

Media Release

Quality of Primary School Education under threat

November 2015

The Australian Government Primary Principals' Association (AGPPA), the national body for primary principals at government schools is pleading for state governments to urgently review the health and wellbeing of primary school principals.

The *2011-2014 Principal Health and Wellbeing Report* (the Report) by the Australian Catholic University demonstrated the impact of school principals' workload on their health and wellbeing. AGPPA demands policy-makers act now by reviewing the roles and responsibilities of principals.

Ms Gabrielle Leigh, AGPPA President said, "Following the most significant public primary education reforms in over a decade, the role of a primary school leader is more complex and holds more accountability than ever before."

"School principals have felt the impact of the increased complexity of their role. However, state education departments are yet to recognise and respond to this impact and as a consequence, support structures are lacking. The first thing that must happen is for all state education departments to recognise and respond to the direct impact increased accountability is having on the individual leaders," Ms Leigh said.

School principals are experiencing an increase in job demands yet support resources are decreasing. The pressure of the role is intensified by working in a high-risk environment. School leaders experience physical violence at approximately seven times the rate of the general population, as outlined in the Report.

"A review is required to identify and recognise the increased workload and related pressures, and the subsequent impact on primary school leaders' health and wellbeing. Once these issues are acknowledged, AGPPA would welcome the opportunity to work with the departments to explore and implement the necessary support structures," said Ms Leigh.

Ms Leigh expressed her concern for the impact on the quality of primary school education, "As a community, we cannot undervalue the importance of primary school principals in leading schools to deliver quality education. When a principal is under immense pressure, the impact is felt by the entire school."

This call for action follows research published in the Report stating that principals' quality of life can be seriously affected and one in ten principals thinks about self-harm.

The 2015 Principal Health and Wellbeing survey findings will be released on the 3rd of December.

For more information about AGPPA, visit the AGPPA website: <http://www.agppa.asn.au>

Further enquiries and interviews;

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