

# Australian Principals Federation

## President's Message—Julie Podbury



The **2013 Victorian Government Schools Agreement** expired at the end of October 2016. The APF hoped that a new agreement, at least for the Principal Class Employees, could have been sorted and ready to implement at the expiry of the old one. This has not proven to be the case. This is extremely disappointing and demonstrates, we believe, that the Government has no concept that the **workload, responsibilities and accountabilities set the Principal Class Employees well apart** from the Teacher Class Employees and deserves to be recognised in a **separate industrial agreement**.

While I am a member of the EBA negotiating team for 2016, as I was for 2013, I asked David Finnerty, currently Victorian Branch Treasurer, to lead this team as he has the experience of being a member of the past four EBA negotiating teams. We return to the negotiating table next week on 21st February and David will report to members as soon as the team has something that merits your attention.

*This newsletter* is packed full of information and the links will take you to the relevant page. We remind you that the KAYA Consulting PD, on **School Leader Wellbeing** begins next month, **on 8th March at Coatesville PS, OR 22nd March at McKinnon SC**. Details can be found in this [newsletter](#) with a link to the flyer on Page 6. It is important to register ASAP to secure a place in either program.

The article on **Coding** by Dr Ian Sloane, generated considerable feedback and requests for [further information](#), which Ian has generously provided on Page 2.

[Member Feedback section on P3](#) and 4. Following on from the last newsletter, we are advised that of the 180 schools that suffered considerable damage on the 29th December weather event, every one of those schools was able to open on the first day of the school year. Efforts continues to finalise this work over term one, with over half of these schools being completely repaired for day one, term 1, 2017.

**Financial Advice and Superannuation** [See Page 4 for information](#).

The **DET Legal Services Unit, continuing PD**. These programs are very well regarded by our members. The first one commences on 22nd Feb. [Details are on P4](#).

**Cyberhound's new Victorian Manager**, [Ian Anderson introduces himself to APF members](#).

Stephen Macdonald, from Kaya Consulting, describes **Another Approach to Wellbeing**. [This is on Page 5](#) and is followed on P6, with the information about our 2017 PD program run by Stephen.

**Mark Arkinstall, APF Industrial Officer** has an excellent article on Pages 6&7 about the [Merit Protection Board](#). The APF supports a significant number of members at the MPB and the lessons learned along the way, when followed, stand us all in good stead for a successful appearance at the Board. Mark has provided a very good check list on [How to Avoid the MPB](#) on Page 7.

*The next newsletter* will feature John Handley's third article, **Building Capacity in Leaders and Teachers**

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### Information from the AEC—APF Board Vacancies

You will receive the Election Notice from the AEC at your workplace address.

Close of Roll: Tuesday 21 February 2017

Roll to Returning Officer: Wednesday 22 February 2017 by 12 noon AEDT

**Nominations Open: Tuesday 28 February 2017**

On Tuesday 28 February 2017 the APF publishes Election Notice and nomination form on the Federation Website.

**Nominations Close at 5pm AEDT on Tuesday 21 March 2017**

Postal Ballot Opens: Tuesday, 18 April 2017

Postal Ballot Closes at 10am AEST on Tuesday, 9 May 2017

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APF President  
Vic Branch



Steve Durkin  
Vice President  
Vic Branch



David Finnerty  
Treasurer  
Vic Branch

## The industrial organisation for the Principal Class

## Coding: How can you make it work and fund what you are doing? Dr Ian Sloane

In the last APF newsletter, I provided an explanation of what coding was and what it is useful for in a primary school setting. Some of this will be applicable to secondary school settings. There has been a lot of feedback to the APF and me from colleagues after that article was published and a number of Principals were wondering how they could make a start, particularly with funding and the role that the school's TSSP or locally employed Technician might play.

In this piece, I will give some more detail around these issues and make some additional suggestions as to how you might get things moving.



You will need a staff member (most likely a teacher) to co-ordinate this area. It fits in the Technology and Design curriculum area, so the co-ordinator of this areas in my school takes responsibility for overseeing the program co-ordination and the purchase of re-sources. It's better to start off small than large. I would focus on a small discrete piece of equipment, like a robotic arm or BeeBots, within a limited budget. Once the students are familiar with how to operate the equipment, and there is a more widespread understanding across classes, then additional equipment can be considered for purchase and use.

