

As the seasons inexorably click around to the shorter days of autumn and the temptation rises to curl up indoors with a good book it's as well to remember the positive wellbeing factors from engaging in physical activity. At a recent Wellbeing Symposium hosted by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) it came as a surprise to learn that only 15% of school aged students engaged in sufficient physical activity to meet the guidelines. There are a number of strategic initiatives underway to explore what could make a difference to this; initiatives that include tangible support from the sporting, health and education sectors – with additional discussions on how the role of parents in inclusive school based sporting activities can be supported and encouraged.

The Wellbeing Symposium saw the presentation of the report 'Are the kids alright? *Young Australians in their middle years*' from the Australian Child Wellbeing Project that gave a fascinating perspective and opportunity to learn more of the middle years of education - years that just happen to collide with adolescence and all that goes with that at such a crucial time in our children's lives. A range of speakers and discussions helped to explore the pressure points, sensitivities and opportunities in this field. This is a growing area of interest and one that appears to offer considerable scope to improve the outcomes for our children's development, and their future lives. A summary of its findings and the topical presentations from the day can be found here: www.australianchildwellbeing.com.au

Linking in to the topic of wellbeing is the ongoing discussion surrounding Safe Schools Coalition Australia (SSCA). Bill Loudon's report had been delivered, politicians briefed and the Minister has given the Government's response, recommendations and required changes. As the President of ACSSO I am a member of the SSCA National Steering Committee and ACSSO is strongly supportive of the programme and its essential objectives. SSCA is currently working with the Department of Education and Training to clarify the recommendations and required changes with a focus on ensuring that the programme can continue to provide essential support and training for schools across Australia. For further information and detail please visit: www.safeschoolscoalition.org.au

The 2015 ASG National Excellence In Teaching Awards (NEITA) were presented this month – to twelve of Australia's very best Teachers covering the three sectors of early years, primary and secondary. What makes them even more special is that they were among over 1,100 initial nominations made by parents and communities across Australia. Having met some of them it is their deep commitment and passion for giving their very best for the benefit of our children that shines through. Nominations for the 2016 awards will open in April – very soon - so in the meantime please consider nominating a Teacher that works with your children and is worthy of greater

recognition. The winner's profiles can be found here: www.asg.com.au/community-initiatives

Wishing you all the very best for the fast approaching end of term holiday break.

Phillip Spratt