

The First Ten Years of the Kindergarten Teachers' Association of Western Australia: 1962-1972

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Kindergartens like bathrooms are necessary in this modern society¹

Early childhood education in Western Australia began in 1911. A group of Perth people whose concern was for the educational and physical well-being of working class and disadvantaged children organised the Kindergarten Union of Western Australia.² The Kindergarten Union aimed to provide the opportunity for young children to reach their potential as worthwhile citizens through its kindergartens.

Properly trained teachers were essential to achieve these aims. The teachers were daughters of the upper middle class of Perth society because kindergarten teaching was charity work and considered excellent training for motherhood. The cost of training and financial support beyond the minimal wages paid, also restricted those who trained³ A kindergarten teacher, Helen Briggs, recalled:

People had to pay to train. Then we were bonded for three years after that. It meant only the people who could pay could come in, so I suppose it gave you a feeling of being a select group of people.⁴

In World War Two, many women left their homes to join the workforce. For most this experience in the public sphere gave them a new identity and broadened their horizons. Once the war was over they returned to their homes with a renewed sense of purpose and stronger family and community commitment. The “elite” women who spearheaded the formation of the kindergartens refocussed their attention on the needs of their own children.⁵ Pat O'Sullivan, a kindergarten teacher, explained:

The Kindergarten movement was amovement for the poor children. But when the middle class [and the society women] began to see the advantages that the poor children were getting from kindergartens, they wanted it too. they wanted it too.⁶

Other parents involved themselves in local community activities including pre-school education and health. They lobbied for building loans, they raised funds for equipment and they organised and helped maintain their own kindergartens⁷. Registration and affiliation of kindergartens⁸ and the training and provision of the teachers remained the province of the

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Kindergarten Union. Teachers' salaries were partly met by the Kindergarten Union and partly by the weekly levies paid by the parents. Note that this so-called 'Union' was in fact an employer body and at this stage its employees had no collective representation.

Prosperity accompanied the economic development in the State in the 1950s. Suburbia spread, placing pressures on both the governments of the day and charity groups to provide more facilities and amenities. The Kindergarten Union struggled to maintain the supply of teachers for each new kindergarten. Extensive recruitment drives included not only locally trained primary teachers, but also women trained in the Eastern States and appropriately trained migrant women. The Kindergarten Union also took the unprecedented step of re-employing married women as part-time teachers. Training extended to include new conversion courses for primary trained and European trained women.⁹ But the quality of teaching varied because the autonomy within each kindergarten allowed teachers to freely practise their own methods and ideas. This worried some kindergarten teachers.¹⁰ Others expressed concern at the small number of kindergartens. They realised their skills and expertise provided pre-school education to a very small percentage of the population. By 1963, more than 60% of all children ready for kindergarten were turned away.¹¹ A crisis existed.

The kindergarten teachers themselves were at the centre of this crisis. As the education of girls extended, those young women who chose kindergarten teaching as a profession came from wider socio-economic groups than just the upper middle class.¹² They did not have the same family economic support and needed financial independence. But kindergarten teachers, who trained for longer than other teachers, were paid less. Kindergarten teachers were overworked, underpaid and in short supply. However, until 1962 they seemed insufficiently motivated to improve their position. Their commitment to the philosophy of the kindergarten movement and their still dominant middle class conservatism inhibited them. One writer of the times noted a confusion in their status in society which added to their apathy:

The image of the kindergarten teacher is a rather curious one. She appears to be highly regarded by representatives of other professional groups with whom she is in close contact - namely, the personnel of Infant Health, the Health Education Council, the special services branch of the Education Department and the Education Department itself. The public image of the kindergarten teacher is less reassuring. She often appears to be regarded as a 'child minder' rather than an educationalist, and whilst historically and currently one can pin-point reasons for this, it is difficult to ensure that knowledge of her role in education is understood by the general public.¹³

One woman's influence and determination helped resolve this situation. Joyce Sackville's concern to improve the salary and status of herself and her colleagues culminated in the formation of the Kindergarten Teachers' Association of Western Australia, Industrial Union of Workers, early in 1962.

Joyce Sackville worked for the Spastic Welfare Association at the Sir James Mitchell Centre, teaching children affected by cerebral palsy. She was one of the married women who trained as a kindergarten teacher in the mid-1950s. After three years of training, she returned to the Centre as a more skilled and competent worker. One day, she re-assessed her salary in relation to the long hours and very demanding duties. She decided to confront the accountant and request an increase in salary. He replied, "I'm very sorry but I will not raise your salary....you haven't any award to cover you and I can pay you what I like."¹⁴ His refusal took her by surprise. After voicing her indignation Joyce Sackville said, "Well, I most certainly will see that you get one [an award] forthwith"¹⁵

Having set herself a challenge, Joyce Sackville spent some time organising her thoughts.

