

Australian Association for Professional and Applied Ethics

Annual report, 2002-2003

The Annual General Meeting for 2002 was held during the annual conference in Brisbane in early October 2002. The last year has seen additional interest within the Australian community in the practice of ethics. There has been increasing concern to discuss how moral behaviour can be enhanced rather than to focus on excess and moral error. For an Association which is concerned with “professional and applied” ethics this is an encouraging sign.

Perhaps as a result of this new interest, the Association was approached during the year on a number of occasions by organisations seeking access to expertise in the field of applied ethics. AMP Financial Services contacted the AAPAE when it decided to include, for the first time, a session on ethics in its professional development program for financial planners. As a result, a session was developed to meet the AMP needs and presentations were made in all Australian states, involving variously Stephen Cohen, Ronald Francis and Howard Harris. The Association was also approached when BioTechnology Australia needed a person to provide ethics input to a hypothetical on New Products and Ethics at its annual conference.

The AAPAE website is the first point of contact for many people. It is maintained by Stephen Cohen, who also moderates the aapae-l list server. These contributions from Stephen, which have continued for many years, deserve our ongoing recognition and thanks. Without them the Association would be much less visible and members would be less well served.

For many years the Committee has endorsed the formation of regional ‘chapters’, but nothing has come of it. This year I can report with some pleasure that there have been a number of meetings in Adelaide of a group which has met informally to discuss issues in professional and applied ethics. It has met in hotels around a meal, with a presentation to focus discussion, and has included more practitioners than academics. Chris Provis has been the force behind it.

Some AAPAE members have been regular contributors to the national and local media. The Association aims to foster community discussion, and whilst the contributors may not always be identified with the Association, their informed contribution to the debate on current issues is a way of advancing that aim.

These varied items, and there are others which could equally have been included, show the importance of professional and applied ethics and the role which the AAPAE is playing in it.

Another important element of the AAPAE’s work is publication. It is included in the Association’s objectives: to develop and distribute publications, including a newsletter, conference proceedings and journal. Thus far in 2003 we have received no issues of the Association’s journal the *AJPAE Australian Journal of Professional and Applied Ethics*, and the issues of *Business & Professional Ethics Journal* and *Professional Ethics* which will contain selected papers from the 2001 Adelaide conference have not yet reached members. Refereed papers at the 2003 conference will be available on CD.

Publications are important for the association and its members. They are a source of reference for practitioners as well as academics. For academics and students they provide an opportunity to have their research recognised within the criteria established by the Dept of Education, Science and Technology. The ‘Buam journals’, in which the selected conference papers have been published for some years, provide the opportunity for publication in long-established journals. These publications distinguish the AAPAE as a professional association, distinct from associations without this element, and add to the AAPAE’s standing in the community. The future arrangements regarding publications will be discussed at the 2003 AGM.

Kay Buckley has indicated that she will not continue as Treasurer. Ever diligent and persistent, she has brought order to the Association’s book-keeping and statutory affairs and will be missed. To her go the thanks of the committee and all members.

Following discussion and agreement in principle at the 2002 AGM, the committee sought expressions of interest in providing an administrative base for the Association. Agreement has been reached with the Hawke Institute within the University of South Australia for the provision of (limited) admin support for the AAPAE. This should enhance our ability to provide service to members.

HR Harris
Secretary, 28 Sep 2003