

EDITORIAL

In this edition of the Journal, I have included papers from the Eighth National Conference of the Australian Association of Special Education held in Brisbane in June, 1983. Quite a number of papers were given at this conference and the topics covered a wide range of interest areas. The theme of the conference was Exceptional People – a Lifetime Commitment and there were papers on Early Intervention, Educationally Handicapped Children, Handicapped Adults and Parents. Other interesting areas covered were the Gifted, Child Abuse and Computers in Special Education.

These conferences serve a very important role in professional development of special educators and people interested in Special Education and as well as this they allow the Association to meet and present a public symbol of the unity and presence of the Australian Association of Special Education. President Paul Duerdoth's report in this issue describes some of the important activities undertaken by the Association and its executive. Clearly one of the most important events this year was the meeting with Senator Susan Ryan. Many special educators would fervently hope that Senator Ryan will take particular interest in matters relating to the education of handicapped children. Some of the areas that I believe require urgent attention are:

- a. provision of educational experience for the severely mentally handicapped including appropriate training of teachers and key personnel;
- b. more adequate preparation of pre-service regular teachers to cope with the demands of mainstreaming. You will notice that there is a full report on conference resolutions which focussed on this particular issue;
- c. I believe, given a lot of the very interesting research around Australia on the role and efficacy of computers in Special Education, that there should be special grants for applied research and development involving computers and the handicapped;
- d. I would very much like to see funds available and policies created to promote closer relations between Special Education training institutions and special schools and units to ensure the most effective preparation of Special Education specialists.

There is a lot more that can be done at the branch chapter and national level, I am sure, and I look forward to the Association's continued development of policy along these lines.

Jeff Bailey
Editor