

# Australian Principals Federation

## President's Message—Julie Podbury



### Principal Class Work

The editorial in our last issue, No 167, Workload and Loss of Autonomy, struck a chord with our members. You can always tell, by the immediacy of members response and the depth of comments made.

We have continued to gather your thoughts as we develop our Log of Claims as we head towards the next Agreement. While **the bargaining process is not due to begin until the second half of the year**, we need to get our ducks in a row well before then.

In 2016 the APF commissioned a literature review and report on Principal Work, by Dr Wendy Cahill. In part she found “There is agreement almost globally that schools are confronted with an increasingly complex environment, and the OECD Improving Leadership study identified three barriers which must be overcome for schools to successfully address these challenges. These barriers are:

- **Principals’ roles are intensifying**
- **The profession is ageing**
- **Working conditions are unattractive (2009:13)**

Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2014) echo the findings of this OECD study which suggests that **what is expected of a Principal far exceeds what one person alone can achieve**. Furthermore, as the average age of Principals is increasing, it is imperative to develop clear plans for future leadership and effective processes for leadership succession. However, negative images are attached to the job, which is often viewed as overburdened, offering inadequate salaries and poor working conditions.

More recently, initial findings in the first longitudinal independent project to measure the wellbeing of Principals in Australian Government, Catholic and Independent schools, found that Principals are overloaded and are suffering due to stress of taking on extra responsibilities without support. The key reasons identified for causing the job related stress were:

- **volume of work**
- **growing complexity of their work**
- **lack of time to focus on teaching and student learning”**

Sadly, while this work was commissioned half a decade ago, our member’s recent responses indicate that the key reasons for stress, listed above are far worse not better.

Our work, in negotiating the Agreement for our members will be to address the three items above along with the other matters raised by our members.

On top of the issues raised, there are a number of other matters that are causing great grief that are not able to be included in an Agreement, yet must be addressed if we are to have an impact on what is described as the unattractive working conditions that now exist. This is key to both the retention of current Principal Class and the attraction of new Principal Class Employees.

Both lists will be discussed in the next few issues. For those who are interested I will attach a copy of the commissioned report referred to.

### In this issue:

**Time in Lieu Policy and guidelines** from Mark & John on P2

**Changes to the superannuation** preservation age is impacting on some schools in ways that were never anticipated. I discuss these unintended consequences on P4

**Member feedback –** APF membership is on P5

On P6 we look at progress with the **Teacher Financial Incentives**

Our EO Gemma Naylor invites members to have a look at the **new APF website** which was launched this week.

<https://apf.net.au>

Members only sections requires log-in. This is the same as was previously used.

If you need this information please text Gemma or Julie. Gemma will respond Mon, Thur & Fri. Julie will not be available to respond on Fridays.

## Time in Lieu

A good deal of the work we do is what we call preventative. In other words if you handle this appropriately, it will not escalate into an issue of an appearance at the MPB.

A member recently asked for advice about Time in Lieu, and both John Handley and Mark Arkinstall responded. We share this advice for all members.



**Mark responded:** The key here is that time in lieu only applies when the principal **directs or requires** the ES staff member to work in excess of their normal hours. This needs to be made clear in any policy. Most ES staff, like teachers, contribute more than their required duties by participating in school camps, attending concerts, etc. This occurs within the context of the whole school year and is seen as a voluntary, discretionary effort. You cannot direct or require an ES staff member to participate in things like this if they fall out of hours so their attendance is voluntary and does not entitle them to time in lieu.

Directing or requiring them to participate in something though does attract time in lieu. An example of where time in lieu would apply would be:

- If you were running an anaphylaxis pd after school and required your ES staff to be there, at a time that they would not normally be at school.
- If you had an integration aide that normally finishes at 12.30 each day but was required for the whole day while the class was on an excursion.

The policy is:

*An **education support class employee** is entitled to time off in lieu where they are **required** to work in excess of their normal hours of duty. Time off in lieu is equivalent to the additional time worked.*

*The requirement to work hours in excess of normal hours should only be where such work is unavoidable and reasonable notice is provided. All work required in excess of an education support class employee's normal hours of work must be documented by the principal. An education support class employee **who is directed to work in excess of their normal hours of duty** may request not to do so where this would unreasonably affect personal or family commitments and the principal will not unreasonably refuse such a request.*

*The time at which time off in lieu is granted is at the discretion of the principal having regard to the operational needs of the school and the wishes of the employee. Time off in lieu may be granted on any day other than a day of approved leave.*

*As an alternative to time off in lieu, the principal and the employee may agree to payment for time in lieu owed at the employee's normal rate of pay.*

*Unless otherwise agreed between the principal and the employee, where time in lieu remains outstanding from the previous school year, at 30 June of the following school year the employee may elect to:*

- take time off equivalent to the time owed, commencing immediately; or*
- request payment at their normal rate of pay plus 50% for the additional time worked.*



**John responded:** Whilst I was at East Doncaster Secondary College we agreed to a set of practices to be considered for TIL for both teachers and Ed Support staff. Our policy follows.

