

# Australian Psychological Society BOARD OF EDUCATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

## LETTERS TO MEMBERS

Dear Member

Please offer your ideas about how to help in the following matter, as outlined by Dr. Sam Beavers, Treasurer BEDP.

Thank you.

Fiona Bryer, Chair BEDP

### HUMAN TRAGEDY IN RUMANIA: Will Our Profession Respond?

Recently, Australians were shocked by media revelations in which the appalling living conditions of thousands of institutionalised Rumanian children were graphically exposed. The shocking neglect of the basic health and hygiene needs of these children have galvanised thousands of Australians into action. All reports indicate that charitable organisations (e.g. World Vision Australia) have been overwhelmed by the generous contributions that certainly will help to alleviate the suffering of these children. We only can hope that other developed nations will respond with equal generosity. While providing for the basic physical health needs certainly has the most immediate priority, it is recognised that their emotional needs and intellectual development also have suffered under the cruel and dehumanising conditions under which they were forced to live. It appears that in numerous cases, children have been placed in institutions in Rumania who were not disabled when initially institutionalised — unless we wish to join the Rumanian authorities and classify large ears and other physiognomic anomalies as disabilities! The question that arises for us, as *Educational and Developmental Psychologists* is, "How do we respond?" It seems that we, as caring professionals, cannot ignore this monumental human tragedy and dismiss it as being too far away and removed for us to do anything. While for many children, sadly enough any intervention might be too late, it seems incumbent upon us to commit ourselves to finding ways to help as many of these children as possible. The problem is an extremely complex one — as are the needs of these children.

The National Executive urgently requests ideas from as many members as possible as to what we as a profession might do to show that we care.

If you know of any programs, materials, or persons that might be helpful in tackling this situation, please write, phone or fax M. Cuskelly, BEDP Sec.

15 November, 1990

Dear Member

You have a copy of the Revised (1987) Board rules, sent by the National Executive before the September 1990 AGM, held in Melbourne. At the AGM, two motions about the Board rules were carried. The first motion was to examine the rules of membership of the Board, paying particular attention to the rules of entry. Amendments to this motion were that, before the formation of the working party, the Executive develop a timeline for this review process, ask the Sections for contributions, and circularise the membership for feedback. The second motion was that the National Executive take responsibility for nominating members of the working party.

*It was moved that a Board of Educational and Developmental Psychologists working party be set up to examine the rules of membership of the Board, paying particular attention to the rules of entry; that working party to include representatives from all states and to make recommendations.*

*(Moved: Daphne Keats; Seconded: Jennifer Standish: Carried)*

*Amendments: It is proposed that some preliminary stages need to be undertaken by the Executive before this working party meets. These are (1) a timeline for the review needs to be developed; (2) the Sections should be asked for contributions; and (3) proposals should be circularised to the membership for their feedback. Once these procedures have been met the working party to be formed to consider the proposals and subsequent feedback from the membership and to formalize recommendations to go to the 1991 AGM.*

*(Moved: Ray Watson; Seconded: Daphne Keats: Carried)*

*It was moved that the National Executive take responsibility for nominating the members of the working party.*  
*(Moved: Fiona Bryer; Seconded: Kathryn Gow: Carried)*

Members are requested, therefore, to examine their copy of the Board rules carefully. Rationales for changes, particularly to the rules of entry, and specific point-by-point proposals for change should be forwarded to Monica Cuskelly, Secretary BEDP, Schonell Special Education Research Centre, University of Queensland 4072, as soon as possible and not later than 31st March, 1991.

The National Executive also calls for expression of interest in membership of the working party.

A timeline has been developed by the Executive. Please note the relevant dates in your 1991 diaries.

1. Advise members through the November, 1990 issue of AEDP.
2. Ask for submissions from Sections and from individual members by 31st March, 1991.
3. Form a working party in April, 1991, to sight initial submissions.
4. Circularise proposals in the May, 1991 issue of AEDP.
5. Ask for feedback from Sections and individual members on these proposals by 30th June, 1991.
6. Hold a teleconference of the working party in July, 1991, to consider the proposals and subsequent feedback, and to prepare formal recommendations.
7. Publish recommendations about Board rules in the August, 1991 Bulletin of the APS.
8. List rule ratification in the 1991 AGM agenda.

The National Executive urges the membership to give careful attention to this important matter.

Seasons Greetings from the National Executive: We send our best wishes for the happiness and safety of members and their families now and in the New Year.

Yours sincerely

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