

# Australian Principals Federation



## Acting President's Message—Tina King

The recent release of the 2020 Australian Principal Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing survey highlights ongoing issues and concerns for Principals.

This longitudinal study is an extensive piece of research which was jointly conducted by both **Australian Catholic University** and **Deakin University**. The survey results provide insight into the continued challenges and difficulties

faced by school leaders in particular increased job demands, excessive workload and escalation of offensive behaviours.

Of key importance are the 16 recommendations identified as a result of the findings. The APF has continually supported and endorsed the work undertaken by DET in the area of Principal Health & Wellbeing. The initiatives, policies and programs developed set the benchmark for other states and this was highlighted in the survey.

The focus however is to continue growing and extending upon this work in order to address the key issues that burden our school leaders. Implementing effective strategies and supports that lead to positive wellbeing outcomes is a priority and our current log of claims is fundamental to this cause.

Of other key interest this week has been the Federal Education Minister's announcement outlining pending review of teacher education as a result of declining academic achievements and global rankings. Aspirational targets to reach high global rankings by 2030 were proclaimed by Minister Tudge and the APF has written to the minister seeking a level of consultation and participation in the reforms that has not been afforded to Principals in previous reviews and debates.

*T. King*

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## 2020 Principal Health & Wellbeing Survey Findings - Summary

**A survey of Australia's principals has found last year's ravaging bushfires, followed by shock floods, and the COVID-19 global pandemic had an immense impact on the stress and workload of school leaders.**

*The Australian Principal Occupational, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey 2020, jointly conducted by researchers at Australian Catholic University (ACU) and Deakin University, surveyed 2,248 school principals across all states and the territories.*



Now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year, the longitudinal study has tracked trends in the health, wellbeing, and safety of school leaders and made policy recommendations to both government and key stakeholders.

Co-chief investigator for the survey and ACU Institute for Positive Psychology and Education (IPPE) Professor Herb Marsh said, "The extremely long work hours and constant exposure to stress during 2020 left school principals exhausted."

"During 2020, almost all principals (97%) worked overtime and close to 70% worked more than 56 hours a week during school term, and 25 hours a week during the holidays. The main sources of stress were the sheer quantity of work, the lack of time to focus on teaching and learning, the mental health issues of students and the expectations of the employer," Professor Marsh said.



### In this Issue:

This is a vitally important issue as it reports on the **Principal Health & Wellbeing survey**. The issues raised go to the heart of many matters represented in our **Log of Claims in the current EBA**. The context in which we put together this Log of Claims, draws heavily on the findings drawn from the longitudinal survey in respect to Principal Class Wellbeing and the challenges inherent in the role. We strongly urge you to read this article.

On P4 we have the DET Information re **Principal Health & Wellbeing and COVID-19 Assurance Program**

On P5 information about the deadline extension for the **Women's Leadership Scholarships**.

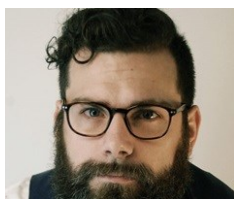
On P5 there is also reports from some of the **DET Stakeholder consultations**: eduPay Refresh, Tutor Learning Initiative, Business Manager Accountability Framework, and finally Data Collections and Surveys.

**APF Website**

<https://apf.net.au>

## The Union exclusively for the Principal Class

“During the survey period, three of out 10 school leaders (almost 30%) received a red flag email alerting them to contact employee support services. These alert emails are triggered when school leaders are at risk of self-harm, occupational health problems or serious impacts to their quality of life.”



ACU investigator and IPPE Professor Phil Parker added, “Over the past decade, principals report a steady increase in job demands with no real increase in support services. The surveys have shown us that school leaders need support to maintain a healthy work-life balance.”

Deakin University’s Professor Phil Riley and co-chief investigator said the survey shone a light on “a year like no other” for school leaders. “Last year was one of unimaginable horrors for Australians and the global pandemic had a life-altering effect on us all,” Professor Riley said. “But 2020 showed us that the more things changed, the more they stayed the same. “As well as needing to quickly develop on-line learning practices, school principals were faced with managing COVID-safe processes to protect their employees, students, and parents from a global pandemic.

“Although schools were classed as essential services, and told to stay open to protect the economy, they were not privy to vital information. Particularly at the start of COVID-19, school leaders had to listen to the news to find out what to do with their schools’ operations.” However, Professor Riley said there was a bright spot, “The survey has shown us the pandemic’s lockdowns and restrictions reminded communities about the vital role school leaders play. Ironically, COVID-19 could herald a positive shift in community attitudes towards school principals.”



