

Editorial

This issue of *ANZJLE* covers topics of considerable importance to school management and administration, to teacher education programs, and to wider issues to do with community welfare. The first of the topics to be addressed is to do with child abuse which has long been a concern in most countries. In recent years, however, the extent and seriousness of various types of abuse – particularly physical and sexual – has received increased media attention. In this regard various commissions of inquiry, as well as research programs carried out in schools and elsewhere, have demonstrated how prevalent this problem actually is in schools and the wider community. One response to the problem of school-based abuse has been the introduction of various child protection statutes by many of the Australian State legislatures. Lindsay's article contains a penetrating examination of four such statutes enacted in New South Wales which provide for a range of measures to help ensure children are given greater protection from various forms of abuse.

One of the most stressful concerns of school administrators and teachers alike is to do with bullying. Recent research, in Australia and elsewhere, has clearly established the effects bullying has on both victim and bully. Most worrying is the conclusion that the consequences are usually long term and influence the health, academic performance, and careers of those being bullied. There is evidence too, of a strong link between student suicidal ideation and actual suicide. The two articles on bullying contained in this issue are therefore timely and welcome. In the first Slee and Ford provide an overview of research into school bullying in Australia. The types of bullying, their frequency, and their consequences are outlined and recent school-based intervention programs are described. The article concludes with a discussion of areas of law that might be seen to be associated with the problem. In the second article, Farrell examines the phenomenon of bullying from an early childhood perspective. Her article, which is based on a research program currently being undertaken with teachers of children in early childhood settings, examines practices used by these teachers to address the problem. It is concluded that intervention in the early childhood years is feasible and needs to be seen as part of the Australian national crime prevention strategy.

While education law has long been a recognised discipline in many tertiary institutions in the United States this is not generally the case in other countries. Nonetheless courses which bring together educational policies and practices with pertinent aspects of law have emerged in teacher training institutions in Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere. Thomas, Kajs and Cox in their article to do with Mentor-Teachers argue the value of this group having a sound appreciation of the law which they in turn might pass on to the beginning teachers entrusted to their care. The article contains a comprehensive school law program which can readily be utilised to facilitate the Mentor's acquisition of an appropriate level of legal literacy.

Issues to do with student rights are rapidly assuming the level of importance that has been accorded them in North America for many years. Previous issues of *ANZJLE* have

published articles alerting readers to the legal implications for educational institutions associated with student rights violations. In this regard Varnham's article examines the rights New Zealand students have in relation to school rules and their Constitutional rights to freedom of expression and appearance. Khan, on the other hand, examines the Constitutional rights of schools as well as of students to do with search and seizure in Canadian schools.

A further area of concern in Australia and New Zealand is the emergence of the rights of students with disabilities to an equitable access to education services and in this regard Lindsay's case note provides an interesting analysis of discrimination in education as this relates to children with disabilities.

Reviews of the CCH publication *Principals Legal Guide* and the book *Aspects of Educational Law* (Edited by Oosthuizen) and its associated CD ROM, *Educational Law*, conclude this issue of the journal. The reviews by Spencer and Stewart indicate the remarkable growth of interest in education and the law which is currently taking place in many common law countries including, in these instances, Australia and New Zealand. This level of interest will be further demonstrated in book reviews to be included in Volume 4 (2) and Volume 5 (1) of the journal.

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