



australasian association of progressive and alternative education

AAPAE NEWSLETTER No 6

15th OCTOBER 2004



Jeanette

Nicky

Tim

Warren

Mary

REPORT ON AAPAE 4th CONFERENCE (by Cecelia Bradley)

Many thanks to the Fitzroy Community School Team who made the AAPAE 2004 Conference held at Fitzroy Community School in Melbourne 28th – 30th September such a successful gathering.

The theme of AAPAE 2004 Conference was **The Medium is the Message**. The organisation and tireless work of the Fitzroy people set the scene for this. Our initial lunch together was a chance to meet and begin to make connections with our confreres. Tim Berryman welcomed all to FCS and followed with his thoughtful paper.

Some of the key ideas for me were:

peace education defined as education that empowers

competence and empowerment should not diminish with advantage

what is the cause of disempowerment?

anything which does not empower is structural violence which occurs “when society or community is constructed or organised in such a way that certain individuals or groups are denied the realisation of their potential”

the hidden curriculum as structural violence - the gulf between what schools claim they do and what they actually do.

3 aspects of this: institutionalised values, learned dependency and medium as message

Tim’s study reminded us of Ivan Illich’s work (1971) – “argues that re-enlightenment requires us to divest ourselves of the myth of the authority of schools and to reclaim the right to think, learn and discover for ourselves. This is to be done by rejecting institutional values, rejecting the notion that authorities know best and insisting that the individual has the right to define his own life, regardless of whether this fits in with authority’s prescribed set of expectations and values.”

To illustrate the importance of how we do things Tim included the story of **Tatto-Chan The little Girl in the Window** by Tetsuko Kuroyang.

After talking continuously to a head master who really listened for at least 4 hours something special had happened for Tatto-Chan

"Deep down she felt that she was considered different from other children and slightly strange. The headmaster, however made her feel safe and warm and happy. She wanted to stay with him forever."

Some themes for the conference had emerged.

Care, compassion, thoughtfulness, consideration, respect and genuine listening - are these the media we use?

Are we willing to acknowledge and work on the possibility that our schools may participate in forms of structural violence or do we see it only happening in 'the others'?

Tatto-Chan's story unleashed emotion in many of us and this became a thread through the days as each person shared the gift of the story of their school or work. It seemed as though we needed our '4 hours' of genuine compassionate listening and this meant that we had to schedule extra morning and afternoon sessions and still needed to take some time at the beginning of the AGM on the last day to enable this to happen. So many of us were meeting for the first time and this was a very important part of the medium of the conference as well



Maitreyi Ray (Learning Co-op) Matthew (Pine Com Sch)



Daryl (VU) Di (Tamariki) Sandy (Preshil)



Mandy (Brunswick) Tanya (Village School)



(Kirinari) Di (Tamariki) Jen (UW) Sue (Currumbena)



Dana (Kirinari) Kirsty (SA) Sandy (Preshil) Kath & Helen (Kirinari)



Helen (Kirinari) Marlene (BYC)



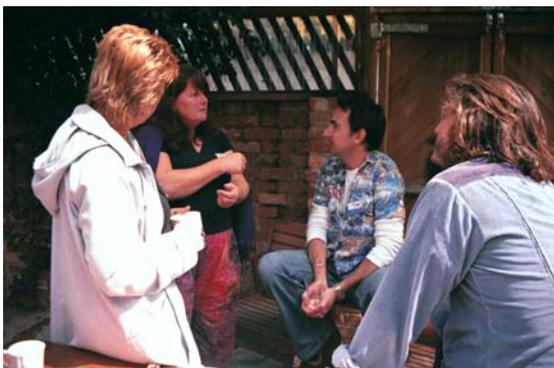
Stuart (UWS) Bob (IDEA - NZ)



Sue & Chris (Currambena)



Anna Marion Tracey Sharon (Coonara)



Helen(Kirinari) Julie(Kinma) Tim(Exodus) Chris(Currambena)



FCS CAT - newest AAPAE member!



Sue (Currambena) Wendy (SA)

FCS is set in two terrace houses, inner city Melbourne, at the northern end of Brunswick St in Fitzroy. As Chris Price and I walked the length of the street the first morning, dragging our laden trolleys, we soaked in the atmosphere of this lively mix of art, culture, food and community groups housed in a mixture of rundown, seedy and renovated old buildings. The school itself is a mixture of the old and the new with the facades kept, one of the terraces left in the old style with pressed metal walls while the other has had a modern remake which has become a space that is light and airy and able to hold our crowd of people with ease.



