
Evaluation of the Empowering Local Schools Initiative First Progress Report

Australian Council *for* Educational Research



April 2013

Submitted to:

Department of Education, Employment
and Workplace Relations
School Performance and Improvement
Branch
Curriculum Assessment and Teaching
Group

Contact details:

Dr Robert Simons
Principal Research Fellow
simons@acer.edu.au
(02) 8338 6840

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1. BASELINE SPECTRUM OF STARTING POINTS TO BUILD CAPACITY FOR LOCAL EMPOWERMENT	4
2. ELS HEADLINE ACTIVITIES TO BUILD CAPACITY FOR LOCAL EMPOWERMENT	5
IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF AN ESTABLISHED CAPACITY FOR LOCAL EMPOWERMENT	6
SHARING GOOD PRACTICES IN LOCAL EMPOWERMENT TO BUILD CAPACITY FOR LOCAL DECISION-MAKING IN MORE SCHOOLS	8
STRENGTHENING BASIC SKILL SETS TO BUILD CAPACITY FOR LOCAL DECISION-MAKING.....	10
3. EARLY INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	10
ENGAGING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS.....	11
INCREASING EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISENGAGED INDIGENOUS AND DISADVANTAGED YOUNG PEOPLE	12
IMPROVING STUDENT’S ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS	13
DEDICATING MORE TIME FOR TEACHERS TO SPEND ON TEACHING AND LEARNING	13
SUMMARY.....	14
APPENDIX ONE: PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FROM SURVEYS OF PRINCIPALS.....	15
APPENDIX TWO: CASE STUDY SCHOOLS.....	69

Executive Summary

The First Progress Report for the Evaluation of the Empowering Local Schools (ELS) initiative describes early stage progress of 926 schools from the Government, Catholic and Independent sectors taking part in the program from April 2012 to December 2012.

The Report describes a baseline measure of school decision-making among the participating schools. In this evaluation, local decision-making in schools is used interchangeably with local empowerment, which takes various forms in schools depending on their current capacity for making decisions locally and the policy and regulatory contexts in which they operate.

Local empowerment in schools can refer to any or a combination of, these:

- 1) School self-management within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, standards and accountabilities;¹
- 2) Building capacity for self-management as part of a strategy for whole school reform;²
- 3) Building capacity in one or more of the following areas: a) distributed leadership; b) parent and community engagement to work with schools; and, c) the preparation and professional development of school leaders.³

The policy context for the evaluation comprises:

- 1) the National Partnership for ELS; and
- 2) the Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership.

The baseline contributes to both National Partnerships by mapping the current level of capacity that these schools have to make decisions locally in the areas of governance, funding and infrastructure, and workforce management.

The first section of this Report provides an overview of point-in-time estimates of the location of schools from each jurisdiction and sector⁴ on a baseline ‘spectrum’ of ELS starting points.

The second section briefly summarises the headline activities (governance, funding and infrastructure and workforce management) that ELS schools from all jurisdictions and sectors are undertaking, from the perspective of their location on the baseline spectrum.

The third and concluding section offers examples of early indicators of success in a subset of ELS schools.

¹ Caldwell, B. J. & Harris, J. (2008). *Why not the Best Schools?* Melbourne: ACER Press, pp. 4-5.

² Caldwell, B. J. (2012). *Review of Related Literature for the Evaluation of Empowering Local Schools*. (Submitted to Empowering Local Schools Section National School Reform Support Branch Curriculum Assessment and Teaching Group) Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.

³ Caldwell, 2012, pp. 17-18; 20-21; 28-30.

⁴ ‘Jurisdiction’ is used interchangeably for: a) the state and territory departments of education; b) the Catholic education commissions and offices; and, c) the associations of independent schools. ‘Sector’ indicates the type of ELS school as Government, Catholic, or Independent.

1. Baseline spectrum of starting points to build capacity for local empowerment

A baseline spectrum provides a framework for the evaluation, and a way of classifying the different types of approaches being adopted within jurisdictions. It comprises three point-in-time interpretations of the current capacity for local decision-making by schools. The spectrum represents the point from which they are: 1) improving the effectiveness and efficiency of an established capacity for local empowerment; or 2) sharing good practices in local empowerment to build that capacity in more schools; or, 3) strengthening basic skill sets to build capacity for local decision-making.

The spectrum indicates the primary focus of schools in continuing to build capacity for local decision-making in a way that respects and acknowledges their particular situations and circumstances. A specific location along the baseline spectrum is not to be interpreted as: 1) totally excluding the others; or, 2) fixed and static; or 3) a point from which to compare relative levels of local decision-making between or within sectors; or, 4) a judgment about the relative merits of the starting points along the spectrum.

The Report shows that schools in jurisdictions with a longer history of local decision-making have a relatively more developed capacity to make decisions locally. These schools are using ELS to improve how effectively and efficiently they are doing this. They are from VIC and SA in the Government sector; NSW, QLD, SA, VIC, and WA in the Catholic sector; and NSW, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC, and WA in the Independent sector.

In other jurisdictions there are subsets of schools that have significantly progressed local decision-making and others that have not yet had either the capacity or the resources to do so. Schools in the former category are using ELS to share good practice in local empowerment so that more schools in their jurisdictions can learn from and adapt these examples to enhance their own capacity for local decision-making. These ELS schools are from the ACT, NSW, QLD, and TAS in the Government sector; the ACT, NT and TAS in the Catholic sector; and the ACT in the Independent sector.

The Government and Independent ELS schools in the NT represent another point on the baseline spectrum. They are using ELS to strengthen basic skill sets of community stakeholders and board members with professional development and training to build their capacity for local decision-making.

Figure 1 below gives a count of jurisdictions by sector along the baseline spectrum of starting points in all states and territories. It shows that Catholic and Independent jurisdictions most frequently engage in activities related to improving effectiveness and efficiency, while Government jurisdictions most frequently engage in activities related to sharing good practice.

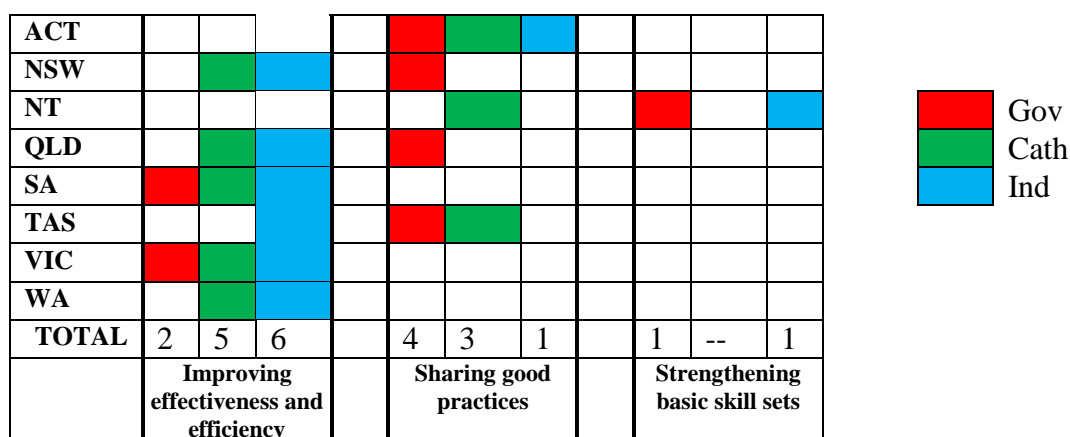


Figure 1 Count of jurisdictions by sector along the ELS baseline spectrum of starting points in all states and territories⁵

In summary, the baseline spectrum of starting points, the central organising framework for the evaluation: 1) acknowledges the diversity in levels of local decision-making among jurisdictions and sectors; 2) flags how schools intend to move forward on the basis of this diversity; and 3) comprises the basis from which further progress will be measured.

The next section describes the specific ELS headline activities that schools are undertaking to build their capacity.

2. ELS headline activities to build capacity for local empowerment

ELS schools tended to select activities under specific headline areas that corresponded to their position on the baseline of starting points. Figure 2 below gives a count of activities in each of the headline areas that jurisdictions by sector are undertaking in all states and territories. It shows that there is little variation between the numbers of jurisdictions within sectors across the three areas.

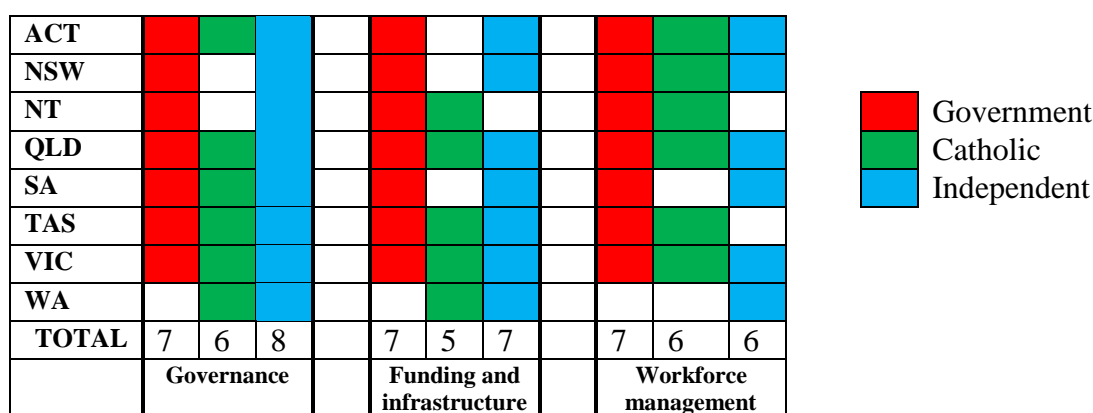


Figure 2 Count of activities in headline areas that jurisdictions by sector are undertaking in all states and territories

⁵ The Victorian government sector also has a focus on ‘sharing good practices’ and ‘strengthening basic skill sets’, however, at this stage of the evaluation ‘improving effectiveness and efficiency’ is the primary focus.

The activities are briefly summarised below according to where jurisdictions are situated along the baseline spectrum of starting points.

Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of an established capacity for local empowerment

Government schools

Government ELS schools at this point on the baseline spectrum are from VIC and SA.

VIC

Several Government ELS schools in VIC intend to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their current capacity for local decision-making by leveraging ELS on prior jurisdictional initiatives designed to build school capacity in that regard. ELS schools engaging with the School Partnerships initiative are working in clusters and networks to: 1) introduce new governance arrangements; 2) share funding and infrastructure resources; and 3) share human resources to improve workforce performance. Another group of ELS schools are purchasing a larger number of services from their Local Administrative Bureau for personnel, payroll, procurement and maintenance. Schools in receipt of Specialisation Grants are building on existing strengths and opportunities to initiate and develop sustainable programs and improvements that engage students, enhance learning and benefit the school's community. The single greatest emphasis among the ELS schools building on the Supporting Professional Practice initiative is performance management.

SA

ELS Government schools in SA intend to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their capacity for local empowerment by framing ELS as an opportunity for individual schools and schools collaborating in a cluster to operate with: 1) increased control of their budget, staff, grants and utilities; 2) a student-centred funding model for greater flexibility in the mix and deployment of staff; 3) increased autonomy in vacancy management and staff appointment processes; and 4) school councils being able to advise principals in the management and employment of non-teaching staff. There is additional support for these schools with professional development in educational and leadership skills for principals to drive innovation in practice in governance, funding and infrastructure, and workforce management.

Catholic schools

Catholic ELS schools at this point on the baseline spectrum are from NSW, QLD, SA, VIC and WA.

NSW

Catholic Schools from NSW are providing professional development to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of local empowerment in: 1) governance for the members of school advisory boards; 2) financial management for principals and administrative staff; and 3) workforce management for schools through the development of a professional community of managers.

QLD

QLD Catholic schools are undertaking ELS activities that focus on governance for strategic planning and community engagement; the management of funding and infrastructure for school improvement and renewal; and leadership mentoring and coaching of principals and their teams.

SA

The Catholic schools in SA are concentrating exclusively on improvements in their governance arrangements for local decision-making. Specific activities include: 1) implementing plans to increase the range of local stakeholders in decision-making processes to realign the identity of schools to better reflect their core values and purpose; and 2) analysing responses to surveys by parents and carers, students, teachers, expert partners, and other community stakeholders to better identify and respond to the needs of the school and the local community, and to develop more effective and efficient processes for the selection of Board members from the school community.

VIC

ELS Catholic schools in VIC are improving the effectiveness and efficiency of governance arrangements for local decision-making by developing multi-media resources for greater engagement of stakeholders across rural areas. Schools have access to upgraded communication systems from their central office to the chairs of school boards, principals, leadership teams, and administrators. A number of primary schools have also begun to implement global budgeting processes. They are supported with access to an Integrated Catholic Online Network for ongoing change management to improve workforce performance through: 1) the professional development of principals as instructional leaders and teachers identified as high performing; and 2) supplementary educational support for teachers of Indigenous students. Coaching, mentoring and teacher appraisal are available to assist in achieving both of these objectives.

WA

The Catholic ELS schools in WA are undertaking one of two school-based projects. One involves refining the current model of governance for school boards to perform their current roles more effectively. The other involves employing a business manager to work in several primary and new schools to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their management of finances and infrastructure.

Independent schools

Independent ELS schools at this point on the baseline spectrum are from NSW, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC, and WA.

NSW

Those from NSW are conducting Board appraisals and developing action plans for improved governance and risk management audits for funding and infrastructure. These initiatives are being supplemented with performance reviews and professional development for teaching and non-teaching staff to improve the teaching and learning environments in schools.

QLD

The Boards of Governors or committees of management for Independent ELS schools in QLD have selected activities to improve local decision-making to enable more effective and efficient: 1) governance, leadership, and parental and community engagement; 2) business administration, finance and budgeting; and 3) employee and human relations. The largest number of activities relate to parent and community engagement.

SA

Independent ELS schools in SA are focusing on 'lean' strategically aligned decision-making by developing: 1) new consultation processes for school governors to engage staff and parents in local decision-making processes; 2) strategies for risk management, student safety and wellbeing; and 3) workforce management strategies for the appraisal of new staff and opportunities for additional professional development for leadership teams and school staff.

TAS

In TAS, Independent ELS schools are improving the effectiveness of their local decision-making by engaging consultants to review current structures and processes for Boards and leadership teams, and general school operations. Based on the outcomes of the review, the schools will develop their own strategic plans to guide their future development and operational efficiency.

VIC

The Independent ELS schools in VIC are designing activities across the headline areas with the benefit of professional services from the American Productivity and Quality Center's Program for Process and Performance Management (PPM). These schools are linking services from the five PPM domains -- governance, funding, infrastructure, community engagement, and workforce planning – to the longer-term objective of improving student learning outcomes.

WA

Independent ELS schools in WA are improving the effectiveness and efficiency of their local decision-making by: 1) reviewing and implementing new processes to engage with parents and community stakeholders; 2) formulating strategic plans to better manage funding and infrastructure to enhance long-term sustainability; and 3) engaging in professional development for improved workforce management of employee relations and the recruitment and retention of principals.

Sharing good practices in local empowerment to build capacity for local decision-making in more schools

Government schools

Government ELS schools that are sharing good practices in local empowerment to build capacity for local decision-making in a larger number of schools are from the ACT, NSW, QLD, and TAS.

ACT

ELS Government schools in the ACT have commenced working with a dollar based staffing allocation model, rather than the current staffing points model; increased school-based decision making in the selection and management of staff; and greater flexibility to direct resources where they are most needed. Longer term, these schools plan to develop systems that support local decision-making in schools and that can be shared as a template for all government schools to adapt and use from the commencement of the 2014 school year.

NSW

Under the Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership reward reform, 47 NSW Government schools piloted a range of reforms to increase flexibility in local management in relation to staffing, recruitment and budget.

Several ELS activities expand these reforms for all NSW government schools by: 1) implementing the Learning Management and Business Reform system for integrated HR/Finance and Payroll systems; 2) focusing on flexibility in workforce performance and management to choose the

number and roles of staff to best meet local needs; and 3) implementing improved planning and processes for continuing professional development. ELS schools are also implementing a new funding model (Resource Allocation Model). The new funding model will allow NSW Government school principals to make decisions about more than 70% of the total public school education budget.

QLD

In QLD, Government ELS schools have selected activities to demonstrate the scope that all government schools have for local decision-making and leadership to: 1) develop governance structures that enable schools to work more effectively with communities; 2) manage resources with increased budgetary discretion through the removal of tied grants; and 3) develop staff profiles locally.

TAS

Government schools participating in ELS in TAS are called Plus Schools. They have been selected to identify sustainable school system changes for greater local decision-making that are transferable to the next generation of school leadership. Their ELS activities include: 1) considering whether to replace School Associations with Advisory Boards; 2) implementing one-line budgets for greater flexibility to direct resources; and 3) exploring school amalgamations and partnerships to apportion staff to work across school settings.

Catholic schools

Catholic schools at this point in the ELS baseline spectrum – sharing good practice – are from the ACT, the NT, and TAS.

ACT

Catholic ELS schools in the ACT are trialling a new data warehousing system to support a broad range of local decisions in schools. ELS schools will use the new system to: 1) engage stakeholders to implement a Regional Council structure for school governance; 2) shift the focus of principals primarily towards the development of a culture of performance in schools; and 3) access professional development to expand the capacity of principals and staff to lead innovation, improvement, and change.

NT

In the NT, Catholic ELS schools are trialling new procedures and online financial and human resources systems to demonstrate how all NT Catholic schools can strengthen their capacity for local decision-making. The systems support principals to set budgets, employ staff and plan and develop education programs.

TAS

Tasmanian Catholic schools participating in ELS are piloting the development of a user-friendly online database to build system capacity so that more schools will be able to make data-informed decisions. They have access to a coordinator to train principals and ‘teacher enablers’ to assist teachers to access and analyse data. Eventually, all TAS Catholic schools will have access to the database for more informed local decision-making.

Independent schools

ACT

The one Independent ELS school in the ACT is providing professional development to bolster the capacity for governance of its Board, and for business administration and human resources of its school leaders. The school is mentoring smaller Independent schools by sharing good practice in engaging critical friends to strengthen local decision-making. The school is also demonstrating good practice in finance and budget systems that can be transferred to other schools.

Strengthening basic skill sets to build capacity for local decision-making

Government schools

ELS Government schools in the NT are providing professional development and site-based mentoring to improve governance structures and processes for school board members to engage in strategic planning. These schools are also providing professional development for school staff to strengthen basic skill sets in: 1) financial literacy for financial managements, budgeting and reporting, and school operations; and 2) human resource management within schools.

Catholic schools

There are no Catholic ELS schools that are engaging in activities at this point in the baseline spectrum of ELS starting points.

Independent schools

The NT Independent ELS schools have Indigenous Boards. Their activities are geared towards improving the governance structure and processes of these Boards to engage parents and community stakeholders more effectively.

In summary, ELS schools from all sectors selected headline activities that: 1) build on prior initiatives to improve capacity for local decision-making; 2) target areas where further development of capacity for local empowerment in specific contexts is most needed; and 3) reflect similar emphases and approaches across sectors in specific states and territories, as well as opportunities to share good practice, and to develop further capacity suited to specific contexts.

The next section shows how schools in a subset of jurisdictions and sectors have already begun to show early indicators of success resulting from their activities to build capacity for local empowerment.

3. Early indicators of success

This section showcases a sample of ELS schools undertaking activities to strengthen and extend their capacity for local decision-making. The successes show how ELS is enabling schools to: 1) engage parents and community stakeholders more effectively; 2) increase educational and career opportunities for disengaged Indigenous and disadvantaged young people; 3) improve students' achievement levels; and 4) free teachers from administrative tasks to dedicate more time to teaching and learning.

Engaging parents and community stakeholders

Government schools

NSW

Some Government schools in NSW are consulting with their communities as they take advantage of the flexible staffing option for the mix of staff. Communities engaged in the process have a better understanding of how priorities in the School Plan directly link to the allocation of resources for the improvement of student outcomes. One ELS principal has been acknowledged as the AITSL (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership) secondary principal of the year because of the positive impact from her early successes in community engagement.

NT

An early indicator of success in the NT has been in engaging parents to develop a plan to further increase parental engagement. This plan is currently being implemented and is strengthening the school's skill base to involve parents and community stakeholders in decision-making processes.

SA

Several Government schools in SA have reported early successes in engaging parents by: 1) using social media; 2) 'de-privatising' how teachers construct lesson plans and timetables so that parents can access this information online; 3) consulting parents on the development of learning spaces; 4) tapping into parents' interest in service delivery for themselves and their children through online linkages between schools and other agencies; and 5) improving technology to facilitate links to information about learning and wellbeing relevant to both students and parents.

TAS

ELS Government schools in TAS have been successful in implementing improvements in: 1) governance arrangements to facilitate partnerships with students' families; 2) innovation by using information and communication technology to communicate more effectively with parents and incorporating information from this initiative into school-wide systemic reform; and 3) coaching to build capacity for team leadership.

VIC

ELS Government schools in VIC have been successful in: 1) consulting parents and communities as part of the decision-making process to select specialisation areas of teaching and learning; and 2) forming partnerships and clusters of schools for greater capacity to identify shared goals and plan to better meet the educational needs of the local community.

Catholic schools

WA

Catholic ELS schools in WA are tapping into newly available data systems to: 1) engage parent and community stakeholders more effectively in decision-making processes; and 2) monitor their progress to determine whether the lessons learned can be replicated in other schools.

Independent schools

An Independent ELS school in the ACT has been successful in demonstrating how a process to engage parents and community stakeholders can provide additional support to students and contribute to improved learning outcomes. The school achieved this early success by developing a model of reflective practice and sharing it with other Independent schools: 1) to assist in aligning a

school's mission and strategic vision; and 2) to collaborate with the ELS school in developing communities of practice.

Increasing educational and career opportunities for disengaged Indigenous and disadvantaged young people

An Independent ELS school in QLD is an especially good example of giving disengaged young people access to more learning opportunities and support to pursue them.

Case study

The core business of this small regional co-educational secondary school centre is to re-engage and provide education and training to young people who are neither engaged in nor attending school. Since the school was established, it has helped hundreds of young people to stay off welfare by operating as a centre that offers opportunities for both education and training.

Students at the school face many barriers in coping with schooling, including dysfunctional families and homelessness. Some are barely literate and others have been out of school for two years. If they become homeless while at school, the school supports them to find housing. The Principal said, 'Despite a perception that the centre is a halfway house, last year two students began university studies and of the 25 students enrolled in Year 12, 24 graduated to employment or further studies and many of these students settled in the local community'.

The school wants to extend its support services and test the suitability of its student management model for disadvantaged youth in other regional areas. It has employed a consultant to determine the feasibility of a pilot cluster of similar school centres and of developing staff and resources for them. The study aims to clarify: 1) whether the school has the capacity to facilitate a cluster of schools to achieve similar goals; 2) possible locations and optimal sizes for additional centres; 3) grade levels they should offer; 4) whether centres should be single sex or co-educational; and 5) the best management model for them.

If the study suggests that the plan is feasible, the school plans to work as a hub in a cluster with two other schools in the future. The hub will provide administrative support to improve service delivery and sustainability for all schools in the cluster. If the hub model works, the intention is to replicate it in many locations across QLD.

Improving student's achievement levels

A Catholic ELS school in Tasmania has begun to experience success in improving the achievement levels of students in maths.

Case study

A medium-sized co-educational primary school in a suburban area of relative socio-economic disadvantage with 11 per cent Indigenous enrolment has had high staff turnover in recent years. National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and other data have identified a need for improvement in mathematics, especially Space and Measurement.

The school has identified four 'enabling conditions' to achieve its ELS goal: 1) leadership by the principal and the leadership team; 2) collaborative teams of teachers to undertake professional learning in collaborative inquiry and knowledge building; 3) a timeline for teachers to collect and analyse data to improve teaching and learning outcomes; and 4) prioritising time for teacher enablers to concentrate on curriculum planning.

A teacher-enabler (one of the two assistant principals) and the principal participated in professional development workshops towards the end of the 2012 school year. They looked at the school's NAPLAN data and explored the concept of 'data conversations' for all teachers, the principal, and teacher-enablers to determine teaching and learning goals collaboratively. The principal said: "Our philosophy of empowerment is to empower all of the teaching staff".

A variety of strategies are in place to measure the impact of ELS, including formative evaluation of teachers' performance within current appraisal and performance management systems and structures and, staff and parent surveys and interviews. Improvement in student learning outcomes will be measured by teachers' observations and classroom assessments together with data from standardised tests and NAPLAN.

Dedicating more time for teachers to spend on teaching and learning

A Government ELS school in VIC is successfully managing to reallocate administrative responsibilities so that teachers can concentrate on teaching and learning.

Case study

A small government co-educational primary school in rural VIC with human resource shortages and limited technologies has worked with the Local Administrative Bureau (LAB) for seven years. While the school was already accessing many services offered by the LAB, it can now also access increased training and purchase more technological resources.

Participation in ELS has allowed greater flexibility for staff to devote more time to learning and teaching and to focus on educational leadership and higher level strategic planning. The school has also been able to significantly upgrade its technological resources. Without support from ELS to access additional LAB services, much of the school's budget would be in deficit.

The school sees short-, medium-, and long-term benefits from the ELS initiative. In the short-term, there are efficiency and time-saving benefits. In the medium-term, the school anticipates changes in systems, and in the long-term, in planning, training, and sharing 'what works' with other schools. The business manager commented: 'The knowledge is portable. We can share what we're learning with other schools and principals'.

The school believes the extension of the program made possible by the ELS grant is sustainable and that the program is transferable to other schools. The school considers sharing knowledge and experience with other schools an added benefit of ELS.

Summary

A subset of ELS schools from all sectors has reported on early successes since the commencement of their ELS activities. These early indicators of success affirm that ELS is supporting progress in building capacity for local empowerment to: 1) improve local governance by engaging parents and community stakeholders more effectively; 2) increase learning and career opportunities and support for disengaged Indigenous and disadvantaged young people; 3) improve students' achievement levels; and 4) enable teachers to spend more time on their core responsibilities for teaching and learning.

Appendix One: preliminary information from surveys of principals

A. Governance arrangements in relation to strategic planning, school operations, and decision-making structures and processes that include parents and carers and community stakeholders

School Boards, councils or committees of management (Survey qq. 22-28)

In the final data set responses were received from 693 schools in answer to the question about the existence of a school Board. Of these 693, 87 came from the Independent sector and all of these schools had a Board. There were 98 Catholic schools and all but 5 reported having a Board. Of the 508 government schools 54 per cent (n = 273) reported having a Board. There was considerable variability between states and territories. For example, all government schools from ACT and TAS and nearly all from VIC reported having a Board. In NSW and QLD less than 25 per cent reported having a Board. This wide variability can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Proportion of government ELS schools reporting having a Board, by state and territory (Total n = 273)⁶

Of the 54 per cent of government ELS schools with a Board, around half were incorporated, and half were advisory. The distribution of Board types varied widely across the sectors. Nearly all Catholic schools had an advisory Board, 80 per cent of Independent schools had an incorporated Board, and about half of the government schools had an incorporated Board. Details can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Proportion of Boards that are incorporated or advisory by sector

	Government	Catholic	Independent
Incorporated	49.4	9.8	80.5
Advisory	50.6	90.2	19.5

⁶ Responses from the SA Government ELS schools do not reflect the actual situation that all Government schools in SA have a Governing Council that operates as a Board. The discrepancy between responses to the survey and the current status of all Government schools with Governing Councils could possibly be explained by the different terminology.

shows the wide variability between states in the government sector. For example, nearly all NSW and QLD government ELS schools with Boards are advisory, while it is less than 20 per cent in SA.

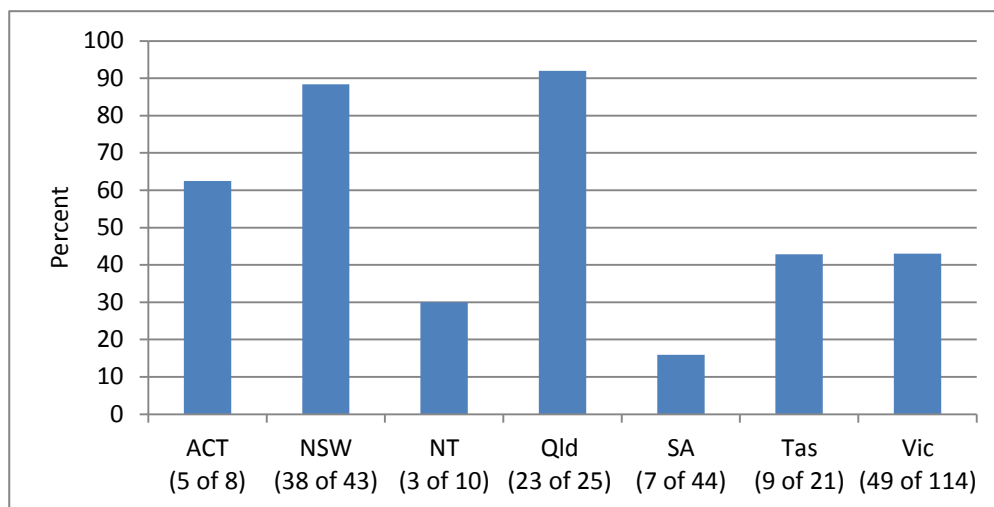


Figure 2: Proportion of government ELS schools with a Board, reporting it was advisory, by state and territory (Total n = 265)⁷

For those schools with Boards, the average size was around 11 members (SD = 3.8). The distribution of size can be seen in Figure 3.

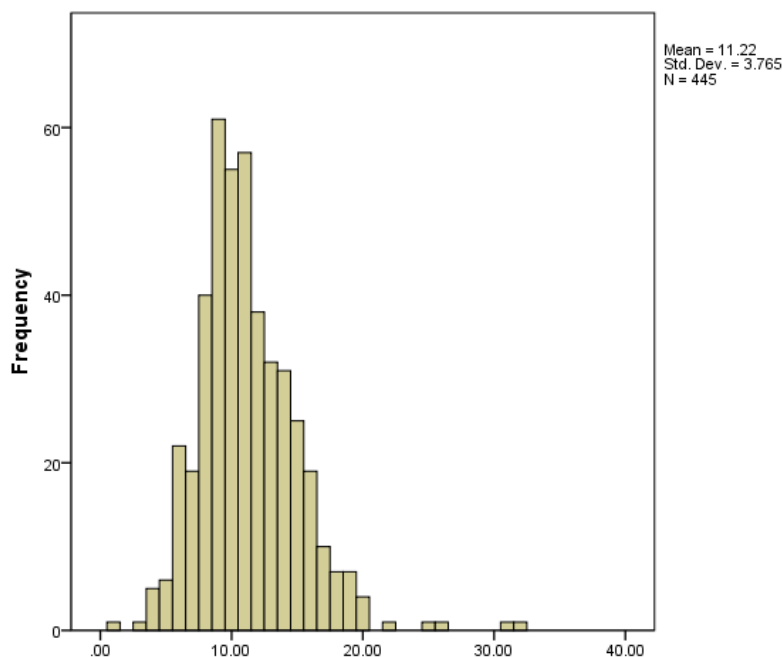


Figure 3: Number of members on school Boards

⁷ Figure 2 shows the number of schools in each state or territory to indicate the base upon which the percentages are calculated. Some numbers are small. For example, in the ACT, there were only eight government schools reporting that they had a Board, and of these eight, five are advisory, while in Victoria just over 40 per cent are advisory, this represents 49 of 114 government schools with Boards. Figure 2 also does not reflect that all Governing Councils in SA Government schools are incorporated under the Education Act. See footnote 2 above, where the discrepancy between the actual situation and the responses to the survey could be possibly explained by respondents to the survey not recognising that Governing Councils are equivalent to school Boards in SA.

On average, there was little difference in the size of Boards across sectors, or between states. On average, government and Catholic schools had around six parents on each of their Boards, while Independent schools have on average three parents. (This difference is statistically significant.) There were also differences between states with SA averaging seven parents per Board, and ACT and NSW averaging less than four. Slightly less than 90 per cent of Boards had the school principal as a member. About one third of Boards did not have as members the school's executive staff, about one third had one member and the remaining third of schools had two or more members. There was little difference between sectors or states in the average numbers of these school staff on school Boards. Just under one half of schools had no non-executive school staff, about a quarter had one non-executive staff and about a quarter had two or members. Government schools were more likely, on average, to have non-executive school staff on Boards than the other sectors. This difference is large (with the effect size using Cohen's d in the range of 0.79 – 1.06). In contrast, Independent schools were much more likely to have community members on their Board. This can be seen in the error bar chart, Figure 4.

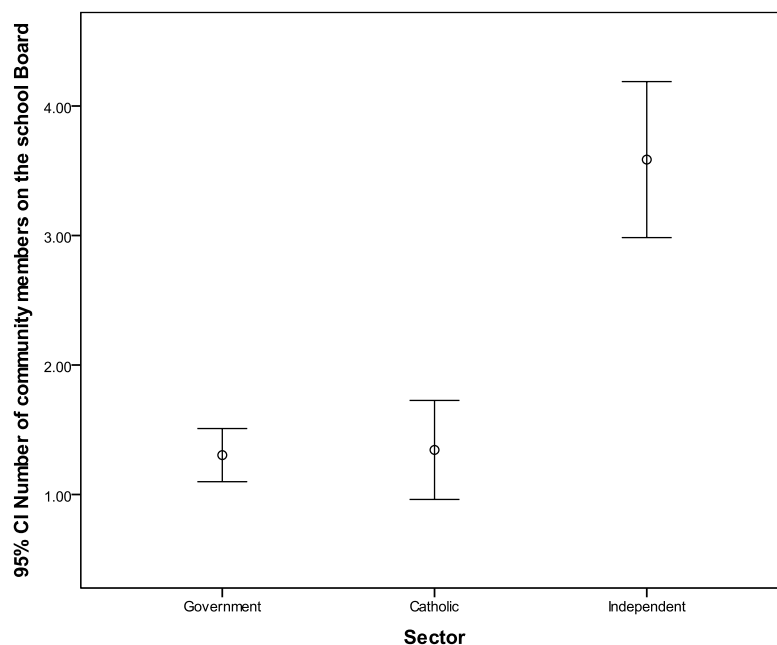


Figure 4: The average number of community members on school Boards by sectors, showing 95% confidence intervals

Over 80 per cent of schools did not have students on their Boards. About 10 per cent had two students on their Board. Government schools were somewhat more likely to have students on their Board compared with Catholic and Independent schools. This difference was small (with the effect size using Cohen's d in the range of 0.22 – 0.41). Over 90 per cent of Boards did not have system level staff as members.

