



TASMANIAN
PRINCIPALS
ASSOCIATION

Leadership in Focus – AGPPA/Tasmanian Principals Association

The Tasmanian Primary Principals and Secondary Principals associations amalgamated a little over ten years ago to form the Tasmanian Principals Association. The TPA advocates for public school principals and public education as well as providing opportunities for professional networking and learning.

The TPA has identified four dimensions in its work: professional, political, operational and industrial. We work through a structure which has three branches, a state executive and a president. We seek to take a publicly proactive approach in each of the four dimensions, as much as possible, by establishing a vision of continuously improving Tasmanian education and by working positively with the Department of Education, the Government, Australian Education Union and other stakeholder groups including parent bodies.

Principals in Tasmanian primary schools face similar issues to their colleagues around the country. Workload remains a challenge while efforts to improve the number of other senior personnel working in support of principals have so far proven unsuccessful. This adds up to serious concerns regarding principal health and wellbeing. There may be some light at the end of the tunnel given an improved budgetary position. The very big “but” is that the staffing formula for schools was varied negatively as part of a political/industrial context that came to a head with stop work action in November 2014. This means that almost all primary schools lost staff (up to 2.0 FTE) which, given the comparatively small size of Tasmanian schools, is a significant change that few schools, if any, could absorb without increasing class sizes and/or cutting programmes.

The TPA is currently awaiting the exposure draft of the revamped Tasmanian Education Act (1994) and is very interested in how submissions will be interpreted. We want to see a preamble which sets a confident and optimistic tone. We are concerned that the inclusion of technical definitions may become limiting, rather than enabling. Submissions, available under freedom of information, are being used by print journalists as the basis of a series of somewhat contentious newspaper articles.

Malcolm Elliott

President

Tasmanian Principals Association

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