I thought to myself, "Now who does the caring for the child? Mostly women. What is the status of women?" . . . Let's look at this. Our society measures the status of the person by the pay that they receive for the work. I thought of doctors, lawyers, teachers... if you're getting a good big salary you must be a person of importance. So that is the platform that I went forward on. I had to raise the status of women [kindergarten teachers] by getting them a salary in measure with the type of work.¹⁶

It was this ideology of equating salary with status that Joyce Sackville presented to her friends and colleagues at the Kindergarten Graduates' Club.¹⁷ Initially, she received a cool reception. The task of persuading the women to commit themselves to forming a union was difficult. Not only were they professionals but also those "who were working with the Kindergarten Union at the time were a bit fearful that they might lose their jobs", she recalled.¹⁸ This was not a problem for Joyce because she worked for a private employer. Eventually she managed to find six women willing to form a committee to consider the issues involved in establishing a union.

The committee, which always met in private homes, agreed to place an advertisement announcing a public meeting in the *West Australian*.¹⁹ The following week, 22 women representing about 30% of Perth's kindergarten teachers met at 1186 Hay Street, West Perth and formed a union. They discussed a constitution and elected all the office bearers, except the president. Joyce Sackville became the Union's first secretary and Lena Meenhorst its first treasurer.²⁰

At the second meeting, the 31 women present elected Jane Innes as President. They also reconsidered the constitution and selected a name. The popular choice of the title “Association” not only denoted the professional status of its members but also provided a distinction from the employer body, the Kindergarten Union. The word “Association” “was a bit of a softener . . . it wouldn't detract from the professional image of the union,” explained Joyce Sackville.²¹

An application to the Arbitration Court (hereafter referred to as the Court) to register their new organisation was challenged by the Independent Schools' Salaried Officers Association which requested an exemption from the Association's constitution for kindergarten teachers in independent schools.²² This exemption was granted. The Kindergarten Teachers' Association of Western Australia, Industrial Union of Workers, received official registration on 22 October 1962.

The primary concern of the newly formed Kindergarten Teachers' Association (hereafter known as the Union) was to improve the salaries and conditions of service through an industrial award. The President, Jane Innes wrote:

We are neither nursemaids nor child minders. We are qualified teachers specialising in the kindergarten field. Our Kindergarten Diploma is accepted by the Education Department as a teaching qualification up to Grade 3. But we are poorly paid. . . Nobody is backing the Kindergarten Union so fees must go up. Only the rich can pay. Teachers accept low salaries to avoid this situation²³

Of equal concern was the escalating cost to parents through fees or levies. The President, in her first Annual Report, summed up the position by stating that only those children whose parents could afford the levies would benefit from the teachers' work. The children who needed a kindergarten education would not have access to one.²⁴ Kindergartens should be for all pre-school aged children.

In 1963, the Union consolidated its position, recruited members and drew up a log of claims. Membership reached over 95% of all the kindergarten teachers by the end of that year. Executive members knew they had strong support when they applied to the Court, in September 1963, for an award to cover all kindergarten teachers in the State.²⁵ But no one expected the ensuing battle.

The dispute over the log of claims was protracted and time-consuming for everyone, particularly the key witnesses who not only ran kindergartens but had family responsibilities as well. The Spastic Welfare Association and the Child Welfare Department both objected to being bound by the proposed award.²⁶ They believed that their staff provided quite different services from other kindergarten teachers. Commissioner D E Cort upheld their objection.

But he acknowledged that a *prima facie* case did exist for an award to cover other kindergarten teachers.²⁷ Six weeks later the Full Bench of the Court unanimously dismissed an appeal presented by the Union against the decision to exempt the Child Welfare Department from the award.²⁸

A second presentation of the log of claims to the Court created an industrial dispute between the Union and the main employer body, the Kindergarten Union. The hearing started in June 1964.²⁹ Disagreement arose over the salary scales and the added margins for skill. The Union used the salaries paid to assistant mistresses in the primary section of independent schools as its guidelines, even though these were far below those of the State School teachers' salaries.³⁰ To validate the Union's claim that kindergarten teachers deserved to be paid a margin over and above the flat rate, witnesses gave evidence of their work, training and the skills required to perform their duties. One witness, Jane Innes, compared the particular skills of a kindergarten teacher with those of a primary teacher. She spoke of the different methods of programming daily activities, the extra duties such as checking equipment and attending meetings, the longer hours at work with larger classes and the longer training which allowed teaching up to Grade 3.³¹ Joyce Sackville also reported her experience of applying for a salary increase. She explained that her employer considered the female basic wage sufficient pay despite her specialist skills and professional training.³²

