

Australian Principals Federation

President's Message—Julie Podbury



It keeps on coming!!!

I had no plans to do a newsletter this week, however so much has happened that it needs to be aired. I have had an overwhelming number of emails from secondary colleagues about matters they have been informed about in the last few days. Principal Class are at breaking point with what has transpired over the last four months. They are limping to the line at the end of term on 26th June and yet last week they were assailed by the following, which all have far reaching implications.

- Changes to VCE/VCAL results and ATAR scores moved to 30th December. With four days allowed for Change of Preference.
- Swinburne announcing that they will not be using the ATAR as an entrance method.
- Changes to the fee structure for tertiary courses.
- Concern re the Essential Safety Measures (ESM) reports due 30 June.

Let's unpack this with member feedback.

VCE/VCAL/ATAR

"This is almost the final straw. I don't mind the fact that we worked with the Leadership Team through the Easter holidays with Good Friday seen as an opportunity to make sure remote learning was ready to run and I don't mind that the last holidays was a time of planning and allaying fears of both the larger community and staff but to be now put in a position where the Leadership Team and Principal have to be at school between Christmas and New Year is an insult. The platitudes of thank-you for all your work for making remote learning happen is just that – a platitude. Also don't tell me that you don't have to be at school to support your students. They have just come through an unprecedented time of change and to suggest they just get their results and cope with the outcomes shows a complete lack of understanding of what our work is about and the impact of what our Year 12's have just gone through. I am really saddened to receive the proposed dates for the release of results. I now understand that the DET do not see us as leaders but just a number to do a task and we will push these people (Principals) to the position where they break. I am just "gutted" that DET would think so little of their personnel and supposedly the leaders of their communities after what has been an extraordinary year with commitment and passion to deliver remote learning."

"I am very disappointed and angry that again, principals have been treated in such a disrespectful way.

Christmas is sacrosanct! It is a time for families and friends, it is a time to recharge. The sheer timing is appalling! This decision is thoughtless and irresponsible and completely disregards principal health and wellbeing, particularly after the stresses of term two. Doesn't the DET understand that people are at breaking point?"

"I work in a remote part of Victoria and flog myself year on year to do this job. This year has been the hardest ever. We have dealt with fires, floods and the pandemic. For me the light at the end of the tunnel was to escape to family away from here at the end of year break. Many of my staff will also leave the area. Many of my student's families will also be out of the area. I understand we have 6 months notice to sort this out, but this advice nearly broke me!"

No ATAR for Swinburne Admission

"I wanted to flag some concerns I have around the mooted non-ATAR entry into Swinburne (and possibly other institutions) that seems to revolve around direct recommendations from principals.



In this Issue

On P1 we look at some of the issues causing grief in the last week.

On pages 1,2 and 3 member feedback frames the issues. As part of this report we publish an article from **Michelle Grattan** re the changes to **Tertiary funding**.

We also look at the **Essential Safety Measure Report** on P3 &4.

Mark McKelson speaks about the challenges of tackling racism both in schools and as a parent in the wake of the **Black Lives Matter** demonstrations and related incidents.

APF Website

<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.

The possible problems are:

1. Increased work-load- are we doing the institutions or VTACs jobs for them?
2. The risk that pressure will be placed on PCO's by parents demanding positive recommendations
3. The risk of ongoing dispute with parents if recommendations are not forthcoming

Risks the independent sector will be liberal with recommendations, because their business model is often largely based on their success in making tertiary placements

The system, if it is going to happen, should be like Special Entry Access Scheme. Schools make recommendations which are completely confidential from parents and students. Also, it could be as simple as a yes/no box for recommendation. If institutions want more info, it's on them to develop a supplementary testing or interview program to get it."



Changes to the Fee structure for Tertiary Courses

Michelle Grattan, Professorial Fellow, University of Canberra, explains this well in The Conversation yesterday, although she does not discuss the appalling impact this will have on Year 12 students who have already submitted their preferences.

The government's higher education changes, announced last week, appear driven by three factors. How you judge the result will depend on where you sit.

In sum, the shake up will reduce student fees for courses in areas the government identifies as potentially job-rich and increase them for the humanities and certain other courses to produce a result that's funding-neutral for the government.