Stakeholders participating in decision-making across several specific areas (Survey q. 29)

Schools were asked who participates in decision-making about (i) curricular offerings, (ii) extra-curricular and co-curricular offerings, (iii) criteria for the selection of a principal, (iv) the selection of a principal and (v) site improvement plans.

Figure 5 shows that few Boards, on average, contribute to decisions about the school's curriculum. Government school Boards are much less likely than Catholic or Independent Boards to participate in decisions about the selection criteria and the selection of the principal. There is, however, considerable variation between states and territories, as well as within sectors across states and territories. This can be seen in Table 2.

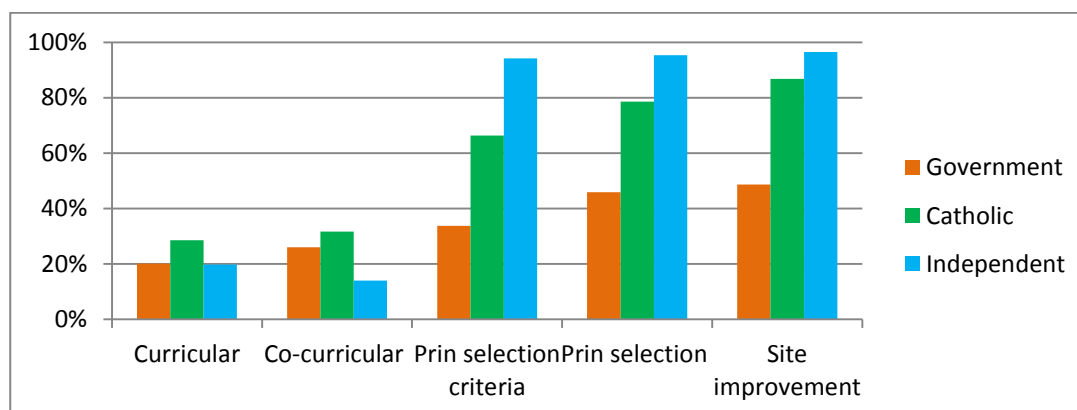


Figure 5: The proportion of school Boards participating in various types of decisions by sector for all Australia⁸

Table 2: Proportion of Boards participating in various types of decisions by sector and state or territory

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total
Curricular									
Government	100.0%	6.5%	36.4%	5.5%	29.8%	35.0%	41.3%		20.1%
Catholic	100.0%			26.3%	16.7%		35.4%	12.5%	28.6%
Independent		28.6%		7.1%	33.3%	50.0%	16.7%	8.3%	19.8%
Total	91.7%	9.3%	26.7%	8.4%	29.0%	30.8%	37.4%	10.7%	21.3%
Co-curricular									
Government	37.5%	9.7%	54.5%	12.7%	46.8%	35.0%	50.4%		26.0%
Catholic	66.7%		50.0%	21.1%	16.7%		37.5%	31.3%	31.6%
Independent		21.4%			11.1%	50.0%	16.7%	8.3%	14.0%
Total	41.7%	11.2%	46.7%	12.6%	38.7%	30.8%	43.9%	21.4%	25.3%
Prin selection criteria									
Government	37.5%	20.4%	27.3%	3.6%	61.7%	10.0%	75.2%		33.8%
Catholic	33.3%			47.4%	100.0%	50.0%	77.1%	62.5%	66.3%
Independent	100.0%	85.7%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	91.7%	94.2%
Total	41.7%	29.0%	33.3%	18.9%	71.0%	23.1%	78.1%	75.0%	46.0%

Table continues over the page

⁸ In relation to Figure 5 and Table 2 below, all school Governing Councils in SA participate in decisions dealing with principal selection criteria, principal selection, and site improvement. That less than 100% of the respondents reflected the actual situation suggests a discrepancy between their perception and the reality. Refer also to footnote 2 above.

Prin selection	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total
Government	100.0%	22.6%	63.6%	2.7%	93.6%	80.0%	91.7%		45.9%
Catholic	100.0%		50.0%	73.7%	100.0%	75.0%	72.9%	93.8%	78.6%
Independent	100.0%	85.7%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	95.3%
Total	100.0%	30.8%	66.7%	21.7%	95.2%	80.8%	87.7%	96.4%	56.8%
Site improvement									
Government	87.5%	23.1%	72.7%	21.8%	95.7%	60.0%	87.6%		48.7%
Catholic	100.0%		100.0%	68.4%	100.0%	100.0%	87.5%	93.8%	86.7%
Independent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	88.9%	100.0%	88.9%	100.0%	96.5%
Total	91.7%	33.2%	80.0%	35.7%	95.2%	69.2%	87.7%	96.4%	60.1%

Figure 6 shows the proportion of schools where principals participate in various types of decisions. There was little variation between the sectors. There was also very little variation between states and territories, either within or across sectors.

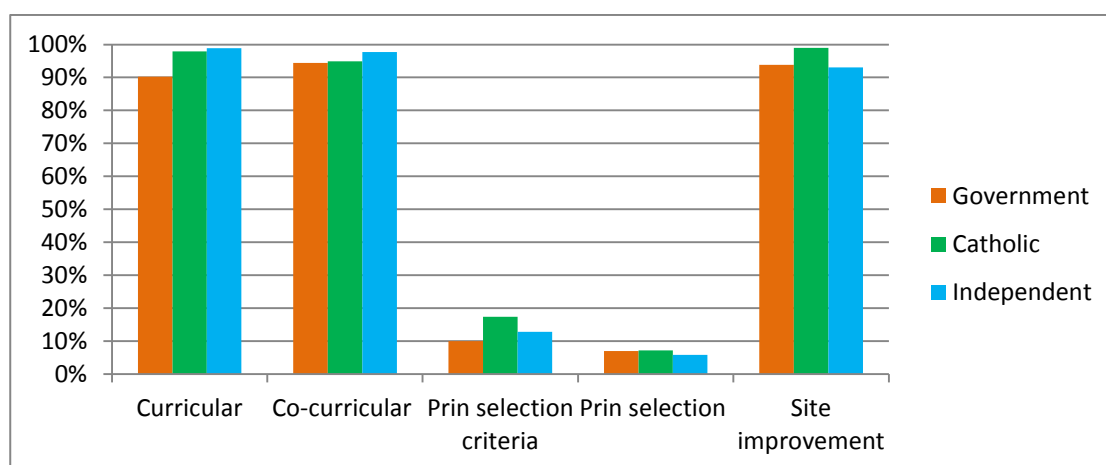


Figure 6: The proportion of schools with principals participating in various types of decisions by sector for all Australia

Figure 7 shows the proportion of schools where school executive or senior staff participate in various types of decisions. There was little variation between the sectors. There was also little variation between states and territories, either within or across sectors.

Figure 8 shows the proportion of schools where teachers at the school participate in various types of decisions. Independent schools were less likely to have teachers participate in the decisions about the criteria for the selection of the principal and in the selection of a principal. There was little variation between states and territories.

Figure 9 shows that Catholic schools are somewhat more likely to have other school staff participate in decisions about the selection criteria for principals, otherwise there are few differences between sectors. Similarly, there were few differences between states. Some (e.g. SA with 65 per cent of schools) were more likely to involve other staff in decisions about site improvement than others (e.g., NT, 26 per cent).

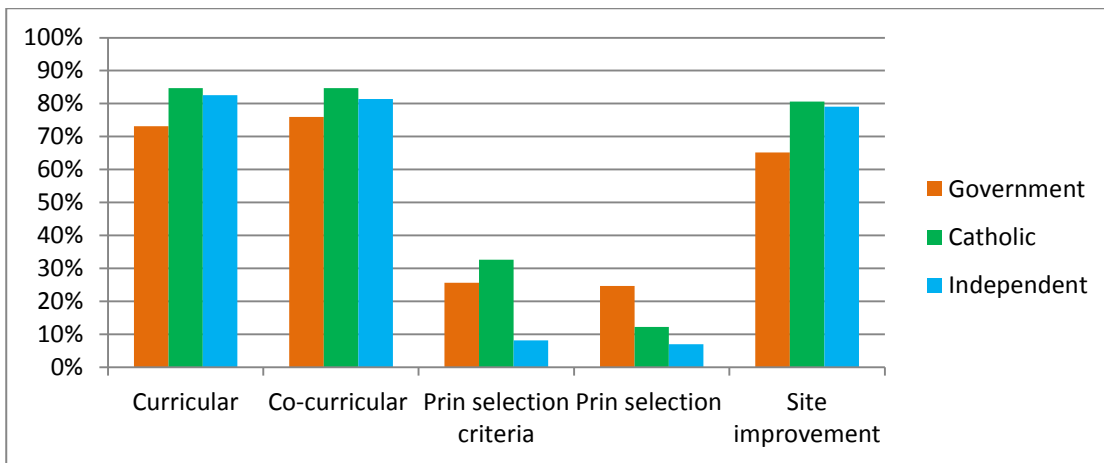


Figure 7: The proportion of schools with school executive or senior staff participating in various types of decisions by sector for all Australia

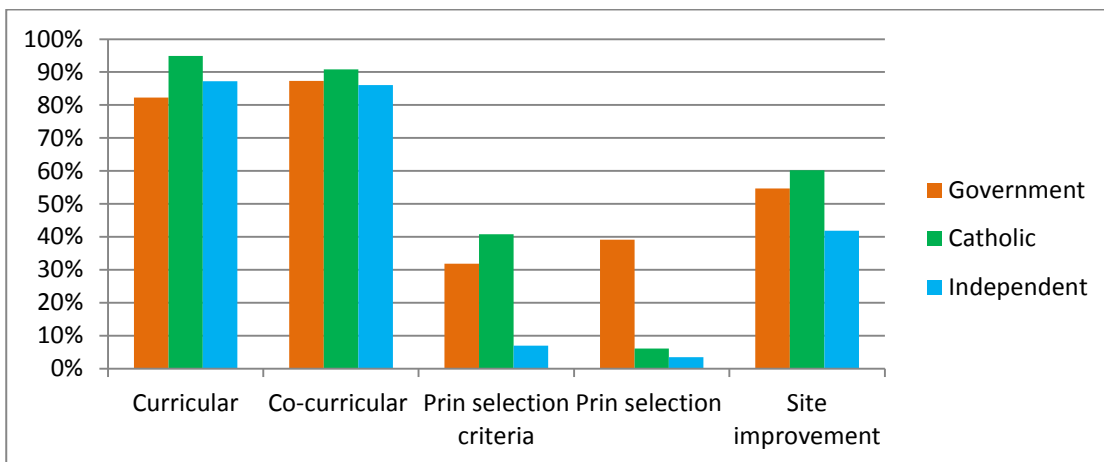


Figure 8: The proportion of schools with teachers participating in various types of decisions by sector for all Australia

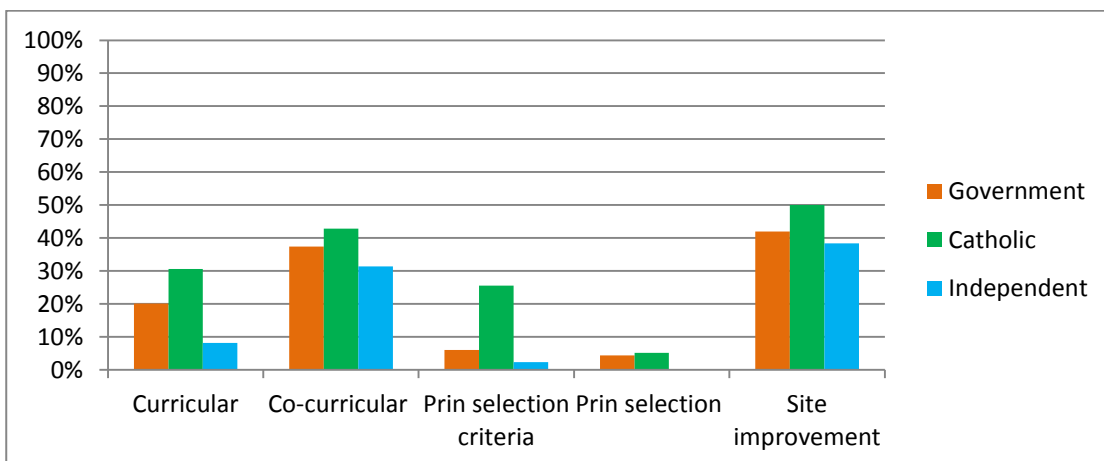


Figure 9: The proportion of schools with other school staff participating in various types of decisions by sector for all Australia

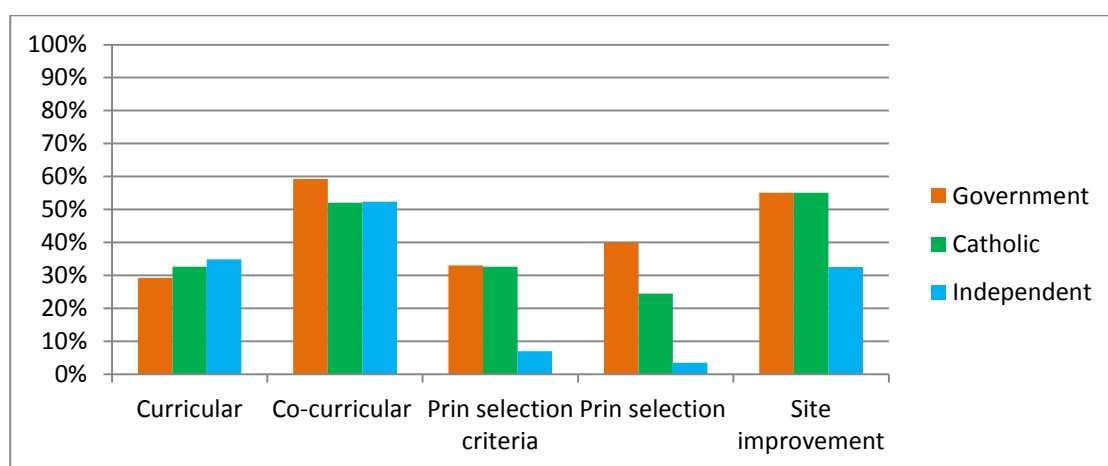


Figure 10: The proportion of schools with parents participating in various types of decisions by sector for all Australia

Figure 10 shows that Independent schools are somewhat less likely to have parents participate in decisions about the selection criteria for principals; otherwise there are few differences between sectors. Similarly, there were few differences between states. Table 3 shows that there is considerable variation across states in some decision-making areas. For example, 60.3 per cent of NSW schools – mostly due to the government sector – have parents participate in decisions about the selection criteria for principals. This compares with less than 10 per cent of schools in most other states and territories.

Table 3: Proportion of ELS schools where parents participate in various types of decisions by sector and state or territory⁹

Curricular	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total
Government	37.5%	31.7%	9.1%	26.4%	25.5%	20.0%	32.2%		29.2%
Catholic	66.7%		100.0%	36.8%	33.3%	25.0%	31.3%	18.8%	32.7%
Independent		46.4%	50.0%	28.6%	33.3%		22.2%	41.7%	34.9%
Total	41.7%	33.6%	26.7%	28.0%	27.4%	19.2%	31.0%	28.6%	30.4%
Co-curricular									
Government	75.0%	64.0%	36.4%	67.3%	48.9%	50.0%	51.2%		59.2%
Catholic	66.7%		100.0%	52.6%	66.7%	50.0%	50.0%	43.8%	52.0%
Independent		64.3%	50.0%	42.9%	55.6%		55.6%	41.7%	52.3%
Total	66.7%	64.0%	46.7%	62.9%	51.6%	46.2%	51.3%	42.9%	57.4%
Prin selection criteria									
Government		68.3%	9.1%	8.2%	14.9%		18.2%		33.0%
Catholic				21.1%	83.3%	25.0%	41.7%	12.5%	32.7%
Independent	100.0%	7.1%			11.1%		5.6%	8.3%	7.0%
Total	8.3%	60.3%	6.7%	9.1%	21.0%	3.8%	23.0%	10.7%	29.7%

Table continues over the page

⁹ Parents in Government schools in SA participate in decisions pertaining to principal selection criteria, principal selection, and site improvement through their representation on Governing Councils. Refer also to footnotes 2 and 4 above. In addition to the possibility of not understanding the equivalence between Governing Councils and school Boards in SA, survey respondents may not have been aware of the rules around the operation of Governing Councils.

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total
Prin selection									
Government	12.5%	74.7%	18.2%	9.1%	17.0%	20.0%	30.6%		40.0%
Catholic				36.8%		50.0%	29.2%	6.3%	24.5%
Independent					11.1%		5.6%	8.3%	3.5%
Total	8.3%	65.0%	13.3%	11.9%	14.5%	23.1%	27.8%	7.1%	33.2%
Site improvement									
Government	37.5%	67.2%	18.2%	59.1%	46.8%	45.0%	42.1%		55.1%
Catholic	100.0%		50.0%	52.6%	83.3%	25.0%	60.4%	31.3%	55.1%
Independent		32.1%		21.4%	33.3%	100.0%	27.8%	50.0%	32.6%
Total	50.0%	62.6%	20.0%	54.5%	48.4%	46.2%	45.5%	39.3%	52.3%

Figure 11 shows that Catholic schools are somewhat more likely to have students participate in decisions about the selection criteria for principals, otherwise there are few differences between sectors. There was little variation between states and territories, either within or across sectors.

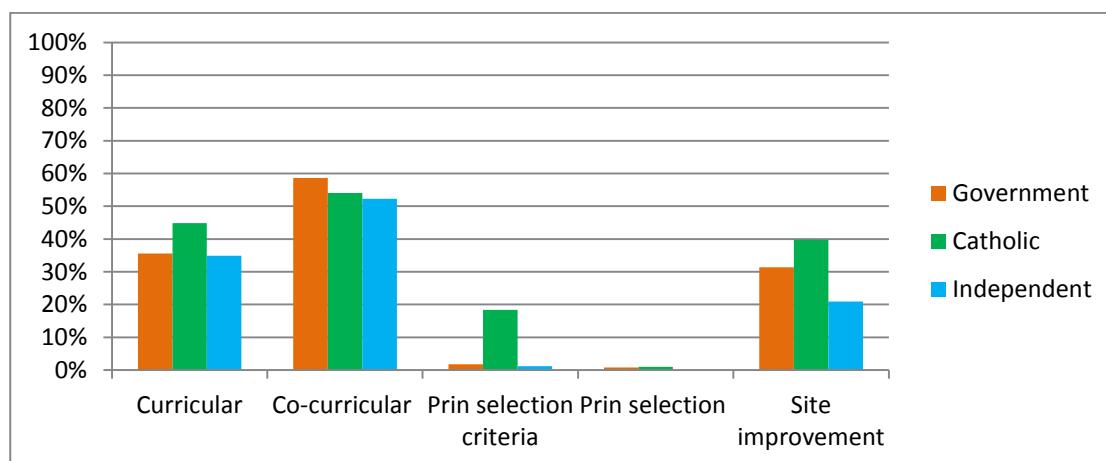


Figure 11: The proportion of schools with students participating in various types of decisions by sector for all Australia

Figure 12 shows that there is very little difference between sectors in the extent to which non-parent members of the community participate in various types of decisions. This lack of variation is due mostly to the very low levels across each of the sectors. There was very little variation between states and territories.

Figure 13 shows that Independent schools are much less likely to have Head Office participate in decisions, probably due to the fact that, as Independent organisations there is no 'Head Office' to make decisions. For the Catholic and government sectors, there was a high level of participation, especially around decisions related to the appointment of school principals. There was little variation between states and territories, either within or across sectors, except for decisions about the selection of the principal. This can be seen in Table 4.

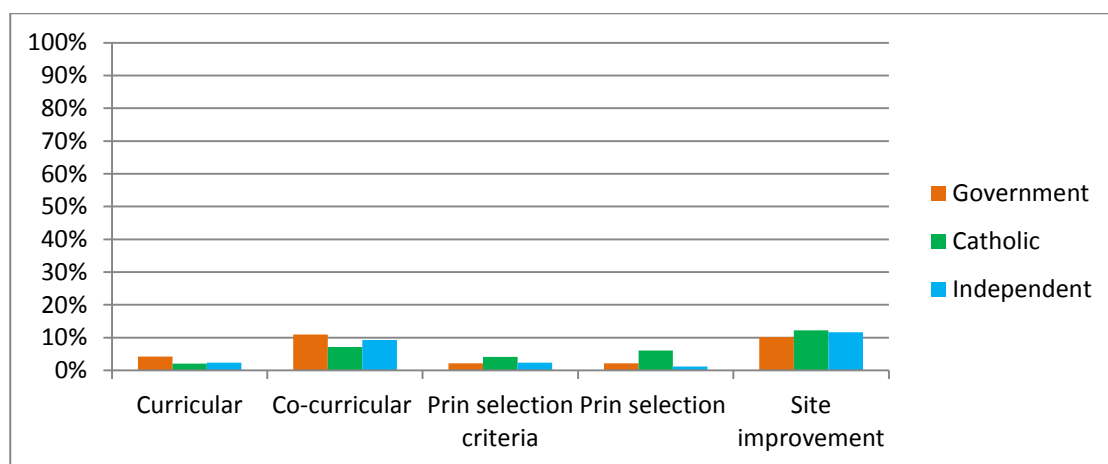


Figure 12: The proportion of schools with the non-parent community participating in various types of decisions by sector for all Australia

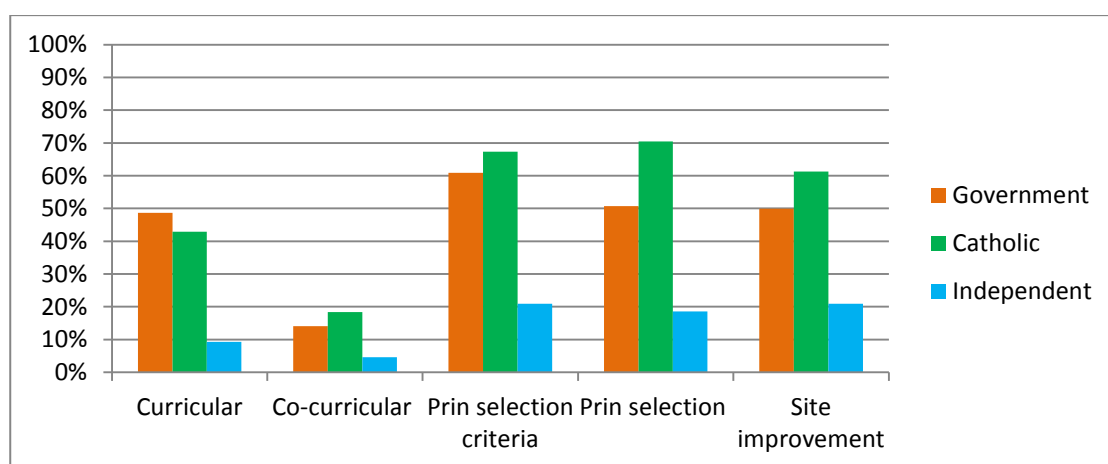


Figure 13: The proportion of schools with Head Office participating in various types of decisions by sector for all Australia

Table 4 Proportion of schools where Head Office participates in decisions about the appointment of a principal, by sector and state or territory¹⁰

Prin selection	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total
Government	100.0%	36.6%	81.8%	82.7%	27.7%	85.0%	40.5%		50.7%
Catholic	100.0%		100.0%	78.9%	100.0%	100.0%	56.3%	75.0%	70.4%
Independent		28.6%	50.0%	14.3%		50.0%	5.6%	25.0%	18.6%
Total	91.7%	35.5%	80.0%	75.5%	30.6%	84.6%	41.2%	53.6%	49.5%

Figure 14 shows that Independent schools are much less likely to have the Regional Office participate in decisions, probably due to the fact that, as Independent organisations there are no regional offices. For the Catholic and government sectors, there was a moderately high level of participation around decisions related to the appointment of school principals and site improvements. There was little variation between states and territories, either within or across sectors.

¹⁰ In SA, Government Schools have both a Head Office and Regional Offices. While Regional Offices are involved directly in principal selection and appointment in all SA Government schools, their involvement is in close collaboration with Head Office. Responses to the survey in SA Government ELS schools do not accurately reflect the involvement of Head Office in collaboration with Regional Offices.

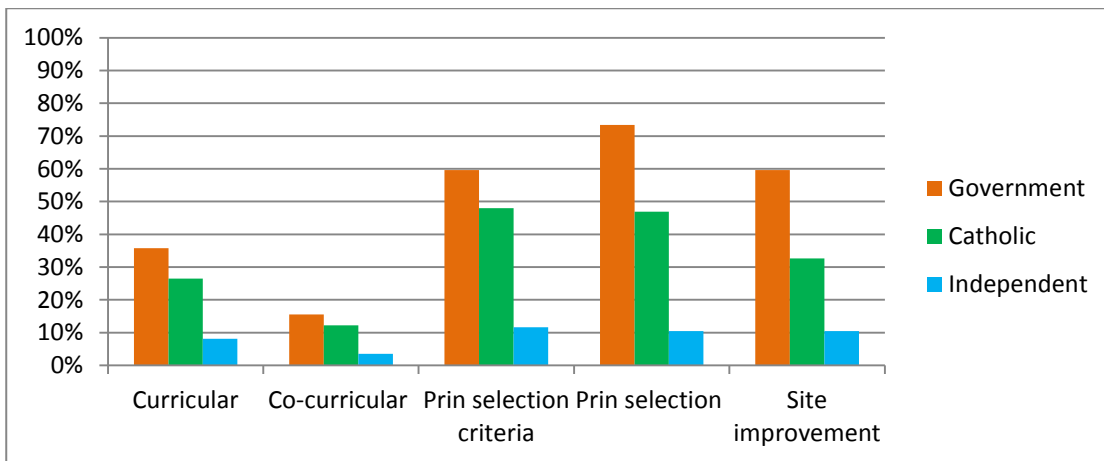


Figure 14: The proportion of schools with the Regional Office participating in various types of decisions by sector for all Australia

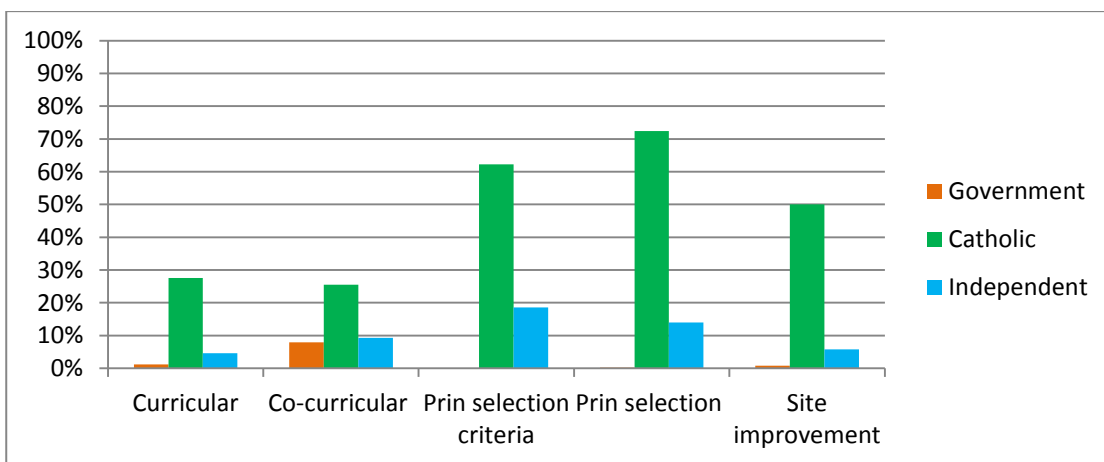


Figure 15: The proportion of schools with the community religious leaders participating in various types of decisions by sector for all Australia

Figure 15 shows that Catholic schools are much more likely to have community religious leaders participate in decisions, especially in relation to principal selection and site improvement. Community religious leaders had rarely participated in decisions at government schools, and only slightly more at Independent schools. There was little variation between states and territories, either within or across sectors.

Figure 16 shows that Aboriginal Educational Consultative Groups rarely participate in decisions at schools, and where they do, it tends to be government schools. There was little variation between states and territories, either within or across sectors.

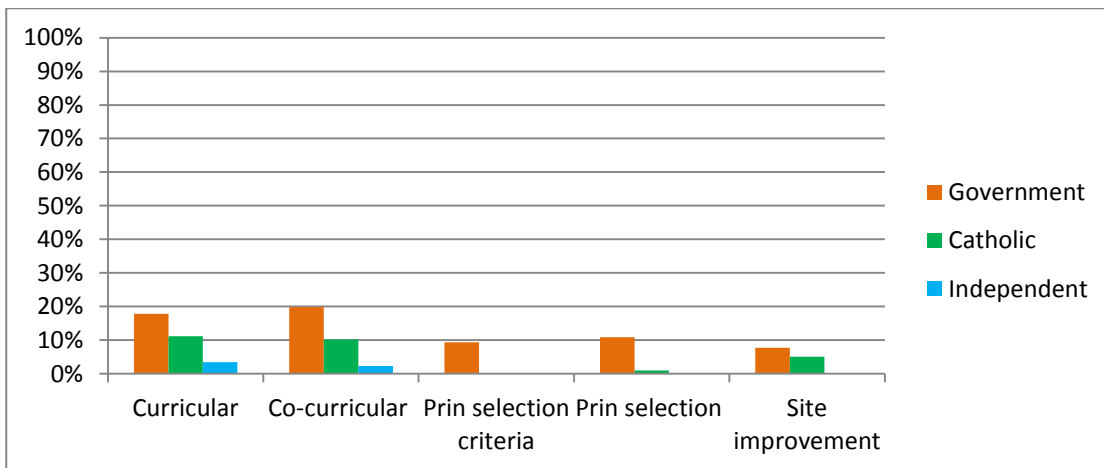


Figure 16: The proportion of schools that has an Aboriginal Educational Consultative Group participating in various types of decisions by sector for all Australia¹¹

School strategic plan, mission statement or constitution (Survey qq. 30-34)

A smaller proportion of government schools have a strategic plan (74 per cent) than schools in either the Catholic (93 per cent) or Independent (95 per cent) sectors. There was some variation between states and territories in government schools, for example with QLD having just over 60 per cent of government schools reporting a strategic plan compared with nearly 90 per cent in ACT and VIC (see Figure 17).

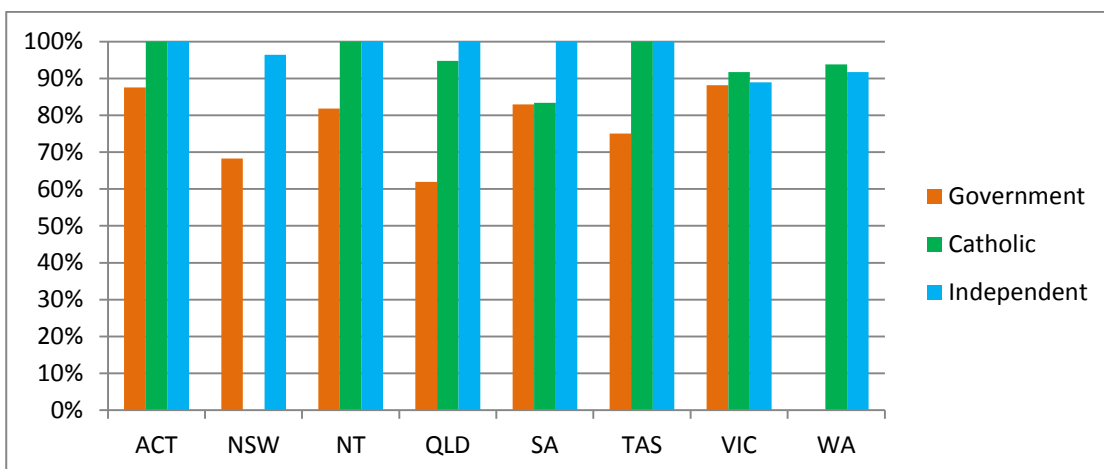


Figure 17: The proportion of schools with a strategic plan or mission statement by sector for all Australia

Of those schools with a strategic plan or mission statement, 90 per cent reported that it is treated as a working document and regularly referred to throughout the year. Around 90 per cent of government and Catholic schools and 80 per cent of Independent schools used the document regularly. There was some variation between states and sectors, which can be seen in Figure 18. SA government schools are low compared with other government jurisdictions.

¹¹ The number of schools with 60 per cent or more of students with a language background other than English was too small for meaningful comparisons across States and Territories.

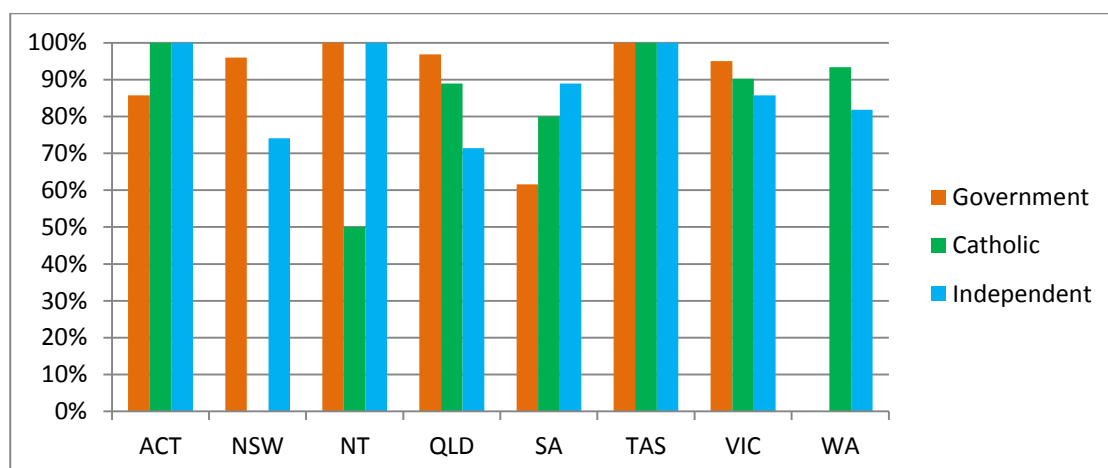


Figure 18: The proportion of schools that have a strategic plan or mission statement and use it as a working document by sector for all Australia

Figure 19 shows the sources of input for this document. There is some variation between sectors, for example, government schools are less likely to draw input from Boards and far less likely to draw from religious leaders. None of the sectors draws much upon the non-parent community. There were no clear patterns in the data as to who reviewed the strategic plan or mission statement.

