

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND A RATIONALE FOR CHANGE  
IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF STATE SCHOOLS

Many observers<sup>1</sup> of Australian schools have commented on the structures and governance of the state systems of education. For example, Freeman Butts<sup>2</sup> in 1955, examined the assumptions underlying Australian education. Part of this study was devoted to a review of the existing decision making processes and management in education. He argued that the highly centralized systems of state education rested on two underlying assumptions:-

1. a uniform policy for all schools in a state is a good thing, and
2. a uniform policy can be achieved only when the basic decisions are made by a relatively few people.<sup>3</sup>

The advantages from such a centralized system, it was claimed,<sup>4</sup> lie in the provision of uniform learning situations throughout the state, thus enabling equality of opportunity for all students. No matter where the school is located the state is able to provide the same

physical learning facilities and appoint teachers who have all undergone similar training programmes.

Butts was critical of the small number of people involved in policy and decision making in such systems. The few non-professionals entrusted with a role in major educational decisions have included only the Minister and public service boards, while within the professional staffs themselves it has been only the directors, inspectors and other senior members of the bureaucratic hierarchy. The Hughes Report<sup>5</sup>, in supporting this criticism, pointed out that schools are being left to make decisions only on relatively minor matters with the result that variety and innovation in education are restricted. Australian schools have therefore, become less adaptable and flexible than is appropriate in the rapidly changing world of today.

The disadvantages Butts saw in the centralized system included time consuming activities by the hierarchy in handling more mundane and routine functions thereby restricting their time available to attend to more pertinent problems, e.g. acting as leaders in the field of education. He also suggested that such a system misses some of the vitality, initiative, creativeness

and variety that would result if the decision processes were delegated throughout the educational structure. A two-way flow of ideas could lead to more broadly based decisions and thus more democratic ones. Democratic decision making should involve all who are concerned and affected by the decisions so that, according to Butts, the government, the profession and the community should all be involved in educational decision making. The Hughes Report<sup>6</sup> however, refers to the major problem in establishing a new education system as the demarcation of powers of the various authorities.

Butts suggested that the lack of confidence of community participation in decision making lies in the apathy by the local community toward the organization of schools. If this is so, and the community is expected to take part in policy making, then a decline in educational standards or inequality of provisions for education could result. The certainty of uniformity would seem more desirable than the uncertainty of decentralization in these circumstances. However, in the society of today, twenty years after Butts' writings, there is an increasing demand for participation and responsibility in decision making by those who are vitally concerned in the organization.<sup>7</sup>

It is claimed in the Campbell Report<sup>8</sup> that this is a prevalent trend in today's schools. Hughes<sup>9</sup> has commented on the increasing frustrations of parents arising from the lack of opportunity for meaningful participation in the educational policy making process. Such participation would assist in dissolving the present climate of dissatisfaction and apathy as well as infusing a wider range of experiences and diverse expertise than can be provided by teachers alone. An organization that permits a balance of community and professional interests would provide greater opportunity for liaison between community and school. Having encouraged students to become more responsible for their decisions, it is hardly surprising that the community now is wanting to exercise these lessons in the governing of schools.

The hierarchical structure that has grown up in the state departments of education is being increasingly rejected. A close examination of the pyramidal structure controlled effectively by a small decision making apex shows that this structure is no longer appropriate. It has not proved an effective form for curriculum implementation<sup>10</sup>, particularly with the restrictions imposed by external examinations, tertiary

entrance requirements and the inspectorate in assessing teachers for promotion. Further, there is a real demand for schools to show greater responsiveness. It has justifiably been claimed<sup>11</sup> that despite curriculum reforms school programmes continue to display similar characteristics from region to region, and they still follow the same basic principles as in earlier years.

There is a lack of perceived relevance to outside events and issues, a lack of adaptability to individual needs and interests, and a lack of ability to make use of new techniques and facilities in effective ways.<sup>12</sup>

A highly significant report in the development of decentralized systems of education in Australia is the Campbell Report. It is suggested that Australian teachers are nursing similar grievances<sup>13</sup> to those experienced in other countries, lack of teacher autonomy, excessive bureaucracy in school administration, lack of adequate grievance machinery, misassignment of teachers outside their own special subject areas, excessive work loads, too many extra-curricula duties, and lack of ancilliary staff. The organizational constraints of the centralized educational systems, at a time when social changes are affecting the whole spectrum of education, are resulting in a situation of role conflict in

the teaching profession over which the individual teacher has little power or authority to resolve. If the conflict remains the only alternative left to the teacher is resignation from the profession. This has been a fundamental cause of the rapid turnover of staff experienced in recent years.

