in ACT schools, and will go on changing', Canberra Times, 8 February 1988, p. 2.
Beare's administration had less than six months before the government began to impose very stringent economies upon a system which had barely begun to enjoy the success of establishment as a new and different system. Despite his attempts to develop a non-bureaucratic organisation, Beare was frustrated by structures which had been created before the Authority was established: the ambivalence of his role, the pressures for conformity of the governmental context in which the Authority was situated, and the cultural background of the staff provided.

He attempted to reorganise the Office, but the changes did not produce the expected results, although considerable progress in changing the administration was made in comparison to other state education departments and to the system it had replaced in 1973: not usually recognised until independent observers reported upon the noticeable differences. Others also challenged the administration. One was Ros Kelly during the year she chaired the Authority Council. According to Hugh Waring:

The year or two she was chairman really was an advanced year for us... She actually kept asking those bureaucrats questions. "Why not this and why not that?" She swung the balance of meetings towards the teachers and the parents and towards community stuff... I'll never forget some Ministerial meeting with Minister for Education Carrick... Well Ros stood up to Carrick remarkably well. I was

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91 For example, Neal & Hird, Professional Staffing for Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory Schools, Canberra, 1976, p. 32. The Legislative Assembly's Inquiry which challenged the changes made by the Authority were an indication that a noticeable difference was visible.
absolutely filled with admiration for her... She was a good chairperson for the time she was there.92

For many people, however, the progress towards participation was too slow. This subject is taken up in the next chapter.

92 Waring, Interview, 1992.
CHAPTER FIFTEEN.

PARTICIPATION BLOCKED

In 1967 the planners' vision had included participatory decision-making incorporated into the decentralised organisational structures. In practical terms, participation for parents and teachers meant opportunities for involvement in decisions which would affect the schooling of their children; at the school level where important decisions could be made about a school's staffing, finance, and curriculum, and at the system level where consultation could occur about the system's policy decisions. The expectations had been that all important decisions about education would be made on the basis of wider consultation, thus providing better information to administrators which in turn would contribute to better education in the schools.¹ While the teachers and parents who sought participation in decision-making during the planning stage were committed to this involvement, the views of other stakeholders on this issue were not known. Administrators had to establish and service the system structures to make this participation possible, and parents had to be willing to become involved at least at the school level if not at the system level.

There had been those who had warned of likely difficulties in putting this scheme into practice, and the unwillingness of teachers to allow parents to be involved in appointing teachers

¹ This was substantiated in later comment. See, Australian Council of State School Organisations, A Parent Perspective on Secondary Education, Submission to the Commonwealth Schools Commission on the Secondary Education and Youth Policy Project, July 1986.
to particular schools has already been recounted. Wettenhall, for example, while welcoming the opportunity for 'a real measure of citizen participation in policy making and administration,' added, 'my own experience leads me to doubt that many Australian teachers genuinely want this participation'.

His doubts are confirmed by other evidence. Prior to the Authority's establishment, ACT school principals were divided over the merits of participation on school boards. Brian Dooley, in a later study on the Secondary Principals' Council, wrote that the

SPC was in the middle of this turmoil. From the tranquillity of the omnipotent and protective mantle of the district inspector of the sixties, the principals' council was thrown into heated discussions and disharmony. Several principals wanted to go back to NSW with great haste, while others supported the changes, and some were more concerned over the apparent democratisation of their roles as principals. Who wanted a committee to run their schools?

Don Anderson, an ANU academic who had been involved in the struggle to establish the Authority, also warned of the danger of schools becoming centres of conflict between groups of administrators, teachers, civic representatives and parents.

Nevertheless, despite these cautions, the participation of parents and teachers in major decisions concerning schooling was perceived as fundamental for the new system.

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5 Currie Report; Neil-Radford Report; Campbell Report; Hughes Report; Information Statement No 1, Guiding Principles and Aims of
Despite such evidence that not everyone welcomed participation, the Authority was established in a general political climate which supported participation. In 1973 the Karmel Report had contained statements which espoused devolution of powers to schools through participatory decision-making structures, recommending 'less rather than more centralised control over the operations of schools'. The Commissioners stated that their belief in this grass-roots approach to the control of schools reflects a conviction that responsibility will be most effectively discharged where the people entrusted with making decisions are also the people responsible for carrying them out, with an obligation to justify them, and in a position to profit from their experience.6

While such statements also contained ambiguities and contradictions, their lack of definition allowed for acceptance by readers with varying views and philosophies about education.7 The value of the principle of participation was reiterated in many Schools Commission publications during the 1970s; in one case, the report of the National Conference on School Based Decision-Making held in Sydney in June 1977 stated that the ACT school system was founded on the principles enunciated in the Karmel Report.8

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6 P. Karmel, (Chair), Schools in Australia, AGPS, Canberra, 1973, p. 9.
The Currie Working Party envisaged school boards as the formal structures for participation at school level, with equal representation of parents and teachers, acting 'essentially as advisory bodies, directing their efforts to promote the interests of their schools'. As early as 1967 the planners were concerned to assist the proposed Authority to 'seek by every means possible to counteract its own centralising tendency' and to 'constantly seek new ways to extend the area of delegation to local control'.\(^9\) The members of the Hughes Panel further defined and extended the concept of decentralised participation, recommending that school boards should determine broad school policies, budgeting and control of funds, employment of professional and non-professional staff, maintenance and minor extension of school buildings. Financial powers were particularly important.

We believe that government schools should be at least as free to budget and expend public funds as are the independent schools. We see absolutely no reason why individual schools should not prepare triennial and annual budgets concerning staffing, recurrent and capital costs...\(^10\)

It is doubtful whether senior officers in the Department of Education believed in going quite so far. Alan Foskett, addressing the ACT Chapter of the Australian College of Education in September 1973, described it as 'an unprecedented development in participatory decision making'.\(^11\) Before the Authority was established, administrators within the

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\(^9\) *Currie Report*, p. 45.
\(^10\) *Hughes Report* p. 67.
Department of Education had decided the manner of devolution to school boards; they delegated the powers of school boards from the Interim Authority Council and made it clear from the start that boards would be obliged to operate within the framework of a government statutory authority in order to ensure that the Authority would be properly able to account to the government for the operation of the school system.\textsuperscript{12} Hugh Waring acknowledges the importance of the administrators in the early 1970s and believes they 'were biased in favour of change', but declares that the structure of the Authority was taken further than departmental officers had expected.

They had their private program which didn't include what we finally got...There were submissions made to [the Hughes Committee] and I think that [the Hughes Panel's] findings were more liberal than a lot in the department wanted.\textsuperscript{13}

It is interesting to note that parents, teachers and administrators did not question that some central controlling functions should be retained. No other possibility was explored, for example, that individual school boards could be established as separate statutory authorities which, technically at least, would have given them complete autonomy. Under such an arrangement, the schools could not have been managed as a system, and coherence was important for the early planners. The Currie Working Party members stated that 'the education system should not be a highly centralised one, nor one which


\textsuperscript{13} Hugh Waring, Interview, 3 January 1992.
conforms to a rigid pattern though it should certainly be a coherent one, in that it should provide logical development from one stage in education to the next, as well as correlation between the various sections...14 A completely decentralised system would of course have challenged the interests of senior administrators for whom control was important, as has been argued above. No such arrangement was discussed in the *Hughes Report*, and there is no evidence that the idea was ever considered at any time.15

The formal structure established for consultation at the system level was a ten-member representative Authority Council with representative standing committees. In 1977, when the permanent Authority was established, the Minister expanded the new permanent Council to fifteen members which altered the balance of power on the Council so that power blocs were rendered difficult.16 It was widely believed that this was intended to reduce the influence of the Federation members who voted as a group according to Federation policy.17 Peter O'Connor believes that the change in representation changed the

14 See *Currie Report*, especially pp. 4-12, quotation, p. 10.
15 A completely decentralised system would have seen each school board established as an independent body with little or no central control. Many years later, Hedley Beare claimed this was a logical consequence of removing the Authority Council. *Canberra Times*, 29 January 1988, p. 2.
16 The ACT Advisory Council had pressed for the Authority to be placed under the jurisdiction of the Minister of the Capital Territory, but was unsuccessful when the Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, in December 1972, specifically apportioned territorial education to the Minister for Education. B. Peck, Assessment Panel Report, Minute to R. A. Foskett, 26 June 1973, Department of Education File 73/4777, ACTSA.
17 This view was commonly shared by many people in the ACT and is supported by Mick March in 'Policy Development for Public Schools in the ACT', in A. Hone et al. *ACT Papers on Education 1982-3*, CCAE, 1983.
tone of the decision-making. 'When the Authority was blown out to 15 then we had our package of six to seven reliable votes and by that stage the others had to organise against us and it was clearly divided. It was a divisive period, year after year. You were seeing the substantial minority... being over-ruled'.  

The three teacher representatives carried over from the interim Council, two still from the inaugural meeting, Dempster and March. Hugh Waring also carried over and was the only remaining parent from the Working Group on the Authority. Peter O'Connor observed: 'I think the parents as years went by had more and more problems matching the quality of the initial group; their initial group was extraordinarily capable and committed and it's never been the same since'. Hugh Waring does acknowledge that during the campaign there was a 'flowering of able people', but believes that throughout the long time he was involved in the Authority (until the mid-eighties), 'a certain number of people kept rising to the top who were outstanding people'. It is interesting to note Peter O'Connor's anxiety about membership balance and voting allegiance and contrast this to Waring who claims that the parents 'weren't thinking about parity. [We] wanted genuine representation, to have a true vote, be accepted as equal, but we didn't care whether numbers were stacked against us or not.' There was clearly a different interpretation of participation and political awareness between the two groups. This is confirmed by Peter O'Connor who describes his understanding of what participation meant.

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18 P. O'Connor, Interview, 10 September 1986. All quotations by O'Connor are from this source.
I felt it [participation] was going to be all-embracing; teachers were going to be on boards and on the Authority and there was going to be no more stupid NSW type of decision-making... We were going to be out of the clutches of the politicians and they were going to provide a reasonable amount of funds - a one-line kind of funding - and then a representative group were(sic) going to make decisions based on public argument and commonsense.

In reply to a question on the parents' role, O'Connor continues: 'We obviously wanted them to have a major role on the Authority, but we were quite clear we weren't ready for anything major at the board level.'

The new Ministerial nominees seated at the Council table at the first meeting in January 1977 were John Dallas, Executive Director, ACT Employers' Federation; Charles McDonald, Secretary, ACT Trades and Labour Council; Richard Campbell, ANU; Jean Miller, Assistant Secretary, Department of Education; and Bruce Töpfer, solicitor. Phillip Hughes, Canberra College of Advanced Education, a former Ministerial nominee, remained on the permanent Authority Council. The Legislative Assembly had two representatives, Ros Kelly and Trevor Kaine. The Federation's representatives were Margaret Dempster, Mick March and Ian Alder who had replaced Max Badham on his retirement. The Canberra Pre-School Society sent Harold Huntley; Hugh Waring and Anthony Ketley remained as the two P&C representatives.

19 The ACT Advisory Council unsuccessfully had sought greater representation on the interim Authority Council on the grounds that it represented no sectional interest and that its members were the only democratically elected people in the Canberra community.
On this new Council, there were representatives of interests rather than members of the community at large: scarcely a voice for 'ordinary' people. With one or two exceptions, the members were professionals (or aspiring professionals) some quite young, and there were no long-time female campaigners like Catherine Blakers and Kath Abbott. The Council was typical of a Board of Directors, which in a sense it was, but this meant that participation on it was limited to an elite. In 1974, the Council committees were first established as ad hoc committees, but Hedley Beare's concern about the proliferation of committees led to their reconstitution into six standing committees on which the P&C Council, the Legislative Assembly, the Pre-School Association and the Federation were represented in the same way as on the Council. There was only a slight chance for ordinary members of the community at large to become involved as co-opted members, or as elected representatives from the P&C Council. In effect, participation for most people essentially had to occur at the school board level.

One of the Interim Council's first moves in 1973 was to define the role of school boards, including their interaction with the Council. Draft documents defining the roles of boards and teachers and parents in the decision-making structures, 'Guidelines on Schools Boards', were distributed in November 1973. The final versions of this document and a second which provided further details about the roles and responsibilities of the partners in system decision-making, Guidelines on
The Council also investigated ways of preparing parents for their new role. A Working Party on Community Education about Schooling was established in 1974, to recommend ways to identify and meet requirements for community education. Its membership included representatives of the Council of the Authority, the P&C Council, the Federation, the Canberra Pre-School Society, the Public Library, the Centre for Continuing Education, and sections of the Schools Office. One of its most active members in the early stages was Kath Abbott. It met for more than two years, received seventeen submissions, and initiated a number of activities. These included preparing information brochures about the system, arranging for a two-page news-feature entitled, 'Education in Canberra' to be published in a local free newspaper, setting up a shopfront information service in the summer holiday, arranging seminars for school boards, and broadcasting on local radio. This committee reported on its activities to the Council in March 1977.21 The first of fifteen recommendations was that the Authority should further facilitate the devolution of responsibility and the participation of parent members in

21 Its terms of references were: 1. Identify and give priority rating to needs. 2. Make recommendations as to how these needs can best be met taking account of: a. human and material resources presently available in the ACT education and general community, ways of disseminating information about these resources and providing guidance on their use; b. facilities required at individual schools, regional centres, and centrally, to meet needs and house material in the short and long term; c. the role of the Authority and its provisions particularly in relation to the involvement of parents in curriculum development programs and workshops.
decision-making. Another was to establish a unit within the Office to identify parent community needs and to initiate and coordinate programs for community education about schooling. Most recommendations, however, required Office staff for their implementation, and the report coincided with severe cuts in staffing; the recommendations, therefore, were not acted on. In the administrators' priorities, participation obviously was not high enough to warrant the use of scarce resources.22

Very early in the Authority's life, the Council identified communication as crucial for effective participation. It started by issuing press releases about the business of the Council, then began to distribute edited minutes of the Council meetings.23 Communications between people in the Office and the schools were frequently poor, as administrators were not accustomed to explaining their actions or decisions to people outside the Office. They were not used to the delays in decisions which consultation imposed. The shortage of staff and the requirement for speedy decisions led to the Office sometimes being criticised for side-stepping consultations with parents and teachers. Again, administrators' priorities were the determining factor.

