

## Primary School Principals reinforce key messages for the next government

The Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) believes this Saturday's election marks the point at which primary school education policy has to take account of the many forces impacting on primary school principals, teachers, parents and students.

APPA President, Dennis Yarrington said that primary schools operate in an increasingly complex and interwoven world. Therefore, policies around school funding, school autonomy, teacher quality and curriculum should always be developed in consultation with principals. Principals are in the position to provide the reality check needed with policy and effective policy implementation.

"Maybe it's because of our federal structure but all governments have to join the dots across the transitioning from pre- to primary to high school; between teacher training and delivery in the classroom; from the foundations of literacy and numeracy to the creativity of the young mind. We cannot afford for our schools to be driven by short-term responses to PISA results and international comparisons. The very best systems aren't and nor should we. Our vast and diverse country should have its own system, not an imported one."

APPA has a set of key messages for those about to be elected:

- Our national political leaders must **prioritise investing in our primary schools with a long-term view**. A non-partisan, 20-year school education plan will see schools better positioned to focus upon the innovation and flexibility needed for tomorrow's world.
- APPA supports a national arrangement of **funding for schooling; one that is needs based and sector blind, values students equally, and is transparent and predictable**.
- The early and primary years are where the educational and social foundations of a child's future are established. **A primary base rate equivalent to the secondary rate is crucial to the future success of our school education system and our students**.
- **Developing quality school leadership requires strong and ongoing investment** through a national program for aspiring principals; building the professional capacity of current school leaders; and ensuring principals and teachers, with system and other support, look after their personal health and wellbeing.
- **Initial teacher education** must be driven by a rigorous course curriculum and high quality in-school experiences, so that **primary graduates are 'classroom ready'**.
- **My School has made no real difference to the learning achievement of our students** and stereotypes individual students, groups of students and school communities. Principals deplore the high stakes environment created by *My School* and the resulting implications for primary-aged students, their teachers and the curriculum.
- **Students who are disadvantaged** because of background, disability or learning difficulty **require targeted funding and long-term funding certainty** to help reach their potential.
- We know that **early and sustained intervention** in the primary years reaps the greatest reward.

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

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