

Book Review:

The First 50 Years of the Australian College of Educators in South Australia

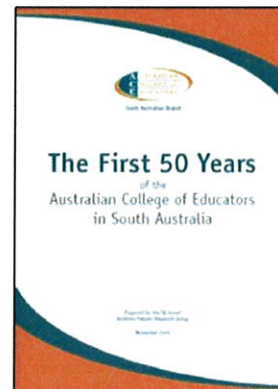
Reviewed by Andrew Cook

The First 50 Years of the Australian College of Educators in South Australia provides a comprehensive overview of the SA branch's origins, evolution, activities and impact both locally and nationally since 1959. The study is organised thematically with sections devoted to the peak professional association's establishment, submissions, initiatives and key figures.

Covered over nine chapters are the ACE conferences held in Adelaide; submissions made on science in education, the education of girls, the 1988 Review of National Broadcasting and the more recent National Literacy Inquiry; local issues including the matriculation debate and the Karmel and Keeves reports; support for research projects such as Erica Jolly's history of Vocational Education SA; and initiatives of the SA branch such as the AW Jones Oration and the MacKillop Medal. Throughout the study there are also useful profiles of individuals who were to figure prominently in the ACE and South Australian education generally including Jean Blackburn, Hedley Beare, Lyall Fricker and the three national ACE presidents Albert (Alby) Jones, Jonathan Anderson and Denise Bradley.

Among other things the reader gets a sense of the disproportionately large role the SA branch has played in contributing to the in ACE's stated role of providing a unified voice for the education profession. The expansion of opportunities for leadership roles for women over the life of the organisation is also evident (contrast the 1959 office bearers with those of 2009). More generally, the interrelationship between social change and the theory and practice of education in the post-war years can be inferred throughout the text.

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It is not surprising perhaps that the SA branch of the ACE is the first to have its history written as in 2003 the ACE's scattered collection of records was consolidated, organised and properly housed in a leased area of the National Archives of the Lutheran Church in suburban Adelaide. Since 2007 an Archives Fellows Research Group has met under College Archivist Tony Ryan to research and write on aspects of the ACE's history. The Group, which also includes Jim Dwyer, Robin Ryan, Jan Lokan and Tony McGuire, were responsible for selecting and preparing much of the primary material for the national history, *Australian College of Educators: The First 50 Years*.

The present volume, produced with written contributions from Joan Brewer, Louise Bywater and Judith Redden, and editing by Jan Lokan, also represents an excellent example of a collaborative approach to archival research and an illustration of the effectiveness of well chosen primary material in adding texture to an historical narrative. In this case, primary material such as photographs, news clippings and conference publications have been used to good effect.

The First 50 Years of the Australian College of Educators in South Australia, then, will be of interest to both teachers and archivists.

An online version can be found here:
<http://austcolled.com.au/sa-history-project>