Dear Colleagues

I hope the term has been successful and full of achievements. I encourage you to have some time away from your emails, school business and education thinking: be distracted by nature, music, food or a good book/movie. We need to allow our brain to relax and have a rest from the constant “ON”. Use absent messages to let people know you still care, but at this point you are on leave or not in the office. The Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey (hope you completed it) reminds us that looking after yourself is the first step in being ready to lead others. I will spend time lost in the vegie garden and enjoying time with family and friends. I might even try a new recipe – oh no! A learning challenge without paperwork or data! Also, watching the mighty Swans!

This term has been focused on the follow-up to the election result and responding to the Government’s policy position, NAPLAN Online trial and the Productivity Commission’s inquiry into the National Education Evidence base.

During the term APPA’s National Advisory Council met in Adelaide and spent time on developing a paper for NAPLAN Online. This is available on the APPA website. The meeting also included workshops on the response to the federal government’s election policy on education and Principal Health and Wellbeing research project.

At the meeting in Adelaide we welcomed our partners, Academy Photography, Parentshop and a new partner in Teachersonnet (Tap for Teacher App). Our NAC dinner was well attended and we welcomed new members Louise Peyton (NT) and Brad Nelson (Vic).

Government’s Quality Schools Quality Outcomes.
The election saw education on the agenda and since the result, education has continued to be a prominent issue. We were pleased to see Minister Birmingham reappointed to the education portfolio. This continuity will enable us to build a stronger relationship and present advice on primary education. I have had one meeting with both the minister’s office and shadow minister’s office. We are planning a number of briefing meetings with returning and new MPs on APPA’s position on a number of issues regarding primary education. APPA has presented a response to the government’s education policy and this is available on the website. APPA has identified three key future focus areas. These include: Principals as Leaders of Learning: Literacy, Numeracy and STEM, Teaching and School Leadership, and Preparing our Students for a Globalised World.

NAPLAN Online
APPA’s reference group have met with ACARA via teleconference. A number of issues were discussed that were in the APPA Position paper. We agreed to ongoing meetings to continue the discussion and to address concerns with moving NAPLAN Online. APPA sent out a short survey for principals to complete regarding the NAPLAN Online Trial. We have produced a summary report and provided copies to the APPA NAC, Minister, Shadow Minister and ACARA. A copy will be on the website shortly. A summary of the findings is in Connected Leader.
In conversations with principals about the trial, a number talk about problems with technology, set up and the test format. This includes screen freezes, dropping out, students who aren’t familiar with desktop skills, calculators not working and problems with screen sizing. I also acknowledge some report everything went well.

APPA is continuing to push the line that online writing assessment is not supported for Year 3. We have raised this issue with a range of stakeholders. I have also been talking with principals and the concerns are consistent. The impact of the trial needs close consultation and further work in enabling schools to be ready over the next three years for NAPLAN Online.

Principal Health and Wellbeing

I encourage all principals to complete the survey: your voice is vital. APPA will be undertaking targeted research on the role of employers, system leaders and departments in ensuring we have quality leadership and a high performing principal in every school in Australia. This research will roll out in term 1 2017.

The research will explore the role of employers more deeply, and will identify the current range of strategies and actions in place. We will also propose recommendations for enhancing current practices and provide suggestions for additional strategies and actions. These suggestions will address current work practices and processes and will make recommendations for policy development.

The research will draw on the feedback from current principals and school leaders, system and department personnel, and employers. The desktop review of current policy for principal health and wellbeing will complement the surveys and case study components for the project. The research team will look to draw on information from international studies, reports and input from other education systems and professional associations.

National Educational Evidence Base: Inquiry by the Productivity Commission

APPA has provided a submission to the Productivity Commission’s inquiry into the National Education Evidence Base. See our website for a media release on the Commission’s report. The Commission has recently released a draft report with an overview and draft recommendations. APPA will provide a response to the draft report.

PAI

At the APPA Board meeting we welcomed Principals Australia Institute new chair, Anne Skipper and CEO, Paul Geyer. Anne presented her background and the key tasks ahead. This includes developing a futures strategy, enhancing connection with stakeholders and a renewed focus for PAI. KidsMatter and Mind Matters is still a focus for PAI and at this stage there is no news on the invitation to tender for the project. PAI will be in contact with professional associations and schools regarding the tender. Another key project is certification for principals. While the government announce policy initiatives on principal preparation, PAI will be keen to work with the government, principal associations and jurisdictions on both projects. School leader well-being is also on the agenda and PAI is seeking opportunities to support associations and provide programs for jurisdictions.
Principals Australia Institute have been coordinating the John Laing awards. My congratulations to all recipients. The award recognises the contribution a leader has given to principal associations for professional learning for principals’ and school leaders.

**AITSL**

AITSL recently announced the appointment of Ms Lisa Rodgers as AITSL’s new Chief Executive Officer. Lisa joins AITSL from the New Zealand Ministry of Education, where she was Deputy Secretary, Early Learning and Student Achievement. We look forward to meeting Lisa soon.