The use of expert witnesses to tell their stories, combined with the competence of D W Fletcher of the Bakers' Union as their industrial advocate, proved successful. In handing down his decision, Commissioner Cort stated that:

The worker whose child attends a kindergarten is in receipt of a reasonable wage and there is no reason why he (*sic*) should not contribute sufficient amount to enable the teacher to receive a reasonable wage for the work performed.³³

Then he considered the hours of teaching and rates of pay in other States and other teaching positions as well as the witnesses' evidence on the particular skills required for the job. He granted the Teachers' (Kindergarten) Award [22/1963]³⁴ (hereafter known as the Award) but deliberately omitted a "Preference Clause" which would have given union members preference in employment.³⁵ However his insertion of a "Liberty to Apply" clause left the way open for the Union to re-apply for a Preference Clause.³⁶

The granting of the Award allowed the Union Executive to turn its attention to further improving the status of kindergarten teachers. Strategies suggested included the registration of teachers, stricter Education Department controls and a code of uniformity to overcome the variation in teaching standards between kindergartens.³⁷ Then, early in 1965, the President, Jane Innes, convinced the Executive to apply for the inclusion in the Award of a Preference

Clause with a dismissal clause in order for the Union to function satisfactorily and at full strength.³⁸ Another major dispute occurred. Commissioner E R Kelly heard the case. G J Martin, advocate for the employer body, the Kindergarten Union, argued, inter alia, that kindergarten teachers, as professionals, were above unionism. Once again Fletcher, the Union advocate, successfully used his knowledge of industrial law and his advocacy skills by citing other industrial cases to reinforce his claims. Kelly ruled that both the Preference and Dismissal Clauses be included in the Award.

The Preference Clause did not increase the shortage of teachers as predicted. However the increasing demand for new centres and low trainee recruitment did exacerbate the situation. To help cope with the shortage the employer gradually recruited more women as untrained aides on very low salaries. They were mostly married women with children who were glad of jobs which required no formal qualifications and had hours corresponding with school hours.³⁹ But the kindergarten aides became increasingly dissatisfied with their low salaries and poor working conditions. So they sought assistance from the Federated Miscellaneous Workers' Union (hereafter known as the FMWU).⁴⁰ Following this request, the FMWU altered its constitution to allow aides to become members.

At this time too, the employer body, Kindergarten Union, changed its name to Kindergarten Association of Western Australia (hereafter referred to as the Kindergarten Association). The President, W D Benson, explained this was “to save confusion in industrial interpretation”.⁴¹ This name change may have offered a better image but it did nothing to assist the guardian and provider of kindergarten education with a formula to solve its ever-increasing financial problem and alleviate the pressure for more kindergartens. By 1968, less than 10% of eligible children attended kindergartens.⁴²

The Kindergarten Association, to relieve its financial situation and cater for more children, increased the length of the afternoon session⁴³ and the number of children in the class. The Union agreed to an experiment for one term only.⁴⁴ Selected teachers increased their hours by half an hour for three afternoons per week and accepted five extra children without a pay. The effects on the children were assessed by the teachers to ensure the maintenance of good standards of education.⁴⁵

The experiment proved successful and extended to all kindergartens. The Union promptly applied to the Court for Award amendments to restrict tuition to five and half hours per day, an hour for lunch, a 20% increase in margins, and a district allowance for those teaching in the North-west of the State. Once again it was the setting of the margins which caused the greatest dispute. The Union applied for similar increases in the margins as those already

received by the female primary teaching staff in independent schools. The Union's advocate, Owen Salmon of the Electrical Trades' Union (later Secretary of the FMWU), argued that the kindergarten teachers' margins should be fixed to the independent schools' rates for future convenience and expediency. Their salary rate would then be comparable with the least qualified teachers outside the Education Department.⁴⁶ The granting of this 40% salary increase⁴⁷ brought kindergarten teachers' salaries closer to parity with female state school teachers.⁴⁸

That same year, 1968, also proved to be significant for the industrial strength of the Union. Membership stood at 100⁴⁹ of the 102⁵⁰ eligible women. Membership support in a postal vote referendum allowed affiliation with the Trades and Labor Council, indicating that members' industrial horizons had widened.⁵¹ The same referendum agreed to extend membership to holders of the National Nursery Education Board of England certificates (hereafter referred to as NNEB).

