



2020 Annual General Meeting - Co-Presidents' Report

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands and waters where we live and learn, and pay our respects to elders past, present, and future.



The ACT Principals Association has the 'ACTPA Core Purpose' document to guide ACTPA activity. The following Strategic Intentions or *Pillars* represent the core of our work and for the structure of this annual report:

- **Advocacy**
- **Professional Learning**
- **Principal Wellbeing**
- **Research**

ADVOCACY

ACTPA welcomed our new Director General, Ms Katy Haire at the Yacht Club in February, setting the scene for a productive relationship. The extraordinary circumstances presented by bushfires, poor air quality and the COVID-19 pandemic required positive, proactive and frequent engagement between our association, the Directorate and the Catholic and Independent School sectors.

For some weeks, ACTPA's Co-Presidents and Vice Presidents were called on a daily and sometimes hourly basis to work directly with the senior executive of the Directorate to ensure strategies and plans put in place would work at the school and community level whilst supporting community

health and government responsibilities. We experienced the affordances of online forums for just-in-time communication and MS teams meetings have added another dimension to engaging our members with emerging priorities, strategy and bite-sized professional learning.

Our routine meetings with the Director General and the Minister have continued to be a place for open dialogue, informing strategic actions and communication with school leaders regarding issues that impact on their daily work. As the local election came into focus, we received messages of thanks from the Minister's office for our work and collaboration. We were delighted to welcome Minister Berry back to her important education portfolio this term.

As a system, we continued to progress the 2018-2021 Education Directorate Strategic Plan and we appreciated invitations to provide feedback on the ACTED Workforce Strategy and Safe and Supportive Schools procedures and guidelines. The period of remote learning deepened our engagement with the Future of Education Strategy's Foundations and Principles. Equity, student agency, access and inclusion took centre stage, and strong communities of learning were guided by empowered professionals who developed tools and skills to enable learning continuity in these peculiar times.

ACTPA recognises the significant responsibility school leaders have in strengthening cultural integrity and competence in our workforce and throughout our schools. This year we have taken action to ensure we have ATSI representation within our Executive, and we welcomed Vicki Lucas, as a co-opted member in August. Vicki's contributions within and beyond the ACTPA Executive are inspiring.

As each year passes, ACTPA continues to attract new members as we farewell colleagues. This has been sustained through the active engagement of ACTPA Executive with colleagues across the system, listening to what matters and bringing this back to inform our deliberations and advocacy. ACTPA offers school leaders a strong professional network for a very low subscription. The annual allocation of \$25,000 for professional learning by the Education Directorate fosters, "for the profession, by the profession", learning and development opportunities for members.

In a dynamic year for our association areas that received our consideration and input included:

1. COVID19 Response - Stakeholder Reference Groups (Minister, Director General, EGM School Improvement, School Sectors)
2. Principal Health and Wellbeing Strategy
3. Principal Capability Framework (supported by EA and Principal Coaching model)
4. Review of the Safe and Supportive School Policy and Guidelines
5. 2021-2023 Workforce Strategy (Stakeholder Review)
6. AITSL Stakeholder Roundtables (Cultural Competency in the Workforce, Occupational Violence and Wellbeing)

7. Teacher Scholarship program
8. Professional Recognition with membership of Public Education Awards Judging Panels
9. Teacher Transfer and Recruitment program
10. Teacher Efficacy Audit
11. Contributions to national submissions (National Education Architecture, Vocational Workforce, Occupational Safety, Disability Standards Review)
12. NAPLAN Review

2020 has seen our continuing engagement with the AEU. Our focus has been to ensure the Principals' voice and perspective is a feature of dialogue across the membership. Ensuring productive engagement around Enterprise Agreement Implementation Plans has been a focus and we have forged a routine of meeting the AEU Secretary, Glen Fowler each term. We were pleased to accept an invitation to the Special Council meeting for decision making about the safe return to school, as the remote learning period came to an end.

There is still work to be done to implement the Principal Capability Framework which will provide a complete approach for career management, leadership coaching and professional development. We were recently advised that the Coaching Panel would be established by the end of 2020.

