

ACSSO President's Report - Newsletter October 2019

Interesting times

As we move towards the end of the calendar year we remain in 'interesting times' in 2019.

This includes the finalisation of two major reviews that will guide policy well into the future. The [Melbourne Declaration](#) consultation closes this week, and the [national review of pathways in senior education](#), among other things.

These reviews, and more, will be on our minds as ACSSO convenes in Darwin next month (8-10 November) for our annual Roundtable, Annual General Meeting and Board meeting. It's an important event for anyone interested in the national agenda. We have assembled some of the nation's key educators who will address a full range of curriculum issues, professional and industrial priorities and significantly community and family engagement. I commend our office on the event's preparation and look forward to emerging with great focus for 2020 and beyond.

Teacher-parent relationships

I am writing this on the cusp of [World Teachers Day](#). Many of us will be attending and speaking at events which rightly valorise the work of the teaching profession. Scroll down for ACSSO's statement for WTD.

In [my own jurisdiction](#) one award, instituted for the first time last year, is for outstanding contribution to school community. I am pleased to have been asked to speak to, and to present this award on behalf of the wider parent community.

I am saddened and somewhat annoyed to continue to read press articles which state that parents do not have the time or energy to help our teachers but do have the time to criticise and condemn what occurs in our schools. My continuing dialogue with school leaders suggests otherwise.

Not a true reflection

Rogue incidents will always demand and excite the media's attention. What remains unwritten and apparently unrecognised by some journalists and commentators is the unsung, faithful body of work that parents and communities continue to pursue on behalf of our children.

If we can extrapolate from annual Queensland surveys, then parent executives in in our government schools spend an average of approximately 10.5 hours per week in volunteer support. In Queensland that means a total of 13,000 hours a week of parent time gifted to our schools.

When respondents were asked to nominate their main purpose in volunteering, I have been thrilled to see that more than half nominated "*building school community and supporting the learning environment*" as their main purpose. This speaks to the true meaning of community engagement.

Australian Children's Week 2019

October also hosts Australian Children's Week. With the permanent theme "*A Caring World Shares*", the particular focus of 2019 is the right of every child to good health and wellbeing.

In her message to the nation this year, the [National Children's Commissioner, Megan Mitchell](#), encourages us to consider that goal as an inclusive right, extending beyond access to health care services to include rights to

- non-discrimination
- a healthy environment
- safe care
- housing
- nutritious food.

We have a way to go in this regard in our own nation to achieve these goals and when considering the current international situation, I am reminded of the seemingly unattainable goal this presents for those many children in dire need and in harm's way.

So, we pause to salute our teachers and school leaders in the same month as we restate the rights of all the world's children. It's an ideal learning lesson for those of us engaged in furthering that unstated alliance between the helping professions and the wider community of families and volunteers.

Kevan Goodworth, Chair

Australian Council of State School Organisations

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