**KEY FINDINGS**

**Offensive behaviours**

More than 40% of principals reported being exposed to threats of violence or being a victim of physical violence in 2020. This is up to 9 times greater than the general population. However, several categories of offensive behaviours decreased in 2020 which is attributed to the reduced face-to-face contact with parents.

However, over the 10-year lifespan of the survey, there was a steady increase in bullying, physical violence, slander, sexual harassment, threats of violence and verbal harassment towards principals.

**Table: 2020 Offensive Behaviour by parents and students towards school leaders by state and territory, compared against the general population.**

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	ACT	NT	General Population
<b>Sexual Harassment</b>	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	5%	2%	3%	3%
<b>Threats of Violence</b>	43%	30%	44%	45%	46%	57%	55%	47%	8%
<b>Physical Violence</b>	38%	21%	38%	42%	43%	38%	57%	55%	4%
<b>Bullying</b>	25%	14%	19%	20%	15%	24%	21%	26%	8%
<b>Unpleasant Teasing</b>	6%	2%	4%	2%	4%	0%	5%	8%	8%
<b>Conflicts &amp; Quarrels</b>	36%	31%	41%	43%	32%	43%	36%	42%	51%
<b>Gossip &amp; Slander</b>	31%	19%	33%	31%	28%	41%	19%	21%	39%
<b>Cyber Bullying</b>	28%	20%	34%	25%	27%	36%	24%	16%	



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*Our membership continues to grow and we are grateful to all members for their referrals to their colleagues.*



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Join the APF

<https://apf.net.au>

Forms can be completed on-line.

## Ageing workforce

- School leaders have on average 27 years' experience in the school environment.
- A staggering 47.5% of school leaders are over 56 years of age.
- 5.5% of school leaders are over 66 years of age.
- Almost 7% (6.8%) of school leaders plan to retire this year in 2021.



## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

There are 16 key recommendations in the report including the following:

- There is an urgent need to establish an independent taskforce to fully investigate the offensive behaviours occurring in schools.
- Standardisation and risk management of online meetings with parents may be required to ensure quality control and reduce offensive behaviours and are likely to be more convenient for parents and principals.
- Employers need to take the moral choice of reducing job demands or increase job resources to allow school leaders to cope with the increased workload.
- Professional associations and unions should collaborate and speak with one voice. A united voice would be stronger for achieving change. In Finland, for example, there is one union which advocates for all educators.
- Federal, state & territory governments should come together to maintain a single education budget in a managerial way. All school funding should be transparent so that anyone, at any level of the system, can confidently know how much money schools have.
- In Education, there is a need to systematically research potential strategies and new policies before they are rolled out on a large scale. In medicine, for example, it would be unheard of to put in place large new programs without adequate efficacy and safety tests. The same should be true in education.

## PROGRESS

Over the ten years of this report, important progress has been made in key areas:

- Increased government recognition of the issue of violence in schools with several inquiries underway at the state, territory, and federal level.
- The report has shone a light on the burden of stress and overwork among principals and significant policy changes have been made to benefit principals, particularly in Victoria, Queensland and Northern Territory. For example, the establishment of the Victorian Policy Bank has helped ease the workload of principals in that state.
- Substantially reduced waiting times for mental health consultations with the Teachers Health Fund and other providers.

The full survey report is available at <https://www.principalhealth.org/au/reports.php>

## SUPPORTING STUDENTS

**Now more than ever, it's important to think about what kinds of support families need and how students' social and emotional health can be nourished.**

*We can be striving to:*

Recognise that students won't succeed in school until they are fed, sheltered, and safe – and also known, seen and loved.

Create classroom norms that every student contributes and commits to.

Create a space where children establish their own vision of success.

Extend the same options and practices to all students, no matter what they look like and how they learn.

Develop critical thinkers and lifelong learners who leave school ready to live in the world, to be a citizen, and to do equity work of their own.

*"When Social-Emotional Learning Is Misused" by Eve Colavito and Kalila Hoggard in Education Week, December 9, 2020*

**Quote**  
from Hippocampus,  
an email publication of  
Principal's Digest

## DET Information re Principal Health & Wellbeing and COVID-Assurance Program

We know that the wellbeing of principals is central for creating a positive school culture for teaching and learning. The start of the year is the perfect time to put measures in place to proactively support wellbeing and prepare for the year ahead.

