



South Australian  
**State School Leaders**  
Association

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# SCHOOL AND PRESCHOOL **LEADERSHIP**

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EMPLOYMENT PRIORITIES  
2023 - 2025

01 Development and implementation of an improved Band A classification and remuneration structure.

02 Reduced teaching load for Preschool Directors.

03 A focused and continuing program of amelioration of workload pressures on Band A and Band B leaders.

04 Extension of the Workers Compensation Additional Compensation Scheme to the education workforce.

05 Improved conditions of contract for Band A and Band B leaders.

06 Review and Improvement of Recruitment, Selection, and Reappointment Practices for Band A and Band B Leaders.

# Welcome

SASSLA's six priority employment initiatives for 2023 to 2025 represent the collective interests and aspirations of over 500 Principal, Preschool Director, and education leader members.

In 2023, we identified six key employment priorities that have high value for our members. We are pleased to present the achievement of our goals and our continued key areas of focus for 2024 and 2025 in this updated publication.

We aim to continue our advocacy on these important leadership employment priorities through our collaborative approach of working

with the Government, the Department for Education, and other stakeholder groups to shape our shared interest of building a strong public education system.



**Phil O'Loughlin**  
Chief Executive



**Marion Coady**  
Chairperson

# 01

## Development and Implementation of an Improved Band A Classification and Remuneration Structure

Leader Associations Join Forces for Band A Principal and Preschool Director Classification Reform

SASSLA has joined with the five Principal Associations and the Preschool Directors Association to develop a submission to the Department that sets out the collective interests for improvement of the Band A classification and remuneration structure.

Our core argument is that classification and remuneration structures for Band A Leaders must reflect the high value of Principal and Preschool Director work and the new reality of continuing scarcity of quality candidates for these roles.

The submission is being considered as part of the current Review of Band A Classifications. The Department has engaged the international consulting firm Mercer to undertake a full analysis of the work value of Principal and Preschool Director roles and present recommendations for a new classification structure.

We are working collaboratively with the Department to ensure the interests of school and preschool leaders are fully considered in proposals for the Band A classification structure.

This work highlights the value of the Associations joining forces to represent a single voice on matters of critical interest to School and Preschool Leaders.

See our website to read our submission under [Member Benefits - Policy Development and Advocacy](#)

## DONE

Band A Leaders will receive a differential general salary increase of an extra 1% for the enterprise agreement increases of 1 May 2023, 2024 and 2025. SASSLA has presented clear and persuasive arguments for the recognition of increased work value of Band A roles through higher remuneration. We are delighted to see these arguments recognised through the Government's wage offer.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

SASSLA, and the Joint Associations, will continue to collaborate with the Department in 2024 on reviewing the findings of the Mercer Review for the Band A classification system. Our interest in this process is to develop a contemporary classification structure that provides improved career paths for Principals and Preschool Directors.

The Government's policy announcement of permanent appointment for Band A Principal and Preschool Directors adds further impetus to the need for reform of the classification structure. We will continue to advocate for this work to be given high priority status.



# 02

## Reduced Teaching Load for Preschool Directors

A Fair Go for Preschool Directors

SASSLA has worked in collaboration with the Preschool Directors Association to review the workload conditions of Preschool Directors.

Two reports were submitted in 2020 and 2021 that identify the pattern and scope of changes that have increased Preschool Director workload. A clear and compelling case is made that the current system of workload protections are wholly inadequate for the operational demands of today's Directors.

Our comprehensive submissions of the work of Preschool Directors are a resource that can further inform employment related issues likely to flow from the Government's ambitious program of early years education reform in 2023 and beyond.



The most pressing issue from our research is the need to introduce regulated maximum hours of teaching for Preschool Directors.

See our website to read our submission under Member Benefits - Policy Development and Advocacy

A key finding is that Preschool Directors are the only teaching related classification without regulated maximum hours of teaching. Our research indicates that Directors in standalone preschools will often have a near full time teaching load in addition to the leadership and administrative duties associated with site management.