ACTPA representatives have had the opportunity for input into a full range of advisory groups, committees, forums and inquiries, not limited to:

- The Principal Health and Wellbeing Governance group
- TQI sub-committees - Professional Learning and Development, Initial Teacher Education, Standards and Professional Practice
- ED's Consultative committee (EA Implementation)
- ED's Policy and Procedures Reference Group
- Professional Learning Planning for ED and ACTPA
- Business Managers' Advisory group
- BSSS Committees and Board
- Public Education Awards
- Teacher Scholarship panel
- Briefing forums for executive officers in the Directorate
- 2020 Transfer Round Reference Group

Advocacy in Action - 2020 Transfer Round Reference Group

Three ACTPA Executive members, Jessie Atkins, Annamaria Zuffo and Andy Mison were part of the Transfer Round Reference Group this year and participated in the placement panel itself at the end of term 3. Our team brought the feedback from the Term 2 ACTPA survey into the planning leading into the placement process and led the evaluation discussion once the process was complete. Several recommendations will inform the Transfer Round next year, and hopefully improve its efficacy. The team will share the findings of this report once finalised and will continue to advocate for improvements in policy and procedure that support principals to staff our schools appropriately.

National Matters

National Architecture for Schooling Consultation

ACTPA contributed to the AGPPA submission over the Autumn break. We recognised potential benefits in the preferred model which would see ACARA and AITSL merge, leaving ESA as a standalone company (as it currently is). There will be many bureaucratic issues that need to be resolved and we emphasised how a primary focus over the next few years will be on wellbeing and student achievement. Administration of national agendas shouldn't become a barrier.

COVID-19 Advocacy letter to state/territory and federal ministers of education

APPA, ASPA, CaSPA and AHISA wrote to all state, territory and the federal Ministers of Education on 23rd April. They urged unified advice be given for reducing the likelihood of Covid-19 transmission in schools and the formation of principal advisory groups to assist in planning for the successful transition back to face-to-face teaching. Locally ACTPA was included as a stakeholder and a recent letter from Minister Berry affirmed her commitment to our stakeholder relationship.

National Principal bodies

Throughout this year we have received many emails and public statements from the various state, territory and national Principal groups regarding Coronavirus, and this will continue as a matter of course. To summarise, these statements celebrated how well the principal class were managing the evolving nature of pupil-free learning, the concerns we had around the health and safety of our children and staff and working to protect our health and wellbeing. Well done ACT Principal class!

Australian Secondary Principals' Association (ASPA)

ACTPA has one representative on the Board of ASPA, Michael Battenally. ASPA has continued to lobby and advocate for public secondary schools. ASPA continues to play a strategic role supporting cross jurisdictional sharing of reforms through the affiliates influencing Commonwealth and State/Territory policy. It is doing this with a clear understanding of and respect for the ever-changing educational landscape.

The ASPA Newsletter provides a regular update on the national scene, including promoting our involvement with stakeholder forums convened by AITSL and ACARA through the year. Throughout 2020 ASPA affiliate jurisdictions continue to foster their work to support principal wellbeing. Our efforts in the ACT also provide a strong contribution to the national effort.

Australian Government Primary Principals' Association (AGPPA) and Australian Primary Principals' Association (APPA).

Primary principal members of ACTPA are represented in two national groups, the Australian Primary Principals' Association and the Australian Government Primary Principals' Association. Wendy and Liz Bobos are both members of AGPPA and Wendy also represents ACTPA on the National Advisory Council for APPA. We are privileged to represent and advocate for the ACT at these national bodies which continue to have a strong influential voice at the national level on primary education and school leadership.

Some of the major strategic work undertaken in the primary sector on the national scene this year involves principal health and wellbeing, school leadership, valuing primary education, learning progressions and online formative assessment, cultural competency, addressing school staff abuse, considerations of the Disability Royal Commission, school staffing and facilities standards, and social infrastructure.

Both groups have provided submissions to the Disabilities Standards Review and have been consulted on the National Teacher Workforce Strategy, Teaching in rural and remote Australia, and Reducing Red Tape initiatives from the Federal Government. Our perspectives have been sought around the NAPLAN, Myschool and Australian Curriculum reviews.

We have had meetings with the Minister for Education Dan Tehan and his advisors, and Federal Education's Deputy Secretary Alex Gordon. We have ongoing relationships with ACARA, AITSL and ESA. We have enjoyed conversations with Jenny Donovan, Director of the Australian Education Research Organisation (formally the National Evidence Institute) as this entity takes shape. Phil Riley, continues to contribute insights and perspectives to these forums, sharing his reflections on the longitudinal data on Principal Wellbeing.

