



Science Teachers' Association of Victoria Inc.

ABN 59 004 145 329

STAV Annual Report

1 July 2021 - 30 June 2022

Treasurer's Report

Economic Future: Australia, STAV and Science Victoria

1.0 Geopolitical Uncertainty and Natural Disasters

Over the last two and a half years, the Australian economy has been struck by a continuous set of external and internal economic shocks. Drought, bushfires, and floods. The introduction of public health measures to mitigate the spread of the COVID pandemic. The close of international and state borders. Geopolitical tensions and the Russian-Ukraine war. These events disrupted Australia's global and domestic supply chains. Migration collapsed. Businesses experienced chronic staff shortages. The price of energy and food dramatically increased. By the end of the 2022 financial year inflation reached 6.1 percent. The Interest rate moved from 0.1 % to 1.85 % in just four months.

1.1 New Government. New Promise. New Summit

In May 2022 the then Leader of the opposition, Anthony Albanese committed a future Labour Government to holding a "Jobs and Skills Summit". The proposed Summit will bring together Australians, including unions, employers, civil society and governments to address shared economic challenges, namely rising inflation and interest rates, falling real wages and the trillion dollar debt.

On Monday 11 July 2022, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced the Jobs and Skills summit would take place on Thursday 1 and Friday 2 September 2022, at Parliament House in Canberra. The Summit will cover five broad themes:

- Maintaining full employment and growing productivity.
- Boosting job security and wages.
- Lifting participation and reducing barriers to employment.
- Delivering a high-quality labour force through skills, training and migration.
- Maximising opportunities in the industries of the future.

In August 2022, the new federal education minister Jason Clare convened a roundtable on teacher shortages in Australia, gathering all the state and territory education ministers. Also invited were teachers and principals representing the states and territories to discuss their experience of teaching particularly in the last few years.



1.2 What Role for teacher Associations?

The Universities provide initial teacher education. The State government of Victoria is responsible for the regulation and delivery of school-based education.

The State Government, the Catholic Education Office and the Independent Schools as the employers of teachers are responsible for their wages and conditions.

Therefore, the specific challenges of teacher shortages, wages, conditions, respect, trust etc. may become the responsibility of government, unions, higher education, employers, etc.

I am not aware of any teacher associations peak bodies such as ASTA or APTA having a seat at the Summit promoting the interests of the members.

It is not readily apparent as to how volunteer professional teacher associations may have a role in helping “the fantastic teachers we already have remain in the classroom” (Jason Clare, August 2022).

I am assuming the National “Education” Action Plan will have its own momentum for change. As the ripple effect of each change moves through the education system I suspect opportunities will emerge for STAV and Science Victoria to support teachers in schools.

2.0 STAV and Science Victoria: Restructuring and Strategic Planning

During the 2020-22 financial years, STAV Council and the Board of Science Victoria had been preparing their respective organisations to cope with the social, environmental, membership demographics, and financial ramifications of these economic shocks.

Before the Jobs and Skills Summit, STAV, and Science Victoria had restructured their respective organisations to cope with the shocks that had already arrived, and are strategic planning for those that are over the horizon.

2.1 Business Process Review

In October 2020, STAV and Science Victoria (SV) jointly commissioned a review of the business processes of both organisations to recommend possible areas of improvement.

The interim report (March 2021) recommended an operational restructure in which the business activities of STAV Publishing and STS could be transferred from Science Victoria to STAV. By January 2022 both STAV and Science Victoria had been restructured in line with the interim report’s recommendations.

Accordingly, a suite of new financial reports has been developed for STAV Inc. and its three business units (BU’s) STAV H.O., STAV Publishing & STS.

Note1:

“Membership” is a business activity of STAV H.O (Head Office). “Professional Learning/Project Management Service” is a “collaborative” business activity of Science Victoria (SV) and STAV H.O, and is the reason for the STAV-Science Victoria Service Agreement.



2.2 Strategic Planning Process: STAV and Science Victoria

In March 2022, Liz Billings, (Executive Manager), proposed to STAV Council and the Board of Science Victoria a process for developing the next Strategic Plan. Noting:

“The most recent four-year strategic plan expired in 2020 and since then STAV/SV has undergone a significant organisational restructure.... As both entities are interdependent, it is proposed that the development of the next Strategic Planning be run as a joint process between Council and the Board. ...

This is particularly timely as the education systems and the wider community are returning to place-based activities, following two years of public health and safety restrictions.”

In April 2022, Cath Smith of Changesmith Consulting was appointed as the external facilitator to design the strategic planning sessions to be initially held in June, and to deliver a draft Strategic Plan for STAV Council and the SV board to review.

On Saturday 30 July, members of both STAV Council and the Board of Science Victoria attended STAV House, Coburg, to participate in the rescheduled Strategic Planning Day.