### DONE

The joint advocacy of SASSLA and the Preschool Directors Association (PDA) has resulted in allocation of \$16 million per annum to allow for reduction in face-to-face teaching for Preschool Directors and other staffing options that will reduce workload pressures.

### WHAT'S NEXT?

SASSLA will continue to work in partnership with the PDA on the successful implementation of this new funding to achieve a comprehensive reduction in workload for Directors.

The implementation of structural changes to early years education, flowing from The Royal Commission into Early Childhood and Care including three year olds accessing preschool, will bring new challenges to standalone preschools and school based preschools. We will continue to work with the Associations to identify operational impacts and consequential workforce reforms and resourcing that will be needed for these reforms to be successful.

# 03

## A Focused and Continuing Program of Amelioration of Workload Pressures on Band A and Band B Leaders

Leader Workload – The Time for Real Change is Now!

SASSLA has been active in developing a deeper understanding of the conditions that give rise to excessive leader workload since the initial publication of the SASSLA Education Leader Workload paper in 2020. In November 2022, the Chief Executive of SASSLA delivered the keynote address at the Australian Principals Federation Conference in Perth on School Leader Workload.

SASSLA has actively engaged with school and preschool leaders in country and metropolitan schools and they say that workload has reached an unsustainable level.

The identification of excessive school leader workload has been clearly identified in the research presented in the Australian Catholic University Australian Principal Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing Survey. The Review by the Australian Government Productivity Commission of the National School Reform Agreement (2022) brings further evidence of the problem of excessive workload being embedded across the Australian education system.

SASSLA has made a submission to the Federal Government in which we clearly identify the risks and costs associated with a continuing pattern of excessive workload for school and preschool leaders.

**A critical priority for 2024/2025 must be a sustained focus on improving the workload conditions for school and preschool leaders.**

### DONE

SASSLA, in partnership with SASPA, have developed a paper titled Reconceptualising the Role of the Principal. This paper addresses the need to clarify the role of the Principal and the changes needed for Principals to confidently lead schools in 2024 and beyond. The paper presents new thinking on how to confront the chronic problem of the excessive workload demands placed on Principals.

The paper has been positively received by the Department and the Minister. A process for engaging secondary leaders has been implemented.

### WHAT'S NEXT?

There is now a growing realisation that action is needed to confront the problem of excessive workload front on. It is clear that existing managerial and industrial relations approaches are inadequate and broad-based responses focusing on changing work systems and building workforce capabilities are required. SASSLA is actively promoting alternative thinking on what is needed to push in this direction.

## See our website to read our Education Leader Workload Paper under [Member Benefits - Policy Development and Advocacy](#)

These risks and costs need to be confronted so that we can maintain a strong and vital public education system. The issue of workload must be brought to the foreground of thinking and action. In 2024/2025, SASSLA will advocate for the development of a strategic approach to improve workload conditions for school and preschool leaders.

### PEOPLE

Detrimental effects on health, personal relationships, and family life.

Long hours and high emotional demands mean the risk of burnout and exhaustion is very real. The findings of the Australian Principal Survey's longitudinal research provides compelling evidence of this. There is also emerging evidence of increased exit rates, disengagement, sickness, and workers compensation claims.

- 53% of principals work upwards of 56 hours per week and this work extends into school holidays.
- Principals experience high levels of job demands (1.5 times the general population), emotional demands (1.7 times), and emotional labour (1.7 times).

### PRODUCTIVITY

Leaders are less able to prioritise critical elements of work that promote the growth of teaching, learning, and practice.

Case study literature highlights the critical role of school leadership in school effectiveness and improvement. How school leaders time is directed to the activities that positively influence education outcomes and support positive wellbeing of students must be a priority. The evidence indicates that leaders' time is not being used productively.

- Time pressures are being placed on leaders which diverts them away from the high value work that influences quality education outcomes over the medium to long term.
- Leaders undertake a high number of activities during the school day that are varied in nature and short in duration. The prioritisation of time tends to drive a bias of time spent on the urgent rather than important.

### SUSTAINABILITY

People are making alternative career choices away from leadership roles because of excessive work demands.