This year's national APPA Conference was postponed and we hope to meet for the TransTasman Conference in Melbourne next year. This scheduling adjustment put a hold on planning meetings for iNterACT, a conference we intend to host with the Northern Territory principals. Meanwhile, preliminary planning is underway for an event in Canberra in 2021 that will engage the APPA board in an exploration of the enactment of the Future of Education Strategy.

National and International Association Websites

Australian Secondary Principals Association (ASPA) Newsletter <https://www.aspa.asn.au/>

Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) News <https://appa.asn.au/>

Australian Government Primary Principals Association www.agppa.asn.au

International Confederation of Principals (ICP) <https://icponline.org/>

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

ACTPA continued to provide a variety of professional development options this year for school leaders including the continuation of the '**What can leaders learn about**' series. This included two major sessions:

- ***What Leaders Can Learn from Sport*** – exploring the development of culture with the Canberra Raiders, Matt Ford.
- ***What Leaders Can Learn from the Medical Industry*** – discussing the importance of process in high pressure situations with Dr Dave Lamond, Senior Emergency Specialist and Trauma Consultant at Canberra Hospital and SouthCare Rescue Helicopter Team. Dave's presentation focused on staying calm in times of excess stress. Key points were:
 - Hot Debriefing after a crisis event which is quick and immediate
 - Substantial Quality Assurance Debriefing which comes at a later time and more detailed
 - Barriers to communication within a hierarchy with officers asking senior officers 'are you sure that's right?'

The Professional Learning Team also embraced the remote learning model through the professional provocations and excellent presentations from Peter Kent, Sophie Bissell and Marc Warwick held over three sessions. The conversation series fostered some deep insight into ***Leading and Teaching in the New Normal***

Informal learning was also valued through the **ACTPA Event held at the Canberra Yacht Club in Term 3**. This provided a welcome return to face to face engagement, and fostered some much-needed opportunities to reconnect, recharge and participate in a professional debrief on a busy period.

Wellbeing remained a focus, as members also enjoyed **Wellbeing Coach Webinar** with Russell Scott, from Coach Communication where Russell explored the following:

- Why self-care is something we can't afford not to do
- A new pandemic – lack of sleep
- Our three brains
- How to achieve calm
- What we need to know about the neurotransmitters flowing through our bodies
- What resilience really means

Business of Schools Series

The Business of Schools banner continues to bring ACTPA's voice and support to the Business Managers' Development Project, and its associated system networks - Business Managers' Advisory Group and Business Managers Association. This has involved planning and discussion around role clarification, classification, responsibilities and professional learning. ACTPA was invited to contribute input and encourage principal participation in the ACT Schools Business Managers Leadership Summit in November.

We are looking forward to further collaboration between ACTPA and BMAG/ BMA in 2021.

PRINCIPAL WELLBEING

Our Director General, Katy Haire, has committed to sustain the Principal Health and Wellbeing Governance Group with ACTPA to ensure support for Principals is sustained. 2020 has put the spotlight on the wellbeing of leaders in many professions, and the great efforts of collaboration and professional support have been acknowledged for ACT school leaders.

Katy has made it clear in her communications this year that leader wellbeing is critical to sustained success for every school, so we look forward to hearing from her experience in developing next stage plans.

Remember that every time you reach out to a colleague to 'check-in' or seek some advice, this is an important contribution to the professional and personal wellbeing of Principals. Thank you.

The national Principal Health and Wellbeing survey was conducted again this year and we anticipate results for the ACT will be available early in 2021. This will be the eleventh year of the longitudinal survey.

Your Wellbeing Matters

Through the Winter months 35 members joined the international Virgin Pulse 100-day step challenge. Five teams of seven and the challenge to sustain physical activity and a healthy lifestyle for 100 days. We did it and the results are in!



Congratulations to all participants, but the effort of the Cockatoos led by Captain Steve Collins deserve a special mention. There is a rumour about that one Cockatoo member has a treadmill in their office!

Beyond overall activity gains, individual responses indicated decreases in stress, improved sleep and diet, plus significant gains in productivity and concentration. Congratulations to all involved and keep up the commitment to your wellbeing. We also thank our sponsors for their valuable support of Principal wellbeing.

Spring Principal Wellbeing Event at the Yacht Club

ACTPA convened a wellbeing afternoon networking event with COVID-safe distancing measures in place. The food was delicious, the company of colleagues wonderful as we connected in-person with colleagues.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

ACTPA Surveys

Enterprise Agreement Implementation - Thank you all for completing the survey on the EA implementation earlier this year. It was very clear there were a number of matters that were having a negative impact on Principal wellbeing and ability to manage your schools. The feedback directly from Principals informed meetings with the AEU and ESO to progress working with the EA in schools.