But amidst these successes one regretful note sounded. Joyce Sackville, the founder and Honorary Life Member, retired due to pressure of work, which had left her little time for administrative duties. She had taken a new post with the Education Department as an advisory teacher for handicapped children. For her enthusiasm and dedication she was presented with a silver engraved bracelet which she still wears.

After Joyce Sackville's retirement, the Union Executive and their new non-teaching secretary, Elsie Waghorn⁵², continued to manage the affairs of the Union effectively. Meanwhile, the Kindergarten Association continued to struggle with the impact of the increased salaries including the aides covered by the Kindergarten Aides' Award.⁵³ The recurring problems of finance, budgets and negotiations with government and teachers prompted P J Carly, the first Executive Officer of the Kindergarten Association, to head a deputation to the State Minister of Education, E Lewis, in November 1968. The requests for an immediate special grant to overcome a budget shortfall and for a new formula for calculation of future grants were acceded to.⁵⁴

Until now education was primarily a State Government responsibility. But in 1968 the Commonwealth Liberal-Country Party Coalition Government fulfilled its election promise by setting up the Commonwealth Department of Education and Science. This allowed for the gradual increase in the Federal Government's involvement in education. Initially, the Federal Minister for Education and Science, Malcolm Fraser, extended the capital works grants to the States.⁵⁵ The increasing politicisation of education at the State and Federal levels had significant repercussions for kindergarten teachers.

Initially, these promises of more Federal aid for education created an expectation of expanded resources for pre-school education for all children, especially those of working mothers. However the opening of 14 new kindergartens in 1969 did little to alleviate the problem as only 5676 children had places.⁵⁶ Long waiting lists existed at most centres. In an attempt to accommodate more children, the class sizes in some kindergartens were increased by 20% in both the morning and afternoon sessions. Two teachers and an aide worked together in these larger classes.⁵⁷

New centres and larger classes required more trained staff. The expansion of the Kindergarten Teachers' College at Meerilinga in Hay Street, West Perth, with Federal Capital Assistance funds, resulted in an increased intake of trainee teachers. But these students took three years to train. The employment of more women holding qualifications gained elsewhere relieved the immediate staff shortages.⁵⁸ By 1970 the Kindergarten Association employed 149 teachers, 11 holders of the NNEB and 106 aides.⁵⁹ The Union Executive's concern over teacher qualifications now intensified as often teachers did not fit the criteria for Union membership and therefore failed to meet the standards set by the Australian Pre-Schools' Association.⁶⁰ In the country the issues of standards and staff shortages were more serious because kindergartens were frequently run by untrained women with qualified teachers visiting only once or twice a week.⁶¹ The Union suggested the provision of suitable living accommodation near the country kindergartens, extending the district allowances and improved salary increments to encourage country women into kindergarten teaching or to return to teaching after an absence.⁶² The Kindergarten Association rejected these ideas.

Instead, Barbara Jones, the Director of Kindergartens, proposed a new training course for assistants based on the NNEB. The object of the Child Care Certificate course was "to train girls and women to a similar standard for employment as assistants in affiliated kindergartens or service in day care centres and other institutions."⁶³ Immediate implementation meant the first intake occurred in February 1971 and included two Aboriginal and several mature-aged women. Many graduates of this new Child Care Certificate course (hereafter referred to as the Triple C) "saw themselves as a category of trained teacher."⁶⁴ Because of this attitude, the three year trained kindergarten teachers viewed the course with suspicion as they feared it would undermine their status. However, once the trained aides or assistants proved their worth the kindergarten teachers accepted them as para-professionals along with the holders of the NNEB certificates. By February 1972, both were included in the Award under the title of Assistants.⁶⁵ The Union had successfully adapted to the changing times.

The changing social attitudes towards the position and value of pre-school education resulted in a change in terminology. *Pre-school* replaced *Kindergarten*. At the 1971 Annual General Meeting, the kindergarten teachers unanimously agreed to register a new title for their Union - the Pre-School Teachers' Association (hereafter referred to as the Union).⁶⁶ This was granted on 20 June 1971.⁶⁷

As the Union deliberated over its new name, the fight for salary parity with other three year trained teachers continued⁶⁸. Realising the under-resourced employer body could not meet their log of claims, the Union modified its first application. Their claim for parity with Junior Primary teachers in the Education Department was amended parity with female, two year trained teachers in independent schools.⁶⁹ They also deferred the commencement date to January 1972.