Attracting and retaining high quality school leaders is becoming more difficult every year across Australia. A high percentage of school leaders are in the retirement window and numbers of job applicants are thinning. Research indicates that many teachers are discouraged from considering a role in school leadership by the nature and amount of work required in their roles.

Changing demographics are bringing a new urgency to this problem and it will become more acute as younger teachers with different interests and aspirations enter the workforce.

- A high number of leaders will leave the public education system over the next five years.
- Over 40% of the teaching workforce are part-time and less likely to express interest in a leadership role.



# 04

## Extension of the Workers Compensation Additional Compensation Scheme to the Education Workforce

Why are Educators being Left Out of the Workers Compensation Additional Compensation Scheme?

SASSLA has identified the need to include educators under the benefits of the “Workers Compensation Additional Compensation” scheme which is available to police, nurses, social workers and other groups providing front line community services.

Following the introduction of the *South Australia Return to Work Act 2014*, workers compensation weekly payments were capped at two years and medical expenses capped at three years for most workers, other than those few categorised as ‘seriously injured’ (as opposed to ongoing entitlements under the previous scheme).

After a very public campaign led by the Police Association, the State Government agreed to an “Additional Compensation Scheme” being inserted into the Police Officers Award which provided for ongoing weekly payments and medical expenses. This would apply where an injury is sustained from conduct directed at an employee that is, or appears to be a criminal offence or in other circumstances where an employee is placed in a dangerous situation.

Other Public Sector Associations, with frontline community worker members, lobbied for similar conditions to be included in their Awards. As a result, amendments have been made such as Schedule 7 of the South Australian Public Sector Salaried Employees Interim Award.

“There is a clear and compelling case for educators to be covered under equivalent workers compensation entitlements as other public sector workers.”



See our website to read the articles related to this issue under Member Benefits - Policy Development and Advocacy

## WHAT'S NEXT?

SASSLA will raise public interest in this matter and advocate for change with the Minister and Department.



SASSLA will continue to advocate for fair treatment of educators in relation to access to the additional workers benefits available to other government workers supported by the following evidence:

The Australian Principal Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing Survey (2023):

**48.2% OF SCHOOL LEADERS WERE VICTIMS OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IN 2023**

**PHYSICAL VIOLENCE HAS INCREASED BY 76.5% SINCE 2011**

**96.3% OF REPORTED PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IS PERPETRATED BY STUDENTS AND 19.7% BY PARENTS**

**CONDITIONS IN SCHOOLS ARE EQUIVALENT TO OTHER OCCUPATIONS INCLUDING, POLICE OFFICERS, NURSES, AND SOCIAL WORKERS**

Monash University Study, 2022 (reported in the Adelaide Advertiser, 3 November 2022):

**EDUCATORS HAVE A 75% HIGHER RISK OF BEING INJURED OR ASSAULTED COMPARED TO OTHER STAFF SUCH AS EMERGENCY SERVICE OR OFFICE WORKERS**

**4.5% OF COMPENSATION CLAIMS MADE BY EDUCATORS WERE ASSAULT RELATED WHILST ONLY 2% OF NON-EDUCATORS MADE THE SAME CLAIM (1.5 MILLION WORKERS COMPENSATION CASES ANALYSED IN STUDY)**

**SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS FACE THE HIGHEST RISK FROM AN ASSAULT**

### Teachers face greater hit risks

OLIVIA JENKINS

TEACHERS are more likely to be assaulted on the job than any other worker, new research reveals.

An Australian-first study by Monash University has found that educators faced an almost 75 per cent higher risk of being injured from an assault compared to other staff such as emergency service or office workers.

The research, which analysed more than 15m workers' compensation claims from around Australia, showed about 45 per cent of compensation claims made by educators were assault-related, while just 2 per cent of non-educators made the same claim.

But researchers warn that figure could be much higher because "severe underestimates" caused by underreporting mean teachers are also the

group least likely to make an injury claim.

Secondary school teachers faced the highest risk of being injured from an assault, making up 24,764, or 29 per cent of the 84,915 total educator compensation claims.