COVID-19 Response Survey - Thank you to all who contributed to this survey very early in the year as the disruption arising from COVID-19 initially hit. Having a collaborated and informed message directly from Principals informed the big decisions we all became part of in schools and the broader community.

Research with Steve Shann

ACTPA Executive recently approved a research proposal that will see Steve Shann conducting research to compliment our exploration of the Experience of Women in Principalship. This study will once again involve mythopoetic methodology and will enable us to explore the impact of gender on leadership in the ACT system of Public Schools. We will engage with Steve soon and consider selection of participants from whom leadership reflections and insights will be gleaned. Aspects in support of this research project include:

- Endorsement of positive benefit from the prior focus group, and expectation that the male study should be of similar value.
- the opportunity to connect principals who bring a range of career experiences
- the Womens' Principal case study has resulted in an artifact that continues to make a contribution to school leadership teams in which it has been shared
- The benefits of the study include: academic credibility through Steve Shann and enhancing personal wellbeing

The Principals Australia Research Foundation (PARF)

PARF was established in 2019. Funded by the legacy of the retired Principals Australia Institute, this entity is a body that will fund research grants for projects that will have an impact with long-term beneficial outcomes for education.

This funding will be made to Principal Associations (ACTPA) to undertake research and development in school leadership and effective leadership practice. Executive will continue to consider the opportunity to establish a PARF research proposal.

SPONSORS

Our Sponsor Partners are long-standing supporters Teachers Mutual Bank, Footsteps Dance who specialise in movement programs from Preschool to Year 12, The School Photographer who are well-known for the school photographs and our newest partners, OSHClub who provide outside school hours care. Please acknowledge the support our partners give the Principal class. See our website www.actpa.com.au and download the free ACTPA App for details.

We also acknowledge the leadership of Executive Members, Chris Jones and Kim McCormack for their stewardship of this responsibility to bring additional resources and goodwill to ACTPA as a professional education body.

THANK YOU

As school leaders you have done an outstanding job in leading your communities through some worrying times. You have remained calm, found solutions and been there to support others. Your sustained efforts in support of policy changes and contributing to their speedy design in some cases, even if you were sometimes frustrated by some of them, have helped keep the ACT safe and on track. Thank you!

Thank you to all members who attended or connected online with the professional learning activities during the year. Your collegiality and capacity as professional educators provide the motivation and purpose for the work of our association.

We acknowledge our Director General, Katy Hair, and the key senior executive for the open door they provide for listening to ACTPA and more importantly the leaders in all schools. In 2020 the active partnership with the Education Directorate executive team has enabled members to co-design contributions to professional learning, strategic planning and a host of critical COVID-19 operational matters.

Our Vice Presidents Liz Bobos and Andy Mison, and the Executive team members have worked tirelessly in 2020 and we thank them for their ongoing commitment and the good cheer they bring to ACTPA. A special mention must also go to Paula Kinsman, as our Treasurer who maintains the financial records and payments for reporting to our meetings and the audited financial report.

ACTPA principals have represented our colleagues in many forums; on committees, advisory bodies, and on working groups. Your contributions individually and collectively have kept us wise and well. Thanks to Mark Eyles for ensuring we had the right papers, minutes and regular information sharing. Mark has been supporting ACTPA in this role for 14 years!

The final word.....

We are so proud to be a part of this association but ACTPA isn't about us, it isn't about our wonderful executive team. It's about every principal and every deputy in our system. Those of us who sit on the executive group are passionate about what ACTPA stands for, the principal class it represents and whose interests we lobby for. Tonight at the AGM Dinner we will pay tribute to some of our finest who have made the decision to move to the next chapter of their lives.

We know we are going to hear from them during our dinner but we wanted to pay particular tribute to the enormous contribution that these Principals, Anne Simpson, Kerrie Blain and Jennifer Hall, and Deputy Principal, Carolie Wilson, have made to public education both in the ACT, nationally and internationally. The students, families and teachers whose lives you've touched are better because of you, so thank you.

And thank you to everyone for another year of support and professional involvement.

Wendy Cave
ACTPA Co-President (Primary)

Michael Battenally
ACTPA Co-President (Secondary)

