

# Australian Principals Federation – Victorian Branch

Industrial protection exclusively for the Principal Class

## About us

A resolution at a meeting of the then VPPA & VASSP in 1998 determined the need to form an industrial organisation to protect the principal class in an increasingly difficult and hostile environment in the government education sector.

The Australian Principals Federation was founded with branches in both Victoria and WA. Federal Registration as an Industrial Organisation was granted in 1999.

## MEMBERSHIP

We offer membership for Principals, Assistant Principals, Executive Principals, and those in Acting Principal Class roles. The APF is solely funded by members subscriptions, which are tax deductible.

Membership costs \$696pa, which can be paid annually or by monthly direct debit deductions. Alternatively membership can be paid through Smart Salary packaging.



At 2016 APF AGM, L to R: Professor Bill Lucas, Federal Education Minister Simon Birmingham, Victorian APF President Julie Podbury, Victorian Education Minister James Merlino, and then Federal APF President Ron Bamford.

## this brochure

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## Highly experienced industrial support for you

The role of a Principal Class Employee in the Victorian DET has become increasingly fraught. While there is still enormous satisfaction to be derived from being a successful school leader, there are an increasing number of challenges. Even the most successful and experienced principals encounter matters which require support.

While workload issues hamper genuine educational leadership at times, the issues that come unexpectedly from staff, parents and the DET cause Principal Class Employee workload to spiral to an unmanageable level. It is not only the workload that impacts on **your** wellbeing, but the nature of the issue.

The APF has highly experienced and successful industrial and support officers who will guide and support you through a myriad of matters that impact on your working conditions. We provide a support person for disciplinary or complaint meetings in your role.

In the last 2 years we have supported 466 individual members with 730 issues.

A variety of matters required support, including but not limited to:

- 96** Contract negotiations, renewal, remuneration issues
- 75** Agreement/staffing, Consultation Committee
- 55** Serious parent complaints
- 39** H&WB of member compromised
- 36** Serious staff complaints
- 33** Workcover
- 32** Student related complaints
- 29** Allegations and **7** anonymous complaints
- 22** MPB representations
- 21** Investigations
- 11** School Council matters



Australian Principals  
Federation

## School leaders and liability.

Being a leader in education is one of the most vulnerable careers. Every policy and procedure we have to adhere to has some legality attached to it.

The principal is the senior finance officer and may fall foul of the law over conflict or misuse of funds.

The Disability Discrimination Act can be a legal minefield for leaders as they try to provide for all with scarce resources.

Parents and their advocates, rightly pushing for social justice can ensnare the school leaders in resulting litigation.

OHS is another challenge as school leaders are on-site managers under the act, often in charge of major building works with complex safety and building regulations.

The increasing level of compliance, accountability and delegations under the various Acts has led to a severe reduction in the number of candidates for school leadership positions. When things go wrong, the DET is often the first to desert you. APF members are increasingly looking to the APF for support in dealing with these issues.



Andrew Dalgleish – Vice-Exec, Primary, SW Region

Having been a member of the Australian Principals Federation for about 13 years, and since joining the principal class, I have had the peace of mind knowing that the APF Executive and Industrial Officers work tirelessly behind the scenes to gain fair employment conditions, including workloads and regional support, and relevant salaries for my peers and me.

Although this has been important work, that I have thoroughly appreciated, I have had the need, on a few occasions, to make contact with and gain individual support from the APF on industrial and human resources matters at my school.

More recently I had a career and life changing experience in the workplace that negatively impacted on me in personal and professional ways. I felt unsupported by my managers, yet gained much needed care and support from the APF Executive and an Industrial Officer. This support provided timely advice, realistic perspectives and representation in other forums, but most importantly the support enabled me to navigate through some particularly challenging circumstances: I felt the APF right by my side and with my interests at the forefront.

I could not have regained my professional confidence and achieved a career change without the APF: something that I feel very fortunate to have had. I strongly recommend to all principal class officers, "Join the APF: the industrial organisation for principals that cares for the profession and for you!"

**Assistant Principal, Country  
Secondary School**

## Why be a member of the APF?

Andrew asked two accomplished Principal Class Employees why they are glad to be a member.

"I am writing this to share with my colleagues the extreme importance of being a member of the Australian Principals Federation.

I have recently been involved in an **investigation** by the Department of Education and Training (DET). This was endured for nearly one and a half years. In my 40 years with the Department I had not previously drawn the attention of the Department.