The key to its implementation was that consultation always occurred before activities/events were to occur. That way a person could decide to opt in or out of the activity/event should it be seen to be impracticable to be granted TIL, and a suitable replacement found. In cases where it was possible, the amount and timing of the time in lieu was also agreed beforehand.



Podium 2,  
Tooronga Village,  
766 Toorak Road,  
Glen Iris, 3146.  
Tel: 0412 584 002

*Have you moved or changed schools since joining the APF? Please let me know so I can update our records.*

*\* NOTE: Monday, Thursday & Friday are my APF working days. If you need assistance on Tuesday and Wednesday, text Julie or Mark direct please.*



Gemma Naylor  
APF Executive  
Officer

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

Join the APF

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

Forms can be completed on line.



join

## TIME IN LIEU

Practices to be used when considering requests for Time in Lieu

### Preamble:

It is essential that in establishing a cohesive, supportive working environment we are able to share the workload and reward people, as much as possible, for their contributions to school life.

One of the ways of supporting one another's workload is to recognise the need for "time in lieu" of excessive demands.

Whilst it is difficult to be absolute in rulings of appropriate allocation of "time in lieu" these procedures are intended to give some direction and consistency to such practices at East Doncaster Secondary College. It is not intended that the compensation of this type create excessive workloads for others nor provides significant disruption to the learning programs of students.

It should be noted that the context of teacher workload is within a 7.6 hour working day (38 hour week) and the normal allotment of teachers. This also applies to Education Support staff. It should be noted that the requirements of Student Attendance hours should not be effected by the granting of "time in lieu".

Members of the Principal Team are the only persons with the authority to approve "Time in Lieu".

### Recommendations:

Staff working hours outside their usual or contracted working hours must seek prior approval before being eligible for Time in Lieu.

If staff are required by a Principal Team member to attend work for part or all of a day (which is normally a day off), then the equivalent time in lieu should be made available.

If a teacher is required by a Principal Team member to teach a class on a regular basis, in a time outside the normal six period student day, another period would be set aside whereby the teacher would be unavailable. If it is feasible to have this at the beginning or end of the day, the teacher would be able to leave the school. A block time release for a series of occasions will not be permitted.

Teachers and Education Support staff who work extended periods of time (over and above reasonable work expectations) on duties approved by the Principal may negotiate time in lieu or compensation only if it creates a manageable workload for others.

Attendance at Camps and School tours, and other school activities like Socials, Valedictory Dinner, sporting and cultural events, and excursions, would not usually be regarded as categories for time in lieu compensation for teachers but may be considered appropriate for Education Support staff with specific role related duties.



### Support for members

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

**Julie - 0419 103 664**

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

**Mark - 0418 551 375**

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

**John—0407 557 862**

[jimhandley@gmail.com](mailto:jimhandley@gmail.com)

Ring us direct

### Conflict of Interest

This issue is still causing concerns for some of our members. If in doubt please ring to ask for advice.

I am happy to come to Network or other meetings to present to you on this topic.

Please email me or ring to discuss.



Mark Arkinstall

APF Industrial Officer

**Mark - 0418 551 375**

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

## Superannuation: Unintended consequences—Julie Podbury

There have been changes to superannuation in the last few years that have had quite serious impacts on school staffing and on Principal Class Wellbeing and it is only now we are beginning to see the depth of that impact.

Preservation age is the minimum age that you can withdraw your super benefits under Australian legislation, once you have also met a condition of release.

Your preservation age in Australia depends on your date of birth, as outlined below.

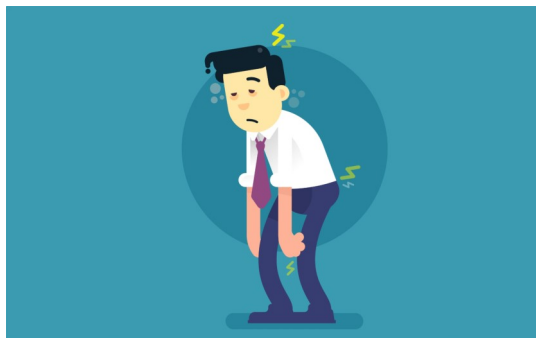
If your date of birth is...