The study's co-author Dr Tyler Lane said teachers faced pressure not to report assaults or injuries caused by staffing shortages and viewing a student's actions as accidental.

Adelaide Advertiser, 3 November 2022

# 05

## Improved Conditions of Contract for Band A and Band B Leaders

### Career Certainty and Stability for Band A and Band B Leaders

SASSLA has made representations to the Department on behalf of members who have concluded their contract or retired with respect to issues that relate to future career options and conditions of employment, particularly as they relate to payment of leave.

The current Departmental processes for managing people coming out of contract are mostly built around informal processes and practices and there is a general lack of consistency in how people are managed. For people who fall out of contract it can be a difficult time with future career uncertainty and loss of income.

**The current system does not adequately compensate for the uncertain nature of contract employment or provide sufficient clarity on employment rights at the end of tenure.**

The use of contract-based employment for school and preschool leaders has provided the Department with considerable flexibility in managing its workforce. This flexibility is not held in balance with fairness to employees.

SASSLA's view is that positive change can be achieved in the management of Band A and Band B leaders to maintain workforce flexibility and provide certainty and support for people at the conclusion of contracts. Improved contract conditions will also incentivise mobility and build capabilities across the system.

LEADERS IN NSW AND WA ARE APPOINTED ON A PERMANENT ONGOING BASIS CONSISTENT WITH PUBLIC SERVICE APPOINTMENTS

LEADERS IN VICTORIA ARE CONTRACT BASED BUT HAVE ACCESS TO GENEROUS SALARY MAINTENANCE AND REAPPOINTMENT CONDITIONS FOR PEOPLE COMING OUT OF CONTRACT

## DONE

SASSLA's criticisms of the current model of contract based appointments for Band A and Band B Leaders has shone a light on the inadequacies of this system relative to other States. We are delighted to see that these arguments have been recognised through the Government's decision to permanently appoint Principals.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

Band A permanency is a high value strategy that will provide certainty and stability for Principals and Preschool Directors. It will also make these roles more attractive to potential applicants. SASSLA has developed a discussion paper that is designed to surface the key design issues to build a shared understanding of policy options that balance employee rights with operational needs of the Department.

We will extend this work to focus on process improvements for Band B selection and reappointment.

# 06

## Review and Improvement of Recruitment, Selection, and Reappointment Practices for Band A and Band B Leaders

Recruitment, Selection, and Reappointment – Building Confidence in the System

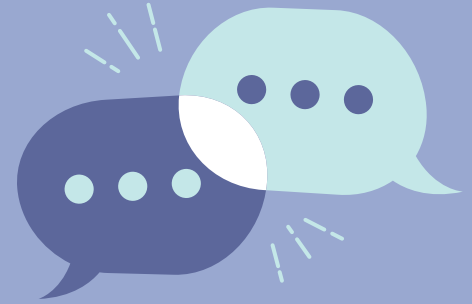
SASSLA has made representations to the Department on behalf of members seeking improvements to the recruitment, selection, and reappointment of Band A and Band B leaders.

Re-appointment and selection processes must have two defining features:

- The interests of public education are met through having high quality candidates selected and retained in roles.
- Candidates must have confidence they will be afforded a fair and objective process.

Where reappointment systems fail in these two vital areas, the whole system is negatively impacted.

There is much to be gained from a review of recruitment, selection, and reappointment processes. This is strategically important to the Department and integral to attracting and retaining leaders and supporting mobility across the public education system.



Recruitment, selection, and reappointment systems are only as good as the confidence people have in them. Confidence is built and sustained through clarity of information and processes, fair and objective evidentiary processes, and high-quality communication and feedback. When these are lacking, people's confidence in the system wanes.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

SASSLA will continue to advocate for changes in practice to address the deficiencies in the current merit selection process. Key areas of focus are contemporary selection criteria, clear standards of evidence and a robust appeals process.





South Australian  
**State School Leaders**  
Association

This document has been authorised  
and produced by the South  
Australian State School Leaders  
Association Board

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February 2024

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