It is important to keep your TSSP and locally employed technicians in the information loop, because they may be called on to deal with any technical difficulties when something doesn't work as expected. Fortunately, this has not been a common issue in my school. Their advice about materials available or what equipment might suit the planned purpose can also be invaluable. It has been less important at Mitcham Primary School because we have had a long-term relationship with a knowledgeable supplier (see below).

We set aside a sum of money, normally about \$6,000 dollars per annum, for the purchase of new or replacement equipment. Over a period of time, the collection of various Robotics equipment will grow to be significant. The key to the success of a Robotics program is to preserve the integrity of the equipment, that is, ensuring there is no loss of components and that a careful sweep is made of carpets, desks, pockets and any other area where pieces could be deposited during a lesson. This is quite important, because if key components are lost, then items that are to be constructed cannot be assembled properly. We have been spending between \$5,000 and \$6,000 on Robotics equipment annually for a long time. In some years, however, like last year, we have spent double that to achieve special project outcomes. Last year, an article was published in The Age which touched on some of the things we have been doing, but did not draw the link between our coding and Robotics program and Mitcham Primary School's superior performance in Mathematics (<http://www.theage.com.au/national/eight-students-in-every-class-have-no-idea-what-is-going-on-why-we-cant-solve-our-maths-problem-20161129-gt04fv.html>).

What about the scope of programs in their infancy? As noted above, I suggest that you start small. It's important to have enough equipment to engage a whole class, and it doesn't have to all be the same item. The students should learn from making mistakes and trial and error is a good tutor. Students will learn on the way. Multiple classes should get access to the resources or there will be complaints that one class is benefiting and others are missing out. It is critical to have a co-ordinator who is prepared to learn with the children or read about the equipment's capability before unpacking it for use.

A secure storage area is required with sealable storage containers to protect against loss being deployed. Labelling the containers with a Dymo labeller is useful, so teachers collecting the containers housing the containers know what contents should be there at the start and the finish of their lessons.

We have worked with Kevin and Pauline Taylor of "World of Robotics" for over 15 years. They can be contacted through their web site, [www.robotics.com.au](http://www.robotics.com.au) if you are looking for advice. Kevin's e-mail address is [ktaylor@robotics.com.au](mailto:ktaylor@robotics.com.au). I can provide anyone interested with his mobile number. He has an excellent range of equipment available. Kevin and Pauline will visit schools. We have had them working with our whole school every year in Education Week for about 14 years, with special classes for nearly all the children (it's never been mandatory to participate, but most of the children manipulate their parents into allowing them to go because it is such great fun). Kevin can provide you with valuable advice on what equipment represents good value for money, if resources are an issue, as well as supplying invaluable advice about what equipment suits which purpose.

There are many other providers and you might find someone else who meets your school's needs perfectly. One way or another, we now have to find a way to get coding into our schools' curriculum and I hope that these few suggestions will assist those of you who are unfamiliar with the area to get started.

The next part of the equation is to ensure that the resources are available to pay for the cost of the personnel who



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Dr Ian Sloane  
Mitcham PS &  
APF Board  
member



Chris Eeles  
Secondary Sector  
Vic Branch Exec



Andrew Dalglish  
Primary Sector  
Vic Branch Exec

## The industrial organisation for the Principal Class

are going to deliver the program. In our case we employ someone, VIT registered, who works in four different government schools during the week. The cost of doing so is approximately 30% of a teacher's salary. When I use the SRP planner tool on the SRP web site after it is mounted in mid-September, I ensure that when I add the costs of everyone's salary, I can meet these costs without going into deficit, which is achievable if care is taken. This course of action has been noticeably more difficult since the advent of the 2013 Victorian Government Schools Agreement, when schools were made responsible for cost increases which the Department of Education and Training had previously picked up and then were passed on to schools. We have been working with our consultant for 18 years, and a strong relationship of trust has ensued. The ICT co-ordinator, Technology and Design co-ordinator and I are involved in discussions with the consultant about what we can see coming up on the horizon, which we then translate into a plan of attack, supported by resource allocation to buy the equipment that we see as necessary to deliver the outcomes that we have planned.