- before **1 July 1960**, your preservation age is **55**
- between **1 July 1960 and 30 June 1961**, your preservation age is **56**
- between **1 July 1961 and 30 June 1962**, your preservation age is **57**
- between **1 July 1962 and 30 June 1963**, your preservation age is **58**
- between **1 July 1963 and 30 June 1964**, your preservation age is **59**
- on or after **1 July 1964**, your preservation age is **60**

The unintended consequence can be seen in the number of teachers who are remaining in the workforce who do not want to be there, however are forced to do so because they cannot access their superannuation until they reach their preservation age. Even in the very best of schools teaching can be an exhausting occupation. In class you are 'on stage' every moment of class time if you are engaging the students. Where behaviour management gets in the way of teaching it is even more so. When not teaching you have preparation and correction, and there are meetings, endless administration, communication with parents, professional development, etc. Imagine if you have had enough! You want out! You were born the year the Beatles toured Australia, 1964, and you cannot access your super until 2024. That is three and a bit years away and you will be forced to work and are likely to get more and more cantankerous, making life increasingly difficult for the Principal Class in your school. Mind you, I imagine a number of Principal Class are caught in this themselves.

A member recently told me that she has a number of cranky, unhappy and uncooperative people who fall into this category. She claims if they left, she could employ some younger more enthusiastic staff. While I felt very sorry for her, I was also sympathetic for the staff. The changes to superannuation have forced a number of people to work well beyond their 'use by date' and we will all pay. Our recent stats showed that the 'staff' category of issues had a score of 30 issues over a five month period, this is an increase over our previous period where there were 13 over a 3 month period. This represents a 30% increase month on month, and is a clear indication that this is likely to increase as time goes on. Other cases I have recently handled though indicate super is not always the issue. In one school an older vexatious employee is making legal challenges to a Principal on a regular basis, launching action in court. This is appalling and not exactly a harbinger of wellbeing.

The other obvious issue is the rise in sick leave, which will increase as disengagement amplifies.



### Role of the APF:

#### Industrial Relations 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.

Further, your 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.

#### Industrial Relations 102

Industrial matters arising from the management and implementation of one's professional role. Specifically as a function of the Principal Class Employee interpreting and performing their accountabilities and obligations as defined by their contract of employment; the operation of industrial agreements, Ministerial Orders and the changing compliance environment determined by legislation, regulations and policy.



## Member feedback –The APF

I am writing this letter to endorse the Australian Principal's Federation (APF) unequivocally. I simply cannot talk more highly about the support I received from the APF, (particularly Mark Arkinstall), who provided accurate professional advice, outstanding and truthful support and genuine empathy when I had the misfortune to go through a protracted complaints process throughout 2019.

The APF is an organisation that can 100% be relied upon to assist any Principal Class Officer with expert advice and guidance. Though I felt aggrieved at the time, the advice I received was at all times extremely fair and of sound reasoning which created a professional rapport with the complainants. It also ensured that I was dignified in all my responses and even more importantly, far more free of stress throughout the process.

I cannot thank them enough and urge all PCOs to join the APF immediately!

@@@

*We would really like many more Principals and aspiring Principals to be aware of the importance of being a member of the APF and having the APF 'in their corner'. For us it has been a necessity!*

*The past 18 months have been some of the most difficult of our lives, certainly the most difficult of our careers. The APF (Julie Podbury) has answered every phone call and email, reassured us when we felt like no one was listening, provided clear guidance, continue to be a brilliant intermediary and advocate and is the best sounding board we have ever had the pleasure of conversing with.*

*We would like everyone to understand how crucial being a member of the APF is. Now, more than ever (consider increasing workloads and responsibilities), all Principal Class members need to join the APF. You are more than 'just a number'. You and your questions and concerns really matter!*

*APF member and his wife.*

@@@

As a principal of a small rural, isolated and low socio-economic school, the APF have provided support, encouragement and advice that has been more than invaluable; it has been sustaining.

Free from personal ambition, political affiliation or networking entanglements, that APF is the organisation principals have in their corner that they can rely on.

Their seemingly revolutionary practice of actually returning your calls and providing robust and highly professional advice is a key to their ongoing success and growth.