Dr David Cohen opened our second day and developed the theme of the previous day by analysing the relationship between student learning and curricula. "For reasons not based upon the sound evidence about human beings and how they learn best, curriculum decisions in recent years have come to represent the ANTITHESIS of EFFECTIVE LEARNING." He emphasised the detrimental effects of the homogenised, 'one size fit all' curriculum, a medium that gives a very different message from that which its designers say they envisage. "Such approaches represent a total denial of what we know about people, which may best be represented by the algebraic equation $n=1$." Individuals and the way they learn differ widely. The need to engage everyone, particularly the learner, in the decisions about their learning was fundamental to this process. "Involvement breeds commitment."

He went on to suggest that curriculum contracts, not a new idea as they have been around since 1920, when used effectively, are a practical way to enable this fundamental belief about people to be practised.

It was wonderful to see that David has maintained his passion and concern that we stay true to our belief that "the reality is that in education we deal with individuals like the thoracic surgeon who operates on one heart at a time"

I want to send my deepest thanks to David for coming and doing his session with us. As well as recovering from another stint in hospital and literally being in the middle of a major house move he was still willing to come and inspire us once again. It was a treat to meet his son Benjamin, who some of us met at the conference at Marbury and his niece and her children as well, all of whom made up David's support team.

David has donated copies of many of his publications to AAPAE which we can sell to fundraise, so we thank him for this generosity as well. (If anyone would like any of David's publications contact Cec)



Cecelia David Chris

Professor Stuart Hill was a very welcome participant and contributor to the AAPAE 2004 conference and I would like to thank him for taking the time to be with us. Stuart is the Foundation Chair of Social Ecology and Lifelong Learning at the University of Western Sydney. I find it difficult to summarise Stuart's wisdom and capacity to inform, challenge and enable (his key word) learning and change in such a fun, entertaining way. When introducing himself he sometimes claims as he shakes hands, "You're very pleased to meet me!" The reality is that we are and many people at the conference commented that they could have listened to him for much longer. I know that I did not allow enough time for him to really develop his thoughts and themes, but that means that we will be happy to have more sessions with him if he is willing!! For me Stuart is a person who seems to have a glimpse of where and how we, who think we are largely on the right track, may be able to continue to grow and develop and change, in fact to do that very thing Tim asked of us in the first session, to examine our hidden curricula, expose them and find more authentic ways of being. One of the people expressed to Stuart that for the first time she had heard academic support and understanding of all that she had believed and tried to practise, for so many years.

Some key points for me

"The task is not so much to see what no-one has yet seen; but to think what no-one has yet thought about what everybody sees" Arthur Schopenhauer (1880) Most reform is really about trying to improve and make what we already do more efficient. Real change and learning is TRANSFORMATIVE - personal, social, ecological, 'spiritual'

Awareness of the triple bottom line (and its equivalent in education) and the slogans of reuse, recycle are the tip of the iceberg and there is so much more that needs to happen.

"Learning ecology provides a means for understanding and working with complex and diverse ways in which individuals learn, become more conscious, develop worldviews, change and act on their values - for effective learning, all need to have some understanding of one another's learning ecology profile so that they can be facilitators of transformative learning and personal development - choice, agency, self-directedness, negotiation, particularly concerning time, place, content, preferred learning styles and measurement.

How do we ENABLE?

" We teach subject material and ourselves. It is the latter that is the most enabling, and that will last a lifetime"

By our actions do we support empowered, aware, creative, competent individuals and the development of caring, loving, mutualistic, negentropic relationships with diverse other?

Take small, meaningful collaborative and individual significant steps and initiatives

Perhaps it is time to move from democracy to co-operacy?



Stuart Hill (UWS) Roger Holdsworth (Connect)

Roger Holdsworth's from the Australian Youth Research Centre at the University of Melbourne and Editor of CONNECT and AAPAE member for sometime, continued many of the themes which had become part of our days together. Roger has worked for many years in supporting the ideas of student involvement and participation and he enabled us to become aware of many of the positive ways that learners, across all systems and particularly in state schools, are involved in real life participation and decision making about things that matter to them.

