

Equitable Excellence

Is Built by Empowered Leaders

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Empowered leadership



Leadership in our preschools and schools takes many forms. We need our leaders to hold tight to our shared purpose but be flexible to respond to the context of their community. As a system we will support our leaders to collaborate with their communities to lead the learning and change processes aligned to our purpose and principles.

Judgement.

“Equity is culture: you have leadership of that.”

01

Instructional Leadership

02

Administrative Leadership

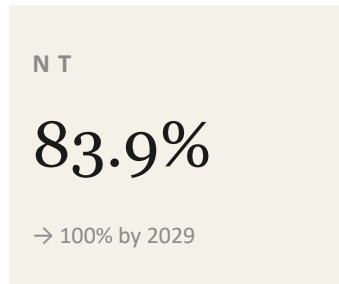
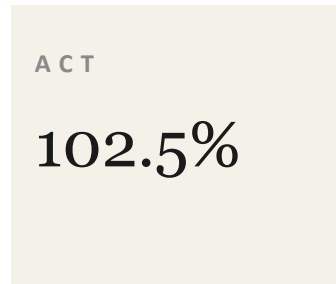
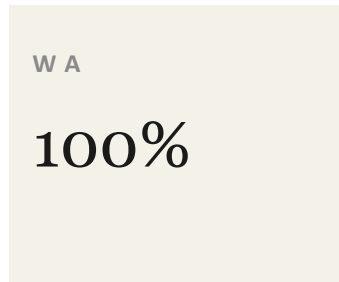
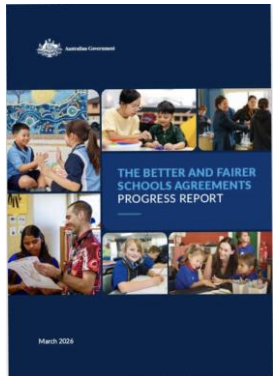
03

Frontier Leadership

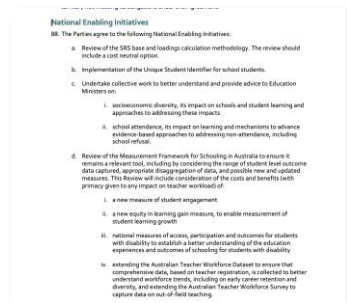
A strong policy voice is required.

National data
snapshot.

