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The Australian Parents Council (APC) and the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) both attended the Melbourne Declaration Consultation Forum in March where the Education Goals for Young Australians were discussed.

Both parent organisations jointly asked the working party to consider the following points when developing the first draft of a new declaration:

- Renewed commitment to equity and opportunity for all children and young people whatever their ability and wherever they live.
- Children are global citizens from birth. This should be enhanced through expanded learning opportunities, recognising that children learn beyond the school gate.
- An emphasis on tangible actions and outcomes that are easily understood by all stakeholders.
- The benefit of respectful and authentic parent-school partnerships be highlighted and expanded. There is now unequivocal evidence that shows strong and robust relationships between school, teacher and family significantly improves the education and wellbeing of our children. It is a shared responsibility with the broader community.
- The new ratified Declaration should be provided to all parents on entry to primary and secondary school, with an introduction from both the Minister and parent organisations highlighting its importance as the mandate underpinning all education institutions.
- A strong focus on wellbeing in the Declaration is required to complement the focus on great educational outcomes, which won't be realised if a child or young person is not mentally and physically well-balanced.
- Families have the primary responsibility for their children in every aspect, including their education, so every effort should be made to assist them in preparing their children for formal schooling, through significant transition points and across the learning journey more generally.
- A whole-of-community education approach would not only benefit all children, but everyone invested in the process and outcomes. In particular, we need to find ways to meaningfully engage and inform parents from other cultures, so they can participate in their child's education.
- Understanding how to make best use of technology, as well as to create technological solutions, should have an increased profile in the new Declaration, as these are essential skills for our young people to actively participate in and contribute to future work opportunities. The skills of collaboration, critical thinking, confidence, communication and creativity are treated with equal importance to the development of teachable abilities.
- More needs to be done to motivate children to reach their potential and engage with their education. All students need to be imbued with hope for the future. Statements like, "many jobs are not invented yet", contribute to a sense of disengagement and uncertainty about what matters at school and afterwards. Positivity is much more likely to encourage young people to look for and create opportunities.