



Australian Secondary Principals Association

"Advocating for public secondary education"

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ASPA calls for a national conversation to address the issues highlighted in *The 2017 Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing Survey Report*.

15th February 2017: The Australian Secondary Principals' Association (ASPA) calls for a national conversation, at all levels, to address the issues raised in *The 2017 Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing Survey Report*.

The report highlights that there is no single stakeholder group responsible for the state of education and no single group has the power to effect much change on its own. The problems and the solutions are very similar in all sectors so the differences between the sectors are more superficial than substantive. The variation in social capital inside schools demonstrates that simple resourcing, while important, is not going to fix intractable issues.

"Many of the issues are entrenched in the wider Australian culture and a long term focus is essential for sustained improvement. This is not a time to look for quick fixes - we need a holistic enquiry approach to address these issues", said ASPA Executive Director Rob Nairn.

The new report released today clearly shows that increasing pressures, job demands, stress, threats and violence facing Australian principals are taking their toll, and urgent action is required. This issues will be exacerbated as principal turnover increases and positions become harder to fill.

Rob Nairn said - "ASPA has been leveraging off the best practice of exemplary principals across the country and driving profession led change. Schooling has changed and the way students learn has changed. We must invest in our next generation leaders and ensure they are well prepared to handle the demands and stresses of this challenging role. This requires a shared focus and dialogue between government, employers, peak bodies and school leaders".

The *Report* shows that since the survey was introduced in 2011 issues have worsened across many areas for school leaders and this cannot be ignored.

Principals still rate their biggest contributors to stress as the sheer quantity of work and lack of time to focus on their core business of teaching and learning. This must be addressed.

The report indicates that "If we improve the working conditions for principals and teachers we also improve the learning conditions for students, as the two are inseparable."

ASPA welcomes the positive news that more principals are taking control of their work-life balance and reducing their work hours during holiday periods. Unfortunately this is overshadowed by the deteriorating overall health and wellbeing of school leaders.

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