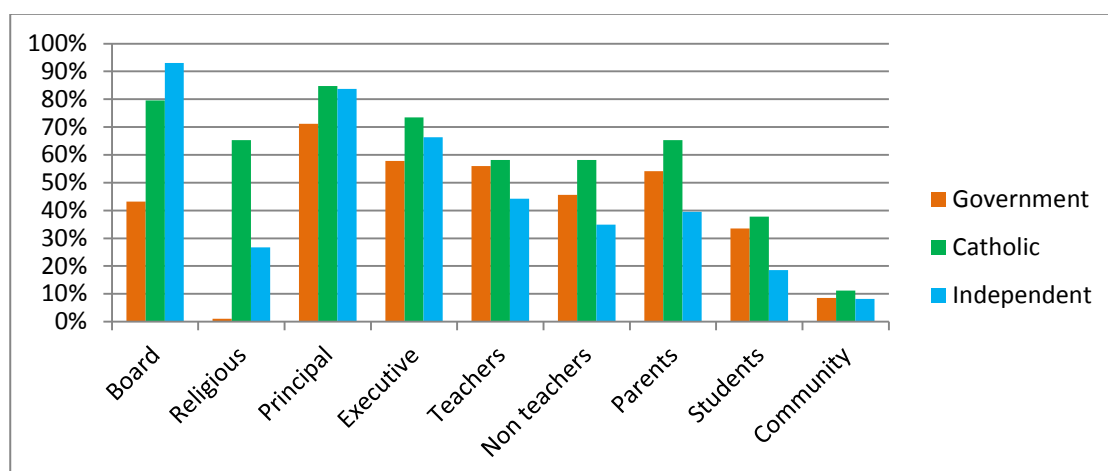


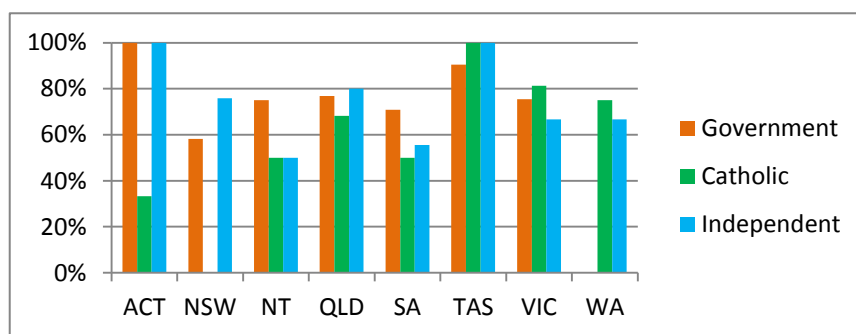
Figure 19: The proportion of schools with a strategic plan or mission statement that received input from various sources by sector for all Australia

On average this strategic plan or mission statement was seen to be useful to a moderate extent for principals in all states and territories, and sectors. It was seen to be less useful, in declining order, for the deputy principal or equivalent, the heads of learning, the executive and parents and carers. For parents, on average, it was seen to be useful to a minor extent.

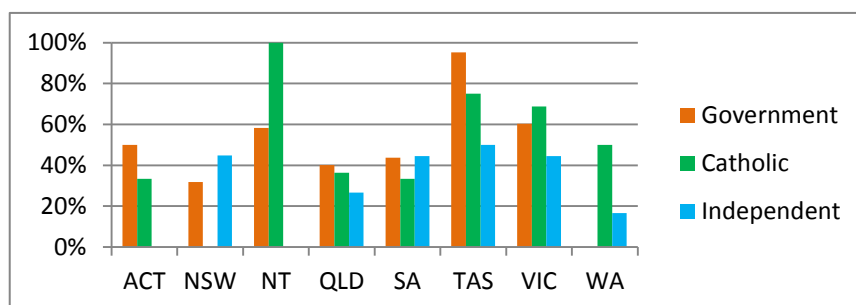
School's engagement of stakeholders for complementary on-site services for students and families of students (Survey qq. 35-36)

Figure 20 shows the proportion of schools offering complementary health care on-site varies widely across states and sectors. Similar variation can also be seen for social welfare services, and for VET in schools. There is less variation, and proportionately many more schools who provide teachers' aides and other support for special needs students.

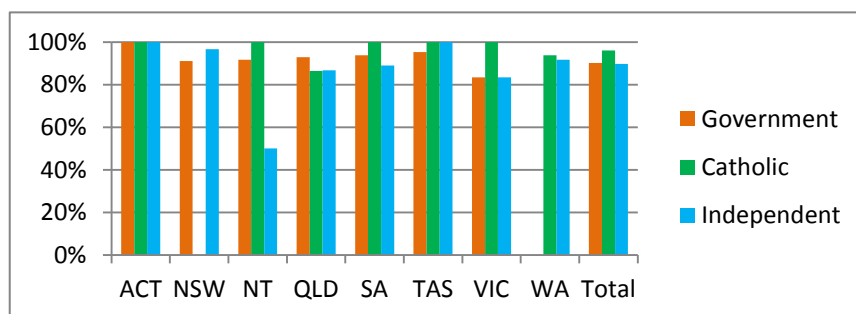
Complementary health care provided on-site



Social welfare services on-site



Teachers' aides, support for special needs on-site



VET in schools on-site (secondary only)

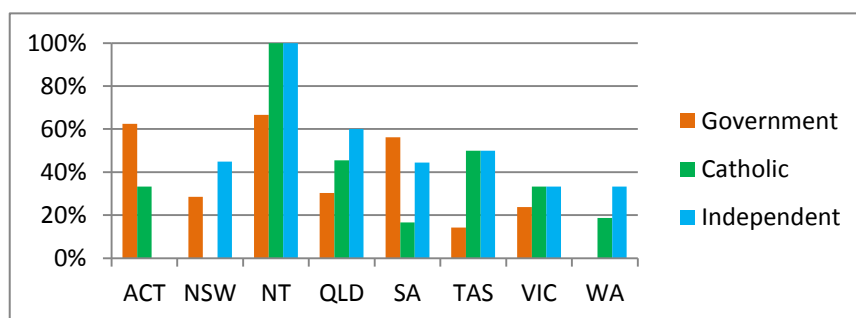
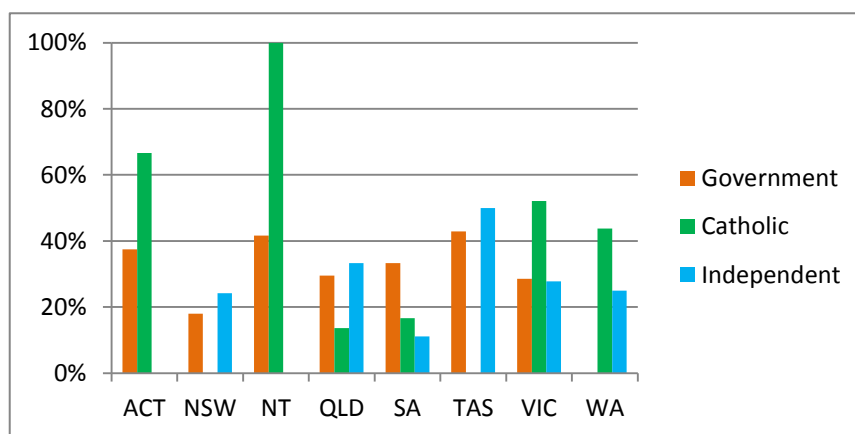


Figure 20: The proportion of schools, with various types of on-site support for students, by sector for all Australia

Figure 21 shows that schools provide on-site support for families less frequently. The strong exceptions to this are Catholic schools in the NT.

Family support
services on-site



Social welfare
services on-site

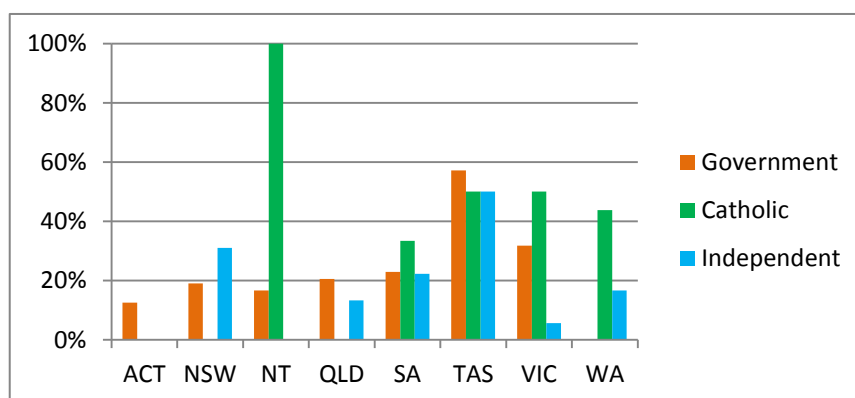


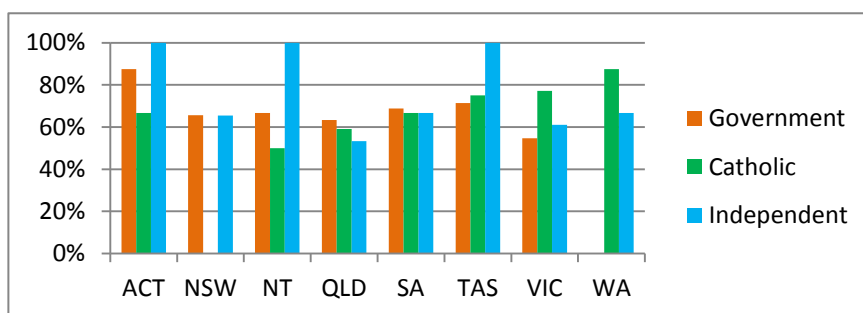
Figure 21: The proportion of schools, with various types of on-site support for families, by sector for all Australia

School's engagement of stakeholders for complementary services for students and families of students off-site (Survey qq. 37-40)

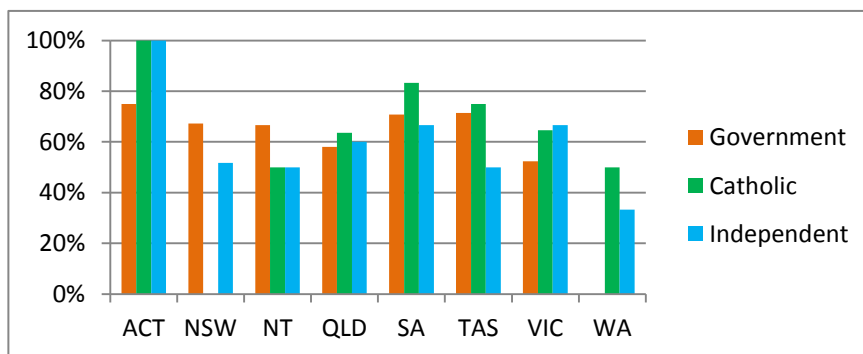
Figure 22 shows the proportion of schools in each sector and state and territory that offer a variety of off-site services. There is little variability across sectors or states and territories except that the ACT tends to have a higher proportion of schools providing off-site services than other jurisdictions. A high proportion of schools within each sector and within each state provide off-site complementary health care and social welfare services.

Around 50 per cent of schools – irrespective of sector or state – reported that these services were supported on an ad hoc basis.

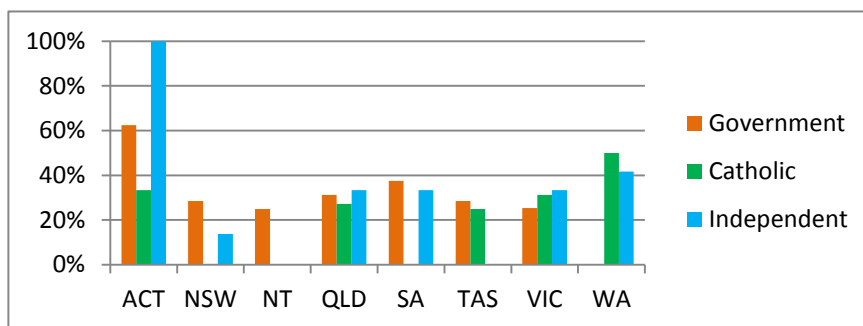
Complementary health care provided off-site



Social welfare services off-site



Teachers' aides, support for special needs off-site



VET in schools (secondary only) off-site

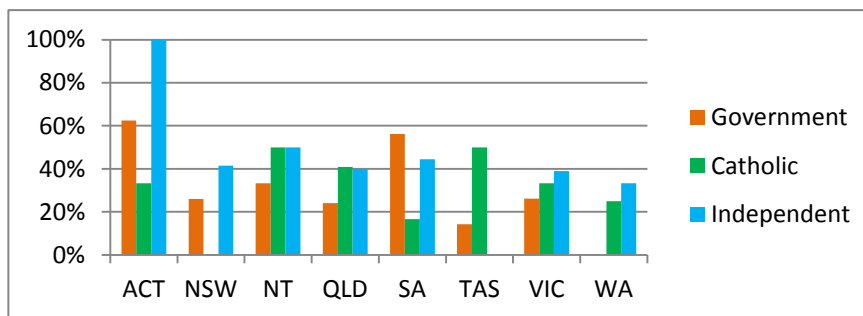


Figure 22: The proportion of schools, with various types of off-site support for students, by sector for all Australia

B. Funding and infrastructure¹²

Stakeholders who participate in decision-making about the: a) total school budget; b) allocation of funds within total budget; and c) setting of school fees and charges (Survey q. 46)

Figure 23 shows the proportion of schools, with various participants in decision-making about the total budget, by sector for all Australia. The participants include (1) head office, (2) the school Board or equivalent, (3) the principal, (4) religious leaders, (5) the school executive, (6) teachers, (7) non-teaching school staff, (8) parents, (9) non-parent community members, and (10) students. While head office participates most frequently in government and Catholic schools, it is the School Board and principals and in some states, the school executive that most commonly participate in Independent schools. Teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, community members, and students rarely participate in decisions about the budget in any of the sectors.

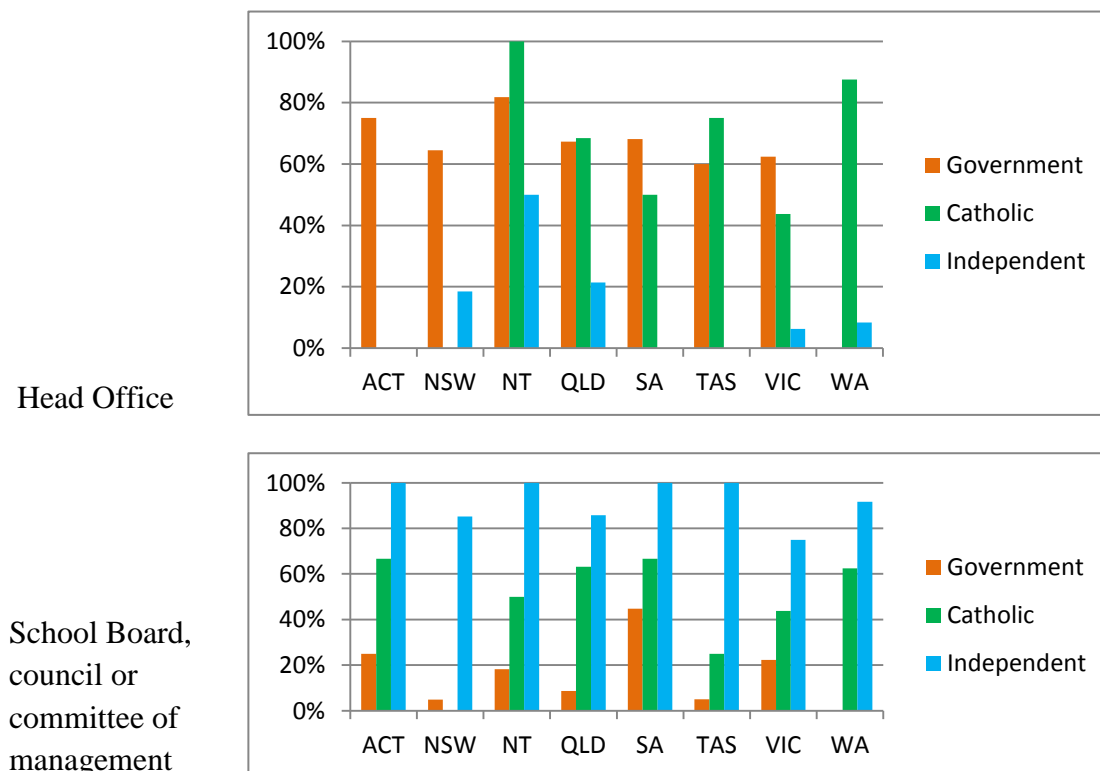
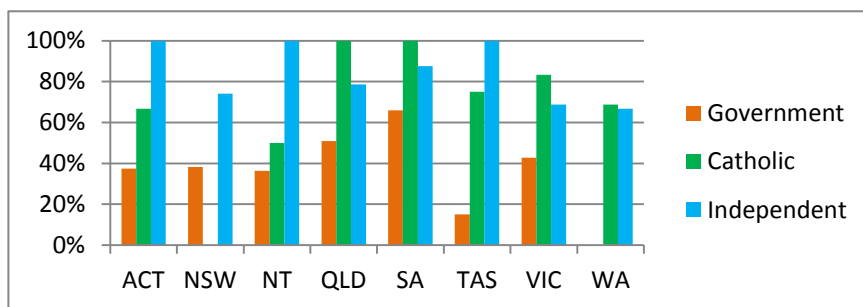


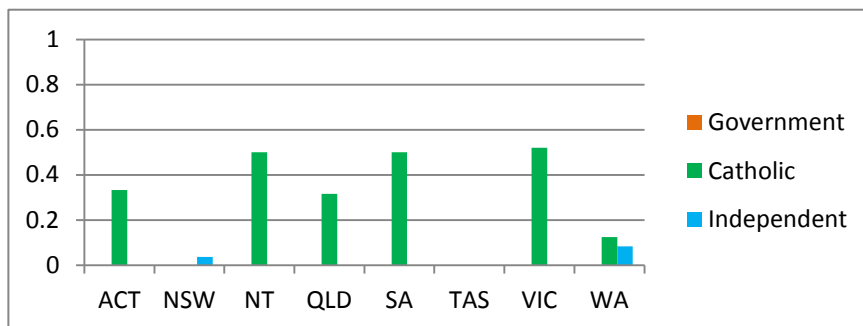
Figure continues over the page ...

¹² Meaningful data were not collected from responses to survey questions 43, 44, and 45 respectively in relation to: a) the total school budget; b) the proportion of the total budget for which the principal has local discretion; and c) the proportion for which the principal has local discretion for recurrent funding and capital expenditure by sector for all Australia.

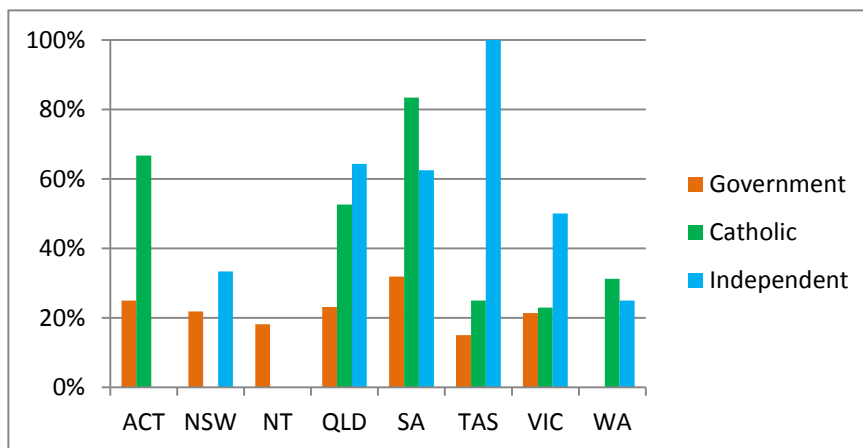
Principal



Community religious leader



Executive



Non-executive teaching

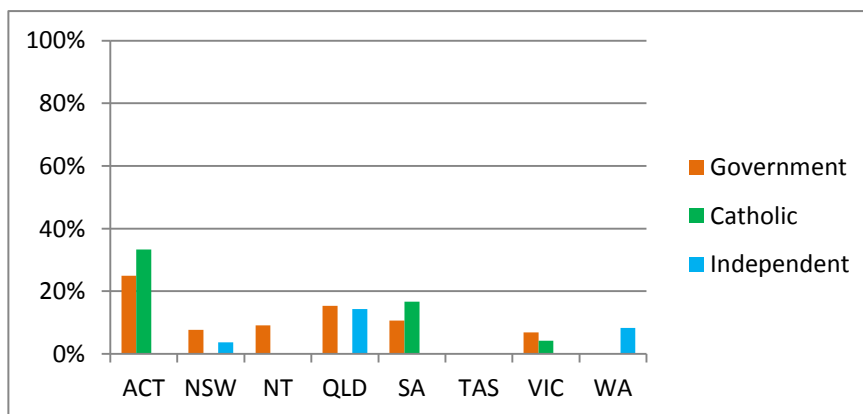
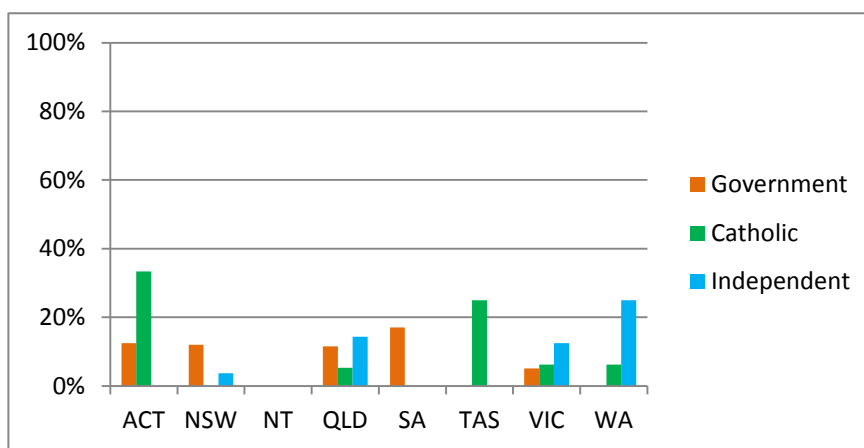
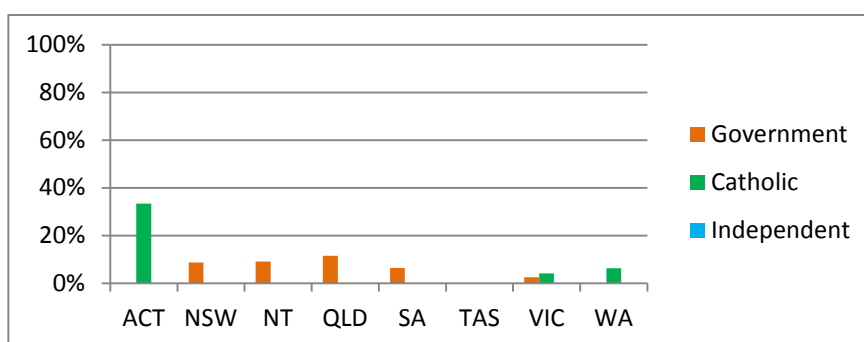


Figure continues over the page ...

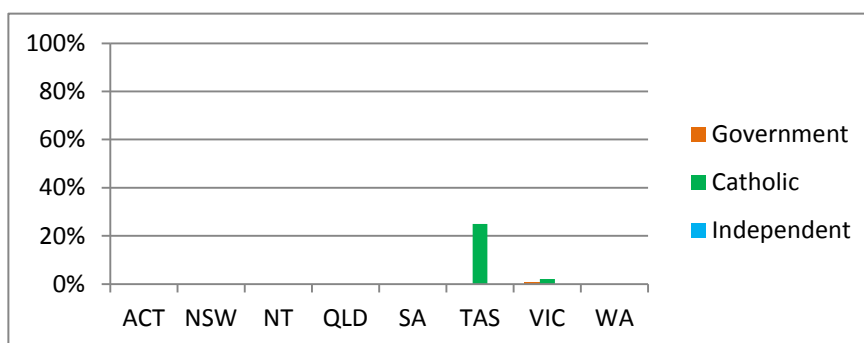
Non-teaching
school staff



Parents



Non-parent
community
members



Students

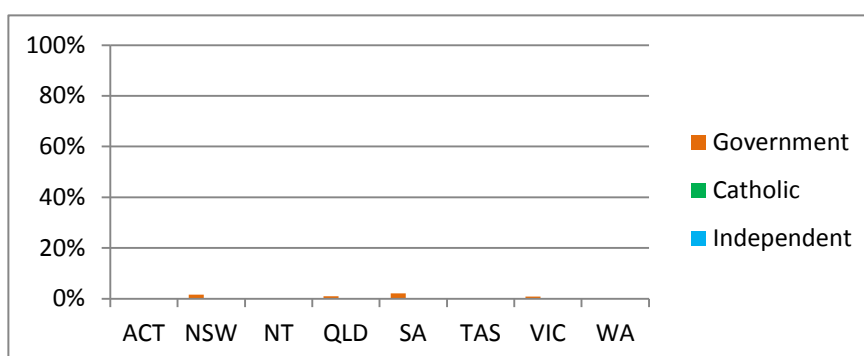


Figure 23: The proportion of schools, with various participants in decision-making about the total budget, by sector for all Australia.¹³

¹³ While Figure 23 accurately represents principals' responses to the survey, those responses do not always reflect the situation in their jurisdiction. For example, it is mandated for SA Government schools that a Governing Council includes stakeholders listed in Figure 23 to approve school budgets and set school fees for materials and services.

Planned changes because of ELS to decision-making processes about specific areas of the budget (Survey q. 47)

Schools were asked if they were planning to change decision-making processes or procedures related to (i) major works, (ii) maintenance, (iii) resource allocation, and (iv) school fees. Figure 24 shows that government schools were more likely to report that they were not planning to change these processes as a result of the ELS. Figure 25 shows the converse, namely the proportion of schools that plan to change these procedures in the next 12 or 24 months. About 20 per cent of schools reported that these changes were planned, for all areas, except resource allocation, where the proportions are a little higher. There are only small differences between the sectors to be seen in these data.

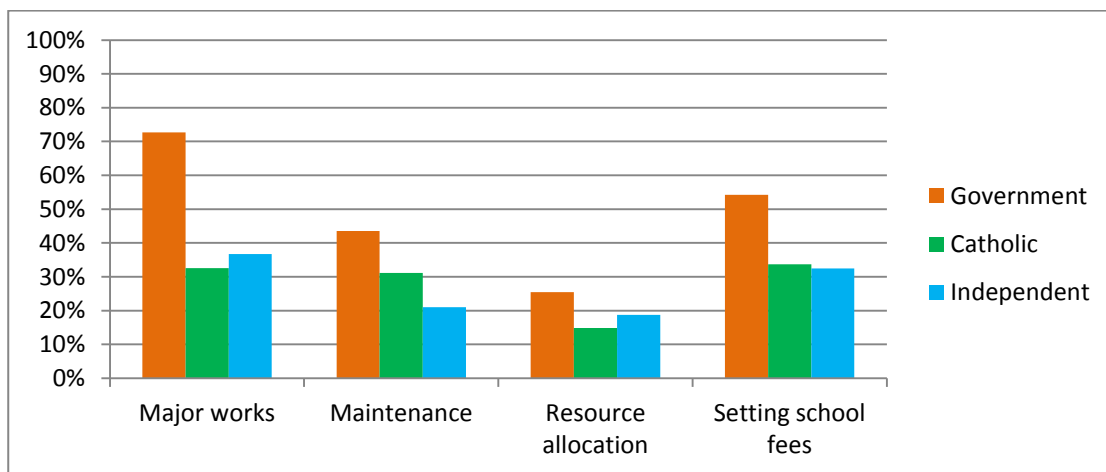


Figure 24: The proportion of schools that are *not* planning to change decision-making processes because of ELS about various areas, by sector for all Australia

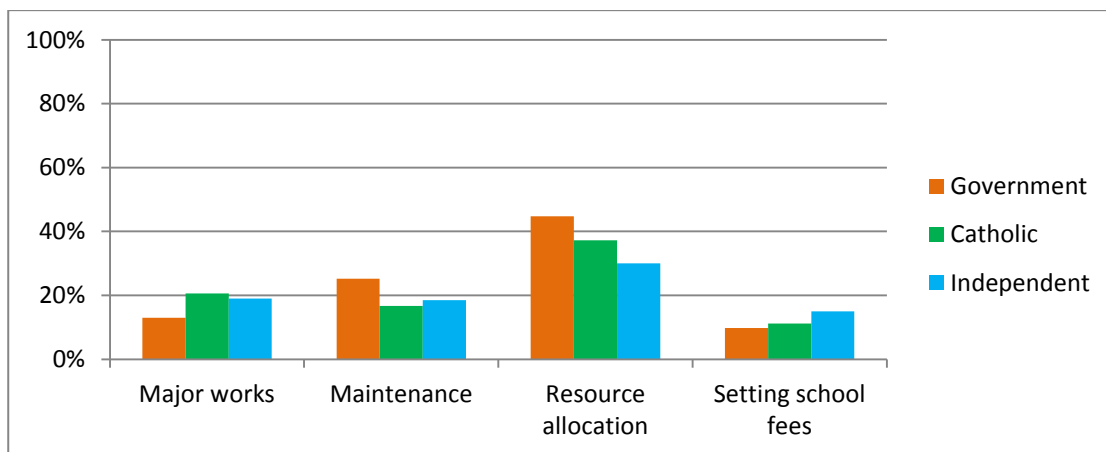


Figure 25: The proportion of schools that are planning to change decision-making processes because of ELS about various areas in the next 12 or 24 months, by sector for all Australia

C. Workforce management

Participants in decision-making about: a) number of teaching staff required and at what level; b) criteria for selection and selection process for teaching staff; c) number of non-teaching staff required; d) selection process for non-teaching staff; and e) PD and learning needs (Survey q. 48)

Figure 26 shows the proportion of schools, with various participants in decision-making about the number of teaching staff required and what level these teachers should work. In the government sector, in most states and territories, except VIC and SA, Head Office most commonly makes these decisions. Similarly, in the Catholic sector, in all states except VIC, Head Office makes these decisions. In the Independent sector, nearly always it is the school principal. In most states and territories the principal also participates in these decisions in Catholic schools. No schools reported students or non-parent community members contributing to these decisions.

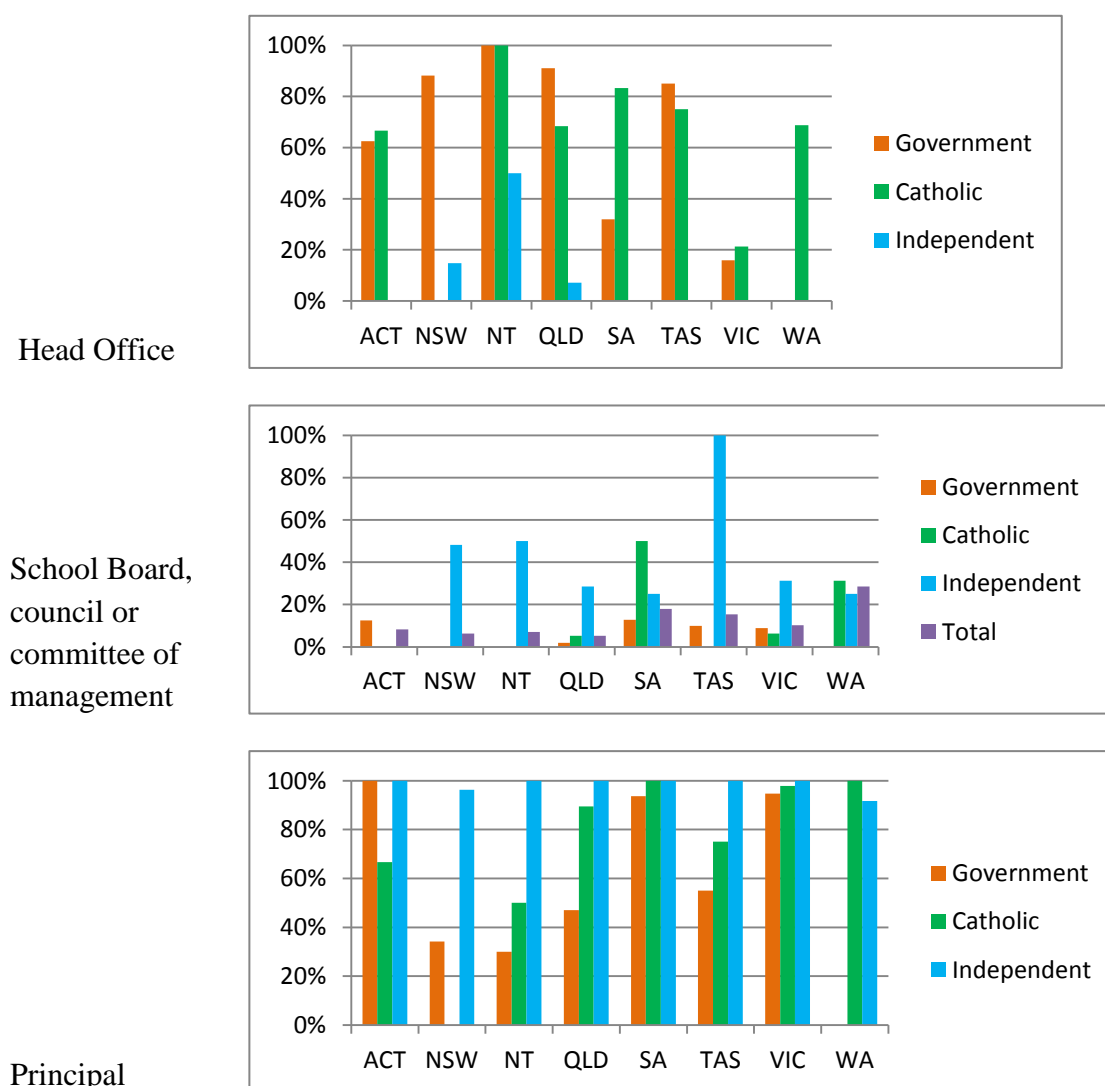
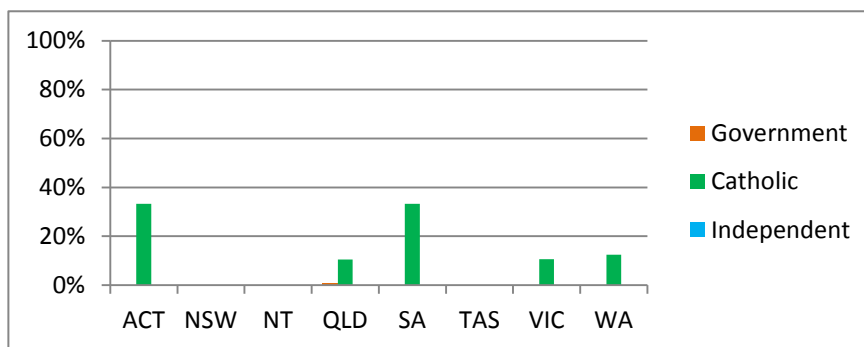
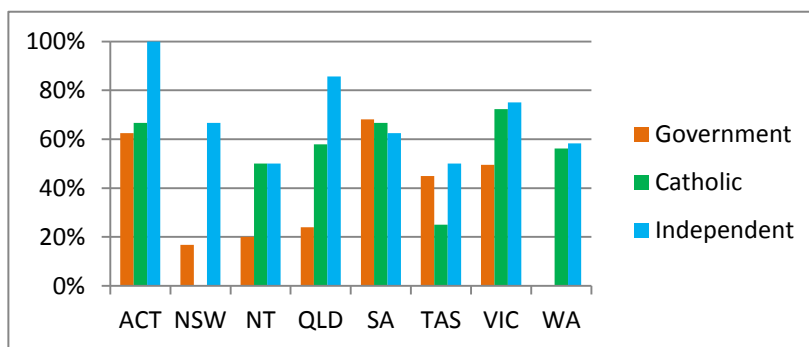


Figure continues over the page ...

