

Principals welcome the focus on quality teaching and school leadership

The Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) welcomes the major parties' commitment to quality classroom teaching and higher teacher education standards.

APPA President, Dennis Yarrington, said that reports about schooling and education are no longer the sole domain of bureaucrats and educators. Today, they hit the pages of mainstream and business media. This, he said, was a welcome and much needed development if Australians genuinely want their children to contribute to the community, find meaningful employment and lead fulfilling lives.

Mr Yarrington said that quality teaching and school leadership were critical to these aspirations and we must build on the momentum of today.

"Over just the last week or two – and this amidst an election campaign where the attention on schools and education policy is the highest it's ever been – I've read feature articles on teaching practice in The Economist and Australian Financial Review, watched a panel discussion on the quality of Australian schooling, read a just published report about how principals affect schools and continued to enjoy the TV series about how one school turns itself around.

"Let's welcome the attention and may it continue. The public needs to hear that teaching is a highly regarded profession requiring passion, dedication and well-honed skills. There are many aspects to bringing great teaching to the classroom and principals are key to leading best practice.

"In teacher education, we want the very best people entering our universities to begin a teaching degree; rigorous teacher education courses that focus on evidence-based teaching practice; and extensive practical experience in schools under quality supervision. Here, we need our universities always to be working with school principals to make sure every graduate is 'classroom ready'.

"For current teachers, whether new to the profession or with many years of experience, there is always the task to seek improvement and growth. Here again, principals provide the guidance and support at a personal and professional level."

Mr Yarrington believes we need the best teachers in classrooms, together with the best principals leading our schools.

"Leading a school is a tough gig and, while a great privilege, there are challenges whether it be in a small, isolated community or in a large regional or metropolitan location. So it's pleasing to see that there is also a focus on school leadership at a political level. We look forward to working with the future government on a national school leadership strategy targeted at the next generation of principal."

APPA is the professional association representing over 7,200 Government, Catholic and Independent primary school principals across Australia.

16 June 2016

Media contact: Dennis Yarrington (APPA President): 0466 655 468