

APPA Newsletter – August 2009

Dear Colleague

Gosh, where to start. There is so much happening on the national scene so I will do my very best to keep the newsletter as short as possible. Your National Executive Council met in Canberra on 30 and 31 July and as you will see we are busy ... busy ... busy. Which is good.

Transparency and Accountability

The topic of public reporting is certainly receiving a great deal of attention in the press and is a huge priority for APPA.

We have published our position paper on transparency (available on www.appa.asn.au) and will now be developing a one page summary to make it easier for everyone.

APPA has also invited Dr Ken Boston to Australia for the week of 10 to 14 August. This is generating enormous interest and Ken will be sharing with us his experiences in the UK in regards to national tests, league tables, etc. In a newspaper article (on our website) he said that high stakes testing in the UK has *sucked the oxygen out of the primary curriculum*.

If you would like to read more about his three public meetings: Sydney 10 August, Adelaide 12 August and Melbourne 13 August, the information is on our website. Over 800 parents, teachers and principals, etc have registered in total so far. I'm sorry we couldn't afford to have him visit all states / territories but his talk will be videoed and, along with a written summary, will be on our website asap.

We are also in joint discussions and planning with the secondary associations, unions and hopefully, parents, about the transparency agenda.

As our position paper clearly states – *we support transparency and accountability as long as it enhances primary education*.

Building the Education Revolution

We are very upfront that this is the best thing that has ever happened to primary schools despite the negative publicity. In fact, given the size, timeline and complexity of the task, it is not surprising that there have been some teething problems for some schools.

Executive has decided to write to the Minister (copies to all the State jurisdictions - all sectors) stating how positive we are and acknowledging the terrific work of all the jurisdictions, particularly for establishing a variety of strategies to resolve any issues that arise. We will also be heaping praise in the letter on the support we have received from DEEWR.

There is a great deal of goodwill to get this right. Our letter will raise two concerns that are impacting on a very small number of schools – the need for an extension of time for schools where P21 and School Pride timelines clash and for schools with limited access to more than one contractor.

Please keep in touch with your state / territory association and I'd love to hear some good news stories.... ltrimper@senet.com.au. I actually asked one journalist if they wanted some positive stories and just received a laugh and the comment that the Government would do that.

Government Funding Anomaly Money

APPA fought extremely hard to eliminate the funding anomaly that existed between government secondary and primary schools. Executive agreed that we will write to the Minister to provide her with a progress report about what has happened in each state / territory with the money (\$635m over five years).

Would you believe that the Northern Territory is the only jurisdiction that has allocated the full \$100 per student directly to every government primary school?

South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland have certainly been transparent about where the money is going to support primary but as for the rest.....it is very hard at this stage to determine exactly where the money has been allocated. This is very disappointing and I know AGPPA will continue the fight.

It's been terrific that all sectors have supported this and is an excellent example of why APPA is so influential.

Parliamentary Friends of Primary

APPA is currently working with our lobbyist to establish a *Parliamentary Friends of Primary Group*. The idea behind this is to bring together politicians on all sides to reinforce the message that primary school education is important and receives the profile it deserves.

We will be writing to a significant number of politicians to join our group and to meet our executive at Parliament House in October for us to all to meet and for us to share our priorities with them.

Would you believe we will be the first education group to initiate something like this?

Where To For The Next Five Years?

Whilst we can stand very tall about our recent achievements, there are still many questions concerning our sustainability, particularly since our Executive Director, Terry Aulich, needed to leave for family reasons; and the school where we are based in the ACT now needs their room back because of their increase in enrolments. We are now going to conduct a review amongst our executive to look at where we want to be in five years and what the barriers are that might prevent our continued success.

This is a critical time given we need to ensure that the next President (from 2011) has the necessary support (human and finances) and a base in Canberra to continue our momentum.

This will be imperative because the Federal Government is intending, for example, to start a review of school funding in 2010 – and this is only one major priority that will demand our attention. APPA must therefore be confident about its future sustainability.

APPA / MSP International Travel Award

Put simply.....

There's \$10,000 available for you (or maybe to share with a friend) to travel overseas for some professional learning. **Applications close on 21 August.** Details are on the web www.appa.asn.au – just click on the MSP logo. Why wouldn't you have a go?

We are very pleased to announce that Master School Portraits has undergone a review and now has a new logo and new website. They will now be called msp photography and their byline is *capturing school moments*. I can't think of a better group to be photographing your students. Keep an eye on our website to look at the expanded range of services they can provide.

Principals as Literacy Leaders

Our literacy project *Principals as Literacy Leaders* is going very, very well and there are some fabulous resources to share with you.

On our website in my section on the homepage, you will find a document posted on 26 June titled, ***The Identification of Assessment Resources to Support Children Learning in the Early Years of School***. Principals in the project are finding this a very helpful resource. Very soon you will also be able to access a literacy audit guide for classrooms in the early years, middle and upper primary.

We will keep posting material on the website to support you in your role.

I do urge you to keep an eye on our website as in June we received over 300,000 hits.

Annual Conference

Why don't you think of joining us at the [Gold Coast from 16-18 September](#) for our Annual Conference? The program is terrific and all you need do is go to our website www.appa.asn.au and click on the Conference tab.....fill out the registration form and perhaps invite a friend to join you. Go on....

Indigenous Proposal

Well we did it. We completed the homework task the Minister gave us on some practical ways to close the gap for Indigenous students. It took a while to complete and I must thank Principals Australia for the support we received from them. As soon as the Minister has marked our homework we will put our proposal on our website for you to read and, of course, will send it to all key stakeholders.

Sponsorship

Lobbyist, Parliamentary Friends of Primary and Dr Ken Boston's visit are just some of the examples of why our sponsors are soooooo important to us. Whilst they want to advertise their products you will see on our website that they are approaching this a little differently and wanting to support you in your role.

Scholastic continues to write literacy links for you to put in your newsletter. These are proving very popular. The following link http://www.keylinks.com.au/shared_reading.asp# will take you to the Scholastic website and a demonstration of an excellent example of guided reading and shared reading.

Education Works - Wooldridges are sharing resources on Aboriginal Studies and Books for Beginners.

Wattyl has produced a brochure to help you make the most of the Government's Stimulus Package.

R.E. Batgers is still offering the most unique furniture for primary schools I have ever seen. I urge you to have a look at the Bodyfurn Chair - it doesn't tip back and adjusts to the student's seating position.

From Tuesday 11 August the APPA Office will be based in Adelaide and I am delighted to announce that Christine Perri will increase her time to full time until the end of the year. This is good news indeed.

Can I conclude by saying thank you to all of you who have contacted APPA to acknowledge our role in BER and the funding anomaly? I pass on your thanks to the executive and it is always gratefully received.

Leonie Trimper
President