22 B. Price, (Chair), Report of the Working Party on Community Education about Schooling, ACTSA, 1977. Submissions to this committee included those from: ACT Council of P&C Associations; Primary and Secondary Principals' Associations; ANU Library; CCAE Library; Curriculum Resources Centre, CCAE; Canberra Evening College; Centre for Continuing Education, ANU; Department of the Capital Territory; Department of Education Library; Education Research Unit, ANU; NCDC; National Library of Australia; Women's Electoral Lobby; Radio 2CA.
The Federation, by contrast, placed a very high priority on establishing an effective communication system. Executive meetings were held weekly, Council meetings usually monthly, and the minutes were distributed promptly to schools. Each school had a Federation representative responsible for keeping teachers up-to-date on union issues. Regular bulletins, broadsheets, and circulars were distributed to schools, dealing with the day-to-day issues of teaching conditions, and were usually the prime source of information about policy decisions, planned or implemented. In the absence of effective communications from the Office, the Federation acquired a de facto role of dispatching current news throughout the system so that teachers' first source of information presented the union's viewpoint. By the time the Office informed teachers of its position on contentious issues, teachers had been briefed already and had formed their opinions, which were then difficult to open for reconsideration. For example, teachers were kept well informed throughout the clashes over parent selection of staff, the secondary restructuring matters, and the Neal-Hird review, not by Office communications, but by Federation circulars and bulletins.

In 1975, to improve communications with the schools, the Authority introduced school liaison officers to sit on school boards.24 The idea came from Cath Blakers who argued for the need to relay and interpret accurately to the schools, requests, requirements and decisions of the Authority; the need to encourage contacts between schools and local

communities; the need for coherence and the interchange of ideas between schools of various levels of education ... between schools of the same levels ... involving school boards, staffs and students.25

So broad a conception, however, was beyond the resources available. Two teachers acted as liaison officers in 1974, and in 1975 the number was increased to ten with an intention to add more later should the idea prove successful. They soon became heavily used, but their success spelt their downfall as workloads which included attendance at school board meetings increased steadily. The government's imposition of staff ceilings prevented a further increase in numbers. Eventually, when the Office was reorganised into regional teams in 1977, further staff cuts forced the Office to use these positions to carry out administrative work, and the system lost an effective form of communication.26 Once again, Office staff determined the system's priorities and participation lost.

The draft guidelines for school boards issued by the Council in November 1973 described boards with power over school policy and curriculum, recurrent expenditure and staffing: in the revised guidelines these functions became purely advisory.27 The powers to be given to school boards were to be

set out in the Act to establish the Authority, initially expected
to be passed some time in 1974. Plans for ACT self-government
led the government to change from an Act to an Ordinance, so
that the school system would therefore eventually come under
the control of a Territorial administration. Within the
Department of Education, and once it was established, within
the Interim Authority, there were those who stated that the
Authority should be established by Act rather than Ordinance,
as an Act was perceived to be less vulnerable to change. It was
also believed that an Act symbolised the importance of the
establishment of the Authority.28 Then delays occurred in
drafting, and the legislation to establish the permanent
Authority was not passed until the end of 1976. However, in
mid-1974, the first of several draft Ordinances was circulated to
schools.

In August of that year, Ken Jones, secretary of the
Department of Education, wrote a long article for Canberra
Times readers which set out to explain the provisions of the
draft Ordinance on such matters as selection of staff, curriculum
decisions, and finance and budgeting for schools. He reminded

28 K. N. Jones, letter to G. Lindell, Attorney-General’s Department, 3
August 1973, Australian Archives (ACT): CRS A1642, Department of
Education File 73/4524; K. E. Beazley, letter to L. Murphy, 5 November
1973, Australian Archives (ACT): CRS A1642, Department of Education
File 73/4524; P. W. Hughes, Chair, Interim ACT Authority Council,
letter to K. E. Beazley, 12 November 1973, Australian Archives (ACT):
CRS A1642, Department of Education File 73/4524; L. Murphy,
Attorney-General, letter to K. E. Beazley, 29 November 1973, Australian
Archives (ACT): CRS A1642, Department of Education File 73/4524; K. E.
Beazley, letter to A. Barnard, Acting Chair, Interim ACT Schools
Authority, 25 January 1974, Australian Archives (ACT): CRS A1642,
Department of Education File 73/4524; P. O’Connor, General Secretary,
ACTCTF, letter to F. R. Smith, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Interim
ACT Schools Authority, 22 August 1974, Department of Education File,
74/139.
readers that requirements of the Treasury and the Auditor-General would have to be met by the Authority when receiving, disbursing and accounting for monies. He warned that accountability provisions governing the delegation of financial authority to schools needed careful consideration and stated that such delegation was likely to be limited at first. He explained that 'the activities of school boards represent a novelty to Commonwealth administration' and that it would 'be up to the parties concerned to develop administrative arrangements which recognise the role boards are intended to play but yet provide due safeguards for the expenditure of public funds'. Jones also warned that both the Authority and the boards would have to determine their policies and actions 'against the background of attitudes and desires of teachers both as professional people and as members of industrial organisations'. Direct lay participation in the activities of the Authority through membership of school boards was forecast, with the rider that, 'in the longer run the attitudes of the community at large will be a most important factor in conditioning the activities of the system'.

This acted as a signal to action for parents frustrated by the failure to transfer decision-making powers to school boards. Several days later a sharp rejoinder was published by the Canberra Times. The authors were two CCAE lecturers, Frank Morgan, senior lecturer in education and head of the media studies centre, and Roger Scott, principal lecturer in politics.

30 ibid..
Both were members of the same school board and had been chairpersons. The *Canberra Times* featured their very long letter under the headline, 'Autonomy? What Autonomy?'. They maintained that Jones's article had given, 'not information about autonomy, or freedom, or democratic responsibility, but rather an arrogant insistence that certain bureaucratic controls will prevail'.

They claimed that its theme was subordination rather than autonomy, speculated that reasons for the change to an Ordinance from a promised Act could be connected with their perception that Jones appeared to be 'mainly concerned with the power of his department', and suggested that he sought 'to undermine the confidence of the public in their ability to govern and administer their own schools', so as to 'leave the bureaucrats and the teachers free to call all the shots and lead a quieter life'.

Castigating Jones's 'centralist tone' and concern for power, they claimed that 'the independence originally conceived as essential to the effective and responsible operation of the authority [had] been lost'. They claimed that school board members sought three things in the legislation which had been present in the *Hughes Report*: first, 'definite power' to ensure that the principal and staff would be in fact responsible to the board for the implementation of its policies; second, 'more definite responsibility and discretion' over funds; third, a clearly defined role in the formulation of Council and Authority policy. They concluded by reminding readers that the voters of Canberra had been promised an autonomous statutory authority and local participation in its operation but had received instead a draft

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32 *ibid.*
Ordinance which 'subordinates elected community representatives to central bureaucratic direction, and abrogates the hope of any semblance of real autonomy for the schools of the ACT'. In a journal article also, Morgan discussed the retention of bureaucratic practices. He suggested that Authority staff

were naturally more familiar with parent and citizen involvement being through P&C Associations and other peripheral, ancillary or advisory bodies, rather than at the centres of power and decision-making. It was therefore not surprising that matters such as funding, staffing and stores requisitioning were seen as matters for direct officer to officer negotiation and the Old Mates Act, rather than policy-related matters for determination by Boards.

Thus, within the first year of the Authority's administration, strong doubts were being expressed about the efficacy of the participatory structures. The Morgan and Scott letter was followed by other public expressions of anger and disappointment. On the following day, the Canberra Times editorial proclaimed, 'The Mixture as Before', asserting that the Ordinance entrenched 'the authority of the Minister, not that of the people, which was the sole object of the exercise', and that the Authority would be regarded as 'just another agency of the Commonwealth power'.

Less than a week after Ken Jones's article, the P&C Council protested to Kim Beazley, Minister for Education, that the draft Ordinance did not provide an adequate framework for

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33 *ibid.*


implementing the Currie, Campbell and Hughes Reports which had 'been accepted in principle by the citizens of the ACT'. The P&C Council regretted that the Ordinance 'takes as a principle the delegation of responsibility downwards rather than upwards. For example, only residual powers and functions are vested in school boards and only residual moneys are allocated, making them little more than an administrative arm of the Authority'.

P&C branches protested about the failure of the Ordinance to deal satisfactorily with participatory structures, especially powers to school boards. One stated that the Ordinance would lead to the Authority becoming 'handicapped by entanglement within Public Service structures and procedures' and foresaw 'great impediments to any real educational progress within our new system'. Another board claimed that the Ordinance eroded the autonomy of the Authority and was not in keeping with the spirit of the provisions laid down in the Hughes Report.

In its official statements the Authority Council held to the original intentions for financial responsibilities to be delegated to schools. In December 1974, it still proposed to decentralise

36 H. Collis, President, ACT Council of P&C Associations, to Mr Kim Beazley, Minister for Education, 13 August 1974, File 74/105, ACTSA.
37 J. R. Richards, President Campbell High School P&C Association, letter to Chair, Legislative Assembly Health and Education Sub-committee, 13 July 1975, File 76/3806, Department of Education files.
'considerable decision-making to the school level', stressing the participation of parents, teachers, students and community groups in making decisions. The Council acknowledged that all had legitimate and valid interests in the educational process and the central problem is to recognise these interests in appropriate ways. This involves not only the creation of administrative structures but also the development of support services for those structures. It is important that the planning and provision of schools makes allowance for a two-way interaction...39

When parents began to complain about their difficulties with participating effectively on school boards, a meeting with about fifty chairpersons of school boards was arranged for May 1975, and Phillip Hughes and Hedley Beare discussed points of criticism and difficulty. Suggestions for information documents were implemented within the next year, but these did not address the important problems which lay behind the dissatisfaction of school boards: the lack of real powers devolved to boards from the centre, in particular, control over financial resources.40

A year after Ken Jones's article, matters had not improved. Another P&C Council President complained to the Minister about the role of school boards in the latest draft of the Ordinance, objecting strongly to the limits placed on parent

40 Edited Minutes of IACTSA, 15 September 1975. H. Beare, Meeting with School Board Chairpersons, Note to Council, 15 May 1975, March papers.
participation in staffing and the restrictions of powers to school boards, stating

a unique opportunity for education advancement in the ACT has been frustrated by the Minister for Education and his Department... The Ordinance clearly fails to translate into practice the aims and objectives for ACT education which rose spontaneously from the 'grass roots'... Whenever questions of independence, autonomy, flexibility or devolution of decision-making arose whether of financial, administrative or educational affairs, the decision has been either negative immediately (flexibility in the spending of funds) or apparently positive only to be lost by later attrition (powers of school Boards). These results are the result of Departmental influence...41

A fortnight later, members of a P&C Council committee published an article in the Canberra Times based on the letter to the Legislative Assembly's Health and Education Sub-Committee, describing the situation as 'considerably worse', repeating similar arguments and referring again to the letter written to the Minister a year earlier in August 1974 which had protested against the 'ineffective and bureaucratic practices' of the Interim Authority. 42 The anger and disappointment of parents was unmistakable. Many school boards and P&C associations wrote protesting against the terms of the draft Ordinance. From North Ainslie School Board and P&C:

It is the considered opinion of the representatives of these bodies that the provisions of the Ordinance in their present form indicate an erosion of the autonomy of the ACT Education Authority and are not therefore in keeping with

41 Quoted in T. Hemmings, letter to Chair, ACT Legislative Assembly's Health and Education Sub-Committee, 15 July 1975, Department of Education File 76/3806. Original punctuation and syntax retained.
42 ACT Council of P&C Associations Committee, 'A unique opportunity frustrated by the bureaucracy', Canberra Times, 29 July 1975, p. 2.
the spirit of the provisions originally laid down in the Hughes Report.43

From Campbell High School P&C Association:

The Authority now proposed promises to be so handicapped by entanglement with Public Service structures and procedures that we foresee great impediments to any real educational progress within our new system... The Authority must negotiate with the NCDC for its building [powers and functions]...44

And from a member of the public:

...[the] whole tenor of the ordinance puts an emphasis on the dominance of the Authority and the department over local and elected representatives on School Boards - the theme is control rather than accountability. Power is centralised and bureaucratised...

... In conclusion, may I repeat that the school board system is a joke among the more objective members of the community'...45

The legislation to establish the permanent Authority was enacted late in 1976. The details concerning school boards revealed that the protests had been unsuccessful and that there had been considerable modification of the recommendations in the Hughes Report. Regarding financial management, the Hughes Report's recommendations had been diluted to a provision which stated that boards had the power 'to determine

44 Dr J. R. Richards, President, Campbell High School P&C Association, letter to clerk, Standing Committee on Education and Health, ACT Legislative Assembly, 13 July 1975, Department of Education File 76/3806.
45 R. D. Scott, BA, DipPubAdmin, letter to clerk, Standing Committee on Education and Health, ACT Legislative Assembly, 7 July 1975, Department of Education File 76/3806. (No reference by the writer of membership of school board, P&C association or school community.)
the purposes for which funds made available for the school [would be] expended'...46

There are some grounds for suggesting that the structures for participation suited the skills and talents of the New Middle Class who devised them and, perhaps, were daunting to other groups of people. In June 1974, Frank Morgan, senior lecturer in education and head of the media studies centre at the CCAE, and co-author of the letter criticising Ken Jones's article in the Canberra Times, surveyed school boards and published an account of his experiences as a board member and chairperson as well as the results of his survey. The findings, confirmed by other studies also, showed that those surveyed were very dissatisfied with the role of school boards and the possibilities for the future.47 Morgan's survey attempted 'to ascertain the type of person who had become involved in the interim boards, and how they perceived their role'.48 He discovered that about two-thirds of board members had previously been executive members and office bearers in their P&C associations. A majority of board chairpersons had also been officers of several other organisations. Morgan asked whether this information suggested that these people belonged to an energetic, enthusiastic minority, unrepresentative of the general parent

46 ACT No. 59 of 1976, Schools Authority Ordinance 1976, Section 38, 1 (b).
48 F. Morgan, 'Involvement in a Schools' Authority', in W. Mulford et al. (eds), Papers on A.C.T. Education 1974-5', CCAE, 1975, p. 90. The survey does examine ethnic, or other characteristics.
community, and described the characteristics of a typical Board chairperson as

male, between 35 and 44 years of age. He was either an academic or other member of the professional and administrative group, earning between $14000 and $17000 p.a. (July 1974). He had at least a bachelor's degree, with either a postgraduate diploma or higher degree. And he had on average six years experience as a teacher (28% over 10 years and 4% over 20 years). He was thus hardly either representative of the general community (in which only 9% are graduates) or laymen (in terms of his experience of formal education).