## BUDGET

Once these program delivery costs are notionally covered, the Finance sub-committee of School Council considers all requests from program leaders, when formulating the approved Program Budgets. The responsibility of this School Council sub-committee is to look at all available resources, including the SRP quarterly cash grant, locally raised funds and any other sources of revenue and to make a balanced judgement on the allocation of resources, taking into account the School Strategic Plan priorities, Annual Implementation Plan priorities, as well as long term priorities that school, its staff and School Council have set as priorities.

As a result of these deliberations an amount of money is set aside to purchase the resources requested by the Technology and Design group. Because Robotics and coding has been seen as very important to my school community, because of the opportunities it has offered all our students, this has been an area where the Finance Committee has placed a high priority on funding every year.

Now that the Minister's announcement about coding being mandatory for every student in Victoria, our determination to develop this program has made it very easy for Mitcham PS to comply with only minor modifications being required.

## Member feedback—The culture and the workload.

Hi Julie,

In News.com this morning there is an interesting article about a culture of fear in the police department that was written in relation to the horrible tragedy in Bourke Street last week. The article talked about fear of negative consequences when things went wrong and how it is paralysing the police to make decisions and take action – I believe the same can be said for principals.

In an environment of litigation, social media where you can be publicly criticised and a lack of real support by the department, the job just becomes emotionally exhausting and yes, at times paralysing. Decisions often require multiple phone calls to the legal branch, consultation with other departmental personnel and a number of other steps before anything can happen. When you add this to an already long list of jobs to do – it's exhausting.

I can tell you that I'm seeing my AP's and LT's increasingly under the pump – documenting every conversation, drowning in data, accountability overload – the list goes on. There are some wonderful future principals amongst this group of AP's and LT's but I know that some will never take the next step – it's all too hard, too exhausting and not worth the angst (and certainly not the remuneration)

I know this is a cultural issue that folks way smarter than me are aware of, but the parallels with the police really struck a chord.

**Julie's response:** *I have had a number of emails along this line, but this one stood out as it clearly and eloquently highlights what is a growing concern. Central, regional and school based staff must all work together to overcome both the culture, the us and them mentality and the workload.*

*I once proposed the idea that SEIL's should have only a three year appointment and then should go back to schools and carry with them the knowledge and skills that they developed in what was sensational PD. However, having left a principal's role myself, I could not now propose that. The stress I was under lifted dramatically, my health improved so much as did my sleep patterns; I could not go back ever and I loved that job. Many Regional staff cite similar stories. This therefore reinforces the issue of the unreasonable workload and demands of the role. We can control part of this by the way we work, how we manage our mental and physical health and our response to the demands. DET must also look at this and work out how to do things differently, and how to develop a supportive culture that responds effectively to critical incidents and the operational requirements of the system.*

*We all want the same outcome and it is only by working together that we will find the solution.*



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**Membership is growing...**

because you have been encouraging your colleagues to join you as part of the APF.



Angela Stefani  
APF Executive  
Officer

[astefani@apf.net.au](mailto:astefani@apf.net.au)

Join the APF

[www.apf.net.au](http://www.apf.net.au)

Forms can be completed on line.



join

# The industrial organisation for the Principal Class



## Member feedback continued.....

## We're a shoe shop as well now



Hello Julie, you'll be pleased to know that this week we have also become a shoe shop – instead of giving vouchers to parents to go and purchase shoes from nominated shops, some bright spark has decided that parents come into the school. My office staff, in between everything else they have to do, have been measuring sometimes smelly feet for a free pair of shoes. I have no problem with the generosity to provide shoes but when schools have to take the orders, place the orders and then return the shoes when they are the wrong size it is an utterly ridiculous situation.

