

2020 Pre-Budget Submission
Australian Primary Principals Association

The Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) represents more than 7600 Government, Independent and Catholic Primary school principals. APPA warmly welcomes the opportunity to make the following submission.

The mission of teaching and school leadership in Australia is widely acknowledged as complex and challenging. This is a socially and geographically diverse nation, which faces significant challenges in equity of educational provision and outcomes for children.

APPA believes that there must be clarity about four purposes of school education: individual, democratic, socio-cultural and economic. We acknowledge the recent re-drafted declaration of goals for Australian schooling and continue to advocate for ongoing open collaborative dialogue on the purposes of education and a national statement to accompany the revised Declaration.

APPA believes that multi-partite agreement on purposes and goals would underpin long term educational planning, and strategies would ensure clarity of focus on core educational issues including: teaching and school leadership; curriculum; purposes of, and practices in assessment; and research and services in support of these core activities.

APPA seeks commitment via Education Council to sustained, multi-year approaches to school resourcing aimed at providing stability and continuity in Australian schools.

Consequently, APPA strongly supports further consultation with Australia's education professionals regarding the national education architecture – the purposes and activities of the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority; the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership; Education Services Australia; and the proposed Evidence Institute.

APPA respectfully submits the following to the government of Australia for consideration and inclusion in the 2021-22 Budget:

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The dominant feature of 2020 is the Covid-19 pandemic. Experience in schools has revealed the following for pre-budget consideration:

- 1. The pivot to 'learning at home'** has highlighted inequity in students' access to information communication technology (including availability of hardware and reliable broadband connectivity) suitable for fluent on-line communication between home and school.

Access to sufficient technical support personnel in schools for maintenance of home/school communication and programmes has been problematic.

There has been an overestimation of the effectiveness of 'learning at home', (and an underestimation of the consequential impact of trying to manage 'learning at home' and 'learning at school' simultaneously) even though there have been some success stories.

Budgetary implications include:

- ✓ commitment to ensure provision of appropriate one-to-one device access for all school aged children in Australia;
- ✓ commitment to universal access to fast, reliable broadband access for all school aged children in Australia
- ✓ funding made available to supplement school staffing cohorts with technical support personnel for hardware and software applications;
- ✓ funding made available to supplement school staffing cohorts during learning from home, to relieve administrative and pastoral burdens for school principals, other leaders and teachers.

2. The psychological effects of the pandemic are yet to be fully realised. However, research conducted by APPA and widely reported in the media prior to the pandemic, revealed serious concerns regarding anxiety in primary school aged children. The APPA report revealed schools and parents "at a loss" to manage this growing issue.

Budgetary implications include:

- ✓ funding for a major research project in practical, collaborative and simultaneous learning programmes for parents and teachers/school leaders.
This includes finance for management, design processes, platforms of delivery, delivery and evaluation.
The APPA roundtable on anxiety in primary school aged children has reached agreement on a parent/educator collaboration. It is envisaged that a report could be furnished within 15 months of commencement (allowing time for ethics approval for a university research partner) with a budget of not more than \$2 million.
- ✓ funding for support in schools, and access to non-school-based therapeutic supports.

3. Principal and deputy health and wellbeing remains a serious concern with impacts on recruiting, retention and the overall health profile of an ageing cohort of school leaders.

Budgetary considerations include:

- ✓ money specifically designated to relieve the resource deficiency in school leadership.
a major project to

APPA acknowledges the government's commitment to teacher and principal wellbeing through work being undertaken by AITSL which includes analysis and response to abuse, as well as reduction in red tape. APPA urges a continuation of the exploration of issues arising from the Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey conducted by Associate Professor Philip Riley. There is much to be done in regard to the causes and impact of issues in mental health amongst Australia's student population and education workforce.

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The status of the teaching profession and school leadership has been eroded and this is reflected in highly problematic behaviours amongst students and parents in Australian schools.

Budgetary implications include:

- ✓ APPA submits a request for funding to mount a sustained national multi-media campaign, to rebuild the esteem of the education profession within the broader community. This campaign should be planned to be multi-year.

APPA continues to acknowledge the work being done on the **national education workforce strategy**, and continues to advocate for resource allocation in the following areas:

Budgetary implications include:

- ✓ A national programme promoting careers in primary school education;
- ✓ A national programme of improvements in pay and conditions to bolster the attractiveness of the profession;
- ✓ A national programme aimed at illuminating the necessary, fundamental role of parents in the raising of children and the critical importance of community support for primary school education, teachers and school leaders;
- ✓ A national Primary Schools Staffing Standard, developed in consultation with the profession, which means that every primary school has the staffing (including administrative support) appropriate to its particular needs;
- ✓ A national Primary Schools Facility Standard, developed in consultation with the profession, which means that every primary school has the facilities appropriate to its particular needs;
- ✓ Commitment via Education Council to redress of disparity of substantive leadership roles between primary and secondary schools;
- ✓ Commitment via Education Council to separation of the principal role from staffing quotas in primary schools;

- ✓ Commitment to a national programme of leadership development and support based on Australia's social and geographic diversity and the findings of the Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey conducted by Professor Philip Riley.

Further to our 2020-2021 Submission, APPA continues to seek Budget consideration and allocation in these areas:

Budgetary implications include:

- ✓ Creation of, and funding for, an indigenous education reference group to provide advice on training, teaching and school resources.
- ✓ Allocation of funding for the training of indigenous teachers;
- ✓ Commitment to diversity of provision to match the diverse needs of students with disability in primary schools;
- ✓ Commitment from Education Council to transparency in funding allocation for students with disability and additional needs with a strong emphasis on equity;
- ✓ Commitment to additional staffing for primary schools to enable specialist literacy and numeracy teachers who can champion and build teacher capacity in each of these domains;
- ✓ Commitment to support for universal access for 3 and 4 year olds to early learning at 15 hours per week. Teachers in these settings must have an early learning qualification.



Malcolm Elliott
President