

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

**Unrealised Expectations: Managing Multiple Stakeholders in the
Development of the NSW Primary Curriculum Foundation
Statements**

by

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List of Abbreviations

AASE	Australian Association of Special Education
ACARA	Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACHPER	Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation
ACSP	Association of Catholic School Principals
AEC	Australian Education Commission
AECG	Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
AIS	Association of Independent School
BCC	Board Curriculum Committees
BOS	Board of Studies
Cath.	Catholic schools
CCSP	Council of Catholic School Parents
CEC	Catholic Education Commission
CEO	Catholic Education Office
CTS	Concurrent Triangulation Strategy
CURASS	Curriculum and Assessment Committee of AEC
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DET	Department of Education and Training (now known as the New South Wales Department of Education)
ECEC	Early Childhood Education Council
EOI	Expressions of interest
Foundation Statements	New South Wales Primary Curriculum Foundation Statements (BOS, 2005b)
Gov.	Government schools
GTA	Geography Teachers' Association
Primary HSIETA	Primary HSIE Teachers Association
IEU	Independent Education Union
IPSHA	Independent Primary School Heads Australia
KLA	Key learning areas
MANSW	Mathematical Association of New South Wales Inc.
MCDM	Multi criteria decision-making
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (now known as the Education Council)
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy
Non-gov.	Non-government schools

NSW	New South Wales
NSW BOS	New South Wales Board of Studies
NSW PC	New South Wales Parents Council
NSWTF	New South Wales Teachers Federation
OBE	Outcomes-based education
OBOS	Office of the Board of Studies (referred to as the Office)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
P&C	Federation of Parents and Citizens
PAM	Primary Association for Mathematics
PCARP	Primary Curriculum Advisory Reference Panel
PCC	Primary Curriculum Committee
PCP	Primary Curriculum Project
PDHPETA	PDPHE Teachers' Association
PETAA	Primary English Teachers Association Australia
PPA	Primary Principals' Association
PTC	Professional Teachers Council
RML	Registered Ministerial Letter
STANSW	Science Teachers' Association of New South Wales Inc.
TAFE	Technical and Further Education New South Wales
NSW TF	NSW Teachers Federation
The Act	Education Reform Act 1990
The Evaluation	Report entitled <i>Time to Teach—Time to Learn: Report on the Evaluation of Outcomes Assessment and Reporting in NSW Government Schools</i> (Eltis & Crump, 2003)
The Inquiry	Report entitled <i>The Inquiry into the provision of public education in NSW</i> (Vinson, Esson, & Johnson, 2002a, 2002b)
The Review	Review entitled <i>Focusing on Learning: Report of the Review of Outcomes and Profiles in New South Wales Schooling</i> (Eltis, 1995)
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science
TIPS	Technology in Primary Schools
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
VCC	NSW Vice Chancellor's Committee
WA	Western Australia

Abstract

This thesis explores issues of stakeholder power within a curriculum development context: who has it, who does not, why and to what effect this power is exercised. The focus is on the interplay between key educational stakeholders involved in the curriculum decision-making processes related to the shaping of the *NSW Primary Curriculum Foundation Statements* (2005b). The ‘stakeholders’ central to the study are educational groups and their nominees who have been elected or appointed to represent the interests of their group. This research represents the first substantive account of the perspectives of the educational stakeholders involved in the development of the Primary curriculum statements. It provides important insights into the role of stakeholder representatives in the development of the curriculum with specific reference to their competing perspectives, ideologies, personalities and agendas.

Interest group theory is the theoretical lens used to examine the people and politics involved in decision-making processes of curriculum development. In doing so, the research design used qualitative approaches with sources of evidence gathered from public and private records, media accounts, data obtained through semi-structured interviews, and the researcher’s own participant-based observations. Seventeen members of the NSW Board of Studies Primary Curriculum Committee were interviewed, each representing the varying interests of stakeholder groups in education across the state. Using a grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and content analysis, documentary sources and interviews were coded and categorised according to the main themes grounded in the data. The themes that emerged from the data were analysed to highlight the nature and patterns of stakeholder interactions during the curriculum decision-making processes. Critical incident analysis was then used to group and classify stakeholder involvement along a historical timeline in the development of an outcomes-based approach to the Primary curriculum.

This study builds on Pross (1992) and Freeman’s (1984, 1999, 2007) assertion that stakeholder groups influence the policy community through deliberate and careful networking interactions within a decision-making processes. At the time of this study, federal and state government education reforms in the late 1980s and 1990s had significantly affected the development of the Primary curriculum in NSW through the instigation of an outcomes-based framework. Major concerns regarding the workload associated with outcomes resulted in teacher stakeholder groups becoming more politically engaged with the policies and procedures in curriculum-related matters.

The incentive for stakeholder participation in educational decision-making processes is the potential to influence what and how students learn. Some individuals, despite claiming to represent the collective view of their group, sought to promote and secure their own agendas. In doing so, they shaped the *Foundation Statements* to reflect their own world views. This research extends our understanding of the manner in which people exercise power within decision-making processes. It also provides important insights into the effective management of curriculum development processes and the inherently political nature of such undertakings.

Declaration

I hereby certify that this work has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Vilma Galstaun", is positioned above a horizontal dotted line. The signature is written in black ink on a light gray background.

Vilma Galstaun

September, 2016

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Dedication

For my parents, Hrair (Harry) and Doreen Galstaun, who brought us to Australia for a better life and a good education: thank you.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Study Overview

“[Interest] groups are seen as ‘adaptive’ instruments of political communication, equipped with sensitive antennae for locating power.”

(Pross, 1992, p. 2)

1.1 Introduction

This doctoral thesis explores the politics surrounding the development of the Primary school curriculum in New South Wales (NSW), Australia, from 1990 to 2006. Specifically it examines the interactions between the representatives of educational stakeholders engaged in the curriculum development processes of the NSW Board of Studies (BOS, now known as the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards [BOSTES]). Of particular interest is the BOS’ response to the 2003 report of an evaluation conducted by Professor Ken Eltis, *Time to Teach, Time to Learn: Report on the evaluation of outcomes assessment and reporting in NSW government schools* (Eltis & Crump, 2003), and its implications for the Primary curriculum in NSW. The BOS’ adoption of the report’s recommendations and the subsequent development of the *New South Wales Primary Curriculum Foundation Statements* (BOS, 2005b) (referred to hereafter as the *Foundation Statements*) provide important new insights into the social and political decision-making processes and the role of stakeholders involved in the development of curriculum for all schooling contexts.

1.2 Background to This Study

The various consultative processes conducted by the BOS during its development of the *Foundation Statements* (BOS, 2005b) have had significant social, political, economic and cultural implications throughout the period of this study. Not surprisingly, a number of groups sought to exercise their influence in the political processes at the time. The voices of some stakeholders appear to have been more dominant than others. However, the more powerful voices did not always prevail in the decision-making processes. As Johnson and Reid (1999) claimed, the contestation over curriculum often results in compromises and this partially satisfies a number of groups without threatening the authority of those who possess the larger portion of cultural and financial capital. The stakeholders involved in the development of the *Foundation Statements* all had a stake in what Primary students should know, do, and understand.

The nature of curriculum, including the way it is developed, has a number of significant implications for this study. Foremost is that curriculum development takes place within

particular settings at particular times and involves particular groups of people. The stakeholders in this study are those identified in the *Education Reform Act 1990* (NSW). An examination of the processes involved in the development of the *Foundation Statements* demonstrated how those stakeholders used such processes to achieve their curriculum-related objectives. Using Freeman's (1984) classic definition, a 'stakeholder' is "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives" (p. 46). Key stakeholder groups and their representatives identified in the *Education Reform Act 1990* (NSW) are all affected by the decisions made in the development of curriculum and thus can affect its development through these decision-making processes. The term 'interest groups' is used to define a group "whose members act together to influence public policy in order to promote their common interest" (Pross, 1992, p. 3). The participants in this study were representatives of key educational stakeholder groups who had representation on the BOS' standing committees—for example, the NSW Teachers Federation and the NSW Primary Principals' Association (PPA) who represent the interests of teachers and Primary school principals.

The *Education Reform Act 1990* (NSW) established a representative, democratic model for curriculum development in NSW. Key educational stakeholders (see Education Act, 1990, s.100) were assigned positions on the BOS, and their nominated representatives established the membership of the BOS. The stakeholders were also represented on the BOS' Primary Curriculum Committee (PCC). Representatives of other interested stakeholders were involved in the consultative phases during the period the curriculum was developed. Key stakeholders represented teachers, principals, parents, tertiary educators and teachers' unions across the three schooling authorities in NSW (Department of Education and Training [DET], Catholic [systemic] schools and independent schools). Special interest groups in special education, Aboriginal education and early childhood education were also represented on the PCC. The involvement of these stakeholders and their representatives in the decision-making processes of the BOS and its subcommittees raises questions regarding the selection of curriculum knowledge for inclusion in the *Foundation Statements*, such as how the knowledge is selected, why some knowledge is privileged over other knowledge and on whose behalf the knowledge is selected.

In responding to the above concerns, this thesis considers both the social and the political processes that played an important role in determining which knowledge would be privileged during the development of the Primary curriculum in NSW. In doing so, it investigates how the involvement of the various stakeholders represented in the decision-making bodies contributed to the processes. This study is grounded in the assumption that legitimate or

official knowledge is socially determined; in this case, some stakeholders or their representatives were able to exercise more power than others, and this influenced the development of the *Foundation Statements*.

During times of heightened cultural conflicts, the relationship between education and power is more apparent. This can be seen in the processes by which various stakeholders and their representatives sought to influence which knowledge was included or excluded in curriculum-related artefacts (Pinar, 2013). These curriculum-based conflicts form part of a much more intense and increasingly common struggle between traditional and progressive worldviews (Apple, 2004; Pinar, 2011). The driving force behind the *political* engagement of stakeholders and their representatives in the policies and procedures of curriculum-related matters is the opportunity it affords to shape the collective mind-set of a generation and, therefore, the future of the nation (Kleeman, 2005).

By examining the interest-based conflicts that arose during the curriculum development processes of this study, important insights can be gained into how the curriculum was constructed, how some knowledge was assigned a privileged status and how other knowledge was excluded. It is also possible to shed light on how institutional processes can facilitate or constrain political action. The issue of power (its ownership, its use and the implications of its use) is implicit in the political actions of the stakeholders and in the individual actions of their representatives. This thesis employs a range of theoretical perspectives—such as interest group theory whereby groups form a policy community to engage formally in the policy process (Pross, 1992, 2007); stakeholder theory where stakeholders employ numerous strategies to ensure their voices are heard (Freeman, 1984; Mitchell et al, 1997); and, social constructionism and curriculum development is used to investigate issues associated with stakeholder engagement linked engagement in decision-making processes during curriculum development within the socio-political climate of the time (Friedman & Miles, 2006).

1.3 Australian Educational Context

Within the Australian system, education is constitutionally the responsibility of the states and territories. Within these jurisdictions, the curriculum is controlled by various state boards of studies and/or education departments headed by bureaucrats who are directly responsible to each state or territory's elected minister of education.

In recent times, the Australian Government has become more interventionist by taking a more active role in state and territory education. It has been able to shape the educational agenda by funding key policy initiatives in schools and through its financial dominance more generally

(Harris-Hart, 2010; Reid, 2005). In the 1960s, the federal government began funding both public and private school education by linking funding to national collaborative projects aligned to national interests (Reid, 2009).

The nation-building aspirations of the federal government created tensions with the states and territories by trying to exert influence over their education systems through national collaboration and the establishment of national education bodies such as the Australian Education Council (AEC) and the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). One such example was federal Labor Education Minister John Dawkins' attempt to introduce a single national curriculum in the late 1980s. From the early 1990s to 2003, the collaboration between the states and territories and the federal government ranged from the Federal providing funding for curriculum projects in nationally strategic curriculum areas to the establishment of interventions involving agreement by the states on national education approaches.

The move towards a national curriculum framework in the early 1990s represented the first substantive attempt to achieve national consistency in curriculum and assessment. The outcome resulted in the National Outcomes and Profiles Statements. However, in July 1993, the movement faltered when education ministers across Australia decided to refer the National Outcomes and Profiles Statements to the states and territories for consultation and review. While these efforts legitimised the idea of a national approach to school education policy, the Australian Government was unable to impose its will on the states and territories, who continued to cling to their constitutional responsibility of education (Riordan & Weller, 2000; Reid, 2005; Harris-Hart, 2010). In 2003, the federal Liberal Minister for Education, Dr Brendan Nelson, made another attempt at national curriculum collaboration by leveraging funding agreements to implement curriculum initiatives such as benchmark testing for literacy and numeracy and A–E assessment and reporting.

1.4 New South Wales Educational Context

Education in NSW is under the jurisdiction of the state's Minister for Education. In the early years of settlement, the state's principle role was to assist the four main churches in the provision of elementary schooling. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, education was provided under the legislative framework, *Public Instruction Act 1880*, which was introduced by Sir Henry Parkes and William Wilkins. The Act was amended numerous times over the following century, with the last substantive amendment taking place in the 1980s (*Education and Public Instruction Act 1987*). Despite changes such as the introduction of the Wyndham Scheme in 1961, the Act continued as part of the state's education legislation until the passing

of the *Education Reform Act 1990*. The new outcomes-based approach to curriculum development provided technical detail on the provision of schooling and the construction of content within the curriculum. The *Education Reform Act 1990* represented a new beginning for the development of the curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12 (K–12) (Teese, 2011).

