



Chair Report

PESA 2026 Annual General Meeting

Leonie Abbott, PESA Chair
28th July 2026

On behalf of the PESA Board, I am pleased to present this report on the activities, achievements, and direction of the Association for the past year. Amongst some critical activities to improve the member experience, the board has been focused on how we can best represent our members and serve as a peak body. The offerings relating to wellbeing in education have grown immensely since PESA was founded and it is time for us as an independent body in the marketplace to ensure schools are getting access to quality wellbeing education.

A peak body association is an organisation that represents the collective interests of its members — rather than delivering front-line services itself. A few defining features:

Representation, not delivery

A peak body speaks for a sector to government, media, and the public. PESA, for instance, represents schools, educators, and wellbeing professionals nationally. PESA doesn't run wellbeing programs in individual schools or classrooms itself, but it champions the field as a whole. Our focus is on creating a marketplace for evidence-based wellbeing programs to be found by busy educators desperate to challenge and enhance the education of their community on matters of wellbeing. We aim to be the champions of the field and to influence shifts in wellbeing within schools across this nation. Making access to quality resources and programs more accessible.

Core functions typically include:

- **Standard-setting** — establishing best-practice guidelines, ethical standards, or accreditation frameworks. We have not lost focus on the growing bodies of evidence in this field. PESA has however, consciously moved beyond a single positive-education lens toward a broader, evidence-based wellbeing education focus. Informed by the field's critics as much as its advocates, this includes positive-education, positive-psychology informed, trauma-informed education, wellbeing education, relational education and many other aligned but differently coined terminology.
- **Professional development** — we are committed to hosting conferences and professional learning training that build capability across the sector. The Starting well, Finishing Strong Professional Learning series continues to provide insight into what is happening in schools from the many sessions shared by teacher practitioners. As well as interspersing these with insight sessions delivered by the many wonderful professionals who provide training programs into schools. We hope that our PESA members value the opportunity to use their membership to trial content or presenters before investing in them coming to work with your school. This of course will be made much easier with our new Resources Hub as educators can go back through previous conference presentations or PL sessions on-demand making this an outstanding resource for our schools. We also have our hugely successful conferences, and I refer you to how it felt being surrounded by educators focussed on nurturing wellbeing in our schools when we gathered for the last conference in Adelaide in 2025. When learning becomes the inspiration to continue this amazing work – that's how I feel at the end of every PESA conference. I just wish I could attend every session! Stay tuned for information about the next conference, we are in preliminary talks with some excellent speakers and hope to have some dates soon.
- **Networking and coordination** — connecting practitioners, institutions, and regional chapters so knowledge and practice spread nationally is something PESA does really well both on a National stage and even more state based. We are grateful to our State Chapter volunteers who offer state-based opportunities for growth and connection across their communities. We also recognise that the cycle for action in each state is something requiring

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- **Advocacy** — lobbying government, shaping policy, and influencing funding or curriculum decisions on behalf of the sector
- **Sector voice and visibility** — acting as the recognised, authoritative "go-to" body when media, government, or partner organisations want a sector-wide perspective, these are two areas we recognise under our advocacy pillar are important to pursue more rigorously.
- **Research and evidence** — commissioning or synthesising research to keep practice evidence-based, we are committed to maintaining our strong relationships with the university sector.

Membership-based governance

Peak bodies are usually member-funded (individual and institutional memberships) and governed by an elected board, with an AGM as the formal accountability mechanism to members. At this point I would like to demonstrate my appreciation for the countless hours our Board have dedicated in service to PESA. I would like to acknowledge

Emma Grave as Deputy Chair

Simon Martin as Treasurer

Elizabeth Bate

Kayla Blakeney

David Bott

Deb Perich

Andy Skidmore

We resolved to pause planning for the next conference so that the work on transitioning to a better Member Portal and Resource Hub to serve members needs could be delivered by our capable and nimble small team. Led by CEO Lisa Davias I would like to thank the enormous undertakings. Lisa, Tanya Deall and Kim Latcham. together represent 2 full time equivalent staff, yet their output is phenomenal. The new Member Portal and Resource Hub project was a huge undertaking and not without its struggles. I think there were many times when Lisa, Tanya and Kim wondered if it was all worthwhile and I want to assure them that their persistence and professionalism in the face of these challenges is much appreciated. The outcome, as we will all experience as we explore the new Member Portal is fabulous and will be a go-to resource for many educators across the country and beyond.

Concurrently, PESA have worked with Minter Ellison to rework our constitution. We had one main mission – to restructure the membership so that a school membership could be extended to the broad educator base of those within a school and not bottlenecked with only a handful of staff, often the school leadership. In making this change to the constitution we hope resources and access to learning can be expanded. We were also advised by the lawyers to unclutter the constitution to align with modern processes that allow the Board to make necessary alterations without needing to rework the constitution. A process that is never fast. We welcome any questions you might have regarding the updates to the constitution which I will commend to you later as part of this meeting.

Thank you to all the presenters who have provided an hour of stimulation in our PL program. Their contribution is a hall mark of PESA's offering and I highly recommend you jump onto our new website and settle in for some outstanding learning. To our CEO Lisa Davias and the PESA team, Tanya and Kim along with our Patron, Dr Martin Seligman, and Ambassadors, Prof Lea Waters AM and Dr Anne Johnstone for their continued support. Above all, thank you to you our members and volunteers across the country whose work embodies PESA's mission every day – to have wellbeing as the foundation for learning in every classroom.

Leonie Abbott
Chair, PESA Board
28 July 2026