

## **President's Report to the AAEGT Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2018 - Lesley Henderson**

It is my honour and pleasure to present the Report on the activities of the AAEGT (August 2017-September 2018).

### **1. Meetings:**

- The 2017 AGM was held in Sydney at the WCGTC conference hosted by University of NSW on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. At that AGM, I was formally appointed as incoming President. The AAEGT Council met the following day to review our strategic purpose and plans for the year.
- One of the main tasks Council set about was the review of our current Constitution (in the form of Articles and Memorandum last reviewed in 2009). To that end, an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) was held in Adelaide on May 5<sup>th</sup> to propose some interim changes that would remove our constitutional obligation for an annual audit (as this is no longer required because of changes to the legislation).
- The AAEGT Council has met via Zoom (online video platform) eleven times between August 2017 and August 2018 in addition to the full day meeting held in Adelaide in May in conjunction with the EGM.
- The Executive of Council has met via Zoom on ten occasions throughout the previous year.

### **2. Affiliation:**

- In November 2017, we were happy to welcome a new Affiliate association when the Association for Gifted and Talented Education Victoria (AGATEVic) was established.
  - We were disappointed that the Queensland Association for Gifted and Talented Children (QAGTC) sent notification in October 2017 that they were not going to reaffiliate with the AAEGT, contrary to their previously stated intention. It is our understanding that their decision not to reaffiliate was based in part on an unwillingness to provide us with their members' details, as required by law. The proposed new AAEGT Constitution will give QAGTC members the opportunity to seek membership directly with the AAEGT or, should the QAGTC decide to reaffiliate with the AAEGT, their members will have a choice about being a member of the AAEGT by consenting to provide their contact details. We hope that this might remove any barriers and encourage the QAGTC to reaffiliate with the AAEGT.
  - Although the NSWAGTC Inc. had been inactive since 2011 and ceased being an Affiliate of the AAEGT many years ago, there would be AAEGT Members who were previously members of this association and might be interested to know that it was put into involuntary cancellation by the Office of Fair Trading in late 2017. The AAEGT is very appreciative of receiving a financial donation distributed from their residual funds. We will consider ways to use this money to honour in particular those members who worked so hard to establish that association.
  - Current associations affiliated with the AAEGT (in alphabetical order):
    - ACT Gifted Families' Support Group Inc. (ACT GFSG)
    - Association for Gifted and Talented Education Victoria (AGATEVic)
    - Gifted & Talented Children's Association of SA (GTCASA)
    - Gifted Western Australia (Gifted WA)
    - NSW Gifted Families' Support Group Inc. (GFSG NSW)
    - NT Association for the Education of the Gifted & Talented (NTAEGT)
    - Tasmanian Association for the Gifted Inc. (TAG)
    - Victorian Association for Gifted & Talented Children (VAGTC)
- Other gifted associations with whom we are linked:
- Memorandum of Agreement with giftEDNZ in New Zealand (signed in 2016)
  - Affiliated organisation status with the WCGTC

### **3. Changes to Council Directors:**

- The loss of the QAGTC as an Affiliate meant that Gail Young from the QAGTC ceased to be a Director on the AAEGT Council. I would like to thank Gail for her service to the AAEGT since

2010. We have missed Gail's caring warmth and passion, and her collegial contributions to the work of the AAEGT.

- We were also saddened when the SA Director from GTCASA, Virginia Kinnear, resigned in December because she was moving to Victoria. We congratulate her on her new position at Deakin University, and thank her for her valuable contributions over the year.
- Two new Directors have been appointed to Council: in November we welcomed Kate Mitchell from AGATE Vic who filled the Victorian position left vacant since June 2017 when Michele Linossier from the VAGTC resigned; and in December we welcomed Rob Perkins from GTCASA as the new SA Director.