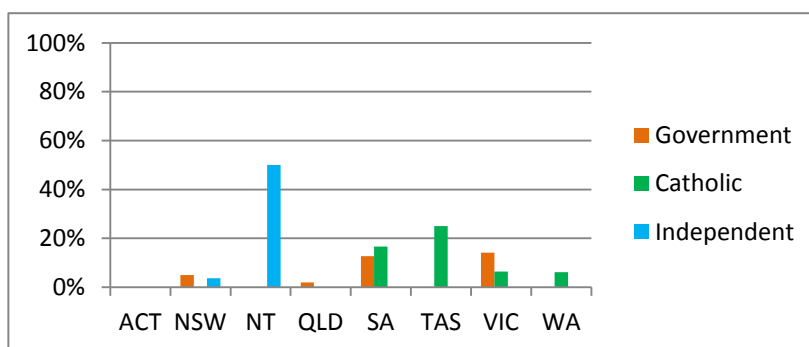
Community
religious leader



Executive



Non-executive
teaching



Non-teaching
school staff

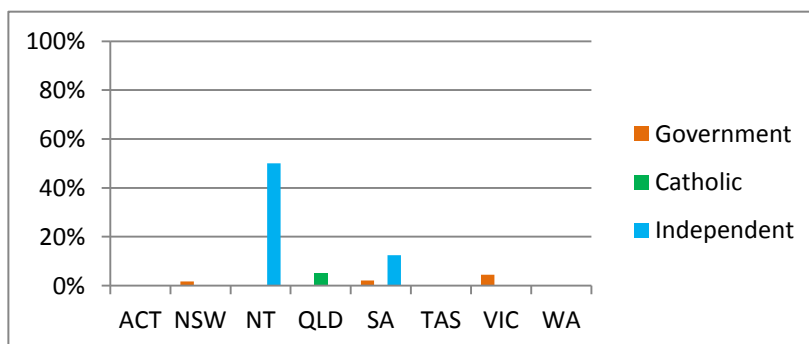


Figure continues over the page ...

Parents

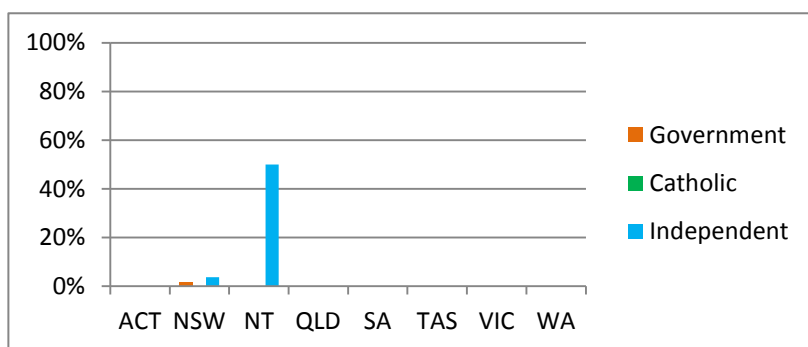
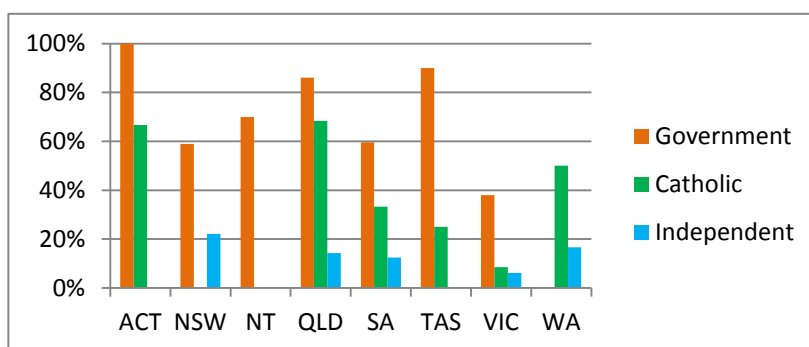


Figure 26: The proportion of schools, with various participants in decision-making about the number of teaching staff required and what level, by sector and state and territory

Figure 27 shows the proportion of schools, with various participants in decision-making about the criteria for selection of teaching staff and the processes associated with the selection. Except in VIC, Head Office is often involved in these decisions in government schools. In all sectors in all states the principal is nearly always involved in them. In most states and territories and in most sectors, the school teaching leadership group also commonly contributes to these decisions. Other teachers rarely contribute, and nor do non-teaching school staff, parents, students and community members.

Head Office



School Board,
council or
committee of
management

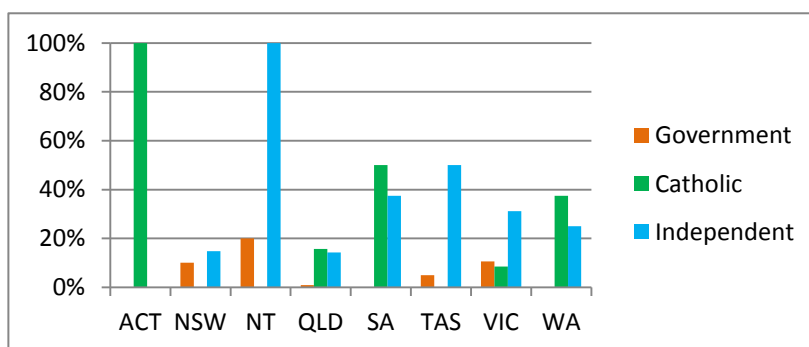
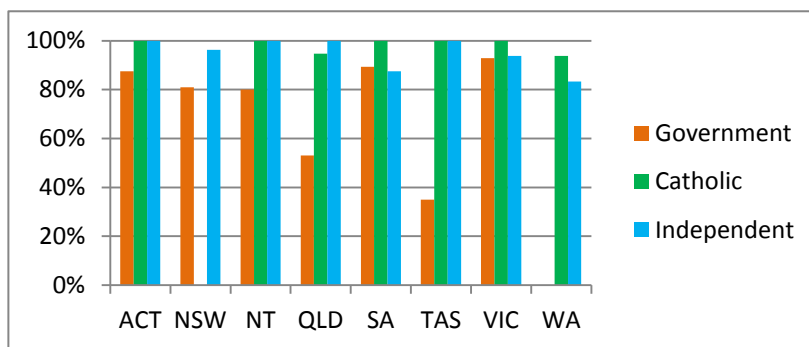
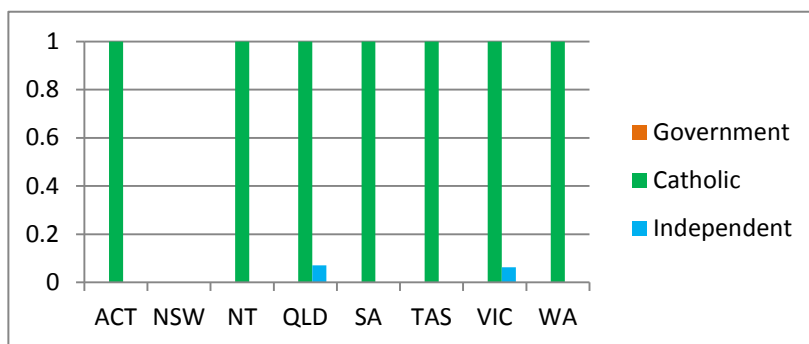


Figure continues over the page ...

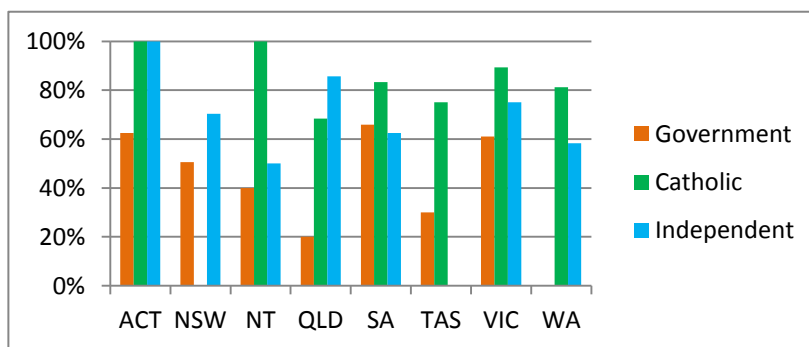
Principal



Community religious leader



Executive



Non-executive teaching

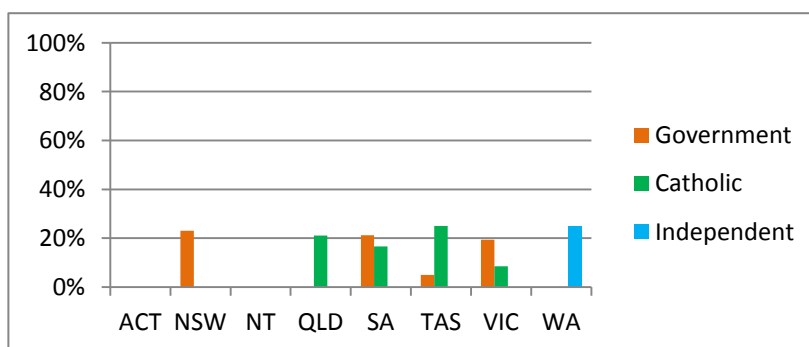
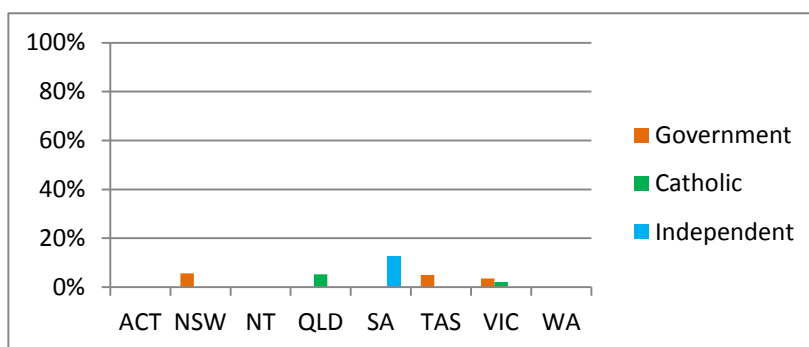
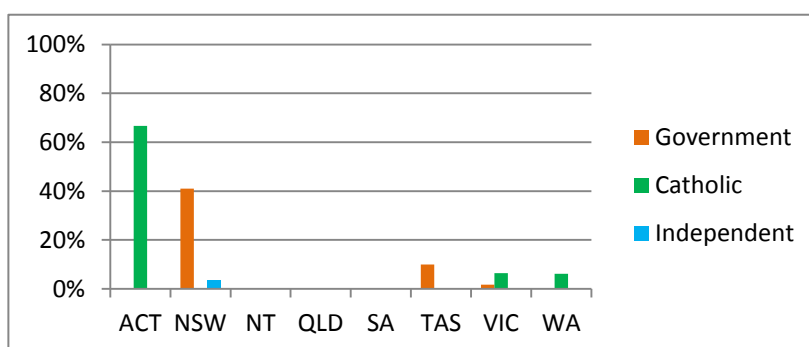


Figure continues over the page ...

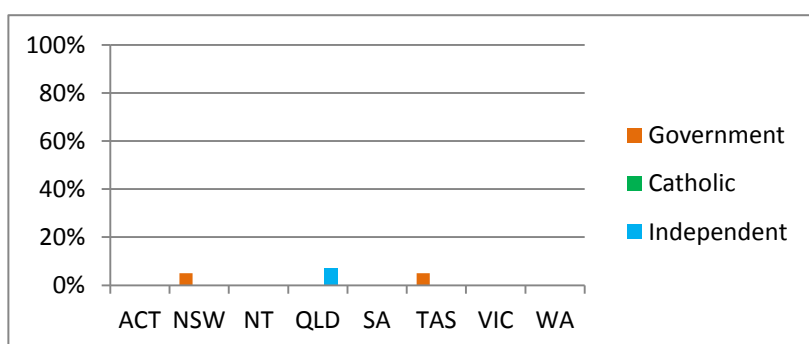
Non-teaching
school staff



Parents



Non-parent
community
members



Students

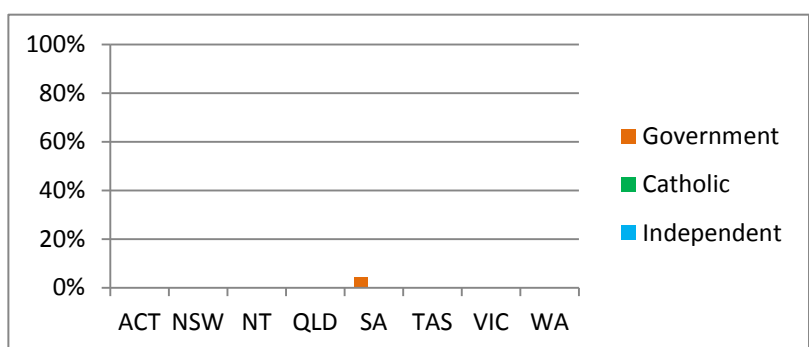
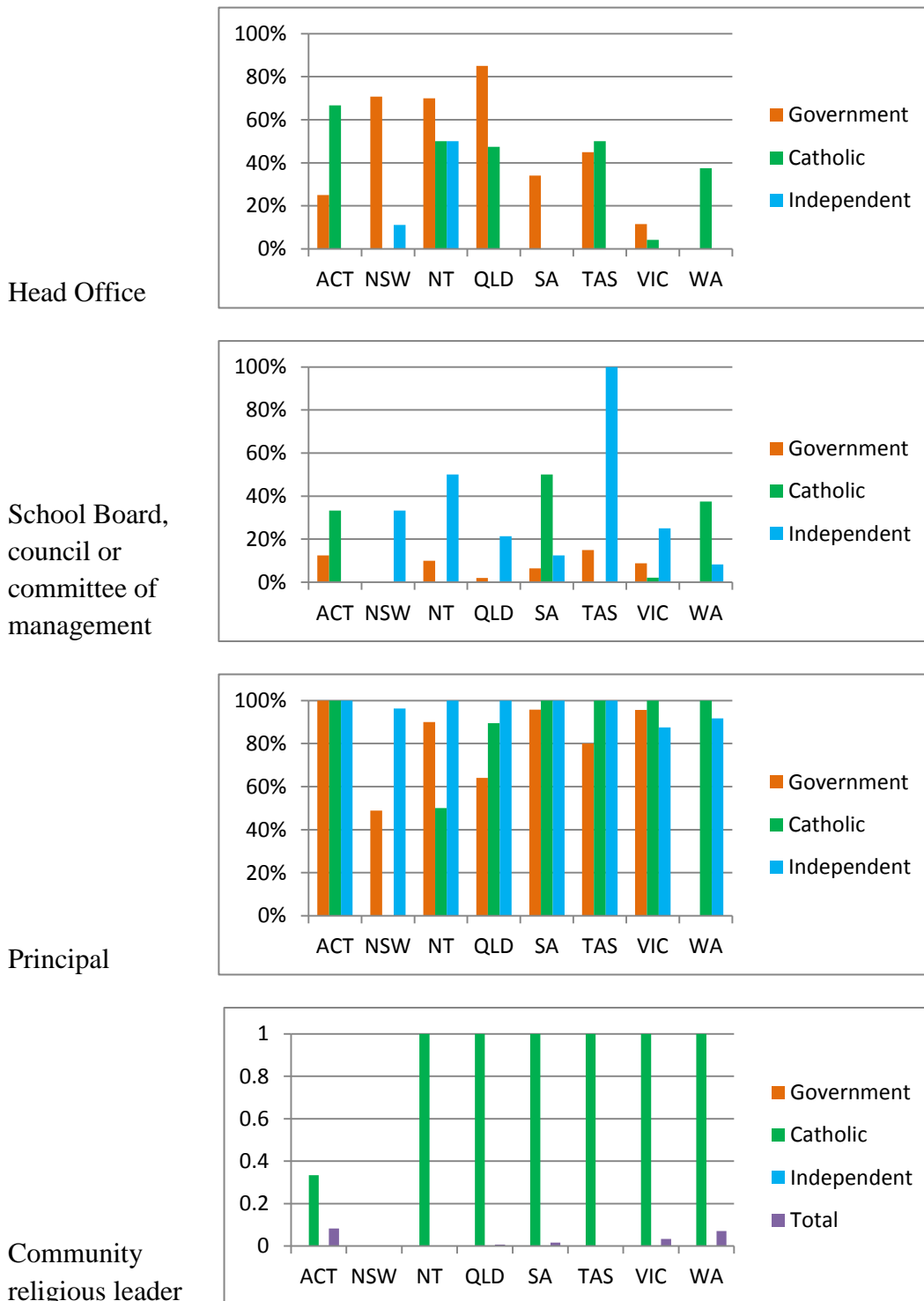


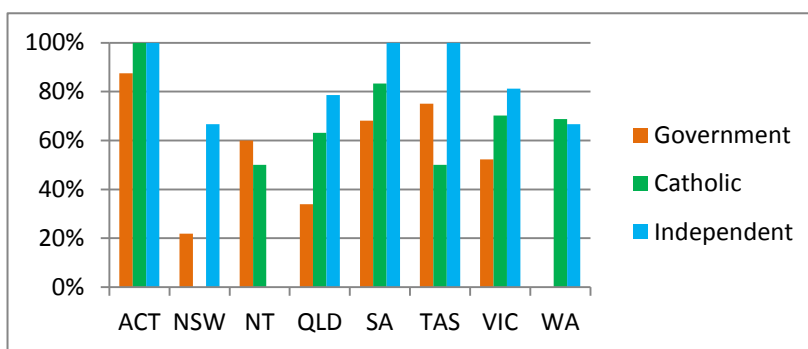
Figure 27: The proportion of schools, with various participants in decision-making about the criteria for selection of teaching staff, by sector and state or territory¹⁴

¹⁴ The responses from SA Government schools represented in Figure 27 do not accurately reflect that all SA Government schools have a mandated Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC) involved in decision-making about selection criteria for most teaching staff positions. Through the PAC staff members (non-executive teaching staff) have input into selection criteria for all advertised teacher positions and are represented on selection panels. The discrepancy between the respondents' perceptions and the actual situation could possibly be explained by some permanent teaching positions still being placed centrally.

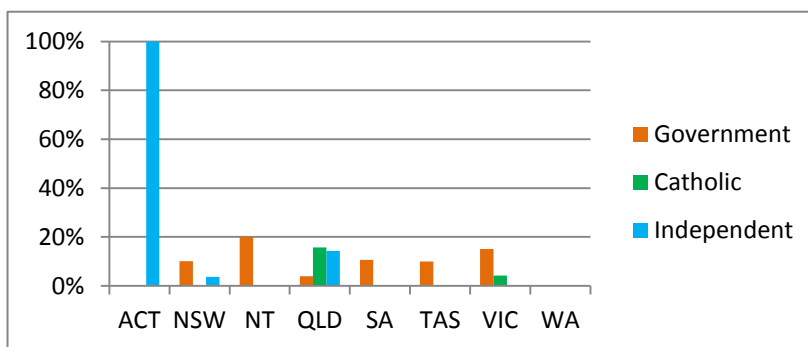
Figure 28 shows the proportion of schools, with various participants in decision-making about the number of non-teaching staff at the school. Except in VIC, Head Office is usually involved in these decisions in government schools. In all sectors in all states, the principal is nearly always involved in them. In most states and territories and in most sectors, the school teaching leadership group also commonly contributes to these decisions. Other teachers rarely contribute, and nor do non-teaching school staff, parents, students and community members. (In Figure 28 the graph for students is not shown because there was too little data to display.)



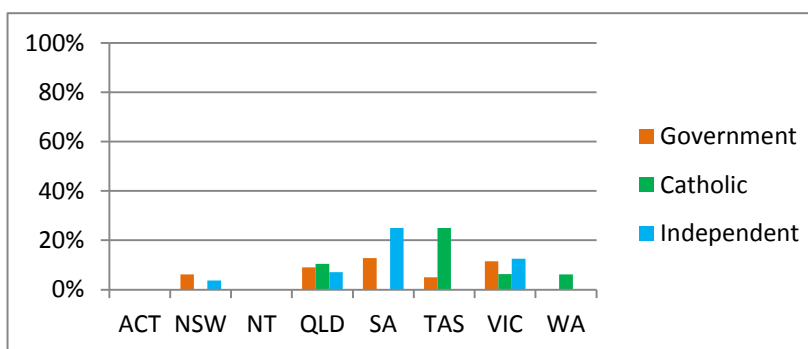
Executive



Non-executive
teaching



Non-teaching
school staff



Parents

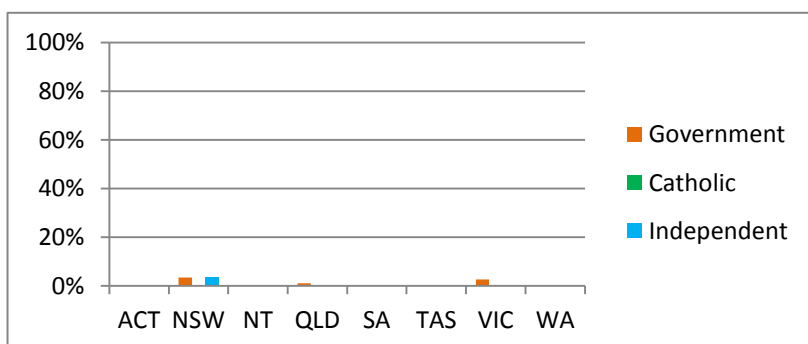


Figure continues over the page ...

Non-parent
community
members

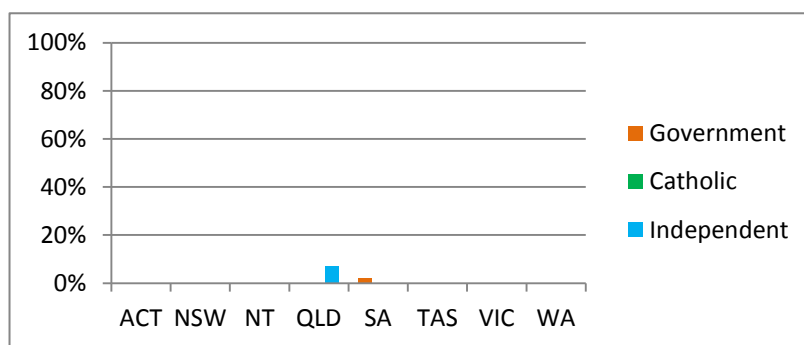
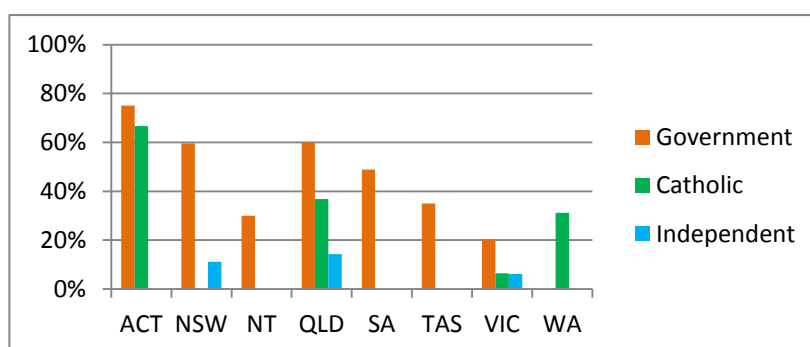


Figure 28: The proportion of schools, with various participants in decision-making about the number of non-teaching staff, by sector and state or territory¹⁵

Figure 29 shows the proportion of schools, with various participants in decision-making about the selection processes for non-teaching staff at the school. Head Office is usually involved in these decisions in government schools, although less frequently in VIC and the NT. In all sectors in all states, the principal is nearly always involved in them. In most states and territories and in the Catholic and Independent sectors, the school teaching leadership group also commonly contributes to these decisions. Other teachers rarely contribute. Non-teaching school staff, parents, students, and community members also rarely contribute to these decisions. (In Figure 29 the graphs for community members and for students are not shown because there was too little data to display.)

Head Office



School Board,
council or
committee of
management

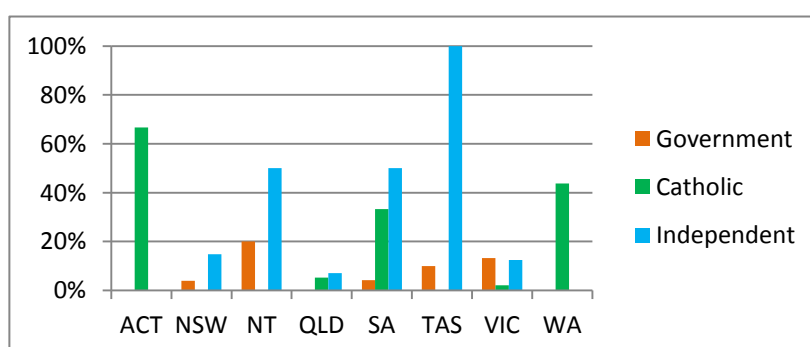
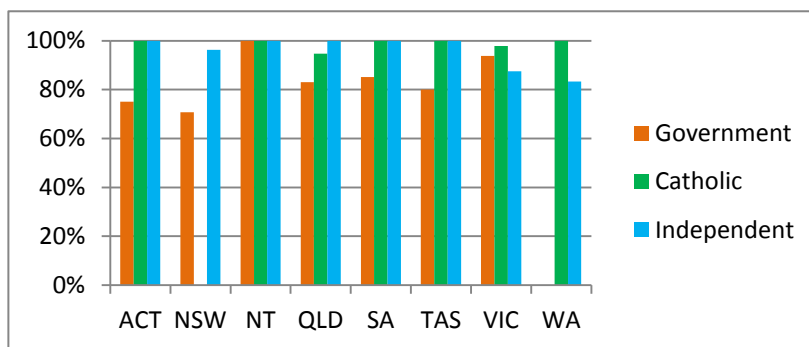


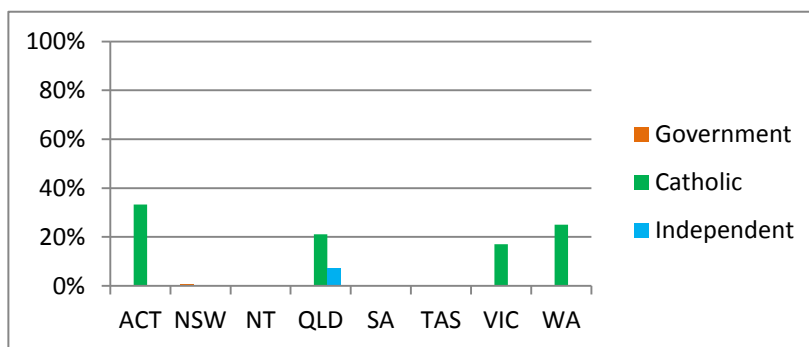
Figure continues over the page ...

¹⁵ In relation to the percentages for SA Government ELS schools refer to footnote 10 above.

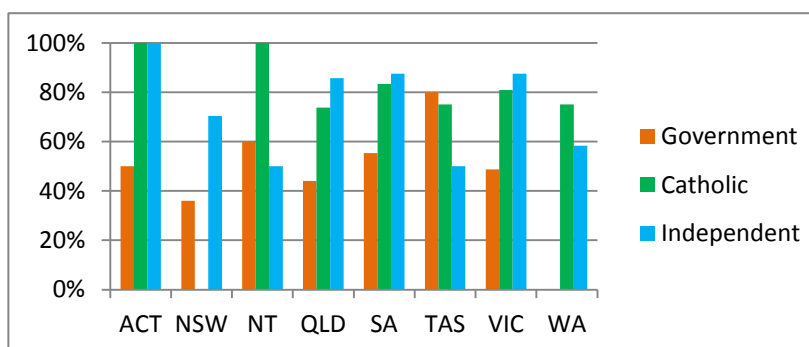
Principal



Community religious leader



Executive



Non-executive teaching

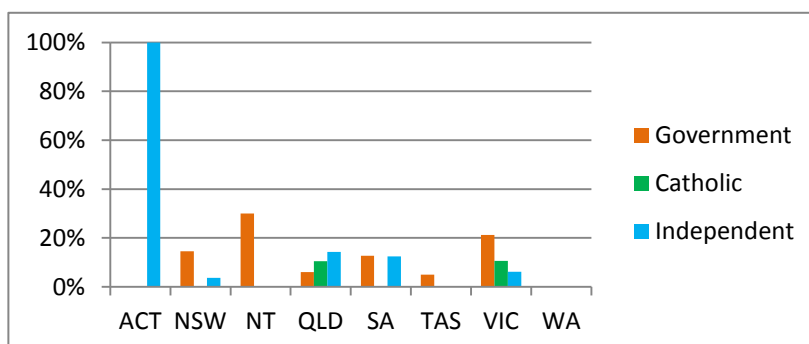
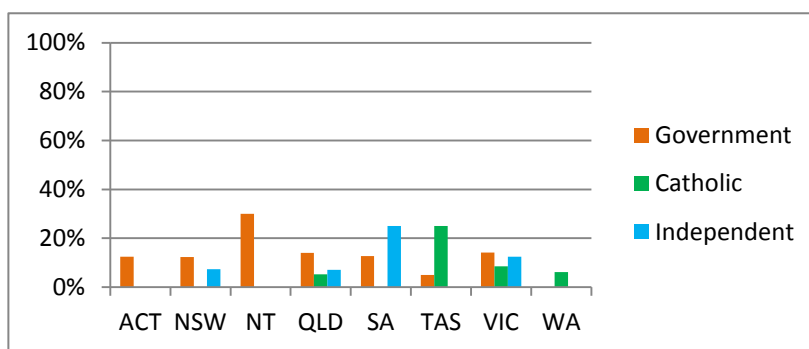


Figure continues over the page ...

Non-teaching
school staff



Parents

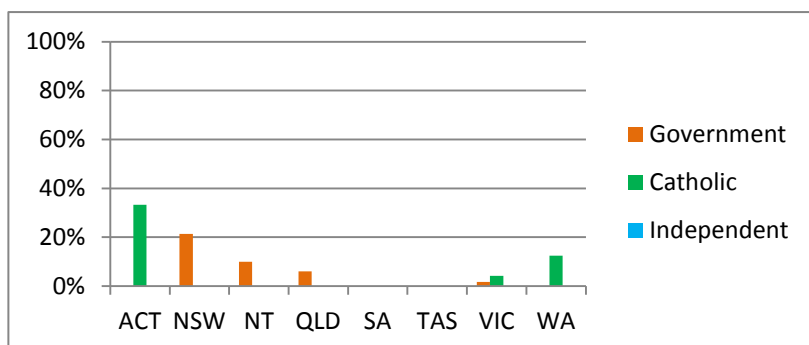


Figure 29: The proportion of schools, with various participants in decision-making about the selection processes for non-teaching staff, by sector and state or territory¹⁶

Figure 30 shows the proportion of schools, with various participants in decision-making about professional development and learning needs. In most states and territories, across all sectors the principal and the school teaching leadership group commonly contributes to these decisions. Other teachers and non-teaching staff also contribute. Parents, students and community members rarely contribute to these decisions. (In Figure 30 the graph for community members is not shown because there was too little data to display.)

