

# Practical classes 'low priority'

By KAREN HOBSON,  
Education Reporter

Secondary school principals are directing technology staff to run classes which are too large and potentially unsafe, according to a professional teachers' association.

The Technology Educators Association of the ACT alleges in its newsletter, *TEACT*, that the "inevitable disputes" that arise are lowering staff morale and creating factions within schools, reducing their ability to deliver effective programs.

The deputy secretary of the ACT Department of Education, Max Sawatzki, said he was affronted by the report, which was presented as a draft discussion paper.

Mr Sawatzki said yesterday the paper was provocative and misleading and attempted to "paint a picture which is difficult to support in fact".

"The association says a continual erosion of funding is putting increased pressure on principals to rationalise resources as they 'struggle to effectively manage their schools'."

"In some instances staff are being told that unless they comply and take more students in technology workshops, classes will be cut in the area and they will be placed on compulsory transfer," the report says.

It criticises the department for staying "particularly silent" and says it has chosen to hide behind the idea

that class sizes are the responsibility of principals.

Mr Sawatzki said this was "rubbish". There had been substantial upgrades of technology areas at Lyneham, Melrose and Alfred Deakin high schools in recent years and Campbell and Canberra high schools were on the present refurbishment program. Each refurbishment cost close to \$1 million.

The department had received seven requests in the past five years to assess occupancy rates and capacities in technology areas, and in recent months a couple of letters had flowed from routine health and safety assessments. He had not received a letter, nor representations, from the technology group.

The report says dwindling education resources are forcing schools to make curriculum decisions based on economics rather than striking a balance between education and economics. It asserts that practical programs are often perceived incorrectly to be more expensive to operate than other areas and are being allocated a lower status and priority.

It argues that this goes against contemporary curriculum development and national trends promoting technology as an essential area of learning.

"It is quite obvious that a number of principals view the practical areas, particularly technology, as an optional area of the curriculum that

can be run down to suit their economic constraints," it says.

"They choose, in some cases, to operate quite small classes in other curriculum areas perceived to be more academic at the expense of technology classes, therefore perpetuating the false and dated view that practical classes are only electives for less academic male students."

The ACT teachers' union sets the maximum number of students in practical or potentially hazardous classes at 24. The association argues this is purely arbitrary and says consideration must also be given to the size and layout of the classroom and equipment, the age of the students (the physical size of students varies greatly between 12 years old and 18) and the demands of the curriculum.

Mr Sawatzki acknowledged that technology areas in some older schools were built for a different era, but said class sizes varied to cope with this.

"The real issue is one of trying to keep pace with changes in technological education and we are working very hard to do that," he said.

"Our new policy is very clear. We accept 24 students in 100 square metres of space."

The association wants a working party of department, teachers, principals and union representatives to come to an agreed position on class sizes and draw up guidelines for establishing practical classes. Mr Sawatzki said this was being done.

## Police search for suspected outback con man

PERTH: Western Australian police continued a search yesterday for a man they believe to be an outback con man who has eluded them for five years.

Searchers looking for the man and a woman companion missing in the Great Victoria Desert believe a man who wandered into a station nine days ago with the woman has conned a number of other station owners into giving him vehicles.

Police in the search area, north-east of Kalbarrie, have found only one confirmed clue to the couple's movements since they began looking for the pair early on Wednesday.

The man in his 30s and the woman in her late 20s wandered on to Yamarna Station, 530km north-east of Kalbarrie, last Tuesday week saying they had been walking in the Great Victoria Desert for two weeks to find help. After resting for a few hours, the pair set off to find their four-wheel-drive vehicle which they said they had abandoned at Neale Junction, 380km east of Laverton.

The station caretaker, Tom McCudden, lent them a vehicle and supplied them with food and water, but they have not been seen since. Police found no trace of the four-wheel-drive at Neale Junction, but later found an abandoned Holden utility only 50km from Yamarna, which they believe was used by the couple.

Police believe the man might be the same person who has stolen equipment from isolated stations for some time.

They said he had used the name of Dave Holley and that his companion had been using the name of Deanne or Anna. A police spokesman said it seemed the man's claim that he was a former SAS member could be true.

OBITUARY: DR WILFRED J. B. CRANE

## A scientist with energy, conviction

Wilf Crane died on March 7 piloting his light aircraft from his farm at Tallaganda, NSW, to Canberra, where he was scheduled to take part in the annual air pageant.

Dr Crane was educated at Launceston Boys' Grammar and the University of Tasmania, where he studied forestry. He completed his Bachelor of Science at the Australian Forestry School Canberra in 1962 and gained a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Washington in 1972.

His death brought to an end the life and career of a remarkable man, a scientist of passionate conviction, imagination, energy and dedication.

As a research scientist, Dr Crane worked in silviculture and forest nutrition in Tasmania before joining the CSIRO Division of Forestry in 1974. Here he continued pioneering work on the nutrition of plantations. His interest in later years had been with the paucity of Australian soils, and how to preserve and enhance them through agroforestry.