The starting position for the investigation was that I was guilty until I could prove myself innocent. Consequently, the very limited support structures that DET provide to principals in this situation are based on this premise. Remember the loyalty of the Department employees is to the Department, not individuals within the Department.

Due diligence is a concept that DET is also not familiar with at this time. There was no phone call, no visit and no discussions with me prior to the determination to proceed with an investigation. No substantive evidence was presented to DET to support the allegations. They were presumed to be true and were acted upon in a most officious manner. I have made the inference that the legal unit wrote the initial letters to commence the process. The only person to step into my school during this process was my APF representative.

Our work as principals is diverse, complex and constant. We are always trying to improve our work for the benefit of our students. Our high level of commitment is not valued by DET. The rights of parents and the fear of litigation are the priorities of our employer.

In the challenging work environment in schools of today you need to be a member of the Union. The APF is a union that works solely for us and, as I found out the only support I had to get me through the terrible year and a half of being investigated. I have been a member of the APF since becoming a PCE. I was very appreciative that I had access to the knowledge and expertise of the APF staff to guide me through this process.

Specifically I would like to thank Julie for her constant support, and, John and Mark for their input when it was needed. My personal support network were also fabulous.

Yes, I have survived this horrendous investigation lasting 16 months, but given the process was unstructured, negative and at times debilitating I don't know how I did it.

My advice to all principals: Be a member of the APF because this is the only place you will receive genuine support, advice and assistance."

**Principal, Urban Special School**



[www.davieslawyers.com.au](http://www.davieslawyers.com.au)

## Your Legal Edge

We offer you immediate access to free initial professional legal advice.

Our legal team will represent you individually or collectively before relevant courts, iBAC, and the Ombudsman's Office.

The APF retains a legal team through Davies Lawyers to assist members with legal and industrial matters.

We also give peer support, advice, mediation and workplace visits. We help you with any legal matter in your leadership role including:

- Workcover Conciliation and RTW
- Unfair dismissal and the reinstatement of your entitlements
- Defamation and vexatious allegations by staff or parents
- Harassment and bullying in the workplace
- MPB representation
- Disciplinary Appeals Board representation
- VIT matters

We act as your Bargaining Agent in Enterprise Bargaining Negotiations to secure improved employment conditions for members of the Principal Class and raise your concerns with the government.

Our skilled team work to protect your rights and entitlements.

We meet regularly with the Minister, Secretary, Deputy Secretaries and Regional Directors. We maintain independence from political parties and the DET to ensure we represent your views.

### EBA

#### 2017-2021 Agreement wins from the APF

4% pa salary increase for 4 years, (17.1% compounded)

Lowering of the SGB Principal Classification barriers which means that 20% of principals will move to higher salary classification over the term of the agreement.

Final elimination of Level 1 principal class, incorporating all P1 principals to P2 from the start of 2018.

### Next Agreement 2021-2025

At a minimum we plan to seek:

A separate Principal Class Agreement

Salary increase in line with the responsibilities, accountabilities and delegations

A complaints process that is fair and reasonable and time limited

A one term sabbatical for every 5 years of principal class service

More educational leadership and less administration

## Message from the Victorian APF President

**The APF is strong and effective in its collaborative representation, industrial advocacy for and legal defence of our members. Now more than ever we need an organisation which is uncompromisingly dedicated to the support of its members with the underlying principles of fairness and reason.**

**We offer you loyalty, togetherness, and a one voice approach to benefit the Principal Class Employees in our state.**

The APF provides support and protection for members of the principal and executive class and acting principal class members.

Together we will work to ensure that our concerns continue to be heard, to build better working conditions.

We pride ourselves on working collaboratively with all stakeholders in our public education system to provide proactive influence procedural improvement for our members.





**Executive  
Officer, Gemma  
Naylor**

Gemma runs the engine room in this busy organisation and is often first port of call in the reporting of issues or membership enquiries.

Office: 0412 584 002

## Becoming a member and payment options?

- Download a membership form from our website or complete it online at <http://apf.net.au/victorian-application-form/>
- Complete the form and return to [gnaylor@apf.net.au](mailto:gnaylor@apf.net.au)
- Membership is \$696 payable yearly or monthly \$58 by direct debit or salary packaging with Smart Salary
- Full details available on the membership form
- Where membership is not packaged, which uses pre-taxed salary, membership fees are fully tax deductible



Australian Principals  
Federation

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<http://apf.net.au>

Principal Class Specialists  
Independent Representation  
By Principals for Principals  
Supportive Industrial Advocates  
Legal Advice/Help and Protection

One focus – Principal Class  
**Our focus -You**