



AGPPA
Australian Government
Primary Principals
Association

Promoting and Advocating for Government Primary Schools

Submission on the Review of Senior Secondary Pathways

The Australian Government Primary Principals Association (AGPPA) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to this Review. Our submission is based upon the professional opinions of public primary school leaders, AGPPA position papers and reports and research projects undertaken on behalf of AGPPA. It is AGPPA's view that this pathway begins in the foundation years of primary schooling and that any review into Senior Secondary Pathways needs to reflect back into these crucial years. AGPPA also looks forward to involvement in the ongoing discussion relating to this very important topic.

AGPPA Background

The Australian Government Primary Principals Association is the national professional association for government primary school principals in Australia. AGPPA represents over 5300 principals in public primary schools in every corner of every state and territory. AGPPA's National Council includes representatives from six states and two territories, with two members from each jurisdiction. This group represents a shared national commitment to both highlight the importance of the primary years and to promote excellence in public primary education in Australia.

Our advocacy is based on the vision of every child attending a school with healthy, high-performing leaders and quality staff, along with the knowledge that primary schools are where Australian children acquire the necessary foundational academic, social and emotional skills to lead fulfilled and enriched lives. It is imperative that our education policy enables this noble intent so that all children can experience such success, both at school and through later life.

AGPPA initiatives, actions and projects are research informed. However, AGPPA cautions that evidence-based practice must be proven to be transferable to all school contexts. It cannot be assumed that the application of a universal solution or the adoption of successful policy from other areas, countries or jurisdictions will be suitable for the diverse range of school settings across our country. AGPPA aims to assist in making Australia's education system a beacon for all.

This aim is perhaps best enunciated using the words of David Gonski, Chair of the Review of Funding for Schooling expert panel, who said:

"Every child should have access to the best possible education, regardless of where they live, the income of their family or the school they attend."

Just as importantly, Dr Philip Riley (Chief Investigator of the Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Surveys) reminds us:

"Today's children are tomorrow's nation builders. We owe it to them and ourselves to give them the best opportunities we can."

AGPPA's response to the Review is shown below and responds to three of the five overarching questions of the Review, Questions 2, 3 and 5.

Question 2: Are current arrangements both in schooling and entry arrangements for tertiary education supporting students to access the most appropriate pathways?

- Young children are demonstrating gender biased perceptions of pathways in their early years. The 2016 UK report 'redrawing the balance' was a study into understanding how to broaden the aspirations and interests of children about jobs and careers.
- Disengagement with schooling is evident in children as young as eight and more resourcing needs to be available in the year 3-6 space to intervene early and ensure students schooling experience is positive and more likely to lead to year 12 completion.
- Parent engagement with school can be stronger in the early years and schools can leverage this engagement to better explore pathways through parent experiences of work and expertise.
- Work education in its broadest sense is embedded in the capabilities and a reduction of content in the Australian curriculum could create space to develop capabilities more deeply.
- We see a need to increase the specialist opportunities of primary learners through access to professional learning in areas of community interest and context.
- Increase opportunities for community and parent expertise in describing pathway opportunities in new and emerging employment opportunities such as artisans, creatives, startups and entrepreneurs.
- Build partnerships with community to identify real world problems that primary learners can engage in and build their agency skills. There is a need to take a risk management approach and not risk aversion.
- We caution about reporting on skills and capabilities as the measurement tools be complex and take time away from the teaching.
- To enable greater partnership with community and the resources it can bring to primary learners re pathways, barriers to participation and side effects of current processes, procedures, and policies must be explored.

Question 3: What are the barriers to allowing all students to have equal access to the pathways that are available?

- Staffing for remote areas
- Geographical isolation
- Specialised subject areas e.g. Maths/science
- Small numbers wanting to access subjects which effects viability
- Availability of access to technology including internet
- Cultural appropriateness of subjects
- Societal/family expectations and attitudes
- Transport
- Parents perceptions of the value of ATAR
- Generational poverty and unemployment

- Impact of mental health
- Changes within government and changing of funding for various programs
- Lack of information/knowledge of what is possible from staff and students
- Partnerships with industry/creative employment pathways
- Pathway planners with broad scope
- Trade training centres only offer selected subjects
- Early disengagement in school
- Disability or additional needs
- The knowledge of teachers of special provisions
- The impact of early subject selection
- **NB: Are all barriers necessarily a negative thing?**

Question 5: How can we collect and disseminate the data we need to understand young peoples' choices and help governments to make informed public policy decisions?

- Ensure the data is capturing the range of pathways that young people take.
- Develop productive relationships with others who have data that can inform
- Do we track young people post school ie: 5 years beyond school survey?
- Big system data-collaborate with Centrelink to determine who is accessing benefits or payment eg: New Start, Austudy, Tax Office
- Partner with universities/TAFE (apprenticeships and traineeships)/other tertiary providers to capture data about University enrolments and continuance/withdrawal rates
- Income earning (TFN)
- Access to health services (Medicare number)
- Children's Commissioner
- Ask kids how they want to get data and how it is useful
- 1000 voices "State of the young person"
- Involve other agencies:
 - Health
 - Beyond Blue, Head Space, Youth Mental Health Services
 - Department of Children's Service, DOCS
 - Justice
 - Community Youth Legal Services
 - Industry
 - Councils
 - Government

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