#### **4. Governance:**

- As stated above, the main focus of the work of Council this year has been to review the existing Constitution and write a new one. This has involved countless hours reviewing the relevant legislation, discussing different models and issues as a Council, sending out concept documents for comment and checking with consultants to ensure that our processes were thorough and our work was in line with the relevant legislation, recommended governance practices and in the best interests of our membership. As a result, we have brought to this AGM a Special Resolution to adopt a new Constitution. The main changes in the new Constitution relate to the membership model and the election of Directors to the Board (which we currently refer to as the Council). Ongoing communication with our Affiliates and Members will help us to transition to the new governance model and processes, and not only ensure that we work in compliance with the Act, but also in ways that will strengthen the AAEGT into the future.
- The development of a new Constitution has been an extremely demanding process and only possible through the dedication and teamwork of the Directors, with many, many hours invested in the process. Sincere thanks to all the Directors for this, and particular thanks to Elizabeth Singer for her research and to the Associations Forum for their advice and support.

#### **5. Development of Policy, Guidelines and governance processes:**

- As there were no policy documents available to the incoming 2017 Council, a great deal of work has been done to interpret our Constitution (particularly in light of current legislation), and to clarify protocols and procedures so that good governance practices are consistently applied. A number of policies and guidelines have been drafted (those marked with an Asterix have been adopted, but will be reviewed in coming months in light of the anticipated changes to our Constitution):
  - Privacy Policy\*
  - Weblinks guidelines\*
  - Roles and Responsibilities of Directors
  - Director Induction Policy
  - Directors' Manual
  - Reimbursement of Directors' Travel Policy\*
  - Conflict of Interest Policy\*
  - Confidentiality Policy
  - Management & Handover of AAEGT Records Policy
- Lynne Maher (Treasurer) researched insurance policies and has established a Directors' Insurance policy for the AAEGT. Lynne is to be acknowledged and thanked for her responsible and meticulous care of our finances.
- Elizabeth Singer (Secretary) deserves to be acknowledged and thanked for her untiring research into governance practices and principles to help develop best practice procedures.
- Melinda Gindy (vice President) oversees the [info@aaegt.net.au](mailto:info@aaegt.net.au) contact email address, and ensures that any emails receive a prompt response, or are forwarded onto the relevant person for a response. Sincere thanks also to Melinda for this important work.

## 6. Giftedness Awareness Week (GAW):

- Since its inception in 2015 at the suggestion of Melinda Gindy who has led the program, GAW has forged stronger links with our community and with the media. Held in March each year, this year's theme was *Acceptance: Diversity and Equity*. Events and activities were held around Australia, organised by the local associations and overseen by Melinda and her committee. On behalf of the AAEGT, I wish to thank Melinda for her passionate (and compassionate) leadership and insight.
- GAW 2019 dates have been announced, so we look forward to 17-23<sup>rd</sup> March GAW events based on the theme of "Belonging".

## 7. Australasian Journal of Gifted Education (AJGE):

- Two issues of the AJGE have been published and distributed to subscribers this year – Volume 26, Issue 2 in December, 2017 and Volume 27, Issue 1 in March, 2018.
- December's Journal saw contributions from giftEDNZ members, following the formalisation of an arrangement to mutually support each other, and an agreement reached in relation to discounted journal subscriptions for their members.
- Acknowledging and thanking Jae Jung for his dedication and hard work in his role as Editor does not go far enough in expressing how integral his role is in the promotion and communication of research and establishing the presence of the AAEGT in the international field through our Journal. His passion and professionalism, supported by an illustrious team of associate editors and editorial panel, produce a quality journal that I believe is the only transnational journal in our field currently published in the entire Asia-Pacific region.

## 8. Advocacy, media presence and Website:

- Position papers: These form an important platform from which we can advocate evidence-based positions about significant issues and concerns. The AAEGT previously began work on these and we have a couple of papers already on file, with new ones being written. Developing a platform of evidence-based position papers on significant concepts and issues will be a strong focus in the year ahead.
- Media reports and publications: Selective schooling has been a controversial issue in the eastern states' press, and Melinda Gindy, Jae Jung and Kate Mitchell have all contributed comments and ideas for articles. Our website has a section where these articles are listed.
- Website upgrades: Jodi Brown has worked hard to both review and check accuracy on our website and also to create new pages to promote our presence and our work. She is to be thanked in particular for her quiet commitment to quality and innovation in her achievements.
- Social media presence: For those who tweet and follow Facebook, these feeds have provided instant information and reached a wider audience and membership.
- Advice: We have provided advice and recommendations to various state and territory governments, organisations such as the AAAE, and ACARA.
- Conference presentations: Several of the Council Directors have presented at a number of state, national and international conferences, raising the profile and visibility of the AAEGT.