... Boards might be said to be less representative of the general community... People in professional and administrative occupations comprise only 24% of the ACT workforce, yet they make up 65% of school board members, whereas sales and clerical occupations with 37% of the workforce contribute only 12% of Board members.

Males outnumbered females on school boards, one hundred and seven to sixty nine and on most boards, by more than half. Only twelve per cent of boards had more women than men and four per cent had no female members; it is also interesting to recall that men largely designed the formal, participatory structures.\footnote{There is no data which examines the reasons why this was so.} Morgan asks an important question apparently not raised by the campaigners:

whether people from professional and administrative occupations can perceive and adequately represent the needs and aspirations of the other members of the community, which was one of the problems with bureaucratic and professional control of education.\footnote{Morgan, 'Involvement in a Schools' Authority', pp. 90-91.}

Morgan's question concerns opportunity for all parents to participate in the formal structures. While comments about 'parent apathy' are often used to excuse low attendance at
meetings in schools arranged by teachers or other parents, Morgan's findings suggest that only certain kinds of parents became involved to any great extent in the formal decision-making structures of a school. Most of the information about this topic is anecdotal, however, and evidence which examines this aspect of participation is scarce. One possible explanation is that many parents, especially female parents or guardians, do not have the desire or the confidence to take advantage of the opportunities available with the form of participation envisaged by the original planners.51 It is also possible that many parents were deterred by the manner, conversation and skills of New Middle Class people.

Difficulties with effective participation were evident also in other spheres. The standing committees were an important vehicle for participation at the system level. By the end of 1975 it was evident that they were not working because their roles and functions had not been made clear. Questions were asked in Council about their functions, powers and the way they were serviced, Cath Blakers arguing that these questions had to be addressed if the committees were not 'to drift into confusion and ineffectiveness'.52 The heavy load of the policy-making burden being carried out by committees serviced by an understaffed Office emerged during discussion, after which the

51 This issue is raised by Frank Morgan in 'Starlings, Ants and a Schools Authority', June 1974. There may be some truth in E. E. Schattschneider's oft-quoted statement: ... 'the flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with an upper middle-class accent'.
Council decided that the committees were not merely advisory to the Office but had the responsibility for formulating policy recommendations for submission to the Schools Authority. The need for additional staff to service them was described as urgent. However the government's staff ceilings meant that the additional staff required to help them work more effectively could not be recruited.

In 1977, Morgan and Scott again examined participation in the formal structures of the ACT school system and suggested reasons for its failure. Using the example of their own school board, they described the gains and losses of parents in the struggle for participation, claiming that developments in the system had confirmed their worst fears. They alleged:

there has been an unwillingness to confront some basic inconsistencies between the lip-service to community control and the reality of centralised political power - centralised in the Authority's management structure, in the federal bureaucracy, in its Ministers and also in the trade union federation which claims the loyalty of the teaching service.

Based upon their 'sometimes bitter experience', they contended:

the forces of centralism will always prevail despite the rhetoric. Whenever the chips are down - particularly when "professional" or "bureaucratic" values are under challenge in terms of public accountability - then these forces will prevail. This has been most clearly demonstrated on occasions when the trade union interests of teachers have been set against the interests of the school community, including both parents and students.

53 Minutes of IACTSA, 3 November 1975, Item 4, pp. 1-2.
Whether it is local involvement in choosing staff most suited for "their" school or consultation before teachers resort to strike action or industrial boycott of committees of enquiry into staffing, the board has lost effective power in the face of trade union exclusivism.\textsuperscript{55}

There seemed to be some grounds for this claim. Towards the end of the 1970's when effective participation in the formal structures was as elusive as ever, Phillip Hughes acknowledged that, 'It is one thing to have a commitment to the participation of parents, teachers and students in decision-making. It is a more difficult thing to bring that commitment to reality'.\textsuperscript{56} By this time, decisions that parents on school boards could make were limited to general policy decisions about school philosophy, curriculum, recommendations for building maintenance; devolution of funding responsibilities was being extended but was limited to oversight of budgeting and expenditure of funds allocated to schools within certain very defined limits. The wider powers sought in the Hughes Report for school boards, especially control of school funds and employment of staff were as elusive as ever.\textsuperscript{57}

Although parents and teachers complained about the continuity of bureaucratic administration, there was in fact some discernible movement towards a participatory and decentralised administration. This is borne out by the number

\textsuperscript{55} ibid., p. 25.
\textsuperscript{56} P. Hughes, 'Issues for the Future', in P. Hughes & W. Mulford (eds), The Development of an Independent Education Authority: Retrospect and Prospect in the Australian Capital Territory. ACER, Hawthorn, Victoria, 1978, p. 105.
\textsuperscript{57} Hughes Report, 5.5, pp. 65-66. This Report had sought similar freedom for government schools as the independent schools to budget and expend public funds. 5.7, p. 67.
of protests which arose whenever changes were made to the organisational structures. Parents and teachers reacted with suspicion to administrative changes made in the Office, frequently interpreting them in the worst light. There is no doubt that having struggled to bring about a school system designed to operate with a non-bureaucratic administration, however imperfect, the successors of the original parents' group, drawn from the same social strata, were very determined to preserve what they believed to be its important features, the decision-making structures and the administrative arrangements.

The Canberra public was particularly well equipped to be effective in its scrutinising of organisational changes which might creep into the Authority to obstruct participation. The ACT community was unique within Australia, not only for the social characteristics usually mentioned but because so many of the public were familiar with the operations of federal bureaucratic government through their work. This knowledge provided citizens of Canberra with contacts in the many areas of policy making in government so that they were well informed about impending as well as current government policies, and possessed the expertise to circumvent or manipulate bureaucratic procedures. A familiarity with bureaucratic practices could imply a predilection for their use; alternatively, forced to practice them in their work, the Canberra citizens might well have a contempt for their use, especially when used against them in their role as members of the public.
Such expertise led some members of the community to be particularly critical of proposed changes to any part of the administration, even those intended to foster participatory, decentralised decision-making. The years of the permanent Authority are remarkable for the number of occasions when proposed changes to administrative structures were contested on the grounds that they were attempts to return to bureaucratic practices. Sometimes these fears were more imagined than real, but the frequency and strength of the protests suggests significant anxiety about the likelihood of a return to a bureaucratic administration.

Dr Hedley Beare himself was responsible for a major outburst when he proposed changes to the Authority's decision-making structures in 1977. Upon taking up his appointment in 1975, he was amazed to discover that over forty *ad hoc* committees existed, some major some minor, to carry out the business generated by the Council. He first reduced these to six standing committees, then late in 1976, had these reviewed by an external consultant, Dugald Monro, who found that, while the committees increased the number of individual viewpoints heard from within the interest groups represented, they did not significantly increase the range of interest group or other outside opinion considered by the Authority. 58 The review also revealed that the membership of the standing committees contained only three people from outside the ACT education

58 H. Beare, A Committee Structure for the ACT Schools Authority, 4 February 1977, in background papers to ACTSA meeting, 21 February 1977, March papers. A copy of the consultant's review report could not be located.
system or tertiary education, so that, although the committees could have provided greater public access to the Authority, in practice they did not do so. Participation, therefore, was limited to a restricted section of the community with the skills and the education to take advantage of it; substantially, to sections of the New Middle Class.59

The review reinforced the Chief Education Officer's opinion that changes were required. At the end of 1976 he decided to alter the committee arrangements to make the administration of the permanent Authority more effective. He quickly discovered that it was very difficult to undo, without protests, structures which he had previously set up. He proposed to create five four-member committees (two Authority members and two officers) as advisory bodies to the branch heads to relate closely to the organisational structure of the Office, and three representative consultative committees to overarch the functional areas of the Authority 'so that each functional unit would fall within the sphere of influence of one of the committees'.60 Vociferous protests promptly arose from teachers and parents. At the same time as these changes were proposed, the Federation representatives on the Authority Council were informed that their school support was to be

59 H. Beare, A Committee Structure for the ACT Schools Authority, 4 February 1977, in background papers to ACTSA meeting, 21 February 1977, March papers. The review also discovered there was duplication of work between committees, extensive delays in decision-making, and that the committees were hampered also by being involved in day to day operational matters.
60 ibid., p. 12
reduced by fifty per cent. The Federation expressed its 'astonishment' that Hedley Beare should submit to the Authority a proposal for radical variation in long-standing arrangements designed to achieve effective participation of our Vice Presidents on the Authority with no prior reference at all to the Federation or to the Vice Presidents themselves.

The Federation countered his proposal with an alternative standing committee structure which virtually endorsed the status quo with some few cosmetic changes. The P&C Council also criticised the proposal, contending that it struck 'at the very heart of the A.C.T. system' and had 'the potential for a return to the worst features of bureaucratic control which characterized the previous administration before the Interim Authority'. A paper prepared by Harold Huntley on behalf of the P&C Council Executive and the Pre-School Society stressed that a participatory framework was 'so fundamental' that minor inconveniences, or even major problems, should be 'accommodated'. Eventually, Hedley Beare's scheme was

61 The Schools Office provided additional staff to the schools of Federation members of Council to compensate for their absences on Authority business. It is not clear from all the evidence, whether the reduction of support for Federation members was connected to the proposed restructuring of the committees. If not, it was very untimely, and a major tactical blunder.
62 K. Lawler, President, ACTTF, letter to H. Beare, 4 February 1977, March papers.
63 P. W. O'Connor, General Secretary, ACTTF, Executive Report Supplement, 4 February 1977, March papers; Minutes of ACTSA, 7 February 1977, Item 6, pp. 2-4.
64 C. Mobbs, President, ACT Council of P&C Associations, letter to P. Hughes, Chair, ACTSA, 10 December 1976. March papers.
65 H. Huntley, Discussion Paper and Proposals for the Establishment of a Committee Structure within the ACT Schools Authority, 17 February 1977, in background papers to ACTSA meeting, 21 February 1977, March papers.
defeated at a Council meeting; the number of standing committees was reduced by one.\textsuperscript{66}

The grounds of the criticisms were dubious. The consultative structures were to be modified to create a more manageable administration and address complaints that they overtaxed the slim staffing resources of the Office. One must ask whose interests were served by retaining the former structures? For whom was participation intended? Articulate, educated parents, and interested teachers? The New Middle Class? Conversely, whether Hedley Beare's proposal would have allowed more parents access to the decision-making structures is debatable. Hugh Waring regrets the lack of wide participation in the system.

We were disappointed in the fact that as time went on and we did succeed in getting a genuine influence in many ways ...the population itself seemed to be declining in their ability or wish to participate in community affairs and it became a me-too sort of generation where they looked after themselves.\textsuperscript{67}

When one remembers that Waring answered the question 'whom do you represent?' by explaining that the representative few customarily spoke for the silent majority in democracies, ambiguity in the meaning of participation is once more illustrated.

Hedley Beare's proposed plan to restructure the Office was also strongly criticised although this lay within the Chief

\textsuperscript{66} Minutes of ACTSA, 21 February 1977, Item 5, pp. 3-4; 7 March 1977, Item 5.
\textsuperscript{67} Waring, Interview, 1992.
Officer's prerogative. His intention was to rationalise staff and resources in order to realise the 1973 expectations for the system and he undertook to brief school boards fully on the new arrangements. The proposed changes, which included altering the duties of school liaison officers, were intended to overcome such problems as: duplication of effort; inefficiency and waste which had occurred in the change from centralised to school-based operations; the difficulties of sharing power among all the agencies and pressure groups and the consequent escalation of negotiations among them beyond anything imagined when the system was set up; the inadequacy of support services; the problems of communication; and the confusion of roles in participation now that the former administration had been replaced by one with many more decision points. Sections of the anti-bureaucratic scrutineers in the government school community were once more roused to protest, as this letter from a school board to Phillip Hughes illustrates. Apropos the expectations about participation stated by Gough Whitlam in September 1973, when he announced the decision to establish the Authority, it said,

Unfortunately for those members of Interim School Boards who still cherish this hope, it appears that decisions are being made without such participation. We refer in

68 B. Peck, Authority Office Reorganisation - Liaison with School Boards, 25 February 1977, March papers; H. Beare, Note to ACTSA, 21 March 1977, March papers; Minutes of ACTSA, 7 March 1977, Item 3, pp. 2-3. Hedley Beare proposed to change the school liaison officers roles so that instead of a limited number of these people attempting the very difficult task of attending every board meeting, they became members of teams which serviced a group of boards in a region. The liaison with the Authority would be provided by officers drawn from across the Schools Office who would each become a member of one school board.
particular to the proposals for the restructure of the A.C.T. Schools Office.69

This time, Hedley Beare went ahead.

In 1980, however, when he once more attempted to rationalise the committee structure, he was again attacked for restricting participation. The P&C Council wrote:

It is of great concern to this Association that proposals to curtail or abolish some of the Standing Committees of the Schools Authority are currently receiving consideration.