Dr Crane worked tirelessly with a deep conviction that trees in combination with pastures were essential for better land-management practices. He told the story of Australian soils and the need to plant trees through his scientific papers, through the book he edited, *Think Trees Grow Trees*, and through the Bicentennial Syl-

vastade project launched by the then Governor-General, Sir Ninian Stephen, and through countless articles, lectures and field days.

In pursuit of an ideal he was a great organizer of people. His own energy was infectious.

His most recent project with CSIRO was the use of effluent to irrigate plantations. It was a project that appealed to Dr Crane in its simplicity, its integration of ancient practice with modern needs and science, and its ability to preserve and recycle. Dr Crane's instinct was to use resources but never to waste them.

He published widely and was an active member of many professional and related societies: The Institute of Foresters of Australia (fellow and past chairman), Soil Science Society of Australia (past president), International Soil Science Society, International Union of Forest Research Organizations, International Tree Crops Institute, Australian Forest Growers, and NSW Nut Growers (president). He also belonged to Greening Australia, whose work for the revegetation of Australia he strongly and vocally supported.

He was never just a member of an organisation. He was a devotee and an enthusiast.

He was, by nature, a teacher, that rare breed of man who could at once bring alive his science and make it plain. He had a mind

## IN BRIEF

### Scrap planned levy increase, Govt told

SYDNEY: The NSW Employers' Federation has called on the Federal Government to scrap a planned increase of the training guarantee levy.

All employers now spend 1 per cent of payroll expenses on staff training and the levy is set to increase to 1.5 per cent in June.

The federation also called on the Government to defer the training obligation for 1991-92 and 1992-93 for struggling companies. They would instead pay a 2 per cent levy in 1993-94.

### Close call denied

SYDNEY: Two passenger aircraft are reported to have come within two seconds of colliding as they landed on intersecting runways at Sydney airport yesterday.

Both Qantas and Australian Airlines played down the incident, while a Civil Aviation Authority spokesman said only that there had been an incident and it was being investigated by the Bureau of Air Safety Investigation.

News reports said a Qantas Boeing 767 arriving from Japan and an Australian Airlines Boeing 727 from Melbourne were within two seconds of a collision, with one crossing behind the other. An Australian Airlines spokeswoman said, "The aircraft got down safely, passengers were in no danger and it was a normal landing."

### Child-care review

MELBOURNE: The Victorian Government is to review regulations covering child-care centres after the discovery that children were sexually abused at a private centre south of Melbourne.

The Minister for Community Services, Kay Sefton, announced the review yesterday, 10 days after the Government deregistered the Mornington Child-Care Centre and Nursery School after an inquiry found children there had been sexually abused, and that the centre's proprietors, Norman and Alison Shulver, allowed the abuse and were themselves involved in it.

Ms Sefton also announced steps to improve links between the Office of Pre-school and Child Care and the police.

The review, to be completed by August, will be carried out by the office.

### Woman incinerated

WOLLONGONG: A woman was incinerated despite efforts by passing motorists to free her from her blazing car after it crashed on a country road in the NSW Southern Highlands yesterday.

The accident was almost identical to one in Wollongong on Tuesday in which a 17-year-old girl was burnt to death after being trapped in her car which exploded in flames after an accident.

Yesterday's accident happened just after 1pm, about 10km south-east of Bowral.

### Road laws deferred

MELBOURNE: The National Road Transport Commission has deferred the introduction of national uniform road charges and legislation, saying it needs time for research.

The commission has postponed until June a report to the Federal Government due in April, further delaying attempts to create national uniform transport conditions. It will present an options paper to its ministerial council meeting in June before consulting with the road industry again.

### Protest resignations

WOLLONGONG: The Illawarra Area Health Service has been thrown into chaos by the resignation of its chairman and vice-chairman in protest against a hospital closure.

The decision by John McKenna and John Hinton was made after Wednesday night's vote by the board to close the small hospital in the holiday town of Kiama, 20km south of Wollongong. The board, which only last month agreed to a proposal to lease the hospital to a community-based cooperative, was keeping the hospital open pending the granting of a private licence to the group.

### Court bid fails

SYDNEY: A residents' group has failed for the second time to block a developer's plans to build a large motel overlooking Wollongong Harbour.

The group, known as Residents of Belmont Basin, unsuccessfully appealed against a decision by the Land and Environment Court upholding Wollongong Council's conditional approval of the plan. The 80-unit motel was proposed by Job Creators Pty Ltd for a site covering five allotments.

### New radio station

SYDNEY: Hastings Community Radio on the mid-north coast of NSW has become Australia's 100th licensed public-broadcasting radio station.

The president of the Public Broadcasting Association of Australia, Jeff Langdon, welcomed yesterday the establishment of the station, broadcasting as 2WAY FM, in the Port Macquarie area. It is broadcasting on weekends until March 22.

### Fire damage \$750,000

The damage bill for Wednesday's fire which gutted a Fyshick flower materials supplier and damaged the adjoining premises, Elegance Stained Glass has been put at \$750,000. This figure includes the loss of materials and tools.

