National Consultation Report
Round One

January 2014

Contents

1. Purpose of Report

The National Consultation Report Round One presents the information that was gathered through the national consultation conducted by PAI during October – December 2013.

The focus of the consultation was a series of forums with principals, principals associations and key stakeholders in each state and territory to clarify and develop the Australian Principal Certification Program. The forums were formative and designed to explore in depth the substantive issues that would need to be addressed in the effective development and successful operation of a principal certification program.

The Report presents the outcomes of the consultation for further consultation and engagement in the development of the Australian Principal Certification Program.

The Report identifies those areas where participants affirmed directions and those matters where further clarification is required.

Based on the findings of the consultation, the Report then proposes a model for the Australian Principal Certification Program based on the three phases of pre-certification, certification and post-certification. It proposes that this framework be used as the reference point in the next round of consultation.

The Report concludes with an outline of the Round Two Consultation process and timeframe.

2. Background

In November 2012, the Board of PAI endorsed the development of a voluntary Australian Principal Certification Program.

In March 2013, PAI and Australia's peak principal associations committed to work together on the development of the Australian Principal Certification Program.

In September 2013, PAI convened the Melbourne Roundtable consisting of nominees from each state and territory's principal associations to consider expert reports on principal certification and to plan a national consultation process to inform the development of a draft model for voluntary principal certification.

The outcome of the Melbourne Roundtable was the PAI Board's release of a 7-point plan to guide the development of the Australian Principal Certification Program.

During October – December 2013, PAI invited principals and the principal associations to participate in the Round 1 national consultation as part of the development process using the 7-point plan.

Based on the National Consultation Report Round One, PAI will prepare a Principal Certification draft model for the Round Two national consultation to be held during February – March 2014.

3. Consultation methodology

3.1   Participants

The PAI Director Principal Certification convened consultation forums with a range of school and system leaders from the following organisations:

Organisation	No.	Participants
Melbourne Roundtable	60	School / System leaders
Australian Catholic Primary Principals Association (ACPPA) and Australian Government Primary Principals Association (AGPPA)	35	School principals
Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA)	24	School principals
Catholic Secondary Principals' Association (CaSPA)	8	School Principals
Independent Primary School Heads of Australia (IPSHA)	8	School principals
Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL)	35	School / System leaders
National School Leaders Network Meeting (NSLN)	35	System leaders
Commonwealth Department of Education (formerly Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR))	3	Federal Ministry
Principals Australia Institute (PAI) NSW	12	System leaders/principals
Catholic Education in South Australia (CESA)	25	School principals
Catholic Principals ACT	85	School / System leaders
Queensland Catholic Primary Principals Association (QCPPA) and Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC)	15	School principals
Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER)	45	Aspiring leaders
PAI Dare to Lead team	5	PAI Dare to Lead team
PAI Certification Reference Panel	10	System leaders/principals
PAI Certification Change Team	12	PAI & principals
Total	**417**	

It is acknowledged that not all stakeholders were represented at these consultation meetings. The Director Principal Certification sought to connect with as many stakeholders as possible during the timeframe. PAI is committed to continued consultation.

3.2   Focus of Consultation Forums

Participants received the Consultation Paper that was the outcome of the Melbourne Roundtable to set the scene for the Consultation Forums.

The Forums were organised to invite critical scrutiny of the Consultation Paper's proposal for the Australian Principal Certification Program and to identify key issues and possible strategies to address them.

In particular the Consultation Forums sought participants' comment on how assessment against the Australian Professional Standard for Principals (the Australian Principal Standard) could operate.

The Forums also sought participants' comments on how a model for principal certification could be structured and organised.

Participants' input in the forums also focused on the following issues and themes:

- Purpose
- Context
- Role of PAI
- Process

- Evidence
- The Standard
- Who
- Levels

- Cost
- Time
- Role of Employing Authorities /Government

4. Consultation findings

4.1 Status of consultation outcomes

The Round One Consultation was a formative consultation.

The consultation was intentionally designed to use the experience and expertise of principals and system leaders to critically analyse issues and to generate possible strategies relating to the definition, development and operation of principal certification.

The consultation process deliberately did not present a detailed Australian Principal Certification model as the reference point for response.

The strength of the consultation process was that it genuinely sought the views and insights of principals and system leaders as the foundation for the Australian Principal Certification model.

The consultation process also created the inevitable tension whereby participants, whilst recognising and valuing the fact that their contributions were integral to the development of the model itself, often wanted specific details upon which to base their comments but which were not available at that point in the development process.