At the APPA Board meeting held recently in Melbourne, AITSL, as represented by Sue Buckley, Edmund Misson and Sarah Richardson discussed the following topics: Principals Preparation and Accreditation; Beginning Teachers (Induction, Attrition); and ITE Course Content / Standards. Sue outlined the principal preparation work and this stage nothing definite can be reported. We discussed the Scenarios and Leadership Pathways Projects, both now on the AITSL website. AITSL to provide guidelines for use. Future scenarios include managing staff performance, working with the community and developing a school vision. The Induction Guidelines for new graduates is now released. We discussed retention and attrition. AITSL has produced a short report.

The curriculum for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses is reviewed by state accreditation bodies. Suggestion to send APPA’s Top Ten Elements to agencies. AITSL is collecting data on national teacher and employer satisfaction. Discussion was held around the literacy and numeracy standards that ITE course need to address. APPA could look at requesting a review into the standards.

**APPA Conference 2017: 12-15 September in Brisbane**

The 2017 Committee meet in Brisbane and have confirmed the keynote speakers. An expression of interest for workshops has been released. The three convenors will be John O’Connor (ACPPA), David Turner (QASSP) and Trudy Moala (IPSHA). QASSP (Mags) will be the manager for the conference. The sponsors and business partners’ prospectus will be out shortly. One initiative to be included at the conference is the Aspiring Leader Day on the Friday. Conference delegates can invite their aspiring leader to join them for the day a special price. This will be a great opportunity to introduce aspiring leaders to a national conference and assist in building our future leaders. For more information, see the Conference 2017 page on our website.

**Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)**

I attended their Annual Forum recently in Sydney. This authority is responsible for the implementation and regulation of the National Quality Framework that covers early childhood services and centres. The Forum’s focus was on research and development of NQF evaluation framework. The Productivity Commission provided an outline of the key findings and recommendations of the draft report on the National Education Evidence Base. The Mitchell Institute provided an overview on research priorities for high-impact policy and practice in Early Childhood Education and Care. Results from the E4Kids study: implications for quality improvement agenda was also presented. A key finding was the quality of instructional interaction and support impacts on children’s language development. The Forum also involved a workshop on reviewing and providing feedback on the NQF Evaluation Framework. During the day, retiring CEO Karen Curtis provided an update on progress towards all centres being rated on the national standards. Some statistics: 15417 children’s education and care services in Australia; 12286 (80%) services with a quality rating; 8655(70%) services are meeting or above the National
Quality Standard; 7506 approved providers with 6246 operating only one children’s service; 49 services rated as excellent by ACECQA. See [website](#) for more information on services and the Starting Blocks package.

Conferences/School Visits
I have been fortunate to attend principal conferences and visit schools with the opportunity to discuss issues and concerns with principals. This has included QASSP, CaSPA, QCPPA, and the ADC Forum.

**School visits:** Harrison School ACT, Fraser Primary ACT, Mosman Prep NSW, Westminster SA, St Mary’s NT, Holy Family NT, St Francis of Assisi NT, St Paul’s NT, Kormilda College NT, John Paul College QLD, Trinity Lutheran School QLD, Murphy’s creek SS QLD, Newtown SS QLD and Latham primary ACT.

Special Projects
APPA is working with the Sports Commission regarding a project on Physical Literacy. The draft project paper has been circulated to NAC and a small reference group has been formed. Physical literacy is about the movement and motor skills and knowledge of young children. The project is focused on identifying strategies and programs that can be implemented or enhanced to address the growing number of children with poor movement and motor skills. APPA is keen to ensure any focus is aligned to the Australian Curriculum and includes a community responsibility aspect to the project.

**International Forum:** *Shaping Spaces for Gen Z* will be held in Canberra on 7th December 2016. APPA has been invited by Canberra University to participate and contribute to this forum. The forum is looking at identifying strategies and polices that lead to more children riding or walking to and from school, playing in outdoor environments and better design principles for school communities and new developments. More information on the forum will be posted on the website at the start of next term.

Meetings and other events:
I have attended meetings with the Commonwealth Department (Teleconference), Sports Commission, ACARA, Smith Family Principals Advisory Board, PM’s Science Teacher Award Committee, PAI Board Meeting, School Aid Board meeting, QCECQA Forum and National Maths Project reference group.

**My Hero Day July 29:** Thank you to the schools who donated to the Captain Courageous Foundation. Thanks again to Stirling East Primary School (SA) student leaders who produced the campaign video. Go to the [KidsGive](#) website for schools to access. Please put this on your calendar for 2017 – a great day for your school.
I wish everyone a safe and restful break. I hope you return to Term 4 with renewed enthusiasm and have a great finish to 2016. I look forward to working with the APPA NAC, state and territory principal associations and, visiting and talking with principals.

Regards

Dennis Yarrington
President APPA

Thank you to the many principals who have invited me to visit their school: what a great privilege. Please see the photo board below.
Congratulations TMB on 50 Years and welcome as a business partner of APPA