

Education: connecting members for 100 years

November 18, 2019

“The journal is essentially the teachers’ organ, written ... in the interests of teachers, and its pages are open to all who wish to use them.” (1919 Annual Report)

This month marks a century for your union journal, *Education*, and the ethos expressed for *Education* 100 years ago still rings true — it’s a vital platform for regular communication among Federation members.

The collective nature of your union is reflected in the journal’s pages: the explanation of policy objectives determined in democratic circumstances, invitations to participate in lobbying activities alongside fellow members and recognition of these joint campaigning efforts. *Education* is also a forum for debate on professional and industrial issues, with members sharing their ideas in the opinion pages.

Less than a year after the union was formed, a sub-committee of Federation’s Council was established to “report on ways and means” of publishing a teachers’ journal. Once it was determined that a monthly journal would be published, the name and cover design was also left to the sub-committee. Special executive and council meetings were held in September 1919 to consider applications and the election of an editor and two sub-editors (one to be a woman).



Alfred Goodwin Alanson edited *Education* from its first issue, dated November 15, 1919, until June 1939, when he was replaced by an editorial board, with the key figure being secretary **Matt Kennett**. “Under Kennett’s leadership *Education* immediately adopted a new layout, incorporating bold headlines, more white space, and a variety of regular features, especially on education controversy. One loss, regretted perhaps by no one but historians, was the full minutes of council and executive meetings.” (Bruce Mitchell, in *Teachers, education and politics: a history of organisations of public school teachers in New South Wales*)

The union’s June 1943 council meeting decided to discontinue the editorial board and Mr Kennett was appointed editor. The 27 July, 1943, edition of *Education* contained a report from the editorial board: “Each issue of the journal involves a very considerable amount of thought, planning and effort — probably more than most members imagine”.

Education (22 March, 1961) reported **Doug Broadfoot** would edit the journal from the next edition, having also been elected as the union’s publicity officer. “These dual positions, involving the major responsibility for the Federation’s internal and external publicity, constitute one of the most important offices in the Federation,” the unauthored article states.

Michael Hourihan was elected editor in 1971. He was credited with revolutionising the appearance of *Education*. “As the need for discussion grew, so did *Education*, encompassing many issues. The letters often became a debating forum and is today amongst the first pages turned to.” (1982 annual report)

It was during this period that current cartoonist Greg Gaul made his first drawing for the journal.

Adrienne Truelove co-edited *Education* with **Michael Hourihan** 1980-82 and then **John Poulos** 1983-85. “My approach to the journal was to make it as appealing as possible to members in both content and graphics,” Mr Poulos said. He then edited the journal alone until 1990.

Education editors are conscious of the need to provide content for all Federation members, not just school teachers. **Diane Hague** (editor 1990-94) said, “I made sure that the minority interests, not just TAFE, but AMESTA, Corrective Services, the lecturers [had] their place in the journal,” during a 2012 oral history interview with Sue Anderson.

Dennis Long (editor 1995-2014) wanted the journal to be a forum for people’s opinions and to have “some light and shade”, he told Mary Ann Hamilton for a 2013 oral history interview. He introduced a number of regular reviews, including the theatre column, still written by Frank Barnes to this day. Mr Long recalled a phone call with maths teacher Robert Yen who said, “I think I understand what you’re trying to do with the journal” and proposed writing a column about the foibles of everyday life in the school. The very popular “Mr Yen’s World” ran for 10 years.

Julie Moon served as editor in 2015 and **Cameron Malcher** 2016-18. **Jason Gerke** first edited the journal in August this year.

Education was first published in newsletter format and then moved to tabloid size. Since the late 1990s many articles contained in the printed editions have also been published online. The presentation of these digitally published articles has taken on a number of formats including as a PDF document, a digital app and currently published at news.nswtf.org.au.

Searchable editions of the journal are available via Trove, the National Library of Australia’s platform for digital collections.

Cover captures school life in 1919 for all time

The cover of *Education*’s first edition captures the essence of life for so many Federation members in 1919 — when small schools dotted the state’s rural landscape.

Teacher Herbert W. Moffitt — a founding member of the union — sketched the illustration.

He worked on the land before he became a bush school teacher at the age of 20. Mr Moffitt taught at the “half-time” schools at Lindendale, Jiggi and Keerong, in far northern NSW. In his 30s, he studied for a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts and became assistant headmaster at Lismore High.

As English master by day at Sydney Boys High School, he studied at night for a law degree, partly financed by his freelance work as an illustrator for Sydney newspapers.

A self-taught artist, he was even known to draw pictures as he sat on the bench, as a judge in the Workers Compensation Commission.

Information from this article was sourced from the *Tweed Daily* (7 March, 1939), *Smith’s Weekly* (8 April, 1939) and *Education* (25 July, 1947).

— Kerri Carr