## 9. National Conference:

- Biannual AAEGT conferences hosted by local Affiliates are specified in our existing Constitution as an expectation. They are a valuable means to bring together people in our field, share current research, showcase best practice and promote gifted and talented education locally, nationally and internationally. They take an enormous amount of effort, time, expertise and commitment to organise, and the support of the national community to be successful. Intended to be held in even years, there was no conference in 2014 (although there was an international conference (IRATDE) held in Queensland in 2015 hosted by QAGTC), UNSW and GFSG Inc. co-hosted the 2016 conference. UNSW also hosted an international conference in 2017 (WCGTC) and no association was in a position to host the 2018 national conference.

- The Research Colloquium hosted by Flinders University in Adelaide in 2018 was suggested as an alternative to a national conference. It helps to address one of the AAEGT's aims to promote research in Australia relating to gifted and talented children and their education.
- Looking ahead to 2020, South Australia is the only state/territory that has offered to host the national conference at this stage. An organising committee, aligned with GTCASA, put in a bid to host the Asia Pacific Federation on Giftedness (APFG) conference to combine with the national conference, which was unsuccessful. However, the organising committee has already made significant progress in preparation for bidding for the national 2020 conference. Sincere thanks to the hard-working and passionate conference organising committee in Adelaide, including Jae in NSW, and to the support of the Adelaide Convention Centre and the Adelaide Convention Bureau. Thanks also to Jae for presenting our bid at the recent APFG conference in Bangkok. Although our bid was commended, the next APFG conference in 2020 will be in Korea, which was no surprise considering the Koreans were present in force in Bangkok!
- I urge Affiliates to start thinking about hosting the 2022 national conference. Previously the national conferences rotated between states/territories to give every association the opportunity to promote gifted and talented education to their own teachers and parents. It would be great to resume a regular rotation for the national conference and to be able to look ahead knowing that we have commitments to two conferences already in the future. With four years to plan for the 2022 conference, please consider this opportunity.

I would like to thank the Council – Melinda Gindy (VP) [NSW], Elizabeth Singer (Sec) [ACT], Lynne Maher (Treas) [Tas], Jae Jung (Ed), Jodi Brown (Web Admin) [NT], Kylie Bice [WA], Kate Mitchell [Vic] & Rob Perkins [SA] – for their efforts and valuable contributions over the year. It never ceases to amaze me how passionate people can find time to volunteer in spite of and in the midst of such busy lives. The role of President is far easier and far more pleasant when the Directors are so committed and collegial!

A key task moving forward is to engage with Affiliates and Members, grow our membership, re-engage with past and Life Members and communicate with our membership about our work. One way in which we plan to achieve this is through the reinstatement of a bi-annual newsletter that will be sent electronically to our Members and included on our website. Thanks to Kate Mitchell and Rob Perkins for taking on leadership of this important initiative. We are also planning to write the history of the AAEGT and would appreciate any information, sources, early documents and photographs (originals or copies) that any Members might have. Curating an archive of these historical records will help us to provide added insights into the work and impact of the AAEGT since its inception in 1985.

I welcome any feedback from our Affiliates and Members with regards to how we might better meet their needs and progress our purpose into the future.

While we can be proud of our efforts and achievements from this past year, I look forward to seeing more of our strategic goals achieved in the coming year and continuing to work on behalf of our Affiliates and Members – ultimately to protect and promote the educational entitlement of our gifted and talented children.

Thank you  
Lesley Henderson, AAEGT President