One of the fundamental principles upon which the ACT education system was founded was that of community participation. From a parent point-of-view, one of the ways in which this ideal found expression was through the establishment of Standing Committees...70

Hedley Beare's reply expressed surprise at the Association's belief that he was abolishing the work of standing committees, 'since it was my initiative that they were set up in the first place'.71 Eventually, after discussion at several meetings, the Council decided to retain the existing Standing Committees.72

Another change that Hedley Beare wanted to make in 1980 was to reorganise the Office after losing a number of CTS positions, removing the regional teams, the subject of much criticism when introduced previously, and establishing Regional

69 H. S. Bazley, Chairman, J. T. Biles, Executive Officer, [Principal, letter to P. Hughes, 2 March [1977]. (The letter stated the wrong year in its date).
70 H. Sigley, letter to H. Beare, 3 March 1980, File 79/59, ACTSA.
71 Hedley Beare, letter to H. Sigley, 21 March 1980, File 79/59 ACTSA.
72 Minutes of ACTSA, 30 June 1980, Part 2, Item 1, pp. 5-6.
Councils of Board Chairpersons.\textsuperscript{73} Once more there were protests.\textsuperscript{74} One school board chairperson stated that this 'would be construed as being contrary to the expressed philosophy of school autonomy'.\textsuperscript{75} On the face of it, the proposed Regional Councils were another decentralised structure, but the critics took a different view. The protests appeared to have been initiated either by school principals who suspected an attempt to by-pass them, or by citizens who feared the initiative would be removed from the school base to the Regional Councils. As one P&C Association stated, their concern was for 'the unilateral decision of the ACT Schools Authority to withdraw its direct representation on school boards', harking back to the desire for 'a participatory system which would avoid the 'we' and 'they' attitudes that prevail in the States systems and the mistakes consequent upon the planners of the system planning in a vacuum at a remote central location'.\textsuperscript{76} So strong was the opposition that the notion of Regional Councils, too, was scrapped for the time being.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{73} B. Peck, Proposed Arrangements for Liaison with Schools and Boards in 1980, minute to School Principals and Board Chairpersons, 11 February 1980, File 80/296, ACTSA.
\textsuperscript{74} C. M. Ellison, Executive Officer, [Principal], Urambí School Board, letter to Brian Peck, 26 February 1980, File 80/296, ACTSA; A. G. Brown, Chair, Forrest School Board, letter to B. Peck, 31 March 1980, File 80/296, ACTSA.
\textsuperscript{75} P. de Chazal, Chair, Lyneham High School Board, letter to B. Peck, 14 March 1980, File 80/296, ACTSA.
\textsuperscript{76} H. Plunkett, Secretary, P&C Committee, The Hawker School, 16 April 1980, letter to Senator John Knight, File 80/296, ACTSA.
\textsuperscript{77} G. Henkel, President, ACT Council of P&C Associations, letter to R. Lee, Chair, ACT Schools Authority Committee on Standing Committees, 27 March 1980, File 70/296, Lee papers; P. Thompson, Director, Schools Branch, letter to C. Ifeka, Chair, Campbell High School Board, 3 June 1980, File 80/296, ACTSA; The notion of regional meetings of board chairpersons was adopted some years later, but organised so that school principals were able to attend.
Richard Campbell also perceived Canberra as 'a peculiar society', 'an artificial society', 'a deliberate artifact', and 'highly dangerous' in which to live because its 'very existence is for politics'.78 As Richard Campbell told the Minister for Education after a contest over school location, 'if there is one issue that turns this town on it is education'.79 This was not entirely accurate: the topic of education did not turn people on so much as a threat to their priorities in education. In other words, what stirred parents to action was a likely disruption to their children's schooling. Above all else, that somewhat limited section of government-school parents active on school boards wanted to remain part of the decision-making process.

Thus, from 1974 to the end of 1980, parents and teachers demonstrated a fear of returning to the old centralised bureaucracy verging upon the morbid. At times, parental suspicions led them into inconsistency, where they criticised changes as potentially bureaucratic, then later protested against the removal of these same structures, complaining that what was to replace them was, in turn, bureaucratic. Indeed, participation appeared at times to oppose any change, even one which had been previously contested; participation risked becoming reactionary.

However, while the anti-bureaucracy vigilantes may have been over-zealous at times, there were enough signs that

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78 R. Campbell, Address on the Occasion of the Meeting of the Schools Authority in Honour of Hedley Beare, its Founding Chief Education Officer, 5 December 1980.
79 ibid.
participatory procedures in the administration were not firmly established or operating effectively. Some delays can be laid at the door of reluctant administrators. However, questions remain about the commitment to participation by parents of all classes and ethnic origins. In the kinds of decision-making structures which were created, no thought was given to achieving effective participation by parents who were housebound, ethnic, uneducated, inarticulate, disabled, Aboriginal, or poor: it was enough for a privileged few to be involved, claiming from their class perspectives that they represented parents as such. Because the original planning process had not set criteria for the kinds of decision-making structures, much was left to later decision-makers, chiefly male bureaucrats. Nor were the problems which emerged helped by the ambiguity of terms like 'participation' and 'community'. However, the situation changed markedly when decisions were made which affected students in particular schools, for example, the threat of school closure. Many parents were then roused to protest. This form of parent participation is the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER SIXTEEN.

SCHOOL CLOSURES, SITE SHARING

During the period being studied, no issue stirred teachers and parents to action more than the threat of amalgamating or closing schools.¹ The Federation feared loss of promotion positions and held to a policy of neighbourhood schools.² Parents fearing any disruption to the schooling of their own children reacted strongly against any new arrangements, whatever the reason for them. In the late seventies the issue of amalgamation or closure of schools provided yet another occasion for mistrust to be aired, not only because of the decisions made but also because of the manner in which they were made.

The issue arose from government demands for cost-cutting. Senior administrators believed it was essential for the Authority Council to decide where funds should be cut in order to avoid being directed by government to make cuts in areas it considered essential, and identified one area in which savings could be made: the cost of maintaining excess building space. At this time, Canberra was changing demographically, affecting the school enrolments; the words 'declining enrolments' were to haunt principals and their staffs for the next decade or more. Young families were establishing themselves in the newer, cheaper, outlying areas where schools were crowded, while schools in the older suburbs were dropping in enrolments as

¹ Recent events in the ACT suggest that this issue still has the power to stir people to action.
² Minutes of ACTTF, executive meeting, 24 March 1981, E. 81. 3. 67(6.1)
children grew past school age. The administrators claimed that the cost of maintaining large schools with dwindling populations was draining resources needed elsewhere, seeing growing inequity in the increasing gap between costs per student between schools in older and newer suburbs; small schools began to appear a luxury tinged with injustice. Administrators concluded that both economy and equity demanded the closure or amalgamation of schools with declining enrolments.

Government restrictions on expenditure placed them in the situation where, in order to meet the Minister's demands for savings, decisions must be made which would not be popular with Canberra's parents and teachers. They faced the dilemma of having to make decisions about where to achieve savings in an organisation whose structure was still incomplete, while at the same time being expected to follow the system philosophy for non-bureaucratic administration. The methods they chose to solve this dilemma demonstrated both their level of commitment to the principles of democratic participation as well as their understanding of the importance of this issue to the government.

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3 R. P. Sadler, Director of Planning, Some Effects on the ACT Government School System of the Stabilisation of Enrolments, Paper prepared for a conference of senior ACT administrators, October, 1979, Lee papers. The paper begins with a statement pointing out that the situation had changed for the ACT: it faced a period of stable or decreasing enrolments, due in part, to a national situation of falling school enrolment levels due to population ageing, and in part to the economic downturn in Canberra and a deliberate policy on the part of government to restrict the level of public service employment. The introduction also pointed out that while overall Canberra's population was increasing slowly, some areas of the city's enrolments were growing rapidly while in other areas they were as rapidly declining. The paper presented graphs and tables of figures and statistics to illustrate the points made in the introduction and to analyse trends by population areas; NCDC, Canberra Schools in the 1980s, Technical Paper 26, May 1978, pp. 8-12.
school parents and teachers. The issue of school closure was to make very obvious the difference in the agendas of the major stakeholders' groups, especially when disputes arose over the manner of decision-making. The mistrust that parents and teachers felt for administrators became overt, and the vision of cooperative participation faded. Perhaps more than any other issue, the contests over threatened school closure and the Ainslie Primary School-School Without Walls (SWOW) dispute exposed the cracks in the stakeholders' commitment to the original vision and divided the new system into opposing camps.

This contest began in April 1979, when a paper prepared by senior administrators on enrolments in secondary schools was tabled at an Authority Council meeting, providing statistical information about enrolments, demographic projections, and the costs of running smaller schools, and making a case for closing several secondary schools. The situation was complicated by variations in enrolment pattern, with growth continuing in some areas, rapid decline in others. Council faced very limited choices; decisions had to be made whether newly built schools should open and whether older, resource-expensive schools should close.4 Senior administrators could not have failed to realise the importance of this issue to parents whose children attended the schools concerned. According to conventional practice, the Minister would be expected to play a part by supporting and announcing the final decision, and in these particular cases conventional practice prevailed and standard bureaucratic decision-making procedures were followed. In the end, the

4 Minutes of ACTSA, 23 April 1979, Item 6, p. 3.
decision-making process was to have an adverse effect upon the outcomes.

In terms of their culture, where decisions were made by senior administrators in bureaucratic secrecy, the approach adopted by the Authority administrators was impeccable. Once the policy was decided, if it was necessary to inform the public, an official announcement was made. Ministers were thus protected from the embarrassment of disclosures and disputes about decision-making, especially when they made decisions contrary to advice from administrators or advisory bodies. In this particular case, the Minister was to be provided with advice from the Authority Council, which if accepted, would be followed by an official announcement. Therefore, in accordance with convention, the senior administrators urged upon Council the importance of strict confidentiality. This put the Council members in a predicament in a system set up under the banner of participation. Council meetings were confidential, although it was the practice to release information of varying kinds to the public later. Various patterns of open and closed meetings had been tried over the years: at this particular time the practice was for alternate open and closed sessions.\(^5\) This issue was to be discussed in a closed meeting. In an earlier matter, the Minister had protested that the Westminster tradition was not being followed when it was debated in the press, and had made it perfectly clear to the Authority that a deviation from standard

\(^5\) For example, an unsigned paper was written on this topic, Note to Council Members re Opening Meetings of the Schools Authority to the Public, n.d. for Authority Council Meeting held 7 March 1977.
practice would not be permitted.\textsuperscript{6} Obviously, the democratic processes of a participatory, decentralised organisation could not be strictly followed with this external constraint upon an Authority with its own democratic legitimacy. There was another complication. For much of the time this issue was being decided, the Authority was without its Chief Education Officer. Hedley Beare was absent overseas for six months and Brian Peck acted in his place at this and subsequent Council meetings until 9 July 1979.

The Council discussed the paper at length. All Council members were very reluctant to accept the advice that some schools would have to close, and were concerned about the confidentiality which was being urged upon them. Some were particularly unhappy about the implications for the principles of consultation. Hugh Waring, as P&C Council nominee, remarked that the public reaction had been greatly underestimated, that the paper should be discussed, and that it was highly undesirable to keep it confidential. The Council was also concerned that the boards of schools which might be closed should be consulted and there was prolonged discussion on how to juggle the requirements of confidentiality and consultation.

Eventually the meeting decided that two new high schools would not open in 1980, and agreed to prepare a 'very carefully drafted press statement' which explained the difficulties faced by the authority and described the problems caused by

\textsuperscript{6} See ch. 11 above.
projected enrolments, but which drew no conclusions. This paper was intended to be used by members in discussion with the group they represented, after which the Council would discuss the issue again.7

Before these arrangements could be carried out, however, the contents of the paper were leaked to the Canberra Times.8 The Council was accused (correctly if unfairly) of holding secret discussions, and faced with immediate and full discussion, both in the Canberra Times and at a public seminar.9 As a power play, the leak was most effective, alerting the public to the issue, gaining wide support and establishing a strong power base for future action.

Thus, the Council's attempt to arrange for a paper to be released for discussions with organisations backfired. Speculation grew about which schools were to close, and the level of the parent communities' anxiety was raised. Publicly expressed anger about the secrecy of the discussions and the lack of consultation made matters worse, providing a focus for the accusations made from 1976 to 1980 by parents and teachers that the Office was backsliding from democratic participation into bureaucracy. The Canberra Times joined in the criticisms, finding ample material for news items. It initiated

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7 ACTSA, Secondary Schools in Canberra, Press Release, 30 April 1979, Lee papers.
8 The source of the leak was not disclosed.
9 A. Trezize, Secretary, Narrabundah College P&C Association, Coordinator for Save Our Schools Action Group, letter to Senator J. L. Carrick, Minister for Education, 15 May 1979, File 79/608, ACTSA. Of course, as we have seen, some members of Council believed such secret discussions were unavoidable. Minutes of ACTSA. 7 May 1979, Item 3, pp. 2-3; ACTSA, Press Release, 4 May 1979.
the debates with a straightforward report on the Authority's press release which revealed that the most severe decreases in enrolments were expected to be in the inner north and south of Canberra. That report was published on a Tuesday. By the end of the week, more information had been leaked and the secondary schools threatened were identified in the press. The *Canberra Times* reported:

Staff of Narrabundah College who learnt of the school's possible closure on Thursday, are incensed by what they consider an underhand attempt to present the school with a *fait accompli* before it has an opportunity to put its case.11

Matters were not improved when the newspaper reported that the acting Chief Education Officer, Brian Peck, had stated that the matter was confidential to the Council, and that Narrabundah or any other school would not be informed before it had reached some sort of conclusion.12

Another report appeared in the *Canberra Times* on the following day, a Sunday. The Member for Canberra, Mr John Haslem, stated that he would resign from the Parliamentary Liberal Party, and possibly from his seat, if Narrabundah College were closed. In his view it was amazing that the Authority could make a decision without close consultation with the boards and senior staff of the schools involved. He accused the Authority Council of playing 'a cheap political game with the parents and children of the older areas of Canberra', and asserted that the proposal had been put forward to embarrass the government.

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10 *Canberra Times*, 1 May 1979, p. 1.
12 *ibid.*
and divide the community. He included a tilt at the Federation by describing the Authority as 'dominated by people with views sympathetic to the Teachers' Federation' who were pushing the option of closing smaller schools, a comment which was the exact opposite of the federation's view. The inaccuracy of his statements did not make them less inflammatory; they stirred a general aversion to secrecy in government and fanned the flames of anger about bureaucratic decisions made without consultation. A contest had begun.

The issue continued to be discussed in tones of hostility in the press the next day. A letter to the editor from Narrabundah College and Telopea Park High School P&C and school board members was published which criticised the secrecy of discussions. The authors expressed a particular concern about reports that confidential submissions had been prepared which would be discussed at a closed meeting of the Authority, and said that they had

written to members of the Schools Authority to make the point that, in keeping with the principle of public participation in education enshrined in the Schools Authority Ordinance, we require that before any decision is taken on this matter, an opportunity be provided for informed public debate.

The same issue carried another report on the school closures question. The general secretary of the Federation, Ian Alder, was quoted as saying:

13 *Canberra Times*, 6 May 1979, p. 3.
the federation is unequivocally opposed to the propositions, [to close some schools], which are based on no consideration of educational needs or community wishes. We are preparing to mount a campaign in co-operation with all concerned groups to ensure that the proposals are not implemented.\textsuperscript{15}

The same report stated that the Federation and the P&C Council had expressed public opposition to closures. The paper pointed out that, as the Federation had three representatives on the fifteen-member authority and the P&C Council had two, the support of only three others was required to defeat the proposal. Power plays, in short, were being planned, to the extent that voting alliances on the Authority were being appraised. Once more teachers and parents required help to gain wide support in order to achieve their ends and once more the local press came to their aid. As in the parents' campaign of the 1960s, the \textit{Canberra Times} was lining itself up on the side of the parents and was demonstrating once more that it was a powerful ally.