Schooling in NSW is divided into Primary and Secondary education. The years of schooling in Primary schools are from Kindergarten to Year 6, with the typical age of students ranging from five to 12 years. Students in Years 7 to 12 attend Secondary schools (sometimes referred to as high schools). Students are required to attend school until they complete Year 10 or turn 17 years of age (whichever comes first).

In NSW and in the other states and territories, Primary and Secondary schools are managed by government and non-government schooling authorities. The DET is responsible for NSW's public Primary and Secondary schools and are supported by a combination of funding from state and territory governments and from the federal government. Non-government schools include systems, loosely co-ordinated groups and individual schools funded through their own resources, fees and funding from the federal government.

While independent and faith-based schooling has made greater inroads in Australia than in many other developed nations, the majority of children continue to be educated in public schools. Within this sector, centralisation has been a dominant administrative feature, with state and territory education departments financing, staffing and maintaining schools. Schools in NSW are served by the statutory body of the New South Wales Board of Studies (NSW BOS), which is responsible for the development of the curriculum for students in K–12.

1.5 Nature of Curriculum

Given the nature of this study, it is important to establish a definition of curriculum. This will facilitate a shared conceptual understanding of the role of educational stakeholders in the curriculum development decision-making processes, especially those associated with the development of the Primary curriculum in NSW. The definition of curriculum in this research takes into account the broader socio-political and ideological factors in the development of that curriculum, the issues of curriculum structure and design, and the contested nature of curriculum development. To accommodate these considerations, this study has adopted Johnson and Reid's (1999) definition of curriculum, whereby discursive practices can affect what and how students learn. Therefore, in this study, *curriculum* is "something that is being made through the many and varied processes of debate, struggle, dissent, agreement, experience, success and failure" (Johnson & Reid, 1999, p. ix) of the many educational

stakeholders involved in its development. It is the planned *substance* for intended learnings and relates to pedagogy, processes, resources and experiences (Smith & Lovatt, 2003).

The following definitions about curriculum development also assist in determining the nature of curriculum in this study:

Curriculum determination is a process of deciding on broad areas of substance to be included in the curriculum. It deals with goals for the curriculum, and leads to decisions about whether learnings are to be planned and developed in the subject areas. However here the definition is neutral about who engages in the decision-making processes (Marsh, 2009; Smith & Lovatt, 2003; Alpren & Baron, 1973).

Curriculum development is a process of organising and constructing the substance of the curriculum. Informed decision-making in this area requires knowledge about each of the determined subject areas, and usually involves the unity of the processes in planning, design and construction (Smith & Lovatt, 2003). Implicit in this definition is who engages in the process.

Curriculum implementation is a process of putting curriculum into practice. Fullan and Pomfret (1977, cited in Marsh, 2009) emphasise that “the term ‘implementation’ refers to the ‘actual use’ of a curriculum/syllabus, or what it consists of in practice” (p. 92).

Academic discourse about curriculum typically recognises its contested and socio-political nature. For example, Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubman (1995) claimed that issues around curriculum occur in a political context over time. Given the often political nature of the undertaking, curriculum is inevitably contested, as various interest groups with alternate worldviews seek to shape what and how students learn. The definition is extended to incorporate the notion that curriculum is also shaped by individuals and groups with different and sometimes competing interests in the process of its development (Johnson & Reid, 1999). At any historical moment, curriculum is the product of this contestation. Some of the contested sites explored are: the BOS, which develops the Primary and Secondary school curriculum; the DET, which implements the curriculum; and Primary schools, which practise the curriculum. Curriculum development is a political action. In the context of social relationship, an activity of development and implementation is a matter of power and control.

1.6 New South Wales Curriculum

The curriculum in NSW is set by the BOS through the development of key learning area (KLA) syllabuses. The 1990s was a period of sustained syllabus development and curriculum

review across Australia, especially in the area of Primary education (Lambert, 2000). Prior to 1990, syllabuses were process-based documents that contained vaguely written goals, and aims and objectives for teaching and learning. However, in 1990, the newly established BOS was tasked with developing the K–12 curriculum, which was organised into six stages of learning. Table 1.1 shows the organisation and structure for the six KLAs for the Primary curriculum and the eight KLAs for the Secondary curriculum (BOS, 1992). Organising the curriculum into stages provided “a convenient way of structuring syllabus outcomes and providing a framework for student progression” (BOS, 1991b, p. 14). Within this framework, each syllabus was required to indicate aims, objectives and expected outcomes for each stage. For the first time in the development of curriculum documents in NSW, outcome statements were to be expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and practical experience to be achieved by students by the end of specified stages of learning.

Table 1.1: NSW curriculum in 1990–1993 structured in stages of learning and organised in KLAs

Years	Stages of Learning	Key Learning Areas	Credential
K–6	Early Stage 1	English	
	Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2)	Mathematics	
	Stage 2 (Years 3 & 4)	Science and Technology	
	Stage 3 (Years 5 & 6)	Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE)	
		Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE)	
		Creative and Practical Arts	
7–10	Stage 4 (Years 7 & 8)	English	School
	Stage 5 (Years 9 & 10)	Mathematics	Certificate
		Science	
		HSIE	
		Languages Other Than English	
		Technological and Applied Studies	
		PDHPE	
		Creative Arts	
11–12	Stage 6 (Years 11 & 12)	At least two units of English (compulsory)	Higher
		At least two units of one subject from KLA Group 1 (Science, Mathematics, Technological and Applied Studies)	School
		At least two units of one subject from KLA Group 2 (Languages Other Than English, HSIE, Creative Arts, PDHPE)	Certificate
		Additional units of study to make up 12 units for Year 11 and 11 units for Year 12	

Source: Adapted from BOS (1992, p. 21)

During 1990 and 1991, the newly established BOS had a number of new syllabuses under development. In early 1991, the BOS produced a detailed schedule for developing its comprehensive syllabus documents, especially in the area of Primary education. Significantly, the Primary curriculum had previously been the responsibility of the DET. Ceding control of

the curriculum to the new authority was not met with enthusiasm by elements of the DET's leadership (P. Lambert, personal communication, 19 August 2013). This had ramifications for the processes of curriculum development given the Department's prior status as the dominant provider of Primary education in NSW.

In 1993, the BOS' syllabus development program changed dramatically due to the intervention of the Minister for Education, Virginia Chadwick. Endeavouring to incorporate the federal government's national curriculum agenda, the minister directed the Board to include the National Outcomes and Profiles Statements in each KLA syllabus. The hasty incorporation of the National Outcomes and Profiles Statements left teachers confused about the nature and status of outcomes in curriculum planning, assessment and reporting (Eltis, 1995). Eltis noted that the president of the Board, Mr Sam Weller (1994–1997), had conceded that the adoption of the National Outcomes and Profiles Statements meant that the connection of the National Outcomes to NSW syllabus objectives could not be clearly elucidated. In his review of the National Outcomes and Profiles Statements in NSW schools, Eltis (1995) reported on the conflict between the eight levels of *typical achievement* provided by the national profiles and the six stages described in the NSW syllabuses (Eltis, 1995). Following the review, the Board further developed its curriculum documents by removing the National Outcomes and Profiles Statements and clarifying the status of outcomes in each of the Primary KLAs. A summary of these developments is shown later in Table 1.2 (see Section 1.14).

1.7 Outcomes-Based Education: The Australian Experience

One of the dominant themes of school reform in Australia (and indeed internationally) over the past 30 years has been the focus on outcomes-based education and the associated need for reliable and valid measures of student achievement against such outcomes. Beginning with the development of the federal government's National Outcomes and Profiles Statements in the early to mid-1990s, many Australian states and territories, to a greater or lesser degree, adopted an outcomes-based education (OBE) approach to their school curriculum. OBE draws on the work of William Spady, a United States (US) academic who promoted a more progressive approach to teaching and learning (Killen, 2000; Watt, 2006; Donnelly, 2007). Although this was resisted in some jurisdictions (most notably Western Australia [WA]), it became the most important change in terms of improving the quality of schooling. Over the next few decades, OBE in Australia underpinned school accountability arrangements, became the centre of national agreements about national benchmarks and performance targets in

literacy and numeracy, and provided ongoing discussions about agreed national schooling goals and associated targets.

Since 2000, Australia's adoption of OBE, known as Essential Learnings in Tasmania, has been at the centre of public scrutiny and debate. In WA in 2006, the introduction of an outcomes-based approach into the Years 11 and 12 curricula led to a vocal media campaign. This was led, in part, by the local newspapers (*The West Australian* and *The Australian*). A parliamentary review initiated by the then Western Australian Premier, Alan Carpenter, took control of the issue in an attempt to improve some of the more contentious aspects of the proposed senior school certificate. The outcome of the review saw Carpenter dismiss the Minister for Education, and although a new set of instructions about the courses of study was issued, there was no intention of changing key aspects of the OBE framework (Alderson & Martin, 2007).

Bruce Wilson (1996), chief executive officer of Australia's Curriculum Corporation in the 1990s, noted that: "one of the defining characteristics of Australian education since the early 1990s is the widespread influence of outcomes-based education" (p. 5). Surprisingly, the states and territories commenced the process of developing their intended curriculum documents based on an OBE approach with the AEC's adoption of the eight KLAs and the development of the National Outcomes and Profiles Statements by the Curriculum and Assessment Committee (CURASS) in 1991 (Alderson & Martin, 2007).

Nevertheless, Australia's adoption of OBE has been inconsistent, as the states and territories developed their own responses to the National Outcomes and Profiles Statements (see Watt, 2006, 2000; Marsh, 1994; Donnelly, 2004; Barcan, 2005). In NSW, a modified adoption of the National Outcomes and Profiles Statements resulted from an enquiry set up to review its implementation in 1995 (Eltis, 1995). In contrast, Tasmania agreed to make use of the national statements and profiles in schools by implementing them in their existing form (Watt, 2006). By July 2003, the MCEETYA, which is the joint council of federal and state education ministers, developed *Statements of Learning* in four curriculum areas; this represented a further important development in Australia's embrace of an outcomes-based approach to curriculum.

1.8 Curriculum 'Revolution' of the 1990s

The 1980s were seen as transition years for most school systems in Australia (Barcan, 2010; Eltis & Crump, 2003; Lambert, 2000). This period witnessed a reaction against such innovations as school-based curricula, activity methods and what had been termed 'open

education' (Barcan, 2010, p. 1). This can be explained, at least in part, by the emergence of economic rationalism and neo-liberal ideas favouring the devolution of administrative responsibilities to schools with more centralised control of the curriculum. Barcan (2010) noted that these changes were facilitated by "a new form of political control of the administration: ministers for education, premiers and prime ministers and their political advisers" (p. 1). These new administrators became actively involved in determining policy rather than delegating such matters to educational professionals.

By the 1980s, neo-liberal approaches to education were enthusiastically embraced at the federal government level as well as in some states across Australia, including NSW. Ministers announced major decisions about the curriculum, and their offices were open to advocates for change. While ministers still sought advice from their departmental officers, control was no longer in the hands of education bureaucrats. This becomes evident in this research, which reports numerous incidents of ministerial interventions in the course of the development of the Primary syllabuses.

By the late 1980s, two significant events were unfolding; the first was occurring at the national level, while the second event took place within NSW. Australia began to enter a new, increasingly globalised economy, and the federal government shared NSW's commitment to the application of *economic rationalism* and neoliberal policies to education. A new era in education was formally announced when John Dawkins, federal Minister for Employment and Education, and Clyde (A. C.) Holding, Minister for Employment Services and Youth Affairs, issued a document entitled *Skills for Australia* (1987). The document announced: "The Government is determined that our education and training system should play an active role in responding to the major economic challenges now facing Australia" (Dawkins & Holding, 1987, p. 1).

In May 1988, Dawkins unveiled the federal government's new education policy statement entitled *Strengthening Australia's schools: A consideration of the focus and content of schooling* (Dawkins, 1988). It declared that: "Australia can no longer afford fragmentation of effort and approaches must be developed and implemented in ways which result in real improvements in schooling across the nation" (Dawkins, 1988, p. 30). Dawkins believed that education was central to micro-economic reform, and that schools and the curriculum had to change if they were to contribute to this report. This change, which was coordinated at a national level to remove any duplication across the various state and territory education systems, had a profound effect in NSW.

1.8.1 Education Reforms with a Change of Government in New South Wales

In 1988, the voters of NSW elected a Liberal/National Party (Coalition) state government, thereby ending 12 years of Labor government control. From the outset, the incoming Premier, Nick Greiner, and his ministers were intent on implementing the reforms they had planned and communicated while in opposition. The reform agenda had four key features: economic reform of the state and the public sector; a managerialist approach to public administration; the establishment of new ethical standards for governments and the public sector; and a major restructure of education. Dr Terry Methereil was the minister responsible for the education portfolio, and he immediately began to implement the policies outlined prior to the election. Riordan and Weller (2000) described this period as: “an epochal reform agenda for education” (p. 4).

The new Greiner government’s education agenda was wide-reaching. It included a complete review of the DET and consideration of a new process for developing curriculum for schools. Senior educationalists within the DET were alarmed when the minister was adamant that the reforms would be implemented in detail and within the constraints of the overarching economic agenda of the new government. However, teachers reacted angrily to the budget cuts needed to finance the reforms, resulting in major industrial upheaval.

