The theme of this edition is 'The State of the Nation'. Computer Education Groups around Australia were invited to provide two reports— one describing the status of the use of computers in their state or territory, and another reporting on an innovative project.

The news from around the nation is similar— withdrawal of centralised support for computer education activities. In some states, this has been underway for some time (e.g. SA and WA); in others, (e.g. Qld) it has only just begun. Decentralisation throws the ball into the 'grass roots' court, with teachers and professional associations having the opportunity and responsibility for initiating and co-ordinating their own professional development and support structures.

Such a role places increasing demands on the voluntary efforts of Computer Education Groups. The South and Western Australian governments have provided some assistance to their CEGs by providing funds for secretarial services (SA), equipment and presenter's fees (WA). It is likely that all CEGs will need to become pro-active and prepare proposals seeking funds to run in-service programs.

This edition also includes reports on two national initiatives—the Australian Educational Telecommunications Calendar, and the National Statement for Technology Education. Both projects reflect the growing commitment to the coordination of educational services across state and territory boundaries. This commitment should also extend to services which are currently being disbanded by state and territory education departments (e.g. software development, hardware and software evaluation, and the development of curriculum support materials.)

Given today's economic climate, educators can accept that each state and territory cannot afford to run programs in all these areas. However, the need for such support remains. It may be time for a national audit of programs and materials, to identify which can be effectively 'imported' from other states and territories; and to share the responsibility for services across state and territory boundaries. For example, two states with demonstrated expertise could focus on software development, another two on software and hardware evaluation, another two on writing curriculum support materials and so on. Models for such collaborative enterprise already exist (e.g. the national curriculum mapping process.)

The days of waiting for centralised initiatives and funding to solve our problems are over. It is our collective efforts and initiative that will determine our progress. You are invited to respond to these ideas by writing letters for publication in future editions of this journal. You are invited to respond to these ideas by writing letters for publication in future editions of this journal.

While grappling with day to day concerns, it is important to take time out to ask ourselves 'What are we really trying to do? What does the "big picture" reveal?' In response to these questions, the theme of the September edition of the journal will be 'Computers and Theories of Learning, Knowledge, Thinking and Language'. It will explore current and emerging educational theories and models and their implications for the use of computers in education, challenging us to identify the key principles underlying our use of computers.

In 1992, Australian Educational Computing will be changing its format to include a refereed section. This will encourage contributions from educators at the tertiary level and give readers increased access to current research in the field of educational computing.

So in this edition we begin to navigate the nineties by taking stock of where we are and looking at our younger students' perceptions of computers, the perceptions of computers in our youngest students. (See Perceptions of computers: What do five year olds think?)