The Kindergarten Association, as the employer, ignored these generous concessions and proposed a plan to offset the salary increases by extending the number of afternoon contact hours to two and a half per day. The extra hours would attract a higher government subsidy,⁷⁰ thereby meeting the Kindergarten Association's estimated deficit of \$67 000 created by the salary increases.⁷¹

The Union organised a special general meeting to discuss the increased hours of tuition and the conditions attached to the proposal. Union advocate Owen Salmon addressed the meeting. A lengthy discussion followed. Finally, the members accepted all but the last condition titled "Suggested Condition outside the Award". Its wording placed total power in the employer's hands:

The Association [the employer body] to be free from union opposition in arranging cases where staff employed, number of children and environmental conditions allow, to arrange for the opening of the kindergarten on a fourth afternoon in each week after consultation with the teacher or teachers in charge and the Committee (but not subject to the right of veto).⁷²

The members then drew up a compromise motion which allowed for the extension of the contact time to two and half hours for three, not four, afternoons per week.⁷³ The employer disregarded the amendments and threatened to suspend all salary negotiations.⁷⁴ At the second special general union meeting within a fortnight, the members showed the first signs of militancy. They instructed Owen Salmon to convey to the Board of Management of the Kindergarten Association, the unacceptability of its threats and lack of guarantees for the future. They insisted an independent arbitrator be used to resolve the issue.⁷⁵ Writing to members, the Union Secretary advised:

Money was not the only point at issue. . .[It is] the future of pre-school education in WA and the possibility of falling standards. They [the Kindergarten Association] repeatedly inferred that the primary teacher is working full-time and that if kindergarten teachers were hoping for parity they must be prepared for parity 'not only in the pay packet'. They seemed unaware of the much wider range of duties and responsibilities expected of a kindergarten teacher and to be of the opinion that kindergarten teachers have two afternoons off per week.⁷⁶

Surprisingly, despite the year long confrontations and differences of opinion, negotiations kindergarten teachers' salaries rose to parity with two year trained independent schools' female teachers and the hours were not extended.⁷⁷ Salaries now equalled 82.5% of three year trained Education Department teachers' salaries.⁷⁸ The pre-school teachers, satisfied that their Union had done an excellent job in procuring higher wages and maintaining their hours of work, continued working in the first term of the new year.⁷⁹

In early March 1972, however, a directive from the Kindergarten Association caught them by surprise. Teachers must work the extended hours or be dismissed.⁸⁰ The employer implemented the extended hours policy without consultation. The teachers were furious. Non-contact hours were essential for efficient curriculum planning, daily programming and administration of the kindergartens. Any challenge to their professionalism and work practices was viewed with contempt.

The Union Executive perceived that the root cause of the latest policy was once again the deteriorating state of the Kindergarten Association's finances. The secretary wrote to the Minister pointing out that the State Government acknowledged the need for pre-school education through its grant of \$500 000 to the Kindergarten Association but made no direct request for State intervention. But one sentence provided a clue to future developments. "This [pre-school education] already is an integral part of State school system in other States of the Commonwealth where the school age is lower than in WA."⁸¹ There was no reply to this letter but it no doubt influenced politicians' thinking and future policy planning.

At the third special general meeting of that year, convened late March, the teachers voted to "work to rule". They refused to work the extra afternoon, and they resolved to take industrial action in the event of a colleague being victimised by the employer.⁸² For the times, this was an unusually militant action for pre-school teachers and it showed their determination.

A stunned Board of Management of the Kindergarten Association applied for Court intervention. Commissioner Kelly presided over a compulsory conference in April. The Kindergarten Association's advocate, G A Black, based his case on two points - the necessity for extra contact or teaching hours in order to raise the level of government funding, and the assumption that the Union had agreed to the extended hours even though the Award itself had

not been amended.⁸³ The Union's advocate, Owen Salmon, argued, "We are seeking parity in terms of wages but the Association [Kindergarten Association] said we should accept parity in terms of hours".⁸⁴ He argued further that longer hours did not mean better education.