The strategy for implementing the major reforms in education involved commissioning three major reports on specific aspects of the reform agenda. Dr Brian Scott conducted a review of the Department of Education and recommended changes to the structure and organisation of the state’s schools (Riordan & Weller, 2000). Sir John Carrick was asked to review schooling in NSW and make specific recommendations for appropriate legislative reforms (Riordan & Weller, 2000; Vinson, Esson & Johnston, 2002a). A third report was to be conducted by the NSW Ministry for Education. For this to occur, the government was required to prepare a White Paper on curriculum and present it to parliament. The findings of these reports culminated in the *Education Reform Act 1990*. The *Committee of Review of New South Wales Schools* (1989), referred to as the Carrick Report (1989), is of significance to this study.

1.8.2 Carrick Review of New South Wales Schools

Carrick, who was a senator in NSW from July 1971 to June 1987, played a pivotal role in the NSW Liberal Party. Carrick was General Secretary of the party from 1948 until 1970, when he entered federal politics. In the Fraser government, Carrick was the Minister for Education and later became the architect of Fraser’s ‘new federalism’ policy (Starr, 2012). After retiring from his federal government office in 1987, he was recruited by Greiner to chair the review of

NSW education (1988–1989). At the time, Dr Metherell, NSW’s Minister for Education, claimed that the Committee of Review chaired by Carrick had undertaken the most comprehensive review of school education in Australia’s history.

Upon establishing the Committee of Review of NSW Schools in September 1988, Premier Greiner noted that when the *Education and Public Instruction Act 1987* was passed, there were “concerns in many sections of the community especially over the inadequacy of the consultative processes for such a far-reaching overhaul of the central piece of legislation for the total NSW education system” (NSW Government, 1989, p. 1). Central to the government’s approach on these reforms was its focus on the consultation processes.

The *Education Reform Act 1990* closely reflected the government’s consultation with stakeholders over the key directions and recommendations provided by the Carrick Report (1989). A key recommendation was that a Board of Studies be established to develop broad minimum curriculum requirements and specific and detailed syllabuses. This was to be supported by its own bureaucracy, with a president reporting to the minister. The Carrick Report (1989) argued that there was a need for a curriculum continuum providing a K–12 focus that could not be achieved by separate educational bodies.

The Carrick Report (1989) also expressed concern over Primary education. The review committee claimed that there was a need for Primary education to be re-focused to ensure a smooth continuation of curriculum development from Kindergarten to Year 12. In pursuing this view, the Report noted that there existed a “plethora of curriculum documents which Primary schools are expected to implement” (p. 155) and suggested that more specificity and direction be provided in Primary curriculum documents.

1.8.3 Education Reform Act 1990

The *Education Reform Act 1990* was the most significant change to education legislation in NSW since the *Public Instruction Act 1880* (Riordan & Weller, 2000; Teese, 2011; Hughes, 2002; Bezzina & Koop, 1991). The technical detail of the Act, as well as its construction and passage through the NSW Parliament, reveals insights into power and policy making at the time. It examined the ways in which the dilemmas associated with the provision of schooling, such as what gets taught and who should decide what gets taught, were understood and settled in a particular historical context. The Act was a key part of the state government’s strategy to regain control of the management of education in NSW by undertaking a program of reform.

Dr Metherell, the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, brought the Education Reform Bill to the NSW Parliament in early 1990. The second reading of the 1990 Education Reform

Bill revealed the importance that speakers from both sides of the parliament attached to the proposed legislation. The use of the term *reform* in the title of the Bill, and opposition to the term by the Labor opposition, symbolised the divisions emerging in the state's school system. The controversy surrounding it was also seen by many as radical changes being implemented by the government. The widespread and intensive public consultations surrounding these reviews provided heightened public interest in the passage of the Bill through parliament. Major educational stakeholders fiercely lobbied government ministers, especially as the Bill's passage through the Legislative Council (the state's upper house) was not certain. The many parliamentary debates in the parliament's official Hansard provide evidence of the community's recognition of the Bill's significance. The Act represented a powerful attempt to improve curriculum standards by re-affirming the primacy of a traditional subject-based approach within a KLA framework.

1.8.4 Independent Board of Studies

In NSW, curriculum determination is vested in the BOS, a statutory body constituted by the *Education Reform Act 1990*. The establishment of a K–12 BOS (Part 9 of the Act) was of special significance, and its creation underpinned major recommendations of the Carrick Report (1989). The Carrick Report found that the public viewed the previous Board of Secondary Studies as an integral part of the DET, where the Department was seen to have considerable influence on the Board's decisions and procedures (Carrick, 1989). However, the committee argued for the Board and its administrative staff to be a separate body from that of the DET.

The Act institutionalised key stakeholder participation in the decision-making processes of the new BOS by specifying the membership of the Board. Importantly, the new Board was to be independent, have a full-time president and be directly responsible to the Minister for Education. The Carrick Report (1989) identified the advantage of a single Board as facilitating inter-systemic curriculum cooperation. It noted that there was:

a good case for the increased exchange of curriculum ideas and documentation among systems and schools. A curriculum unit, composed of officers from both government and non-government school backgrounds was to be attached to the independent Board of Studies and that it would be in an excellent position to foster and co-ordinate such an exchange (p. 158).

There is little doubt that establishing the BOS allowed for an increase in the contribution and involvement of the non-government sector in the determination of curriculum and the development of related policy.

The most politically sensitive feature of the establishment of the BOS was its independence from the DET. The development of the curriculum in NSW had been a key role performed by the Department since the mid-nineteenth century. The settlement of the issue of who should determine what was taught in NSW schools clearly favoured a technician rather than a 'political' or democratic resolution. Assigning responsibility for Primary curriculum development to the BOS, traditionally the responsibility of the DET, was now in the hands of an independent authority and firmly grounded in the Act.

The Primary curriculum was considered less likely to be open to bureaucratic and political change as it would be developed by a statutory body responsible for developing the curriculum for all schools across the state. The DET strongly defended its position, arguing that it should remain responsible for the majority of the state's students because it had developed the relevant and necessary curriculum expertise over many years. In this study the role of the DET and its Primary curriculum representatives as key stakeholders on the BOS' PCC are considered.

1.8.5 Structure and Function of the New South Wales Board of Studies

The roles and responsibilities of the NSW BOS are prescribed by the *Education Reform Act 1990*. Its key role is to serve government and non-government schools in the development of school education for K–12, and to determine, develop and monitor curriculum requirements in Primary and Secondary education (BOS, 1992, p. 3).

The BOS has a constituted Board, with a full-time president, three members of the NSW Department of Education and 19 appointed members representing the interests of teachers, principals and parents from government and non-government schooling sectors. It also has a number of standing committees that advise the Board on Primary (K–6) education issues, non-government schools' applications for registration and accreditation, and aspects of the School Certificate (replaced by Record of School Achievement in 2012) and Higher School Certificate programs. The Primary Curriculum Committee, which is the most significant committee in terms of this study, is one of the Board's standing committees.

The Office of the Board of Studies (OBOS), commonly referred to as The Office, was formally established in 1995 after the Minister for Education, Virginia Chadwick (1990–1995), commissioned an independent review of the Board following administrative concerns expressed by Board officers. The Office and its general manager (more recently titled chief executive) report directly to the minister. The highly structured Office serves multiple

functions. In 2010, it was restructured into three main directorates: curriculum and assessment; examination and credentials; and regulatory and management services.

In the period from 1995 to 2003, the Office had nine branches, of which the curriculum branch is the most significant for this study. Figure 1.1 shows the structure of the BOS during this time; however, there was no inspector for Primary education in the early 1990s to oversee the specific development of the Primary curriculum. The Primary Curriculum Advisory Reference Panel (PCARP) was established to ensure the Primary curriculum was developed with the expertise of dedicated Primary educators. PCARP also lobbied Minister Chadwick for the position of Primary inspector to be added to the Office's structure. Dr Phil Lambert (1993–2001) was appointed as the first inspector for Primary education and was seconded to the Office for almost eight years. During this time, he oversaw the development of the six Primary KLA syllabuses. He also played a significant advisory role in the establishment of the PCC. By the mid-1990s, there were 9 Board inspectors representing the different KLAs, an inspector for Primary education and a Vocational Education Inspector. The formalisation of the PCC occurred in 1994, and it is now the major standing committee of the Board representing the interests of Primary education. However, its establishment took many years of lobbying the education minister by the stakeholder group, the Early Childhood Education Council (ECEC).

The establishment of the PCC centralised Primary curriculum development in NSW and considerably altered power relations in the negotiation of the formal or written curriculum in schools across the state. The PCC's role remains as an advisory committee to the Board on strategic issues relating to Primary education, and it provides links between the formal school curriculum, early childhood and the promotion of K–12 continuity. At the time of this study, members of the PCC consisted of six Board members representing Primary education and six additional members with expertise in Primary education (BOS, 2006). Experts in Primary education and schooling were also seconded, for fixed-term periods, as members of the committee.

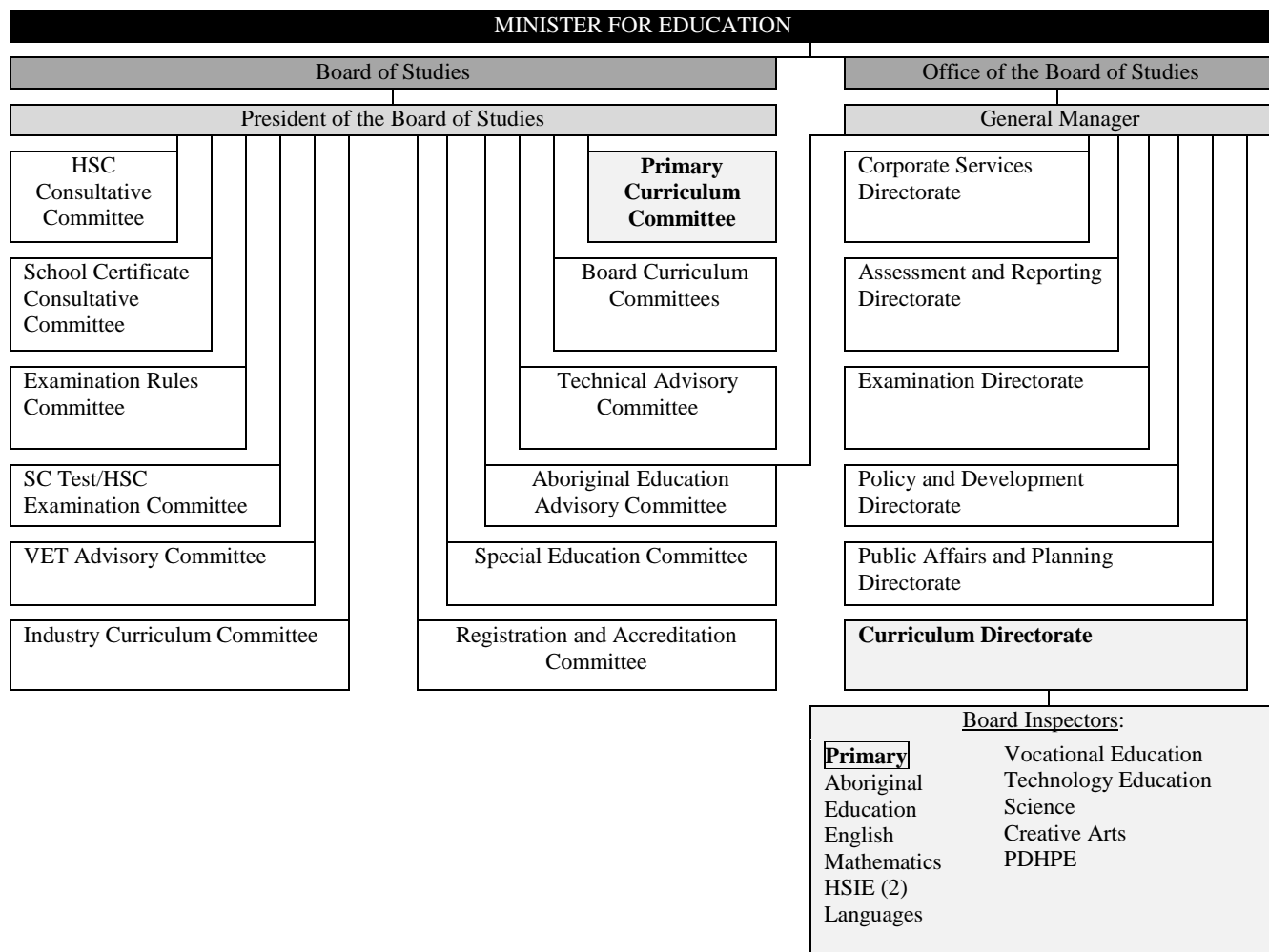


Figure 1.1: BOS and its Standing Committees and the OBOS and its Directorates

Source: Adapted from BOS Annual Report, 2004, p. 78.

1.9 Primary Curriculum Development in New South Wales

With the Board now responsible for developing the syllabuses for K–12, it became possible for the first time in NSW to consider a continuum of learning across the compulsory years of schooling. The Act established that there would be six KLAs for Primary education (The Act, 1990, Part 3, Section 7), with each KLA designed to align with the eight KLAs for Secondary education to facilitate the transition of students from Primary to Secondary school. The KLAs were also closely associated with the federal government’s National Outcomes and Profiles Statements introduced to the states and territories in 1993. The development of the KLA-based syllabuses is of significance for this study. Substantial research has demonstrated that the formal development of curriculum and syllabus documents is steeped in politics (Ball, 2012; Rata, 2013; Goodson, 1994). This became evident with the development of the NSW Primary syllabuses and the role of key stakeholders in the curriculum decision-making processes.