Head Office

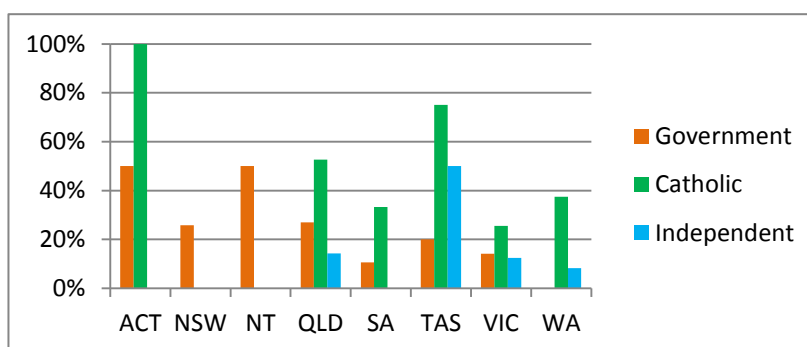
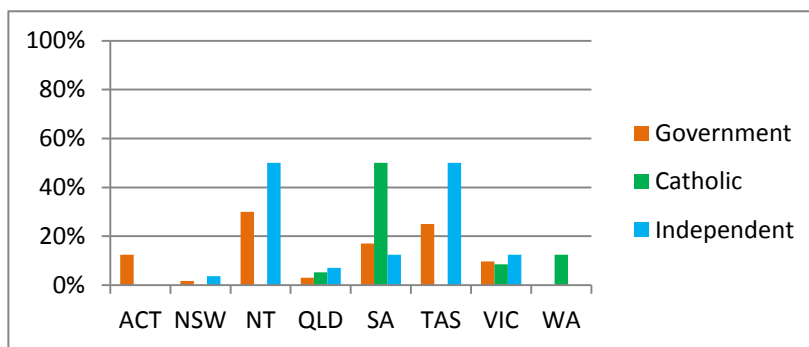


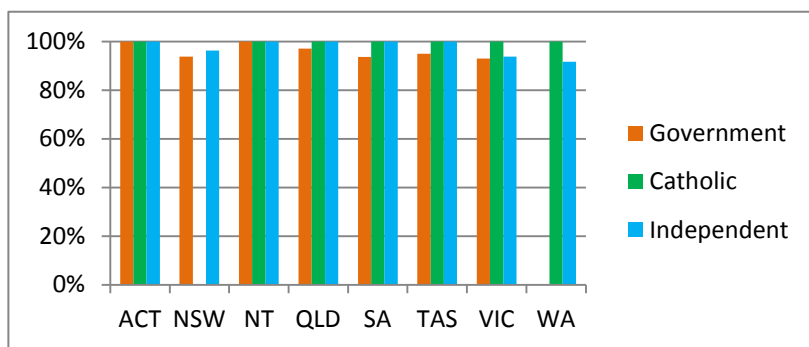
Figure continues over the page ...

¹⁶ In relation to the percentages for SA Government ELS schools refer to footnote 10 above.

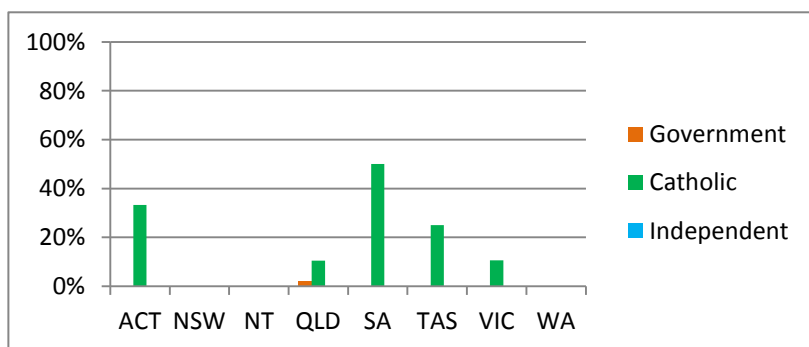
School Board,
council or
committee of
management



Principal



Community
religious leader



Executive

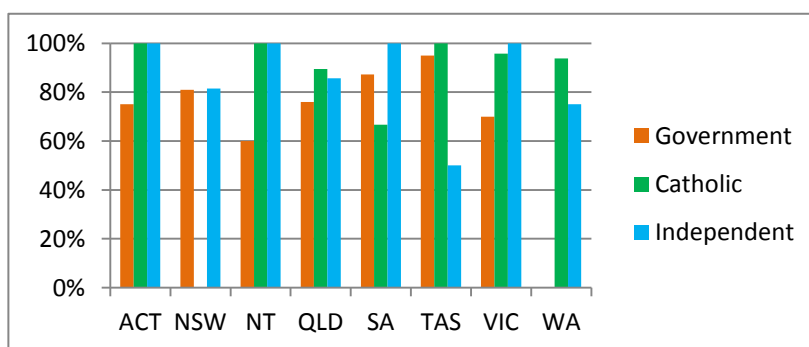
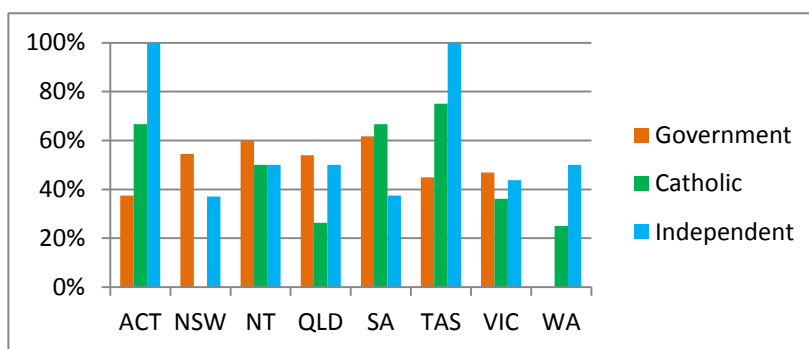
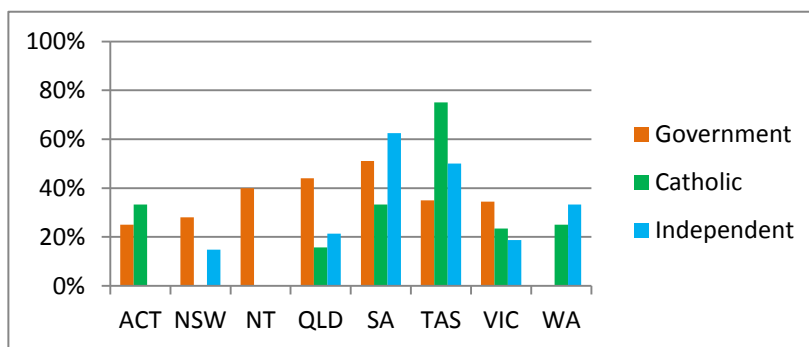


Figure continues over the page ...

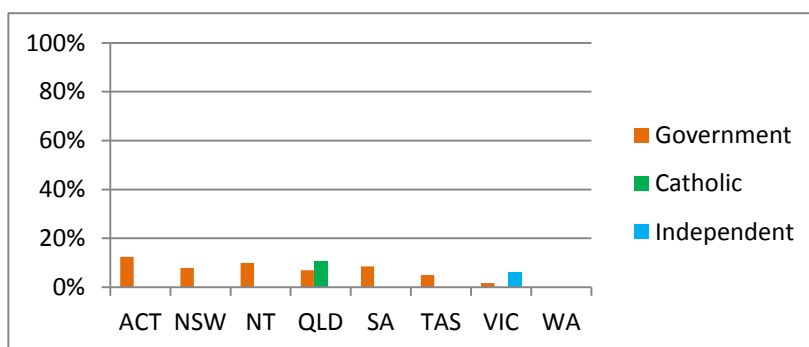
Non-executive
teaching



Non-teaching
school staff



Parents



Students

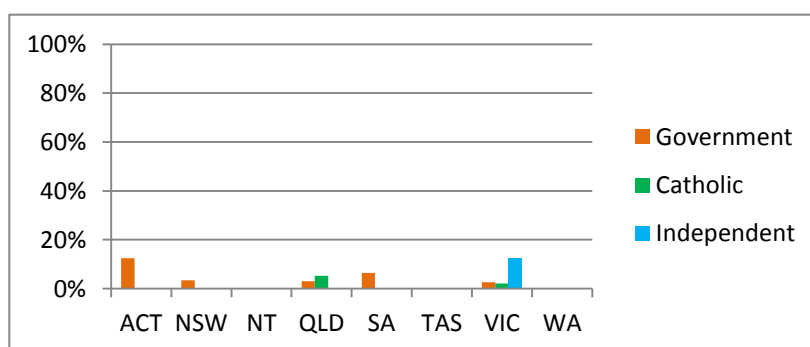


Figure 30: The proportion of schools, with various participants in decision-making about professional development and learning needs, by sector and state or territory

Participants in deciding key selection criteria for: a) principal; b) executive; and c) non-executive staff (Survey qq. 49; 50; 51-52)

Figure 31 shows the proportion of schools, with various participants in decision-making about selection criteria for principals. In government and Catholic sectors across nearly all states and territories, Head Office participates in these decisions. In the Independent sector it is the school Board that nearly always participates. The selection panel participates in these decisions in a number of schools especially in the Catholic sector.

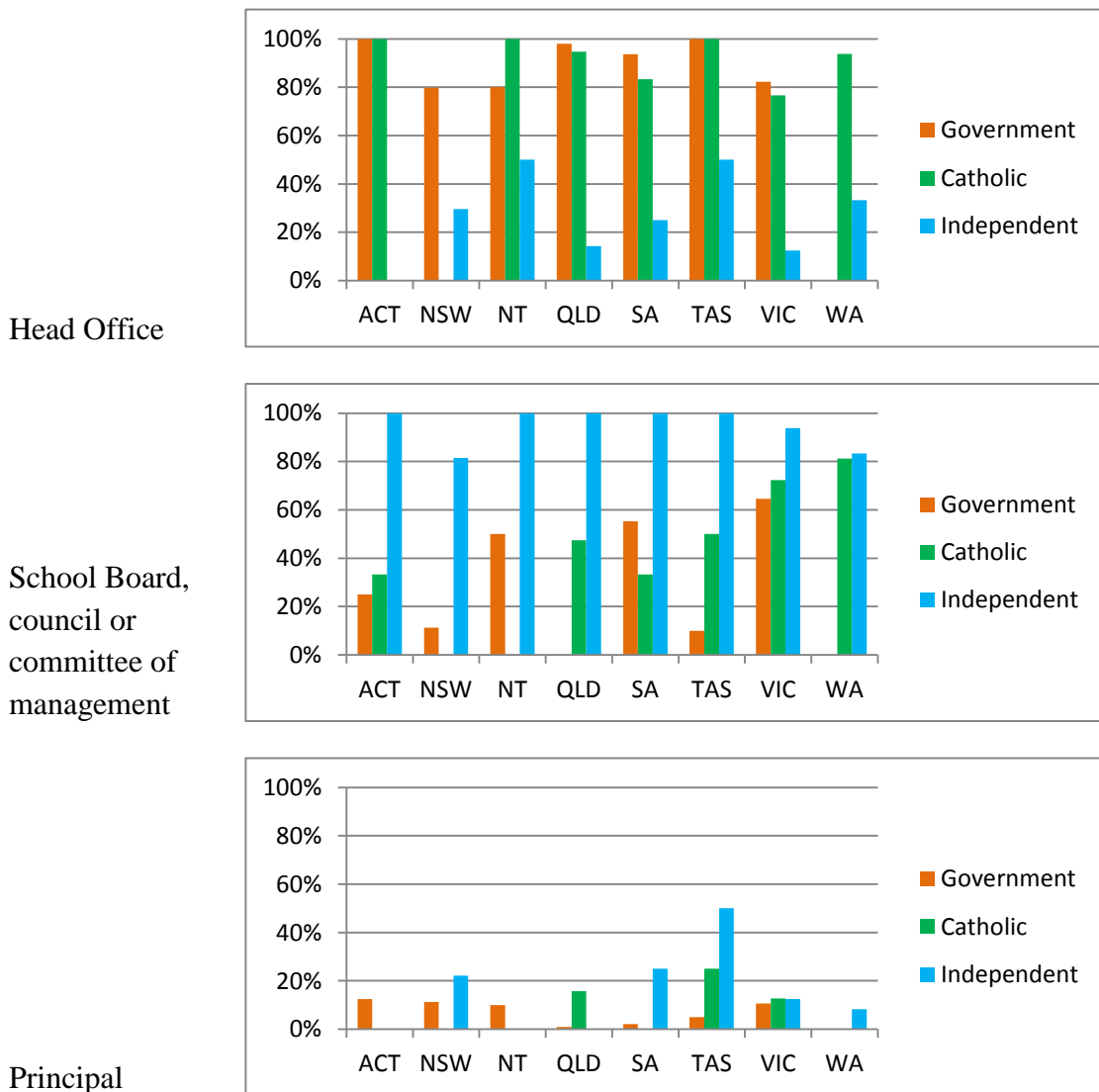
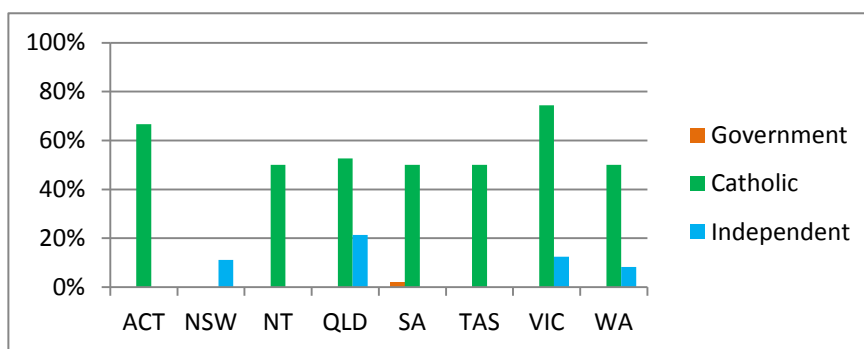
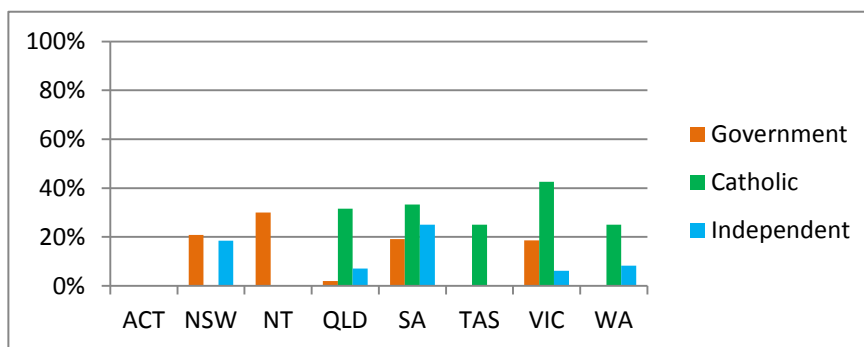


Figure continues over the page ...

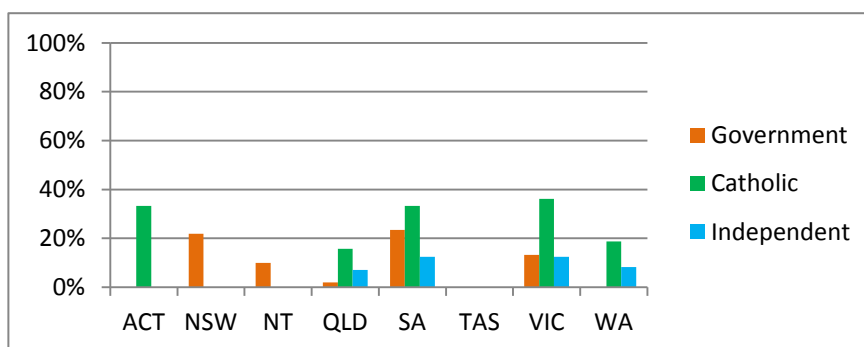
Community
religious leader



Executive



Non-executive
teaching



Non-teaching
school staff

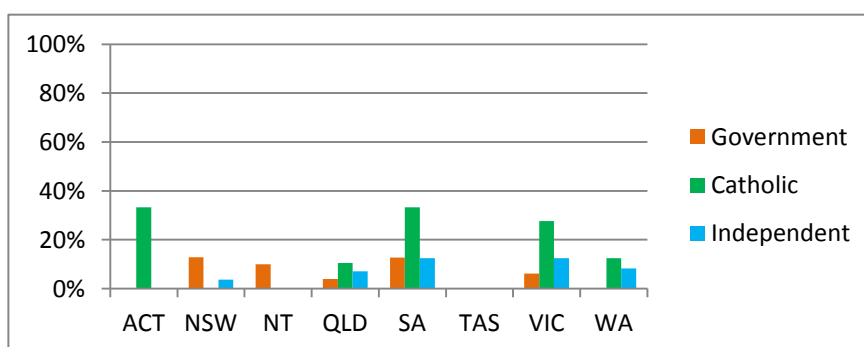
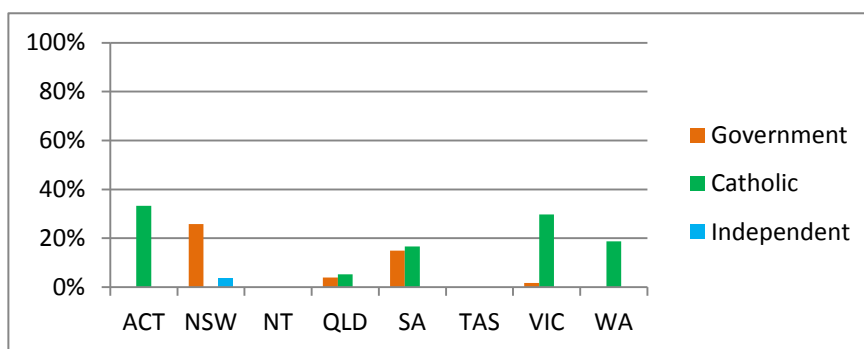
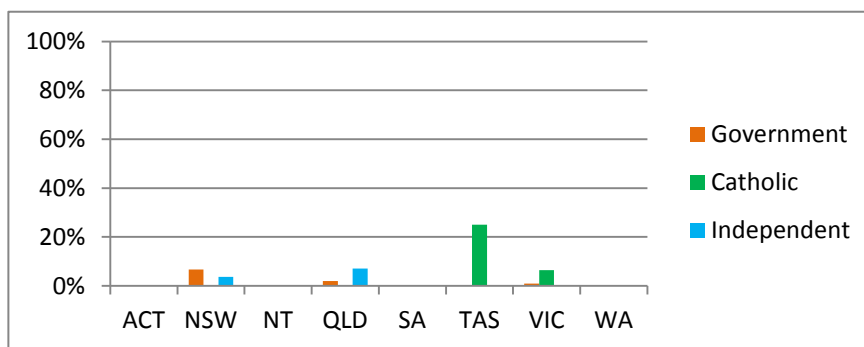


Figure continues over the page ...

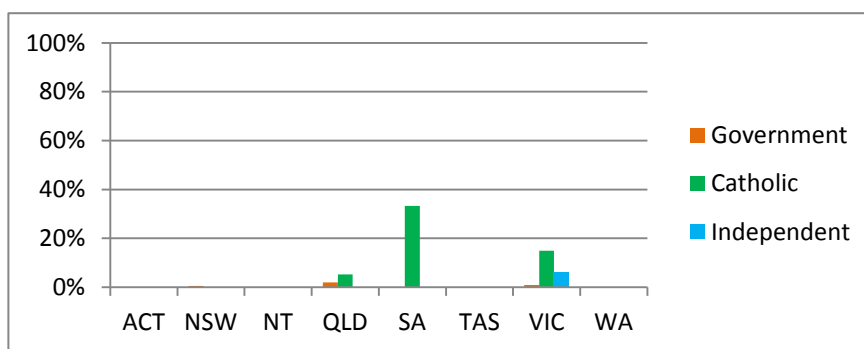
Parents



Non-parent
community
members



Students



Selection panel

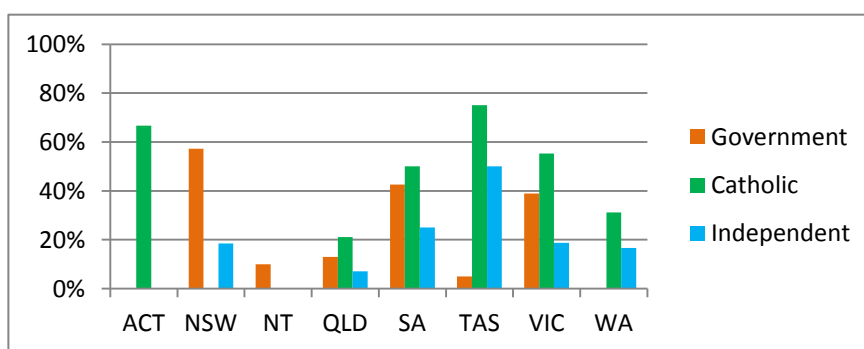


Figure 31: The proportion of schools with various participants in decision-making about selection criteria for principals, by sector and state or territory¹⁷

Figure 32 shows the proportion of schools, with various participants in decision-making about selection criteria for school executive teaching positions by sector and state or territory. In government and Catholic sectors across nearly all states and territories, Head Office participates in

¹⁷ In relation to SA Government schools, while the percentages in Figure 31 reflect the responses from ELS principals in SA, those responses are not an accurate reflection of the fact that Governing Councils in schools (refer to footnote 10 above) and non-executive teaching staff are involved in developing selection criteria for principal positions through participation in a Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC).

these decisions. In the Independent sector it is the school Board that nearly always participates. In the Catholic and Independent sectors principals commonly participate, while they less frequently do so in the government sector. The selection panel participates in these decisions, in a number of schools, especially in the government and Catholic sectors. Other groups only rarely contribute to these decisions.

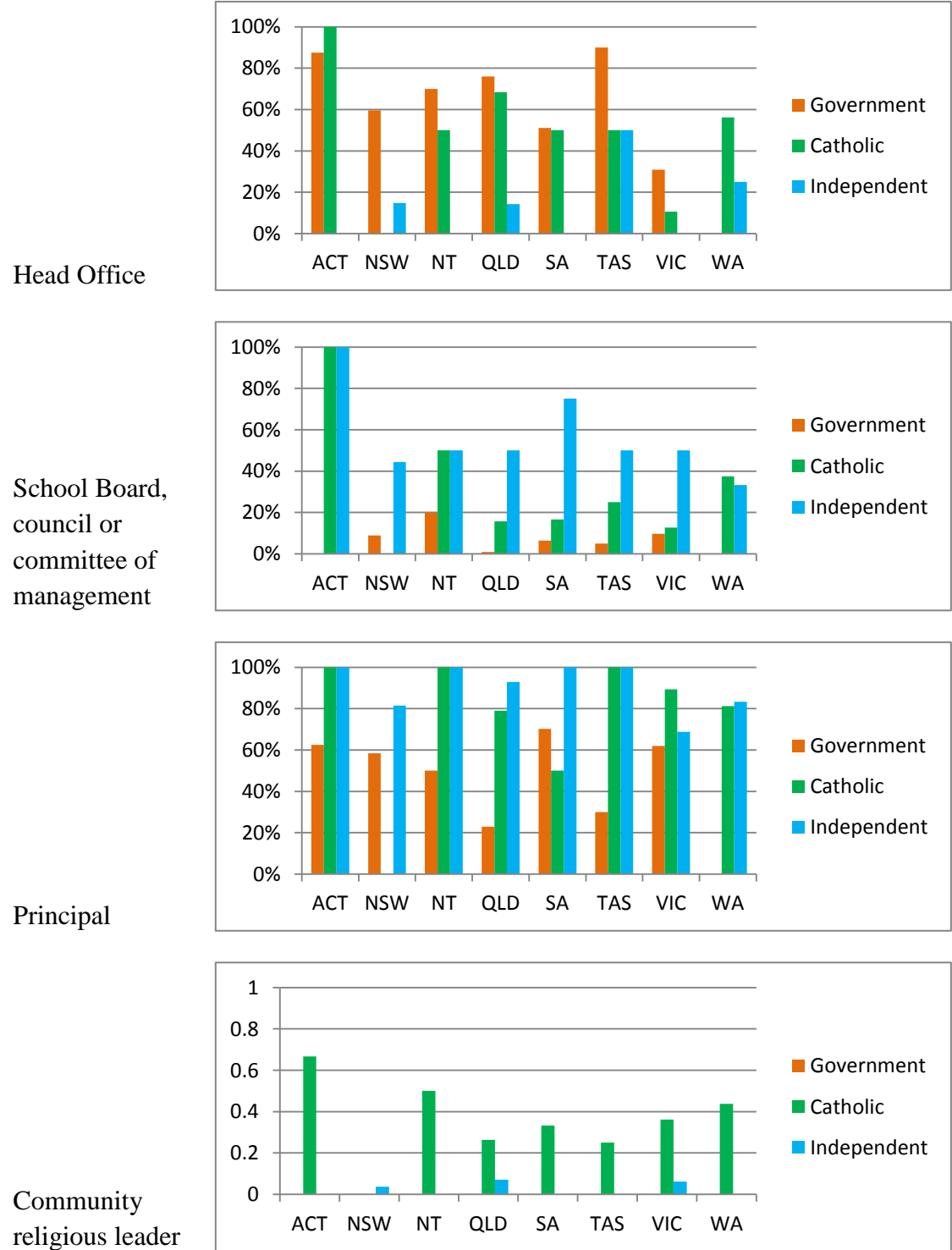
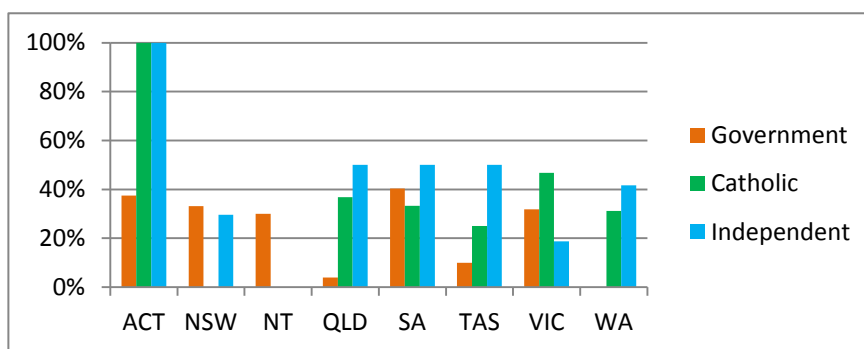
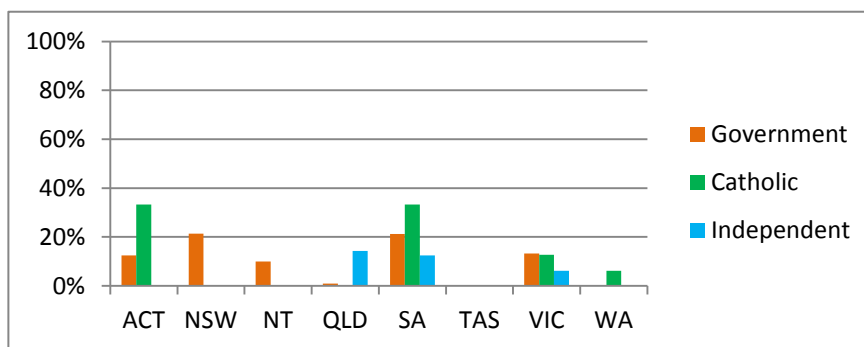


Figure continues over the page ...

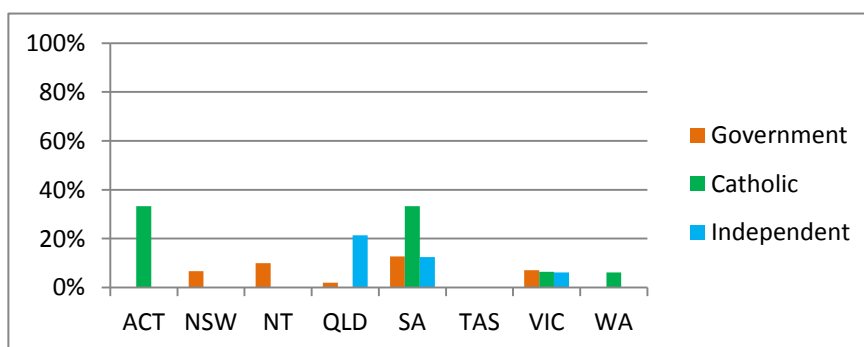
Executive



Non-executive teaching



Non-teaching school staff



Parents

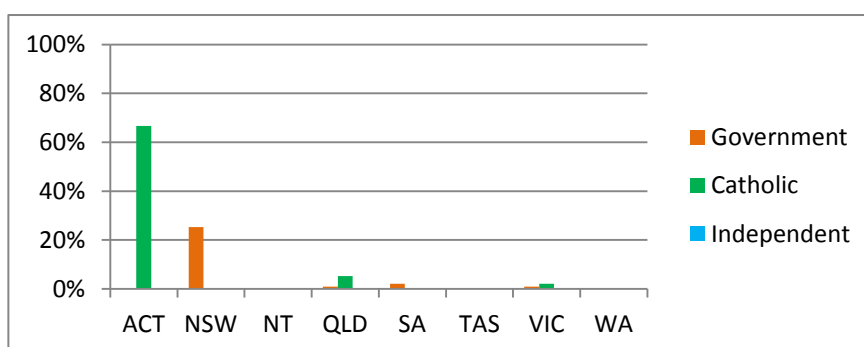
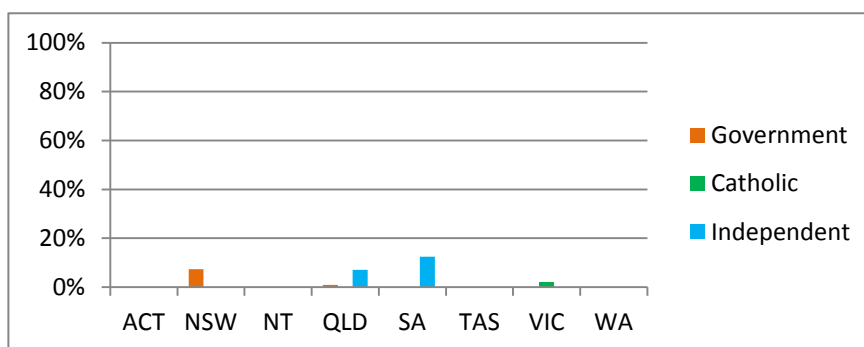
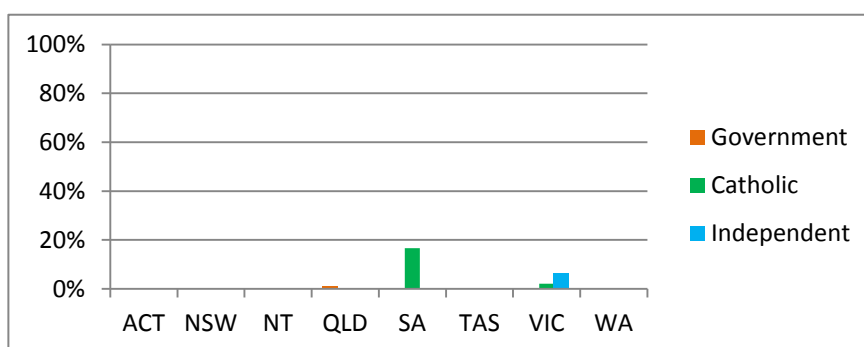


Figure continues over the page ...

Non-parent
community
members



Students



Selection panel

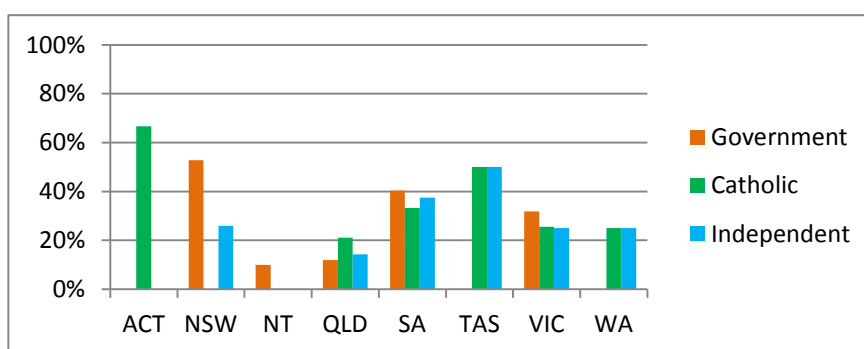
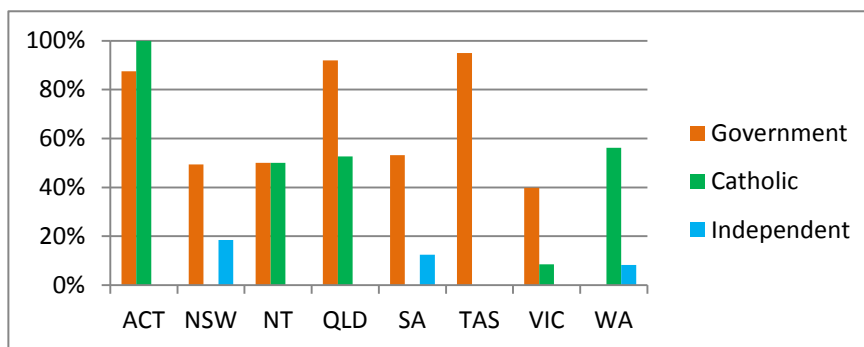


Figure 32: The proportion of schools, with various participants in decision-making about selection criteria for school executive teaching positions, by sector and state or territory¹⁸

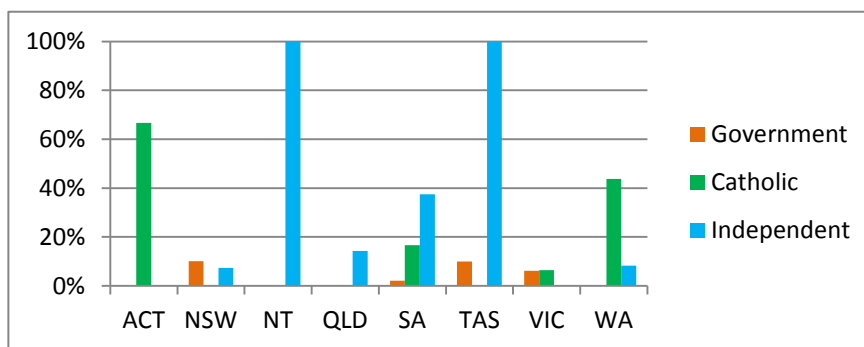
Figure 33 shows the proportion of schools, with various participants in decision-making about selection criteria for school teaching positions, by sector and state and territory. In government and Catholic sectors across most states and territories, Head Office participates in these decisions. In the Independent and Catholic sectors it is the principal and school teaching executive that nearly always participates. The selection panel participates in these decisions, in a number of schools. Once again, other groups only rarely contribute to these decisions.

