

Principals say primary schools are key to our nation's future

The Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) launched its *Charter for Primary Schooling* in Parliament House, Canberra last night in front of a large number of parliamentarians from both Houses and members of the APPA National Advisory Council.

APPA President, Dennis Yarrington, said that the Charter is about giving direction to education policymakers as to what's unique about primary education and what we need to focus upon each day in our schools.

Mr Yarrington said,

"APPA's initial Charter was released in 2007 at a time when primary principals were dealing with an increasingly crowded curriculum. More and more, schools were being asked to solve social problems. Technology in schools had taken off. It's difficult to say that much has changed. In fact, the pace of change has only accelerated.

"What's important though is that schools must stay tuned to the business of educating children. We must stick with our core principles – quality teaching in every classroom, highly competent principals and strong partnerships with families.

"We might also do well to emulate the example of those countries where communities respect and value education."

Mr Yarrington said primary principals recognised, too, that while literacy and numeracy remained the building blocks of a good education we must also invest in a rich and balanced school experience.

"Our Charter begins, 'primary schools teach our children and contribute to our nation's future'.

"If we invest in the young, there are known social, educational and economic benefits to be found in the secondary school years and far beyond. Now is the time to reinforce the fact that the best educational foundations are laid in the early years of a child's schooling.

"This is an opportunity we must not miss."

The APPA Charter on Primary Schooling has the support of every state and territory Government, Catholic and Independent principals' association and can be found at www.appa.asn.au.

APPA is the professional association representing over 7,000 school leaders across Australia.

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