From 1990 to 2000, the Board systematically set about developing each K–6 KLA syllabus (BOS, 1996). However, significantly, the advice given to syllabus writers lacked a clear definition of what was meant by ‘desired outcomes’. Syllabus writers were encouraged to collaborate with those involved in the development of other syllabus documents. They were advised that: “... in the development of syllabuses, the relationship between the KLA and common skills and understandings should be identified ... requiring consultation and collaboration between syllabus developers who are working in different learning areas” (BOS, 1996, p. 9). This provided the writers with only a description that “outcomes should form the basis of a shared and unifying culture and an understanding of the Australian experience” (BOS, 1996, p. 8). As a result, many misunderstandings occurred, especially with regard to the relationship between outcomes and syllabuses, the language used to describe outcomes and content in the syllabuses, and the implementation of outcomes in teaching and learning, especially around assessing and reporting of outcomes.

Primary teachers became increasingly concerned about the status of outcomes in the KLA documents. As the Primary syllabuses were developed, the number of learning outcomes proliferated. The development of the sixth Primary syllabus in Creative Arts in 2000 saw the total number of outcomes reach 316.

Reports compiled by various reviews and evaluations in the 1990s showed that Primary teachers complained about the overwhelming number of outcomes, especially as they related to curriculum planning, assessment and reporting processes in schools. The reports concluded that there was a lack of clarity about how teachers were to manage teaching and learning for each KLA (Eltis, 1995; BOS, 1998; Vinson et al., 2002a). In commissioning the reviews, the ministers for education, the NSW Teachers Federation and the BOS found many flaws with the OBE approach to curriculum development and the implications for teachers’ workload associated with outcomes assessment and reporting. Two reports commissioned by state education ministers—*Focusing on Learning: Report of the review of outcomes and profiles in New South Wales schooling* in 1995 and *Time to Teach, Time to Learn: Report on the evaluation of outcomes, assessment and reporting in NSW government schools* in 2003—play a significant role in this study. These reports, referred to as the Review (1995) and the Evaluation (2003) respectively, reflect professional and community concerns about the implementation of outcomes in NSW schools.

1.10 Eltis Reviews

Commissioned to chair two state-wide reviews into NSW schooling, Professor Eltis was seen as an independent entity by the Minister for Education. As he was not employed by any

education schooling authority, he was able to provide the government with an objective report of what was occurring in public schools across the state. The reviews examined the work of teachers and the issues affecting classroom practice and student activity, especially those relating to issues around an outcomes-based approach to education. The two reviews were published and subsequently released by the minister in 1995 and 2003.

In April 1995 the NSW Minister for Education and Training, John Aquilina, announced a pause in the implementation of the National Outcomes and Profiles Statements in schools. The Review (1995) was conducted against the background of the State Government's "commitment to the highest quality school curriculum for NSW" (Eltis, 1995, p. 1). The second review was undertaken as an evaluation into the demands placed on teachers as a result of the introduction of outcomes-based assessment and reporting in NSW schools (Eltis & Crump, 2003). The following sections outline these reviews.

1.10.1 1995 Eltis Review

The 1995 Review argued that the skills and energy that teachers bring to their work should be incorporated into future directions and strategic planning for education policy. Eltis wanted to draw attention to the many conflicting demands that affected teachers' work in the early 1990s. Tasked with simplifying the complex and conflicting issues facing teachers, the Review's (1995) terms of reference centred on "the quality of curriculum documents that utilise outcomes and profiles" (p. 2). However, the Review was also tasked with meeting the state government's fulfilment of its pre-election commitment to "provide a breathing space for the Government to review fully the existing policy" (p. 1). The Review proffered 21 recommendations, which resulted in the BOS halting the incorporation of the National Outcomes and Profiles Statements into NSW syllabuses. The Review's recommendations were also explicit in defining syllabus outcomes, and the role of outcomes in the syllabus framework (Recommendation 2, p. i). The release of the Review in August 1995 resulted in Minister Aquilina (1995–2001) approving the recommendations. However, there was no requirement for educational institutions to respond.

In the intervening years (1995–2002), the NSW BOS persisted with its scheduled K–6 syllabus development, taking into account the Review's (1995) recommendations where applicable. Particularly, it modified its development schedule in line with Recommendation 8: "that the Board of Studies: continue to develop syllabuses as they are due for revision" (p. iv). In doing so, it established a new timeframe for the Primary documents to be implemented in schools. It also responded to Recommendation 13: "in relation to assessment and reporting practices" (Eltis, 1995, p. v), that the BOS investigate assessment and reporting practices for

schools and their communities by providing guidelines for teachers and parents. However, by 2002, teachers were becoming increasingly overwhelmed by the demands associated with planning, assessment and reporting of outcomes. This resulted in the NSW Teachers Federation raising the issue with the Minister for Education, John Watkins (2001–2003). The union lobbied for Eltis to conduct a follow-up review of outcomes-based curriculum, assessment and reporting in NSW government schools.

1.10.2 2003 Eltis Evaluation

The second Eltis review commenced in late 2002 and was released in November 2003. Although Watkins commissioned the review, the circumstances of its origins were somewhat different from those of the 1995 Review. This time, the NSW Teachers Federation lobbied Watkins to request that a study be undertaken to investigate the demands placed on teachers as a result of the increased workload associated with the introduction of outcomes-based assessment and reporting.

The appointment of Professor Eltis as chair of the Evaluation committee was an opportunity to assess what had occurred in schools since the completion of the initial Review (1995). The report for the Evaluation (Eltis & Crump, 2003) provided an opportunity for Eltis to revisit aspects of schooling he had reviewed and reported on in 1995.

The task set for the 2003 Evaluation was to conduct a rigorous and practical review of the “good and the not so good” (Eltis & Crump, 2003, p. 16) that had occurred in classrooms across the state in the intervening years. The questions asked dealt with what needed to be done to take outcomes-based curriculum planning, assessment and reporting forward for teaching and learning. When surveyed, the research team found that Primary teachers were concerned with assessment and reporting demands and questioned whether there was an appropriate overarching rationale to what they were being asked to do. In addition, work on syllabuses and support materials since 1995 had added a number of new dimensions to the outcomes-based approach adopted in NSW schools, including the adoption of a ‘standards framework’ for syllabuses. These important new elements in teachers’ work added substance to the ongoing debate about outcomes assessment and reporting.

The Evaluation (2003) made 29 recommendations. The report received ministerial endorsement; however this then required the state’s educational institutions, such as the BOS and the DET, to respond to the recommendations of the Evaluation. The BOS addressed the recommendations concerning the “adjustment to curriculum demands” (p. 81) by working with its key stakeholders to develop solutions to assist teachers with managing the Primary

curriculum. The development of the *Foundation Statements* was the BOS' solution to the Evaluation's recommendations to clarify curriculum requirements and reduce the levels of prescription in the Primary curriculum. The circumstances that led to the Evaluation (2003), its findings, and the requirement to respond to the recommendations are an important aspect of this study.

The development of the *Foundation Statements* (2005b) endeavoured to reduce the number of outcomes in the delivery of the Primary curriculum. The *Foundation Statements* were to provide clarity, balance and manageability (BOS, 2005) to Primary school teachers across the state. The Statements aimed to make teaching more manageable by shifting the focus from teaching, assessing and reporting individual syllabus outcomes to developing a "set of prescriptions for each stage of learning" (BOS, 2005, p. 1).

Responding to the Evaluation's recommendations gave the BOS an opportunity to review the nature of learning in the Primary years. It also enabled an evaluation of the suite of six Primary KLA-based syllabuses. The response was considered timely, as an evaluation of the existing Primary syllabuses had not yet been conducted. The Board was therefore able to present its response to the Evaluation as complementary to its evaluation of the Primary curriculum and the six KLA syllabuses.

The Evaluation of the Primary KLA syllabuses, along with the development of the *Foundation Statements*, had the potential to change how the Primary curriculum was taught, assessed and reported in NSW Primary schools. It was an opportunity for the Primary curriculum to be described in terms of the common curriculum requirements for Primary education across the state. The *Foundation Statements* also provided the knowledge, skills and understanding of what needed to be taught in all Primary schools (BOS, 2005a). The framework for its development came from the Board's own curriculum development processes, which were "designed to provide opportunities for consultation with interested individuals and groups during the review, writing and draft curriculum phases" (BOS, 2006, p. 16). These processes involved key educational stakeholder groups, their representatives and their members. Stakeholder involvement was considered central to the Board's curriculum development processes. Broad consultation with key educational stakeholders from the different schooling authorities, as well as strong input from the state's Primary school teachers (Eltis & Crump, 2003), was seen as an adequate response to the recommendations of the Evaluation.

1.11 Research Investigation

This study investigated the ways in which key stakeholder groups and their nominated representatives influenced the Primary curriculum development processes and how state and federal Government policies and reforms shaped the development of the *Foundation Statements* (2005b). These processes are examined in the context of the BOS' response to the Evaluation's recommendations in 2003. The use of critical incident technique analysis has enabled the identification of five major developments in the historical timeline that necessitated the Eltis Evaluation's review of outcomes-based assessment and reporting in the Primary curriculum.

The study has a central focus on the contested nature of curriculum development. Analysis of documentary artefacts, and interviews conducted with key informants allowed particular attention to be given to the interactions and interplay between the representatives of the specific stakeholder groups involved in the shaping of the *Foundation Statements* and how decisions were made in relation to their development. Further attention was given to the ways in which the education policies of the federal and state governments contributed to shaping the Primary curriculum in NSW in the 1990s and 2000s.

In conducting this investigation, the researcher focused on:

- the decision-making processes that involved a diverse range of stakeholders' views in the consideration of the construction of the Primary curriculum in NSW;
- the views made by *individual* representatives when they represented their group; and
- whose voices were heard during the decision-making processes.

Investigating the decision-making processes involved in the development of the *Foundation Statements*, the researcher adopted an interpretative approach. This approach enabled the exploration of the differing views and perspectives of stakeholder groups and their representatives with regard to their involvement and participation during the period under review. By investigating the individuals' perceptions of their involvement in the curriculum development processes, the study could explore the nature and scope of the relationships developed within the policy community of the BOS' PCC. Stakeholders engaged in relationships with many groups, and those with similar interests formed alliances to influence the BOS' decision-making processes.

The absence of existing research on how educational stakeholders—particularly those with a keen interest in Primary education—are involved in the development of the K–6 curriculum

provided the impetus for this study. Key questions concerned *what* expertise educational stakeholders in Primary education bring to the curriculum development processes and *how* specific interest groups and individuals engaged in these processes. Central to this study is the consideration and selection of Primary curriculum knowledge for the *Foundation Statements* and in whose interests it was chosen. The process of selecting what students should know, do and understand in the *Foundation Statements* was part of the consultative processes for syllabus development in NSW. Pross (1992) identified the importance of relationships within policy-making communities as a major influence on policy determination and implementation.

To further position the research into how, and to what effect, key educational stakeholder groups and their representatives are involved in curriculum-related decision-making processes, the following section includes the study's rationale, aims and research questions, and the parameters in which the study is set. The relevance and importance of this study, as well as the study's major assumptions, are defined through a brief summary of the related literature. Finally, an overview of the thesis structure is provided to orient the reader to the framework of this study.

1.12 Rationale for the Study

This study is important for several reasons. It explores the complexities and interconnections of the stakeholder groups involved in the curriculum decision-making processes for Primary education in NSW during the development of the *Foundation Statements*. Probing into the role of stakeholders exposed a number of understandings that lie beneath their representative roles. By acknowledging that stakeholders come together to form part of a policy community (Pross, 1992), important insights can be gained into the nature and effect of stakeholders' participation in decision-making processes. Stakeholder theory provides a way for describing the management of stakeholders within institutional settings by identifying their salience in the decision-making processes (Freeman, 1984; Mitchell et al., 1997).

The ascent of the *Education Reform Act 1990* institutionalised the participation of key educational stakeholders in the curriculum development processes in NSW. Insights into the varying interests, knowledge and expertise of the nominated stakeholder groups and their representatives were explored as part of this study. Of particular interest are the political machinations of key stakeholders and their representatives. Kleeman (2005) and Harris (2002) considered that an understanding of curriculum relies on examining how curriculum is socially constructed, including by whom, for what purpose and to what effect. Issues of power and control (who has it, who does not, why and to what effect) are central to the meanings

people attach to the development of curriculum documents. This study sought to shed light on the nature of these specific interactions and the interplay between these groups and their nominees.

The development of the six KLA-based Primary syllabuses adds another layer to the complexity which results when stakeholders work together. It is important to acknowledge the roles played by stakeholders within these highly contentious curriculum decision-making processes. The decision to form representative committees and employ expert syllabus writers throughout the 1990s raised a number of concerns concerning what constituted an outcomes-based approach in syllabus development. By exploring how the Primary curriculum was developed, we can observe how the newly constituted BOS struggled with defining a syllabus model that articulated “the aims, objectives and desired learning outcomes” (*Education Act 1990*, Section 14.3) to Primary teachers. Taking more than a decade for the Primary syllabus documents to be developed, there was still a lack of conceptual clarity and a robust foundation for a clearly defined syllabus model. This resulted in a variety of contested versions and understandings of what constituted an outcome and an outcomes-based approach on which the formal syllabus development process was founded. Gaining an understanding of the processes involved in developing the Primary curriculum provided a range of important insights into the role of stakeholders in the curriculum decision-making processes.