¹⁸ In relation to SA Government schools, while the percentages in Figure 32 reflect the responses from ELS principals in SA, those responses are not an accurate reflection of the fact that non-executive teaching staff participate in developing selection criteria for both school executive teaching positions and school non-executive teaching positions through their participation in a Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC). The discrepancy could possibly reflect misunderstandings about the modalities through which participation takes place.

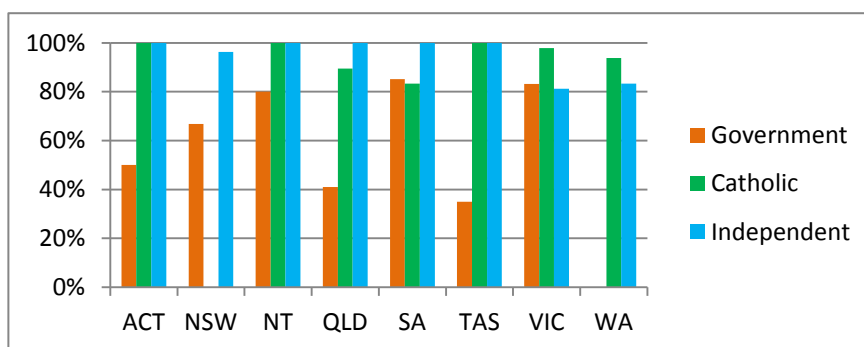
Head Office



School Board,
council or
committee of
management



Principal



Community
religious leader

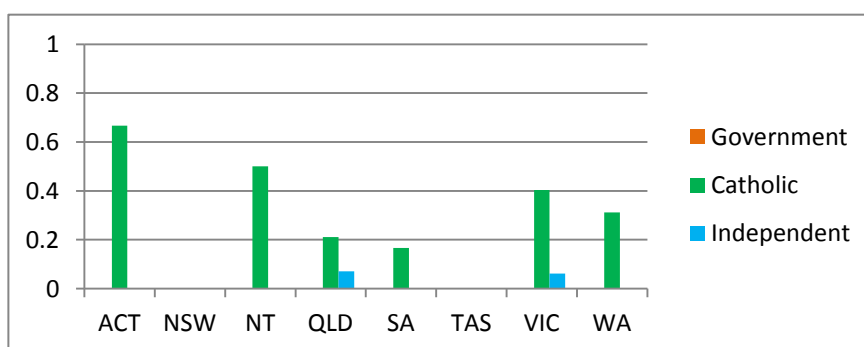
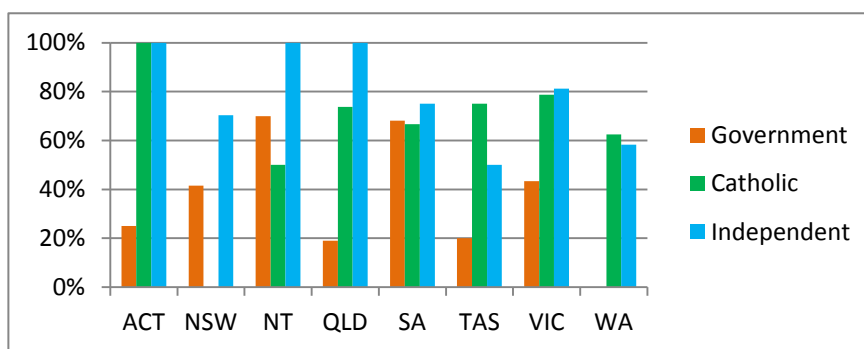
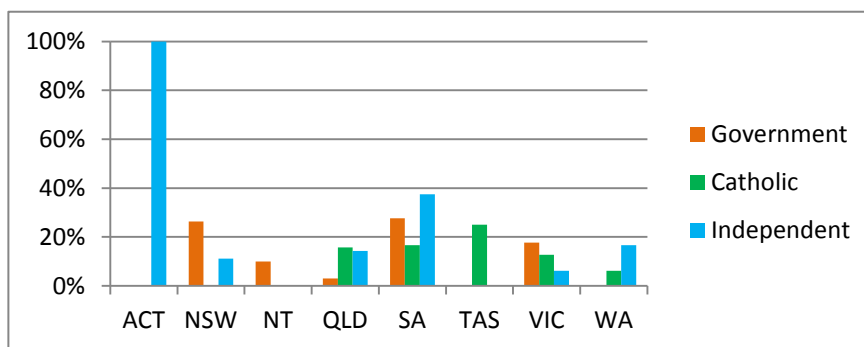


Figure continues over the page ...

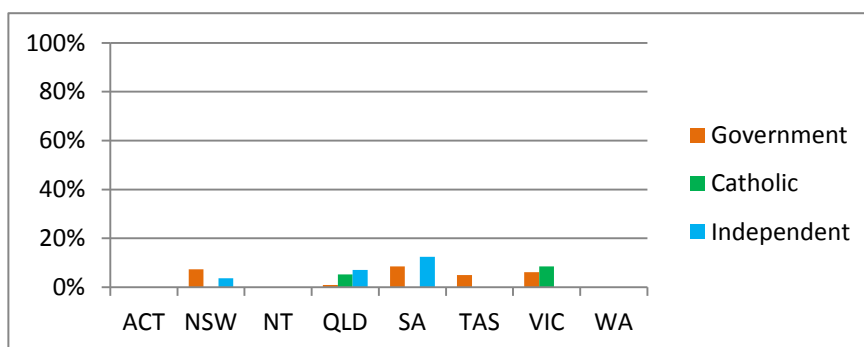
Executive



Non-executive
teaching staff



Non-teaching
school staff



Parents

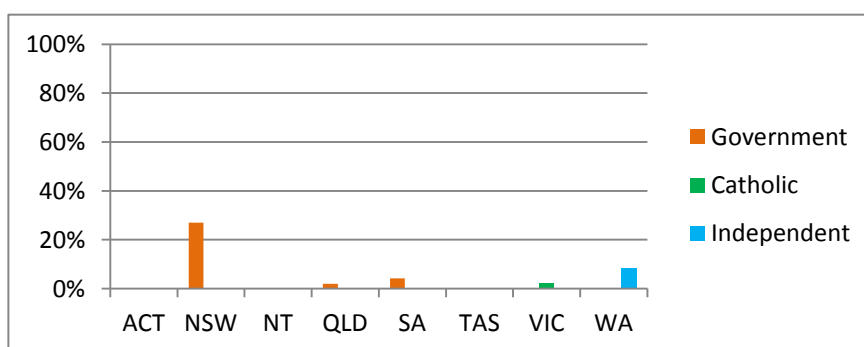
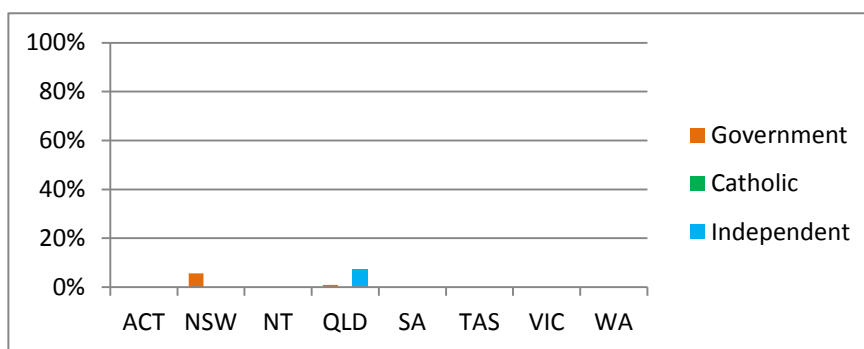
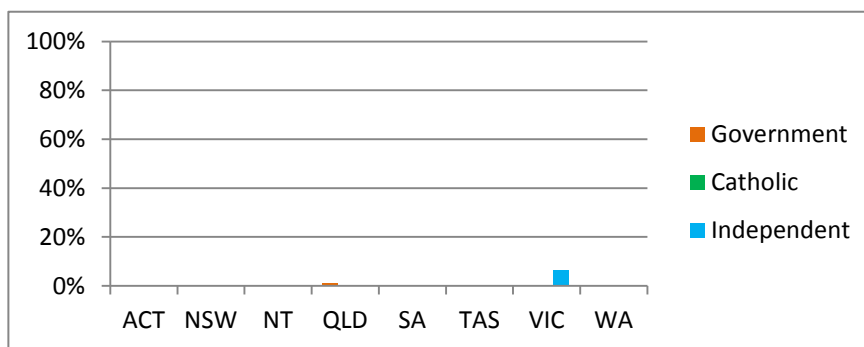


Figure continues over the page ...

Non-parent
community
members



Students



Selection panel

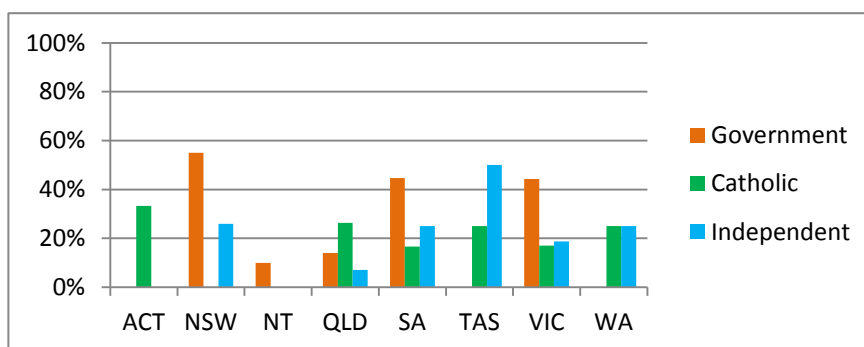
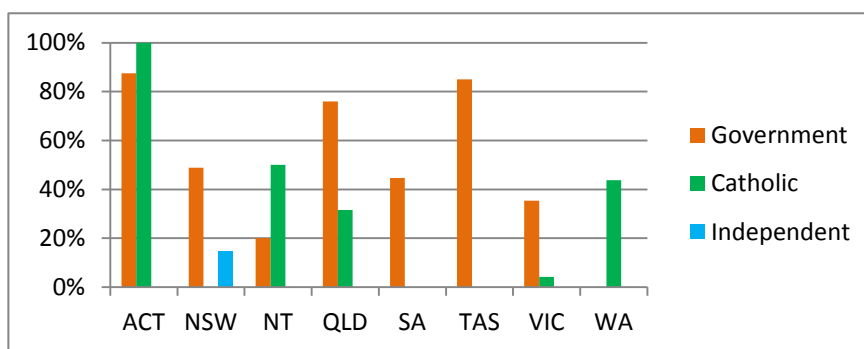


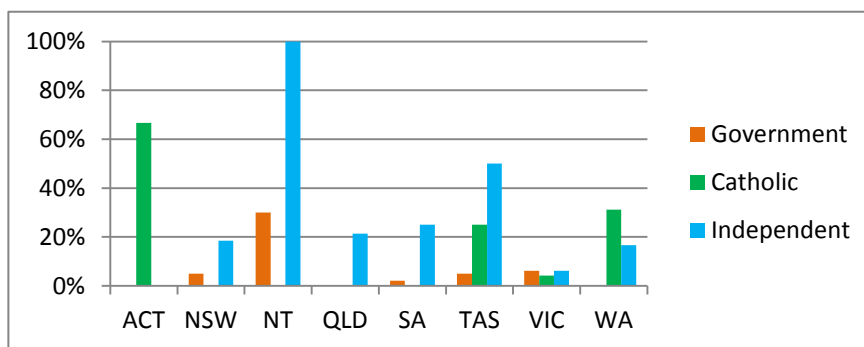
Figure 33: The proportion of schools, with various participants in decision-making about selection criteria for school teaching positions, by sector and state or territory

Figure 34 shows the proportion of schools with various participants in decision-making about selection criteria for school non-teaching positions. In the government sector across most states and territories, Head Office participates in these decisions. In the government, Independent and Catholic sectors, it is the principal and school teaching executive that nearly always participates. The selection panel participates in these decisions in a number of schools. Once again, other groups only rarely contribute to these decisions. (In Figure 34 no graphs are shown for students and community members because there were too few data to display.)

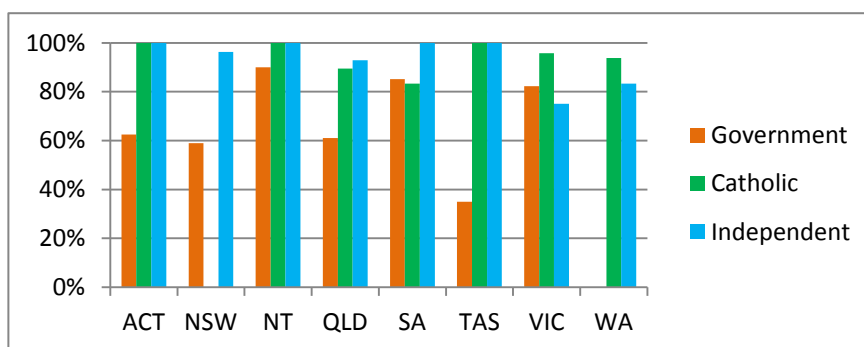
Head Office



School Board,
council or
committee of
management



Principal



Community
religious leader

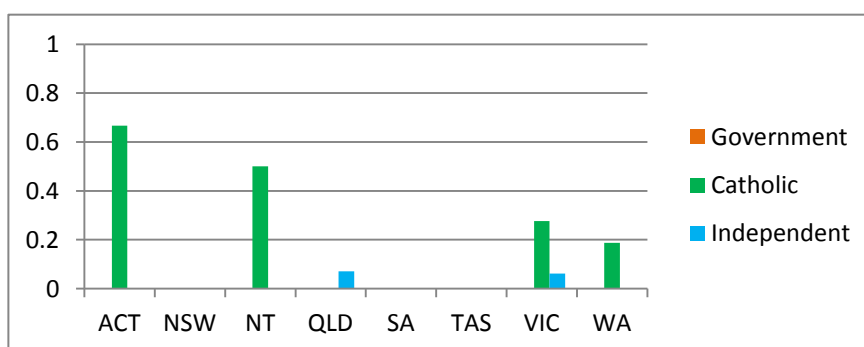
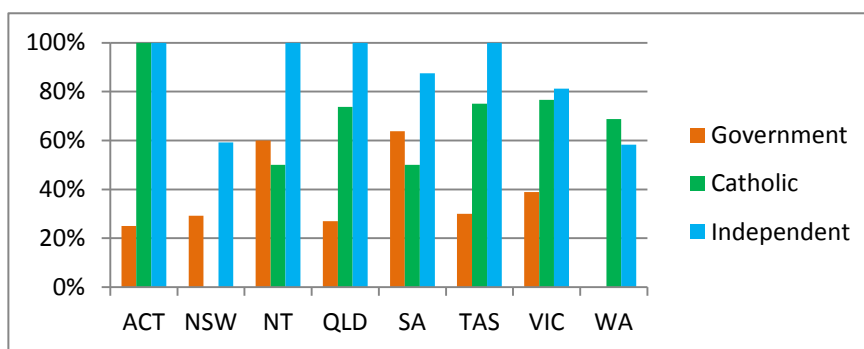
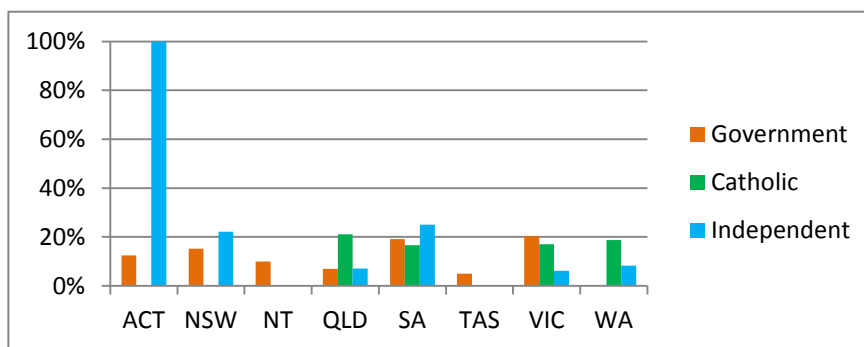


Figure continues over the page ...

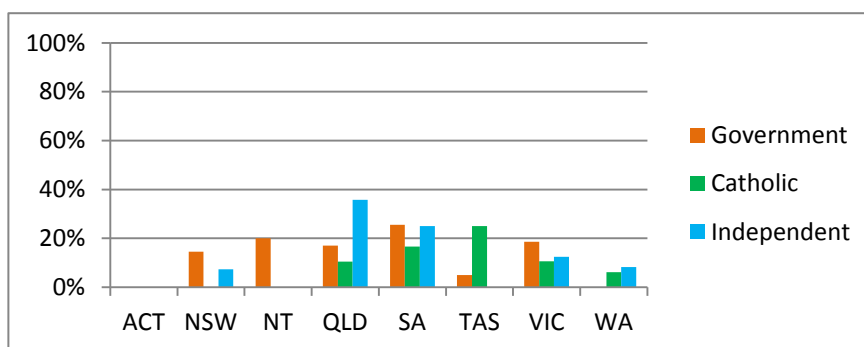
Executive



Non-executive teaching staff



Non-teaching school staff



Parents

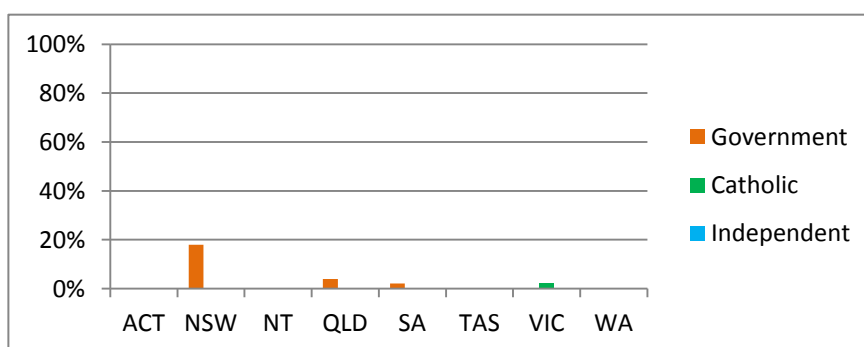


Figure continues over the page ...

Selection panel

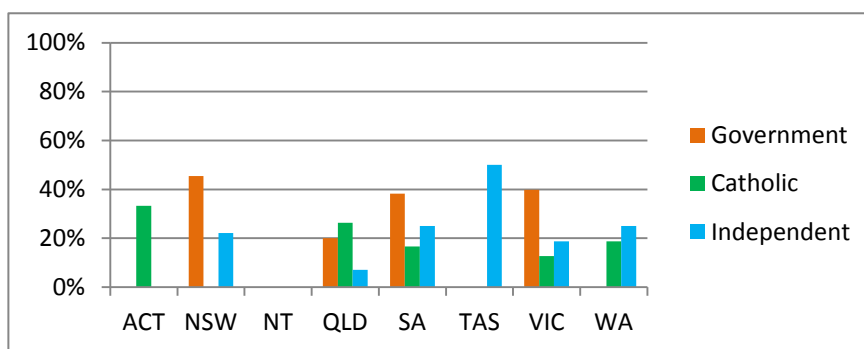


Figure 34: The proportion of schools, with various participants in decision-making about selection criteria for school non-teaching positions, by sector and state or territory

Figure 35 shows that in all sectors in all states and territories the selection panel's decision is final in most schools.

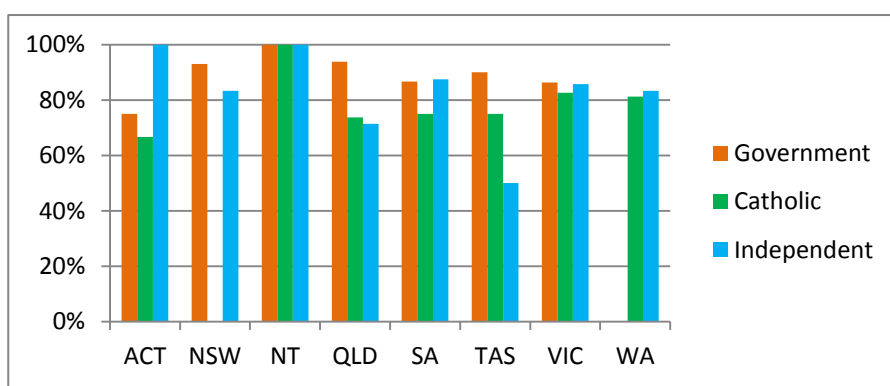
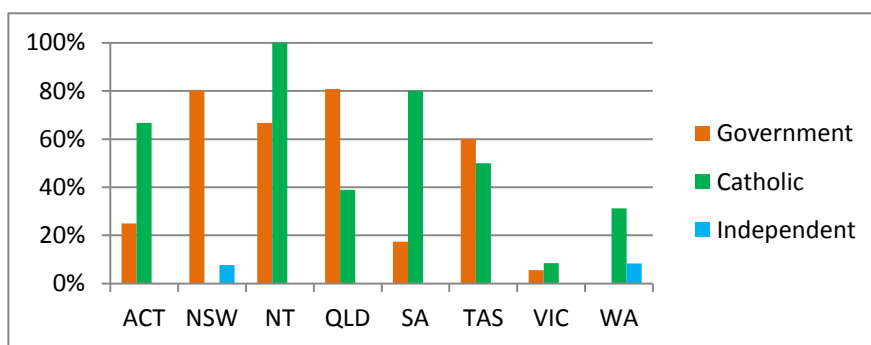


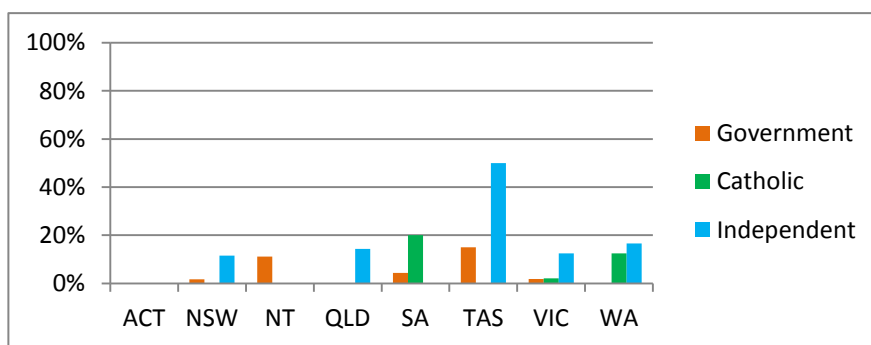
Figure 35: The proportion of schools where the selection panel's decision is final, by sector and state or territory

Figure 36 shows the proportion of schools who decide which teaching positions are required, by sector and state or territory. There is considerable evidence of a dispersion of responsibility for this decision, with all sectors and states and territories having a variety of sources. The education authority, principals, and senior teaching staff in particular are commonly cited by schools.

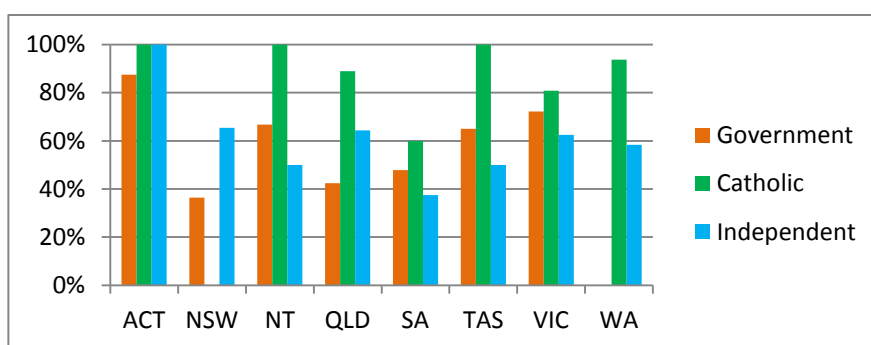
Education
authority



School Board



The principal



The principal in
consultation
with the
teachers

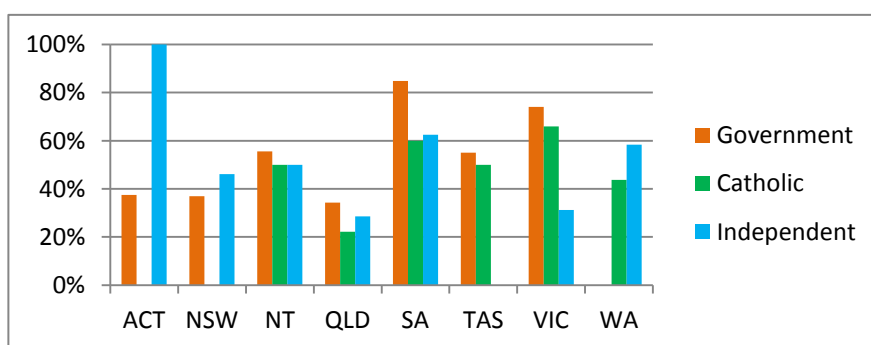
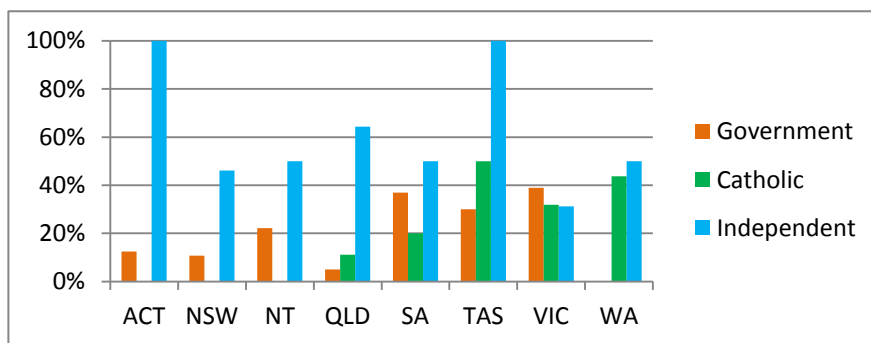
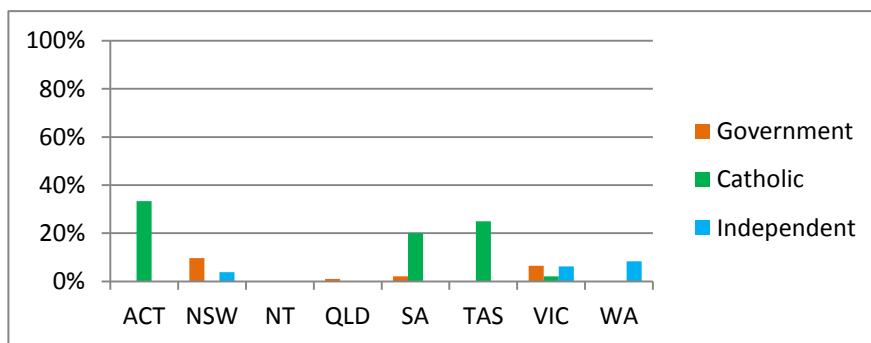


Figure continues over the page ...

The principal in consultation with the school Board



Selection panel



Executive or senior teaching staff

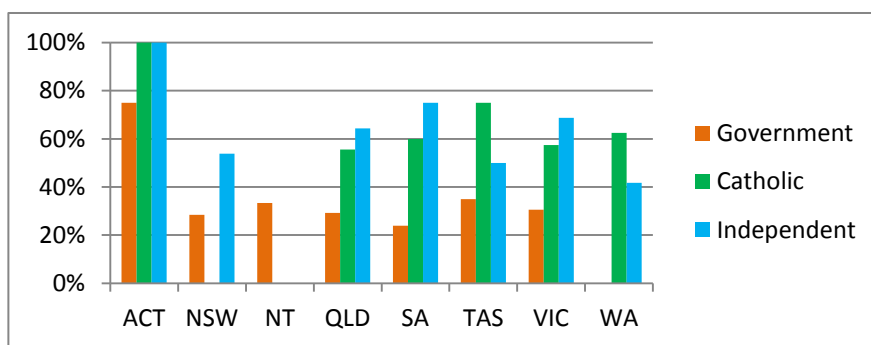


Figure 36: The proportion of schools, showing who decides which teaching positions are required, by sector and state or territory

Figure 37 shows the proportion of schools who decide which non-teaching positions are required, by sector and state or territory. The patterns for non-teaching positions are very similar to those seen for teaching positions.

Education authority

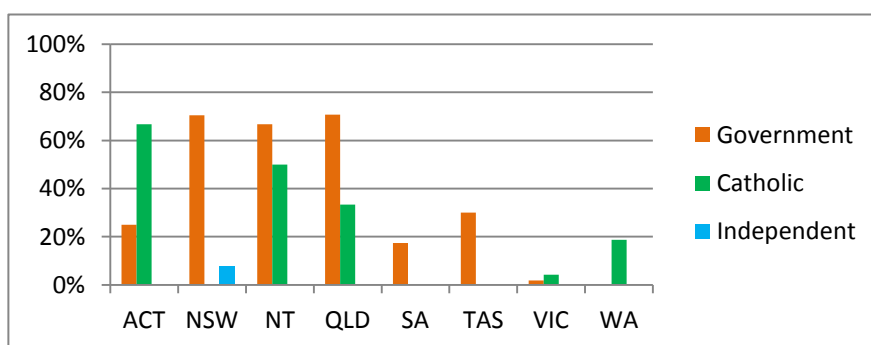
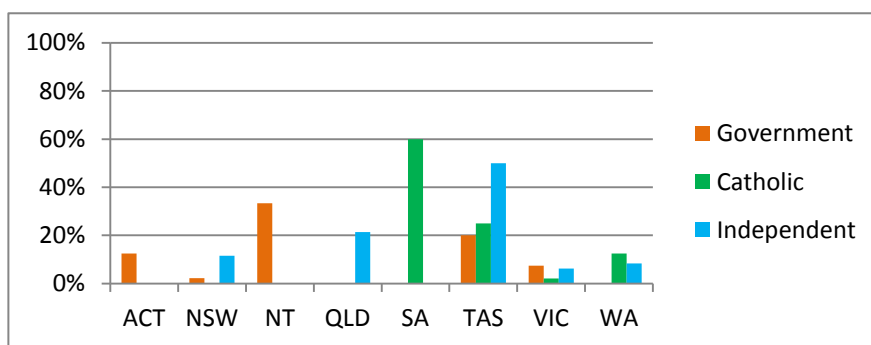
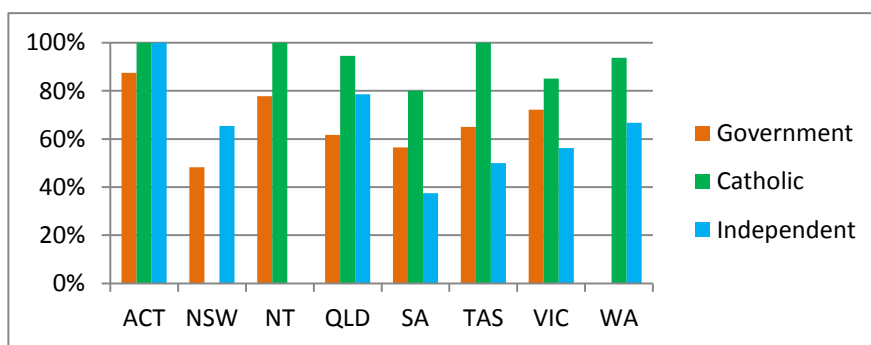


Figure continues over the page ...

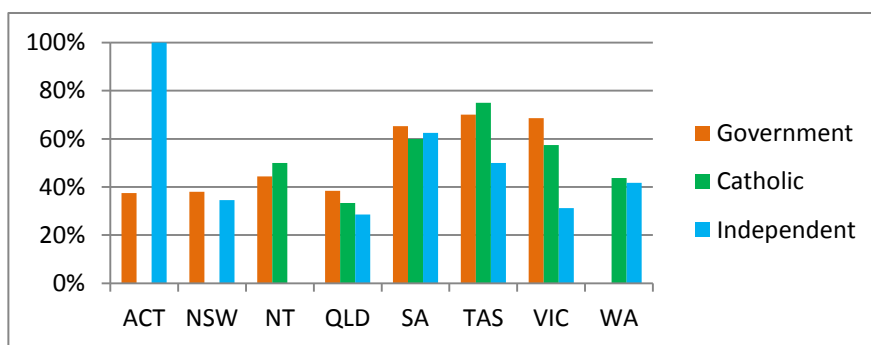
School Board



The principal



The principal in consultation with the teachers



The principal in consultation with the school Board

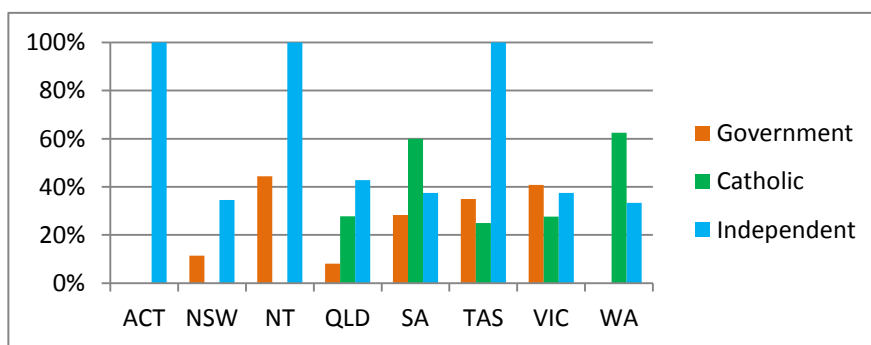
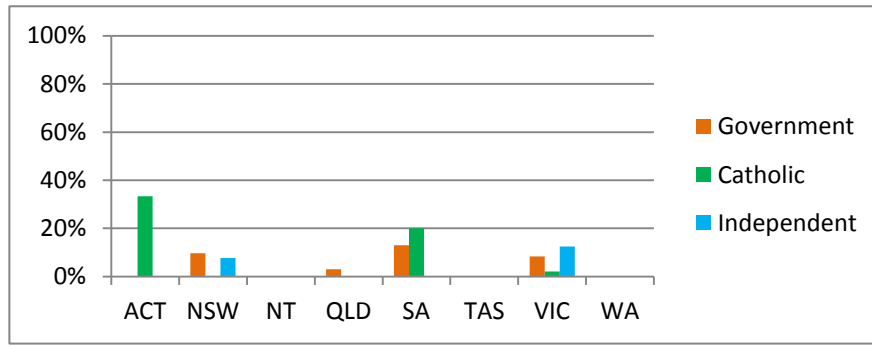


Figure continues over the page ...

