

# Australian Principals Federation



## President's Message – Tina King

Our thoughts are with those who have been impacted by the devastating flood crisis. Many schools in northern Victoria remain closed and the Department has been working with haste to make plans for impacted students to attend nearby schools where possible. With Year 12 exams imminent, one cannot fully fathom what these students must be feeling. It was with a sense of hopelessness that we have watched this disaster unfold and whilst people will rally, the impact on communities and individuals will be ever-lasting.

The fragility of impacted communities cannot be understated. Communication from principals in the impacted areas demonstrates the high levels of stress, anxiety and frustration felt;

*...Whilst my school community is now safe, two staff have lost their homes, at least 5 have extra people in their homes, and over half the staff are cut off from Shepparton as they can't get across the causeway from Mooroopna to Shepparton. Other staff are in their home but are trapped in their estates....My wonderful staff (those who have power and/or reception) have contacted every family today to check in on them...I think if those in Melbourne actually walked through, or should I say waded, our streets and spoke with people they would hear their tiredness and anxiety.*

*We were tired from the continual in and out of covid on the flip of a coin and now this – no wonder I can't attract any staff, nor anyone else in our town...Principals are being asked to do more and more with little to no break – it's tiring. Of course I care deeply for my community and staff, students and the town, but boy have we been tested...Just got back from the supermarket that was closing at 5 as they only had 12 staff out of 50 available today – the whole town is impacted – and not much on shelves as the roads in and out were cut off until today....*

As we have continually seen through one crisis after another, school leaders will stand tall even when impeding demands exceed personal strengths and capabilities.

Through these difficult times, we remind our colleagues that you are not alone and invite you to reach out and seek support as needed. The Department will provide organisational interventions, supports and resources with colleagues and support networks available to provide emotional and group resilience.

*T. King*

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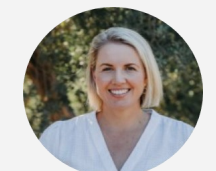
**The Honourable  
Natalie Hutchins**  
Minister for Education &  
Minister for Women



**Professor Phil Riley**  
Honorary Professor at  
Deakin  
University



**Dale Sidebottom**  
Creator and Founder  
Jugar Life and  
Energetic Education



**Helen Quiney**  
Executive Director  
Employee Health,  
Safety &  
Wellbeing Division

## APF Annual General Meeting & Seminar –Thursday 27th October



### Re-evaluating the Working Conditions of School Leaders

Burgeoning workloads continue to place great strain on our school leaders. Now more than ever, there is a compelling case to re-evaluate the working conditions of leaders.

Our guest speakers include:



**Registrations are now open for members (\$175) and non-members (\$200) and close this Friday 21 October 2022. You may register by following this [LINK](#)**

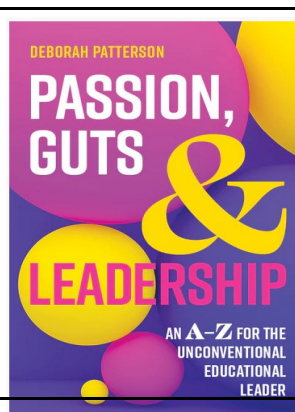
# The Union exclusively for the Principal Class

## Passion, Guts & Leadership - Deborah Patterson

Congratulations to Deb Patterson, former long serving educator and APF member, who recently released her book **An A-Z for the Unconventional Educational Leader**.

As a passionate and highly successful leader for over 22 years, Deb shares her vast knowledge and expertise through story telling and practical advice.

The book is another wonderful achievement in Deb's professional career and we congratulate her on sharing her insights into the principalship.



"I loved being a boss, but I knew that I was not everybody's cup of tea. While I often reflected on my own actions, I noticed that some people who were inclined to comment on or judge my leadership style needed to look inward first!..."

Passion, Guts & Leadership (Amba Press)

### From the memory box! -HENRY GROSSEK, PRINCIPAL, BERWICK LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Rarely does a day go by that I don't draw on my memory box of advice from others and experiences from which I've hopefully learnt in my role as a principal. In saying this, I'm honoured to have been invited by our president, Tina King, to share some of these with you in the hope that they may prove to be of value to you.

In approaching this, I was struck by the challenge I face - with such a diverse range of principal class members, undoubtedly, I could learn much from more than a few too. My hope for those colleagues is that, at the least, they find some enjoyment in the reading.

When I first became a principal, more than thirty years ago, I was privileged to have had as a friend, an experienced and wise principal – a person whom I could both trust and, in doing so, respect. A great mentor if you like. The very first piece of advice he gave me has sat with me throughout my years in principalship.

We were enjoying a stroll in the Botanical Gardens when Robert said to me that in my role as a principal, I would forever have an invisible word printed on my forehead. He asked me if I knew what it was. Of course, I didn't. To which he responded by spelling it out – B-O-S-S.

