

Australian Principals Federation



Vice President's Message – Wendy Powson

The main issue with the **Time in Lieu** (TIL) provision is that this arrangement is simply not sustainable unless it is properly funded. Unfortunately, programs and those rich experiences from which our students gain so much, will be 'watered down' or ceased altogether which will be a sad indictment on our great system.

My lived experience with TIL thus far:

There is no doubt that teachers should be properly remunerated for the extra work they do. I have monitored with interest the impact of TIL not only financially, but the effects observed on the attitude of staff and ultimately, the culture of the school. Below is what has occurred:

- We currently have hundreds of thousands of dollars of TIL waiting to be acquitted. Whilst staff agreed to acquit time towards the end of the year when the older year levels leave, there will still be a significant cost to enable classes to be covered. The 'Step Up' program that promotes students to the next year level as part of our end of year program, will be significantly compromised.
- It has not been practicable to acquit time through teachers leaving school early or starting late. Organising and monitoring this adds significant workload to a number of key staff including the principal team. The number of classes that have required coverage due to staff shortages, illness and excursions/camps, has well exceeded previous years and has necessitated a 'all hands-on deck' approach. It has also been pointed out to me that taking time during the day means a loss of preparation and correction time.
- There is a subtle change to the school culture. Despite extensive consultation and a document for staff to refer to if in doubt about TIL, I am constantly having to discuss and disappoint people regarding TIL eligibility. They will then be quite vocal amongst colleagues regarding their willingness to do anything 'extra'. This then requires a further conversation, which leads to an element of disgruntlement.
- A brilliant outdoor education teacher is heading off on twelve months LWOP (agree to it or lose him!). He is owed over 100 hours of TIL, there will be no choice but to pay it out. Revenue is already reduced with parent payments and subject contributions down and the CRT budget having already been spent; the reality is that this will not be sustainable.
- We currently have a whole school initiative being implemented to assist with trauma informed approaches to teaching. The whole school PD Day had staff missing. Part time staff who were not rostered on that day were not offered paid time to attend as they have been in the past. The cost would have been prohibitive. This has compromised the whole school implementation of the program.
- The number of 'approvals' in my inbox is triggering.

Wendy Powson

Wendy is Vice-President of the APF and Principal of Lilydale HS (1450 students). The experiences and concerns she has shared continue to be commonly voiced amongst many of our members.

Recognition of Service Ceremony

Congratulations to all DE staff who have been acknowledged in this year's Honour Roll for their loyal and dedicated service to public education. [DE Recognition of Service Ceremony Honour Roll.](#)

In particular we would like to acknowledge and congratulate the following APF members who have been recognised and provided service for 50 years or more:

50 Years of Service Wendy Duff, Assistant Principal, South Yarra Primary School

55 Years of Service Helen Snookes Miller, Principal, Reservoir Primary School

Laureen Walton, Principal, Sandringham East Primary School



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APF Website

<https://apf.net.au>

The Union exclusively for the Principal Class

Victorian State Budget – Tina King, Victorian Branch President



I attended the budget lockdown meeting on Tuesday, with opportunity to speak directly to the Premier's Chief Advisor and the Minister's senior advisor and chief of staff. Never one to miss an opportunity, I again raised the issue of Time in Lieu (TiL) and lobbied for additional funding to support acquittal of the TiL provision. Whilst admission was made that supports were needed, no announcement in the budget was forthcoming however it was inferred that the \$205m allocated for teacher initiatives will contain support for TiL – what that 'support' may look like is to be seen. I suggested considerations such as a single payment (eg \$250 per night) for staff attending camp irrespective of classification and remuneration range. This is comparable to other jurisdictions and easily budgeted for and managed from a school and system point of view. We eagerly await future announcements on this very issue as the current situation is simply not viable or sustainable.

The APF is pleased to have received acknowledgement from government representatives that supports are needed for schools to acquit TiL. Current acquittal options (either via time or payment) are presenting with many challenges and it is negatively impacting on school programs and experiences. Additionally, we cannot ignore the economic impact on service providers when schools reduce or eliminate programs such as camps and outdoor experiences. It needs urgent fixing and resourcing for schools are simply not in position to acquit TiL within current budgets and limited options.



Other key items from the budget:

- Kindergartens and special schools are the big winners with free kinder and \$25 million to build therapy pools at specialist schools.
- \$7.5 million to attract allied health professionals (OT & speech pathologists) to regional Victoria.
- No decisions to date in relation to Tutor Learning Initiative – analysis to be undertaken on level of impact of the program, with the Minister to make decision later in the year, around September. The need for a decision to be made prior to the release of the indicative school budget was emphasised.
- Investment of \$205 m to support development of teachers – no details provided however inferences made as per above.
- Over \$40m allocated to supporting teachers with lesson and curriculum planning. This is a big investment and an attempt to address teacher workload. When asked what this looks like, the response was that it is a budgetary commitment that has been made with the need to work on the implementation.
- Continued funding for student wellbeing and supports including Schools Mental Health Fund, anti-bullying supports, free sanitary products and school-wide positive behaviour programs.
- Commitment to integrate more therapy animals into schools with provision of \$4.8m in funding.
- School infrastructure investment of \$1.8 billion to build new schools and upgrades for identified existing schools.