Other groups were also forming alliances. The members of the Federation wanted small schools to continue, partly, because school closures represented a loss of staffing positions, especially promotion positions. Parents also supported the continuation of neighbourhood schools; they claimed that small schools provided better learning environments that outweighed the advantages of the broader curriculum available at larger 'impersonal' schools.\textsuperscript{16}

The concept of neighbourhood school was also related to a desire

\textsuperscript{15} P. J. Cameron and ten others, letter to editor, \textit{Canberra Times}, 7 May 1979, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{16} Evidence of this is provided by a study carried out several years later: ACTSA & Commonwealth Schools Commission, 'Choice of Schools in the ACT', ACTSA, 1985, pp. 274, 278, 282.
for equity in keeping with the pressure for social justice which had increased since publication of the *Karmel Report*: it meant that all children had the same access to a school in their suburb. The retention of the neighbourhood school concept, therefore, was important to teachers, and to parents who sent their children to the local government school.

The *Canberra Times*, as in days of old, continued to report regularly on the latest power plays. On the following Tuesday, the Authority Chairperson, Ros Kelly, while saying that the Authority 'had been directed by the Government to keep recurrent spending per pupil in the ACT to "zero growth"', attempted to reassure the school communities that no decision had been taken by the Authority, and they would be consulted on how the Authority would cope with resource restrictions. After a closed meeting of the Council, she announced that a discussion paper would be published in that week to be followed by a public seminar three weeks later. Labor's leader in the Legislative Assembly, Peter Vallee, was reported as saying that the Council should insist on independent arbitration over its

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18 Some children with special needs were enrolled at schools other than the local school if the neighbourhood school was not able to meet specific needs; for example, some disabled children were enrolled in schools with appropriate architecture. In exceptional cases, students could also be suspended or expelled from their neighbourhood schools. Parents also could send students to government schools outside the local neighbourhood school, and at least a quarter of Canberra's children attended non-government schools; ACTSA & CSC, op. cit., pp. 2-3.
19 Ros Kelly joined the Authority as an ACT Legislative Assembly nominee in September 1976, and was elected to chair the Council in February 1978.
funding from the government to avoid becoming a catspaw for government financial policies. Concerning John Haslem's threat to resign, he remarked, 'I think he's providing the Schools Authority with an incentive'.

On Wednesday 9 May, the Canberra Times' editorial let loose a barrage against bureaucratic secrecy. It began in hostile fashion.

It is not in the nature of most public authorities to relish open debate. "Peace at any price" is an ancient bureaucratic principle, even when that peace is to be purchased at the price of obsessive secrecy and effective denial of the democratic principle. The positive value of disputation has been demonstrated in Canberra during the past few days, however, in the furore that blew up when this newspaper reported that the ACT Schools Authority planned to meet in closed session on Monday to consider a confidential report on the future of a number of Canberra's schools.

Continuing in this vein it argued that

the obsessive secrecy with which the operation was surrounded until the weekend, and the unspecific promises of subsequent consultation advanced by the authority's staff, suggest that the fears that the community might be presented with a fait accompli should not be written off as paranoiac.

Acknowledging the Authority's predicament with a Minister who 'it is understood is displeased when he learns of its intentions through the Press', the Canberra Times stated, 'with all respect', that

21 Canberra Times, 9 May 1979, p. 2.
22 The practice of bureaucratic secrecy was challenged when the Freedom of Information Act was passed in 1982.
23 Canberra Times, 9 May 1979, p. 2.
if a choice is to be made between the Minister's sensibilities and the open conduct of Canberra's educational business, the authority should rearrange its priorities. Of course it is in the awkward position of being subordinate to the Minister: that is a serious flaw in the Ordinance that should be remedied forthwith'.24

The Federation meanwhile confirmed its opposition to the proposals for closure and sought full and comprehensive consultations prior to any 'consideration of action'.25 School principals also protested. The Secondary Principals' Council issued a press release, declaring that 'Not all options have been explored' and complaining 'that economic considerations have outweighed education values'.26

The Authority organised a public meeting for 30 May 1979. On the previous day the Canberra Times published another editorial, 'Schools are for people'.

To close long-established schools in a city where population changes occur at the stroke of a bureaucratic pen is to cut off a bold experiment in community-based education to spite a short-term economic face.27

Immediately adjacent to this was a feature headed, 'Why Narrabundah College Matters'. The opening sentence echoed the editorial, declaring, 'Education is about people'. Also in this edition was a report of a protest meeting at Watson High School, where the Chairperson of the Watson High School Board

24 ibid.
25 Minutes of ACTTF, executive, 22 May 1979, E. 79. 5. 17.
26 Canberra Times, 25 May 1979, p. 3.
27 Canberra Times, 29 May 1979, p. 2. This meeting at Watson High School was held prior to the public meeting on 30 May at Campbell High School. The Watson High School protest meeting drew 750 people.
described the Authority's demographic and economic case as a set of 'tattered rags'. His anger was apparent. 'Without prior consultation, on the flimsiest of evidence and on the basis of highly questionable assumptions about educational philosophy a sentence of death has been passed by the schools office on this school. How dare they!', he demanded.²⁸

On the day of the meeting a large advertisement signed by the President of the Narrabundah P&C appeared in the Canberra Times with the headline, 'Join Us Tonight'. The advertisement exhorted the community to 'speak out at the Schools Authority's public meeting' and suggested that members of the audience should ask such questions as: 'Why kill one of Canberra's best secondary colleges?' and 'What's wrong with a college of 500 where students can be treated as individuals and not factory fodder?'. Letters to the editor were largely devoted to the issue under the heading, 'The threat of closure hanging over ACT schools'.²⁹ On the night, the Campbell High School hall was filled to capacity and the meeting was stormy, with angry speeches from the floor, and student groups armed with banners urging the Authority not to close their schools stood at the back of the hall. Ros Kelly, in the chair, began by tabling student petitions from the three schools identified as likely to close, Watson and Deakin High Schools, and Narrabundah College. She declared that schools belonged to the community and that the various public meetings had confirmed her view that none should close.³⁰ With

²⁸ ibid.
²⁹ Canberra Times, 30 May 1979, p. 2.
³⁰ Here, as in many other cases, the precise meaning of 'community' is not clear; for example, it is not certain whether Ros Kelly means
such a statement from the Chair of the Authority Council, supporting the protests against the Council's earlier actions, the implications for alliances in subsequent power plays were indeed interesting.\textsuperscript{31}

At the subsequent Authority Council meeting, the public meeting and its implications for future action were discussed at length. The Council eventually passed a resolution which stated its regret at naming the schools in the public discussion paper, assured those schools named that their future was in no way prejudiced in future deliberations, rejected all current proposals for school closures and promised to take no action which would require closing of schools without prior consultation with school boards and P&C associations. A committee was formed to plan and carry out actions in the desired direction. A working party, with parent representation, was established to consider the problems of declining and shifting enrolments and the effect on the school system, to report no later than June 1980.\textsuperscript{32} At the following Council meeting, Ros Kelly reported that the Minister was very critical of the composition of the working party and of the length of time allowed for the preparation of its report, and had stated that he thought its outcome was obvious.

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\textsuperscript{31} Canberra Times, 31 May 1979.

\textsuperscript{32} Minutes of ACTSA, 11 June 1979, Part 2, Item 1, [p.4]. As a consequence of this decision, a discussion paper was distributed the following year. ACTSA, Open, Close, Amalgamate?: The Problems of Declining and Shifting Enrolments and Their Effects on ACT Government Secondary Schools, Working party on Secondary Enrolments, February 1980.
The Authority had been tested in this issue and from the teacher and parent points of view, had failed. The parent and teacher organisations from which Council membership was drawn had opposed the closures and the interests of members of Council were obviously divided on the issue. When confronted with a potentially contentious issue, the administrators had advised the Authority to maintain bureaucratic secrecy without exploring other options. This had not only backfired, but had so focused the community's opposition that school closure was a dead issue for many years.33

Less than twelve months later, the administrators were to be tested further, and once again bureaucratic secrecy proved to be a major source of parent antagonism. The issue concerned a proposal by the Office to move the students from an alternative secondary school, the School without Walls (SWOW), into premises adjacent to the Ainslie Primary School. SWOW had been developed on the initiative of a group of teachers, students, parents and CCAE lecturers; an unofficial start was made in late 1973, and in 1974, SWOW became part of the new Authority. Its mission was to provide a 'means by which much of the student learning that now takes place in the essentially limited confines of the normal school classroom, will take place in the community at large and will be direct, involving, [sic] self motivation and self rewarding'.34 Once SWOW was established,

33 In the end, no secondary school was closed until almost a decade later. Watson High School closed in December 1987.
34 Submission for a Canberra Community School, Appendix A, prepared by many people from the School Without Walls, P. 1, quoted in D. Mildenh, 'The School Without Walls: A Case Study', in W. Mulford et al. (eds), Papers on ACT Education 1974-5, p. 13. The meaning of involving was: the school was to be 'involved in the community and
its community lost no time in leasing a former Catholic school in the suburb of Braddon, but no final arrangement about the termination of the lease was made at the time. By September 1977 the SWOW Board became anxious about the need for more permanent accommodation: it wrote to Hedley Beare about the issue, suggesting that unused space in the former Ainslie infants building might be made available. The Ainslie site met the requirements for a central location close to the public facilities used by SWOW and reasonably close to public transport.

The matter was passed directly to the Planning and Building Branch of the Schools Office, the same branch which had carriage of the closure of schools issue. The matter was then managed by the Office according to standard bureaucratic practice. A request for capital expenditure in the Forward Works section of the Annual Estimates for 1979-80 was sought for the conversion of the Ainslie infants building. There appears to have been no discussion with the Ainslie School Board about the intention to move SWOW into the adjacent building which had once been part of Ainslie school and was still considered by the school to be their premises. This lack of consultation was to be the cause of

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35 R. A. Foskett, Territorial and Liaison Branch, Department of Education, letter to Monsignor J. P. Kelly, Secretary, Diocesan Catholic Education Office, 21 August 1975, File 79/35, ACTSA.
36 R. Mazza, Executive Officer, SWOW School Board, letter to Hedley Beare, 20 September 1977, File 79/35, ACTSA.
37 P. Thompson, Acting Director, Operations Branch, Schools Office, letter to Chair, SWOW School Board, 20 December 1977, File 79/35, ACTSA.
38 Such requests are normally confidential.
39 An examination of the minutes of school board meetings does not indicate any discussions or other communications between Authority officers and members of the Ainslie Board.
much later anger. As in the schools closure issue, relations with the educational community deteriorated considerably as a result of adhering to conventional bureaucratic secrecy.40

Previously in 1978, the Minister had requested more information about that particular budget item, remarking that since SWOW had been first established, secondary colleges were offering a wide range of courses in Years 11 and 12. He queried the continuation of SWOW, and requested a review in order to decide its future, the unmistakable implication being that should the review be unfavourable, no money for the renovating of the Ainslie premises would be forthcoming. A review process was therefore commenced.41

SWOW was not the only agency which sought to use the Ainslie infants building. While the review was proceeding towards its ultimately positive conclusions, the Ainslie Board was approached by other prospective tenants.42 Ignorant of the Authority's plans for SWOW, the Board agreed to allow the Noah's Ark Toy Library (a privately run resource-sharing centre for disabled pre-school children) to move from one part of the

40 A report carried out by the School and Community Standing Committee in 1980 stated that Authority senior officers had informed the Ainslie School Board at least as early as May 1976 of the possibility that SWOW might have to be accommodated in the Ainslie building. ACTSA, 29 July 1980, Item 3. In 1976, a different person was principal at Ainslie school, and a different generation of primary parents would have been serving on the school board. Such information would not have been likely to have been remembered or passed on during that period of four years, especially as there appears to have been no written record of this discussion.
42 Minutes of ACTSA, 22 January 1979, Item 6, p. 4.
Ainslie building to a larger area. A close and mutually beneficial association between the school and the Toy Library developed. A proposal to establish a Questacon Science Centre to provide a hands-on activities centre for young people with funds from the Schools Commission supplemented by private sponsors, was also given permission by the Board and by the Authority Council to use the building in question. The opportunity to consult with the Ainslie Board on the future use of the building does not seem to have been taken, although school board meetings on both matters were attended by officers from the Office, or, when they were unable to be present, the minutes were sent to them. Ainslie Board and the Office corresponded on the use of the premises, but no information of other plans for the building appeared to have been given to the Board.\(^{43}\) As late as June 1979 an Authority officer attended discussions on the Questacon proposal, but no mention was made of a possible SWOW occupancy.\(^{44}\)

In the end it was not an Authority officer who told Ainslie school about the decision to move SWOW to Ainslie but a member of SWOW community who telephoned the principal to seek permission to visit the infants building prior to moving in. Not surprisingly, this news was received with consternation.\(^{45}\)

\(^{43}\) Minutes of Ainslie School Board Meetings: 6 February 1979, 16 March 1979, 29 March 1979, 10 April 1979, 3 May 1979, 30 May 1979, 31 May 1979, 19 July 1979, File 76/1745, ACTSA.
\(^{44}\) Minutes of Ainslie School Board Meetings. 14 June 1979, File 76/1745, ACTSA.
\(^{45}\) Minutes of Ainslie School Board Meetings, 19 July 1979, File 76/1745, ACTSA.
During October and November 1979, Authority officers and members of the Board met to talk about the move, and a discussion was held about a paper to be presented to an Authority Council meeting.\textsuperscript{46} According to usual procedures, the paper was not shown to the Board before the meeting, so the Board decided to circulate its own paper to the Council, as the Board was not confident that its views would be represented in the 'official' paper.\textsuperscript{47} Clearly, at that stage, negotiations had deteriorated to the point where the Ainslie Board members lacked trust in Authority officials.

The Board had been presented with a \textit{fait accompli}. The decision to relocate SWOW had in fact been made some twelve months earlier after following normal procedures. The administrators had assessed the problem and researched the situation carefully, including the investigation of other possible sites, and concluded that the only possible site which met all the requirements was the former infants building at Ainslie. They did not foresee difficulties about site-sharing because they believed the site was large enough to accommodate two schools comfortably.

