

# A message from ACSSO Chair Sharron Healy



## New beginnings...

And just like that the end of Term 2 is upon us.

Last month saw a change of Federal Government, and we are pleased to [welcome](#) the Hon. [Jason Clare](#) MP to the position of Minister for Education. We were encouraged by his [announcement last week to expand the current Chaplaincy Program](#) to include appropriately trained and qualified secular workers as a funded option for our government schools. It's a good first step in ensuring all of our students feel included, welcomed, and safe when seeking help at school. We also welcome and look forward to working with the [Hon. Anne Aly](#) in the area of Early Childhood Education.

At this time we would like to thank the outgoing Shadow Minister for Education, [Tanya Plibersek](#), for her dedication to public education, and her deep engagement with ACSSO over the last few years. We wish her well with her new portfolio of Environment and Water.

### Connecting with principals' associations

Our Board recently underwent training, held discussions with members, and met with Andrew Pierpoint, Australian Secondary Principals Association President, and Pat Murphy, President of the Australian Government Primary Principals Association.

It was interesting and encouraging to find we share so much common ground in our visions for a more equitable, inclusive public education system, and we look forward to engaging further with both bodies, and collaborating where we can.

We are also absolutely delighted to welcome ASPA as an awards sponsor for our inaugural [Susan Ryan Family Engagement Awards!](#)

## Annual conference update

In the lead-up to our 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Canberra in November, we are conducting a series of webinars on Family Engagement. The first of these featured American author and educator, [Patricia Weinzapfel](#), discussing the importance of communicating effectively with families. Particularly after the last two years. Patricia shared many strategies for teachers, and parents, to help foster a positive dialogue and partnership, all of which are simple to do, and pave the way for improving student outcomes. Keep an eye on our website for upcoming webinars in this Family Engagement series.

Speaking of conference, we have had a huge response to our call for nominations for the inaugural [Susan Ryan Family Engagement Awards](#). Applications are open until 9 September, so please encourage your public school communities to submit a family engagement achievement or strategy before the closing date. Full details are on the ACSSO website. Find out more below in this newsletter.

Cheers,

**Sharron Healy**

**Chair**

**Australian Council of State School Organisations**

**June 2022**