After deliberating over the evidence, Kelly summarised the issues as revolving around professionalism and unionism. "Conflict arose where professional bodies are also industrial bodies," Kelly stated.⁸⁵ Kelly queried the right of the Kindergarten Association, an employer of professionals, to instruct its employees to work more hours,⁸⁶ adding that in both instances negotiation seemed more appropriate. Kelly went on to criticise the Union for not showing full concern for its members because a union's role, first and foremost, was to improve employment conditions for its members. Even though they were professional people they should not be concerned with the employer's financial position.⁸⁷ The Commissioner concluded that the real question of teachers' working the extra hours needed resolving. Kelly ordered the removal of the negotiable phrase "maximum of five and half hours" in Clause 8 of the Award in the interest of clarity.⁸⁸

Negotiations between the two parties continued in an attempt to follow the Court's instructions. Finally the employers conceded to the professional expertise of the teachers, giving them the right, in consultation with their parent committees, to decide whether the extra half hour was appropriate for the children in their individual centres. The issue of the extra half day remained unresolved.⁸⁹ The militancy of the women thwarted the plan to incorporate Friday afternoons into the teaching contact time.

The Union now recognised its political power. Once it had informed the Minister of the relation between the Kindergarten Association's financial problems and the industrial strife over wages and increased hours and had taken a militant stand, then the members recognised their industrial strength. Indeed, the Association itself recognised, at least unofficially, that the Union had an important role to play. Lena Meenhorst recalls:

The Kindergarten Association was always very supportive of the Kindergarten Teachers' Union. It was very difficult for the Kindergarten Union [Kindergarten Association] to have their grants to pay teachers increased and the people I talked to in the Kindergarten Association indicated that by having an official recognition of teachers, by having an industrial award, by having the Arbitration Court decide what teachers should be paid this would strengthen the case of the Kindergarten Association's demand for larger grants to pay teachers' salaries and so they were really behind us all the way and supported us in every way they could⁹⁰.

In addition, a new body, the Parents' Action Group, formed in April 1972 as a community pressure group. Its strength, together with the Union's letters to various members of Parliament and the Kindergarten Association's deputation to the Minister, influenced the

State Government to hold an inquiry into pre-schools. However, the overriding influence for an inquiry was the changes in Federal Party policies for the financing of pre-schools. The Inquiry into Pre-School Education in Western Australia was headed by Stipendiary Magistrate and Chairman of the Government Schools Teachers' Tribunal, W E Nott.⁹¹ The terms of reference reflected the key areas of concern as expressed by all parties and included the administration of the Kindergarten Association, teachers' working conditions and salary structure, the role of the Kindergarten Training College and the formula for government subsidies. The hearings started in June 1972 and lasted until August of the same year.

Union members were pleased with several of the Report's recommendations, which were clearly based on the Union's submission which was presented by Owen Salmon and one of the members.⁹² These included:

That no change be made in the present method of negotiating and determining working conditions and salaries for kindergarten teachers and aides.
and
Subject to the provision of Commonwealth Government funds, the acceptance by the State Government of the total responsibility for subsidising pre-school education in the areas of teacher training, salaries and wages of kindergarten staff, advisory teachers, college staff and administrative and clerical staff.⁹³

At last the women had recognition of their value as teachers and their true worth as fully qualified three year trained teachers. The fulfilment of every kindergarten teacher's wish - salary parity with State School teachers - seemed achievable. The Union Executive called for the immediate implementation of a policy which would see the State Government pay all pre-school teachers' salaries, grant salary parity with State School teachers over 1974 and 1975 and extend student allowances to Kindergarten Teachers' College students.⁹⁴ The Union had realised its crucial role in the politicisation of education. Its members, all women, discarded the stereotyped image of the "professional" when they took the progressive steps of unity and militancy against the unfair practices of their employer.

However pre-school teachers' pleasure in the Report's recognition of the work of their Union and of the need for improved salaries was almost overshadowed by other recommendations. Although the report recommended the continuation of the Kindergarten Association as the principal agency for "the administration of Pre-School Education in this State," it advocated a major change in composition, namely "that the present Board of Management of the Association [Kindergarten Association] be replaced by a Statutory Board consisting of 12 Members".⁹⁵ The implication of this recommendation seemed minimal on paper, but pre-school teachers and the Union Executive believed this clause represented the initial moves towards a changing power base in the pre-school education field. This view was to be vindicated as the future unfolded.

The next ten years saw the Union continuing to maintain a vigilant watch over workplace conditions, and changes to the administration of the pre-schol education system. The Union itself adopted its strategies and tactics to its changing environment in the second decade of its existence, culminating in amalgamation with the FMWU in July, 1982. Over the full period of the Union's history its members maintained their professional identity, and indeed enhanced it, whilst highly unionised. They successfully overcame the restraints of professionalism, conservatism and gender stereotyping, and in doing so ensured the future for their profession and its paraprofessional assistants.

