

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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Kids matter: Schools need to take student wellbeing seriously

An incident this week at Calare Public School in Orange (NSW) highlights the importance of schools focusing on mental health and wellbeing.

“This event shows that we still need to work harder at creating school communities that are safe and respectful and treat all children with dignity,” says Jim Davies, CEO of Principals Australia Institute.

“Schools should be taking a whole-school approach to caring for the wellbeing of their students. This means principals, teachers, school staff and families working together for the best interests of young people.

“The way to create a positive culture in schools is to have wellbeing initiatives within a school that pro-actively focus on promotion, prevention and early intervention.

“We know that when you focus on wellbeing you create an environment where children learn, thrive and flourish.”

KidsMatter Primary – www.kidsmatter.edu.au - is a mental health initiative that has been adopted by 1 in 4 (28%) of Australian primary schools.

The initiative has been developed in collaboration with *beyondblue*, the Australian Psychology Society and Principals Australia Institute, with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and *beyondblue*.

“KidsMatter Primary is free for schools. In an ideal world - every school, every teacher, every child – would be participating and reaping the benefits of focusing on student wellbeing.”

“The uptake in NSW is on the increase and Principals Australia Institute urges more schools to participate in this initiative that is proven to make a difference to children.”

“KidsMatter Primary provides a foundation for us to attend to Australia’s obligations as a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.”

These rights include to:

- be treated fairly
- grow up healthy
- be safe
- receive quality education.

Interviews: Jim Davies, CEO, Principals Australia Institute is available for comment.

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Background

KidsMatter Primary is an Australian school-based initiative that has been very successful at improving wellbeing and reducing mental health issues in primary school children. The mental health initiative has been developed in collaboration with *beyondblue*, the Australian Psychological Society and Principals Australia Institute, with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and *beyondblue*.

A wide range of free resources that schools and families can use to enhance and support children's wellbeing are available on the KidsMatter website: www.kidsmatter.edu.au

Principals Australia Institute provides professional learning, leadership development and support to the nation's 10,000 principals and schools. PAI is a not-for-profit organisation supporting primary and secondary schools across all schooling sectors (government, Catholic and independent).