For full details of the budget for the educational sector please see [Victorian Budget Education 2023](#).



Deborah Describes the Passion

I consider myself blessed to have a sustained passion for teaching.

Passion was the fuel in the fire that guided me through my 46 sometimes challenging years in education. When you have passion for something, it shows. I could identify the passionate teachers by the way they appeared to live, breathe and love what they did. Their passion could be felt and seen in the way they went about their day-to-day duties and interacted with their students. If you do not have passion, you might as well be flying blind. I am glad that I started as a 21-year-old teacher and finished 46 years later with the same passion in my body.

Teaching is not for everyone, and as a young woman I had very different ambitions.

.....
 Passionate teachers inspire and genuinely get the desired outcomes that we all aim for.

I learnt as a leader that you can have a team of champions, but that does not mean you have a champion team. Everyone

From the memory box, No. 8, Henry Grossek



I wasn't expecting the question. In fact, it threw me for a moment. At a recent meeting with parents of prospective children at our school, I was asked to name any former students who were now famous. Something deep within me, and I wasn't quite sure in that moment what it was, held me back from rattling off the names of students whose success in life had brought them public recognition beyond their time at our school.

I think it was the word 'fame' that had me stumble. Fame is a fascinating concept. Celebrity fame is a prime example, especially when contrasted with the fame of, for example, our Indigenous greats such as Eddie Mabo, or that of say, Ita Buttrose whose long and illustrious career in the media has been impactful in so many ways. Then there are the countless people, beyond the fringes of public fame, people whose influence and success, it could be argued matches that of those who catch the public eye. Their fame resides in the shadows. Who then to honour the most?

Then there is the marketing side of things. Schools do honour their students who, through their achievements, bring fame on themselves and by extension their schools. On the other hand, what of those students who bring shame and infamy on themselves? Are we meant to ignore those students when assessing the reputation of a school? To what extent are schools accountable for the outcomes – fame or infamy of their students in adult life? Worth contemplating.

School leaders are influential. Our take on what counts as important in the way in which the success or failure, fame or infamy of our students is viewed, matters. In my time as the principal of the now closed Eastern Road Primary School in South Melbourne, a young boy with a passion for football attended our school. He was later to become a successful VFL (now AFL) footballer with Essendon. He did very well – I have always felt that his success had less to do with what we did for him at Eastern Road P.S. than many other factors in his life. Nonetheless, his name pops up from time to time. That's frequently the way of fame these days. People are more likely to know of famous entertainers – this including sporting stars, than others whose names do not hit the media headlines.

Oh yes, back to my parent's question. I explained that in answering, I would prefer to focus on 'memorable' rather than 'famous', acknowledging the subjectiveness of it all. I told the story of a day when I was driving home on the Monash Freeway and my car broke down. Some twenty minutes later an RACV tow truck arrived. Out jumped a young man, one I did not recognise. No such experience for him.

"Hello Mr Grossek," he said with a beaming smile. "I'll bet you're more pleased to see me today than all those times I was sent to your office." I most surely was. He had been a chronic visitor to my office for years, for all the wrong reasons. It turned out that in the years since graduating from our school, he had made a success of his life in many ways. Famous he was not, yet his contribution to our school's reputation was every bit as important as those with fame attached to their names.



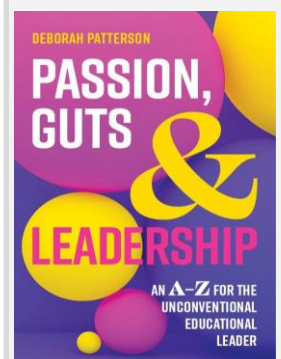
HENRY GROSSEK is the PRINCIPAL of BERWICK LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL and a member of the APF Council. henryk.grossek@education.vic.gov.au



has a purpose. We all have strengths in certain areas and skills that we can use or share with others.

The trick is to find out what your strengths are, match these with a passion for doing something and-- as a bonus--get paid for it. Good career advice and listening to others can lead you down pathways that you never would have imagined. Be creative, take those surveys to match your strengths and passions, and go for it. Embrace risk and don't be pressured to do something because your parents said to do it. Choose your career path wisely, because you are the one who has to wake up every day and turn up.

Your goal, as I have said, is to get paid to do something that you are good at and enjoy.