The following synthesis of the Consultation findings is based on the analysis of the detailed points raised through the consultation process.

The synthesis addresses the following key matters explored in the consultation process:

- Ownership of principal certification

- Purpose of principal certification

- Australian Principal Standard

- Assessment against the Australian Principal Standard

- Certification process.

For each of these key matters, the Report presents those points where participants affirmed specific directions and those points where they indicated further clarification is necessary.

In presenting the synthesis it is emphasised that the consultation findings should not be interpreted as an overall endorsement or lack of acceptance of the Australian Principal

Certification Program. Instead they provide the foundation for the development of the model itself.

The Round Two Consultation will be conducted during February – March 2014.

This next phase of the consultation process will present a proposed model for the Australian Principal Certification Program as the basis for formal comment.

4.2 Ownership of principal certification

Points of affirmation:

a) Principal certification should be the responsibility of the profession.

b) Principal certification is consistent with the current responsibilities of PAI to provide quality professional learning, leadership development and practical support for principals and school leaders across Australia.

c) Federal and/or state governments should not have management responsibility for principal certification.

d) Principal certification should be voluntary. It should not be made compulsory through direct or indirect means.

e) Principal certification should be accessible to principals in all contexts and locations, whilst recognising that context affects leadership and the development of capacity.

f) Principal certification should not be used to create principal rankings.

Matters for further clarification:

g) Determination of the means by which the commitment of principals across Australia and the three school sectors to principal certification will be obtained and demonstrated.

h) Definition of the roles of the following in relation to principal certification:

- PAI
- Principals Associations
- Employers – Local, State and Federal
- Training organisations / Universities
- AITSL.

4.3 Purpose of principal certification

Points of affirmation:

a) Principal certification provides professional recognition of exemplary educational leadership.

b) Principal certification demonstrates, builds and sustains expertise within the profession.

c) Principal certification elevates the professional standing and esteem of principals in the community.

d) Principal certification is recognition of a principal's demonstration of the Australian Principal Standard.

e) Principal certification demonstrates the professional commitment of principals to student success and to quality learning, quality teaching and quality schools.

f) Principal certification provides a point of reference for a principal's critical review and improvement of professional practice.

Matters for further clarification:

g) Determination of how employing authorities will regard principal certification in the context of principal:

- recruitment/ appointment
- promotion
- contract review
- performance appraisal.

h) Explanation of the difference of principal certification from school accreditation / review procedures and performance management/appraisal.

4.4 Australian Principal Standard

Points of affirmation:

a) Principal certification should align with the Australian Principal Standard. It would be counter-productive to develop and operate two standard-based school leadership frameworks.

Matters for further clarification:

b) Determination of whether the Australian Principal Standard should incorporate a continuum of practice and clarification of how such a continuum would relate to principal certification.

4.5 Assessment against Australian Principal Standard

Points of affirmation:

a) Use of the Australian Principal Standard as the basis for principal certification requires an assessment process and the development of assessment rubrics.

b) Assessment procedures for principal certification must be authentic, fair, transparent, user-friendly, and achievable.

c) Assessment procedures for principal certification must be flexible and cater for variety and diversity in leadership contexts and practices. They must be fit for purpose and not bureaucratic.

d) There are a number of professional learning programs, research activities and field experience that could be recognised as evidence for the achievement of certification.

e) Assessors who are part of the assessment process for principal certification must be trained and supported.

f) Assessment for principal certification must be quality assured.

g) Support materials should be available for principals engaged in principal certification and the assessment process.

h) The principal certification and assessment process provide significant opportunities for professional coaching, mentoring, learning guidance, and work shadowing activities.

Matters for further clarification:

i) Definition of the eligibility criteria for assessors and the selection process.

j) Definition of the quality assurance process for assessment in principal certification.

k) Operational details of the assessment process – assessment rubrics, definition of evidence, assessment timeframe, application process and requirements.

l) Development of the evaluation framework for assessment in the Australian Principal Certification Program.

4.6 Certification process

Points of affirmation:

a) Ongoing consultation and engagement with principals must underpin the development and operation of principal certification.

b) Principal certification must have demonstrable value for both an individual principal and the profession generally.

c) The decision to seek principal certification must be voluntary and rest with an individual principal.

d) Principal certification must be able to be differentiated from school evaluation and accreditation processes.

e) Principal certification is portable. It is tied to the individual principal and not a school.

f) Principal certification processes must be time-efficient. They must recognise and respect the reality of principals' work.