3.0 COVID and the Supply Chain Chaos.

During the past three years each of the geopolitical uncertainties and natural disasters, to a greater or lesser extent has disrupted Australia’s economic growth. The increase in Australia’s demand for goods, lengthy lockdowns and COVID infections of workers, the global shipping container shortage, reduction in shipping services and port skipping, and rising costs, have been creating Australia-wide supply chain chaos. A situation that is not predicted to ease until 2023 and beyond.

3.1 The Financial Challenges of 2022

The following financial data represents STAV’s deficit or surplus, and members equity for each of the three financial years 2022, 2021 and 2020.

Note2:

At this time, the business activities of STAV Publishing and the Science Talent Search were being transferred from Science Victoria to STAV because of decisions taken in March 2021 to invest in a renewal and growth strategy.

The alternating deficit-surplus-deficit pattern reflects the changes and uncertainty of operating a business in the COVID-era. STAV’s revenue was supplemented by the federal government’s COVID19 stimulus package during the pandemic restrictions mandated in 2020-21.



- In the financial year ending 30 June 2022, STAV reported a deficit of (\$73,484). In 2021, STAV reported a surplus of \$39,092. In 2020, the deficit was (\$35,669).

Note3:

The deficit or surplus reflects the ongoing struggle to generate income during the COVID-19 “era” pandemic.

- In the 2022 financial year, STAV reported members equity as \$959,795. In 2021 members equity was \$1,033,279. In 2020 members equity was \$994,188.

Note4:

Members equity refers to the Association’s assets- the cash, equipment and the value of STAV House it owns on behalf of the members.

The combined equity of STAV and Science Victoria in FY22 was \$2,350,961, in FY21 the equity was \$ 2,628,088, and in FY20 it was \$2,745,231. An overall change to the STAV/SV Group of approximately (\$400,000), during the past three years.

Between March 2020 and October 2021, during Melbourne’s six lockdowns totalling 262 days, STAV and Science Victoria continued to offer a range of resources and services to support science teaching and learning, and the science talent search.

The 2020 STS Exhibition and Presentation Day was designated a COVID Safe event. The STS Committee authorised changes to the website so that the presentation ceremonies were live streamed on Monday 16 November 2021.

The office staff were determined that all schools purchasing STAV Publishing Semester Trial Exams received their orders on time. Furthermore, in response to COVID-19 disruption to parcel deliveries, trial exams were made available in electronic form.

State government restrictions, which mandated COVID Safe events, meant that STAV and Science Victoria’s capacity to hold a significant number of face-to-face events, such as conferences and workshops was limited. Seeking donations from corporate or individual sponsors, difficult. Recruiting volunteers, challenging.

Lockdowns and mandatory periods of isolation meant that STAV and Science Victoria had to decide whether to cancel or postpone in-person conferences. The online conference proved not to be as profitable. Delegates were grateful for the opportunity to engage with others and attend live sessions or watch later the pre-recorded sessions.

Note5:

Before the restructure, STAV’S operating income was limited to membership and the STAV-Science Victoria Service Agreement. After the restructure, membership, the STAV-Science Victoria Service Agreement (professional learning), trial exams, and the Science Talent Search are the main sources of STAV’S operating income. For Science Victoria the “Professional Learning” business activity is the only source of operating income.



4.0 Over the Horizon

If STAV'S policy horizon were simply to grapple with the financial challenges of 2022, then I would finish my report here. However, I believe that the nature of the Covidian-era shocks, over time, has the potential to transform the operations of STAV and Science Victoria, such that each organisation is fit-for-purpose in the non-profit, volunteer services sector.

Looking over the horizon, it is clear that in the near future STAV and Science Victoria are each focused on reporting an annual surplus, growing the membership, and seeking financial sustainability.

I suspect that whether someone becomes an individual member of STAV or attends STAVCON and/or VCE conferences will largely be determined by what people feel is most important in their lives.

If STAV and Science Victoria are to remain meaningful to teachers throughout their careers then council and the board will need to continue building capacity and offering services that align with their work-life balance.

Note6:

Fun Fact... 79 years ago...

"Mark Stump, then at Carey, wrote at his own expense to science teachers to attend a meeting on July 17, 1943 to oppose the imposition of a General Science to Year 10, in place of Physics, Chemistry and other subjects, by the Melbourne University Schools Board. This inaugural meeting brought together for the first time teachers from all secondary school sectors in Victoria, and from boys and girls schools, a large majority of whom taught Physics and Chemistry, and several tertiary associates. ... The foundation members found early that they were collectively supportive of the social principle of General Science for a "science for all" and set about making it work."

Dr Rod Fawns

Dr. Robert Roe
STAV Honorary Treasurer
Tuesday 29 November 2022