

## GUEST EDITORIAL

The May issue of the A.J.S.E. is designated as a conference issue and we are pleased to be able to share with non-participants some of the papers presented at the Tenth Annual Australian Association of Special Education Conference, held at Launceston, September 4-8, 1985. Perspectives on the theme *Models of Co-operation in Special Education* are provided from England, the U.S.A. and Australia.

Following an overview of relevant contributions of the Schools Commission to services for persons with special education needs, Ross Harris expresses concern that current directions may mean a reduction in resources available for programs. He provides a constructive challenge for wider support and co-operation, both within the Association and between the Association and other community groups, toward the development of a more unified and possibly more effective approach to advocacy on behalf of persons with special needs.

Who is supposed to be co-operating with whom and for what purposes? Having raised this question, Peter Mittler (U.K.) stimulated participants to reflect on how co-operation might be developed between teachers, and between and among all professionals interacting to provide special education services. Professionals are advised that if they are serious about providing the best possible service from their collective expertise they need to plan for co-operative problem solving in an active and systematic way. Collaboration with parents was the subject of another paper by this speaker.

Collaborative problem solving was also advocated by James Ysseldyke, who reported on selected aspects of a national six-year study of practices in the United States in making referrals, and placement, instructional and evaluation decisions in relation to learning disabled children. That the issues highlighted and practices challenged were applicable to the Australian scene was amply demonstrated by feedback from delegates.

One of special education's most challenging areas is the provision of appropriate services for profoundly and multiply handicapped children. In their paper, Peter Evans and Jean Ware describe educational provisions for this population in parts of England, and conference participants drew many parallels between England and Australia in changes in administration, service provision, staff training, and anticipated directions. The overview provided is a condensed version of the paper delivered at the Conference.

There has been increasing enthusiasm for the development of special interest groups in the Association and two such groups have been officially recognised. One of the founding members of the Special Education Computing Interest Group, Anne Williams, encourages wider use of microcomputers for their potential in providing greater access to learning for some disabled, and in facilitating learning for others. Resultant competence and confidence can have a positive and cumulative influence on the rate of progress of the individual.

It is only possible to publish some of the Conference papers in the Journal. These and other papers by invited overseas speakers, together with papers submitted by Marie Biicheno from N.Z. and Australian presenters, will be published in the Conference Proceedings. On behalf of A.A.S.E., the Tasmanian Chapter sincerely thanks all speakers for their contribution to what feedback suggests was a most stimulating, wide-ranging and challenging Conference. Further, we thank all other participants for their active involvement in the program and their support both prior to and during the Conference. We look forward with keen anticipation to this year's Conference in Adelaide.

DR. DON CROSS,  
Guest Editor.

## COMMENTS BY THE EDITOR

Many thanks to Don Cross for collecting and editing an excellent range of papers, not to mention his sterling efforts in organising a splendid National Conference at Launceston.

DR. JEFF BAILEY,  
Editor.