

Principals welcome Coalition commitment to additional funding

The Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) welcomed the Coalition Government's 'real education cost' funding guarantee and its commitment to a high quality school education system but cautioned against stretching school education funds too thinly or adding to a primary school's administrative demands.

APPA President, Dennis Yarrington, said that the Coalition Government's funding commitment over 2018 – 2020 brings a level of certainty to school communities and goes some way to addressing what was becoming a growing concern for principals. He also commented that the Coalition announcement contained measures and conditions that would benefit from further clarification and discussion.

Mr Yarrington said,

"How and where money is allocated is obviously critical and APPA recognises that accountability is a necessary part of reform and change.

"Whilst tracking and reporting of student performance is fundamental to how good schools operate, any increase to the number of national assessments could further limit the scope and depth of what is taught in the classroom. This needs to be avoided.

"Good teachers, too, should be rewarded financially and, while APPA does not support linking performance rewards to student test scores, a mechanism linking pay progression to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers is worth consideration. Developing school leaders is also critical and, using the Australian Professional Standard for Principals, APPA is keen to continue working with government to see the best leadership in our schools."

Mr Yarrington made the point that Australians expect all children to receive a quality primary education, and primary school principals are determined to see each child, no matter school or circumstance, reach his or her potential.

"Funding certainty is crucial to achieving this and I commend all sides of politics for recognising that Australia has a high quality education system that should be valued and, indeed, strengthened.

"Of course, there will be differences in how we go about this task and what is emphasised; however, evidence-based practice, school leadership development and classrooms with great teachers should always be seen as an investment in the future."

APPA is the professional association representing over 7,200 Government, Catholic and Independent primary school principals across Australia.

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Media contact: Dennis Yarrington (APPA President): 0466 655 468
Phil Seymour (APPA Deputy President): 0412 673 378