



MEDIA RELEASE

DON'T PUT PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN AT RISK

The Australian Primary Principals Association's (APPA) Draft School Charter is designed to 'unclutter' or simplify the curriculum by establishing a core area of learning. Putting aside the fact that the Draft Charter looks remarkably similar to the agenda being pushed by the Federal Minister of Education, Science and Training, there will need to be some clear-headed debate about the implications of this proposal.

ACHPER National Executive Director, Jeff Emmel said,

“The Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation Inc (ACHPER) supports the concept of a Primary School Charter to help primary schools more clearly define their roles. However we believe that the best investment that can be made in our future is to ensure we have healthy, educated young people emerging from our school systems across Australia. Physical and health education must be considered as core experience in the primary school”

“ACHPER supports the need for primary students to be literate, numerate and knowledgeable in science and have a good sense of Australia's indigenous and European heritage but we will not stand by and watch the curriculum being politicised or eroded in a way that marginalises Physical and Health Education or the Arts for that matter”.

“Our concern is the possibility that schools will be able to ignore or minimise the contribution of physical and health education despite the fact that international and Australian research backs the importance of it in the lives of primary aged students. Physical and health education is fundamental to a child's growth and development, their motor skills their health and well-being and their lifestyle. Without the definition of 'core', any new Charter would have to make it clear that areas such as physical and health education should be mandated”.

Research is showing that health and well-being is an important factor that underpins successful learning by children and young people in schools. Internationally, the significance of investing in the health and well-being of future generations *through education* is increasingly being acknowledged because it provides a context in which essential life skills can be positively engaged with.

Emmel said, “We are not just talking about better health outcomes for students here although the school provides one important setting in that regard. We are talking about the values, attitudes and essential learnings of communicating, working in teams, strategic thinking and of course the social confidence that comes from a quality primary school experience in physical education and sport programs”.

ACHPER knows there are many wonderful teachers out there who understand the contribution of this experience for children that carries over into the classroom and believes that Governments and the community have a responsibility to support schools in their efforts to develop the whole child.

One of the more dangerous outcomes of the proposal would be that ‘extraneous time and energy’ could be spent by some schools only on the four core areas.

Emmel said, “It will be important that the Charter provides clear guidelines to ensure the balance of learning experiences was relevant to a child’s life during the primary years. There is also a risk that schools could ignore the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing’s Physical Activity Recommendations for Children 5-12 years”.

ACHPER believes that the majority of school principals, teachers and parents appreciate the importance of quality physical and health education in primary schools and would not want to see this learning area marginalised. Certainly children themselves would be the best advocates of the importance of play and physical activity in their school day.

For Further Information /Interview Contact

**Jeff Emmel
National Executive Director
Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation Inc
214 Port Road
Hindmarsh, South Australia 5007**

Phone 08 8340 3388, mob 0403 570 915

For ACHPER state and territory Branch contact please contact the following:

SA - Shane Pill (President)	T: 08 8201 2277
Matt Schmidt (Executive Officer)	T: 08 8232 7055
NSW - Doug Hearne (President)	T: 02 4221 4092
Julie Percival (Executive Officer)	T: 02 9572 8602
QLD - David Keating (President)	T: 0413 880 188
Jocelyn Balmer (Executive Officer)	T: 07 3895 8383
VIC - Jeff Walkley (President)	T: 03 9925 7359
Mary Wilson (Executive Officer)	T: 03 9851 6966
WA - Beth Hands (President)	T: 08 9433 0206
Denyse Passmore (Executive Officer)	T: 08 9383 7708
ACT - Darryl Stuckey (President)	T: 02 6201 2501
NT - Tamie Devine (President)	T: 08 8946 1458
TAS - Ross Brooker (President)	T: 03 6324 3724