Selection panel



Executive or senior teaching staff

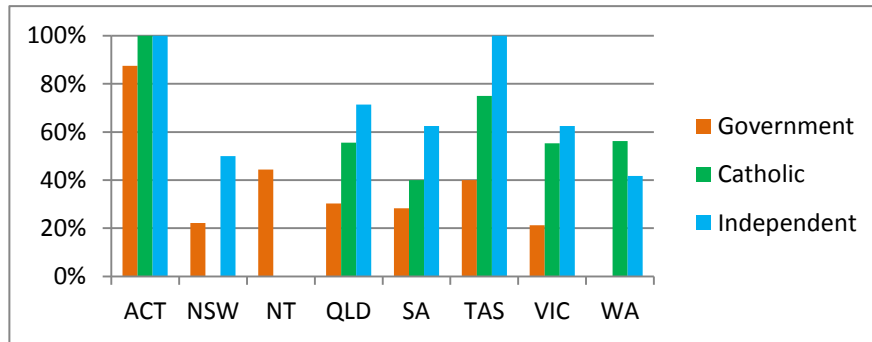


Figure 37: The proportion of schools, showing who decides which non-teaching positions are required, by sector and state or territory

Principal's preparedness for decision-making re: governance, funding and infrastructure, and workforce planning and management (Survey q. 53)

Figure 38 shows that principals, irrespective of the state or territory, or sector are feeling well prepared to make decisions in strategic planning. On a four point scale where '1' means 'Not at all' and '4' means 'To a major extent ...', the averages are above 3 and some close to 4.

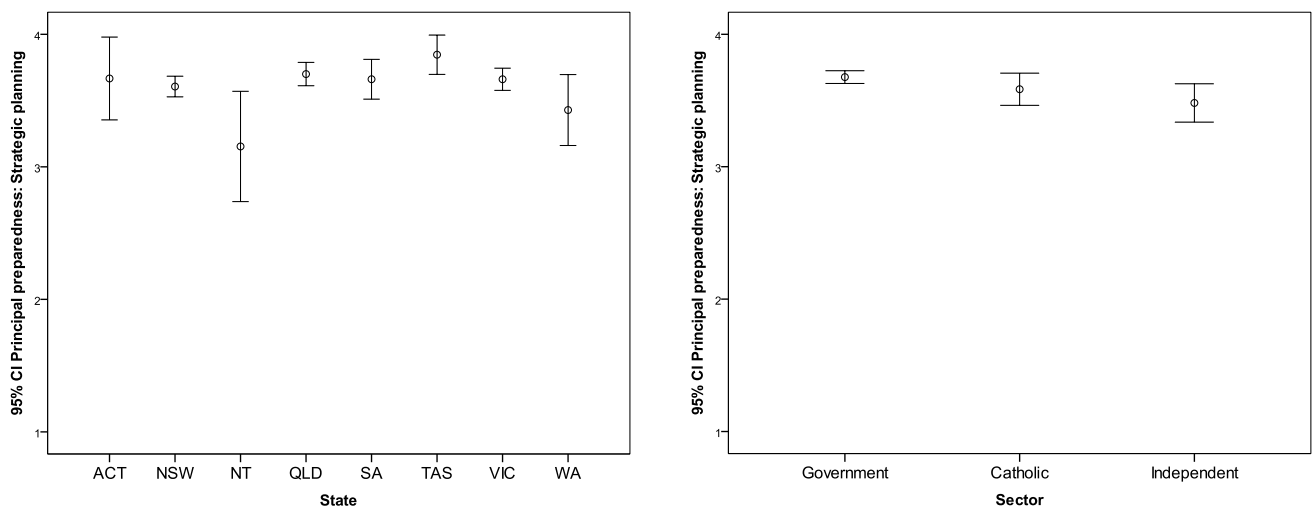


Figure 38: The extent to which principals feel prepared to make decisions in strategic planning for each state or territory and for each sector

Figure 39 shows that principals, irrespective of the state or territory, or sector are on average feeling well prepared to make decisions about resource allocation.

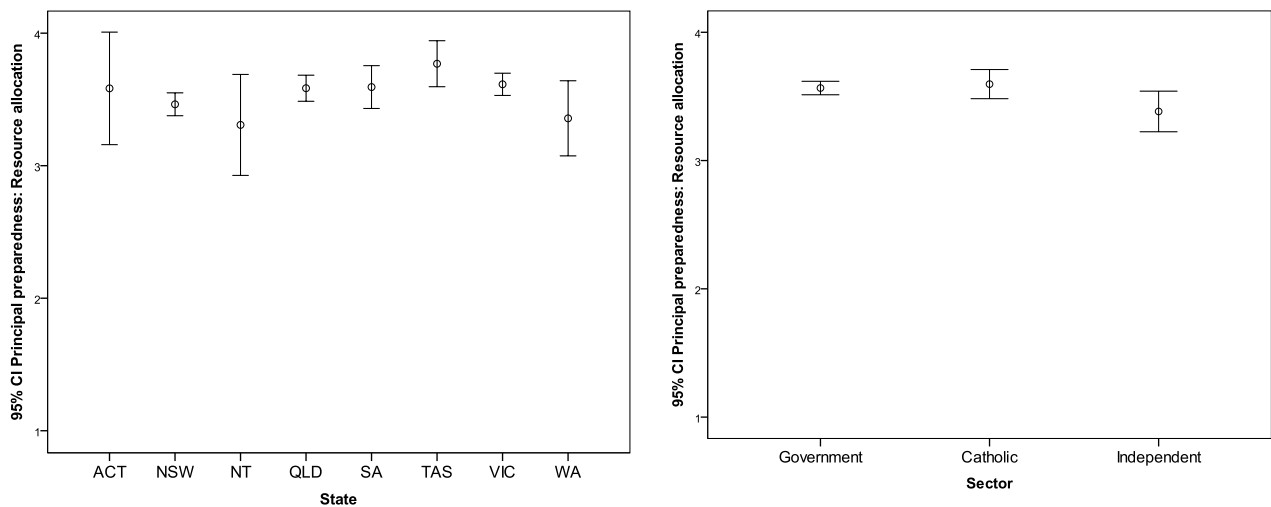


Figure 39: The extent to which principals feel prepared to make decisions about resource allocation for each state or territory and for each sector

Figure 40 shows that principals, irrespective of the state or territory, or sector are on average feeling well prepared to make decisions about infrastructure planning.

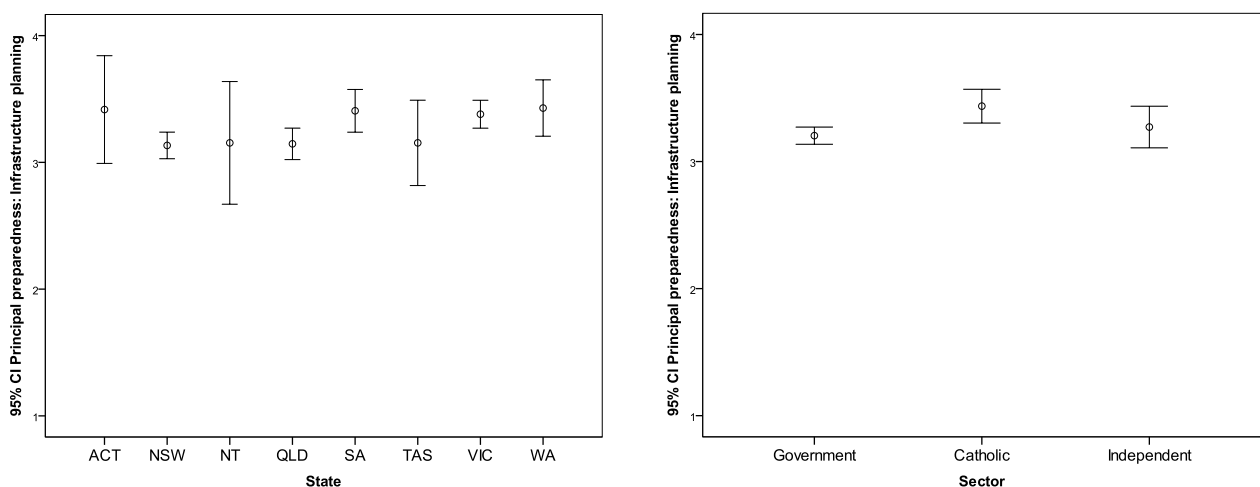


Figure 40: The extent to which principals feel prepared to make decisions about infrastructure planning for each state or territory and for each sector

Figure 41 shows that principals, irrespective of the state or territory, or sector are on average feeling well prepared to make decisions about workforce planning. Similarly, Figure 42 shows that principals, irrespective of the state or territory, or sector are on average feeling well prepared to make decisions about staff selection as well as performance management (see Figure 43).

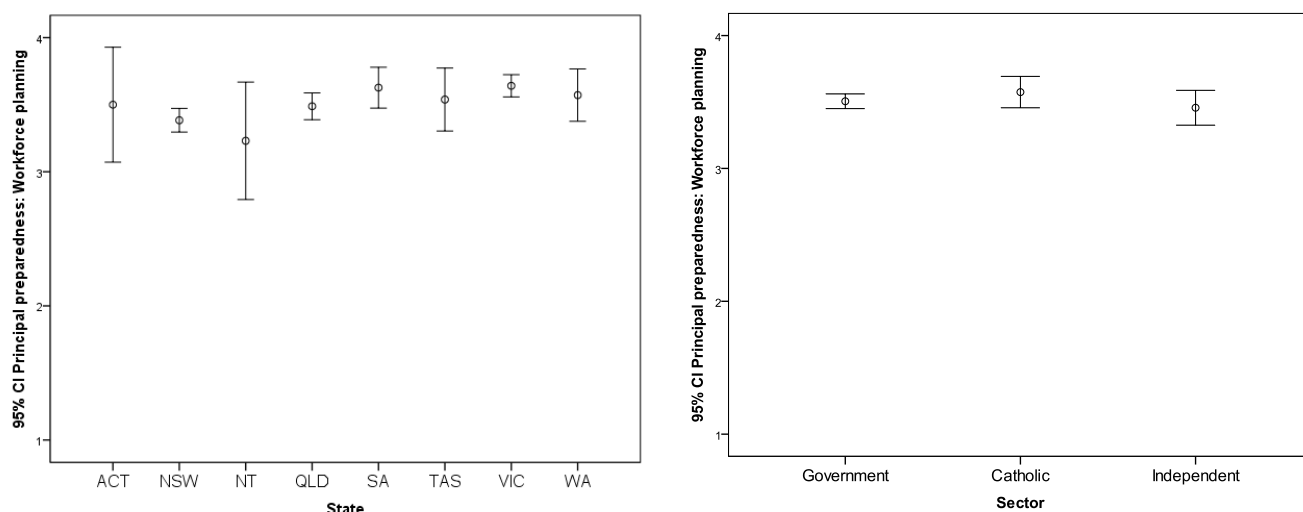


Figure 41: The extent to which principals feel prepared to make decisions about workforce planning for each state or territory and for each sector

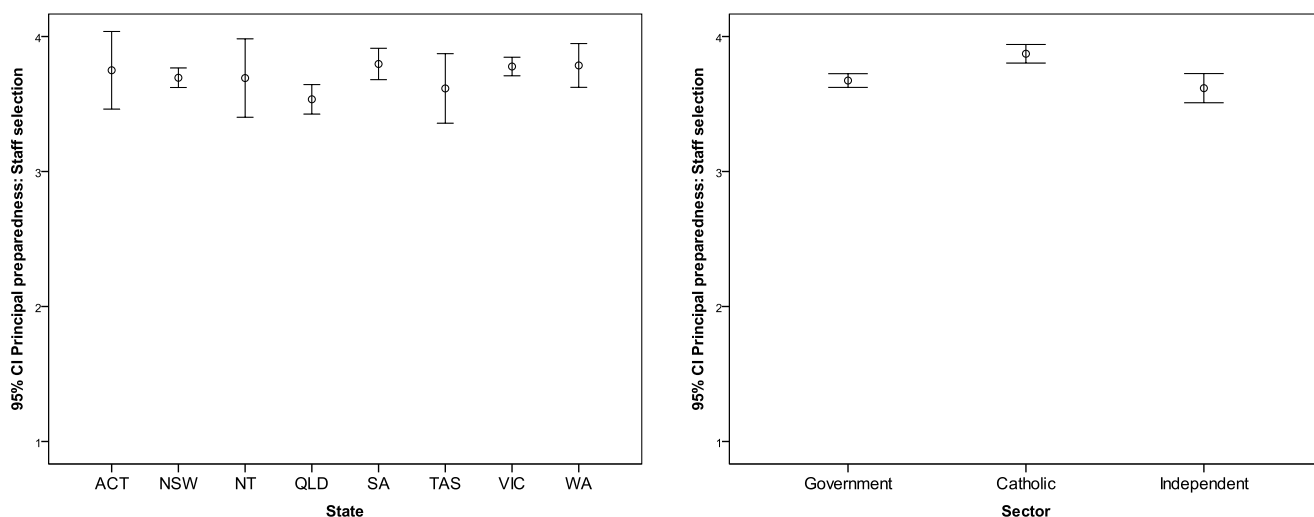


Figure 42: The extent to which principals feel prepared to make decisions about staff selection for each state or territory and for each sector

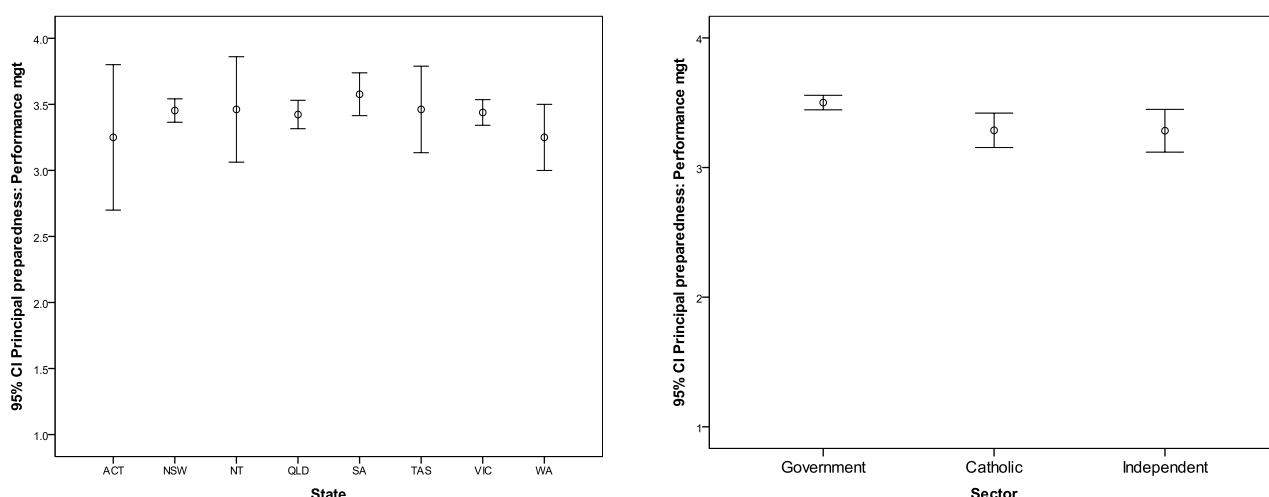


Figure 43: The extent to which principals feel prepared to make decisions about performance management for each state or territory and for each sector

Preparedness of executive / senior staff to make decisions re: governance, funding and infrastructure, and workforce planning and management (Survey q. 54)

Figure 44 shows that principals, irrespective of the state or territory, or sector feel that school executive and senior staff are, on average, moderately well prepared to make decisions about strategic planning.

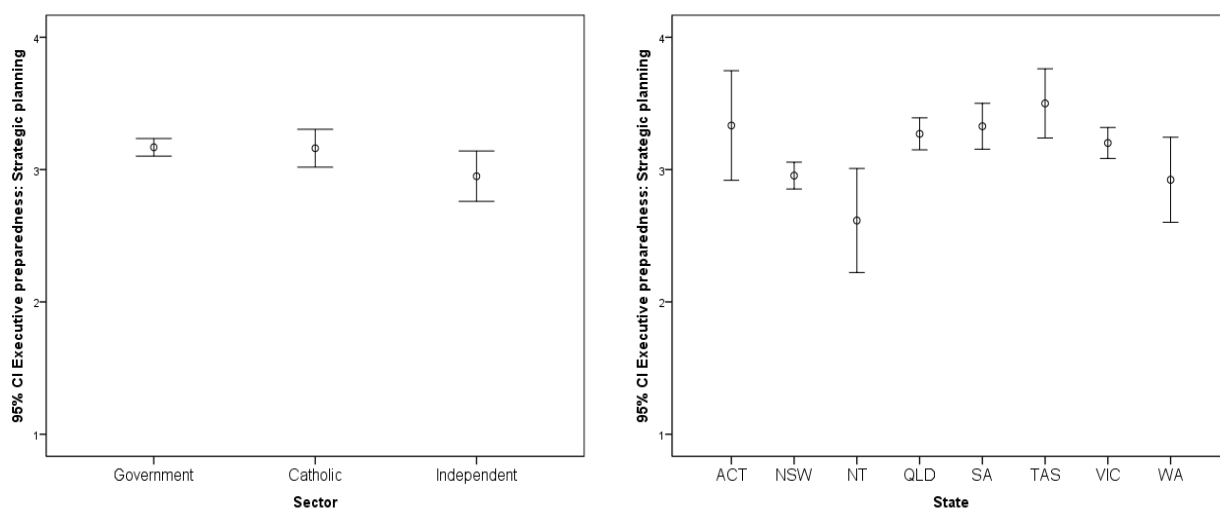


Figure 44: The extent to which principals feel that the school executive and senior staff are prepared to make decisions in strategic planning for each sector and for each state and territory

Figure 45 shows that principals, irrespective of the state territory or sector, feel, on average, that school executive and senior staff are moderately well prepared to make decisions about resource allocation.

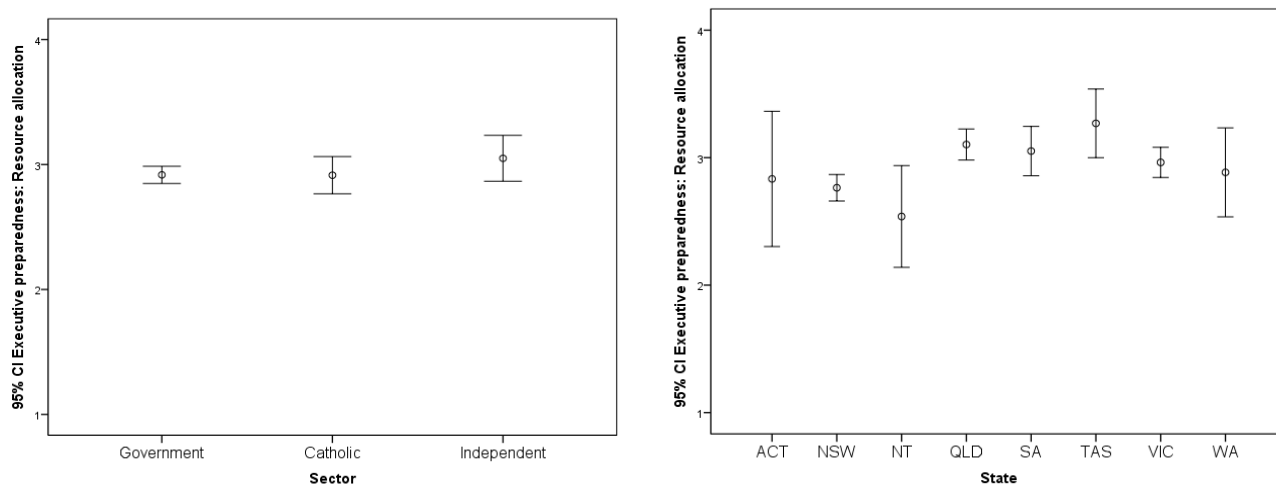


Figure 45: The extent to which principals feel that the school executive and senior staff are prepared to make decisions about resource allocation for each sector and for each state and territory

Figure 46 shows that principals, irrespective of the state, territory or sector, feel, on average, that school executive and senior staff are moderately well prepared to make decisions about infrastructure planning.

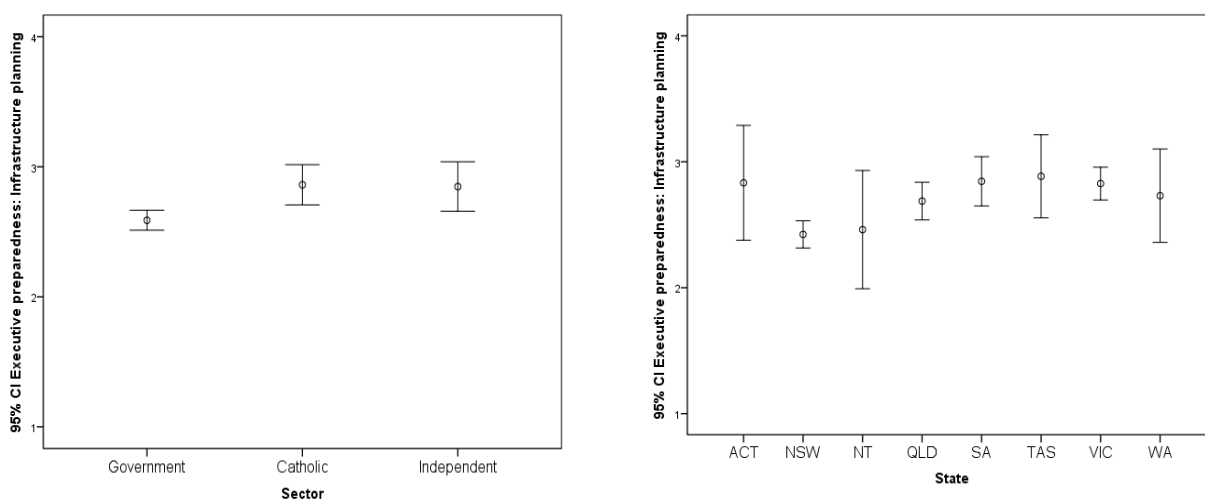


Figure 46: The extent to which principals feel that the school executive and senior staff are prepared to make decisions about infrastructure planning for each sector and for each state and territory

Figure 47 shows that principals, irrespective of the state or territory, or sector feel, on average, that school executive and senior staff are moderately well prepared to make decisions about workforce planning. Figure 48 and Figure 49 shows similar levels for staff selection as well as performance management.

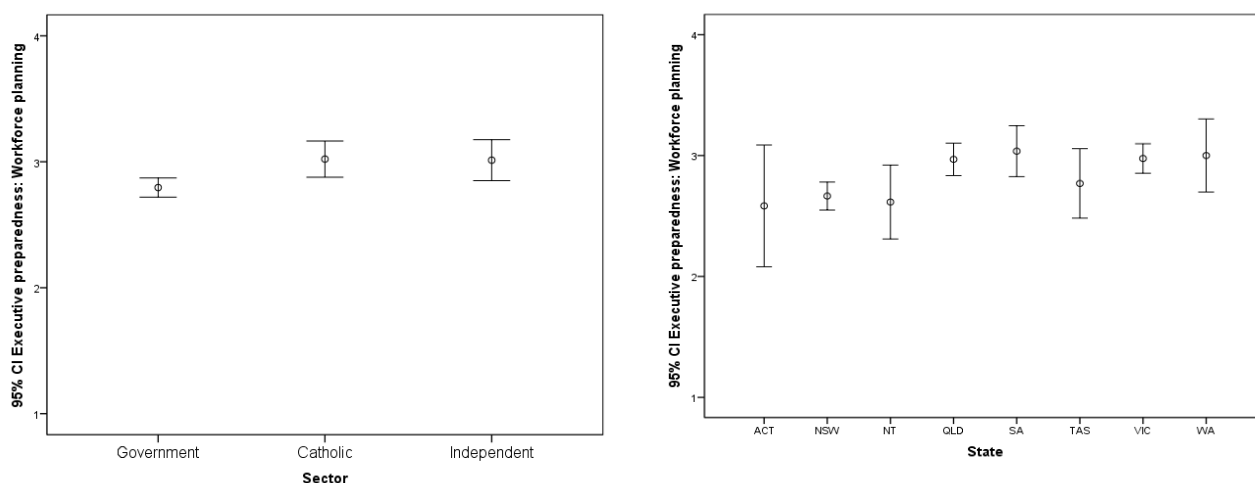


Figure 47: The extent to which principals feel that school executive and senior staff are prepared to make workforce planning decisions for each sector, state and territory

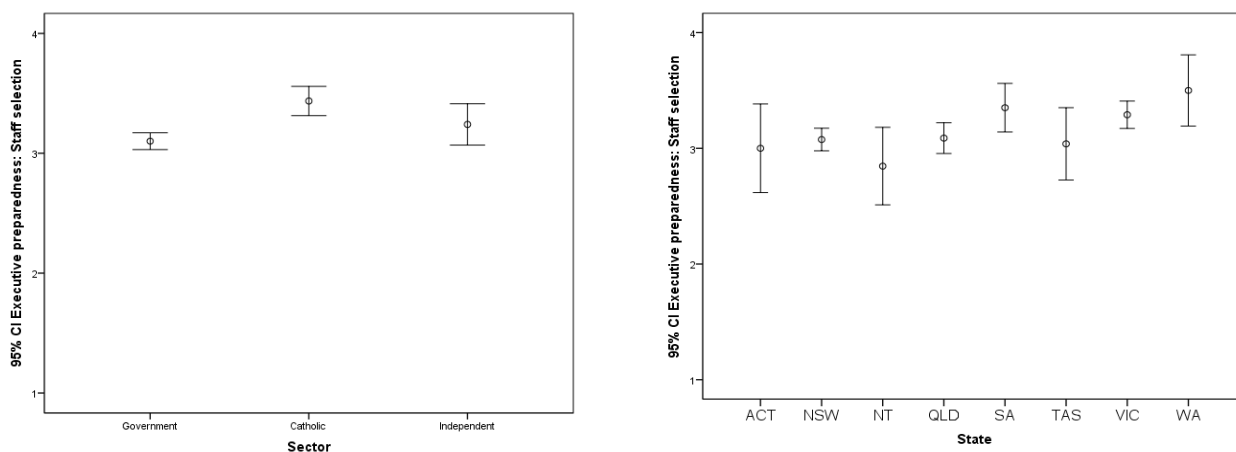


Figure 48: The extent to which principals feel that school executive and senior staff are prepared to make decisions about staff selection for each sector and state and territory

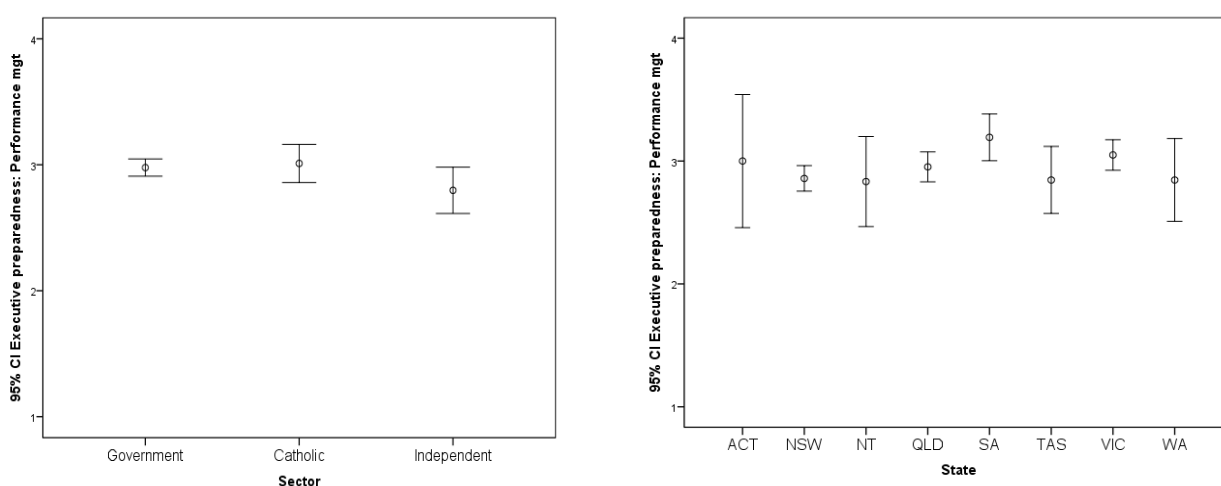


Figure 49: The extent to which principals feel that school executive and senior staff are prepared to make decisions about performance management for each sector and for each state and territory

In summary, on average, principals see themselves as a little better prepared for making a wide range of decisions, than their senior staff within schools.

Planned changes to decision-making processes for workforce planning and management as a result of ELS (Survey q. 55)

Figure 50 shows that Catholic schools are the least likely to be planning changes to decision-making processes as a result of ELS. Conversely, Figure 51 shows that Independent schools were more likely to be planning changes, especially in the area of teacher performance management.

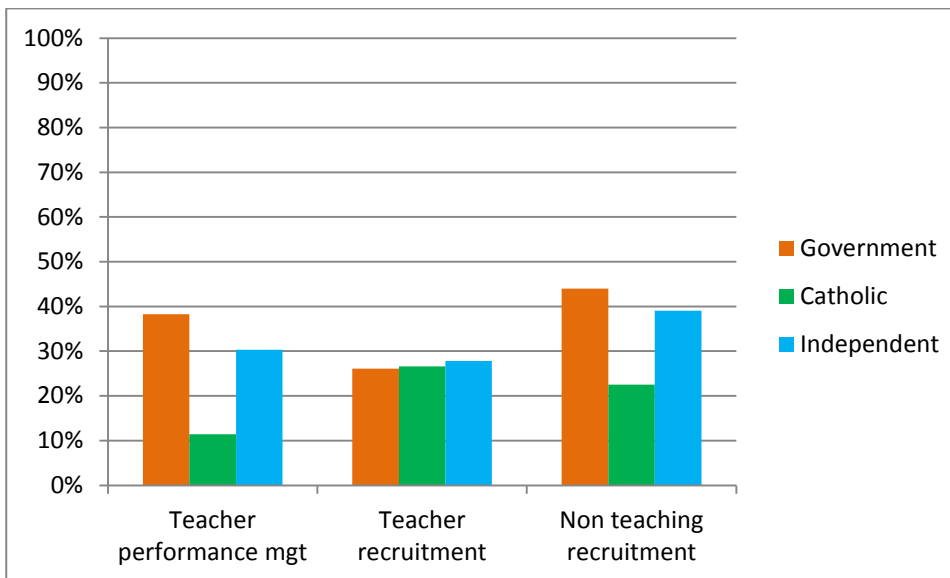


Figure 50: The proportion of schools that *are not* planning to change decision-making processes or procedures related to various issues as a result of ELS

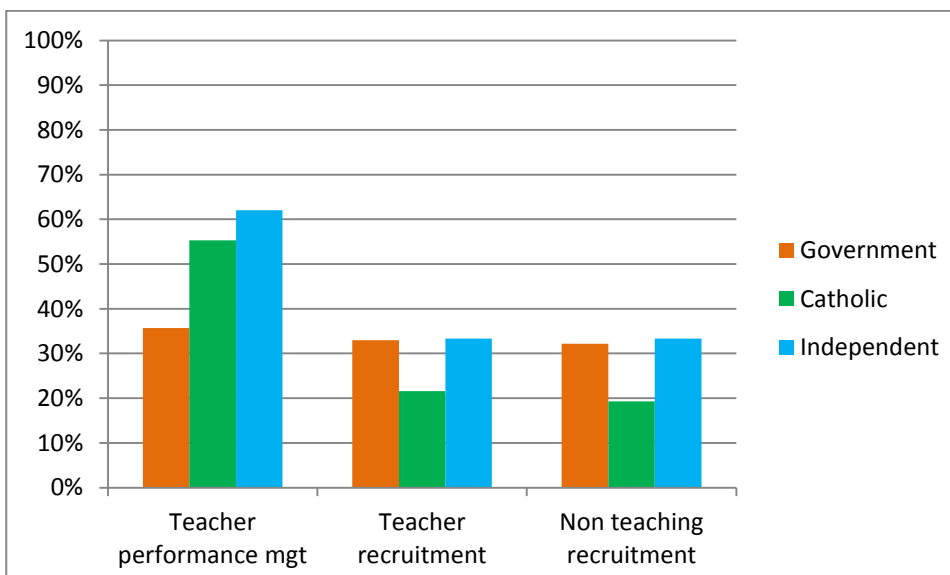


Figure 51: The proportion of schools that *are* planning, in the next 12 to 24 months, to change decision-making processes or procedures related to various issues as a result of ELS

PD for workforce planning and management available for principals and school leaders (Survey qq. 56-57)

Figure 52 and Figure 53 show the proportion of schools accessing PD through AITSL, and from other sources. There are no clear patterns either across states and territories, or sectors.