¹ Secretary of the Kindergarten Union, in *Daily News* 6 August 1955

² R Kerr, *A History of the Kindergarten Union*, Perth, 1994, p 31.

³ Interview with Miss M Evans, Perth, 19 September 1994.

⁴ Helen Briggs, Oral History Transcript, p 1, Meerilinga Archives.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Pat O'Sullivan Oral History Transcript, p 10, Meerilinga Archives.

⁷ Particularly strong parent committees existed in Fremantle, Bayswater and Mt. Hawthorn.

Interview with Miss M Evans, 19 September 1994.

⁸ 'Kindergarten' means a school for children under 6 years of age conducted on the theory that education should be begun by gratifying and cultivating the normal aptitude for exercise, play, observation, imitation and construction. Section 2, Education Amendment Act 1943, *Statutes of Western Australia*, Vol VI, 1943.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ Mrs Pomykaj, a kindergarten teacher, mentioned in a conversation with the author that there was a real concern over the lack of uniformity of standards, Perth, 6 September 1994.

¹¹ *Sunday Times*, 15 December 1963.

¹² Interview with Miss M Evans, 19 September 1994.

¹³ 'Accent on Youth: Pre-School' in *West Australian Parent and Citizen*, July 1971, p 10.

¹⁴ Joyce Sackville, Oral History Transcript, p 2.

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ 'The Kindergarten Graduates' Club offered an opportunity for teachers to meet socially to overcome their feelings of isolation in the community.' Joyce Sackville, Oral History Transcript, p 2.

¹⁸ Joyce Sackville Oral History Transcript, p 3.

¹⁹ *West Australian*, 14 March 1962.

²⁰ Minutes, 22 March 1962.

²¹ Joyce Sackville, Oral History Transcript, p 5.

²² Letter to the Arbitration Court from Secretary of Independent Schools' Salaried Officers' Association, 28 September 1962, Union Correspondence file 26, FMWU.

²³ Letter from J Innes to the editor *West Australian*, 10 September 1962.

²⁴ Union Annual General Meeting, 28 March 1963.

²⁵ Register of Industrial Disputes, IAC, AN 195/8 Acc 1489/45. 1954-1967, SAWA.

²⁶ *West Australian Industrial Gazette*, Vol 44, 1964, pp 66-67.

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ *ibid.*, pp 105-107.

²⁹ Register of Industrial Disputes, IAC, AN 195/8 Acc 1489/45, 1954-1967, SAWA.

³⁰ WAIG, Vol 44, 1964, p 472.

³¹ Disputes, Transcript pp 17-24, IAC, AN 195/31 Acc 2801/22, 1963, Box 11, SAWA.

³² *ibid.*

³³ WAIG, Vol 44, 1964, p 471-475.