A report also worthy of note by Australian educational administrators is the Redcliffe-Maud Report<sup>14</sup>; a design for the reorganization of local authorities in Great Britain. In 1974 local government throughout England and Wales was restructured to reduce the number of Local Authorities from 163 to 105. The principle underlying the reduction in numbers of local government areas was to produce a consolidation of the services available (including education) thereby providing a wider and richer range of services. Freeman Butts also considered that some regions and communities in Australia had grown sufficiently large to be classified as school districts worthy of greater autonomy. This measure could provide the possibility of genuine decentralization in educational policy making and financial support. The growth in total population and in the number of medium sized centres of population in



Australia, combined with the rapid improvement of transport facilities, provide adequate reasons for a serious re-examination of the concept of decentralization.

The basis for the reorganization of local government in England has raised some important issues that could be relevant in the Australian setting.<sup>15</sup>

For example, it may be possible for the state systems of education to be separated into more cohesive units so that each state could support more than one system. Regionalization as practised in the mainland states gives tacit support for such an argument.

The Redcliffe-Maud Committee examined the economics of the optimum size for Local Authorities in England. For this purpose they listed ten basic principles:-

1. The unit should be such as to make possible a "sense of common purpose".
2. The units should not divide urban from rural areas.
3. All services concerned with the physical environment (e.g. transport, town and regional planning) should be in the hands of one authority.
4. All personal services (e.g. health, education, welfare) should be in the hands of one authority.

5. If possible the same authority should handle both the "personal" and "environmental" services.
6. Authorities should be larger than most county boroughs.
7. A Local Authority should generally serve a minimum of 250,000 people.
8. The upper limit for a Local Authority to serve should be a population of about one million.
9. Where the population in an area exceeded this limit, a two-tiered government form would be needed.
10. The pattern of Local Authorities should approximate the traditional clusters within the country.

To determine the optimum size for a school system Her Majesty's Inspectorate was requested to undertake a survey to this effect. The results of this survey showed:-

- (a) that the least efficient education authorities were concentrated among those with populations of less than 200,000;
- (b) that authorities serving 200,000 to 500,000 provided services of a generally acceptable standard;
- (c) that the best average performance of any single group of authorities came from those with popu-



lations of around 500,000 and upwards.

The Committee therefore concluded that although there was no 'right' size for a local education authority, economies of scale demanded that it serve a population of at least 250,000. They felt, however, that once the population of an authority exceeded one million the law of diminishing returns would begin to operate, with the disadvantages of size outweighing the gains of functional efficiency.

Allowing for considerations of geographical location and distance on the basis of these findings it could be argued that Australian education has reached the point where the state system model is no longer the most efficient one. Beare<sup>16</sup> has suggested that Australia would be better served by having 26 systems, as listed below, with a minimum of 13 (i.e. one system for each million of population).

Tasmania	1	Queensland	3
Western Australia	2	Victoria	6
South Australia	2	New South Wales	9

The fact that some of the state systems have introduced the concept of regionalism seems to argue in favour of the Maud Committee conclusions applying in

Australia. It would be a relatively easy shift to convert each region into a semi-autonomous school system leaving the central administration with the role of co-ordinator, distributor and planner. In the Hughes Report it is suggested that

the zest for experimentation in educational administration is a correlate of reasonably small size of school system, adequate and flexible financial arrangements and the delegation of as many powers as possible to those responsible for the governance of individual schools.<sup>17</sup>

The conclusion that Butts arrived at in 1955 also supports the ideas expressed above. He suggested that the Australian education systems as they were first devised during the latter half of the nineteenth century were democratic and appropriate for that time, but have since become progressively unsuitable for today's democratic society as population has grown and conditions have changed. Therefore he argued, "the time now seems ripe for a fundamental re-examination of this whole question."<sup>18</sup>

#### Changing Social Conditions

Of particular significance in an examination of new governing structures are the social changes that are taking place and impinging on the educational organ-

izations. The Campbell Committee has summarized the major social changes in Australia that have had a bearing on proposed changes in the structures of education. As the members of this committee saw it the foundation of the task of reorganizing education is that -

.....education must be regarded as a process which takes place outside the special educational institutions as much as within them and which continues long after a person has left them. The process is therefore very sensitive to, and is thus deeply affected by, structural changes in society.<sup>19</sup>

The social changes that were considered relevant to their study were as follows<sup>20</sup>

(a) Knowledge

The most obvious characteristic is the sheer growth in the quantity of knowledge. The enormous and rapid expansion of information now available has made the acquisition of skills and insights to which education is directed very much more difficult at all levels of learning.