The final component underlying these complexities concerns the contested nature of curriculum. If we acknowledge that curriculum is socially constructed and that it can be contested, explicit communication is required of the fundamental concepts that underpin the processes for its development. Providing a shared common language and an understanding of curriculum processes may assist in facilitating openness and transparency to enable stakeholders to work from a common foundational base. This clarification may also assist stakeholders and syllabus writers to develop documents with clear and explicit statements about what students need to learn, do and understand. These issues have a number of implications that will be developed in Chapter 7.

1.13 Research Aims and Questions

The aim of this study was to investigate the dynamics of the Primary curriculum decision-making processes through the theoretical lens of interest group and stakeholder theories. In doing so, it explored the roles of the key educational stakeholders and their representatives and examined their interactions during critical periods of heightened contestation in curriculum development. Understanding curriculum in this context created new ways to develop, interpret and then implement curriculum in schools. It is argued that the only way to

fully understand these processes is to investigate the historical context and the manner in which change was implemented. This study is therefore set within a 16-year period, from 1990 to 2006 of which five critical periods have been identified. Using critical incidents technique, documentary sources and interviews with key informants, it examined stakeholders' actions and their consequences over the five critical incidents, from the adoption and implementation of an outcomes-based approach to syllabus development, focusing on the interactions of stakeholder groups and their representatives.

This study aimed to build on the work of Pross (2007, 1992), who identified the role of public interest groups in policy formation and decision-making processes. The study also explored stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984; Mitchell et al., 1997) to illuminate the salience of stakeholders in the formal and informal structures, processes and procedures employed by groups when interacting with key players, such as bureaucrats and policy makers. The development of the six Primary KLA syllabuses highlighted the involvement of stakeholder groups embedded in the curriculum decision-making processes of the NSW BOS. The interactions of individual stakeholder group representatives were also explored. Of particular interest are the processes of the development of the *Foundation Statements* (2005b), the latter being a response to concerns about the number of outcomes in the Primary curriculum.

Three specific research questions guided this study:

1. How have federal and state government education policies and curriculum reforms shaped the development of the *NSW Primary Curriculum Foundation Statements*?
2. How, and to what effect, is the salience of educational stakeholders who are involved in, and shape, decision-making processes in curriculum planning, assessment and reporting?
3. How does the analysis of stakeholders' experiences in curriculum decision-making inform the theories of curriculum development, interest group and stakeholder theories?

The study was conducted through the lenses of interest group theory, stakeholder theory, curriculum and curriculum development theories, and it used the critical incident analysis technique as a framework for organisation and presentation. The issues of stakeholder power—who has it, who does not, why and to what effect—was explored in relation to the determination of the mandatory outcomes and the *Foundation Statements* (2005b). At a more micro level, this study explored the role of stakeholders participating in the curriculum development processes by adapting Pross's (1992) seminal research on interest group theory.

Pross (1992) claimed that members of interest groups act together to influence policy in order to promote their common interests. Many actors in the political system employ varying strategies and ‘tactics’ to gain power and influence within the policy community. Key NSW educational stakeholders enjoy ‘insider status’ in curriculum development forums via their legislated membership of the NSW BOS and its various committees. These stakeholders are part of the policy community which allows them to exercise a dominant voice in the development of syllabus documents and their related artefacts. The incentive for stakeholder group participation in educational decision-making processes is the potential to influence what and how students learn. Interest group theory, examined with a particular focus on Pross’s (2007, 1992) notion of the ‘policy community’, illuminated interest groups as “‘adaptive’ instruments of political communication, equipped with sensitive antennae for locating power” (Pross, 1992, p. 2). Additionally, stakeholder theory offers a variety of ways by which stakeholders were identified, including their salience to the BOS during the curriculum development process.

Stakeholder theory allows us to consider what Freeman (1994) calls the principle of who or what really counts, who or what are the stakeholders of the organisation, and to whom or what do managers pay attention? A normative theory of stakeholder identification assists in explaining why managers, such as the Board Officers who were managing the consultation on defining mandatory outcomes and the development of the *Foundation Statements*, considered “certain classes of entities as stakeholders” (Mitchell et al., 1997, p. 853). However, a descriptive theory of stakeholder salience provides an explanation for the conditions under which those leading the consultation process considered “certain classes of entities as stakeholders” (Mitchell et al., 1997, p. 853).

1.14 Parameters of the Study

The parameters of this study are framed within a historical timeline of events that occurred around the development of the Primary curriculum in NSW. Given the nature of curriculum in Australia and the manner in which it is determined, it is perhaps inevitable that it has become a forum for ‘political’ activism. Successive education ministers at both the federal and state level have commissioned a variety of reviews that have affected Primary school curriculum. Changes in government at the state level, accompanied by policy changes and increased levels of education policy activism at the national level, have further heightened the ‘political’ nature of curriculum determination.

The development of the Primary syllabuses is a significant element of this study. Substantial research has demonstrated that the formal development of curriculum, and indeed syllabuses,

is steeped in politics (Brundrett, Duncan & Rhodes, 2010; Cunningham, 2012; Ball, 2012; Brady & Kennedy, 1999; Goodson, 1994). Numerous events, identified through critical incident analysis technique, during the period of this study highlighted the role of key educational stakeholder groups and the significant contributions of their representatives in the curriculum development decision-making processes. Extensive documentary analysis of government reports, institutional reports and media articles showed stakeholders voicing their involvement, and sometimes their dissatisfaction, with the many federal and state government interventions that affected the formal curriculum development processes surrounding the production of the Primary KLA syllabuses. Interviews with key stakeholders verified the roles played by stakeholders in the curriculum decision-making processes during these periods.

Significant developments during the 16-years of this study are highlighted in Table 1.2. These events occurred during a period of intense curriculum change and development in NSW, and within the federal and state governments' education policy context. It shows a number of factors that influenced the development of the Primary curriculum and its implementation in schools. These include federal and state government ministerial interventions, the constant restructuring and reshuffling within institutional agencies, and the changing conceptual understanding of OBE and its effect on teachers. Five critical incidents that occurred between 1990 and 2006 have been identified as important events during the development of the Primary curriculum in NSW.

The five critical incidents examined relate to the perennial issues of Primary school teachers' workloads and their battles with the outcomes-based approach to curriculum, assessment and reporting. Metaphors for 'war' have been used to demonstrate the constant battle teachers had with understanding this new approach to curriculum development. Thus, the parameters of this study are bound by these five critical incidents, namely:

1. ***A call to arms—Managing the outcomes-based approach to curriculum.*** This critical incident identifies the constant upheaval created by continuous curriculum development using an outcomes-based approach, resulting in the state's teachers mobilisation in the lead-up to the 2003 NSW state government election. Teachers were concerned by the demands associated with the introduction of an outcomes-based assessment and reporting regime.
2. ***Strategic manoeuvres—Averting industrial action.*** This incident examines the events and developments prior to the 2003 NSW state election. The NSW Teachers Federation approached the Minister for Education and demanded a review of teacher

workloads associated with outcomes-based assessment and reporting. The minister commissioned the Evaluation (2003) and averted industrial action.

3. ***The rebellion builds—Challenging the BOS’ mandatory outcomes.*** This critical incident explores the responses from key stakeholders as they challenge the BOS regarding its capacity to deliver an acceptable set of mandatory outcomes as a response to the Evaluation’s recommendations.
4. ***The final assault—Abandon the mandatory.*** The fourth critical incident examines the demands by other stakeholder groups representing specialist curriculum areas and the broader education community’s demand that the Board’s mandatory outcomes be abandoned.
5. ***Strategic retreat—A change in curriculum direction.*** The final critical incident examines the BOS’ retreat as it distanced itself from defining a set of mandatory outcomes and shifted its attention to the development of broad statements of learning—the NSW *Foundation Statements*.

Each incident highlights the dynamic nature of the ways in which stakeholders engaged in the curriculum development processes. Light is also cast on the motivations of those involved and the tactics that were used to advance their objectives.

Table 1.2: Historical developments in the development of the Primary education syllabus in NSW from 1990 to 2006

Year	Key Events					Issues and critical incidents
	Policy context		NSW BOS		Schools context	
	Federal government	NSW state government	BOS	OBOS		
1990	<i>Hobart Declaration on Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling</i>	NSW Education Reform Act 1990 passed in NSW parliament.	The BOS is established as a statutory authority on 8 June .	K–12 Board inspectors are appointed for each KLA. Timetable for developing Primary syllabus documents developed. Science & Technology K–6 Syllabus is the first to be written with outcomes.	Schooling systems assume responsibility for the implementation of syllabuses developed by the BOS. DET restructures its 10 regional offices to support teachers.	The Act requires that syllabuses must indicate the aims, objectives and desired outcomes of knowledge and skills to be acquired by students. PCARP established as an expert K–6 representative committee.
1991			Syllabus committees established for the six Primary KLAs.	English, HSIE, Creative Arts and PDHPE syllabuses begin development.	Science & Technology K–6 released. DET regional offices develop implementation strategies.	
1992			October Board meeting accepts proposal to establish a Primary Curriculum Working Party.	Syllabus committees for K–6 English, HSIE and PDHPE develop syllabus drafts.	English K–6 consultation with teachers and community representatives.	
1993	National Outcomes and Profiles Statements released to states and territories.	Education Minister Virginia Chadwick approves National Outcomes and Profiles for inclusion in syllabuses.	Draft English and Creative Arts K–6 syllabuses presented for endorsement. Syllabus writers required to include National Outcomes and Profiles.	Appointment of the first Primary education Board inspector . National Outcomes and Profile Statements were written into all syllabus documents.	Draft English K–6 and PDHPE K–6 distributed to schools for consultation. Curriculum support materials for Science & Technology and Mathematics released to schools.	The National Outcomes and Profiles Statements claim that the outcomes and profiles approach will help teachers improve their teaching because the outcomes are defined and language of standardised achievement (Eltis, 1995).
1994	The first meeting of MCEETYA April 29 : Education Ministers agree to the <i>Hobart Declaration</i> .	In March , Chadwick commissions an independent review of the Board after administrative concerns expressed by Board officers.	K–6 syllabus committees disbanded due to impending restructure after the administrative review. Primary Committee is incorporated into the new structure of the Board's standing committees in July . English K–6 syllabus	Position of general manager established to manage operational structures. Formation of curriculum branch . BOS inspectors manage the curriculum development processes. Draft K–6 syllabuses amended include National Outcomes and Profiles.	Schools implement English K–6 syllabus. Teachers respond favourably to the draft HSIE K–6 syllabus.	

Year	Key Events				Issues and critical incidents	
	Policy context		NSW BOS			
	Federal government	NSW state government	BOS	OBOS		
1995		Minister John Aquilina commissions Eltis to review the National Outcomes and Profiles. Review panel established (May). Review released (August).	released in September . Primary Committee renamed the K–6 Curriculum and Assessment Committee . Concerns of Review are addressed at November meeting.	The OBOS is formally established on 5 April as the administrative office of the Board. Key Primary education documents are written to assist syllabus writers with common understandings and principles about Primary education. Framework for K–6 syllabuses developed in response to the Review.	DET restructure replaces regional offices with 40 district offices. District superintendents replace cluster directors. District offices engage literacy consultants to provide professional learning and support for the new English K–6.	The Review’s implications for K–6 syllabuses finds: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Assessment and reporting in outcomes increases teachers’ work.Teachers lack understanding of outcomes approach. BOS continues developing the K–6 syllabuses and makes adjustments according to the Review’s recommendations.
1996			K–6 English syllabus rewritten to incorporate Review’s Recommendations. HSIE K–6 committee writing brief.	Timeframes developed for reviewing other K–6 syllabuses.	NSW DET develops documents to support teachers with assessment and reporting. Schools briefed on English K–6 syllabus documents.	BOS and DET release information about using outcomes for assessment and reporting.
1997			Production and release of Primary documents in Mathematics (February); English (April) and HSIE (October).	Consultation on draft English K–6 syllabus.	Schools receive documents from BOS on using stage outcomes for assessing and reporting.	Teachers concerned with assessing and reporting using outcomes.
1998	Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs produces information for schools about assessment and reporting practices.		K–6 Curriculum and Assessment Committee renamed PCC.	Revision of the syllabus development processes. Board Curriculum Committees (BCC) replaces Syllabus Advisory Committees. Publications on assessing and reporting using stage outcomes are developed and released to schools.	DET provides professional development and training on assessment and reporting.	Federal government produces information on assessment and reporting in outcomes. <div><i>Critical Incident One—A call to arms—Managing the outcomes-based approach to curriculum. Teachers demand to be listened to about concerns associated with outcomes-based curriculum, assessment and reporting.</i></div>

Year	Key Events				Issues and critical incidents
	Policy context	NSW BOS		Schools context	
	Federal government	NSW state government	BOS	OBOS	
1999	10th MCEETYA meeting in Adelaide. Revised national schooling goals.		PCC endorses evaluation of Primary syllabuses (May). PDHPE K–6 endorsed and approved by the BOS in June .	Evaluate survey developed for the six K–6 syllabuses.	Schools receive HSIE and PDHPE syllabuses in late 1999. Implementation with limited curriculum support for teachers.
2000			Creative Arts K–6 endorsed and approved for release to schools.	Consultation with key stakeholder groups on the Primary KLA syllabuses.	Schools receive Creative Arts K–6 in October . Teachers Federation sponsors Vinson Inquiry into Public Education .
2001		Vinson Inquiry Panel consults with schools (September)	Review of Mathematics K–6.	Internal review undertaken to evaluate all K–6 syllabuses.	DET provides professional development to manage new practices associated with outcomes-based assessment and reporting (Eltis, 1995, 2003).
2002		Vinson Inquiry releases three reports in May , July and September . Minister Watkins agrees to Evaluation. Eltis commissioned to chair review.	Mathematics K–6 is endorsed, approved and distributed to schools by November .	BOS officers conduct state-wide review on all Primary curriculum documents. Review referred to as the Primary Curriculum Project (PCP). Questionnaires are sent to schools in June.	NSW Teachers Federation approaches Minister Watkins, requests Eltis to conduct study into demands created for teachers as a result of outcomes-based assessment and reporting. DET establishes an Eltis Reference Group with representatives of government school stakeholders.
2003	Ministers approve project in July addressing concerns of lack of consistency in curriculum across Australian schools.	Evaluation panel begins in February . Evaluation report released in August . Minister Refshauge requires the DET and BOS to respond in	PCC accepts findings from internal review evaluating K–6 syllabuses. PCC endorses projects developed from internal review in November . BOS approves projects endorsed by the PCC at December meeting.	BOS officers analyse data collected on evaluating the K–6 curriculum. PCP gathers information about issues on effective use of Primary syllabuses. BOS officers develop a response to the Evaluation for the PCC and the Board in late November/early December .	Primary teachers and stakeholders provide feedback to on K–6 syllabuses. Critical Incident Two—Strategic manoeuvres—Averting industrial action. Institutional responses to teachers' claims concerning increased workloads.