Unfortunately, bureaucrats as they were, they overlooked the implications of operating in a participatory system. As a result of their training and experience, bureaucrats were not accustomed to having their decisions questioned. It came as a considerable shock that the parents were not impressed by the

\textsuperscript{46} Minutes of Ainslie School Board Meetings, 11 October 1979, File 76/1745, ACTSA.

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{ibid.}
reasons for their actions. A major mistake was that, having realized that the Ainslie community was opposed to the decision, they did not then attempt to work with the Ainslie parents in a problem-sharing manner to give them some chance to understand the difficulties faced by the Office and the reasons for the decision. Instead, they attempted to force the decision through, with the consequence that the Ainslie parents contested the decision, not only for the stated reasons, but because they believed they had been the victims of injustice. It was only after the Board went public that the Authority introduced a series of consultative steps, but by then the damage had been done. People had adopted entrenched positions, and negotiation became virtually impossible.

The Board's resistance was argued on the grounds of potential difficulties in sharing a site with an alternative school with a population from a different age group. They also feared the loss of autonomy for Ainslie school which might occur from sharing a site. A major anxiety was that the students of both schools would have conflicts arising from attending schools with two very different philosophies, and that the older SWOW students would present negative behaviour models for the younger children. The Board's submission to the Authority stated that:

The Ainslie School Board's prime concern is for the educational and physical welfare of the children attending Ainslie School. ... From this basis the Board has always been concerned to see that any proposed plans for the alternate use of the Ainslie Infants building should be in harmony with the
environment of the present school ... [and] with the existing school's values and attitudes.

... The current proposal is based solely on a need to find accommodation for SWOW and thereby totally disregards the schools' differing educational philosophies and the conflicts of interest that can arise when two such differing bodies are forced into close association.

To be specific, Ainslie Primary School is a conventional school attempting to reinforce the values held by the community it serves. A community which has elected to have its children educated according to the conventional principles of primary education.

In contrast parents of children at SWOW ... desire an alternative form of education to that provided by other schools within the ACT system.

... The query then arises how a school such as SWOW could exist in an uninhibited manner when there is a school espousing the very principles they have found restrictive on the other side of the boundary fence.48

The administrators then tried to reassure the Ainslie parents by suggesting logical solutions, for example, by offering to erect a boundary fence and to make rules about care of and access to the buildings. An Authority officer pointed out that the former Infants building and the primary building are in fact two sets of buildings which are self-contained; they address separate streets and have separate access and parking. A distance of 170 metres of green belt isolates the two sets of buildings and includes playing fields, and landscaped areas. This would appear sufficient to permit the individual schools to operate independently.

He also tried to address concerns about the kinds of students who attended SWOW, commenting that

students of SWOW are not significantly different to other students of the same age groups. Students appear to be courteous, polite and sensitive to visitors to the School and

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other members of the community. In class, they are observed as being intelligent, perceptive and tolerant.49

The Board's strong protest led the Council to delay its decision until a meeting scheduled for 28 April, in order to allow SWOW time to prepare a submission and for a joint meeting of Ainslie and SWOW Boards.

From another perspective, the issue was about the use and control of resources; whether the distribution of resources in schooling was a matter for senior administrators acting on a system basis, whether one school could influence distribution of resources when they were to lose in the redistribution, or whether it should be a matter for genuine consultation between all school communities and the senior administrators in the Office. To some of the latter, the Ainslie parents appeared selfish. Their site was too large for their requirements but they were not prepared to allow another school to share. The Office saw its responsibility to look after the needs of schools in its system as a first priority, and therefore considered SWOW's need had precedence over other contenders for the space.50 On the other hand, the Ainslie parents saw the Office as ignoring their concerns for their children: they were willing to share the site provided the occupants were such as they considered suitable neighbours for their children. The priorities of administrators and parents clashed.

50 This view was expressed by Hedley Beare at a briefing meeting following an Authority Council meeting, circa April 1980.
The members of the Board, determined to contest the decision, sent a circular letter to all ACT school boards, asserting that the Authority had 'pursued this issue from the outset in the spirit of an administrative battle to be won', and that the Authority paper on the issue turned out to be no more than an apology for the Schools Office's preferred option and was the factor which crystallized the Board's opinion of the Office's 'modus operandi'. Instead of arriving at this option via a clear outline of the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative, no disadvantages or costs for their preference were admitted; the only objections to this preference were seen as coming from the Board.51

This action had potentially serious consequences for the Authority. The Board in its anger sought to change the contest from a fight between the Office and a school board over a school issue to a contest between the Office and all school boards over the rights of school boards to have a say in what was decided for their schools. The question was raised: how much say did a board have in the fate of its school when system resources were at stake?

During 1980 the contest began to receive increasing publicity in the Canberra Times. Alliances were formed. The Federation sided with SWOW, having supported the establishment of an alternative school and believing SWOW's need for accommodation to be paramount over the needs of other agencies. Parents of children at Ainslie were supported by

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51 J. Q. Radcliffe, circular letter to chairpersons ACT School Boards, 28 May 1980, File 76/1745, ACTSA.
the local press, but were ranged against the alliance formed by the Federation, SWOW and senior administrators in the Office.

The stakeholders in this issue exchanged strongly worded letters in the local press. SWOW supporters answered their critics:

Ainslie Primary School has expressed concern at the Schools Authority's proposal to house the School Without Walls (SWOW) in its former infants' section. Concern seems to centre on the fact that SWOW students have written on the dreary walls of the dilapidated buildings they now occupy. This concern is both trivial and misplaced. SWOW is a well-established school with a proven educational record. In addition, it teaches students to care for people, as well as buildings.\(^52\)

The Council wrote to the *Canberra Times* to defend its decision to relocate SWOW to the Ainslie site.\(^53\) The Ainslie defendants questioned the Authority's role in the dispute.

How is it that the Schools Authority flies in the face of community protest? Surely it is not insensitive to the protest of more than 1,100 petitioners (we are still collecting signatures), the press of letters to this newspaper which led to your editorial comment of May 13 and the numerous letters to the Minister for Education, Mr Fife. How is it that the Ainslie Primary School principal has neither been briefed nor consulted by the Schools Office about a decision that has so radically affected his school? Even with all the controversy in the media he was not approached on the matter.\(^54\)

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53 R. Campbell, Chair ACT Schools Authority, letter to editor, *Canberra Times*, 20 May 1980, p. 12. Dr Richard Campbell was elected to Chair the Authority Council on 25 June 1979 following the resignation of Ros Kelly.
The contest in the letters column continued for most of 1980. In July and August it reached a stage where the Chairperson of the Ainslie School Defence Co-ordinating Committee and the Chairperson of the ACT Schools Authority engaged in what can only be described as a public slanging match.\(^{55}\)

In June, Catherine Blakers, no longer a member of the Council, was asked to discuss the matter with the Ainslie and SWOW schools. SWOW Board also circulated a letter to all school boards in response to Ainslie Board's letter. Acknowledging that confusion had arisen concerning the principle of community consultation and participation in decision making, it stated that SWOW Board had been consulted and had participated fully in the process of relocation, and that it had not expected to have had the right to determine the outcome. The letter criticised Ainslie Board's decision to contest the relocation. 'It is difficult to see how a single school Board could make a decision concerning the allocation of resources available to system as a whole.' The letter suggested that in future, negotiations of similar type might proceed more amicably, 'if as well as working through the medium of the Schools Office, the Boards concerned contacted each other directly and discussed their positions'.\(^{56}\) The solution suggested would not have worked in the Ainslie situation because Ainslie Board had not known that the matter

\(^{55}\) W. Constanzo, Chair, Ainslie School Defence Co-ordinating Committee, letter to editor, *Canberra Times*, 29 July 1980, p. 2; Dr Richard Campbell, Chair, ACT Schools Authority, letter to editor, *Canberra Times*, 1 August 1980, p. 2.

\(^{56}\) S. Newell, Chair, SWOW School Board to Chairpersons ACT School Boards, 9 June 1980, File 79/35, ACTSA.
was being decided until after the event. SWOW's view which the Authority shared, that no one school could make a decision about a system resource such as a school building, could not be disputed, but at issue was not only the decision but the manner in which it occurred.

A School and Community Standing Committee report on the matter was tabled at the July Authority Council meeting. It criticised the administrators' handling of the matter, especially for not consulting the Ainslie Board. Hedley Beare defended his administrators, arguing that the relocation of SWOW had required intricate consultations with twelve separate groups, one of these a group of seven government instrumentalities. He stated his concern that the Council should be seen to support its officers publicly, and explained that should the report be made public, certain sections of it would have to be revised. The Chairperson of the School and Community Standing Committee, Hugh Waring, defended the accuracy of the report and urged its acceptance. The report was deemed to be confidential, and was held over to a later meeting for further discussion. Eventually, the Council resolved to accept the report, and noted 'with regret, but without attributing blame either to officers or to members of the Ainslie community that the consultations held in 1979-80 were not sufficient to reach agreement on the proposal'. Only part of the report was released, the 'Explanatory Notes', with a covering statement.

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57 Minutes of ACTSA, 21 July 1980, Item 8, p. 5.
58 Minutes of ACTSA, 29 July 1980, Item 3, p. 3.
Ainslie School Board did not allow the matter to end there, but appealed to the Minister. Once more the Authority had to justify the relocation of SWOW to Ainslie. Meetings were held with the Minister and all possible options were reexamined. Hedley Beare wrote to the Minister in November to explain the Authority's position and raised a new argument, that if alternative accommodation was found for SWOW, the Authority would probably have to offer the entire Ainslie building to another department and suggested that the 'loss of such a valuable building to the Authority and the Education portfolio would be a very high price to pay'. Beare argued the only suitable accommodation for SWOW was the Ainslie site, that the Ainslie school had adequate space in its own building and therefore no legitimate claim upon the former infants building, and that the Ainslie Board's effort to restrict the use of unused space was 'aiming to defend a position of privilege and self-interest'. He concluded by indicating his concern for the public image of the Authority, this time to his Minister.

If you decide not to allow the School Without Walls to move into the Ainslie premises you will over-rule a decision which was made by the Authority in an area clearly within its prerogative. This will then certainly be seen as a lack of faith by the Government in the Authority, and a clear indication that any decision made by the Authority is appealable to the Minister.

The Minister's decision to uphold the Authority's decision was made in mid-December, after having visited SWOW and Ainslie schools, talked with members of their communities and

59 Ainslie School Board, 6 August 1980, File 80/973, ACTSA.
60 Minutes of ACTSA, 24 November 1980, Item 12, p. 3.
61 H. Beare to Mr Wal Fife, Minister for Education, 17 November 1980, File 80/105, ACTSA.
met for discussion with the Chairperson of the Authority Council. The parents interpreted this as a victory for the bureaucrats. The Bulletin published an article by Alan Reid headlined 'Bureaucrats beat Parents in a Schoolyard Fight'. The sub-heading stated: 'In a microcosm of the methods of the education system bureaucracy, the parents of Ainslie in Canberra have been beaten by the system'. The article encapsulated the fears of parents that the democratic, participatory system established to replace the former NSW bureaucratic system was itself being turned into a bureaucracy.

Interesting questions were raised by the educational community's opposition to bureaucratic secrecy in the issues which were contested. As a significant proportion of the Canberra population worked in government organisations, many of the parents involved in the various disputes would have been accustomed to standard bureaucratic practices, including secrecy in negotiations. It might be expected that they would have acknowledged difficulties for administrators in deciding appropriate procedures. Beare's analysis was that Canberra contained a 'high proportion of people whose business it is to be industriously critical, analytical or judgmental - research workers, academics, politicians, advisers to government, national lobby groups, political observers, and the like'. He wondered whether many of Canberra's citizens vented their frustration

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62 Minutes of ACTSA, 15 December 1980, Item 7, p. 3.
over having no meaningful local government by attacking any agency provided by government. The rejection of self-government in 1978, however, demolished this reason.65 Alternatively, it could be speculated that many people in the ACT were so familiar with bureaucracy and its inner workings that they were completely sceptical about motives and practices. What were revealed in these contests were differences between rhetoric and practice, and the mistrust of the public for the practices of administrators. Quite clearly, each group of stakeholders had different priorities and in issues like these, such differences were exposed.

By 1980, the end of the period being studied, the contests by some groups of parents against the administrators had exacerbated long-held fears that the participatory administration established as a result of the parents' campaign was being eroded by a centralised bureaucracy and an intransigent union. Following the SWOW-Ainslie dispute one school board sought

the assurance of the ACT Schools Authority that ... all reasonable consultation and communication took place between all parties... In essence this Board wonders at the role of School Boards as perceived by the ACT Schools Authority...66

Another Board Chairperson wrote to the Chief Education Officer to stress that

the credibility and therefore effectiveness of Boards will be severely diminished should it seem that proper procedures

66 W. Down, Chair, Evatt School Board, letter to R. Campbell, 5 June 1980, Lee papers.
are not upheld... These events made for considerable uncertainty about the Authority's view of the role of public participation in decision making. As regards Ainslie Primary School Board and the Authority, it doesn't appear that there is evidence of genuine community involvement at any stage of the exercise... 67

Members of the public were once more castigating bureaucratic secrecy and impersonality in the administration of their school system: the criticisms of bureaucratic administration were as fervent in 1980 as they had been in 1966.

The end of 1980 marked the end of an era. As Richard Campbell stated in his address in honour of Hedley Beare, the founding phase was over. The next few months were to see several people of note connected with the Authority leaving Canberra. Phillip Hughes, the first Authority Council Chair, left to take up a position as Professor of Education at the University of Tasmania and Hedley Beare resigned to take up a position as Professor of Educational Administration and Policy at Melbourne University, and Pat Thompson, one of the few teachers originally seconded to work in the Office in 1973 who was promoted to the position of the Director of the Schools Branch, retired. At this time too, the CTS Commissioner, Jack Lenihan, retired, and another person of significance in the national education scene, the Chairman of the Schools Commission, Ken McKinnon, left the ACT to take up an academic appointment at the University of Wollongong.