The first driver of the policy is the surge in demand for places. This is coming both from what's dubbed "the Costello baby boom" ("have one for mum, one for dad and one for the country," Peter Costello said when treasurer) and from the COVID-flattened economy, which will stop many young people taking a gap year.

COST OF A YEAR OF FULL-TIME STUDY			
Field	Current fees	Proposed fees	Percentage change
Humanities	\$6804	\$14,500	113% ▲
Law	\$11,355	\$14,500	28% ▲
Economics	\$11,355	\$14,500	28% ▲
Medicine	\$11,355	\$11,300	0
IT	\$9698	\$7700	-20% ▼
Engineering	\$9698	\$7700	-20% ▼
Science	\$9698	\$7700	-20% ▼
Education	\$6804	\$3700	-46% ▼
Nursing	\$6804	\$3700	-46% ▼
Agriculture	\$9698	\$3700	-62% ▼

SOURCE: FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The government wants to manage this pressure without having to fork out more money.

Secondly, the changes reflect Scott Morrison's overwhelming preoccupation with jobs. This is the main element in both his rhetoric and his policy across government. When he announced recently the national cabinet would be made permanent, he said its singular focus would be jobs.

While it is understandable that at the moment most issues are being seen through the employment prism, in the longer term a government's lens should be wider. Work (with the opportunity to

obtain it) is critical to the well-being of the individual and the community. At the same time it is not everything, certainly not if people are to have rounded and fulfilling lives.

Finally, there does seem to be an ideological tinge to the policy, notably in the treatment of the humanities. The cost for these courses will rise by a massive 113%. This compares with hikes of 28% for law and commerce.

There is an anti-intellectual streak in this government, with ministers unsympathetic towards universities, which many of them see as breeding grounds for left-leaning activists. Education Minister Dan Tehan, for one, has been very critical of what he has identified as curbs on free speech in the universities.

This government and its prime minister are a very long way from Liberal Party founder Robert Menzies's views. Menzies saw as one of his major achievements the expansion of Australia's universities, and he had a broad view of higher education.

David Furse-Roberts wrote in a Quadrant article titled, ["A Rugged Honesty of Mind: Menzies and](#)



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

**New members
aplenty.**

**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.**



Gemma Naylor
APF Executive
Officer

gnaylor@apf.net.au

Join the APF

<https://apf.net.au>

Forms can be
completed on-line.

Education: “Far from functioning merely as utilitarian “degree factories” to churn out the greatest volume of graduates, Menzies esteemed universities as the great nurseries of civilisation. In addition to equipping undergraduates with essential training and vocational skills, the university would serve to cultivate the character of students and encourage them to seek truth and beauty in their chosen discipline.”

Menzies strongly defended the humanities (although it has been noted the “humanities” as taught in universities of his day looked rather different from much of today’s content). And, it should be added, universities then did not teach the wide range of vocational courses they do today.

The Morrison government takes a basically “utilitarian” view of universities. Indeed, universities have made themselves very utilitarian, as they have transformed into giant businesses - substantially in response to governments of both persuasions pushing them on the revenue front.

This strengthened the Australian economy, as higher education ballooned into a massive export sector.

But COVID has brought home the over-dependence of our universities on foreign students, for many thousands of whom they are now desperately trying to find a passage back.

It is not just the financial position of institutions that has been compromised by excessive reliance on overseas students, who pay so much more than the domestic cohort.

So have some academic standards, although this is not often publicly admitted. One hears frequent complaints, for example, from domestic students who find themselves working (and assessed) in groups with overseas students who have limited English language skills. And some staff feel under the pump to pass foreign students.

The COVID crisis should mark a point where universities take stock of how they are managing the trade offs between foreign income on the one hand and educational standards and the needs of domestic students on the other.

Coming back to the Tehan package for domestic students, the reaction has been predictably diverse, according to how various stakeholders see it affecting them. The winners are applauding; the losers cross.

In terms of its broad effects Andrew Norton, professor in the Practice of Higher Education Policy at the Australian National University, believes it will not alter students’ choices substantially.