Combined with this, the practical application of knowledge has been increasing at an alarming rate. The educational objectives of school programmes now seek to develop in students the capacity to face and cope

with quite novel situations. The emphasis that has been on rote learning has been replaced by the emphasis to obtain and analyse information.

(b) Society

Changes in society and the economy are making very different demands on schools today than they have done so in the past. Both the school's aims and objectives must therefore be reviewed in the light of these changes.

There have been quite significant moves in the structure and occupations of the workforce. In 1947 approximately 15 per cent of the workforce was employed in primary industries but by 1971 that figure had dropped to 8 per cent. Conversely, those engaged in professional, technical and related occupations rose from approximately 5 per cent to 11 per cent. Such changes in the pattern of employment are related to the increasing industrialization of society.

The initial response in schools to this move toward an industrial society was universal primary education followed by universal secondary education. As the demands from employers for higher qualifications emerged so the schools were required to provide more

and better education. The rapidity with which these changes in the occupational structure have taken place has meant that formal schooling can no longer be viewed in narrow vocational terms.

Due to these increased demands by employers, employees have come to rely more on winning jobs in open competition rather than from established position. This increased competitive aspect of society has resulted in greater mobility of the workforce. The possibility of better economic rewards, combined with better salaries, has made the community more affluent.

With increasing industrialization has come the associated increase in mechanization and automation in industry. Men have been replaced by machines and in many cases these machines are now operated by women. There has been a significant rise in the number of women in the workforce. The extension of equality of opportunity to women has also made it possible for them to achieve comparable education standards leading to different conceptions of the social role of both men and women. In a survey conducted in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne, and reported in the Campbell Report, girls expressed a greater desire for change in the educational structure than did boys.



Technological advances in the mass media have had a significant impact on the adolescent sub-culture. World events can now be broadcast immediately through television and radio, thereby influencing the nature of children's perceptions and understandings. Home and school are no longer the primary sources for social experiences for the young, nor are they the only sources of information.

(c) Secondary School Population.

These changes in the structure of society have been matched by changes in the nature of the secondary school population. There has been an extension in the number of years of formal schooling. Higher retention rates are seen as a direct function of social change and as a consequence of developments in knowledge and technology and their social effects.

There has also been a change in expected role behaviour of adolescents. More and more they are expected to assume adult roles, as evidenced by the new legal position of 18 year olds and the franchise extended to them. An expression of these new roles is the desire shown by students to have a greater say in the determination of school policy. Approximately 94 per



cent of fifth and sixth form students in Canberra indicated that they felt that students should be represented on college councils.

A consequence of the higher retention rates and change in the expected role behaviour of students is that at the senior high school level students are often being placed in a situation of severe conflict. On the one hand society is prolonging the dependent status of childhood and economic reliance on parents, while on the other they are expected to adopt adult behaviour patterns of biological and social maturity. The student survey conducted by the Campbell Committee revealed a quite striking and disturbing degree of antagonism and alienation in the sample population. The student dissent movements experienced overseas and beginning to appear in Australia are a consequence of this conflict situation.

#### (d) Schools

The era of mass education now being experienced is reflected in the larger number, and populations, of schools. The nature of the teacher/pupil relationship is changing as students are becoming further divorced from those in positions of authority and com-

munication channels are breaking down. The administrative structures of schools should be designed to encourage a very personal relationship between teacher and pupil, not break it down.

At least one common aim of all Australian education systems is to provide the student with some understanding of his place in society and to inform him of some of the characteristics of that society. Due to the social changes that are taking place society is making increasing demands on the schools, particularly with regard to moral issues. The aims of education need to be broadened to encompass such issues.

Means of effective community involvement in the development of policy will have to be determined in the light of the requirement for critical attention to be given to such moral issues whilst protecting teachers, students and administrators from manipulation by vested interests. 21

#### The Bases for Change

It is evident that the changes taking place in society and policy making procedures are making demands on the schools for a greater degree of independence to devise their own goals, structures and curricula. A much wider participation in decision making on these matters is essential to the operation of schools. The

Hughes Report<sup>22</sup> has advocated that governmental and administrative structures should be designed to encourage the contributions of parents to help in overcoming the criticism of the lack of direct citizen participation and the gap between schools and the people's representatives in parliament. However, establishing local authorities will not in itself ensure that all those who have a legitimate right to be involved in policy making will be involved in a more meaningful way than at present.

