



2023 Annual General Meeting



- Advocacy
- Professional Learning
- Principal Wellbeing
- Research

ACTPA President's Report

The ACT Principals Association's Core Purpose Statement guides our work in promoting advocacy, professional learning, principal wellbeing and research. We thank the association's executive members for bringing initiatives to fruition this year, and our membership for their feedback and engagement.

The ACTPA membership has continued to grow steadily this year, from 74 financial members in 2022 to 80 in 2023. Of these:

- 54 are Principals (51 in 2022)
- 24 are Deputy Principals (22 in 2022)
- 1 is a Retiree
- 1 is an Associate

ACTPA's Executive was altered through two significant appointments. Vice President, Lyndall Read set off to the Teacher Quality Institute. We congratulate her on her position as Chief Executive Officer, and thank her for her ongoing contributions to the teaching profession in Canberra. Chris Jones stepped seamlessly into the Co-Vice Presidency and I am so grateful for his diligence and integrity.

Following Andrew Pierpoint's retirement, Andy Mison was elected as President of the Australian Secondary School Principals Association and he commenced the role this term. We know that Andy's perspectives will be highly valued in the work he will undertake for Principals throughout Australia. We thank Steve Collins for stepping into the ACTPA Co President's role, and Gareth Richards for picking up where Steve left off as Co Vice President this term.

Membership trends reflect active engagement of ACTPA Executive with colleagues across the system, listening to what matters and ensuring that grounded perspectives inform deliberations and advocacy. ACTPA has continued to offer school leaders a strong professional network for a very low subscription. An annual allocation of \$25,000 from the Education Directorate complements investment, of members and sponsors, in development opportunities for the profession, by the profession. The quantum of this allocation is currently under review as EA negotiations unfold.

Advocacy

ACTPA's Co-Presidents and Vice Presidents were frequently called to work with the senior executive of the Directorate to ensure strategies and plans put in place would work at the school and community level, whilst supporting community health requirements and government responsibilities. ACTPA was instrumental in shaping EDU policies to better support schools with their manageability. We have worked closely with ED Executive on workload reduction measures to assist schools through the worst of staffing shortages and teacher morale.

Our meetings with the Director-General and the Minister have continued throughout the year as a forum for open dialogue, informing strategic actions and communication with school leaders regarding issues that impact their daily work. In particular we have represented the views reflected in our regular membership surveys, most notably this year around HR, workload, staff morale and connections between staff within the directorate and Principals. Other areas that received our consideration and input in this dynamic year included the Principal Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Education Act legislation review. Participation, distance education and inclusion have been prominent features of these conversations.

We have continued our engagement with the AEU in 2023. Regular ACTPA/AEU meetings provide an opportunity to voice the concerns and input of our members. ACTPA Member Surveys have provided clear information to the AEU, setting a platform for collaboration as future claims are drafted. We thank Angela Burrows and Patrick Judge, for their interest in working with ACTPA to support quality leadership of the ACTs public schools, and conditions that help principals to grow a thriving teacher workforce.

ACTPA played a significant role in the refinement of the workload reduction strategy building on the association's proposal that was developed last year. This continued to feed into the work of the Workload Reduction Committee, through ACTPA representatives, this year. Quality, timeliness and impact of supports continue to be the interest of ACTPA members.

ACTPA Co-Presidents have publicly represented ACT principals throughout the year in the media, with commentary provided on ABC local and national radio, the Canberra Times and other media outlets, mainly in response to workforce issues and the impact of personal devices, especially mobile phones, on our work.

ACTPA representatives have had the opportunity for input into a range of advisory groups, committees, forums and inquiries, including:

- The ED's Principal Health and Wellbeing Governance group;
- TQI sub-committees - Professional Learning and Development, Initial Teacher Education, Standards and Professional Practice;
- ED's Policy and Procedures Reference Group;
- Directorate Consultative Committee;
- Business Managers' Advisory Group;
- BSSS Committees and Board;
- Public Education Awards;
- Teacher Scholarship panel;
- Briefing forums for executive officers in the Directorate; and
- The ED Safe at School Advisory Group.

Australian Secondary Principals' Association (ASPA)

ACTPA is represented on the Board of ASPA by the Secondary Co-President. This has been Andy Mison for the past few years and we were especially pleased during 2023, when Andy was appointed ASPA President. We will hear from Andy soon about the important work he is leading in ASPA to unify the States and Territories and ultimately strengthen the voice ASPA in strategically shaping educational reform.