Matters for further clarification:

a) Definition of the role of the certification panel.

b) Operational details of the certification process – polices, guidelines and procedures, timeframe for certification process, application process and requirements, cost.

c) Development of the evaluation framework for the Australian Principal Certification Program.

5. Towards a principal certification model

The Round One National Consultation demonstrates that principals are able to identify the purpose and value of principal certification and can visualise how its assessment and certification processes could operate.

The Consultation further demonstrates that principals want to consider a detailed model of principal certification for their consideration before they commit to it.

Based on the findings of the Round 1 consultation, PAI proposes that the model of principal certification should be based on the three phases of Pre-Certification, Certification and Post-Certification as outlined below.

Pre-Certification

Purpose	The purpose of the precertification phase is to provide time and a structure in which to reflect upon the principal's development to date, to understand the certification process and to register interest. Those interested will consider the assessment requirements and begin to collect evidence of their practice.
Content	The content is based on certification rules and regulations. It is aligned to the Australian Principal Standard, the leadership curriculum for an accomplished principal and to assessment requirements.
Duration	The length of the precertification phase depends upon the leadership role of the person registering and their individual circumstances.
Eligibility	The minimum is four years as a principal. Existing principals may proceed to certification if they have been in role for four years. Members of school leadership teams and those in system leadership roles are eligible to register and collect evidence.
Support	Support during the pre-certification phase will be provided online through materials and facilitation. PAI will encourage and provide support to local self-managed support groups.
Assessment	Individuals will be able to gauge their progress using an online diagnostic that will reflect the assessment requirements.
Linkages	Pre-certification recognises relevant qualifications, professional development activities, performance management and context.
Quality Assurance	The content, assessment and support processes are consistent across Australia. The APPLE criteria will be used throughout the process…Administratively feasible, Professionally acceptable, Publicly credible, Legally defensible and Economically affordable.

Certification

Purpose	To successfully collate and distil the evidence of practice and reflections in a form suitable for submission for the assessment for the award.
Content	The content is based on certification rules and regulations. The leadership curriculum for an accomplished principal and assessment tasks. The certification award.
Duration	One year.
Eligibility	An individual's online application for this phase has been successful.
Support	Principals are assigned a personal mentor who will support them in preparing their portfolio of evidence.
Assessment	A panel of experienced principals will assess the portfolio.
Linkages	Feedback from the local education department and others will be incorporated.
Quality Assurance	The quality of this stage will be rigorously monitored by PAI – it will select and train mentors and assessors; plan, monitor and quality assure their work and adjudicate disputes.

Post-Certification

Purpose	To continue a principal's own leadership development and to enable them to contribute to the development of future leaders and the system as a whole.
Content	Training of accomplished principals in the role of mentors and assessors. System leadership training.
Duration	Continuous and portable.
Eligibility	The principal has received the accomplished principal award/certificate.
Support	PAI will develop and maintain a network of accomplished principals online as well as hosting an annual conference. Self-managed groups and local education department resourcing.
Assessment	It may be necessary to reassess the accomplished principal at regular intervals to ensure the standard is maintained
Linkages	Local, national and global. School to school. Roles in the public service and community leadership.
Quality Assurance	The quality of the award will be maintained through the assessment process.

6. National Consultation Round Two

During February - March 2014, PAI has announced it is leading an extensive consultation process with principals across Australia, to inform the design and further development of the Australian Principal Certification Program.

PAI's proposed model for the Australian Principal Certification Program based on the three phases of Pre-Certification, Certification and Post-Certification will be the focus of the Round Two consultation.

The National Consultation Tour will provide Australian principals the opportunity to:

- contribute to the national discussion about the impact of principal leadership on student learning
- nominate a Years 6-12 student representative leader to participate in a simultaneous forum to contribute student voice to the recognition of principal leadership
- develop a shared understanding about certification in the Australian context
- engage with the National Consultation 7 Point Plan
- provide feedback on the draft Australian Principal Certification Program Model.

The scheduled dates for the National Consultation Tour are:

- Monday 17 February   SA
- Friday 21 February   WA
- Monday 24 February   VIC
- Wednesday 26 February   QLD
- Thursday 27 February   ACT
- Monday 3 March   TAS
- Thursday 6 March   NSW
- Wednesday 12 March   NT