67 C. Ifeka, Chair, Campbell High School Board, letter to H. Beare, 12 June 1980, Lee papers.
With the departure of these people went those influential educators who had been committed to the original intentions of the Authority. Phillip Hughes had been an key figure in the campaign for the system, and Ken McKinnon, although not directly concerned in the affairs of the Authority, had established a supportive context for the Authority during his period of leadership of the Schools Commission. Hedley Beare, less the administrator than the educator and criticised at times for his inability to keep the administrators in check, had demonstrated his commitment to the goals of the Authority as described in the Currie Report and the later major reports.

The parent community's reactions to change revealed anxiety that the participatory structures were vulnerable to dismantling. The story of what happened must wait for a study of the next period to be carried out. Suffice it to say that in 1987 opportunities for parents to participate at the system level were removed when the Authority Council and its committees were dismantled and other forms of advisory structures were set in place. New forms of consultative arrangements were about to begin.
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN.

CONCLUSION

The ACT Schools Authority was conceived in 1966 and delivered after a long and protracted labour in 1974. By 1980 it had survived a period of poor sustenance when lack of resources had restricted its growth and the mere fact of its continued existence was something upon which its begetters could pride themselves. While for many people the new system had not fulfilled all expectations, nevertheless, ACT education had been fundamentally changed.

Whatever its shortcomings, the Authority was a remarkable achievement. When ACT education became independent from NSW, under the guidance of the Department of Education and Science and supported by a teachers' union which knew nothing but hierarchical, centralised structures, it could well have become another replica of the school systems in the states; especially perhaps in the hometown of bureaucracy. What averted this destiny was the work of a few dedicated individuals who had a vision of a different kind of system, and who expressed something of a communal character which was at once opposed to bureaucracy in education, and, paradoxically, drew strength from the New Middle Class character of the public service city. The document in which they stated their vision, the Currie Report, is remarkable for two reasons: it was written by a large group of citizens led by a few who saw beyond what existed to what was possible; and it remained for over
two decades as a statement of ideals for an education system, and the touchstone for all kinds of people in the education community.

In 1967, the planners' vision was for a system the complete antithesis of the bureaucratic NSW Department of Education. While the authors of the Currie Report, and later, the Campbell and Hughes Reports, described many desirable features for a new school system, the bureaucratic features of the centralised NSW administration, which made it too inflexible and unwieldy to allow adaptation to a distinctive local setting, was identified as the source of the problems. Their solution was to create a school system not merely independent from that of NSW, which was commonly expected to come at some time, but radically different from it, with lay people able to introduce changes by contributing to decisions at various levels: that is, a democratic, participatory school system. It was also intended that the independent role of teachers would expand, liberating their creative energies in partnership with parent representatives. Conformity and uniformity were to be replaced by freedom and diversity, and nothing exemplified this more for the planners than the changes recommended for secondary education, an area identified as urgently needing improvement.¹ As these were first proposed by officers in the Department of Education and Science, it seemed that bureaucrats, too, could be incorporated in a reform coalition; as politicians accepted what was proposed, in the end, they

¹ Campbell Report, p. 71.
were also involved as a benign, if external force. By 1972, such changes included creating separate senior secondary institutions, where those who had no intention of going on to tertiary education were as important as those who were, and removing the controlling and constricting force of external examinations.

The parents' conception of democratic participation appears to have had its genesis in a worldwide movement for participation in a range of decision making structures which culminated in the major demonstrations of outrage in 1968. In Australia, Professor John Anderson's work in defining and promoting participatory democracy and the passion for reform of schooling kindled during the New Education Fellowship Conference in 1937, were early manifestations of this movement. In Donald Schon's terms, community control was an idea in 'good currency'.\(^2\) For ACT parents, the context of the 1960s with, as John Riddell argues, the effects of the advent of Vietnam and Nimbin, provided the necessary support for reform; the situation of Canberra with, as Wettenhall describes it, an almost colonial dependence upon NSW for administration of schooling, provided the motivation for change; and the availability of a specially skilled New Middle Class population of Canberra, provided the means.

The story of the Authority is one of interactions between key groups of people, each with a major stake in the school system, facilitating or frustrating attempts at establishing

participation in various forms. The parents' group, their perspectives limited by their membership of an elite group within the New Middle Class and an ideology which they too readily assumed that others shared, were confounded when at different times and for different reasons, first teachers, then administrators, thwarted the realisation of their vision for participation in the Authority.

First the teachers' union, which entered the arena as a new and unexpected force once the Authority was imminent, effectively impeded the parents' attempts to participate in selecting teachers for their schools. This was not the end of collaboration, however; in a revealing demonstration of how stakeholder alliances have the power to achieve major change, in haste, and even against resistance from others outside the reform coalition, the teachers' union collaborated with parents and administrators' groups to establish secondary colleges and replace external examinations with moderated internal assessment supervised by an Accrediting Agency. It was done just in time. The sudden onset of the mid-seventies recession then imposed new strains which severely hampered the process of establishing the Authority. The supply of resources, human and material, was restricted and new fears about unemployment raised parents' doubts about the effectiveness of schooling for securing their children's futures. Recent developments in education were criticised, more particularly by new stakeholders, local politicians and employers, omitted as such from earlier discussion and opinion-formation, who had previously
questioned changes to secondary schooling, especially those to do with assessment and reporting of the achievements of senior students. By limiting staffing, the recession also indirectly delayed decentralisation of functions and powers to school boards, a key part of the process of participation. In the late 1970s, the conflicts which arose over the administrators' solution to recession cutbacks - amalgamation and closure of schools - highlighted the differences in ideology between the three key groups.

The campaigners' class membership, which placed a premium upon the acquisition of cultural capital, explains the parents' passion for improvements to education; the effective skills which campaigners displayed also demonstrates the importance of possessing such cultural capital. The campaigners' secure position as New Middle Class intellectuals, whose culture and conditions of work were not affected by changes in the school system, contrasted with the aspirations of upwardly mobile teachers for middle class professional status and their previous history of unionism and industrial conflict, suggests reasons for the conflicts which arose over lay participation in teacher selection. The senior administrators, like the teachers, were concerned with protection of work interests, but for different reasons. Their training was in bureaucracy, and to have accepted completely the move for participation, while not so threatening to their status as that of the teachers, would have required a profound cultural change.
As the saying goes, hindsight always has 20/20 vision; in retrospect, the flaws in a process which has ended can be detected and the process evaluated. The people actually in the situation, however, must deal with the exigencies of the present, and as yet prescience has not been developed as a tool of management. Therefore, with the advantage of hindsight, the explanation offered by the strategic planning process suggests that many of the difficulties in the later implementation stages of the change can be traced back to campaigners' discounting the importance of other stakeholders' priorities, including their own, once the planning stage had been passed. Basing their claims to influence and their vision for a new system upon such concepts as community and an openness which saw others essentially as fellow citizens, they failed to examine the different interests and cultures of those who would have to be their allies, and to take it into consideration in their policies and strategies. The planners did not appear to predict the extent to which stakeholders could or would obstruct the full implementation of the desired change. In particular, they did not recognise the limitations their class membership placed upon their role as change-agents. Their ability to analyse and reflect upon education derived from their knowledge and skills as New Middle Class intellectuals, meant they were able to envisage long-term outcomes for education, but they did not see that others had more immediate and pressing needs which had to be met: the teachers for professional recognition and the administrators for bureaucratic efficiency. Nor perhaps, did their ideology
and the repertoire of skills allow enough room for the hard-bitten and the power-plays which were antithetical to their vision of the society for which education was to prepare its children.

Thus they did not probe the reasons why teachers supported the change nor realise the importance to them of their union. While ACT teachers were discontented with the NSW administration and were happy to support the parents' push for change, they had serious reservations about the parents' desire for a say in their children's schooling once matters went beyond generalities and rhetoric to particulars. As the first General Secretary was later to say, 'there were a lot of good people in the teaching ranks who were very concerned about parental control and you can trace that as a theme throughout the whole development of the Authority'...3

The campaigners recognised that the provisions of the Commonwealth Teaching Services Act would restrict flexibility in appointment of teachers to schools, and understood that administrators' loyalty to bureaucratic procedures meant that those who joined the Authority should be committed to participation; to that end, they tried to convince the government that the Authority should employ its own staff. However, they appeared to underestimate the pressures that would be placed on a decentralised, participatory organisation situated in the midst of

3 P. O'Connor, Interview, 10 September 1986.
government departments staffed with administrators trained to value the ways of bureaucracies and expected to conform to Treasury regulations.  

The key administrators, while not opposed to the idea of an independent Authority, were reluctant for many years to give it support, holding that it must first have its own teacher training facility and a career service, and a population large enough to sustain a school system. How much these prerequisites were rationalisations to cover other reasons for reluctance, for example, the desire not to relinquish control, especially to a movement which was avowedly anti-bureaucratic, is hard to assess. These administrators did, however, come to view the reformers' program more favourably when they realised that in a new system it would be easier to implement two favourite projects, open-plan schooling and the introduction of secondary colleges. The pressure that the NSW Department put on the Federal Government to accept responsibility for staffing its own schools in a time of teacher shortage supplied the final stimulus to change; by that time, however, the work of the reformers had done much to ensure that the change would involve a good deal more than merely ending the anomalous rule of NSW over the ACT in one of the major functions of government.

The retention of important Authority functions by the Department of Education, the resistance to an Authority

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4 Canberra Times, 26 February 1972, p. 3.
employing its own staff outside the Public Service Act, the formation of a Commonwealth Teaching Service which established a hierarchical, career-oriented structure, were instances of bureaucratic attitudes which were to have a major negative effect upon the new Authority. The limited powers given to its interim Council show certain reservations about some of the recommendations made by the Hughes Panel, particularly those pertaining to the Authority employing its own staff and the powers of school boards vis-a-vis the Authority Council.5

There are other aspects of this process of change in ACT education which require further comment. There is no question that the group which steered the move for change during the 1960s and the early 1970s was unusual, and the high calibre of its members, described by several as an 'elite', cannot be denied. It was also remarkable that, although eventually many early members fell away, they managed to develop from an ad hoc group to a long-term feature of educational politics in the ACT, shading eventually into the Authority Council, with members continuing to play an enormously significant part in the fortunes of the Authority after its establishment. The explanation for the success of this extraordinary group would have to be found in some interaction of particular personalities which is beyond the reach of the historian. But such a group needed a catalyst,

and Cath Blakers fulfilled this role. An unusually far-sighted woman, not in any position of authority but possessed of New Middle Class skills especially in communication, she mobilised and guided the group; the part Cath Blakers played in events is very representative of Canberra, and perhaps, for a time, revealed the possibilities of a style of working more characteristic of many women.

The role of the Canberra Times is also interesting. During the sixties it provided a means for public airing of opinions by members of the Canberra public especially those with an educational axe to grind. It was very critical of the administration of ACT schools, particularly the mistakes made by the NSW Department of Education and, when they were responsible, federal politicians and administrators. It therefore played a substantial role in the establishment of the Authority and after its establishment, continued to act as its severest critic, publicising the contests among the various stakeholders as it had publicised educational problems during the sixties. In some respects, it acted almost as another stakeholder who mirrored for the combatants the parts they were playing. Therefore, its role in the events which occurred should not be discounted.

In this unusual event, a unique opportunity unlikely to be repeated, there was a potential for many people to create something remarkable. Perhaps such times reveal both the possibilities and the limitations that contain, and are contained within, people. Conceivably, the parents sensed
limitations in their idea of 'community' in Canberra when they perceived local political representation on the Hughes Panel as political self-interest and a potentially constraining force in a period when imagination and experimentation in forging new paths was needed. In a city which lived by politics, yet lacking in the 1970s the usual institutions of democracy for its citizens, it is possible that, in those early years of the Authority, there were potential dangers that were never tested. To the dismay of aspiring politicians, in 1989 Canberra had rejected self-government; fortunately for the Authority, as it turned out, if in its early stages, it was spared on a larger scale the kinds of intervention that the response of the Legislative Assembly in the mid-1970s when self-government was assumed to be imminent, showed was possible. The events described in this study raise questions about the extent to which 'democratic' institutions, guided as they are by people with their own interests and power structures to protect, are able to support the initiatives of 'community' groups, especially in times of contraction. The Federation, ostensibly a democratic institution, for reasons it believed quite justified, restricted the extent of community participation; more recently, the history of education under self-government has exposed a clash of priorities. Especially in times of contraction, there are conflicts between service providers who operate at the personal or 'community' level where needs are exposed, and the institutions of power and authority which are concerned with efficiency; imagination and experimentation require an expansive climate.
The reality is always something less than the vision. The story was not finished in 1980 and is not finished yet, and whatever its eventual fate, the fact that a decentralised, participatory organisation was planned and actually came into being, although imperfectly, stands as an exemplar that cannot be ignored. It may pass through different name-changes, be incorporated into a Ministry or a Department or whatever other institutional structures are conceived, but it will be a struggle now for bureaucrats entirely to remove the expectation for consultation and participation of those who are partners in the educational enterprise. The fervour with which, in 1990 and 1991, the 'Save Our Schools' community group attempted to overturn the decisions to close schools made by the local government which was imposed upon an unwilling Canberra in 1989, provides the most recent demonstration of this. Richard Campbell's words, 'if there is one issue that turns this town on it is education' still holds true a decade later. As we approach three decades since the Campbell parents first dreamed of a different education system, something intangible has passed into the annals of the ACT school system, and there are new people now struggling against political and institutional odds to have a say in what happens to their children's schools and their children's schooling. Right or wrong, blind maybe to the exigencies of financial constraints and political realities, parents now demand a right to object to decisions made without their agreement. The creation of the new Authority

6 R. Campbell, Address on the Occasion of the Meeting of the Schools Authority in Honour of Hedley Beare, its Founding Chief Education Officer, 5 December 1980.
empowered ACT parents with a belief that it is possible to resist bureaucracy and win. For a small group of people who had a vision of something different for education in the ACT that is quite an achievement.
1. PUBLIC DOCUMENTS AND PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS


Australian Capital Territory. Schools Authority Regulations incorporating amendments to 31 December 1979. AGPS 1980.

Australian Capital Territory. Schools Authority Regulations. 1977.


2. NEWSPAPERS, PERIODICALS AND NEWSLETTERS


Schools Authority News. 1978-80.


