

Strategic Plan 2017 – 2018

The Five Key Areas

Principal Wellbeing
Primary School Resourcing
Professional Learning / Capacity Building
Wrap-around Services for Students
Advocating for Public Education

PRINCIPAL WELLBEING

As employers, Australian State and Territory Departments of Education have a duty of care and responsibility to ensure the health and wellbeing of their employees. AGPPA commends the widely recognized work of Dr. Phil Riley that highlights what is needed in this area.

AGPPA believes that all Australian State and Territory Departments of Education should conduct a full review of the health and wellbeing of the Principal class. These reviews are needed in light of government reform agendas, particularly for public primary schools that have increased accountabilities and workload surrounding autonomy, delegations of authorities and accountability structures. AGPPA commends those State and Territory Governments and Departments who have undertaken such a review to date and have initiated improvements. These initial steps reinforce the need for an ongoing commitment by **all** education systems.

AGPPA further believes that State and Territory jurisdictions need to recognise the increasing accountabilities and subsequent workload of the Principal class and their impact on health and wellbeing. States and Territories that invest in school leader wellbeing will have positive effects on student learning, school culture and on system effectiveness as a whole. At the local level, improved school leader wellbeing increases the community's confidence in public education. The consequences of inaction are likely to become costly to employers, through time lost to ill health, WHS claims against employers and reduced functioning of school leaders while at work.

AGPPA will:

- continue to strongly advocate to all State and Territory Departments of Education to work proactively with leadership associations to explore and implement support structures to improve the health and wellbeing of school leadership. This needs to include additional leadership and administrative support allocations in primary

- schools, together with a streamlining of administrative requirements;
- utilise Dr. Philip Riley's research to provide credibility to the importance of school leader wellbeing in the media and political spheres;
- support the wellbeing of school leaders through professional support by State and Territory professional associations;
- advocate to State and Territory Departments of Education for the provision of timely and effective professional learning opportunities;
- call on all Departments of Education to rationalise the work demands on Principals and Deputy/Assistant Principals in light of the '*Job Demand - Resources Model*' of organisational health.
- contribute to the strengthening of the overall mental health of communities by promoting mental health literacy and help seeking behaviours of Australians.

PRIMARY SCHOOL RESOURCING

AGPPA believes that the recommendations provided by the Gonski funding model provide a fair and visionary approach to overcoming economic disadvantage, providing additional support to students with special needs and improving student outcomes. The full Gonski funding model offers the opportunity for high quality education for all children regardless of their circumstances. Sector-blind, needs-based and equitable resourcing enables schools to provide the best possible learning opportunities. AGPPA strongly supports the original Gonski funding recommendations related to needs-based school funding. Resourcing of schools must include needs-based funding for students with disabilities, socio-economic disadvantage, indigenous, remote and isolated students and students for whom English is a second language. Funding must ensure that differences in educational outcomes are not the result of differences in socio-economic background.

AGPPA further believes that there needs to be an equal level of resourcing for every student P – 12 with additional funding according to need. We believe the current funding imbalance between schools primarily serving primary students and those primarily serving secondary students, raises several concerning issues.

- The current national disparity of funding between primary and secondary schools is based simply on historical practice, rather than rational and equitable factors. This includes a range of formulae that dictate specific funding allocations.
- Early intervention is vital to provide a successful learning pathway for children. This is strongly supported by current research.
- Primary school Principals have far less capacity to delegate administrative and management tasks, compared to secondary school leaders in schools of similar size and complexity. This inhibits primary leaders' capacity to effectively lead teaching and learning programs.
- There are unique characteristics of primary schools which completely justify the need for more funding parity. For example, many primary schools are key community hubs, many OSHC services are based at primary schools, and school leaders provide important counselling advice to families, often on a daily basis.

Sector-blind and equitable resourcing enables schools to provide the best possible learning

opportunities. However, the 27 separate agreements that were previously made with different States, Territories and jurisdictions were neither sector-blind nor consistent. The school funding proposal, approved in Federal Parliament in June 2017, eradicated the previous 27 agreements of school funding. AGPPA supported this action but is still concerned that Government schools will not reach the Student Resource Standard (SRS) of funding, due to the Federal Government funding just 20% of the SRS for government schools and the State/Territory Governments being responsible for making up most of the shortfall (75%).

All Australian schools are publicly funded, regardless of their sector. The inequity of school funding, when parent contributions are considered, is disadvantaging a large proportion of young children, the vast majority of whom attend public schools.