Principals and assistant principals have access to range of supports to assist their wellbeing as part of the [Principal Health and Wellbeing Strategy services](#).

In a direct response to feedback from school leaders, [Proactive Wellbeing Supervision](#) (PWS) is now expanded to include assistant principals as well as principals, on an ongoing basis. This follows a successful trial throughout 2020.

PWS offers principals and assistant principals access to four sessions a year to promote wellbeing both in and outside the school context. In partnership with an experienced, independent psychologist familiar with the pressures faced by school leaders, the sessions help participants to:

- gain a deeper understanding of their wellbeing and actively plan ahead to prioritise wellbeing
- get advice on how to effectively manage their time and workload
- get coaching on how to manage mental health challenges within their school community
- have a safe place to discuss challenging relationships with students, staff or parents
- explore strategies to develop and grow their school's leadership team
- have a sounding board to assist them to navigate the challenges of the new year develop a personal Wellbeing Action Plan.

Use of this service is completely confidential and is suitable for all principals and assistant principals, irrespective of where they are at on their wellbeing journey. Contact the service provider, FBG Group directly to book a session, via phone (1300 326 941) or email [wellbeing@fbggroup.com.au](mailto:wellbeing@fbggroup.com.au)

Other services as part of the Principal health and wellbeing strategy, include [Principal Health Checks](#), the [Principal Mentor Program](#), the [Early Intervention Program](#) and more.

School leaders may also wish to access [Manager Assist](#) for timely, short-term coaching and guidance on how to support their teams, and are reminded that the [OHS Advisory Service](#) is available for support on any health and safety matters, including mental health and wellbeing.

### An update on the COVIDSafe Assurance Program for schools

The COVIDSafe Assurance Program for Schools is continuing to support schools throughout Term 1 and 2, 2021, following the successful delivery of the program to 264 schools in Term 4 2020. This builds on the Intensive OHS Support Program that provided support to all Victorian Government Schools in Term 2 and Term 3, 2020.

The objective of the Program is to provide additional expert advice to help schools implement health and safety strategies that minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools. On-site visits from trained Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) specialists are providing hands-on practical support to schools. Where possible, any outstanding risk controls are corrected and addressed during the visit, reducing the burden on schools to follow up and complete actions themselves. In Term 4, this included provision of additional supplies when needed, such as face masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE), hygiene supplies such as hand sanitiser and posters for display throughout the school.



### Support for members

We are here to support and offer advice to all members at any time. If you are concerned about a colleague, please let us know.

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Ring us direct

## Assessment

**“It is time to re-brand assessment as powerful information that reveals student strengths and next steps... Assessment has the power to ensure our systems respond with agility to meet the needs of all its diverse learners.”**

Nicole Dimich in “Assessment That Inspires Hope, Efficacy, and High Achievement” in *All Things PLC Magazine*, Winter 2021

Quote  
from Hippocampus,  
an email publication of  
Principal's Digest



Many schools were observed providing excellent and unique strategies to reduce the risk of COVID-19 and support the health, safety and wellbeing of their school communities. Overwhelmingly, the response from participating schools and many of the involved stakeholders was positive, with many expressing their appreciation for the supportive approach of the program.

Delivery of the program enabled DET to identify areas where additional support can be provided, such as the development of more detailed guidance and support regarding how to safely set-up and use spaces for isolating unwell staff and students, and the importance of monitoring and ensuring adequate supplies of PPE. See [Guidance for the use of Personal Protective Equipment in education](#) and School Update Article [Guidance on providing a safe space for isolating unwell staff or students](#).

In Term 1, 2021, the program design has been revised based on learnings from Term 4 and from feedback from past participants. The Program will focus on risk reduction strategies covering areas such as infection prevention, mental health and wellbeing and occupational violence and aggression. These strategies will continue to be an important part of keeping schools safe during early 2021. Schools selected for Term 1 have been notified, however schools may wish to express their interest in participating in this program, or for assistance in any health and safety matters, by contacting DET's [OHS Advisory Service](#).

The COVIDSafe Assurance Program for Schools should support increased confidence for staff, students, and members of the school community that schools have the support they need to remain safe.

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## Scholarships for women's leadership – applications extended to March 31

Scholarships are still available through Women & Leadership Australia to support the development of female leaders across Australia's schools education sector.