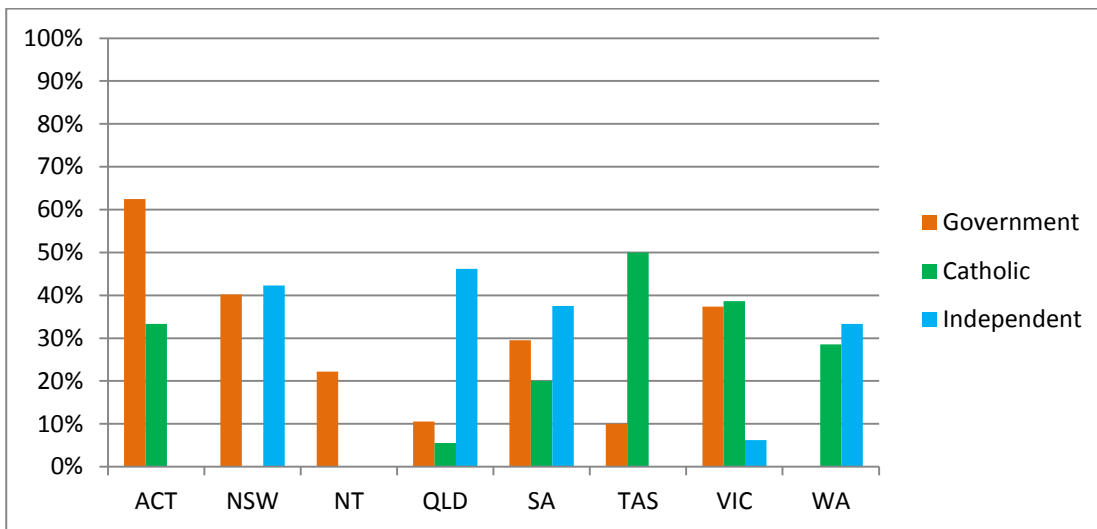


Figure 52: The proportion of schools in which PD is being accessed through AITSL

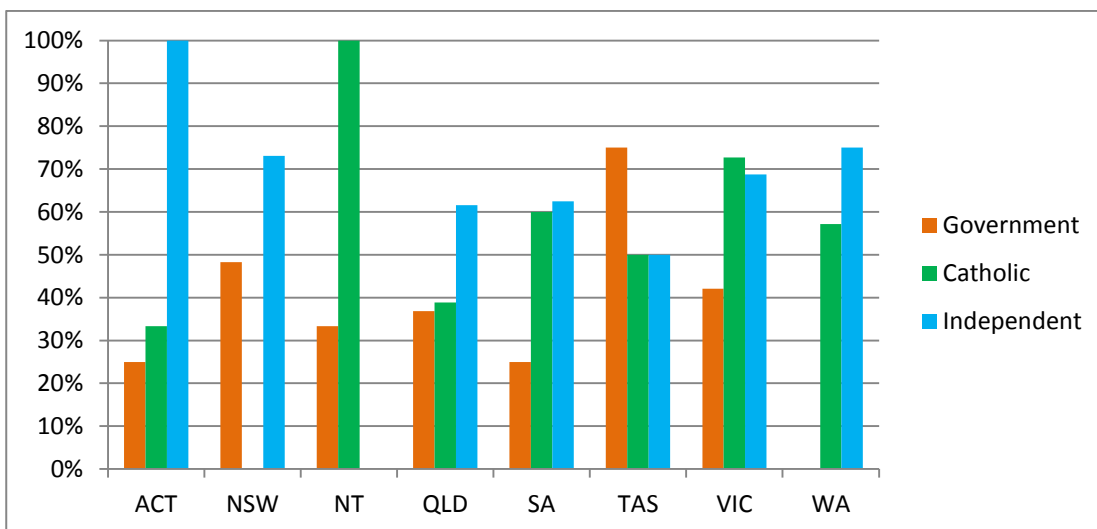


Figure 53: The proportion of schools in which PD is being accessed through providers other than AITSL

Appendix Two: case study schools

The 25 schools selected for ELS case study site visits comprise a representative sample of ELS schools from all sectors across Australia. Jurisdictions with an established tradition of community involvement in governance tended to commence ELS with a more developed capacity for local decision-making than those where devolution of authority is in earlier stages.

One small school that proved the exception managed to navigate successfully through complicated administrative challenges because of a pattern of cooperation and resource sharing among schools in a given region.

Other examples where an existing program or initiative enabled schools to commence ELS with greater capacity in local decision-making include:

- a student performance appraisal initiative strengthened by better student data collection
- research into the feasibility of additional educational centres for disengaged youth
- enhanced capacity to improve teaching practices for mathematics
- enhanced capacity to embed e-learning strategies into classrooms, and
- more effective profiling for a regional school about the value of education programs.

Case study schools highlighted the importance of: 1) the flexibility that ELS provides to apply funding in the best interests of their students without the constraints of targeted grants; 2) consultation with relevant staff and community stakeholders at each stage of ELS; and 3) the benefits and challenges that accompany greater discretion in the local management of human and financial resources.

In relation to the flexibility provided by ELS, one principal commented:

...Schools... need to be entrepreneurial...to overcome constraints.... Motivating people is not just about the money. It's about giving them [opportunities] to work creatively, to build something, [and] backing them along the way.

Sometimes staff do not see how a particular initiative or program can be useful... [and]...think there are too many extra things in which they have to become involved. [Many] initiatives [are] designed for middle class schools.... ELS is different because it is much more flexible and it can be directed to our areas of need.

Schools also appreciated consultation with relevant staff and community members at each stage of ELS. One principal commented: “[The school] philosophy is to give staff knowledge and power to make decisions for the students. We want to facilitate conversations with staff so that we can all determine goals together”.

Consultation with staff and other community stakeholders was also seen as a very important part of ELS to allay concerns that staff might have, for example, that a heightened emphasis on data collection would be linked to performance appraisal. One principal commented: “Critical success factors include consultation with staff [and working as a team] in developing processes for program development”.

Several case study schools referred to both the benefits and the challenges that can accompany increased local responsibilities for human resources and financial management. Many saw this as a plus since it can facilitate directing funds where they are most needed. While those interviewed

expressed confidence in their principal's skill in managing the budget, they also expressed concerns about situations where a principal and school Board members might not have the expertise to handle financial matters in a timely and competent fashion. A further challenge can occur where community members are hesitant to join Boards or councils, perhaps because of a fear that they could be held personally liable for decisions made as a member of the Board.

In general, the case studies so far indicate that ELS is enabling schools to: 1) apply ELS funding flexibly to areas where they can have the greatest positive effect on student learning outcomes; 2) include relevant staff and community stakeholders at each stage of the implementation of ELS; 3) understand both the benefits and challenges involved in taking on greater responsibility for managing human and financial resources; and 4) trial a wide range of projects and programs across Australia that could become sustainable and transferable.

Further details from visits to seven case study schools follow.

Case study 1

List of acronyms used in this case study

AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ELS	Empowering Local Schools

1. Background or context

This co-educational Senior Secondary College (Years 11-12) is the centre of a large community complex in the Tuggeranong Network. The College includes a fully-equipped Active Leisure Centre, a 450 seat theatre, and a multi-use College and community library. Approximately 560 students attend the College during the day and 500 adult learners during the evening. The community regularly uses the library and Active Leisure Centre.

The College Academies specialise in: 1) maths and science; 2) sports; 3) diverse entry learning pathways; and 4) innovative vocational and training pathways.

The College is also committed to the support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Its partnership with the Indigenous Social Inclusion Company has earned both an ACT vocational award and a National Australia Bank Impact Award in 2011. The opening of the Mindygari Centre of excellence for Indigenous education in 2013 is a further sign of its commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Other key partnerships include local and interstate universities, the Canberra Institute of Technology and the Australian Science and Mathematics School in Adelaide.

2. The project

The ELS initiative is directed towards the College building on work in progress especially in the areas of leadership, governance and workforce management. ELS funding supports the participation of teacher-leaders in leadership programs developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). Teacher-leaders work with their peers at the College to build an innovative learning culture across all Academies.

Procedures for deploying staff are also changing so that teachers can concentrate on teaching and non-teaching staff can focus on administrative matters. A senior administrative officer now has charge of managing staff absences and arranging substitute teachers - a task traditionally carried out by senior teachers or even deputy principals in many schools. Similarly, a range of duties connected with student attendance is handled by the Student Services team whose duties include recording student absences and some contact with parents. The principal noted the continuing need for both teachers and administrative staff to recognise the complementary nature of their work. This too requires the kind of ongoing professional learning that ELS is able to support.

3. Objectives and expectations; preparation and planning

The main objectives are to: 1) continue freeing teaching staff from administrative duties; and 2) provide more time for the professional development (PD) of senior teachers as educational leaders.

4. Impacts and benefits and how they will be measured

The principal and Business Facilities Manager explained that ELS provides a boost to the flexibility they already have to manage their staffing budget and to select the best teachers for the College. 'We looked at the staffing structure and saw the need for change. We looked at how teachers can dedicate more time to teaching and what administrative staff can take off them'.

The principal and Business Facilities Manager also noted that ELS is enabling them to manage school finances and budgets in increasingly innovative and flexible ways. ‘It’s all about different ways of doing things’.

Measuring the impacts and benefits of enabling more teachers to dedicate their time to teaching and to develop professionally will be linked closely to improved student learning outcomes. The principal is exploring ways in which the College can make consistent judgements about student learning outcomes through use of the latest and most effective methods of collecting, analysing and managing ‘value added’ data. He also sees a large part of his role in supporting learning innovation and leadership by ensuring the availability of resources and professional development.

5. Issues and challenges

The main issues and challenges are to: 1) ensure that the momentum of change, innovation and development continues; 2) ensure the College’s access to resources and funding; and 3) build a staff profile of talented, experienced and less experienced teachers who can learn from each other.

6. Strengths of the project

The ELS project is strengthened by the College’s: 1) entrepreneurial leadership; 2) inclusion of the Business and Facilities Manager in the senior leadership team; 3) validation of the school’s commitment to local empowerment; and 4) continuing support for PD and capacity building.

7. Sustainability

The Maths and Science Academy is a model of sustainability that can be applied more broadly to the College’s professional learning culture. All members of staff are committed to the model.

8. Transferability

The College is a high profile school that regularly hosts visitors from other schools and school systems. The principal noted that, ‘Our teachers have been asked to present around the country’. The benefits from ELS will also be shared not only between the Academies within the school, but also with other professionals from a range of schools and organisations.

9. Conclusion

The ELS initiative supports the College’s initiatives in: 1) excellence in teaching; 2) innovative use of learning spaces; 3) leadership; 4) governance; and 5) workforce management. The College’s facilities are used by both students and staff, and the community.

Case Study 7

List of acronyms used in this study

AECG	Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
ELS	Empowering Local Schools
P and C	Parents and Citizens
RAM	Resource Allocation Model
SES	Socio-economic Status

1. Background or context

This government co-education secondary school, an incentive school, is in a low SES partnership group of schools in rural NSW. It is a remote school with an enrolment of 186 students. The school has a strong cohort of very experienced staff. Seventy-five per cent, however, are early career, dynamic and young teachers, who often move on quickly. It is a challenge to continually have to attract staff. The principal described the school as a friendly and collegial community school in which the community is very involved in school activities and governance ‘does not present any problems’.

2. The project

Workforce management is the focus of the ELS initiative in the school. Funds will be used to support the financial structure and other administrative areas, including student administration; the professional development and learning of staff; and the employment of additional teaching staff to enhance engagement strategies for students.

3. Objectives and expectations; preparation and planning

The school wants to build on the flexibility that they currently have in their funding arrangements, especially around workforce management. The principal looks forward to both increased responsibility and more opportunities for greater flexibility and to do things differently, that will come with the delivery of the RAM. To ensure that the school and community has a say, the introduction of ELS involved the executive team, the staff and the community stakeholders, such as the P and C, the AECG, the Lands Council and local businesses in discussions and consultations. These groups will be invited to collaborate in planning and consultation.

The school also wants to improve teaching and learning for better student outcomes. The school is engaging in the ELS initiative and in 2013 will consolidate current progress by: 1) ensuring a safe and respectful learning environment for everyone; 2) basing all lessons around a quality teaching framework; 3) giving structure to the leadership development program; 4) improving literacy and numeracy outcomes and HSC results; 5) contributing to reducing the gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in literacy, numeracy and engagement; and 6) having strong and supportive community partnerships.

4. Impacts and benefits, and how they will be measured

ELS funds additional and strategically planned professional learning to: 1) enhance teaching and learning in the school; and 2) contribute to succession planning by building capacity through professional learning for aspiring leaders and for all of the staff and the whole school. Senior leadership at the school will focus more on curriculum and teaching and learning throughout the school, as well as the professional learning of staff. The Head Teacher will support teachers and mentor less experienced teachers. Administrative staff can access professional learning to offset the principal’s current administrative load so that she can devote more time to educational leadership. There are early signs that ELS contributes to improved social, educational and cultural outcomes.

The school will use an evaluation template as a starting point in measuring the impacts and benefits of ELS.

5. Issues and challenges

One challenge resulting from major changes in the Department is that its slowness in implementing the RAM has constrained flexibility in workforce management. The school is also still waiting on the Department's implementation of new staffing agreements for further opportunities for local decision-making.

Initially, some teachers and staff saw ELS as a cost-cutting exercise and a way of reducing staff. Media reports about ELS generated anxiety. Staff came on board through school-wide discussions about, and participation in, ELS. The principal has made a commitment to be 'transparent, open and honest' about ELS and its implications for staff by sharing all of her emails from the Department and informing staff of the latest changes.

6. Strengths of the project

The strengths of this program are the degree to which consultation has occurred before implementation, the involvement of all parent and other community groups, and the planning that has occurred so far. The proposed activities will allow more time to be spent on increasing learning opportunities for students. This is particularly important in a small, remote school, where administrative matters can take a disproportionate amount of time.

7. Sustainability

The program can be sustainable due to the increased skills of administrative and teaching staff, and the ongoing support of community, staff and social leadership.

8. Transferability

Positive changes and lessons from ELS, especially for senior leadership and other staff to focus on teaching and learning are applicable in other rural and remote schools.

9. Conclusion

Critical success factors for the initiative include; 1) support of the staff and school community; 2) a focus on teaching and learning; 3) the Department's continuing support for local decision-making; 4) flexibility with checks and balances in regard to accountability structures; and 5) tailoring professional learning to individual and whole school needs.

Case Study 11

List of acronyms used in this case study

EQ	Education Queensland
ELS	Empowering Local Schools
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
QBC	Queensland Baptist Care
TAS	Student Management Program
VET	Vocational Education and Training

1. Background or context

This small independent co-educational school operating through Queensland Baptist Care (QBC) is located in a coastal town in QLD. It is registered as a Special Assistance School, offering a comprehensive education and support program and is also a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). The school has an enrolment of 110 students from Years 6 -12.

The core business of the school is to re-engage and provide education and training to young people who are neither engaged in nor attending school. Since the school was established, it has helped hundreds of young people to stay off welfare by operating as a centre that offers opportunities for both education and training. The principal commented that there is data that states that there approximately 12,000 young people across Queensland who are not accounted for in any education system. Many communities have similar numbers of disengaged or non-attending youth in their community but do not have a centre like this school.

Students at the school face many barriers in coping with schooling, including dysfunctional families and homelessness. Some are barely literate and others have been out of school for two years. If they become homeless while at school, the school supports them to find housing. 'Despite a perception that the centre is a halfway house, last year two students began university studies and of the 25 students enrolled in Year 12, 24 graduated to employment or further studies with many remaining in the local community'.

2. The project

The focus of the ELS initiative is to determine the feasibility of setting up additional centres with support services for disadvantaged youth in other regional areas.

Specifically, the school wants to test its model for student management in additional regional sites. It has employed a consultant to determine the feasibility of a pilot cluster of similar school centres and of developing staff and resources for them. The study aims to clarify: 1) whether the school has the capacity to facilitate a cluster of schools to achieve similar goals; 2) possible locations and optimal sizes for additional centres; 3) grade levels they should offer; 4) whether centres should be single sex or co-educational; and 5) and the best management model for them.

3. Objectives and expectations; preparation and planning

The school's main objective is to establish three more centres by 2020. If the feasibility study suggests that the plan is attainable, the school plans to work as a hub, in a cluster with two other schools, during Phase Two of ELS. The hub will provide administrative support to improve service delivery and sustainability for all schools in the cluster. If the hub model works, the intention is to replicate it in many locations across Queensland.

4. Impacts and benefits, and how they will be measured

The intended impacts and benefits are that greater numbers of disengaged and disadvantaged students will proceed either to further education or work. Initially, the measure will be the number and proportion of students who graduate from the centres and move on either to work or further education.

5. Issues and challenges

The school faces two major issues: 1) meeting the demand for placements at the school with families even from NSW often relocating so that their child can enrol; and 2) proactively attracting sufficient funds and philanthropic contributions for long-term sustainability.

6. Strengths of the project

The feasibility study that ELS supports will enable the centre to identify how its model of student management can be made available for larger numbers of disadvantaged students sustainably over the long-term.

7. Sustainability

(See #'s 5 and 6 above.)

8. Transferability

At this stage, curriculum and common support services can be shared with other centres, with the hub or hubs undertaking much of the administrative work. The consultant's research will indicate where additional centres are needed, and whether the model of student management needs to be adjusted.

9. Conclusion

New centres can provide additional access for more disengaged and disadvantaged students to re-engage with school and learning. The ELS initiative has enabled the school to commission a feasibility study to clarify how best to implement a plan for satellite centres.

Case Study 18

List of acronyms used in this case study

ACU	Australian Catholic University
ELS	Empowering Local Schools
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
TCEO	Tasmanian Catholic Education Office

1. Background or context

This Catholic school is situated in a suburb of Hobart that was originally set up as by the Housing Commission, but now has about 50 per cent home ownership. About 11 per cent of the school's student body is Indigenous and there is significant staff turnover. The school buildings have been extensively renovated to accommodate team teaching and group activities to foster a culture of learning throughout the school. The school's programs include Spelling Mastery, Multi-lit, B-4 (Birth to Year 4), a whole school social and emotional wellbeing program, and a program for engaging gifted and talented students.

The principal has authority to employ staff within an agreed staffing formula that is based on student population. Two assistant principals share a class, and one of these is the 'teacher enabler' for the ELS initiative. The school is governed by a school Board whose members include the principal, Parish Priest and a number of parents of current and past students of the school. The Board meets monthly and has oversight of key financial decisions. The school's budget is determined through the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office (TCEO).

The school's data gathering and provision project specifically addresses the use of evidence-based data. To ensure ongoing and school-wide benefit from the initiative, it aims to provide comprehensive and universal data gathering and management systems that are contemporary, accessible and appropriate for all stakeholders in the school.¹⁹

The ELS initiative provides further support for the project through PD for teacher enablers and principals and the appointment of a project officer who is an experienced principal.

2. The project

The TCEO is compiling a database that includes all testing data (NAPLAN, PATlit, and PATmath). In accord with this initiative, the school's ELS plan centres on empowering the principal, assistant principals and teachers by developing their knowledge and skills in using evidence-based data. In addition to the data that TCEO is compiling, the school also uses the Action Maths Plan developed at ACU in Melbourne. After considering this data, the teachers identified a specific need for improvement in mathematics, especially Space and Measurement. They have decided to use this as a focus for their ELS plan.

The ELS tasks for 2013 will centre on the teacher enabler's work with teachers and the ELS project officer to establish the conditions to facilitate the ELS initiative. The school has identified four 'enabling conditions' to achieve its ELS goal: 1) leadership by the principal and the leadership team; 2) collaborative teams of teachers to undertake professional learning in collaborative inquiry and knowledge building; 3) a timeline for teachers to collect and analyse data to improve teaching and learning outcomes; and 4) prioritising time for teacher enablers to concentrate on curriculum planning.

¹⁹ *Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Schools initiative in Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission Schools*, (April 2012), p. 4.

3. Objectives and expectations; preparation and planning

The school aims to empower teaching staff to gather and interpret the data, to manage it effectively and efficiently, and to use it to improve student learning. The objectives of ELS align with the overall objective stated by the TCEO to empower participating schools to make decisions at a local level, supporting them to better respond to the needs of students and the school community and provide services designed to assist their students to achieve their best educational outcomes. The ELS initiative complements reforms being delivered through the Smarter School National Partnerships and aligns with and builds on the Australian Government's broader schools reform agenda.

4. Impacts and benefits, and how they will be measured

The chief impacts and benefits anticipated as a result of ELS include: 1) teachers becoming knowledgeable and skilled in the interpretation and use of data to improve student learning; 2) teachers improving their pedagogy as they integrate effective data management skills into their professional repertoire, and 3) improvements in student learning outcomes, especially in the target area of mathematics.

The impacts and benefits will be measured with formative evaluations of teachers' performance within current performance management systems and, as appropriate, staff and parent surveys and interviews. Improvements in student learning outcomes will be measured by teachers' observations and classroom assessments together with data from standardised tests and NAPLAN.

5. Issues and challenges

The major challenge is the effective usage of data to improve students' outcomes, especially in numeracy. Another challenge is finding ways to involve parents in understanding the data about their child's progress, and to work with them to improve results.

6. Strengths of the project

The development of skills that empower teachers in the management and use of data systems to gather and analyse information about student achievement in several areas can contribute to reducing current staff turnover rates and identifying effective teaching methods to improve student outcomes in numeracy.

7. Sustainability

The introduction of a system to facilitate the use and analysis of student data, as well as opportunities for teachers to improve their skills in these areas, represents a significant boost to the school's capacity to improve student outcomes effectively.

8. Transferability

The lessons from the ELS initiative will be disseminated across all Catholic schools in the state and also shared with Independent and government schools across Tasmania. While the focus at the school is on numeracy, the specific knowledge and skills teachers gain in this area are also transferable to other subjects.

9. Conclusion

NAPLAN and other data have identified a need for improvement in numeracy outcomes. The school anticipates that staff who are empowered with new knowledge and skills in interpreting and using data about student learning outcomes will become more effective teachers. The TCEO provides substantial support to the schools with: 1) a central data collection management system; 2) professional development for principals and teacher enablers, and 3) the provision of a dedicated project officer to work with schools in an advisory and coordinating role. All of this augurs well for the successful implementation of ELS at this school and other TCEO schools.

Case Study 19

List of acronyms used in this case study

BER	Building the Education Revolution
EFT	equivalent full time
ELS	Empowering Local Schools
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
SAKG	Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden
SES	Socio-economic Status

1. Background or context

This government primary school is located in a residential area about seven kilometres from Hobart. A School Association comprising the principal, assistant principal, a teacher representative and five parent representatives is responsible for governance. The school is in its third year of National Partnerships funding for Low SES schools and actively seeks opportunities to be involved in programs and initiatives that can strengthen their school community.

The School began the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden (SAKG) program in 2009 and used BER funding in 2010 for purpose-built kitchen and cooking facilities, located next to the garden. These facilities have led to the school becoming the demonstration school for the SAKG program in Tasmania. The facilities have become a key part of the school profile and a centre for community engagement.

2. The project

ELS funding is mainly being used to continue a 0.2 EFT role (1 day per week) for a teacher to network and build relationships with community organisations and families. The Aboriginal Chair of the School Association is keen to support the teacher's networking role by providing introductions to her network of contacts so that the teacher can engage them with the school to develop joint activities that enhance the support and services that the school can offer its students.

ELS funding will also be used to: 1) develop Dare to Lead Snapshots of excellence in Aboriginal teaching and learning for greater awareness of Aboriginal perspectives throughout the school; 2) enhance the health and wellbeing of students with training for parents to offer counselling for other parents and by promoting a low cost fitness program run by parents for the local community; and 3) develop the school website to provide a parent page and interactive forum.

3. Objectives and expectations; preparation and planning

One of the longer term objectives of the ELS project is to build the capacity of the School Association to operate as an advisory Board that enables greater representation of parents' views in school decision-making. The school is investigating governance models at other schools, and the possibility of establishing a Family Liaison role as part of the school leadership team.

An additional objective is the school's development of community networks and relationships that facilitate opportunities for conversations to learn from one another through shared activities, such as adding a bush tucker area the school's kitchen garden. A number of local Aboriginal organisations have been identified for potential partnerships. The school is also approaching several local secondary and tertiary educational institutions to develop links and potential programs.

Although the initial focus for the school under the ELS program will be on enhancing Aboriginal awareness and content in school activities and curriculum, the school is aware that the local community has a small number of Nepalese, Sudanese, Indian and Sri Lankan families. The school would like to find ways to connect with these families more effectively, especially as many of these families are related. Also, some new residents to the area have quite low levels of English proficiency and the school may be able to assist them in some way.

4. Impacts and benefits, and how they will be measured

Since the ELS initiative only commenced at the beginning of 2013, it is too early to talk about impacts and benefits. The Operational Plan details specific KPIs for each activity to measure the number of:

- additional partnerships with targeted Aboriginal organisations
- activities that arise as a result of these partnerships
- families that become involved in school events, counselling skills training, counselling, fitness classes, the School Association, volunteering, and
- Aboriginal content areas embedded in the new curriculum.

The impact of these activities could be informally ascertained by observing how comfortable staff, students and parents feel about talking about Aboriginality. Impact could also be gauged by levels of awareness of different groups in the local community and optimism about opportunities for young people. Alternatively, staff and parents may be surveyed on their views about these topics.

5. Issues and challenges

The ELS project requires additional work for the project team. They anticipate having to closely monitor:

- the development of links with organisations not just individuals in those organisations for ongoing sustainability
- evidence for tangible outcomes for the school
- progress in the negotiation of different levels or types of involvement from community groups, and
- outreach to help families who are not usually comfortable engaging with the school to make the first step.

6. Strengths of the project

The key enablers in this project are: 1) a principal who is enthusiastic and consultative; 2) an Aboriginal Chair of the School Association with extensive local networks, who is committed to support the program; and 3) a dedicated teacher who has been with the school for nearly 10 years and has over 30 years of teaching experience to build relationships with community stakeholders.

A further strength of the project is that the school implements programs flexibly with an ‘organic approach’ that involves ascertaining what works and why, and then factors lessons learned into future planning.

7. Sustainability

The school is using the beginning period of the ELS initiative to ascertain: 1) activities that are likely to be most effective; and 2) additional resources required for sustainability.

8. Transferability

It is too early in the project to suggest which aspects of the program are potentially transferable to other settings and under what conditions.

9. Conclusion

Through their ELS initiative, the school seeks to empower its students by connecting to, and learning from, their community, and discovering and facilitating access to educational opportunities for students during and beyond their school years. The ELS initiative also enables the school to enhance the health and wellbeing of the school community by supporting counselling and fitness programs, and providing more opportunities for parent involvement in decision-making at the school with an advisory Board model of governance.

Case Study 20

List of acronyms used in this case study

ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACU	Australian Catholic University
CEO	Catholic Education Office
SINE	Success in Numeracy Education
PATMaths	Progressive Achievement Tests in <i>Mathematics</i>

1. Background or context

This Catholic co-educational prep-6 school is in a rural Victorian town. It has an enrolment of 356 students and has been a pilot school providing feedback to ACARA about teaching special needs children in mainstream classes. The school has especially good resources for mathematics and most of the teachers have been at the school for at least three years. The principal described the students' parents as a knowledgeable and educated group.

2. The project

The ELS initiative aims to strengthen the school's current pedagogy for mathematics by incorporating changes occurring in a global context in the teaching and learning of mathematics. ELS funding has been largely directed towards assistance from experts in mathematical pedagogy and ongoing support for staff to implement the changes. ELS funding is also directed towards parent professional learning and the purchase of i-Pads with the mathematics application.

3. Objectives and expectations; preparation and planning

Staff surveys and feedback indicated that teachers wanted professional development in the delivery of mathematics education. 'We have taught in the same way for a long time in Maths'. School leadership wants teachers to develop a model of personalised learning for each student to better cater for a range of children's learning styles and so that more children can develop skills in problem-solving and critical thinking.

The main objective of the project is to build the capacity of teachers to be leaders in teaching mathematics and to apply lessons learned in this area to other areas of the curriculum. The school has engaged three consultants to: 1) assist staff plan teaching units and assessment procedures by drawing on the mathematics resources from ACARA; 2) 'open up the thinking' [of staff] to determine if its current pedagogy is working; and 3) act as a 'critical friend'. The school has also employed a leader in the teaching of numeracy to coach teachers in the development of contemporary teaching and learning approaches.

4. Impacts and benefits, and how they will be measured

The school anticipates that the main impact will be improvement in the teaching and learning of mathematics. The school will measure progress with baseline data from the Catholic Education Office (CEO) SINE testing system – a pen and paper test for Grades 1 to 6. In 2013, they will use the PATMaths test to make it easier for teachers to track student achievement. At the end of 2013, they will have baseline data for all students except Prep. Surveys will be administered to students and parents at the beginning and end of the project to measure changes in attitudes towards mathematics. Teachers will also be surveyed to track the progress of the project. In addition, journal entries are built into the coaching model, to assess what is happening in the classroom. Photographic records will also be made of different trialling during the project.

5. Issues and challenges

Since the school already has good results in numeracy tests, they are not eligible to have a numeracy coach or leader provided by the CEO. Finding and employing a coach for numeracy and outside expertise in mathematics in a rural area was a challenge. School leadership also had to ensure that the expert employed would have credibility with teachers and would be of practical assistance. 'Teachers will connect with someone who is down to earth'. It was also important that the person would work well with parents and would want to have them participating.

6. Strengths of the project

Strengths of the project at this stage appear to be the whole school approach and the involvement of both teachers and parents. The project has been initiated and driven by a committed leadership team. It arises from the staff's clearly expressed wish for professional development in the teaching and learning of mathematics.

7. Sustainability

To the extent that updated teaching methods and learning goals for mathematics are embedded in the curriculum and pedagogy, it is likely to be sustainable after the funding grant. For the school, the project is an important step forward in developing skills to improve performance in other areas of the curriculum.

8. Transferability

To the extent that the project contributes to even better student outcomes in an already successful program, the lessons learned can be shared with other schools. The leadership team also believes the project is transferable and that several factors will contribute to its success. The school has plans to visit other schools to share stories of what does and does not work, and to look at other models for teaching mathematics.

9. Conclusion

Extensive planning and preparation, including input from outside expertise, has preceded the implementation of this project in response to teachers' requests for further professional development in the teaching of mathematics. The involvement of the whole school and the participation of parents are likely to be factors in the success of the project. By the end of the project, the aim of reflecting and building on pedagogy in the light of social and educational change in mathematics teaching is likely to have been achieved.

Case Study 21

List of acronyms used in this case study

ELS	Empowering Local Schools
LAB	Local Administration Bureau
CASES	Computerised Administrative System Environment in Schools
DEECD	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Victoria)

1. Background or context

This school is a small government primary school in rural Victoria. The closest town is Bacchus Marsh (ten kilometres away). In 2012, there were 55 students enrolled in three classes. The principal teaches for one day a week. There is one office staff member who works part-time as business manager, and part-time as an integration aide. The school principal is on leave, and the Acting Principal, previously a classroom teacher in the school, commenced duties in November 2012.

2. The project

The focus of the program at the school is liaison with the Local Administration Bureau (LAB) based in Horsham. The LAB offers a range of services either by telephone or internet to this school in relation to recruitment, maintenance, human resources, finance, administration and payroll. ELS funding has enabled the school to purchase extra technological resources and to release staff for training by employing casual relief staff as needed.

3. Objectives and expectations; preparation and planning

In addition to widening technological and managerial expertise, through training and additional resources, the school also wants to gain a greater knowledge of CASES and to see checks and balances put in place. Business managers can assist in setting things up more easily at times. They can trial things first to see if they work efficiently.

4. Impacts and benefits, and how they will be measured

The knowledge, expertise and communication skills of LAB staff are a major factor in increasing the efficiency and confidence of the Acting Principal and the school's business manager. The former had the confidence to apply for a leadership position and is now also confident that all financial aspects of the job are being properly monitored. The Acting Principal can now also teach for one day per week and dedicate more time to the curriculum. The business manager can conduct financial and related business more efficiently and smoothly. The business manager, who also works as a teacher aide in the school, can also restrict office work to the allotted time and provide more flexibility across the staff in general.

The school anticipates short-, medium- and long-term benefits from the ELS program. In the short-term, there are immediate benefits in efficiency and time usage. In the medium-term there will be broader changes in systems, and in the long-term there will be benefits in planning and training other schools and helping to guide them. 'Without ELS, we wouldn't have been able to afford any of the equipment; [we are now] comparable to a big school in having resources not usually upgraded through CASES'.

At this stage, the school intends to use templates with KPIs tailored for the school to monitor and evaluate progress in achieving goals. A further measure of the impacts and benefits of ELS will be

the school's enhanced capacity to implement new management systems on-site and provide training for staff to use them.

5. Issues and challenges

The only issue or challenge faced by the school has been the previous necessity to travel to Melbourne for meetings, with a consequent cost in time and money. This is no longer an issue due to the ELS initiative which has enabled effective meetings to occur online. This technology is highly effective in facilitating effective meetings. School staff can chat live with people from other schools or states, look at documents together. Staff described the Polycom as immediate, and much better than Skype. Schools without Polycom come to this school for the meetings or can conference in, thereby also saving time and money.

6. Strengths of the project

The school outlines the best things about the project as: 1) the professionalism and communication skills of the LAB staff; 2) the quality of the support provided; 3) being able to have funds to upgrade equipment and learn new skills; and 4) support and guidance from DEEWR.

7. Sustainability

Sustainability is ensured by setting aside sufficient funds in the school budget to always be able to purchase services from the LAB. The training and the knowledge they have gained will enable them to continue using these systems and to share them with others. With the equipment they have been able to purchase, they can now upgrade, streamline, and increase the flexibility of their internal systems.

8. Transferability

Members of staff have been able to share and support other schools. The business manager commented: 'We share what we're learning with other schools and principals...[especially those] not participating in ELS.... The knowledge is portable'.

9. Conclusion

The ELS initiative has been very beneficial to this school. While it was already accessing all of the services offered by the LAB, the school can now access increased training and purchase a range of technological resources as a result of ELS. This has allowed more flexibility in staffing and for increased time and energy to be devoted to learning and teaching in the school. An important success factor has been the calibre and quality of the staff at the LAB. 'They have years of experience, know how schools operate, know what checks and balances are required, [and] anticipate anything [a school might need]. We have booked them in for our next rollover and will be guided step by step'.