Freeman Butts's answer to the problem was to have some form of centralized authority for education but decentralized administration.

Overall authority for basic policies and minimal requirements should doubtless continue to be vested in state parliaments and state departments of education, but perhaps a larger measure of direct administration and day to day management should be delegated to local units. 23

The broad areas of responsibility would therefore be:-

1. the government, charged with the responsibility for common welfare;
2. the profession, with seeing that the education process rests upon the best professional knowledge available;
3. the people themselves, to keep the government and

the profession alerted to the wide-ranging interests and the variety of organized and informal activities that mark a healthy and vital community life.

Central to the argument for reorganization of administrative structures in Australian schools is that the conformity and uniformity of the state systems can and should be broken down. Within the broad guidelines laid down by the central authority each school should have the right to determine all aspects of its own educational programme. The Campbell Committee<sup>24</sup> has suggested that schools should be empowered to:-

1. determine the educational programme within broad guidelines;
2. prepare estimates and determine a budget within available funds;
3. advise the central authority on staffing requirements in accordance with the educational needs of the school;
4. participate in the selection of teaching staff;
5. select and employ non-teaching staff on such bases as will ensure the most effective implementation of the educational programme.

To enable decisions to be made on these and more general matters affecting college (school) operations, it will be necessary for each college (school) to have a formal governing body which will bear the responsibility for all decisions taken by the college (school).<sup>25</sup>

It is suggested that the areas of responsibility for the local governing body should be as follows.<sup>26</sup> The board would participate in and be responsible for school policy and implementation of that policy. Purely educational planning and the consequent executive functions would be delegated to the principal and staff. The board would however, retain the right to initiate proposals covering the wide range of school activities, provide suggestions to the principal and staff, comment on and criticise proposals and refer them back for further consideration if necessary. With regard to teaching strategies and internal administrative functions the board should not have the power to establish policies nor reject proposals if the staff and principal are in agreement. This arrangement would protect the professional independence of principal and staff but at the same time guarantee that there is meaningful participation in policy making by all those involved and concerned with education.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that

while the social and educational changes are much the same throughout Australia, the responses to these changes should not necessarily be the same. Differences in geography, traditions and expectations would necessitate differences in administrative structures from area to area in answer to these challenges. The change factors must be viewed in the situational context. The administrative patterns, to be consistent with the views of social justice, must provide equality of opportunity but at the same time allow for the variety of needs and interests. They must also recognize the legitimate interests of the various participants and involve them in policy making in appropriate ways, and provide the specialized knowledge and facilities to support the teaching-learning process.

The arguments for the formation of school boards, therefore, rest on two fundamental principles:-

1. teacher and parent participation
2. decentralized decision making.<sup>27</sup>

The central problem of participation in decision making has been to recognize the interests of teachers, parents and students in appropriate ways. The decentralization of decision making may operate in three areas at the school level; curriculum, staffing and



finance. Within the bounds of broad policy laid down by the central authority the schools should take responsibility for identifying the needs and using resources from the local area, neighbouring areas and the central authority.<sup>28</sup>

#### The Growth of Governing Bodies in the Australian State School Systems

It was not until 1966 that any constructive action towards the formation of governing bodies in state schools occurred. Increasing dissatisfaction with the administration by the New South Wales Department of Education of State schools in Canberra culminated in the Adult Education Department of the Australian National University, supported by the local Chapter of the Australian College of Education, convening a public seminar to discuss the possibility of an Education Authority being established in the Australian Capital Territory. Sir George Currie, who chaired the seminar, was appointed chairman of a working party which, in November, 1967, published the report An Independent Education Authority for the Australian Capital Territory.<sup>29</sup>

In this report it was recommended that an autonomous Education Authority be established in the A.C.T. res-

possible for providing pre-school, primary, secondary, technical and special education. Although these recommendations were not accepted by government, discussions on them, both at public and government levels, continued through to 1972.

During that year Mr. Bowen, the then Minister for Education and Science, gave details of the decision to establish a Commonwealth Teaching Service. The structure of this Service closely followed the recommendations set out in the Neal-Radford Report.<sup>30</sup> Chapter 3 of that Report is devoted to the "Organization and Administration of Schools and School Systems." Among the major recommendations of this section of the Report were that the authority for the management of a school be shared between a school board and the head and his staff, and that a board should be established for each school. The responsibilities for such a board would include; the development of policies for the expenditure of funds, appoint caretaking and ground staff, prepare reports on the needs of the school, and assist in the selection of the head of the school. The membership of the board, it was suggested, should consist of two members nominated by parents, three lay members nominated by the Authority (i.e. the body to

replace the New South Wales Department of Education), two members nominated by teachers, and the head of the school. It was also suggested that the principal and staff be given greater autonomy in decisions related to professional matters. At the system level they proposed a decentralization of powers to the school should occur, but with direct communication between school and Authority.