He tells The Conversation that student course choices are primarily driven by their interests. For most of them, that includes the career they hope for after finishing their degree. Students with firm goals would not change a fundamental life choice due to a change in fees, he says. Students who are less clear about exactly what kind of job they want after finishing their career will only choose within their range of interests.

Norton argues that if some students are not aware of courses that might interest them, then improved careers advice and course marketing would be a better solution than shuffling hundreds of millions of dollars in student payments between courses.

He says the changes raise questions of fairness. While those benefitting from lower fees, such as students undertaking teaching and nursing, will pay off their student debts more quickly than under the current system, those graduating from the humanities could be saddled with debt for decades. “This mix of windfall gains and heavy new debt burdens seems unnecessary to achieve the policy goal of improving graduate employment outcomes.”

The government will need to get its changes through the Senate. When it launched a sweeping plan to deregulate fees some years ago, it could not obtain parliamentary approval. It stresses this is not deregulation, but whether it will be more successful with this proposal remains to be seen.

Essential Safety Measures Annual Report

This topic gets people hot under the collar and causes a huge workload in schools big and small. For the very big ones there is often a Facilities Manager who can undertake this work. Some schools with adequate funding can outsource the process. In small schools its yet another job for the Principal Team OR the lone teaching principal in very small schools. This is an excellent example of PH&WB strategy removing work on one hand (as discussed last week in introducing PAL) and another part of the DET adding to the workload.

“When the VSBA was established their role was about ‘supporting schools’ and was supposed to be part of assisting with workload and health and wellbeing.

The VSBA are now expecting principals to engage [building surveyors out to their school to check we are using buildings appropriately for education](#) as a part of the process among a range of other things.”



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

Mark - 0418 551 375

industrialofficer@apf.net.au

John—0407 557 862

jjmhandley@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

The ESM Quick Reference Guide states:

This document has been developed to support schools, school principals and other parties with responsibilities in managing and operating school buildings, to understand and satisfy their Essential Safety Measures (ESM) maintenance obligations under the building regulations.

ESMs provide for the safety of people in the event of fire and their maintenance is vital for life, safety and health of occupants over a building’s lifetime. They include items such as fire safety doors, exit lighting, fire hydrants, emergency planning, etc.

Each building’s ESM is listed in an ESM Maintenance Schedule (Schedule) for your facility. The Victorian Building Regulations 2018 require schools to take reasonable steps to manage their legal requirements for maintaining ESMs which includes monitoring, testing, reporting, repair/replacement and maintaining a logbook of activities throughout the year.

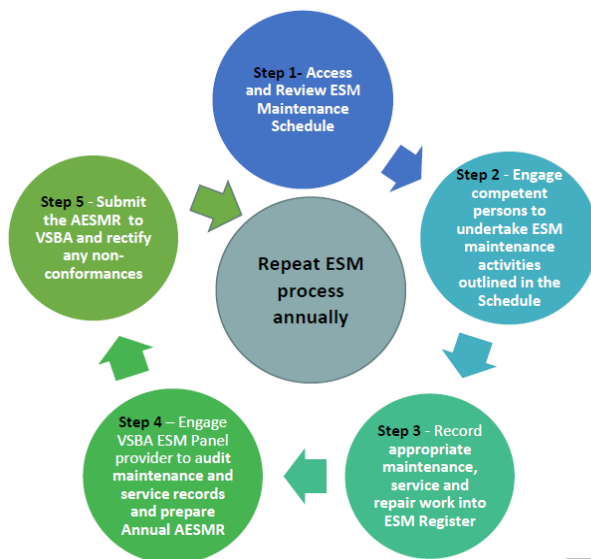
The review of this documented evidence provides for preparation of an Annual ESM Report (AESMR) as required by regulation. The report must be completed by 30 June each year and subsequently forwarded to the VSBA ESM Coordinator.

Schools are to perform the maintenance and reporting on ESM activities using funding from their Student Resource Package (SRP). The Annual Contracts and Essential Safety Measures Budget lines are allocated for this work.

5 Steps to achieving your ESM obligations

Below is a 5-step guide to meeting your ESM maintenance and reporting responsibilities. Following these steps will ensure appropriate records of maintenance service and repair work are implemented and legislative obligations are met.