**Julie's response:** *I am almost bereft of words for this one! I would have suggested that the Parents and Friends group could deal with this...however, protecting the privacy of the students circumstances would preclude this. Perhaps I should thank the "bright spark", for dumping yet another task on schools for them to manage!*

## Superannuation &amp; Financial Advice

As the APF speaks to a significant number of our members as they approach retirement, we are constantly amazed at the number who seek financial advice for the first time as they approach retirement. In contrast, some of our members are very proficient in this area, so much so that they have Self Managed Retirement Funds. **Given that so many younger members have recently joined the principal class, we strongly urge those individuals, and others who have not done so, to seek appropriate advice for the sake of themselves and their family, for the future.** Principal Class members of the APF are welcomed at **Semaphore Consulting**, owned and operated by **Andrew Peters**, a former member of our esteemed profession. He is highly recommended by the APF particularly for the ethical manner in which he operates. Members who have spoken to Andrew have given us good feedback. If you make an appointment to see him please mention the APF when you make a booking.



In searching for a good Financial Adviser, word of mouth is a good guide. You can check the credentials of an adviser on the ASIC website. <http://www.asic.gov.au/for-finance-professionals/afs-licensees/financial-advisers-register/> Also, ask how many clients they have; if they have too many then they can't look after your needs adequately.

## Law and Order Workshops

The DET Legal Division receives a great deal of positive feedback from our members when it comes to the support they receive from the more challenging matters that they handle in their schools. So when the DET offer Information session or professional learning, we highly recommend them. Elly Gay, Director, Workplace and Education law Branch, Legal Division tells the APF that "Principals have consistently provided us with feedback that Law and Order is one of the most useful PDs that they have ever done and we continue to receive very positive feedback about these courses"

A number of workshops are planned for the Bastow Institute for 2017, one per term. They are currently finalising some dates for regional Law and Order sessions as well (a date in Benalla for later this term has been confirmed online bookings should be available by the time you get this newsletter.

Further information is available here:

<http://www.bastow.vic.edu.au/courses/strategic-management-for-school-leaders-law-and-order>

Bookings for the Term 1 session, on Wed 22 Feb, can be made via this link. We still have plenty of tickets left and it's only a few weeks away:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/law-and-order-term-1-wed-22-february-2017-tickets-29564413958>



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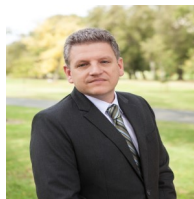
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## The industrial organisation for the Principal Class

## The Evolving Role of Principals

**Ian Anderson, Victorian and Tasmanian Regional Manager, CyberHound, 0403 888 395**



As you are no doubt aware, principals are expected to be across everything going on in their school. Over the last few decades the demands of their roles have substantially increased, as has the complexity of the environments they manage.

This steady transition has meant Principals have had to effectively become 'CEOs' and run their schools as a profitable, sustainable business, while also managing day-to-day operations. It's no wonder the stress levels of Principals have increased and important organisations like the APF support them across Australia.

When most people hear the words '**online threats**', they think of protecting computers and network from harmful viruses and malicious hacker attacks. In part, this is correct. However, **when School Principals think about 'online threats'**, they consider the harmful ways the Internet can impact the wellbeing of their students as well as the reputation of their school – and rightly so.

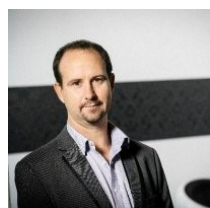
This is why CyberHound stands firmly behind the APF and provides support to its members wherever possible. We understand there is a big difference between a 'CEO' and a 'Principal', and this is what separates CyberHound from the rest. CyberHound's technology goes way beyond standard cyber security - it is developed to empower schools, not just protect them.

CyberHound has developed an end-to-end solution for schools that not only protects their network, but also provides significant benefits all the way through to the classroom. CyberHound's ClearView technology alerts school leaders to online red flags like cyberbullying, self-harm and radicalisation, and empowers teachers to control Internet and website access in their class – all without having to contact IT.

If you're looking for a single solution to manage all of your online risks, contact me for a complimentary 'Digital Risk Assessment' for your school.

I look forward to assisting you and your teachers to work smarter in regards to cyber security.

## The One Approach to Wellbeing, Stephen Macdonald, Kaya consulting



So, the year has just started, you had a reasonable break, thought about getting healthy, enjoyed some time with loved ones (and endured some of those others) and now you are back to work. Has the holiday glow left, does your tan remind you of more relaxed days or have you maintained some of those health habits...at least for now.

