



Australian Secondary Principals Association

“Advocating for public secondary education”

MEDIA RELEASE

The Australian Secondary Principals’ Association (ASPA) welcomes The Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey 2017 and the associated recommendations.

The report highlights, among other data, that greater than 50% of Principals are working more than 56 hours per week, with 30% working up to 65 hours per week. 30% of Principals work 25 hours per week in the school holiday period.

ASPA supports the recommendations of the review and highlights the need to address the following systemic issues:

1. Since no single stakeholder group is responsible for the state of education in Australia, the power to effect change on the system must emerge from joined-up collaborative action from the various stakeholder groups.
2. Taking a long-term, rather than short-term focus is essential for significant improvement in the system.
3. Taking a holistic inquiry approach to both the successes and failures in the Australian education system is also essential. We can learn a great deal from both if we do not limit our gaze or look for quick fixes.
4. De-politicising education at the macro and micro-political levels will promote equity, continuity and transparency. For example, the politicisation of the Gonski report (2011), universally agreed by educators to provide a sensible and equitable way forward in education, should have set the conditions for a decade of educational development. Instead, it is suffering the fate of many educationally sensible reforms in Australia and its potential is being diminished. This becomes demotivating to educators. It is an example of the ‘moral harassment’ suffered by educators (Burens, 2015).
5. Australian education needs a change of mindset: moving beyond sectorised thinking. The problems and the solutions are very similar in all sectors so the differences between the sectors are more superficial than substantive. The variation in social capital inside schools demonstrates that simple resourcing, while important, is not going to fix intractable issues. A change of mindset is essential.

Andrew Pierpoint, President of the Australian Secondary Principals’ Association (ASPA), said: “We continue to be highly concerned at the results of this research. School leaders are central to school functioning and student learning. Anything adversely affecting this should be of concern to all of us”

“This report summarises data from a seven-year longitudinal study. The data over these seven years has shown little to no improvement”.

“This lack of improvement, coupled with the lack of interest by jurisdictions to improve it, is of significant concern to ASPA”, Mr Pierpoint said.

“There is a strong feeling among Principals in jurisdictions across Australia, that the issues impacting negatively on their own health and wellbeing is reflected in the declining number of people applying for school leader positions in our communities”

- Ends -

Media Contacts: Australian Secondary Principals’ Association President - Andrew Pierpoint +61 487 307 113