

Australian Principals Federation



President's Message – Tina King

It may be only 5 weeks into the term, but for some it is feeling like 5 months! By and large, members are stating that it has been a smooth start despite continued workforce shortages and new policy demands. The time-in-lieu component for camps continues to provide challenges for schools and it is interesting to note the commentary and advertising coming from some camp service providers.

Given that the TiL provisions are providing barriers to schools delivering traditional camp experiences, service providers are now offering adapted day programs thus eliminating the need for school staff to stay overnight. Whilst a day program in itself will attract TiL, is this really what we should be striving for – the elimination of rich experiences that overnight programs provide in developing children socially, emotionally and independently?

Without doubt this is an unintended consequence of the TiL provision requirements that is impacting adversely on camping programs and experiences and one that can easily be rectified by funding TiL for camps and overseas learning experiences outside the SRP similarly to Long Service Leave entitlements.

On another note, Henry's Memory Box is back for this year and I know many members have enjoyed the articles throughout last year. We thank Henry for penning his thoughts and sharing of his wise and deep knowledge and expertise.

T. King

PRINCIPALS' digests

The Principals' Digests are designed to keep principals, aspiring principals, and school leaders well-informed about current research and effective practices in K-12 education. The Digests are informed by over 30 journals and publications to which I subscribe. Each month, six Digests will arrive in your inbox summarizing articles and providing resources for diverse areas of interest to school leaders: leadership, learning and teaching, communication as well as resource material for assemblies and newsletters. Links and acknowledgements to the original sources are provided so you can research further or acknowledge as appropriate in your use. The primary aim is to save you time and help you stay current.

Subscriptions are \$145 for a calendar year See the website for subscription details or message me through the website for a school invoice: <https://www.principalsdigests.com/>



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APF Website

<https://apf.net.au>

The Union exclusively for the Principal Class

Federal President’s Message, Chris Chant, Caulfield PS



The 2023 school year has commenced across the country and the holiday break over Christmas seems like it was an eternity ago.

Returning to school has had a series of challenges to complicate the work of school leaders and members of the APF.

The recruitment of staff has been a priority since well before the Christmas break and as this newsletter hits your inbox there are more than 1600 positions advertised on the Victorian Government recruitment platform. This shortage is a national problem and with rural and remote members managing their already hard to staff settings, the ongoing complexities of staffing and curriculum provision add to the workload of all our members.

School leaders are resilient, creative and resourceful by their very nature and the support of our colleagues and professional networks are key components of working through and meeting these challenges.

I extend to you all my best wishes for the school year ahead and urge you to support the work of the APF, promote our roles as school and community leaders and offer support to your colleagues as we all work on the challenges of leading learning in our schools.

Over the holiday break I was a participant in a Harvard Graduate School of Education leadership program held in Sydney. This wonderful opportunity to revisit my leadership and reflect on my work as a school and system leader was extremely valuable. Meeting the participants and educators from across the country and New Zealand was a huge feature of the program and their stories and adventures were all unique, engaging and thought provoking. If you are able to access this program it is a great opportunity to build your skills and capabilities.

The value of ongoing learning and professional development for school leaders is a key focus for the work of our professional associations across the country. Accessing these opportunities is often difficult, but well worth the effort required to be away from your schools, away from the work and taking on the challenges of new learning.

This year we will continue to work collectively with our Western Australian and Victorian members, their executives and administration to engage with State and Federal Education ministers and continue to build our partnerships with SASSLA members in South Australia. These important collaborations and representations will continue to support our work as leaders and raise the profile of the role school leaders across the country.

From the memory box! Henry Grossek, Berwick Lodge PS



I’ve always been fascinated by hypotheticals. They give you, non-threatening, intellectual elbow room. In fact, I frequently use them, disguised in the language of ‘scenarios’, as questions for shortlisted applicants for positions at our school. Of course, care in the use of hypothetical questions for job interviews must be taken. I remember one applicant paused to reflect, and then asked me as to how hypothetical the question was. I suspected at the time that the applicant’s interest in the position at that moment was directly linked to the degree to which the question was, in fact, a hypothetical one.

With all that in mind, here’s a hypothetical scenario on which to muse. Imagine you are at a meeting listening to a senior officer strongly encouraging all present to make every endeavour to create some breathing space for themselves; some work-life balance, having just acknowledged the immense workload demands of your job. Everyone applauds the acknowledgement and advice. Later, over lunch you hear a colleague ask the officer as to whether they have a sound



Social Media and the Teenage Brain

Part of an excellent article in the Feb issue of **Principal’s Digest**

Between 2009 and 2019, depression rates doubled for all teens. And that was *before* the COVID-19 pandemic. The question is: *Why now?*

"Our brains, our bodies, and our society have been evolving together to shape human development for millennia. ... Within the last 20 years, the advent of portable technology and social media platforms [has been] changing what took 60,000 years to evolve," Mitch Prinstein, the chief science officer at the American Psychological Association (APA), told the Senate Judiciary Committee on February 14, 2023. "We are just beginning to understand how this may impact youth development."

Cory Turner broke Prinstein’s submission down to 10 key takeaways last week:

Social interaction is key to every child’s growth and development.

Prinstein said that “children’s interactions with peers have enduring effects on their occupational status, salary, relationship success, emotional development, mental health, and even on physical health and mortality

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work-life balance, to which the officer says, "No."