## Ukrainians urged to 'kill Jews': hearing

ADELAIDE: People in the small Ukrainian village of Serniki were urged to "kill Jews" in 1941, the war crimes hearing was told yesterday.

Witness Milton Turk said he was a teenager when the three Ukrainian men came into the village after Russian authorities retreated in the face of advancing German troops.

He remembered how "kill Jews" was among "shocking words" used in a speech to villagers.

The alleged incident took place around the same time as a squad of German soldiers on horseback came into Serniki to round up and kill about 120 Jewish men including his father.

The shootings were followed by a rampage through Jewish homes by locals, most of them farmers, he said, adding he later found two new mass graves.

Mr Turk said the three men who addressed the crowd wore uniforms, with at least one in a yellow shirt.

He believed in hindsight they might have been Ukrainian nationalists.

Soon after the speech, Jews in the village were ordered into a ghetto, placed under a curfew and forced to wear yellow identity patches on their clothes.

Mr Turk, now a builder, 64, of Toronto in Canada, gave evidence at the criminal hearing.

For Adelaide pensioner Ivan Polukhovych, who is the first person charged in Australia under European war crimes legislation.

He is alleged to have murdered 24 Jews from Serniki, and of having been involved in the slaughter of up to 850 more, during World War II.

Mr Turk said his uncle and cousin had also been shot in their home and he had witnessed a Ukrainian policeman known as "the Bastard" (because he had been born out of wedlock) shoot a Jewish girl as she tried to escape from Serniki by crossing a river.

He escaped from Serniki just before its ghetto was liquidated in 1942 and later joined anti-Nazi partisans.

Earlier, another witness, Jack Krimik, 64, now a New York garment manufacturer, who also escaped from Serniki, said relations between Jews and Ukrainians had been "excellent" before the Germans came.

He said most Ukrainians were sorry about what had happened and many of them had helped or hidden Jews.

"If it wasn't for the war I am sure we would still be there as a happy family," he said.

Later he gave details of an incident in which about 70 Jews were killed in an attack by a group of Ukrainian fighters.

The hearing continues today.

## LAW LIST

**HIGH COURT**  
Before the Full Court, Commonwealth Court, 1st Floor, Eastern End Conference Room 3, 35 Currie Street, Adelaide, at 9.30am:

Application for Special Leave to Appeal: *Y. Khan v. The State of South Australia v. Nguyen and another*; *Brown v. Pederson*; *Mitsubishi Australia v. The Electricity Trust of South Australia*; *Dist. Council of Rialley v. McIntyre*.

Not before 10.30am: *Monroe Schneider Associates (Inc) and another v. No. 1 Raberem Pty Ltd and others*; *Devries and another v. Australian National Railways Commission and State Transport Authority*.

Not before noon: *Woolworths SA Limited v. Drakos*; *Grimmon v. Saccardo Constructions*.

**FAMILY COURT**  
Before Judicial Registrar Knibbs, in Court 2, at 9am: *Phillips, Fahey*.

At 10am: *Bellefleur, Jordan*; *Vaughan, Redmond*.

Before Deputy Registrar O'Rourke, in Court 3, at 9.45am:  
Marriage Dissolution: *Morley, Lambert, Hynd, Gill/Fraser, Robinson, Flew, Lambie, Beattie, Benassi, Berkery, Garrett, Willis, Coleman, Pitt, Wenborn, Wylucki, Westcott-Lewis*.

**A.C.T. SUPREME COURT**  
Before Chief Justice Miles in Court 1, ACT Law Courts, at 9.30am:  
Judgment: *Westpac Banking Corporation v. Barnes*.

**PROBATE JURISDICTION: J. S. Spruats**  
Before Justice Higgins, in Court 6, at 10am:  
Sentence: *R. v. King (Part heard)*.

Before the Deputy Registrar, in Court 6, at 9.30am:  
Return of Subpoenas — *Civil Jurisdiction*: *Georges v. David Jones*; *Canberra P/L v. Gault v. Livingston*; *Prohaz v. Gratiot v. Australia*.

**ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS TRIBUNAL**  
AMP Building Hobart Place, Canberra, 10am:  
Delivery of Decision: *Kamminga and Australian National University*.

**DRINK-DRIVING**  
Three people were dealt with in the ACT Magistrates Court yesterday.

Before Magistrate Michael Somes  
Heather Gaye Wilson, 26, of Edwards Street, Higgins, pleaded guilty of an offence on November 2, in the entrance driveway to the Pitts. Breathalyzer 0.110, fined \$300, licence suspended for three months.

Cameron Stuart Withers, 23, of Lindrum Crescent, Holt, pleaded guilty of an offence on January 5, in a street unknown. Breathalyzer 0.130, without passing sentence was released upon entering into a \$2000 two-year good-behaviour bond and directed to undergo the supervision of an officer from Adult Corrective Services for three months.

Before Magistrate Peter Dingwall  
Brian Smith, 29, of Bandalong Crescent, Aranda, pleaded guilty of an offence on March 6, in Macpherson Street, Breathalyzer 0.07 to 0.08, fined \$500.

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