Over the last year as I have spoken to School Leaders across Australia many question whether it is possible to maintain a healthy sense of wellbeing with the demands of the role. The reality of any leadership role is that maintaining wellbeing may be the first item to drop off a crowded schedule...and Principals are no different. The good news is that it is possible. Testimonials from Principals who have been through our programs and who we have spoken to 6 months later demonstrate that a small shift in approach can lead to a significant change. Yes, the stress remains. Yes, the demands stay relatively unchanged. However, Principals are reporting that their wellbeing is shifting in a positive direction.

If there is one tip I could share from these follow-up conversations and evaluations, it is this. **Focus on one thing only!!** Yes, not very dramatic I understand but achievable and therefore workable. Most of us could identify a few areas we would like to change; get more sleep, eat lunch, exercise, spend more time with family, meditate and the list goes on. The problem is that by focussing on too many changes we set ourselves up to fail and therefore maintain our unhealthy wellbeing. One Principal I spoke with who had lost significant weight told me it was easy. He just focused on walking a certain distance every day. He didn't focus on his diet; some days were better than others but by focusing on the walking only the change was noticeable.

So, as the year kicks off think of one area of your wellbeing you would like to attend to and then pick a habit that you can achieve. Focus on doing that only...the other stuff can generally wait (unless the GP says otherwise).

On the **next page** is the information about the program we have developed for the APF. This is an important focus for the APF; to provide you with the tools you need in respect to the physical and mental health for yourself and your staff. I look forward to working with you to develop the vital knowledge and skills in this important area.



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## Retiring from DET? Please talk to the APF first.

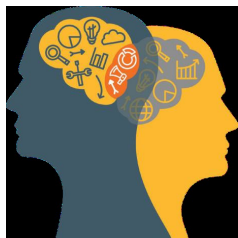
It is imperative to discuss this with the APF so we advise you and where appropriate can negotiate the best deal on your behalf. Members have told us that the APF provided options and information that they had not even considered.



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## School Leader Wellbeing— Kaya Consulting

This program starts 8th March at Coatesville PS, or 22nd March at McKinnon SC

[School Leader Wellbeing flyer apf 2017.pdf](#) All details in the flyer.

### Program Description

Building on our understanding that wellbeing is an interplay between individual, relational and organisational influences, this program provides a comprehensive process for School Leader wellbeing. Rather than providing a simplistic workshop with a few strategies this Wellbeing series provides school leaders with a tool to investigate their own wellbeing, examine the impact of leadership on wellbeing and a framework for improving staff wellbeing.

The base package includes four day long workshops, spread out over 6 months, with an optional facilitated peer online and face to face conversations to embed behaviours. The workshops provide a specific wellbeing lens for AITSL's Australian Professional Standard for Principals professional practice of Developing Self and Others. Attendees will also engage in a pre and post diagnostics that measure improved practice and thinking about wellbeing as a leader.

Contact Angela on [astefani@apf.net.au](mailto:astefani@apf.net.au) to register. Don't miss out on this important opportunity.



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Mark Arkinstall  
APF Industrial Officer  
0418 551 375

If you become aware of a colleague who is not coping or who needs help, please contact the APF without delay.

We are here to support and offer advice to all members at any time.

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**Mark - 0418 551 375**

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John Handley  
APF Adviser  
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## Merit Protection Boards, Mark Arkinstall, APF Industrial Support Officer



The Merit Protection Boards exist as an independent statutory body established to hear grievances; appeals and reviews from employees of the Department of Education and Training (Victoria).

Each board consists of 3 members selected by the Senior Chairperson from the following 3 pools of people. Persons who have been nominated by the Minister to be chairpersons; persons who have been nominated by the Secretary; and employees in the teaching service who have been nominated by the Minister. All Board members other than the Senior

Chairperson are part-time members. The Senior Chairperson, Mr Peter Hibbins, is a full-time member of the Board.

Appeals and grievances may be regarding transfer and promotion, leave, change of time fraction of working hours, outcomes of performance reviews, outcomes of local complaints and other personal management decisions.

In addition to hearing appeals and grievances, the MPB provide advice to the Department and the Minister on merit and equity issues and deliver state-wide training programs on the legislative and policy requirements for human resource management within the Department. The Senior Chairperson, Mr Peter Hibbins, also accepts invitations to address groups of principals and professional and industrial organisations about the workings of the MPB.