Scholarships of \$1,000 to \$5,000 enable participation in one of three leadership development courses designed for emerging through to senior leaders. **All scholarships must be allocated by the end of March and it is unsure when these scholarships will be available again.**

Register your interest by completing the Expression of Interest form <https://www.wla.edu.au/education.html>

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## Key information from DET Stakeholders meetings

### eduPay Refresh

eduPay reimagined 2021 has a key focus on improving recruitment and onboarding processes. These are complex processes that involve knowledge and use of multiple functions across two platforms, namely ROL and eduPay.

One of the key enhancements for this year is to bring ROL into eduPay saving time and eliminating the need to enter information across the two platforms.

Enhancements relating to the management of appointments are also planned with the introduction of a streamlined process for onboarding successful applicants. This includes a guided process that simplifies data entry while ensuring key compliance requirements are met.

### Tutor Learning Initiative (TLI)

The TLI funding model is based on enrolments and is weighted for disadvantage. Indicative



## THE DIFFERENCE PRINCIPALS MAKE

**The most striking finding of recent research: if a principal whose leadership is rated at the 25th percentile improves to the 75th percentile (or is replaced by a leader performing at that level), students in the school will gain 2.9 months of learning in maths and 2.7 months in reading during a single school year.**

Similar studies of teachers' impact have found that improving the performance of a 25th-percentile teacher to the 75th percentile (or replacing the lower-performing teacher with one performing at the higher level) results in gains of 3.7 months in maths and 3.8 months in reading.

Principals have a schoolwide impact, so their work affects a much larger group of students than that of individual teachers. But it's not either-or. Principals affect student learning through the work of individual teachers, as well as through their effect on teacher teamwork, morale, and turnover, student attendance, relationships with the community, and overall school culture. In other words, it's a team effort.

*"Top-Tier Principals Spark Big Gains in Student Learning. A New Study Shows How Much" by Denisa Superville in Education Week, February 24, 2021.*

[Hippocampus, Mar 2021](#)

# The Union exclusively for the Principal Class

funding estimates were provided to schools in November 2020 with confirmed estimates to be delivered with the release of the confirmed SRP on 31 March 2021. All schools will receive a TLI funding allocation that is equal to or greater than the amount that was advised last year. In circumstances where enrolments have increased, the TLI funding will be adjusted accordingly. However, if there has been a decrease in enrolments, the TLI funding which was indicated in November 2020 will still apply despite the reduction.

DET data indicates the following recruitment activity for the TLI program:

- 1,545 Victorian Government Schools have been funded for the TLI program
- 95% of schools have appointed a tutor
- 1% of schools have recruitment underway
- 4% are seeking HR support.

School leaders are to be commended on the pace of implementation and work undertaken to support the initiative.

### Business Managers Accountability Framework

The framework has been initiated in response to the IBAC report which recommended the establishment of a structured approach to understanding and developing school business manager capabilities.

The framework identifies knowledge and skills considered essential for a school business manager and can be used for:

- developing position descriptions
- a point of reference in identifying required skills and areas for development
- setting goals for performance and development plans

The framework is a very useful tool and resource that will not only provide role clarity but support both business managers and school leaders in execution of duties.

Further information is available at <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/business-manager-capability-framework/overview>

### Data Collection & Surveys

Schools are required to provide school level data either annually or periodically throughout the year. There are proposed changes to parts of the DET annual survey program inclusive of:

1. The development of a quarterly School Principal Survey to replace the existing annual Supplementary Census survey. Data collection for the Supplementary Census in August each year can be cumbersome and tedious therefore to have this distributed throughout the year is a positive.
2. The introduction of a health and wellbeing focus to the student Attitudes to School Survey early in Term 2. All pre-existing AtoSS components will be retained, however two additional sections will be included:
  - a) Approximately 5-10 items to be included as core items for all respondents
  - b) A longer, optional model will be developed allowing schools to collect a richer set of health & wellbeing information. Schools will have the option of opting into this module.



## BRINGING US CLOSER

**Paradoxically, the distance created by remote classes has forced schools to get in closer touch with students' and families' life circumstances – and how those intersect with what schools expect.** We are often in such a rush in school – from one class to the next, from one topic to another – that we don't remember that the fundamental job is to partner with families to raise successful human beings.

The pandemic is helping many of us to think about our students in a fuller and more holistic way. Many teachers are building stronger relationships, having frequent check-ins, delving into relevant curriculum topics, designing tasks that give students agency and purpose, and allowing students more choices.

“Make Schools More Human” by Jal Mehta in *The New York Times*, December 27, 2020

Quote  
from Hippocampus,  
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