[Passion, Guts and Leadership – Amba Press](#)

A great read for all new and aspirant principals and students considering teaching as a career.

Between A Rock and A Hard Place – Kevin MacKay



A document called the Victorian Government Schools Agreement sets out a specific but limited number of employment conditions and expectations – for teachers, Support Staff and Principal employees in Victoria.

Every three or four years a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement can be negotiated between employees and their employer.

Typically, workload gets a run from teachers, Support Staff and Principal Employees as in – “*We work really harder than we are currently remunerated for, so pay us more.*” Just as typically, the rejoinder to that sort of argument is that there are benchmarks or relativities that allow salary comparisons to be arrived at fairly. For example, Prison Governors are the “benchmark” for Principals – because Prison Governors manage budgets that are comparable with an average school SRP.

That sort of negotiation pathway usually arrives at a stalemate situation because there is no way to adequately quantify principal or teacher workload let alone qualify it!

In the case of Principals, there is also the addition of Schedule B of additional responsibilities and requirements. Then there is a plethora of *Acts, Policies, Plans, MOUs, Regulations, Rules* and good old unwritten expectations that contribute to the expectations that constitute a Principal’s workload.

The AEU – as one of the “Bargaining Agents” usually argues that teachers should teach less, less time teaching, or lesser numbers of students– in order to do more of the things that would turn them into better teachers.

The APF - the Bargaining Agent for Principal Class Employees, typically argues that workload needs to be reduced for Principals. There’s an inbuilt anachronism though, as the Principal of a school is responsible for *everything* on a genuine 24/7 basis. (The “permitted worker” documents allocated to Principals during Covid restrictions required 24 hour access.) They already have the authority – and, sometimes, the budget to employ people to undertake elements of the “workload” to actually do something about reducing it for themselves. They can never shrug off or somehow delegate the responsibility, though.

Two examples may serve to highlight the issue of responsibility/accountability.

Example #1. A Principal constructs a communication to advise their community that another lock-down is imminent and writes: “ *yes, we understand it is inconvenient and a pain, but we will do what we can to support vulnerable children and children of essential workers.*” A Parent, having read the news, takes exception to the use of the word “pain.” The parent complains to the Regional Office that the Principal has clearly taken an anti-Government stance and needs to be reprimanded. An “official” from the Regional Office contacts the Principal, reprimands them, and tells them that in the next Newsletter an apology should be published.

Example #2 A Principal painstakingly publishes an Annual Report of 2000 words that has been signed off by a School Council President and a Regional Officer. Somebody in Review Branch reads the report and forms the view that there is not a quantum of the number of PCEs at the school. A “Functionary” from the Reviewing Branch advises a Regional Officer to instruct the Principal to recall the published report and add the required quantum of Principal Class Employees.

Now, these examples canvass small stuff, as in don’t sweat the small stuff. However, they both



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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resulted in additional work and both could have been eliminated if common-sense was included in Schedule B. Both should have been backed-up as reasonable and normal. But, no, they became mountains of micro-management by people who understand only one dimension of the work of a principal. The dimension that happens to be in their narrow bailiwick or silo.

Over time, since the **Schools of The Future** initiative, the focus of a Principal’s work has been gradually reconstituted to define more of an encyclopaedic pedant rather than a conductor (as in orchestral conductor) of learning. Therein lies the major difficulty in reducing workload. Meaningful reductions are problematic – especially in any emergency climate. We have experienced a time of a burgeoning public service built on so called line management accountability. Accountability, at its heart, is predicated upon a lack of trust. Based on a lack of trust, the reconstituted work of principals has turned Principals into everybody’s whipping persons.

Principals are truly between rocks and hard places. They get crap coming up, and crap coming down. They are, more than ever, just a number, rather than a living, breathing, thinking and vulnerable person. And because there are relatively few of them across Victoria, it’s easy to sacrifice a principal to avoid a higher-ups own demise, censure or dismissal. The higher-ups include the many agencies’ bosses, managers, directors or functionaries who typically have just one element of the education landscape to pay attention to.

Rather than pay lip service to workload reductions, the various Secretariats of the DE might be wiser to simply provide genuine back-up for their principals. Real support, not the bastardised support that actually translates to simply more work! Of course this pre-supposes a level of trust that has been sadly absent from DE values for quite some time now. It might afford beleaguered Principals the benefit of doubt when it comes to sweating the small stuff. Indirectly there could be a reduction in mindless work-load, so, maybe win-win!



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Please contact David on 0412 927 007 or Julie on 0419 103 664 for further information



Kevin MacKay is the former Principal of Dandenong North Primary school (26 Years), Long serving APF Councillor and Executive member, Member of 5 APF Bargaining Teams for Victorian Government School Agreements over 20 years.

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