Australian Government Primary Principals' Association (AGPPA) and Australian Primary Principals' Association (APPA)

Primary principal members of ACTPA are represented by their Co-President and Co-Vice President on two national groups, the Australian Primary Principals' Association (APPA) and the Australian Government Primary Principals' Association (AGPPA).

Wendy and Chris are members of the AGPPA Council, and Wendy is Secretary for the Executive, which comprises Patrick Murphy (President, Queensland), Robyn Evans, (Vice President, South Australia) and Andrew Dalglish (Treasurer, Victoria). Wendy is also a member of the National Advisory Council for APPA. We are privileged to represent and advocate for the ACT on these bodies which have a strong influential voice at the national level on primary education and school leadership.

The strategic work undertaken in the primary sector on the national scene is framed by the AGPPA Strategic Plan to progress:

- a preferred future of government Primary Education;
- investment/resourcing: Staffing and infrastructure;
- high quality leadership; and
- principal health and wellbeing.

The national groups have been consulted, and developed positions on School funding and the National School Reform Agreement. This year we have engaged with the First 1000 Days Ambassador, Jay Weatherall, Jenny Donovan, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Educational Research Organisation has addressed the group.

We have ongoing relationships with ACARA, AITSL, ESA and ACEQA. An invitation to dine with ACARA's CEO, David de Carvalho, once again ensured the perspectives of Public

School Principals have been shared about NAPLAN, Myschool and the review of the Australian Curriculum. David shared his penultimate address at APPA's November meeting in Canberra, as news of his successor was pending. We have since been delighted to learn that Steve Gneil will be acting in this role until the substantive appointment is announced.

We have enjoyed conversations and consultancy with Director General, SA Ed, Professor Martin Westwell, Federal Minister for Education, Jason Clare, and the Federal Secretary, Education, Tony Cook.

A small delegation of ACTPA members attended the 2023 APPA Conference in Hobart in July. James Castrission, Angela Faulkenberg, Pasi Sahlberg, Simon Breakspear, Nathan Wallis and Gihan Perera were amongst the speakers who focused delegates on the conference theme, *Refreshing Leadership and Inspiring Futures*. We trust many members will convene in New Zealand for the 2024 Trans Tasman Conference.

Wendy was part of the AGPPA delegation, representing the Asia-Oceania region at the *International Confederation of Principals Council Plus* meeting, in Rovaniemi in late September. This meeting provided perspective and inspiration about *Future Schools- Future Leaders*, and enabled rekindled and freshly minted connections. ACTPA Life Member Michael Hall continues to provide insight and wisdom to this Council as its Asia-Oceania Representative.

National and International Association Websites

Australian Secondary Principals Association (ASPA) Newsletter <https://www.aspa.asn.au/>

Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) News <https://appa.asn.au/>

Australian Government Primary Principals Association www.agppa.asn.au

International Confederation of Principals (ICP) <https://icponline.org/>

Wellbeing

Just in time and informal connections between ACTPA members continue to be strong contributors to professional wellbeing. They have generated and complemented a range of activities on the 2023 calendar.

Australian Principal's Day

Principal's Day 2023 was promoted by APPA and celebrated in schools across the ACT. This year ACTPA used this day to launch its reframed *Principal for a Day* initiative, inviting senior executive officers from the ACT Education Directorate to immerse themselves in a school, alongside its leader, during Term 4. Invitations were well received, and while calendars limited the uptake by some this year, the directorate's senior officers have indicated their support of the continuation of this initiative in 2024.

Reconciliation Day

Members Vicki Lucas, Annamaria Zuffo, Katherine Stretton, Peter Kent and Wendy Cave were delighted to engage in a panel discussion in the Margaret Whitlam Pavilion on Reconciliation Day, and we thank Natalie Howson for bringing this opportunity to our community. We were joined by students and members of the ACTED to explore the impact of principals on younger generations and how learning for Reconciliation looks in ACT Schools.

ACTPA Social Gatherings

ACTPA members have stayed in touch through a blend of online and face to face events. Steve Collins and Melissa Planten enjoyed representing ACTPA as invited guests at the United Nations International Women's Day lunch in Canberra.

The **Principals Party**, at the National Portrait Gallery was a highlight of the ACTPA calendar this year. We were honoured to share the company of many past and current Principals, who have contributed to the ACT's system of public schools throughout its 50 year history. More recent additions to ACTPA enjoyed hearing a little of the system's grand narrative, as a collection of portraits served as a stimulus.