AGPPA will:

- Continue to strongly advocate for:
 - Funding being more readily and directly available to schools;
 - A focus not just on public education, but on student need;
 - Recurrent funding to ensure certainty for schools;
 - Building Our Nation through Public Education.
- Liaise and lobby with State & Territory Ministers, through AGPPA representatives, for sector-blind 'funding according to student need';
- Investigate the comparative allocative funding data for each State and Territory to raise awareness of disparity issues;
- Collate current research and use this quantitative data to lobby for increased parity of resourcing for primary schools;
- Advocate for transparency of Federal school funding;
- Advocate for transparency of State/Territory school funding;
- Lobby strongly for funding to be directed to schools, not bureaucracies;
- Liaise and lobby with State & Territory Ministers to attain 100% SRS target for all public primary schools.
- Release media statements as appropriate to support our positions.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING / CAPACITY BUILDING

AGPPA believes that with the move towards increased school autonomy across Australia, there is an increasing critical need to provide scaffolded induction, training and development for school leaders that meets the current and future needs of the profession.

The profession must strongly advocate for leadership and capability development.

AGPPA will:

- Monitor the current situation across Australia in training and development certification, credentialing, professional learning, coaching, mentoring, professional performance management and aspirant leaders programs and work with AITSL with the aim of achieving consistent approaches;
- Support and promote a national Principal Standard, developed from the current work of AITSL and encourage government primary school leaders to regularly attend professional learning on aspects of the Principal Standard;

- Collaborate with all jurisdictions to identify and implement plans for leadership capacity building at both school and system levels;
- Develop a position on Principal qualifications, induction and capability development.
- Strongly advocate to all State and Territory Departments of Education to adopt a Principal and school leader preparation program, for those aspiring to school leadership positions in collaboration with the appropriate leadership associations;
- Strongly advocate to all State and Territory Departments of Education to explore and implement support structures for newly-appointed school leaders;
- Strongly advocate to all State and Territory Departments of Education to provide professional learning for senior administrative (HR and Finance) support staff in schools;
- Strongly advocate to all State and Territory Departments of Education to allocate a minimum annual budget indicative of time and money for professional learning for their leadership teams and Principals.

WRAP-AROUND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

AGPPA believes Government schools in Australia cater for the overwhelming majority of children with disabilities and with significant learning needs. These include those whose family, social or economic circumstances hinder their ability to learn at school, their social development and their wellbeing. School funding indexation needs to ensure that schools can meet the needs of all students with disabilities in order for them to be able to meet their potential.

A comprehensive suite of wrap-around services must be available in primary schools to support students with intellectual, physical, emotional, social and mental health needs. A focus on the whole child – to support academic achievement, wellbeing and social development – requires significant increases in the human resourcing of primary schools. Primary schools require trained professionals, who are expertly qualified to best meet the needs of students, in order to establish early and sustained intervention and address issues in their infancy before it's too late.

Examples of wraparound services are broad and include:

- *Health, dental, and vision care*
- *Mental health services including trained psychologists and guidance officers*
- *Behavioral health, nutrition, and wellness*
- *Parent and family targeted services including:*
 - *Adult education, such as classes on child development, English as a second language, and basic vocational skills*
 - *Service referrals and assistance*
 - *Social work and family crisis response*

AGPPA will:

- Work with governments to identify best practices in Australia and from other schooling systems in the world that comprehensively support students with disabilities and/or additional needs in educational settings;
- Continue to monitor the current situation in all schooling jurisdictions and to gain a deeper understanding of the data of students with disabilities and/or additional needs;
- Ensure that the Federal and all State and Territory governments are regularly reminded of the level of need in government schools regarding the number and range of disabilities and the social and emotional needs of students in our schooling sector;
- Collaborate with all jurisdictions to develop future plans to best resource students with disabilities and/or other complex and challenging needs and provide a comprehensive suite of wrap-around services that can be available to best meet the need of every child in every school in Australia;
- Partner with disability groups to call on governments to address the range of resourcing needs of all students.

ADVOCATING FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Australian Public Education is a precious community resource, which is essential to the life and wellbeing of our democratic society, and to the individuals and communities that live here. It has never been as important for the Australian community to support, nurture and strengthen our public primary schools and to celebrate the contribution they make to the common good.

AGPPA believes there are three fundamental dimensions of public education:

- **Public Education as a public good: free, compulsory and secular;**
- **Public Education for the common good;**
- **Well-resourced public schools must be available in every community.**

To help to achieve these important goals,

AGPPA will:

- Strongly advocate for the inclusion of practising government primary school principals on any panels of review or reform;
- respond to the outcomes of the *Review to Achieve Education Excellence in Australian Schools*, emphasising the need to ensure that contextual solutions which address local challenges must be encouraged, rather than a one-size-fits-all mandated approach;
- engage with and contribute to the *National School Resourcing Board* which will be formed in the near future. This board was recommended by the original Review of Funding for Schooling (the Gonski Review);
- advocate for the full attainment (100%) of the Schooling Resource Standard, which will require a co-operative approach between jurisdictional and Federal governments into the future;
- continue to advocate for public education by raising awareness amongst the broader community at every opportunity.