I wouldn't still be in the job without them.

@@@

APF possesses extensive knowledge, experience and expertise in education. Always accessible their support goes far beyond 'industrial' skill to also encompass collegial and emotional support truly ensuring Prin Class well being. I have enormous gratitude for their work.



## Communicating better with parents—1

### BE PROACTIVE

**Don't wait for problems to arise.** Make it a point to communicate frequently and positively so that you have already developed a relationship before you hit problems. With the technology available these days, teachers should be able to update parents at least once a week about what's going on in the classroom. Use multiple types of communication—social media, email, phone calls, and the tried-and-true hard-copy newsletter.

### CHOOSE YOUR BATTLES

**If you and a parent disagree, always look first for a compromise that will benefit the student and preserve your relationship with the parent.** If you are not inclined to compromise, ask yourself if your method is really the one that's best for the student and whether it's likely to improve the situation. For example, if a student never completes homework despite the fact that you do everything like call home and impose penalties, you may need to find a different way to help the student practise skills instead of wasting an entire school year trying to prove your point. Pushing students – and parents – into a corner will always bring out the fight in them.

Acknowledgement: Terri Eichholz in Edutopia 27 February 2017

# The industrial organisation for the Principal Class

## Teacher Financial Incentives, Julie Podbury

Last year DET announced \$41.7 million to attract and retrain excellent teachers in rural regional and hard to staff schools. In theory this was to provide better support to students in these identified schools and areas and to address the obvious disparity between rural, regional and metropolitan schools.

The plan was for an initial payment between \$9,000 and \$50,000, before tax, followed by a \$9,000 before tax retention payment at the end of the second, third and fourth years. There was to be 450 incentive packages available, with 50 in the first round (2019 –June 2020), 150 in the second round (July 2020– June 2021) and 250 in the final round (July 2021-June 2022). Financial support for relocation is also available.

So, how have we gone so far? The anecdotal reports are that the quantity of applicants has increased, but not necessarily the quality desired. 37 positions have received the financial incentive in both rural/regional and metro schools. Recruitment processes are underway with a further 13 positions and a clear expectation that all 50 positions will be taken up 30 June 2020.

DET is taking active steps to resolve this very challenging issue and will soon move from a passive recruiter, where they advertise and hope people will apply, to an active recruiter, in which they seek the services of recruitment agencies as used in the commercial world.

The long term employee may be initially peeved by the incentives offered to the newcomers, however, it is hoped the energy and economic benefit they bring will impact on communities as a whole.

Further, the plans for specifically welcoming all new employees, and making them feel as if they matter, with welcome hampers, in conjunction with the local municipal authorities in rural communities, makes sense.

However, in a humorous look at the issue: It is only when DET start providing gyms and opening coffee shops in rural towns will we know that they have taken this urgent matter to the next level to ensure resolution. I still think the idea proposed at one meeting; the development a new TV series, 'The farmer wants a teacher wife/partner', will resolve the issue.



### Communicating better with parents—2

#### DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY

**When parents lash out at you, they're often voicing frustration at not being able to help their children.**

Instead of becoming defensive, ask yourself, "Other than being out to get me, what would motivate them to say this?" Think about what to say to de-escalate the situation rather than react. For example, if a parent says, "You're picking on my child," try saying, "I'm sorry you think that. Can you tell me what's happened to make you feel this way?"

#### ASK PARENTS FOR ADVICE

**If a student is exhibiting negative behaviours, invite the parent to suggest what works at home.** Sometimes the parent may not observe this behaviour at home, which is an opportunity to invite the parent to class. Even if the parent can't give you help or make it to the classroom, you will still make your relationship stronger by showing that you value their input. Usually, behaviour at school reflects behaviour at home. Parents know when what you are saying rings true with their own experience of their child. And when it doesn't. They also appreciate it when you ask them questions instead of making statements to them.

Acknowledgement: Terri Eichholz in Edutopia 27 February 2017 in the Principal's Digest

## 101 Things you need to know about being a principal,

Mark McKelson



*Mark has been very busy of late, but assures us that his blogs will return when his workload eases back.*

*APF Member, Mark McKelson, has been a member of the principal class at a number of schools across Victoria. He is currently based at Camberwell South PS. He is writing these "blogs" based on his experiences, in support of new or acting principal members of the APF, and has endless topics that he will write about which will appear in future issues of the Vic Branch, APF Newsletter. From time to time Mark will write opinion pieces for all members. The opinions expressed are his own and do not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the APF.*