We thank Dennis Flannery for providing perspective, guidance and manpower to the organising team, and for leading our work in gathering information about those who have led our schools. We aim to build on this work in 2024, with the assistance of Malcolm Beasley and the National Museum of Education.

Professional Learning

ACTPA continued to provide a variety of professional development opportunities this year for school leaders including the continuation of the 'What can leaders learn from other industry' series.

This year we enjoyed meeting with the (then) ACT Emergency Services Agency Commissioner. Ms Whelan candidly shared the pressures and vulnerabilities that often present themselves in high stakes leadership and the messages were well received and easily applied to our roles as school leaders.

We also returned to the Canberra Raiders Headquarters, where we greatly appreciated a presentation on the strategic model of communication employed by the Raiders. This included delivering key messages to individuals that are emotionally and physically heightened, fatigued or just plain beaten up - again we were easily able to draw applications to school leadership.

Research

ACTPA Surveys

We thank Chris Jones for sustaining a routine of member surveys in 2023. Collection and analysis of this data has informed the agendas of meetings between ACTPA, senior officers within the ACTED, and the AEU, and *State of the Nation* reports to the National Principal

bodies. These pulse checks have also offered a snapshot into perceptions of matters of national significance as we contribute to the work of AGPPA, APPA and ASSPA.

Principals Australia Research Foundation

The project, *Re defining the Primary School Principal: Applying a Service lens to Educational Leadership*, built on the experience of a team of ACTPA members and their journey of coaching by designers. The Principals Australia Research Foundation recognised the potential of its influence on national efforts to inform, drive and advocate for quality leadership across the sector - whilst empowering leaders and promoting wellbeing. The final paper was delivered to AGPPA last December.

Wendy accepted an invitation to present this work at the *International Confederation of Principals Emerging Leaders Forum* in Rovaniemi, Finland in September. She shared the stage with past ACTPA President, Michael Hall, in a session titled '*What I wish I'd known before I became a Principal: Managing the Complexity of Contemporary School Leadership*'. Re connecting with colleagues from around the world and representing Australian Principals in this forum, and at the Council Plus meeting was an honour.

Our Sponsors

This year sponsorship arrangements took a different form, with formal agreements no longer in place. Instead, a number of ACTPA's long term sponsors supported events, including this AGM and the Principals Party. We thank The School Photographer, Master School Portraits, and Smart Tech Industries for their work with us this year.

We thank Executive Members, Chris Jones and Kim McCormack for their stewardship of this responsibility, which brings additional resources and goodwill to ACTPA as a professional education body.

A final word...

As school leaders, you have done an outstanding job in leading your communities through the extraordinary times we are in. You have remained calm, found solutions and been there to support others. Your efforts in responding to critical needs as they emerge can not be overstated. School leaders continue to be arguably more pivotal than at any time before to the safety and wellbeing of the ACT community.

Thank you to all members who attended or connected with professional learning and social activities during the year. Your collegiality and capacity as professional educators provide the motivation and purpose for the work of our association.

We acknowledge our Director-General, Katy Haire and the ACTED senior executive for the open door they provide for listening to ACTPA. In 2023 the active partnership with the Education Directorate executive team has enabled members to offer contributions to professional learning, strategic planning and the all critical workforce shortage response.

Once again, we extend our gratitude to Mark Eyles for ensuring we had the right papers and accurate information to share. Mark has been supporting ACTPA in this role for 17 years and for many before that, as a member and school and system leader.

Thank you to all the ACTPA Executive who have passionately represented the interests of School Leaders throughout the year. At the conclusion of tonight's AGM, we will pay tribute to some highly respected Principals who are retiring from the profession and we wish them well.

Wendy Cave & Steve Collins
ACTPA Co-Presidents

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As my term of Presidency draws to a close, I wish to acknowledge the honour it has been to have served in this role for ACTPA. I have stood on the shoulders of giants and am forever grateful for the opportunities afforded to me.

Membership of ACTPA is, I have found, one of the most important elements of a professional wellbeing strategy. It offers connection, efficacy and acknowledgement by peers, the community, Ministers and policy makers. I value the networks and friendships my participation has enabled so highly.

Through ACTPA, I've seen the country, I've seen the world, I've observed and learnt about leadership and the part good governance plays in it. In return, I've shared and done what I can to help others understand the powerhouse of perspective Principals are, fuelled by insight and skill that builds through our work, every day as adaptive agents serving our communities. What a journey it has been!

I thank Team ACTPA, and wish our incoming Executive every success.

Wendy