The hypothetical scenario doesn't end there, for you hear your colleague pursue the obvious contradiction. "Why not?" The officer thinks for a moment, before very deliberately replying, "Because I choose to."

What a discussion that could open up. Confronted with that hypothetical, my mind went a-racing. Was the officer foxing; pretending to have a choice? If so, do we do that too? Does choosing to do something which is obviously of no benefit to one's health make it right? Is it confusing, even hypocritical in light of the earlier advice given by the officer to the audience, and thereby sabotaging the message? Does it create a sense of privilege for some – that it is somehow okay to not follow one's own advice to others because of one's position? Do I do that too?

On the other hand, can the words of the officer, "Because I choose to," create guilt in the minds of some school leaders; too many of whom already push themselves beyond safe limits to their wellbeing, on behalf of their students and staff? I'd argue that they most definitely could. For example, just check out some of the self-impacting strategies on which we hear colleagues are about to embark, in order to reduce the costs of Time in Lieu to hold school camps.

The impressive body of work of Phil Riley, Professor, Education Leadership, Deakin University in relation to the wellbeing of school principals is well known to us all. Most memorable to me is the damning evidence that overwork kills people. Apparently healthy people can just drop dead from working too hard, and for too long. Short of that, do we give the best versions of ourselves to others when our work-life balance is out of kilter?



That hypothetical scenario I spelt out at the beginning of this piece has made me think – about myself and the impact of my behaviour, well-intentioned as it may be, on my staff and by extension, my family. I couldn't help but think of John Donne's famous poem - "For Whom the Bell Tolls". More than anything else we should never forget that humanity is bound as one.



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.

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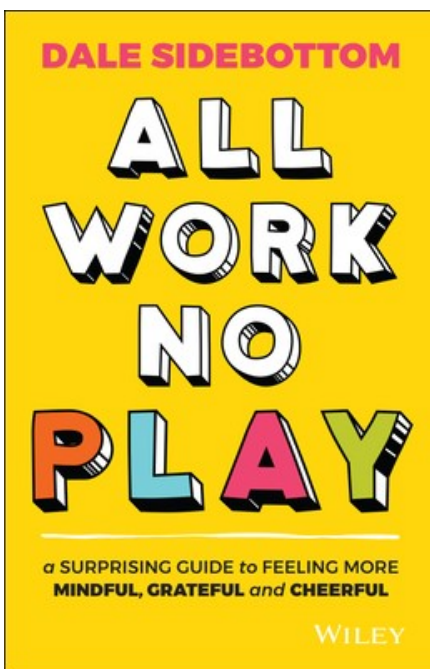
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Last, but not least, Chapter 4, Play and our mental health



1. Always go hard. It doesn't matter if you're five or 10 shots up in life or on the golf course. Always back yourself and believe in what you can do. I would still to this day hit my big golf driver over an iron to go for glory instead of safety.
2. Great things come to us whether we land two balls in a row at a virtual club house or we fail at something on multiple occasions. This is how we grow, learn and progress as human beings.
3. Don't be a human doing, like so many of us tend to be. 'I'm doing this, doing meetings, doing busy, doing deals or doing, doing, doing, doing!' Instead, be a human being, and start being present, being caring, being empathetic, and being open to new people, ideas and opportunities.
Start backing yourself with your driver on the 18th and in life.
4. The Daily PEGG is a 'play, exercise, gratitude and giving' ritual suited for people of all ages - and it seriously works. We'll get fully into how it works in part IV of the book.

Available for sale: [At Amazon and other good book sellers.](#)

APF Membership Drive

A sincere thank you to all members who have actively recruited colleagues to join the APF. Your efforts are paying dividends as demonstrated by the large volume of memberships we have received within the last week alone! Please keep up the efforts as increased membership means a greater voice and stronger bargaining power in the interest of our school leaders.

The APF as an uncompromised union, continues to advocate and pursue for the interest of the principal class collectively and without fear or favour. We will never have 50,000 members because we simply do not represent that many department employees. As an independent organisation, which has no common funding agreement with the Department of Education, we exist to solely focus on the interest of the principal class. Despite adverse commentary from another union organisation, we have a positive influence and resolve to impact of the direction of the educational agenda on school governance, principal accountabilities, conditions of employment, contractual arrangements and protections. Additionally, we are a key agent in EBA negotiations with an unrelenting focus on principal class remuneration and conditions.

Our strength lies in continued increased membership and we seek your support in recruiting colleagues. So please keep spreading the word and continue to reach out to colleagues and encourage them to join.



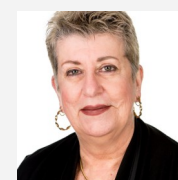
Taking bookings now for T4 2023 and 2024



David Finnerty



Julie Podbury



Loretta Piazza

DAFIN Consulting can devise outstanding programs to deliver leadership training and coaching to your staff.

Contact:

David 0412 927 007,
Julie 0419 103 664, or

Loretta 0418 597 069
to discuss how we can assist you



Only the APF offers uncompromised union advocacy and support for members

-  **Representation exclusively for the Victorian principal class**
-  **Influence and impact on Department policy and initiatives**
-  **Individual support from our highly experienced Industrial Officers**
-  **Specialist advice and support, 7 days a week**
-  **Union representative for principal class in EBA negotiations**
-  **Comprehensive industrial and legal support**

The Union exclusively for the Principal Class