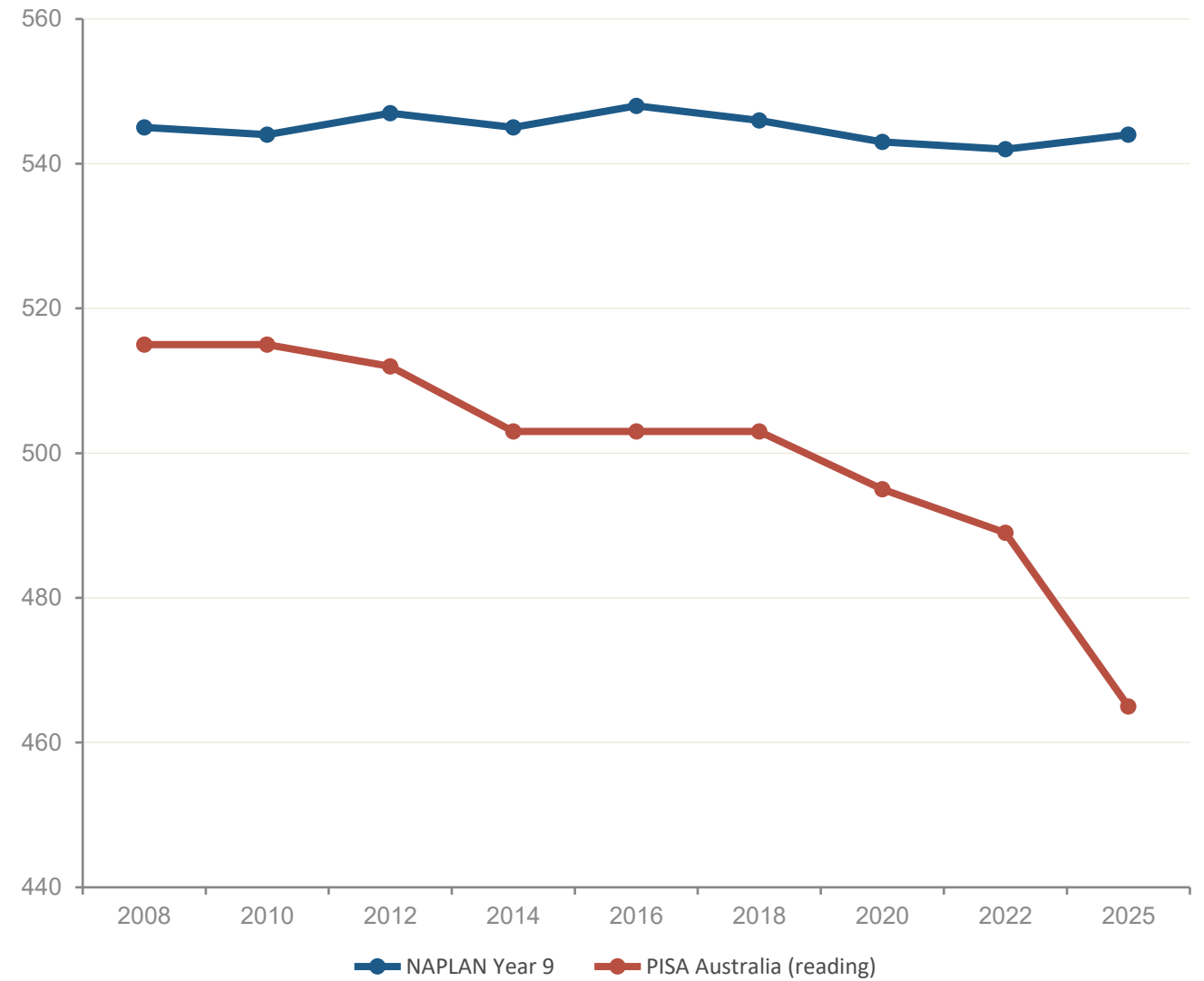
The Better Fairer Schools Funding Agreement: *2026 Funding Position.*



SRS combined share, 2026.



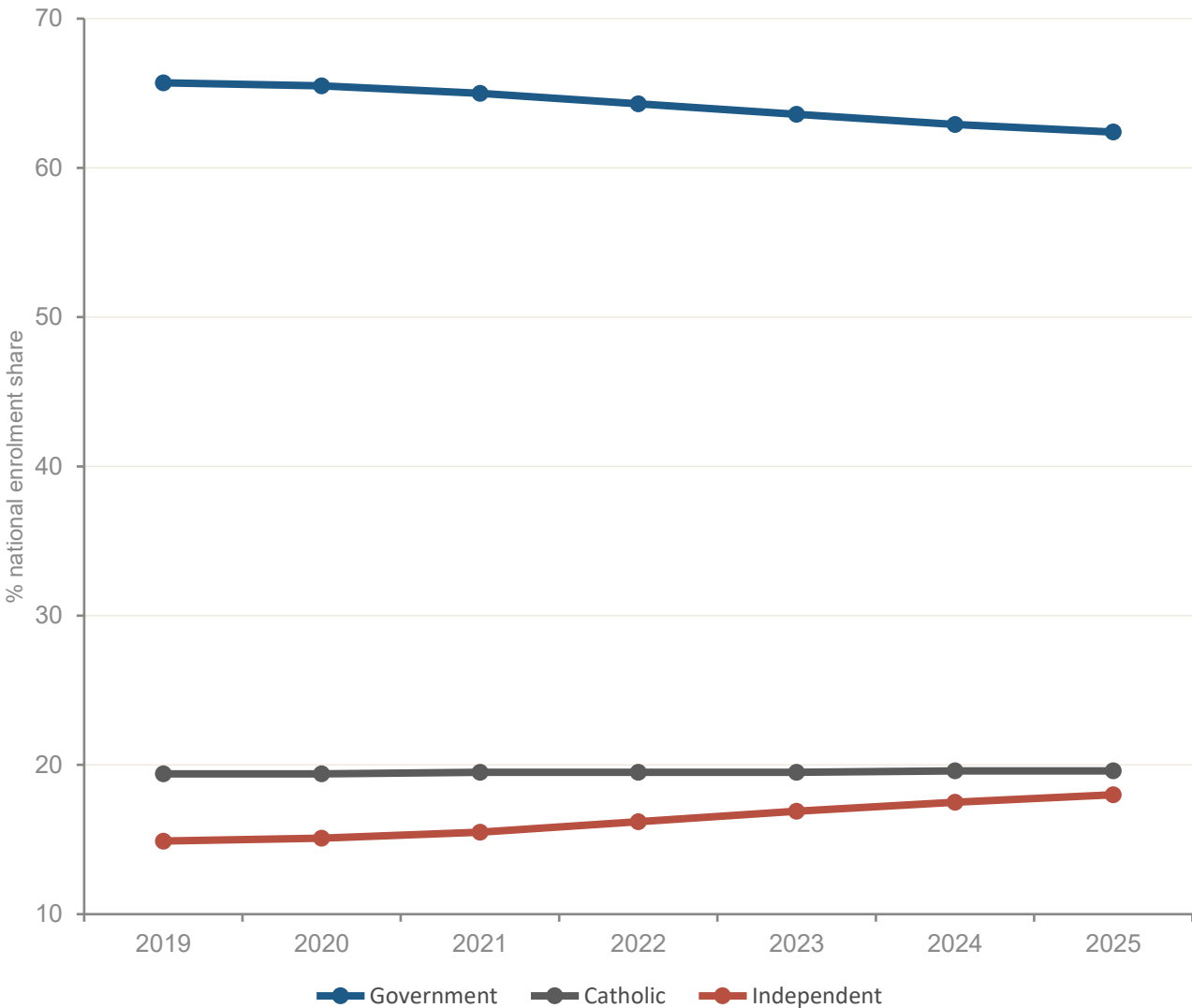
The BFSA enabling initiatives are an
opportunity to improve equity.