A large body of evidence has grown re the benefit of participatory approaches and as an example he quoted Nancy Phillips's summary (1990) of 3 interrelated factors

Sense of Meaning / Sense of Control / Sense of Bonding

Perceptions about whether young people have distant and limited roles or a central constructivist role directly inform our practice.

He also emphasised the problem which arise if we only thing in terms of futurity "when we hold children in passive roles in which they are perceived to have not value except in terms of what they will become then they learn powerful messages about their self worth and their contributions to collective roles within society"

If we see young people as "maximal citizens" then we will work towards "full or 'deep' participation"

We will maximise control, benefit, respect the contributions of all involve real challenges and development.

Roger gave examples of Student Action Teams which have resulted in real life change and development, personally, socially and environmentally.

There are examples of these in issues of CONNECT and I encourage people to subscribe to this even though it means that Roger will not be able to retire as he is trying to convince us is his wish!

Special thanks to Roger for making the time to come and be with us.

We were not able to get copies of his discussion but he is willing to send them to individuals if you email him.



Andrew, Ellen Leigh Janet (Winter's Flat) Winter's Flat Community Class, part of the Winter's Flat State School in Castlemaine Vic came to the AAPAE Conference. Andrew, Leigh, Janet and Ellen's presence and their warm, inclusive, non defensive participation was a sign of something of immense importance - the possibility that alternative, progressive, democratic, ecological education can literally be part of the mainstream. A group of people had a dream to make a difference and they went about creating this dream into a reality. They were also pleased to be making contact with like minded people who could encourage them to continue to value and develop the kind of education they envisaged; " a holistic model of learning which aims to integrate and balance curriculum areas and our guiding values." They hope to expand into a second class soon and they rest of the school led by a sympathetic principal, is taking quite a bit of notice of the way the kids, parents and teacher operate. The medium is the message!



Queen Gab and Marlene from Blacktown Youth College, Kiera and Matt, 2 students from Bidwell Youth College along with Di their teacher and mentor and 'mother,' showed us clearly and decisively the difference really listening, caring and allowing participation in decision-making about learning and living can make in the lives of those who seemed to have no hope and thought that all the things we take for granted were not to be for them. The honesty of Kiera and Matt and candid appraisal of themselves before and after contact with caring people was a powerful reminder for me of how much this matters. Kiera was a walking example of what David had been saying earlier. She told us that when she found Di and Bidwell she could not read or write and now she is about to complete her School certificate and has plans to do apprenticeships and join the police force. Matt had no trouble with reading and writing, plenty of trouble with the police, and now helps other kids at Bidwell who struggle. Special thanks to all of you for being so open and trusting of us to share your stories. Kiera and Matt showed interest in IDEC 2006 so I hope that they can become involved in a practical way. They also reminded me of the value of the student's place in our gatherings and I hope that we can continue to keep this at the centre of our events.

Sue Heart synthesised much that we had been experiencing during our days together and encouraged us out of the dominant head space, through teaching us this song which was sung with much energy and emotion. I think I have remembered the main idea of the lyrics.

We've got to sing as though nobody's listening
 We've got to love, as though we've never been hurt
 We've got to dance as if nobody's watching
 We've got to live as if it's heaven on earth
 We've got to sing when the spirit says sing
 We've got to sing when the spirit says sing
 And when the spirit says sing when got to sing, oh yeah!
 We've got to sing when the spirit says sing
 We've got to change when the spirit says change.....



Sue and AAPAE Singers

The AAPAE AGM was held at the conference on Thursday, 30th September, 2004.

Please see minutes for details.

Two important actions resulted from the AGM.

1. Statements of support for Booroobin
2. Formation of NCAG (Sub-com of AAPAE)

Motion 1

We the participants at the AAPAE 2004 conference support The Booroobin Sudbury Democratic Centre of Learning and we urge the Queensland Government to restore natural justice to the Centre and engage in fair and speedy due process.

Moved : Chris Price. Seconded: Julie Carr. Accepted by meeting.

30th September 2004

2. A more general statement re the right of schools to choose their way of being

Motion 2

We the participants at the AAPAE 2004 conference urge the Queensland Government to respect and support the right of families and communities to establish schools and run them as they choose.

Moved: Tim Berryman. Seconded: Matt Hadgraft.