Year	Key Events					Issues and critical incidents
	Policy context		NSW BOS		Schools context	
	Federal government	NSW state government	BOS	OBOS		
2004		<p>November. Minister Refshauge announces new report cards in October. Parents able to compare child's progress against state-wide benchmarks.</p>	<p>PCC discusses effects of Evaluation at 25 February meeting.</p> <p>June: PCC endorses mandatory outcomes for consultation with teachers and stakeholders.</p> <p>September to December: State-wide consultation on defining mandatory outcomes.</p>	<p>BOS officers work with sample group of teachers to develop draft set of mandatory outcomes.</p> <p>BOS officers conduct state-wide consultation meetings with teachers and key stakeholder groups (July to December).</p>	<p>Stakeholder groups provide feedback on mandatory outcomes.</p> <p>DET consults with government schools and groups on 'Curriculum planning and programming, assessing and reporting to parents K–12' policy and student reporting formats.</p>	<p>BOS and DET consult with stakeholders on their respective responses to the Evaluation.</p> <div> <p><i>Critical Incident Three—The rebellion builds—Challenging the BOS' mandatory outcomes: Key stakeholders' involvement and participation.</i></p> </div>
2005		<p>Education Minister Carmel Tebbutt releases the <i>Foundation Statements</i> in December.</p>	<p>Opposition from stakeholders on mandatory outcomes. Negative findings from the consultation.</p> <p>Recommendation shifts to developing broad statements of learning.</p> <p>PCC endorses <i>Foundation Statements</i> in August.</p> <p>October: BOS recommends that the <i>Foundation Statements</i> be released.</p>	<p>December to February: BOS officers and working party analyse data collected on mandatory outcomes. Develop consultation report.</p> <p>March: BOS officers and working party formulate recommendations to abandon mandatory outcomes.</p> <p>BOS officers seek another solution in managing the curriculum.</p> <p>May and June: Develop the <i>Foundation Statements</i>.</p>	<p>DET develops policy to clarify requirements in curriculum planning, assessing and reporting in response to state government election commitments, the Eltis report recommendations and Australian Government legislative requirements.</p> <p>In November, the DET reports on the consultation on future directions for public education and training. Findings are similar to the Evaluation's findings.</p>	<div> <p><i>Critical Incident Four—The final assault—Abandon the mandatory. The involvement of other stakeholder groups challenging the mandatory outcomes.</i></p> </div> <div> <p><i>Critical Incident Five—Strategic retreat—A change in curriculum direction. A shift in focus: From mandatory outcomes to developing the NSW Foundation Statements.</i></p> </div>

1.15 Positioning the Researcher

This study adopted an ‘insider’ status and perspective. The researcher was on secondment to the OBOS (2003–2006) as Senior Curriculum Officer, Primary Education, at the NSW BOS (2003–2006). Prior to 2003 she had extensive experience as a Primary school teacher, working in several Primary schools across metropolitan Sydney and she is now involved in teacher education. As a university lecturer, curriculum consultant, classroom teacher and a member of a school’s executive, she has had a long involvement in professional learning and the development and implementation of curriculum. Her interests in curriculum development led to her secondment in developing the Mathematics K–6 syllabus support documents and reviewing the Board’s Primary syllabus documents. Working at BOS the researcher’s interests and concerns evolved around the changing educational, social, political and community expectations required of Primary teachers in schools across NSW.

During her time at the BOS, the researcher collaborated with the Director of Curriculum, John O’Brien, and the Inspector for Primary Education, Margaret Malone. She was required to consult with the Board’s key educational stakeholders in Primary curriculum. Working closely with members of the PCC, the Board and the broader education community, she gained valuable insights into the machinations of the Board’s curriculum development and decision-making processes during the release of the Evaluation (2003) and its subsequent response to defining mandatory outcomes and the *Foundation Statements*. As an insider with access to members of the Board and the Office, the researcher interviewed a number of key operatives of the NSW BOS and the PCC as part of this study. Although many of this study’s participants are no longer representatives on the Board or the PCC, they remain active in the education sector, where some are still members of their stakeholder group or professional association.

The researcher’s secondment to the OBOS was recognition of her keen interest and practical experience in curriculum development and implementation in schools. At the BOS, she was involved in the development of numerous Primary curriculum, including the review of the Primary syllabuses (a Board-endorsed Primary Curriculum Project [PCP]), and the BOS’ response to the release of the Evaluation (Eltis & Crump, 2003). During this time, the researcher witnessed, and was also involved in, the curriculum decision-making processes for defining the mandatory outcomes for K–6 and development of the *Foundation Statements* (2005b).

1.16 Organisation of Thesis

This thesis is organised into seven chapters. Chapter 1 sets the scene and provides context for the investigation of specific curriculum development processes to take place. It describes the educational and socio-political context in which the study is based.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the relevant literature. It examines the body of research in three areas: the nature of curriculum, the historical context of curriculum development in Australia and the development of the curriculum for Primary education. It examines issues relating to increased federal government involvement in state-based educational decision-making. The chapter also examines the role of interest groups in decision-making processes, the nature of power relationships and the processes of educational change. Chapter 2 also provides the scope of the field under study and connects the research questions guiding the thesis more closely to theories of curriculum development and interest groups.

Chapter 3 outlines the research design and methods used in this study. It begins with an explanation of the theoretical framework and then provides a detailed description of the methodology by outlining the specific methods used in the research. The chapter also details participant selection, methods of data interpretation, data gathering, management and analysis. Finally, the limitations of the study and essential ethical considerations are discussed.

Chapter 4 presents the findings. The critical incident analysis technique is used as an organisational framework to present the data. Five critical incidents are offered, providing a synthesis of the research findings and an analysis of the data aligned to the literature and research questions. Multiple forms of data, such as interviews and documentary artefacts produced by institutions, media and stakeholders, were collected to increase the validity of the research and act as a type of cross-referencing (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

Chapter 5 discusses the main findings, drawing on the roles of key educational stakeholders involved in the decision-making processes in the development of the Primary curriculum.

Chapter 6 provides a conclusion. It draws the findings together and relates them to contemporary curriculum development processes and stakeholder theory. Further, the chapter makes recommendations for future research.

1.17 Summary

This chapter presents the background to the study. It provides historical background to the socio-political, economic and cultural context during the development of the Primary curriculum in the 1990s and early 2000s. These historical developments have provided an understanding of the significance of the decisions made by the policy community on the nature and scope of the Primary curriculum. Various reforms throughout this time significantly influenced the Board's capacity to understand Primary education and deliver a curriculum that the state's teachers were able to deliver effectively. The dominant feature of the reforms is the interventionist nature of state and federal politicians and stakeholders in the development of an outcomes-based approach to curriculum and how this influences the associated workload of Primary teachers. Various reviews and reports provided an impetus for teachers, the state's largest stakeholder, to affect the curriculum decisions made during the 16 years this study covers.

This study specifically investigated the interactions of stakeholders in the determination of the Primary curriculum. The involvement of interest groups, key stakeholders and their representatives in these processes were legitimated in the Education Act (1990) and have been part of the curriculum decision-making processes of the NSW since 1990. However, the lack of Primary educators and expertise on the Board has seen stakeholders employ strategies to ensure a greater emphasis placed on Primary education. An emerging picture of the role stakeholders have played in the curriculum decision-making processes shows that groups and individuals participate in various ways, choosing to employ different strategies to ensure their voices are heard. Most often, it was seen that stakeholder interactions became an organising principle for stakeholders within the policy community to form networks that aligned with the group's shared interests. This outlines the purpose and design of the study, a brief discussion of the processes of selection and analysis of the stakeholders and their representatives being investigated. Chapter 2 will present a review of the relevant literature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

“Quality stakeholder engagement must involve mechanisms that link engagement with decision-making”.

(Friedman & Miles, 2006, p. 159)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature across the areas of Primary education, curriculum development and decision-making, stakeholder groups and group interactions within the education policy community. Specifically, it reviews the literature in relation to: the contested nature of curriculum; the nature and scope of the Primary curriculum; and the participation of stakeholders in the decision-making processes and their interactions within the policy community. It considers both the socio-political and ideological contexts of curriculum development and the power and influence that stakeholders and interest groups have at different levels of decision-making in determining the Primary curriculum in NSW.

2.2 Theoretical Orientation

This study is framed by:

- An acknowledgement that curriculum is a socio-political construct, the analysis of which provides powerful insights into the interplay of stakeholder groups;
- An understanding of interest group theory with specific reference to the nature of the interactions within the ‘policy community’ and bureaucratic organisation. The notion that groups with similar interests, such as those in government schooling sector or parent groups, form alliances and networks to provide more coordinated and united responses to influence the decision-making processes;
- The observation that stakeholders and organisations engage in relationships with many groups and individuals that either influence or are influenced by them;
- Stakeholder theory, whereby the theory identifies how stakeholders seek to influence organisational decision-making processes so they become consistent with their needs and priorities; and
- An understanding that an organisation or an institution such as the BOS should strive to understand, reconcile and balance the various interests of stakeholders.

The interrelatedness of the socio-political construct of curriculum and policy formulation, ideological perspectives on curriculum and learning, and the relationship between educational

stakeholder groups' discourses and practices accounts for the complex nature of the curriculum development and the role of stakeholders in the decision-making processes being studied in this research. Research in various fields such as policy and educational sociology, management theory and political science has provided an interesting alternative way of analysing the process of educational policymaking and implementation by regarding the various actors involved as stakeholders. In addition, researchers have identified the stakeholders and how the process of curriculum development varies between countries depending on their history, political system, and socio-economical structure (Finlay, Niven & Young, 1998).

In order to achieve consensus in the development of curriculum in NSW, a bureaucratic system of structured consultation was developed as part of the education reforms in the 1990s. This meant that those recognised by the government to have a stake in an issue are offered due process in the curriculum development processes that build on committees and sub-committees within the BOS. Working parties, project/writing teams, and parliamentary commissions are also affected by these cooperative decision-making processes (Lindell, 2004). The stakeholders are thus regarded as an established feature of the educational socio-political landscape and have, as a consequence, built networks of experts who fit into the ongoing curriculum work of the NSW BOS.

Curriculum has emerged as one of the most substantial fields of study within educational research and development since the 1960s. Theorists, such as Goodson (1990, 1994, 1995, 2011), promoted the application of a social constructionist perspective to the study of curriculum, and argued that one of the problems researchers faced was that the term was a “multifaceted concept, constructed, negotiated and renegotiated at a variety of levels and in a variety of arenas” (p. 299). Implicit in this statement is the view that there is considerable political activity during the determination of curriculum content. Goodson's (1994) focus was on the construction of curriculum and policy together with an analysis of negotiations, with the realisation that curriculum is socially constructed for its use in schools. The relationship between the people who make decisions on curriculum construction is important in its development.

2.3 Theoretical Perspectives on Curriculum and the Socio-Political Context

Curriculum is a vital part of education. It is constantly evolving and is the total of what students take away from their years of schooling. The terms curriculum development and curriculum, are problematic as they imply two well-defined areas – the stage of development and the stage where the curriculum is completed. In fact, there is no line separating the two.

Curriculum development is not an entity that stops before going into implementation and curriculum is not a package that stops developing in the classroom. It is a continuous process of constructing and modifying. Various actors contribute to this process. They include governments, bureaucrats, teachers, principals, and parents. As has been noted earlier, the list of stakeholders involved in the development of curriculum is numerous and the effect each stakeholder groups exerts is different according to their interests in the curriculum. Some are more powerful than others, meaning that they can influence the process to a greater extent or even control the behaviour of other stakeholders. Therefore, to comprehend the process, this study is not only interested in the curriculum structure or curriculum content but also in the roles of different contributors in the curriculum development process.

