

Editorial

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The last twelve months have been important in environmental education in Australia. There are a number of developments at policy level as the national curriculum movement gains momentum and as the states continue to develop their environmental education policies. In Victoria, the Department of School Education is active in developing a series of 'Profiles' and other curriculum documents that will in part shape the future of environmental education in that state.

Of course, at the same time, a number of exciting environmental education activities are proceeding at the level of practice -- in schools and other agencies. Community-based, action-oriented environmental education has long been a strength in this country, and this tradition continues to demonstrate that the commitment of schools, teachers, and students and the multi-sectoral professional development support proffered by professional associations and other government and non-government agencies is at least as important an ingredient in environmental education as centrally-coordinated policy and curriculum development. The work of the Victorian Environmental Education Council is important in this regard.

We also have international recognition of many of these developments. We recently hosted a visit by a research team from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (OECD-CERI) which conducted an in-depth study of policy in Environmental Education. This policy review fits in a larger study (the "Environment and School Initiatives Project") which aims to develop a series of case studies of the on-the-ground work of a number of schools active in community-based environmental education and the kind of professional development support that such work requires. The Australian report based on these case studies will take its place alongside those from nineteen other member countries of the OECD, and will hopefully result in a deal of visibility for Australian environmental education at this international forum.

In light of this level of activity, it is not surprising that the degree of support for the *Australian Journal for Environmental Education* has also grown. This issue is the largest in the history of the Journal, and is perhaps a sign of increasing confidence and professionalism in the field as more people report and reflect critically on their professional work and its meaning and significance.

This issue is wide-ranging in its contents. In the *Feature Articles* section, Geake discusses the use of technology as a stimulus for enhancing

sensitivity to the environment, while Russell challenges the “techno-scientific innovations that have been so instrumental in shaping our culture”. Kean and Wals both describe participatory, community-based instances of environmental education in overseas settings, the latter with an emphasis on young peoples’ perceptions of environmental issues. White continues the tradition in this journal of reporting on environment-related programs at Australian institutions by describing the philosophy and structure of the “Social Ecology” program at the University of Western Sydney, and Thomas describes an educational module aimed at exploring the the main aspects of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) techniques, procedures and legislation with a wide range of students.

The *Contemporary Issues Forum* focuses in several ways on the policy-practice interface in environmental education. Fien explores the issue within a “macro-context of teaching environmental education”; Greenall Gough considers environmental education within a complex of national, political and curriculum priorities; Robottom addresses the coherence between purpose, research and professional development in environmental education; and Spork presents an account of an extensive research project that explores the relationship between theory and practice in schools.

In the *Book Reviews* section, Murray Seiffert reviews a book (*Taming the Great South Land*), and a videotape (*Like Nowhere Else*) and Janette Griffin reviews a curriculum resource kit (*Water*).

With Federal and Victorian government elections looming, 1993 promises to be at least as important a year in environmental education as 1992. In a sense, many of the recent gains in the field are at stake. This Journal can play a role in the debate that needs to take place about environmental issues and educational responses to these issues. I hope that the level of support for the Journal continues to increase in these times of change in Australian educational and broader social life.