Accepted by meeting.

30th September 2004

Both of these, with an accompanying letter, have been sent to the Minister of Education Queensland

3. A motion to form a sub-committee of AAPAE to work on a specific issue

AAPAE authorises 4 or 5 of its members to form a subcommittee to work for change at the bureaucratic level to allow for an optional, negotiated curriculum available for all students & parents who desire it, at the primary & secondary levels of education in public & private schools. This subcommittee will devise a paper for comment for any interested members of AAPAE.

The sub-committee will be empowered to set a time frame for comment.

This subcommittee will be known as the Negotiated Curriculum Action Group & its members will communicate via internet & as they agree.).

When the paper is completed the AAPAE members and particularly the AAPAE Committee will negotiate and decide with the NCAction Group as to what steps will follow.

In Gab's original motion she requested that the paper be presented to CEO's of various education boards for implementation & inclusion in relevant school manuals

The written submission from Derek and The Booroobin Democratic Centre of Learning presented at the conference is available if anyone wants more details about their current situation. Contact Cec.

available to school principals. However the members at the AGM asked that we not include that in the motion at this stage as they needed more time to consider suitable action and use of the paper.

The motion was presented by Tim Berryman on Gab MacIntosh's behalf as she could not attend the A.G.M. Moved: Tim Berryman. Seconded: Sue Heart. Approved by the meeting.

Gab MacIntosh has volunteered to be on this committee & others are asked to join her by contact through the ausschool e-mail list.

The AAPAE Committee for 2004/2005

President: Cecelia Bradley (A.C.T.)

Secretary: Chris Price (N.S.W.)

Treasurer: Ian Dodd (S.A.)

Committee Members: Kirsty Dodd (S.A.), Julie Carr (N.S.W), Andy Cathcart (N.S.W) & Juli Gassner-Geering (N.Z.)

AAPAE 2005 Conference

Di Scullin has confirmed that the Tamariki community are making a serious offer to hold the AAPAE 2005 conference and they would like responses from members as to whether this is a feasible option.

Things to consider: Dates and Cost ????

A very general comparison of flight costs

July 2005 –

QANTAS Syd to Perth \$478

Syd to Christchurch \$522 –

VIRGIN Syd to Perth

Syd to Christchurch \$249

Other options??

Another suggestion was that since we have made contact with so many new places in Victoria and it is reasonably 'central' for travel, one of the other Vic places may offer?

WE NEED FEEDBACK ON THIS ISSUE PLEASE

x

THANKS TO ALL AND AGAIN, ESPECIALLY TIM, JEANETTE, MARY, NICKY, WARREN and all at FITZROY COMMUNITY SCHOOL.

Special thanks to the Melbourne people who took time to visit and support Jen Burnley when she was in St Vincent's Hospital. Jen has expressed her deep appreciation of this care and I want to add mine as well. A caring community.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND AUSTRALIA?



It was wonderful to have John Marsden join us at the conference. John shared with us some of his insights from many years as a teacher and successful writer. In recent years he has been running writing camps for kids on his property and he has observed the fundamental value that the quality of learning is enhanced by the fact that the kids choose to be present and are actively engaged in something which they love. The medium is the message!

Derek sent word about this development in Queensland.

Education Laws for the Future

The Queensland Government has commenced a review of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 1989* (the Act). This Act has underpinned education in Queensland for the past 15 years, along with its accompanying regulation, the *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2000*.

Since its introduction in 1989, the Act has been amended many times, most recently through the Education and Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF) and the Student Protection and Safety in Schools amendments. However, the legislation is becoming dated and needs a comprehensive review to ensure that it reflects contemporary society and educational practice and is responsive to issues affecting all schooling sectors in Queensland.

The [Education Laws for the Future](#) new window 241k consultation paper is the first stage of the review.

Get involved and have your say on the proposals outlined in the consultation paper, by completing the [online](#) feedback.

Feedback is invited by **31 March 2005**.

A series of [community forums](#) are also planned to gather feedback.

Contact for CONNECT

12 Brooke St Northcote Victoria 3070

Ph: 03 9489 9052

Email: r.holdsworth@edfac.unimelb.edu.au

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE WORLD?