Sources: Larsen (UNE) standardised assessment analysis; ACER PISA 2022 Australia report; ACARA NAPLAN national reports 2008–2024.

Enrolment patterns across sectors.

3.3 % shift from public to private, 2019–2025.



Source: ABS Schools, Australia 2025 (released March 2026).

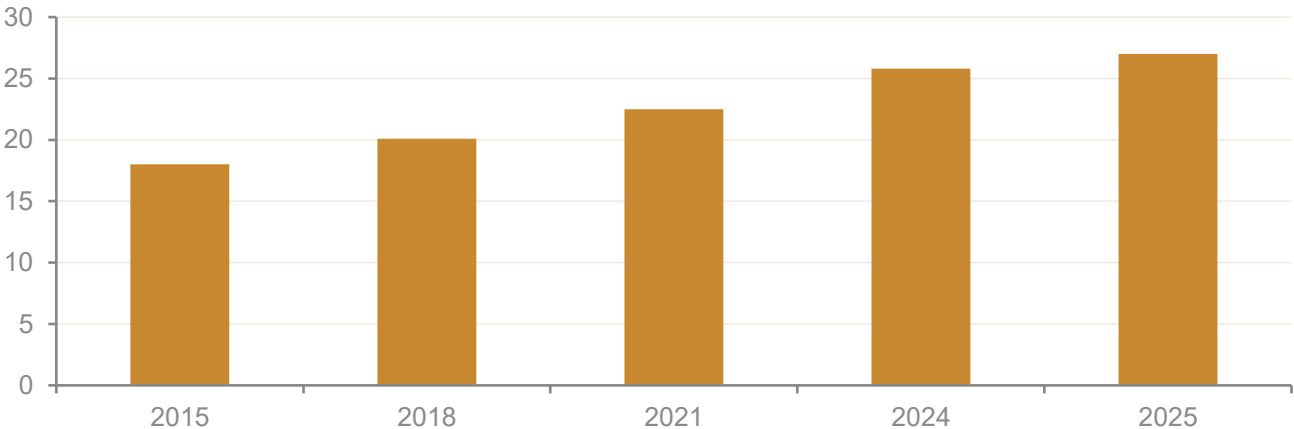
Classrooms are more complex.

27.0%

of students receive an educational adjustment for disability.

“The school I want is one that knows me — what I’m good at, what I’m scared of, what I want to do next.”

— Summit student voice, 2026



The workforce pipeline.

Still tight, but may be improving.

+20%

domestic ITE commencements, 2023–2025.