I thought about that for a moment, before Robert continued by saying that I would never see it, but others would – my staff, students, and parents. Consequently, there would always be a high probability that any of those people could, when interacting with me, respond by telling me what they wanted me to hear or, alternatively, what they thought I wanted to hear. My challenge, Robert continued, was knowing what was really bubbling along in my school and across the whole school community, and to know that without causing disturbance to the school's equilibrium.

That was how I was given that advice decades ago. Today the advice would most likely come in other forms – know your people, create a climate of trustful openness, embrace critical friends and be familiar with the term EI and its valuableness in building and maintaining productive professional relationships. These to name but a few.

As an offshoot to the above, a challenge with which I've struggled intermittently throughout my years as a school leader has been to embrace critical friends within the inner sanctum of my key )



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**Are there changes to details in relation to your membership?**

**Please inform me if there are changes to PCE status, school, home address, phone numbers and cc details.**

**Thank you!**



Jenna Benison  
APF Executive  
Officer

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Join the APF

<https://apf.net.au>

Forms can be completed on-line.

advisors. There's always been the danger for me to see them as negative, black hatters. Unfair as that label may be, there's an appealing seductiveness in finding oneself, almost by osmosis, to be surrounded by like-minded colleagues. It's always easier to accept advice with which one agrees than arguing the point at risk of having to do a U-turn.

Nurturing a culture of open and honest dialogue with a team of diverse people is no easy feat. Everyone has their frailties. Suspicion is forever knocking on the door to our minds. Yet, to not do so is to surrender to the demon that that invisible word on our foreheads can become.

## Amusement Rides, Attractions & Fireworks Policy—DET

The Department of Education and Training has provided details of a new health, safety and wellbeing policy that has been added to the department's Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS) for schools.

Amusement rides, attractions (such as jumping castles) and fireworks are high risk activities. It's important that schools and organisers of events at schools manage risks.

Schools must follow the new [Amusement Rides, Attractions and Fireworks Policy](#) when planning activities that include the hire and operation of amusement rides, attractions and fireworks. Please familiarise yourself with this new policy and the associated risk management processes to keep your school community safe.

Under the new policy:

- schools must not own or operate their own amusement rides, attractions or fireworks
- schools must follow the [policy](#) and [procedure](#) when engaging a third-party operator to operate any amusement rides, attractions or fireworks for school organised events conducted at school sites and non-school sites (for example, a local park)
- schools must enter into a written agreement with third-party operators
- schools must work with the ride or attraction operator to ensure the relevant WorkSafe advice is followed, using the amusement rides, attractions and fireworks [checklist](#) provided
- for land-borne inflatable devices (for example jumping castles, Zorb balls, inflatable slides), schools must ensure that the operator is following required WorkSafe guidance on anchoring, wind speed monitoring, providing safe access and preventing unauthorised access
- for fireworks, schools must ensure that the operator is a licensed pyrotechnician and has provided evidence of notifying the relevant authorities (and seeking approval where required) to conduct fireworks displays.

This is particularly timely as we commence Term 4, when schools may be organising these high-risk activities as part of their end-of-year celebrations or election day activities.

Please also share the policy and supporting resources with your school council.

For further enquiries, contact the OHS Advisory Service: phone 1300 074 715, email

[safety@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:safety@education.vic.gov.au)



### Support for members

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

However, from time to time you may be concerned about a colleague. Please do not hesitate in making contact with us so we can offer them appropriate support.

Tina - 0418 478 807



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

Mark - 0418 551 375



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

Jenna— 0412 584 002



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



## School Cleaning

Commentary in the last newsletter relating to declining cleaning standards and levels experienced in some schools has certainly sparked debate, resulting in an influx of emails from members.

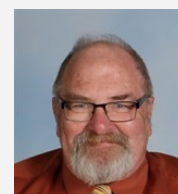
One member wrote:

*"...Your recent words regarding the cleaning resonated. I believe we've been some of the lucky ones, as far as the team has been relatively consistent and responsive. However, we still have to be very engaged in managing them. We returned to school to funky smells and substandard cleaning. We managed to get the cleaning company manager onsite with the area manager. Thankfully, the area manager immediately identified the same issues and quickly resolved to getting things fixed this week. He also committed to returning the following week for another walk around to ensure the standards had been met...."*

Some leaders lamented on the need to continually push back in order to receive favourable outcomes with many, particularly those in small and regional schools, highlighting ongoing challenges in relation to service delivery and support:

