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# APPA Media Release

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## Report highlights serious challenges facing principals

Today's release of the 2018 Report of the Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey, the eighth in the series, highlights the challenges faced each day by principals across the country.

Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) President, Malcolm Elliott, in commenting on the report, said,

“Principals are the key figures in our schools and have a profound influence on the educational outcomes for Australian children. They are working at a time when the challenges of social, economic and industrial change have never been greater.

“While welcome efforts have been made by systems and school communities to affect positively the circumstances of the principalship, the stressors for our school leaders have remained the same, and in many instances grown.”

The report shows that school principals continue to battle under the sheer volume of administrative work. Principals also report high levels of stress this workload brings and too often it prevents them from doing what they see as their most important role – leading the teaching and learning program in their schools. This is also in the context of the ongoing worry of staff shortages for many principals.

The survey also reveals high levels of concern regarding issues in mental health for students and staff. Mr Elliott highlighted that this is concerning on a number of levels; not least for the people affected.

While workload, work focus and the welfare of students and staff are serious issues to tackle, the report shows that this work is being undertaken in an atmosphere in which principals are subjected to abuse including threats of violence, actual violence and bullying behaviour.

“These behaviours must stop,” Mr Elliott said. “It is clear that Australia is facing serious social issues in the way some people feel they can treat those working so very hard in our schools and in other areas such as health.”

The Australian Primary Principals Association strongly supports the recommendations of the report including calls for an investment in genuinely collaborative approaches. The association also welcomes the opportunity to work with systems and school communities to find and implement solutions.

APPA is the professional association representing over 7,200 school leaders across Australia.

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