3. MINUTES OF MEETINGS AND COMMITTEES; OFFICIAL FILES

Note: In late 1974, access to former Commonwealth Department of Education files not already assigned to the Australian Archives or passed on to the ACT Schools Authority was obtained through that Department. Some Department of Education and Science official files were passed on to the Interim ACT Schools Authority and were incorporated into the Authority's files and can be identified by the use of Departmental file numbers preceded by a year-date 1974 or earlier. ACT Schools Authority files were held
in the Authority's Registry and numbered according to conventional practice. On occasion, for different reasons, files are updated and reorganised; they may be amalgamated, reorganised or re-filed and a different number assigned. Previous file numbers are customarily noted on file covers when this occurs. File numbers were correct at the time of access for study, October to December 1984. In footnotes, ACTSA after a file number indicates that this file, whether a former Department of Education file or an Authority file was held in the Office of the Authority. When the files were held by the Australian Archives or by the Department of Education, this is indicated in footnotes before the file number.


ACT Schools Authority. Official Files. Held Office of ACT Schools Authority.


ACT Schools Authority. Education Programs Standing Committee. 1977.


Department of Education [and Science]. Official Files. Archival Files noted in footnotes to text.


Interim ACT Schools Authority. Official Files. Held Office of the ACT Schools Authority.


4. COLLECTIONS OF PERSONAL PAPERS

Blakers, C. Manuscripts and other papers, various. Held by C. Blakers.

Johnson, R. St.C. Manuscripts and other papers, various. Held by R. Johnson.

Lee, R. ACTSA Council Minutes and other papers, various. Held by R. Lee.

March, M. E. IACTSA & ACTSA Council Minutes and other papers, various. Held by M. E. March.

Price, B. Papers, various. Held by B. Price.

Wynn, G. Estate Papers, various. Held by ACTSA.
5. ORAL EVIDENCE

The following people were interviewed. In nearly all cases, the interviews were extensive formal tape-recorded interviews. In one or two cases, these were followed up with briefer conversations to establish particular points.


6. ARTICLES AND SUBMISSIONS


Australian National University. Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts. Education Research Unit, July 1971.


Blakers, C. 'If Wishes Were Horses... The Parent Role in a Participative System of Schooling', in ACT Schools Authority, The Challenge of Change: A Review of High Schools in the ACT. Canberra, 1983.


Boyd, W. L. 'Competing Values in Educational Policy and Governance-Australian and American Developments.' Educational Administration Review, 2, 2, Spring 84, pp. 24-36.


Campbell, R. J. Address on the Occasion of the Meeting of the ACT Schools Authority in Honour of Dr Hedley Beare, Its Founding Chief Education Officer. 5 December 1980.

Campbell, R. J. Graduation Address: Stirling College. 13 December 1978.

Carchedi, G. 'On the Economic Identification of the New Middle Class.' Economy and Society. 4, 1, February 1975, pp. 1-86.


Foskett, R. A. 'Some Aspects of a Schools Authority for the ACT'. A Talk given to the ACT Chapter of the Australian College of Education. 13 September 1973. Australian Archives, 642/T2, Item 71/3550.


Hughes, P.W. 'Education for an Age of Change'. *Education News.* 12, 6, December 1969, pp. 12-16.


Interim ACT Schools Authority. *Guiding Principles and Aims of the ACT Schools Authority.* Information Statement No.1, 6 November 1973.

Interim ACT Schools Authority. Secondary Colleges in the ACT. Information Sheet, July 1975.


McLoughlin, I. 'Misunderstanding the New Middle Class' *Sociology*, 16, 4, November 1982, pp. 586-590.

Millikan, R. 'The Re-Structuring of the Education Department of Victoria: Has the Change Been Mis-Read?' The Educational Administrator, 18, May 1982, pp. 10-35.


Morgan, F. E. 'Starlings, Ants and a Schools Authority: A Local Viewpoint on the Interim ACT Schools Authority'. Education News, 14, 9, June 1974, pp. 9-11.


O'Dea, R. J. 'The Expanding Role of the Professional Association in Industrial Relations'. *Australian Quarterly*, 40, 1, March 1968, pp. 43-49.


Portus, G. V. 'Americans and Australians'. *Australian Quarterly*, 14, 2, June 1942, pp. 30-41.


Willis, Q. F. 'Menzies and Australian Education', The Educational Administrator, [1], 2, October 1974, pp. 12-20.


7. BOOKS AND MONOGRAPHS


Australian National University. *An Independent Authority for the ACT?*. Seminar Papers, Department of Adult Education, 1966.


Board, P. Whither Education? Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1929.

Board, P. Whither Education? Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1929.


Callahan, R. E. *Education and the Cult of Efficiency.* A Study of the Social Forces that have Shaped the Administration of the Public Schools. The University of Chicago Press, 1962.

Canberra College of Advanced Education. *School Boards in the Australian Capital Territory.* School and Community Project, School of Teacher Education, CCAE, Canberra. 1977.


Kandel, I. L. Impressions of Australian Education. ACER, Melbourne, 1938.


8. REPORTS


9. THESES


Lane, R. J. The Development and Implementation of the ACT Schools Accreditation System. Field Study submitted in partial requirement for MEd, CCAE, distributed as a report. ACT Schools Authority, Canberra, 1980.


Mildern, D. C. The First Two Years: Decision Making and the Council of the Interim ACT Schools Authority. Field Study submitted in partial requirement for MEd, CCAE, Distributed as a Report, ACT Schools Authority, 1976.


APPENDIX 1

CURRIE WORKING PARTY

CHAIRMAN
Sir George A. Currie.

CONVENOR
J. L. J. Wilson, Department of Adult Education, Australian National University.

MEMBERS
C. Blakers, Parent.
Professor D. Brown, Professor of Geology, Australian National University.
N. Burns, Council, Combined Parents and Citizens Associations.
Dr J. Burns, Reader in Applied Mathematics, Australian National University.
Emeritus Professor H. Burton, Secretary, Social Sciences Research Council of Australia.
Dr J. Caldwell, Senior Fellow in Demography, Australian National University.
B. Chapman.
M. Cheesewright, Federal Officer, Australian Pre-school Association.
L. Childs, NSW Teachers' Federation.
Professor A. Corbett, Professor of Engineering, Royal Military College, Duntroon.
Rev. Bro. J. Darmody, Headmaster, St Edmund's Christian Brothers College.
J. Ferguson, Assistant Federal Officer, Australian Pre-school Association.
G. J. Hughson, Member, World Education Fellowship.
Professor R. St C. Johnson, Chairman, ACT Chapter, Australian College of Education.
P. McKeown, Headmaster, Canberra Grammar School.
Dr I. Meddleton, Chief Executive Officer, The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust.
B. Milne, New South Wales Teachers' Federation.
B. Mitchell, Research Scholar, Australian National University and Lecturer, Sydney Teachers College.
T. O'Connell, Member, Australian College of Education.
OBSERVER
C. Jubb, Education Branch, Department of the Interior.

APPENDIX 2

ACT WORKING GROUP

MEMBERS

As at December 1969

M. E. March, Principal, Narrabundah High School, Canberra Mathematics Association.
Professor R. Johnson, Member Australian College of Education, Currie Working Party.
C. Blakers, Currie Working Party.
J. Riddell, President, ACT Council of P&C Associations.
H. Waring, ACT Council of P&C Associations.
Dr Alan Barnard, ACT Council of P&C Associations.
Professor Noel Butlin, ANU.
Dr Chris Duke, Centre for Continuing Education, ANU.
Dr D. S. Anderson, Educational Research Unit, ANU.

The following people joined at later stages:

Dr Alan Davies, Centre for Continuing Education, ANU.
K. Abbott, ACT Council of P&C Associations.
P. Hughes, School of Teacher Education, CCAE.
M. Robinson, President, ACT Science Association.
Dr C. Hughes, Telopea High School.

WORKING COMMITTEE ON COLLEGE PROPOSALS FOR THE ACT (CAMPBELL COMMITTEE)

CHAIRMAN:
Richard James Campbell

MEMBERS:

ACT Council of P&C Associations
John Walter N. Riddell
Kenneth Allison Townley
Hugh Douglas Waring
Kathleen Agnes Abbott (Alternate)
James Alan Barnard (Alternate)

ACT Secondary Teachers' Association
Lance Edward H. Chapman
Richard Roger Lee
Milton Edgar March
Peter William I. O'Connor (Until 26 April 1972)
Barry Price (Alternate)

Technical Teachers' Association, Canberra Branch
Bruce Campbell Davy
Donald Bruce Hughes (Alternate)

ACT Secondary Principals' Council
Vivian Arthur H. Judd
Alec Joseph McPherson
Roy William Wheeler
Kenneth George Gollan (Alternate)

NSW Department of Education
John Robert Breen
Eric Mervyn Dukes
Department of Education

Bruce Charles Campbell (Until 12 September 1972)
Neil Russell Edwards
Brian Paul Peck (From 12 September 1972)
Ray Philip Sadler
Reginald Alan Foskett (Alternate)
Benjamin Ronald Williams (Alternate)

Secretary:

Linda Margaret Jones (Until 25 August 1972)
Marie Janice Cullum (From 28 August 1972)

Source: 'Secondary Education for Canberra' (Campbell Report).
APPENDIX 4

INTERIM COUNCIL ACT SCHOOLS AUTHORITY

MEMBERS

As at 10 October 1973

Dr A. Barnard  ACT Council of P&C Associations.
K. Abbott  ACT Council of P&C Associations.
T. M. Badham  Commonwealth Teachers' Federation.
M. March  Commonwealth Teachers' Federation.
M. Dempster  Commonwealth Teachers' Federation.
A. Curtis  Canberra Pre-school Society.
K. Fry  ACT Advisory Council.
P. Hughes  Ministerial Nominee.
C. Blakers  Ministerial Nominee

B. Peck  Department of Education. Executive Member

J. Brummel  Department of Education. Secretary.

Source: Minutes of Meeting Interim ACT Schools Authority, 10 October 1973.
APPENDIX 5

CURRICULUM WORKING PARTY. Membership

13 February 1974

C. Blakers  Interim Council.
M. March  Interim Council
B. Peck  Interim Council
D. Driscoll  School of Teacher Education, CCAE.
R. Traill  School of Teacher Education, CCAE.
M. Newman  Mathematics Department, Institute of
Advanced Studies, ANU.
E. McKenzie  Curriculum Advisory Committee.
M. Lee  Curriculum Advisory Committee
A. Murray  Curriculum Advisory Committee
H. Strauch  Secretary.

APPENDIX 6.

INTERIM A.C.T. SCHOOLS AUTHORITY

Information Statement No. 1  6 November 1973

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND AIMS OF THE A.C.T. SCHOOLS AUTHORITY

It is the responsibility of the A.C.T. Schools Authority to offer to all children in the Australian Capital Territory an education of the highest quality, which will assist every child to develop fully as an individual and a member of the community.

This responsibility requires a system of education which ensures to each child a genuine opportunity to avail himself of the kind of education best suited to his needs and abilities. It implies schools which are sufficiently independent to provide the variety of education necessary, and an administration consciously aware that it serves the needs of children and their education.

The A.C.T. system of education should, therefore, aim, through its schools, to develop individual abilities and talents within the evolving social context.

It should provide for the average, for the gifted, for the slow, retarded or handicapped, for the eccentric and for the non-conformist. It should encourage observation, intellectual curiosity, critical thinking and the ability to communicate effectively, and through these promote the recognition and understanding of conceptual thinking and the techniques of conceptual analysis.

It should develop technical, manipulative, practical and recreational skills. It should stimulate aesthetic appreciation and foster creative vision and talent. It should offer the student opportunity and guidance to seek, form and refine for himself a system of values through which he may come to a fuller understanding of himself, of others and of the nature of living, and in accordance with which he may make his choices as an individual.
Consistent with these aims and with the general responsibility of the Authority for high standards, good order and coherence in the system as a whole, each school will be expected to determine its own educational philosophy, emphasis and programs based on the individual needs of its own students.

This variety in education implies that, within practicable limits, students should be able to choose the school and the type of education best suited to their needs. Each school will, therefore, have the responsibility of catering first for the children in its own area, but will then be free to accept as many other pupils who wish to come to the school as may reasonably be placed.

It is of the utmost importance that variety in education and freedom of schools to devise their own education policies should not lead to the abandonment of equality of opportunity or be interpreted in educational attitudes inconsistent with the welfare of the child and the general aims and principles of the education system.

To this end, schools will be comprehensive in nature. They will not be permitted to charge fees, beyond normal sums such as those at present levied for materials and services. They will neither select nor exclude students on ability to pay such charges, on intelligence, on religious affiliation or on any basis which is likely to lead to intolerance or social divisiveness.

Further, the Authority, in its allocation of resources, will discriminate positively in favour of disadvantaged children and schools.

Through a flexible and approachable administration, the Authority will provide guidance, resources and skills to help school boards and teachers in devising and implementing their education programs; it will at the same time ensure coherence and avoid fragmentation within the system by encouraging continuing liaison between schools and between the various levels of education.

The A.C.T. system of education is thus seen as one of high quality based on schools which are largely independent and responsible - one in which the child is of paramount concern both as an individual and as a member of the community.
So that the system may develop effectively within these broad guidelines, yet remain flexible and responsive to changing needs and circumstances, the council of the Authority will at all times hold itself open to suggestion and proposals for improving education.

It will, in addition, periodically institute an independent panel of review which will assess the quality and effectiveness of education in the Australian Capital Territory and recommend ways of improving it.

In the final analysis it must be recognised that both quality and effectiveness in a system of this kind depend upon the continuing interest and collaboration of teachers, parents, the students themselves and the community as a whole.
APPENDIX 7

ACT SCHOOLS AUTHORITY MEMBERS, 1 JANUARY 1977.

Ministerial Nominees

John Dallas, Executive Director, ACT Employers' Federation
Charles McDonald, Secretary, ACT Trades and Labour Council
Phillip Hughes, Head, School of Teacher Education, CCAE
Richard Campbell, Academic Assistant to the Vice-Cancellor, ANU
Jean Miller, Assistant Secretary, Student Assistance and International Education, Department of Education
Bruce Topfer, Solicitor, Davies, Bailey and Carter

ACT Legislative Assembly

Ros Kelly
Trevor Kaine

ACT Teachers' Federation

Margaret Dempster
Mick March
Ian Alder

ACT Council of P&C Associations

Hugh Waring
Anthony Ketley

Canberra Pre-School Society

Harold Huntley

Chief Education Officer

Hedley Beare

Source: Schools Information Bulletin, 77/1, 2 February 1977.