*"As an experienced principal with many years behind me I'm alarmed at the demands placed on my time, particularly around compliance, which is taking me away from what I am trained to do. Recently I've pushed back, with great success, particularly as DET has lost the ability to consult with principals. The VSBA is one such entity whereby the demands for compliance are ever increasing. I am suggesting they perhaps visit schools to ensure they have a full understanding of daily operations BEFORE issuing demands. After recently pushing back, it was wonderful to actually meet with a couple of people from the VSBA who UNDERSTOOD the plight principals were facing, having recently stepped away from schools themselves, which was refreshing. Should this perhaps be a mandate? Regional staff or bureaucrats must spend a term in a school regularly to fully understand the day to day operations currently faced by principals, because once again there appears to be a total lack of understanding for small schools where the principal has 1 or 2 staff and multiple hats."*

It is important to follow up issues and concerns for unless they are brought to the attention of the Department, awareness is not developed and action cannot be undertaken. Principals may contact the [Victorian School Building Authority \(VSBA\)](https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-school-building-authority) School Cleaning Unit on [1300 842 754](tel:1300842754) or via email [cleaning@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:cleaning@education.vic.gov.au) for advice and support.



David Finnerty



Julie Podbury



Loretta Piazza

DAFIN Consulting can devise outstanding programs to deliver leadership training to your staff or staff from a group of schools.

Contact:

David 0412 927 007,  
Julie 0419 103 664, or

Loretta 0418 597 069  
to discuss how we can assist you

Feedback from current course is outstanding.

## The Union exclusively for the Principal Class

### THOUGHTS FOR A NEW PRINCIPAL/LEADER

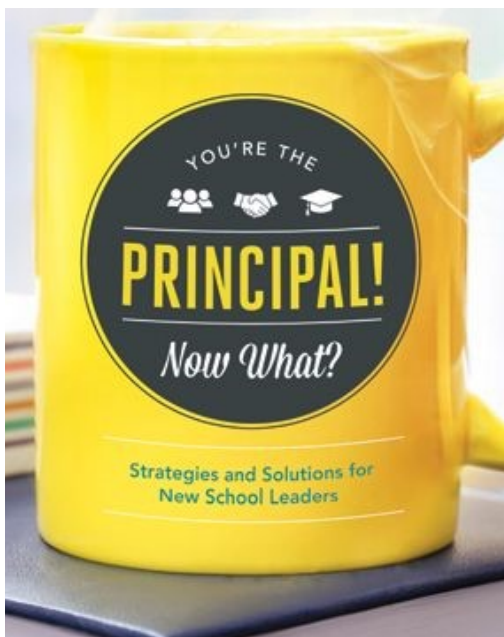
Many of us were trained to enter new leadership roles with a focus on what is wrong and what to fix, with no understanding of what success looks like for the communities we serve, the tremendous assets that exist, or the wounds that need healing for our communities to thrive. What would it look like for new leaders everywhere, from the boardroom to the classroom, to take a different approach to leadership entry this year, one that challenges these harmful patterns and sets the stage for the kind of authentic listening and collaborative learning that leads to high performance and innovation?

Three suggestions for the new leader

- What if new leaders did more than the usual focus groups, town halls, and one-to-ones and used processes that engage honest community dialogue to build trust and create intentional spaces for healing? Our communities need more robust shared visions of what is possible before tackling the problems that stand in the way.
- Leaders can also start asking different kinds of questions of their community members, ones that focus on assets rather than problems. Our communities, especially today, need more robust shared visions of what is possible before tackling the problems that stand in the way. When communities are tethered to a stronger shared vision, it is also easier to weather difficult storms together.
- With more trust and more conversation about what is possible, new leaders will be better positioned to make sense of the data they've gathered and come up with viable solutions. Instead of reviewing data with an internal team of direct reports, which is what new leaders typically do, what if they included teachers, parents, and community members in the sense-making process? With a more nuanced understanding of problems and possible solutions, new leaders will be more likely to devise strategies that their communities can support.

The new leader will find listening with empathy is more likely to cultivate understanding. If they prioritize building trust, they are more likely to create healthy space for healing. With these shifts, they can together create schools that are stronger, more resilient, and more capable of making the change their communities deserve.

*Acknowledgement: Jennifer Perry Cheatham, Rodney Thomas & Adam Parrott-Sheffer: "3 Shifts That Will Benefit Every New Ed. Leader" in Education Week, September 2023*

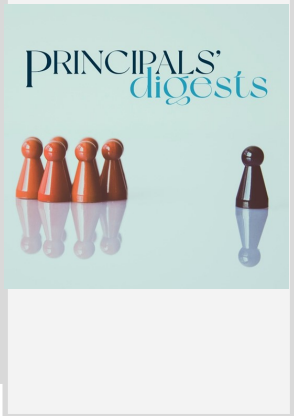


**“By working faithfully eight hours a day, you may eventually get to be a member of the Principal Class and work twelve hours a day.”**

**Apologies to Robert Frost**

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