³⁴ *ibid.*

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- ³⁵ibid, p 472.
- ³⁶ibid, p 475.
- ³⁷Executive Minutes, 16 July 1964.
- ³⁸Presidents' Report, Union Annual General Meeting, 23 March 1965
- ³⁹By mid 1966 there were 68 Diploma teachers and 20 teachers with other qualifications and 70 aides. *Annual Report*, Kindergarten Union, 1965-1966.
- ⁴⁰Letter to Secretary FMWU from general meeting of aides, 8 February 1966, Kindergarten Aides' Award file 1, FMWU.
- ⁴¹President's Report, Annual General Meeting of Kindergarten Association, 1966-1967.
- ⁴²Submission for Pre-School Education Inquiry in Western Australia by Kindergarten Association, 1972, p 15, Meerilinga Archives.
- ⁴³The Award stated not more than 5 1/4 hours of instruction per day.
- ⁴⁴Circular sent to all Union members, 1 February 1972, Kindergarten Teachers' Award file 1, FMWU.
- ⁴⁵ibid.
- ⁴⁶Application and Disputes, Transcript, p 2, IAC, AN 195/12, ACC 1572/119, 1968, SAWA.
- ⁴⁷Application and Disputes, Transcript, IAC, AN 195/12, ACC 1572/119, 1968, SAWA.
- ⁴⁸"Prior to 1971 women teachers received less than their male colleagues who were on the same classification or holding equivalent promotional positions" in "Nennie Harken - The Equal Pay Story", State School Teachers Union of W A. *W A. Teachers Journal* Vol 69, No. 3, pages 44-45, November 27, 1979
- ⁴⁹WAIG, Vol 48, 1968.
- ⁵⁰*Annual Report*, Kindergarten Association, 1967-1968.
- ⁵¹Minutes, 6 April 1968.
- ⁵²Union Annual General Meeting, 15 March 1967.
- ⁵³WAIG, Vol 49, 1969, p 45.
- ⁵⁴*Annual Report*, Kindergarten Association, 1969-1970.
- ⁵⁵ibid.
- ⁵⁶This brought the number of affiliated kindergartens to a record 106, *Annual Report*, Kindergarten Association, 1968-1969.
- ⁵⁷ibid.
- ⁵⁸*Annual Report*, Kindergarten Association, 1969-1970.
- ⁵⁹*Annual Report*, Kindergarten Association, 1969-1970.
- ⁶⁰'Australian Pre-Schools' Association was formed in 1934 as a focus for State organisations concerned with the vitally important first years of a child's life and development.' *Being and Becoming*, Report of 16th National Triennial Conference of Australian Early Childhood Association 1982, p i.
- ⁶¹ibid.
- ⁶²Union Minutes, 24 August 1970.
- ⁶³ibid.
- ⁶⁴Dr D Mossenson, Oral History Transcript, p 14, Meerilinga Archives.
- ⁶⁵WAIG, Vol 52, 1972, p 141.
- ⁶⁶Union Annual General Meeting, 1971.
- ⁶⁷WAIG, Vol 51, 1971.
- ⁶⁸Full equal pay for female state school teachers was achieved on 1 January 1971 (State School Teachers Union of W A (1979) Op. cit, page 45.
- ⁶⁹Letter to members of the Union from Union Secretary E Waghorn, 1 Feb 1972, Kindergarten Teacher's Award file 1, FMWU.
- ⁷⁰State Government grants were calculated on the basis of the number of contact hours per child.
- ⁷¹GA Black, Compulsory Conference between Kindergarten Association and Union, Transcript, p 3, AN 195/24, Acc 2669/369, 1972, SAWA.
- ⁷²Letter to members of the Union from Union Secretary E Waghorn, 1 February 1972, Kindergarten Teachers' Award file 1, FMWU.
- ⁷³Passed 32 votes to 4, Minutes, 11 November 1971.
- ⁷⁴Letter to members of the Union from Union Secretary E Waghorn, 1 February 1972, Kindergarten Teachers' Award file 1, FMWU.
- ⁷⁵Minutes, 9 December 1971.
- ⁷⁶Letter to members of the Union from Union Secretary E Waghorn, 1 February 1972, Kindergarten Teachers' Award file 1, FMWU.
- ⁷⁷O Salmon, Compulsory Conference, Transcript, p 3, AN 195/24, Acc 2669/369, 1972, SAWA.

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- ⁷⁸Letter to Minister of Education, TD Evans from Union Secretary E Waghorn 28 March 1972 Union Correspondence file 6 FMWU.
- ⁷⁹The Award was handed down on 25 February 1972. *WAIG*, Vol 52, 1972 p 141.
- ⁸⁰GA Black, Compulsory Conference, Transcript, p 1, AN 195/24, Acc 2669/369, 1972, SAWA.
- ⁸¹Letter to Minister for Education TD Evans from Union Secretary E Waghorn, 28 March 1972, Union Correspondence file 6, FMWU.
- ⁸²Minutes, 29 March 1972.
- ⁸³GA Black, Compulsory Conference, Transcript, p 2, AN 195/24, Acc 2669/369, 1972, SAWA
- ⁸⁴Leena Meenhorst, Oral History Transcript pp 10-11.
- ⁸⁵Commissioner Kelly, Compulsory Conference, Transcript, p 8, AN 195/24, Acc 2669/369, 1972, SAWA.
- ⁸⁶*ibid*, p 7.
- ⁸⁷*ibid*, p 9.
- ⁸⁸*ibid*, p 7.
- ⁸⁹Letter to Union Secretary E Waghorn from Mr Stapleton Executive Officer of KAWA, 3 October 1972, Union Correspondence file 11, FMWU.
- ⁹⁰Leena Meenhorst, Oral History, Transcript 0-11
- ⁹¹Letter, to Union Secretary E Waghorn from Minister of Education TD Evans, 19 May 1972, Union Correspondence file 6, FMWU.
- ⁹²WE Nott, *Report into Pre-School Education in Western Australia*, Perth, 1972, p 45.
- ⁹³*ibid*, pp 42-43.
- ⁹⁴Letter to Minister for Education TD Evans from Secretary E Waghorn, 19 November 1972, Union Correspondence file 6, FMWU.
- ⁹⁵*ibid*, p 41.