Undergraduate offers **up 6.3%** in preliminary 2026 data.

The leaders.

Stretched.

55.6

hours per week

average term-time working hours

67.2%

of ASPA leaders

experienced threats of violence — over five times the general population rate

45.1%

of ASPA leaders

triggered the survey's red-flag wellbeing email

Principal wellbeing is workforce infrastructure.

Wellbeing and *Efficacy*.

Capability, not deficit.

STRETCHED

The ACU wellbeing data.

55.6	hours/week during term
67.2%	experienced threats of violence
45.1%	triggered red-flag wellbeing email

ENGAGED

The ACU efficacy data.

75.7	self-efficacy (vs 64.2 general pop.)
67.0	job satisfaction
High	meaning of work, commitment, social community at work

We are stretched. We are deeply engaged. *A system response that honours both is the response we need.*

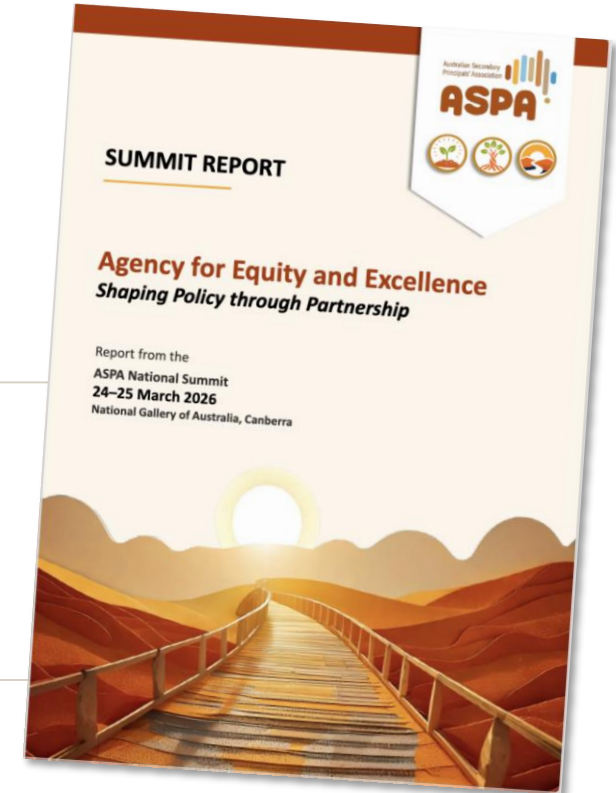
Source: Dicke, Kidson & Marsh (2025) ASPA-specific cut, ACU Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey; TALIS 2024; AITSL ATWD.

ASPA Summit *Findings.*

01 Agency is the precondition for improvement

02 The workforce evidence requires a systemic response

03 The national education architecture must be designed with, not for, the profession.



Read the Report
aspa.asn.au

Systems are holding.

The profession is leading.

But *the conditions need to evolve, for everyone to thrive.*

Policy directions.

- 01** Design the system so that thriving teachers and thriving leaders are the precondition for thriving students.
- 02** Public schools need united advocacy and a positive narrative.
- 03** School leader agency and system partnership is key.

How do we strengthen our collective capability to lead school education for equity and excellence?

A national
reshaping opportunity.



The proposed National Teaching *and Learning Commission.*

What it is.

A proposed consolidation of ACARA, AITSL, AERO and ESA into a single body. The aim: streamline, increase efficiency, and (per Minister Clare) help deliver the BFSa.

Where it sits.

Not yet a done deal. A working group with state and territory representatives is shaping the design now. The National Principals' Reference Group has a seat on the working group.

ASPA's position.

It must be a practical, structural reform that supports a contemporary education system designed around children — with the profession central to its design, leadership, and governance.

Teacher Standards and *Principal Standard reviews.*



First formal review in fifteen years.

TEACHER STANDARDS REVIEW

May 2026 → February 2027

Shapes initial teacher education, registration, professional learning, and performance development. Has never been formally interrogated.

PRINCIPAL STANDARD REVIEW

September 2026 → May 2027

Revised Standard lands in 2027 and shapes the next decade of practice. ASPA is engaged with AITSL on the design of the review.

Consultation channels are open: *please respond.* Our job is to make sure the revision reflects the actual nature of the work.

Source: AITSL Australian Professional Standards review timelines (2026).

