



A new Declaration

Just as this newsletter was being finalised, our COAG Education Council released its review of the “Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians”.

The nation's new goals for young Australians are now contained in the [*Alice Springs \(Mpartnwe\) Education Declaration*](#). While we haven't time to read the statement thoroughly, we can endorse the top level goals the Education Ministers have agreed upon:

Goal 1: The Australian education system promotes excellence and equity

Goal 2: All young Australians become:

- **confident and creative individuals**
- **successful lifelong learners**
- **active and informed members of the community.**

The choice of Alice Springs is a fitting location for this important work: set in the centre of Australia, and not tied to any specific capital city. It is an Australian review, in the red heart of the nation.

ACSSO was proud to provide a consolidated submission during this process, and we wish our leaders a clear focus on improved family engagement and equitable outcomes for all children in Australian education.

Early childhood education recognised

We are also pleased to see that at least one of ACSSO's key campaigns has been recognised in this important declaration, with early childhood education officially recognised as being "critical in giving every child the best possible start in school".

We hope to see appropriate resourcing and policy direction accompanying this vital area, starting with permanent funding for two years of quality preschool access for every Australian child.

PISA and the future of literacy and numeracy

As expected, there has been plenty of commentary regarding Australia's results in the most recent PISA testing. Our national standings have not improved since these examinations began.

Many solutions were proposed for these PISA outcomes in the past week, with some reasonable and common themes echoing our continuing cries: help our teachers teach, let our parents engage, and make the funding fair.

In light of the PISA results, we will pay particular attention to the solutions proposed as we read the Alice Springs Declaration. We hope that clear and reasonable minds prevailed in the final deliberations and that we might see a turning point from 2020.

Ends and beginnings

As we round out this final term - enjoying the end of year concerts, celebrating our children's transitions into their next life journey, and saying "see ya later" to our school community connections - we can reflect on another busy year.

We thank all who have contributed to their school communities through family engagement. Your support is meaningful, worthwhile and a truly valuable investment. I wish you all a very safe and relaxing break, ready to continue with these contributions in 2020!

To the ACSSO staff, board, members, and our supporters I thank your ongoing dedication to public education, and the national education agenda. I look forward to continuing to work with each of the National, State and Territory teams to achieve our common goals.

See you all in the new year!

Andrew Bidwell

Chair

Australian Council of State School Organisations

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