There are several theories that attempt to explain the relationship between the curriculum and the wider social environment. Apple's (1996, 2004) work suggested that in order to perceive the organisation and practices of curriculum, it is necessary to investigate the ideological root of what counts as valid knowledge in a given curriculum. Eagleton (1991) argued that there is no single adequate definition of ideology. However, it is useful to borrow some of his suggested ways for discussion. Therefore, ideology, in this study, refers to the process of production of ideas and values of a dominant group in social life, and the legitimation and promotion of these in society. It is about how stakeholders use power, legitimacy and urgency to shape the curriculum development processes.

Bernstein (1991) maintained that the consequences of social reproductions cannot account for the ways in which social relationships and identity are reproduced. Researchers need to explore how the society transforms itself and becomes the structural components of curriculum so as to facilitate social reproduction. According to Cheung (1997) "one implication of such an argument is that major changes in curriculum planning at the macro level should not be seen merely as changes in methods of education. They are, as it were, changes in the wider society translated in changes within the educational system" (p. 127).

These notions of curriculum reveal that the curriculum development is closely related to the socio-political context. This serves as a basis for the debate of the development of curriculum in times of increasing struggles between traditional and progressive worldviews (Apple, 2004; Pinar, 2011).

2.4 The Nature of Curriculum

To define curriculum for use in this study, the researcher has attempted to create a working definition of curriculum. How the curriculum is defined and described, and what it contains,

is grounded in the beliefs and values held by the different policy actors involved. Any attempt to define curriculum demonstrates that it is a “complex and elusive” (Portelli, 1987, p. 366) concept. Forty years ago, Portelli (1987) identified 120 different definitions of curriculum in the literature. The history of curriculum development in most Western democracies is manifested by debates that reflect longstanding ideological and philosophical perspectives about the purposes and processes of school education. The nature of this complexity has been the subject of extensive work by a number of curriculum theorists (e.g., Giroux, 1981, 1983; Goodson, 1994, 2011; Freire, 1996; Reid, 2003; Apple, 2004; Pinar, 2004, 2013) over the past 50 years.

Other curriculum theorists such as Reid (1990, 2003) noted that much thought about schooling, and therefore curriculum, is misguided in that we are over-fascinated by modern administrative and political rationalisations of the work of education. The centrality of which, since the mid-nineteenth century in Europe and North America, has been given to the idea of national education systems and has led us to base our understanding of how and why education is delivered on administratively-centred accounts. This in turn, emphasises the internal organisation and decision-making, that is, under one aspect, the planning and creation of the ‘categories’ or subjects of the curriculum, for example- which figure in official descriptions of educational practice. Reid (1990) referred to this as ‘organisational categories’. However, Reid suggested that neglected from the concept of curriculum work are “the ‘institutional categories’ which are the socially or culturally held conceptions of wider public concerns significant features of schooling and the curriculum” (p. 203). It is the extent of conformity to institutional categories which decides whether curriculum evolution can come about, not the efficiency or the directive power of the education itself (Gruba, Moffat, Søndergaard, & Zobel, 2004; Reid, 1990; Cunningham, 2012).

Central to a number of curriculum theories is that the written curriculum is a visible and public testimony of selected rationales and it is a legitimating rhetoric for schooling (Goodson, 1990, 1994; Apple, 1996; Apple, Kenway & Singh, 2005; Foster & Harman, 1992). Again, Goodson (1994, p. 19) argued that “the written curriculum—that is, the convention of the school subject—has symbolic and practical significance”. It is symbolic in the sense that certain intentions for schooling are publicly signified and legitimated. It is practical in the sense that these written conventions are rewarded with finance and resource allocation. The study of the Primary curriculum in this research looks at its socio-political context by which understanding the social, political and economic history of the time is grounded in the interactions of those deciding what students should know and understand. .

The perennial question of “what is curriculum?” was important in establishing a working definition for this study. Also important to note is that privileging a particular definition of curriculum necessitates the need to explain its multifaceted and elusive practice (Cornbleth, 2000; Goodson, 1994). Various definitions emphasise curricular content, ideology and pedagogy, while others stress structure, agency and power (Rosenmund, 2016, 2007; Apple, 2004; Prideaux, 2003; Grundy, 1992; Marsh, 1997; Marsh & Stafford, 1984; Pinar et al., 1995). While Grundy (1992) considered that curriculum “is not an abstract concept which has some existence outside and prior to human experience” (p. 5), she provided further clarification that is necessary for this research: “to think about curriculum is to think about how a group of people act and interact in certain situations. It is not to describe and analyse an element, which exists apart from human interaction” (Grundy, 1992, p. 6).

William Schubert (2008a) in his introductory essay on *Curriculum in Theory* noted, “A key question then becomes not only what is worth knowing and why, but also how it benefits or harms all publics it touches” (p. 392). In concluding his chapter, Schubert urged curriculum workers to “keep alive basic curriculum questions” such as “What has shaped us? How did we become what we are? ... Who do we want to become and how can we shape the journey to go there? How can we live together without continuing to destroy this planetary environment?” (Schubert, 2008b, p. 412). These questions embrace the broader definitions of curriculum and speak of citizenship and responsibility at the individual level as well as of democracy at the systemic level. In other words, these questions construe curriculum as social text, psychological text, philosophical text, historical text, ecological text, political text, and so on, and curriculum work as having both interior/individual and exterior/social dimensions, rather than merely “what goes on in the classroom”—a discussion that Pinar (2008) skilfully develops in his reconceptualisation of curriculum theory.

Therefore, some definitions about the different aspects of the nature of curriculum can be stated:

Curriculum is something that is being made through the many and varied processes of debate, struggle, dissent, agreement, experience, success and failure by numerous educational stakeholders involved in its development. It is the planned *substance* for the intended learnings and relates to pedagogy, processes, resources and experiences (Smith & Lovatt, 2003; Johnson & Reid, 1999).

Curriculum determination is a process of determining the broad areas of *substance* to be included in the curriculum. It deals with goals for the curriculum, and leads to decisions about whether learnings are to be planned and developed in the subject areas. The process of

curriculum determination involves all those who engage in the decision-making processes (Marsh, 2009; Smith & Lovatt, 2003; Alpren & Baron, 1973).

Curriculum development is a process of organising and constructing the substance of the curriculum. This involves informed decision-making and requires knowledge about each of the determined subject areas, encompassing the unity of the processes in planning, design and construction (Smith & Lovatt, 2003). Curriculum development engages people- that is, key stakeholders, in the decision-making process. The development of the Primary curriculum in NSW is the work of the BOS. Here, an emphasis on democratic process is a major characteristic of the process.

Curriculum implementation is a process of putting the curriculum into practice. Fullan and Pomfret (1977, cited in Marsh, 2009) emphasised that “the term ‘implementation’ refers to the ‘actual use’ of a curriculum/syllabus, or what it consists of in practice” (p. 92). In NSW the implementation of curriculum is the work of the respective schooling authorities.

The nature of curriculum in its broadest meaning for this study is about decision-making: what to teach and how the selected subject matter is to be taught. The ‘official curriculum’, as Reid (2005) described it, is about what students learn, largely prescribed by policy makers who are guided by ideological beliefs. In NSW, this is given legislative effect through the general parameters specified by the Education Act 1990 and developed by the NSW BOS, which reports to the Minister for Education. Policy agents have their own cultural, social, economic, political, professional and personal agendas. This study is about the political, professional and personal agendas of policy agents and how issues in curriculum decision-making are manifested. Typically, these agendas are played out through debate over the nature and purpose of knowledge. This is because the written curriculum legitimates certain kinds of knowledge and access to knowledge, while de-legitimising others. The continued debate about the contested nature of curriculum through which issues of control are played out provides an understanding about how and why curriculum is changed.

2.5 Curriculum Change

“Curriculum change is driven or inhibited by factors such as vocal individuals and practical constraints.”

(Gruba et al., 2004, p, 109)

Educational change and curriculum reform has had much prominence within public policy across the world in the last three decades. Educational change theorists such as Hargreaves (2010), Lieberman (2000), Fullan (1991; 2010) and Blase (2005), opined that the frequency

and range of changes which educators are confronting are staggering. Pinar (2008) noted the political aspects of policy making, claiming that, for instance, curriculum reform efforts in the 1960s were shaped by “military and nationalistic objectives” (p. 492). Drawing on postcolonial critiques, and in the post-9/11 climate of heightened insecurities, institutional responses fostering consumerism, capitalism, and repression have worked to curb self-reflexivity and promote standardisation and control in educational and social contexts (Asher, 2009). Therefore, historically and in present times, the efforts to develop and implement curriculum for the public good that contributes to the welfare of all children have been influenced by the larger social context, with the effects of globalisation being in greater evidence in recent times.

Educators have always had to engage with changes. Curriculum researchers noted how, in the early twentieth century, educational ideas would spread around the world freely and in many directions. At a time when learning theory was inspired and influenced by European psychologists and philosophers like Piaget, Froebel, Montessori, Pestalozzi, and Vygotsky. In more current times, ideas, innovations and reforms about curriculum circulate more among the globally dominant Anglo-American group of nations and then outwards to other countries through international lending and donor organisations such as the World Bank (Hargreaves, 2010). However, the ideas that circulated almost a century ago were largely pedagogical and psychological that involved professional educators, whereas today’s globally circulating ideas in education are institutional and systemic, and are more confined to politicians, bureaucrats, and their advisors – they are ideas about how to change education on a large scale across entire systems and countries in relation to particular visions of economic reform (Hargreaves, 2010; Blase, 2005; Gruba et al., 2004).

From the late 1960s and early 1970s, researchers like Matt Miles, Per Dalin, Lou Smith, Neil Gross, Lawrence Stenhouse and Seymour Sarason studied the growing phenomenon of educational innovation such as large-scale curriculum projects and curriculum reforms and how and why curriculum innovations either failed or succeeded. The past quarter century or more of educational change processes and initiatives intended to alter learning and teaching in schools, has left a mixed legacy (Hargreaves et al, 2009). However, studies of what works and what doesn't across different change strategies have created a powerful knowledge base about the processes, practices and consequences of educational change. Research studies during this period have shown, for example, how educational change moves through distinctive stages of initiation, implementation and institutionalisation; how people who encounter changes go through successive "stages of concern" about how those changes will affect them, and how people respond differently to these educational change initiatives.

The literature shows that contemporary patterns of educational change present educators with changes that are multiple, complex and sometimes contradictory (Hargreaves et al, 2005; Blase & Björk, 2010; Mutch, 2012). The change demands with which educators had to deal seem to follow one another at an increasingly frenetic speed. An example of concurrent curriculum changes may be where a Primary school is considering a new literacy program, developing cooperative learning strategies, thinking about how to implement new technologies, and trialling portfolio assessments. The portfolio assessments favoured by the school or the region may have to be reconciled with imposed standardised testing requirements by the nation or the state. A push to develop a more integrated curriculum and to recognise children's multiple intelligences may be reversed by a newly elected government's commitment to a more conventionally defined learning standards framework within the existing academic curriculum subject areas.

Australia has seen significant changes to curriculum in the last 30 years. This is evident in the literature which describes numerous changes in the curriculum, particularly in the Primary curriculum (Cunningham, 2012; Mutch, 2012; Reid, 2005; Donnelly, 2005; Gruba et al., 2004). Macdonald (2003) was reminded of the “chaos currently occurring in the light of proposed curriculum change in Australian schools” at the start of the new millennium with the introduction of factors such as national approaches to curriculum, standardised testing and reporting, and technology.

There is a great deal of pressure on the curriculum to respond to the changing needs of society. There are many factors that influence change; the main driver is the influence of people- whether it is individuals, a group, or many groups. Major changes are also driven by subject/discipline knowledge, information and communication technology (ICT), financial concerns, pedagogical concerns, and attainment of standards, to name a few. This reaction to change has led to resistance from teachers, principals, teacher unions, academics and in some cases from parents and the broader community. These are some of the influences that were explored in this study when looking at changes to the Primary curriculum and the decisions on how they were brought about.

2.5.1 Micro Politics of Change

Organisations act as political systems. They consist of both cooperative and conflictive elements, where political alliances and political obligations are the “exchange currency of organisational behaviour” (Blase, 2005, p. 264). The notion of micro politics in educational contexts was first introduced in the mid-1970s by Iannaccone (1975, cited in Blase, 2005),

however it was not until the late 1980s that scholars produced significant theoretical and empirical work in this area. Ball (1987), Bacharach and Mitchell (1987), Blase (1987), and Hoyle (1986) were early pioneers in this new area of educational inquiry. Bacharach and Mitchell (1987) constructed a political perspective on educational organisation that emphasised group-level analysis, bargaining relationships and tactics, and conflict in the context of formal decision making. Ball's (1987) political perspective on education was drawn from studies of British schools and also stressed group-level interactions, particularly the interests of stakeholders, the maintenance of control by administrative educators, and conflicts over decision making and education policy.

Theoretical work on educational organisations highlights the importance of micro politics to education and curriculum development. Blase (2005) lists examples that are representative in this area: loose coupling theory (Weick, 1976); negotiated order theory (Hall & Spencer-Hall, 1982); and the interacting spheres model (Hanson, 1976); as well as intensive case studies of educational settings by Beale (1936), Becker (1980), Lortie (1975), and Cusick (1983) among others. These works pointed to the centrality of power and influence, value and goal diversity, and cooperative and conflictive processes in educational organisations. Emerging micro political work in the area of education also suggests a view of the organisation that stresses the interactive, dialectical, strategic, ideological, interpretive, and conflictive/cooperative aspects of decision-making in curriculum development.