National Teacher Workforce Action Plan part 2!

National workshop on behalf of AESOC, facilitated by Andy Mison and Tim Bullard – September 2025 & June 2026

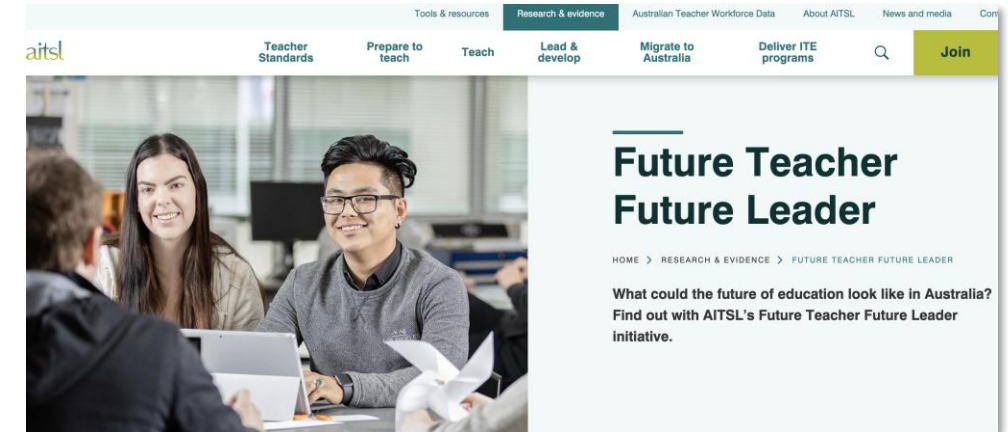
BACKING OUR EDUCATORS BY STRENGTHENING WELLBEING AND WORKPLACE SAFETY

DESIGN ELEMENTS

- **Co-design** – co-design of initiatives with teachers and school leaders and strong stakeholder engagement in the design and delivery of initiatives is vital for effectiveness, to ensure initiatives are appropriate to context and individual need.
- **Resourcing** –adequate resourcing along with a commitment to sustainability for initiatives that are having a positive impact, recognising that effectively supporting wellbeing and safety takes time.
- **Culture** – healthy organisational culture that supports staff morale and wellbeing and enables the prioritisation of space and time to effectively deploy wellbeing and safety initiatives. This applies at both school and system level and sustaining it is a shared responsibility across system authorities, school leaders, teachers and students.
- **Agency** – system and school practices and pedagogical approaches that elevate the agency, competence and professionalism of teachers and leaders improves morale, effectiveness and resilience.
- **Accountability** – accountability for improving the wellbeing and safety of all staff occurring at system, school and individual levels, recognising that a gap in one weakens the effectiveness of others.
- **Evidence-informed** – initiatives supported by research evidence, and effective practices informing the research evidence and the design of programs, noting these are more likely to be effective and sustainable.

AITSL: *Future Teacher, Future Leader*

The national foresight initiative on the profession of the next decade.



What it is.

A structured way for the profession to anticipate change and prepare early for how teaching and school leadership may need to evolve over the coming decade.

Where ASPA sits.

Contributing as one of the practitioner voices shaping the work alongside system, research and cross-sector perspectives.

Why it matters.

It pairs with the Standards reviews and connects to the practice work in ASPA's school-based projects.

ASPA / profession led, national projects.



01 NEXT-GENERATION LEARNING

Broadening definitions of success.

What it is.

ASPA-led two-year national initiative with the Australian Learning Lecture and the University of Melbourne. Semester 2, 2025 — Semester 1, 2027.

What it does.

Works with students in Years 7–10 to generate learner profiles celebrating diverse capabilities, and pilots next-generation assessment and reporting tools.



02 ENTREPRENEURIAL SCHOOLS PROJECT

Accelerating student agency.

What it is.

Two-year, fully funded national initiative. ASPA in partnership with Young Change Agents, backed by the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation.

What it does.

Participating schools build whole-school approaches that strengthen student agency, connect learning to real-world contexts, and build capabilities for lifelong learning.

SASPA schools are among the first cohort of 70 public secondary schools across the country

ACARA: NAPLAN and the *league-table problem*.

