

# Australian Principals Federation

## President's Message—Julie Podbury



### End of Term 1, 2020

For the rest of our lives we will remember what we are going through at present. As you can appreciate, there is no historical precedent for the management of a pandemic in schools and preschools and this is currently being reflected in the policy responses and advice being announced daily. These times are unprecedented as we are at war with an invisible enemy. As we ramp up our response to defend and protect ourselves and the members of our communities, we are being guided by DET, who in turn is being guided by the State Chief Health Officer, Dr Brett Sutton. Dr Sutton's view may or may not be impacted by the views of the Federal Chief Health Officer, Prof Brendan Murphy.

There is no doubt there are mixed and confusing messages about schools in the media. It would appear that the Victorian Government, under the leadership of Premier Daniel Andrews, is at odds with the Federal Government lead by Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, on the matter of school closure. I appreciate our State leadership and wish that we'd had Federal leadership that was as strong from the outset, and my sense is that we would not be so deeply mired in this mess as we are at present, had that been the case.

I recognise how stressful this is for Principals and their staff. I don't know the solution regarding the care of at risk students - they could be carriers due to their lifestyles away from school. The coverage of Emergency Services children is similarly fraught.

The APF has had an avalanche of communication from members, by telephone, text and email since last week, which amplified over the weekend. We have responded to each communication in as timely a fashion as is possible offering advice or opinion as appropriate.

Firstly, it is of note that :

- A. Our members are employees of the department and have an obligation to follow DET directives.
- B. DET is obligated to follow the directions of the Andrews government
- C. The APF continues to have regular contact with the Department via Dr David Howes, Deputy Secretary, Schools and Regional Services, Chris Thompson, Assistant Deputy Secretary and others on your behalf

Currently our concerns in support of Principal Class Employees include:

1. Government/DET messaging needs to be consistent and written by those who are familiar with the dynamics and operation of schools
2. We need a single point of truth.
3. DET sent the 23rd March Coronavirus Update directly to all staff in schools. The way this was written may have enabled countless interpretations. There's reference to principals and leadership teams at the top but no specific reference to teachers or ES staff. DET need to be very explicit in their expectations of Principals.
4. Our view is that all schools and pre schools should be closed for students as of Tuesday 24th March.
5. The issue of parental/carer capacity should not be a school responsibility.
6. The current social distancing message is impractical, particularly for a primary

### In this issue:

On Page 2 we provide some useful or important **links** and a **truth**, which may be prophetic.

On Page 3 we have 2 surveys that are to your advantage to complete.

The **VAGO survey on Principal Performance & Development**.

The second is the **Social Cohesion** survey from Monash and Deakin Universities.

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 can respond Mon, Thur & Fri. only

school with very young students.

- 7. It is difficult for school leaders to feel their employer is attempting to look after their health and wellbeing if they insist they attend a public place like a school, with significant numbers of potential carriers.

In spite of previous comments, The APF believes we need to look forward at this point. To further enable the APF to represent members' views we ask that you consider responding to the following questions as soon as practicable:

1. **What are your key concerns about resuming term 2 with a remote learning delivery?**
2. **What do you anticipate being the greatest operational challenges you will face with remote learning delivery in your school?**
3. **Other comments on remote delivery in T2 and beyond.**



We would like your feedback as early as practicable and preferably within 24 hours of receiving this newsletter. Please be succinct. You can do this by emailing a response to John Handley at [jjmhandley@gmail.com](mailto:jjmhandley@gmail.com) We aim to get a compilation of the responses back to you ASAP.



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*Still more new members this week. Thank you all for your help in spreading the word.*

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

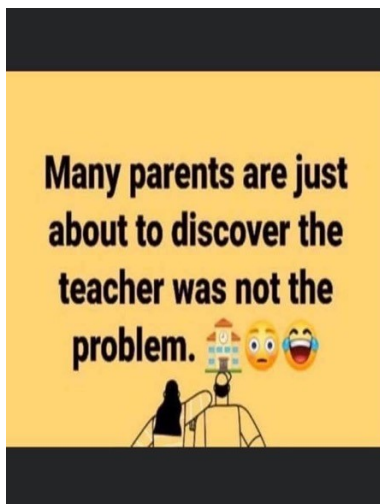
### Important or useful links and a truth

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>

[Scott Morrison has said we'll face at least 6 months of disruption. Where does that number come from?](#) Joel Miller, Latrobe University, 19 March, The Conversation.

[Michael-Carr Greig, Questions and Answers on the Coronavirus for Families and Children, Herald Sun, 23rd March](#)

[Talking to kids about scary stuff](#), YouTube, July 2018



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Join the APF

<https://apf.net.au>

Forms can be completed on-line.

## Principal performance and development: a survey invitation from the

Victorian Auditor-General's Office

The Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) invites you to complete a survey on the Department of Education and Training's approach to principal performance and development.



### Support for members

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

**Julie - 0419 103 664**

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Ring us direct

# VAGO

Victorian Auditor-General's Office

VAGO is asking school principals to complete this survey as an input into our current performance audit *Systems and support for principal performance*. We want to determine how well the Department's performance and development process and system enable it to understand and support school principals in performing their role.

This survey will help us understand principals' experience of the performance review process, what is most helpful and what could work better. Your participation will provide the audit with valuable information and support the development of relevant findings and recommendations.

The survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete, depending on your answers. You may save and return to complete your response at a later date.

This survey will be open until midnight Tuesday 31st March 2020.

[Click here to take the survey](#)

### What we will do with your feedback

We will keep your response confidential and secure. We will use aggregated results to inform our audit; results will be reported overall, at Region or Area level. Free text responses may be quoted in our report, though any personal or school identifying information will be removed. Your feedback will help us to develop recommendations for DET about how to improve the principal performance and development process. You have the opportunity to provide your contact details if you consent for us to contact you and discuss your experience further.

We will table a public report in Parliament in 2020 that will include key findings and recommendations. You can view our public reports [here](#).

VAGO is committed to protecting your privacy and we take our information security responsibilities very seriously. If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, please contact the audit team at [VAGO\\_SSP20@audit.vic.gov.au](mailto:VAGO_SSP20@audit.vic.gov.au)

## Social Cohesion Survey—Deadline Extended!

### Here's a chance to make your leadership work visible

Every day Victorian public schools grapple with a myriad of social issues that face students in their school communities. But what are these issues? And how can we understand them better so as to support school leaders and teachers to do this crucial but 'invisible' work?

**Here's a chance to have your say as school leaders.** Monash and Deakin Universities want to hear your thoughts on these crucial questions. Our aim is to build an evidence base to support school leaders and teachers to build stronger school communities; more engaged learners and ultimately better social and academic outcomes for all public students.

**If you are a Principal or Assistant Principal in a Victorian State School**, please follow this link to an explanatory statement about the research, followed by a short survey.

We've had just 70 school leaders respond so far, and we'd love to see this climb higher to ensure we capture a broad range of views from different school types and areas in the state.

<https://teg.tgesurvey.com.au/WTR0019/cgi-bin/ciwweb.pl?studyname=WTR0019&UID=9997>

If you choose to participate, your answers will be completely anonymised and you can withdraw at any time.

The survey will now close on 12 April, 2020.

### 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.



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