An Invitation to SHANTI (PEACE) in EDUCATION

International Democratic Education Conference www.idec2004.com

The International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC) is being held in Bhubaneshwar, India from **Fri 3rd to Sun 12th Dec 2004**. It is looking to intensify the movement towards quality education with a focus on the child and a democratic learning environment. We would like you to participate. Whether you are an educator, a parent, a child or part of an organization, you can offer to hold a workshop, speak on your work in education, be a member on a panel, or participate to soak in the atmosphere and talk to others.

The cost of the conference is **USD 400 for adults and USD 250** for those under 18 years of age. For residents of India, the cost is INR 4500 for adults and INR 3000 for under-18 year olds. This includes accommodation and food for the ten-day conference period.

We are also looking for financial support for the conference and for contributions to enable a child or a teacher to attend the conference. We also have to pay the travel costs of some of the speakers.

If you are an organization, and can help financially or by sponsoring an event please write to us for details.

There are already many registrations from various countries. We would like to reach out to more groups in Asia, S. America and Africa and if you know of any individuals or groups who would be interested, please send them the information. Send this letter also to people you think will be interested in the conference and in the movement for quality education. Send it to the right people who you feel are looking for alternatives, who will consider bringing about changes in their organizations or programmes and who are open to discussion.

Please :

- _ send this to interested people across the globe
- _ register for the conference
- _ contribute financially or through sponsorship
- _ create a working group in your area for the conference and for the future

Looking forward to hearing from you and meeting you at the conference

Amukta Mahapatra

Contact Person [http:// www.idec2004.com](http://www.idec2004.com) Email: idec04@yahoo.com

The following is an excerpt from **InternationalDemocraticEducationNetwork** (www.idenetwork.org)

October, 2004

Mike Weimann, of KRAETZAE, in Berlin, has sent out the following letter:

Dear everybody out there in the world!

We in Berlin are just applying for funds to realize our IDEC next summer: <http://idec2005.org/>

We are still at the beginning of our fundraising process and we need a lot of money for several general things, as e.g. interpreting. Besides we want to keep the attendance fee low. But as we learned from the organizers of last years IDEC in USA there are people who need help to attend, because they live in disadvantaged regions of our world. We will try to get some help for them. If you live in such a country please let us know about your need of additional funds / subsidies. Please keep in mind, that we cannot promise anything at present. But we try it. With your description of your specific situation we will probably increase our possibility to ask German foundations to donate money to help you.

Please expect an attendance fee of up to 300 Euro. We want to come down from this level, but here in Germany prices are high and the economy is not in the best state, unfortunately.

You are welcome to describe your needs in a private mail to my address.

Please visit our website <http://idec2005.org/> There you have the opportunity to subscribe our newsletter. We will soon post some ideas how schools or any interested people can raise funds to attend our IDEC by this we follow the idea of the IDEC2003 hosts. Thank you very much for you collaboration, looking forward to your response

Mike Weimann IDEC 2005 steering group - mike.weimann@gmx.net>

IDEC 2006

The Organising Committee have prepared AAPAE's proposal to host IDEC in Sydney in 2006. Chris Price and Fran McCarthy will present the proposal at IDEC in India in December 2004. We await the response. Very special thanks to Andrew Pahlman and all the organising committee for the huge amount of work they have done so far. We encourage people from around Australia to be part of this process especially students. If you would like to be involved in the organising process please get in touch through Ausschools or directly to Andrew or Cec

A Letter from Jim and Nao of Whispering Seed

Greetings friends

Just wanted to inform you all of another training that we are hosting for 4 weeks this coming January and February in Thailand. This training aims to build a bridge between the alternative education movements and the sustainable living movements through practical, hands-on life skills. Instructors from Australia, USA and all over Thailand will help to facilitate the course. Below is a short ad, but more info can be found at our website and www.whisperingseed.org/pcinfojan.html

Please feel free to forward the info to anyone that may be interested. People of all ages are welcome!!!
Warm blessings!!! jim and nao

4 WEEK EXPLORATION OF PERMACULTURE, NATURAL BUILDING & SUSTAINABLE WAYS OF LIVING IN THAILAND

January 25th- February 22nd 2005

Sangklaburi, Kanchanaburi Province, Western Thailand

Space is limited for foreign participants. Early inquiries are

encouraged. Join us for this month-long exploration of sustainable living skills and cultural immersion in the Land of Smiles. We are located on a 12- acre piece of land is situated in a river valley in Western Thailand not far from the Burmese border. In this hands-on, intensive training course we will create an overall design, develop the land, and build the first earthen dwellings at the new home of The Whispering Seed, a sustainable learning centre and home for orphaned and abused children focused on natural childrearing, alternative education practices, and cross-cultural exchanges.