- December 2025 open letter.
- ASPA worked with ACARA and the AEU to coordinate publication of a joint letter from education leaders and organisations, calling on News Corp to end its publication of crude league tables based on NAPLAN data.
- Wider improvement agenda.
- ACARA is leading work that may make NAPLAN more useful for teaching and learning progress. The recent NAPLAN writing failure has opened space to argue for a review, and for consideration of what other measures might be needed.
- What this shows.
- Public co-ordination of professional voice can shift the media environment, not just the policy environment. Leverage worth using again.



The *National Principals' Reference Group*.



Standing capability, not an ad-hoc panel.

Established by ASPA in partnership with the other national peak bodies representing principals. Not reconstituted every time a Minister wants to consult.

Default channel for federal engagement.

Recent: National Bullying Strategy, National Reflective Supervision Pilot, NTLC working group, AITSL Standards reviews.

Why it matters.

Principal voice is now structurally embedded in federal architecture — not invited in case-by-case.

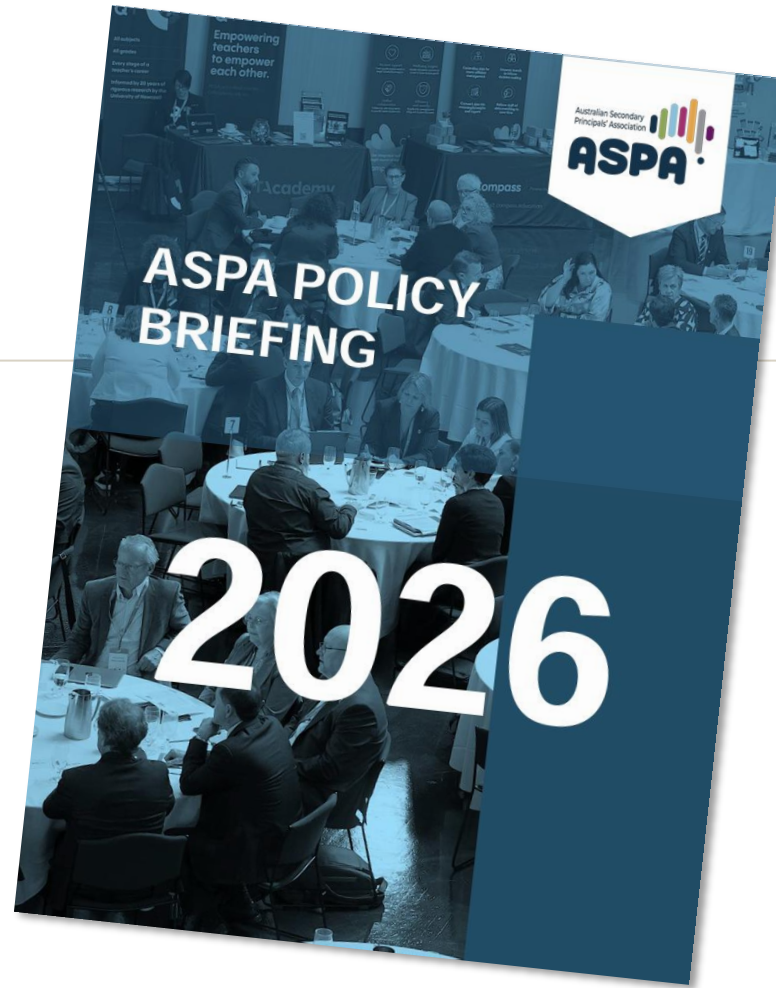
The *2026 ASPA Policy Briefing*.

What it is.

A consolidated position document across the national agenda.

How members use it.

Directly in state-level conversations.



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ASPA – ANU Research.

System leadership in action: Co-design approaches that empower principals as catalysts of reform

What it is.

A qualitative co-design study examining how school leaders enact system leadership, the capabilities it requires, and the conditions that enable them to inform and lead reform. Delivered in partnership with PARF, the Australian National University, working with Professor Geoff Masters, Dr Kerry Elliott and Dr John Cleary.

Why?

Strengthen the evidence base supporting our advocacy and broader policy implication



How do we empower our national leaders for *equitable excellence*?

THREE VOICES FROM THE SUMMIT

“Principals are the hinge to everything.”

“A system that works with the people on the front lines to make changes and lead change.”

“Real innovation comes from grassroots.”



Thank *You.*



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