During 1973, Mr. Beazley, the Minister for Education in the new Labor Government, commissioned a panel to submit proposals on the form and operation of the statutory authority to be established to administer the government school system in the A.C.T. In May of that year their report A Design for the Governance and Organization of Education in the Australian Capital Territory<sup>31</sup> was submitted to the Minister and in October the Interim Council of the A.C.T. Schools Authority<sup>32</sup> was established.

In the section devoted to the governance of government schools in the A.C.T.<sup>33</sup> the panel gave the following assumptions as underlying the formation of governing bodies:-

1. There existed no effective provision for direct community, parental or citizen participation in

school government.

2. The degree to which flexibility and adaptability are achieved in the schools of the A.C.T. will be a function of the degree to which school boards are delegated powers to make important decisions affecting their own schools.

Accordingly it was recommended that a board should be established to control each government school in the Education Authority. Each board would be responsible for the following functions:-

1. determination of broad school policies,
2. budgeting and control of funds,
3. employment of professional staff,
4. employment of non-professional staff,
5. maintenance and minor extension of school buildings,
6. encouragement of experimentation with curriculum.<sup>34</sup>

After reviewing a number of submissions from professional and community organizations the composition of the board, it was proposed, should be appointed from the following groups, principals, teachers, parents, one nominee of the Authority, and students where applicable, e.g. high schools and secondary colleges. The principal is to be an ex-officio member but is not entitled to hold the position of chairman.<sup>35</sup>

The major recommendations of the Hughes Report

were adopted by the Federal Government in October, 1973 and implemented early in the 1974 school year. However, opposition from the A.C.T. Teachers' Federation on staffing, and the lack of necessary legislation on other matters such as finance have so far prevented these boards operating as envisaged by the panel.

During 1973 school councils in South Australia were established as corporate bodies (Education Gazette 14th March, 1973)<sup>36</sup>, following the enactment of the Education Act, 1972. The purpose of this legislation is to democratize the administration of education<sup>37</sup> by including lay, professional, departmental and government representatives on the governing body of each school. The head of the school is in undisputed control of the school and the central role of the school council is essentially an advisory one. It is intended that this advisory function will provide the mechanism for involving the thinking of the community and members of the school staff generally in any discussions and decisions made on school policy.

During November, 1973, the Director-General of Education in Victoria requested that schools and associated organizations give consideration to a paper entitled Some Thoughts on the Community and the School.<sup>38</sup>

For the purposes of governance two administrative bodies were suggested, the School Council as the basic management unit, and the School Education Committee as the body to advise the principal on matters relating to the educational programme in the school.

The responses to these initial proposals were considerable and in June, 1974, a further Memorandum<sup>39</sup> from the Director-General was circulated to all schools advising that no action was to be taken on the formation of councils until relevant details could be finalized. In this circular four alternative proposals on the structure of school councils were put forward for discussion. By March, 1975 approximately 40 per cent of surveys had been returned and assessed and further information was awaited before any definite decisions were to be taken.

In New South Wales, in May 1973, the Minister for Education, Mr. Willis, prepared a Consultative Paper, The Community and Its Schools<sup>40</sup>, in which proposals were made for the structures necessary to establish school boards and involve the community more in the administration of state schools. The Minister also commissioned a review panel to examine and report on the Consultative Paper and the submissions received



and to prepare a further paper based on their findings setting out more detailed recommendations.<sup>41</sup> The review panel met for the first time in October, 1973, and in December, 1974, the New South Wales Cabinet approved proposals for the establishment of school boards.

There was considerable reaction against the proposals in both the Consultative Paper and the Report of the Review Panel. The school board system has been rejected by the New South Wales Teachers' Federation, the Australian Teachers' Federation, The Principals' Association, the Deputy Principals' Association, The Infants Mistresses' Association, The Federated Infants School Clubs, the New South Wales Parents and Citizens' Association, and the Federation of Miscellaneous Workers' Union (cleaners)<sup>42</sup>. The Department of Education therefore began a new approach, during 1975, to the problem of participation in the management of schools. New proposals<sup>43</sup> were circulated that year for the formation and composition of school boards.

In his first circular in 1975 the Director-General indicated that as a result of the response to the earlier proposals "community involvement should be