Importantly, through the hearing process, all applicants are guaranteed fair and equitable treatment with the principles of natural justice applying.

### Some Specifics

- Teachers, principals, assistant principals, casual relief teachers, education support staff and school council employees may be eligible to lodge a SELECTION or PERSONAL grievance in accordance with the provisions of the current applicable Act or Order:  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/employcond/Pages/tso.aspx>.
- Principal, teacher and education support class employees grievance applications must be lodged within **14 days** of notification of the decision. Applications lodged outside of the 14 day period are considered to be out of time and may not proceed. If a PERSONAL grievance is lodged outside of the 14 day period, the applicant may request the Senior Chairperson consider the "special circumstances" which have led to the late application.
- To be eligible to lodge a SELECTION grievance, a member of the teaching service must:
  - Have been an applicant for the position,
  - Be eligible and qualified to apply for the position, and
  - Have grounds for seeking a review of the selection decision. (Being disappointed with the outcome or disagreeing with the decision is not enough to justify a grievance being heard. Contact us for further information.)

# The industrial organisation for the Principal Class



4. Grievances must be lodged on the appropriate form and can be lodged in person, by fax, email or mail or be completed online.

### The Hearing

Hearings are generally held in the MPB Offices located in the Melbourne CBD.

Importantly, both the decision-maker and the applicant can and should have industrial representation to support them.

The hearing process:

- The decision maker explains the basis for the decision\*
- The Applicant presents their case\* – (30 minutes allowed)
- Right of reply from decision maker
- Questions from the Board
- Summing up by applicant
- Parties leave
- Consideration by Board
- Decision and Recommendation (Often a day or two later.)

### APF Advice

1. Attendance at the MPB can be quite challenging and we strongly recommend you do not attend alone or without representation. We understand the MPB and its workings and have significant experience there. We are here to support you as required. Please do contact us as soon as possible if you require support.
2. Put simply, the role of the principal class in the decision-making process is to implement Department policy and do so in a fair and reasonable way, free of bias, transparently and consistently. If your decisions are challenged at the MPB, we will defend this by referring to Department policy and procedures as well as focussing on the fair and reasonable nature of your actions.
3. The best course of action is to manage your staff in such a way that reduces the likelihood of grievances in the first place. (see side column)
4. Do everything possible to resolve issues at the school level. If you've made a decision a staff member doesn't like, talk to them and explain the reasons for the decision, refer them to Department and school policy, etc.
5. Ensure your treatment of staff is both fair and reasonable and avoid being "heavy-handed".
6. Further information about the MPB can be found at <http://www.mpb.vic.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>.
7. The MPB has a number of quality resources to support you, particularly with regard to selection processes. We highly recommend both the "Good Practice Checklist" and the "Interviewing – common decision-making faults" documents. Both are available at the MPB website or you could also contact me at [industrialofficer@apf.net.au](mailto:industrialofficer@apf.net.au) and I'll email you a copy of each.
8. If you do experience issues that may lead to a grievance, please do contact us for further advice and support as soon as possible. We are here to help!



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### Avoiding the MPB

**The best course of action is to manage your staff in such a way that reduces the likelihood of grievances in the first place.**

**This involves:**

- Decision makers acting fairly and without bias
- Decision making processes that are fair, accessible and applied consistently in comparable circumstances.
- Decision making processes that ensure that decisions made accurately reflect Department policy.
- Decisions made that stand up to the fair and reasonable test.
- Documentation that is clear, comprehensive and able to be effectively reviewed.

### 101

At the **APF** consistent with industrial relations '101' we are concerned with matters such as your salaries, classification, entitlements, protections, contracts of employment and, amongst other matters, the manner in which you are assessed and the consequences thereof.

Additionally, you have access to industrial and/or legal advice, advocacy and support in relation to matters of discipline, conflict resolution, conflict of interest, complaints and/or performance management, workcover, compliance, health and wellbeing, staffing, school council, misconduct, retirement and superannuation strategies and other matters that relate to your contract of employment.

## The industrial organisation for the Principal Class