Instructors from Australia, Thailand and USA will facilitate the 2nd Permaculture and Natural Building workshop that we have offered in Thailand. It will include the full 72-hour Permaculture Design and

Practicum Certification requirements, along with in-depth, hands-on application of your newly learned skills.

Skilled earthen builders from Thailand and the U.S. will be leading the group in constructing the first adobe and wattle & daub structure on the land. Local weavers and Hill tribe elders will

share their knowledge of traditional weaving, spinning skills and natural dyes. We will also be learning about natural healing, alternative, holistic models of learning and community building.

Participants will be a mix of foreigners and representatives from Thai and Burmese NGO,s, activist networks, children,s homes and villages.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.whisperingseed.org

permaculture@whisperingseed.org

Saowanee Sangkara & Jim Connor

The Whispering Seed www.whisperingseed.org

whisperingseed@wildmail.com

A happy childhood lasts a lifetime!

From Stuart Hill information on the

Aware Parenting Institute (<http://www.awareparenting.com/>)

P.O. Box 206, Goleta, CA 93116, U.S.A.

(805) 968-1868 (phone and fax); e-mail: info@awareparenting.com

Aware Parenting is a philosophy of child-rearing that has the potential to change the world. Based on cutting-edge research and insights in child development, Aware Parenting questions most traditional assumptions about raising children, and proposes a new approach that can profoundly shift a parent's relationship with his or her child. Parents who follow this approach raise children who are bright, compassionate, competent, non-violent, and drug-free.

Aware Parenting is based on the work of Aletha Solter, Ph.D., a Swiss-American developmental psychologist, international speaker, consultant, and author of three books (*The Aware Baby* [1984, revised 2001: US\$15.95; *Workbook*: US\$10.00], *Helping Young Children Flourish* [1989: US\$15.95; *Workbook*: US\$10.00], and *Tears and Tantrums* [1998: US\$12.95]). Dr. Solter studied with Dr. Jean Piaget in Switzerland before earning her Ph.D. in psychology at the University of California. She is an internationally known expert on attachment, trauma, non-punitive discipline, and developmentally appropriate education for young children. The Aware Parenting Institute has no political or religious affiliation.

Are you passionate about

ALTERNATIVE , PROGRESSIVE & DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION?

Are you interested in and supportive of education which is based on the

Quality of the relationships between learner and teacher

Is inclusive and wholistic

Celebrates learners' gifts

Encourages self-direction

self-determination

self-management

life long love of learning

negotiated curricula

Promotes democratic processes and structures

power sharing

participation of all in decision-making

co-operation rather than competition

working at individual pace and level

Solves problems and conflict through communication and dialogue

Refrains from coercion and manipulation?

If so, we invite you to join

**The AUSTRALASIAN ASSOCIATION
of PROGRESSIVE and ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION**

which seeks to provide a forum for discussion, debate and research, a network for sharing and support and an incorporated organization for working together on common issues

Please fill in our membership form . Join our network through the following:

Send a blank email to ausschools-subscribe@yahogroups.com

Visit our archive and join <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ausschools>

Visit AAPAE website which is hosted by Marbury School, SA

<http://www.marbury.sa.edu.au/aapae> AAPAE – INC9875371 - ABN 26482 700 968

AAPAE INC MEMBERSHIP FORM

Yes, I wish to join AAPAE for one year / two years

Name: _____

Address: _____

State: _____ Postcode: _____

Phone: _____ (wk) _____ (h)

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Type of Membership.

SCHOOL / INSTITUTION	\$75.00	_____
INDIVIDUAL	\$30.00	_____
INDIVIDUAL Concession	\$15.00	_____
STUDENT	\$10.00	_____
STUDENT Concession	\$5.00	_____

Please send Money Order or Cheques payable to

The Secretary, Christine Price

Australasian Assoc of Progressive & Alternative Education

205 Longueville Rd

Lane Cove, NSW 2066

Contact: Cecelia Bradley Ph: 02.62513136 Email: cecelia.b@bigpond.com