Step 6. once you receive the annual ESM report from the building surveyor, please send it essential.safety.measures@education.vic.gov.au



This is another example of where one size does not fit all. We are all aware of how hard the VSBA team work to support schools, and that this is a regulatory obligation, however, the APF has formed the view that this obligation rests with DET and not the Principal. It is a bridge too far and far too much to expect from most of our Principal Class, with the exception of those large enough to employ facilities managers.



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.

Schools Plus grant applications open 20 July

Schools seeking funding for projects that improve learning outcomes can now apply to Schools Plus 2020 open round.

Funding from \$20,000 to \$250,000 is available for individual and cluster schools. Submit a simple Expression of Interest (EOI) before 7 Sept to be matched with a donor.

Schools Plus is a national organisation that provides funding to schools in disadvantaged communities. Since 2015, Schools Plus has funded over 700 projects, benefiting more than 230,000 students and 12,500 teachers.

Schools eligible for support through Schools Plus have a value below 1000 on the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA).

Visit www.schoolsplus.org.au/for-schools/grants/



101 Things you need to know about being a principal, Mark McKelson



Blog 20 - Stand up for what is right!

There isn't a lot we haven't seen. We could all tell stories that would create serious doubt in society. There are people who still have archaic views when it comes to racism and bigotry. When you watch, innocent children playing in the yard as the best of friends, and someone comes along with views their parents have clearly instilled in them, it's frightening.

This actually happened a few years ago.

I had just suspended a boy for the second time for the racial vilification of a fellow student in his class. As disappointing as this was, what happened next truly shocked me. I received a phone call that evening not from the victim's parents but a rather angry father of the perpetrator. "You can't change the world Mark" he screamed. I didn't know what to say, I paused and let the rant continue until I decided enough was enough. "The issue here is you are a racist and you have taught your son to be one as well" I replied. I couldn't believe I said it, but sometimes you have to stand up for what you believe in. I threw the nice guy Principal out the window for five minutes.

I remember my first encounter with racism as a child and I had no idea what was going on. It wasn't something that was discussed in catholic primary schools in Melbourne in the eighties. I remember a classmate referring to the colour of another child's skin. I remember the child being upset and not understanding why. The reason this stands out, is the rage we saw the next day from the girl's father when he came to school to confront my friend. It was scary and made no sense. We were uninformed and in a way sheltered from the real world.

Much of my education into the troubles in Australia and around the world has come through film. I remember studying Cry Freedom in year 11 and watching a multitude of American sports movies depicting the plight of African Americans in my teens. More recently, I've been moved by Australian movies such as Rabbit Proof Fence. During isolation, I made a point of watching two movies with my son to start the conversation with him. Glory Road is a lesser known basketball movie about the first all African American college basketball team and well worth a watch with your family. We also watched Remember the Titans to continue the conversation. For an adults only perspective if you haven't seen the 2019 Best Picture, Green Book, put the kids to bed Sunday night and look it up.

I received a few emails last week asking what are we doing as a community to educate our children about racism and the impact this has had around the world and in our country. I wrote about our staff participating in the Cultural Understanding Safety Training. A significant part of the government's Marrung Plan to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal students. As part of this we are planning to include more information about significant Aboriginal events and milestones in our curriculum. As with many of our programs we have put these on the back burner until school resumes fully. The events of the past few weeks have highlighted the importance to work through these issues and events to educate our young people of their place in the future of our society.

I'll never forget standing up to that parent. We can't have a society where bigotry and racism go unchallenged. That puts us in the firing line at times. But sometimes you have to do what is right!

APF Member, Mark McKelson, has been a member of the principal class at a number of schools across Victoria and is currently the principal at Camberwell South PS. He is writing these "blogs" based on his experiences, in support of new or acting principal members of the APF, for the APF Newsletter. The opinions expressed are his own and do not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the APF.



Anti-racism activities | Years 3-12

This section is continually being updated for the Australian Curriculum.

The resources contained in this section have been developed to support the delivery of anti-racism education in the classroom. Included are lesson ideas, activities and stimulus materials which assist students to engage positively with other peoples and cultures and to better understand Australia's cultural diversity and history.

[Go to the website for more information](#)