

A message from ACSSO Chair Sharron Healy



Teaching our children well

The upside

The recent Federal Budget education announcements were both pleasing and frustrating for the staff and families in this sector.

At ACSSO, we were pleased to see a guarantee of at least four years' funding for Universal Access to Early Childhood Education. For years, early childhood services have struggled with uncertain 12-month funding commitments, making planning and staffing extremely difficult. This funding decision is a positive step towards a permanent undertaking to provide Australia's children with the high quality preschool education that evidence proves will change their lives for good.

Elsewhere in the budget, investments in the Respectful Relationships programs in schools, and reforms for the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention system are very much welcomed, and both are expected to have positive flow-on effects to student wellbeing and achievement.

The downside

However, the lack of much-needed additional resources for government schools in this budget is very frustrating and disappointing. ACSSO's recent research has confirmed what we have long known – that the equity gap is widening. We expect the Australian Government to address this gap to ensure every child in an Australian government school has the resources needed to achieve their full potential.

Read our media release on the education sector's mixed budget news [here](#).

Parents Australia update

The ACSSO Board and CEO met on 15-16 May in Launceston, Tasmania, to discuss recent happenings in education and our advocacy priorities.

One of our objectives is to increase the profile of our Parents Australia website. [Parents Australia](#) is designed to help families support their children's wellbeing, learning and education. If you haven't visited the site before, or if it's been a while since your last visit, please check out the fabulous array of free resources, information, and referral links we've made available and keep extending. Head to <http://www.parentsaustralia.com/>.

Tasmanian connections

While in Tasmania, our Board had the opportunity to meet with [Malcolm Elliott](#), President of the Australian Primary Principals Association ([APPA](#)), and share our thoughts on initial teacher education. It was a fascinating exchange, and we all appreciated the opportunity to connect in person.

A presentation on Trauma Informed Practice from Dr. Elspeth Stephenson showcased the successes being achieved through Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI). Pilot schools in Tasmania have found the TBRI method of teaching extremely beneficial to students and staff. It is a model we would like to see replicated across the nation.

Family webinar a sell-out success

Our latest webinar, *Building Resilience and Creating Happy Kids*, featuring the engaging and enlightening clinical psychologist, Andrew Fuller, was a huge success, 'selling out' the free tickets within days of being advertised.

Our next webinar will discuss the increasingly concerning issue of consent, and the teaching of consent principles within our classrooms. Make sure you keep an eye out on this newsletter, our website and the ACSSO [social media](#) channels for more information soon.

Public Education Day 2021

Public education is a public good. ACSSO is committed to advocating for the right of every child to access a high quality education.

Public education brings together children and young people from a range of diverse backgrounds, and creates a cohesive community which works as one to create equity, hope, and opportunity. It provides lifelong benefits to students through access to education, improved health, wellbeing and employment.

On 27 May we celebrate all that is Public Education – how is your school celebrating?

Reminder: survey closing soon!

National Family Survey – CLOSING DATE EXTENDED NOW MAY 28 - scroll down for shareable QR Code.

We recently launched our follow-up Australian Family survey on Schooling during the Covid-19 Pandemic. This survey builds upon that which was conducted in 2020, and will pursue the major themes of that survey, being: family and child wellbeing; access to adequate equipment and appropriate learning formats; and questions of engagement with schools under pandemic conditions.

We are eager to hear from all families about their experiences with education so far in 2021. You don't have to have completed the first survey to complete this one. We are keen to use the learnings from these survey responses to inform our discussions with government and ensure the current schooling needs of students and their families are being met.

You can access our latest survey via [this link](#) or the QR code at the top of this email. We have extended the closing date to 28 May as school communities had asked for more time to share the survey with families.

The information we compile from this survey, and last year's, help us to advocate for your school community with governments. Please make sure it's been shared as widely as possible this week!

Sharron Healy

Chair

Australian Council of State School Organisations

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