Researchers such as Ball (1987), Bacharach and Mitchell (1987), Blase (1991), and Hoyle (1986) made important contributions to understanding the micro politics of education. Their works emphasise: conflictive politics; behaviour of the group; and formal decision-making processes. Thus, Blase (1991) constructed the following definition of micro politics from the existing literature to address these limitations:

Micro politics refers to the use of formal and informal power by individuals and groups to achieve their goals in organisations. In large part political actions result from perceived differences between individuals and groups, coupled with the motivation to use power to influence and/or protect. Although such actions are consciously motivated, any action, consciously or unconsciously motivated, may have political 'significance' in a given situation. Both cooperative and conflictive actions and processes are part of the realm of micro politics (p. 11).

This definition of micro politics addresses the types of decision-making structures and processes in educational settings: conflictive and cooperative-consensual; group-level and

individual; and formal and informal. It treats overt behaviour as well as subtle and subversive processes and structures (e.g. policies and procedures) as political phenomena (Blase, 2005).

Kreisberg (1992) observed that “the history of consensual decision-making in organisations is littered with power struggles [and] dissensus” (p. 124). Both Kreisberg (1992) and Blase (2005) make the distinction that ‘power-with’ political interaction focuses on mutual empowerment through processes that are characterised by reciprocity, co-agency, negotiation, and sharing to achieve common goals. However, because power-with political processes usually function within a larger ‘power-over’ situation of competition and domination, these processes are vulnerable to subversion (Kreisberg, 1992; Blase, 2005).

Blase (2005), and Blase and Bjork’s (2010) comprehensive perspective on micro politics acknowledge the significance of all matters related to influence processes and the distribution of symbolic and tangible resources in educational settings. Decision-making is considered only one micro political arena. For example, those with positional authority structure organisations to preclude issues from coming to a decision, e.g. through policies, rules, control of agendas. They also attempt to socialise others to accept the status quo. Such actions and processes, as well as actions by individuals and groups who lack formal decision-making status, are part of the micro politics of a given educational setting (Blase, 1991; 2005; Blase & Björk, 2010).

During periods of stability, micro political processes and structures benefit some individuals and groups rather than others. In addition, the political power of individuals and groups is often taken for granted because it is entrenched in the organisational and cultural structures that work to preserve the status quo (Blase, 1991, 2005; Cusick, 1992; Sarason, 1990). Mangham (1979, cited in Blase, 2005) wrote, “so formidable is the collection of forces which underpin behaviour in organisations that it is surprising that any changes ever manage to be promulgated let alone implemented” (p. 266). However, during periods of change, micro political interaction tends to intensify and become more visible in both formal and informal arenas of within the educational setting.

In essence, power and politics dramatically affect, and even drive, key dimensions of change and innovation in organisations. They typically reflect “the strong advocacy of some and the strong opposition of others. The self-interest of groups is at stake and every strategy and resource will be called upon to bring about or successfully oppose the innovation under consideration” (Mangham, 1979, cited in Blase, 2005, p. 267). The literature on the micro politics of the decision-making processes of the Primary curriculum was examined in detail

for this study where the strategies employed by the institutional stakeholders to participate are evidenced in these notions of power and politics of the day.

2.5.2 Curriculum in Australia

“Everybody in our societies seems to know what schools should teach.”

(Marsh, 1986, p. 7)

The literature regarding the curriculum inquiry in Australia is “relatively recent as a distinctive (sub)disciplinary formation” (Green., 2008, p. 123). It is only since the 1980s that there has been an official national organisation to address Australian initiatives in both curriculum inquiry and curriculum work where issues relating to curriculum development, assessment and reporting practices have presented many challenges. As part of the many education reforms since the late 1980s and the 2000s a number of state and federal political initiatives have been introduced and as a consequence have significantly impacted schools (Barcan, 2003; Reid, 2005; Donnelly, 2005; Angus et al, 2007; Fehring & Nyland, 2012). Green (2008) also pointed out that curriculum and education in Australia is archetypically bureaucratic.

Researchers who have discussed curriculum as social policy have variously used the works of curriculum theorists such as Bernstein (1991, 2000), Apple (2004), Ball (2012) and Pinar (2011) to name a few. Using the curriculum as a socio-political construct, Fehring and Nyland (2012) have suggested that when examining curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, it is possible to also explore discourses of power and social control that exist within educational institutions.

The Australian socio-political emphasis on investment in human capital and a productivity agenda has supported a range of curriculum initiatives in early and Primary education in recent years. Curriculum developed from the 1990s has been tightly connected to the national goals in education driving the agenda from 1989 with the Hobart Declaration to the current educational goals for young Australians (Petriwskyj, O’Gorman & Turunen, 2013). However, this emphasis on efficiency and productivity is a common international trend and as Cunningham (2012) and Ball (2012) have noted in Britain, the resulting pressure on teachers has changed the focus and practices in the Primary classroom. Education reforms in Australia have been linked to ensuring that children in the Primary years are not left behind academically during these times of global change (Reid, 2005; Donnelly, 2005; Marsh, 1994). This reflects different socio-political perspectives from those in European countries, such as Norway, Sweden and Finland, where concern for child agency and wellbeing supports

continuity of early childhood and Primary social pedagogies in schools (Donnelly, 2005; OECD, 2006; Petriwskyj, O’Gorman & Turunen, 2013)

The political climate in the 1990s changed with the introduction of the concept of globalisation and its effect on world economies. This policy shift was reflected in Australia whereby the measurement of outcomes took on new significance by introducing new testing regimes, assessment procedures and curriculum documents identifying outcomes to be taught and achieved. It is easy to trace these changes in successive curriculum initiatives as they have been extensively evidenced by government publications in Australia. Government commissioned publications such as *Benchmarking Australian Primary Schools Curricula* (Donnelly, 2005) and *Beyond Nostalgia: Reshaping Australian Education* (Seddon & Angus, 2000) attest to education systems and the adequacy of their students’ preparation for participation in an increasingly global world. The impact for teachers in schools is that curriculum activities now entail detailed documenting of outcomes assessment and reporting procedures that have gone from stages of learning-based standards to a regime of year-level based essential learning standards in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2010; BOSTES, 2016).

The consequences of federal government education policies in Australia reflect a narrow emphasis on curriculum in areas such as literacy and numeracy assessment. What is now valued in literacy and numeracy are areas of the curriculum that can be measured, quantified, analysed and compared (Donnelly, 2005; Petriwskyj, O’Gorman & Turunen, 2013). However, although Fehring and Nyland’s (2010) studies focused on the middle years curriculum, they emphasised that these national testing programs treat students as “human capital resource, as achievement, and finally, as inoculation against social disadvantage” (p. 10). This, they claimed has led to a narrowing of the curriculum, and the marginalisation of multicultural and indigenous groups within our society.

Concerns with curriculum assessment and reporting have become widespread in recent years. Individual states and territories coordinate their own assessment and reporting policies and programs. The testing of students’ basic skills was introduced in NSW government schools in 1989 and with the adoption of outcomes-based education in the 1990s assessment strategies such as assessment *for*, *as* and *of* learning prevailed in classrooms across the state as schools sought to become more accountable and transparent with the delivery of the intended curriculum. However, from 2008 the introduction of the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) across Years 3 and 5 in Primary schools and Years 7 and 9, has seen the federal government imposing an overarching ‘one-size-fits-all’ assessment and

regime (ACARA, 2010). Primary schools have had to report within a standards-reference framework causing much distress amongst teachers and parents (OBOS, 2003b, 2003c). In the investigation of the effects the adoption of these outcomes-based approaches to curriculum development, assessment and reporting have had, this research notes how significantly they have impacted on the workload of teachers.

2.6 Curriculum Development

The narrative accounts concerning the curriculum, curriculum development and curriculum policy are seen as arising from ideologically based positions of political actors (for example, Bunnell, 2009; Cornbleth & Waugh, 1995; Dorn, 2008; Schoenfeld & Pearson, 2008). While formal authority over the curriculum rests with the statutory bodies such as BOS and ACARA—state and federal government—that has official responsibility for education, the impetus for curriculum development (additions or modifications) arise in a variety of locations beyond schools and classrooms. In historical accounts, school system leaders established new curricula in order to solve perceived social problems to advance nation-building, social cohesion and economic development (Goodson, 1991; Harper, 1997; Joshee, 2004; Tyack, 1991). Public opinion exerts a powerful influence on the issues adopted (Levin, 2008; Werner, 1991). Interest groups—parents, businesses, ethnic or religious organisations, university faculty and others—and what Apple (2008) characterised as social movements, may lobby government officials for curriculum additions or modifications (Basicia, Carr-Harris, Meyer & Zurzolo, 2014). Basicia et al. (2014) noted that the common narrative about the influences on curriculum development characterises the stakeholders, such as teachers and parents, comprising many different interest groups.

Internationally, curriculum development has become a major policy instrument over the last three decades, with a proliferation of curriculum documents and standards even in jurisdictions where there were none before (Benavot, Cha, Kamens, Meyer, & Wong, 1991; Meyer, 1999; Westbury, 2008). Researchers have observed an increase over time in curriculum policy activity, a standardisation of curriculum across jurisdictional lines, and an alignment of curriculum with international assessments such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Ball, 1998; Riley, 2003; Weiler, 1983). There has been a growing tendency to align curriculum standards with accountability requirements. In the specificity of these standards and requirements, curriculum policies increasingly prescribe not only what is taught but also how it is taught. These macro-level developments appear to restrict the ability of local jurisdictions, let alone teachers, to do anything but comply with

macro-level curriculum expectations (Bascia et al., 2014; Gewirtz, Mahoney, Hextall, & Cribb, 2008; Gillborn & Youdell, 2000).

Curriculum development policy narratives tend to make a clear distinction between curriculum policy making and curriculum development, and curriculum implementation, characterising them as occurring in discrete stages in a linear, top-down process and carried out by people with different institutional roles (Ball & Cohen, 1996; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Tyler, 1949). In some accounts, teacher groups are among the stakeholders in the political dynamics of curriculum development, but they are described as having limited power and mainly reacting to policies developed by other political actors (Carlson, 1993; Hilferty, 2007).

The relationship between policy and politics is marked by mutual overlaying aspects (Ball, 2012) and reflects a shared etymology. Ball (2012) contended that “policies project images of an ideal society (education policies project definitions of what counts as education” (p. 3) and draws on the centrality of power and control of those involved in the policy development. Ball (2012) claimed that fundamentally, policy is about the exercise of political power and the language that is used to legitimate that process. However, Ball (2012) stressed that the discourses in the policy field sometimes fail to capture the “messy realities of influence, pressure, dogma, expediency, conflict, compromise, intransigence, resistance, error, opposition and pragmatism in the policy process” (p. 9).

Researchers such as Clarke (2012) have separated politics and policy, claiming that politics and policy are normative, “where each is concerned with aspects such as formulation, institution, reproduction and contestation” (p. 297). However, where policy concerns “the authoritative allocation of values”, politics concerns the process of “prioritising those values where the inseparability of educational policy and politics stems from the social and economic value attaching to education and the inevitable requirement, given finite resources, to make decisions regarding its allocation” (Clarke, 2012, p. 298). Yet, contemporary neo-liberal discourses, for example, those around issues of standards and accountability, are typically presented by politicians and policymakers as matters of technical efficiency rather than normative choices. As a consequence, their political nature, including the deep implication of these discourses with issues of socio political power, is effectively backgrounded.

The characteristics of curriculum development as it is conceived, are: that it is an applied field (Connelly, 2013); and it is concerned with the engineering of a product according to specifications, such as those specified by the BOS curriculum development process (BOS,

2006). Curriculum development is characterised as central to the understanding of curriculum, where its construction, testing, elaboration of materials and plans, and the modification of practice occur within a common framework (Connelly, 2013). Curriculum development as a form of practical inquiry whose outcomes are the specification of means, that is, aims, objectives, learning outcomes, teaching and learning experiences, resources, and plans for school use; and action, that is, actual school practices. Development can be seen as beginning in practice by specifying a situation to be improved and ends in practice by intervening in schools to improve the situation. Another characteristic of curriculum development is that it is a deliberative art with the idiosyncrasies of its decision-making and the vagaries of the practical situations in its outcome (Connelly, 2013). Dewey (2013) reminded us that curriculum development suggests that fruitful patterns of inquiry into curriculum development should pay considerable attention to the contingencies of actual curricular situations. Therefore, curriculum development can be seen as an enterprise which deals with a diversity of differences and perspectives from those who are involved in its development.

2.7 Curriculum Decision-Making

“Curriculum is always developed in a particular political context that effects its construction and reception and often constrains what might be said.”

(Connor, 2010, p. 23)

Understanding the curriculum as practice has important implications for this study. Curriculum theorists note that curriculum takes place within particular settings, at particular times, and involves particular groups of people (Reid & Johnson, 1999; Pinar, 2004; Apple, 2004; Goodson, 2011). Curriculum is always developed in a particular political context that affects its construction and reception and often constrains what might be said due to the many competing views of those involved in its determination.

Most governments see the quality of their education systems as a key to economic growth and prosperity. Education is considered to be a way of ‘building human capital’, that is, generating a workforce that is highly skilled and innovative so that the state and nation can compete successfully in the global marketplace. Economists encourage governments to invest in education (or human capital) because to do so will lead to a more productive economy (Reid, 2005; Angus, Olney & Ainley, 2007; Marsh, 2009). It could be argued that, the purpose of education is to achieve the priorities set by governments. However, Primary schools are being asked to assume responsibility for not only the academic growth of students but also for solving problems such as the rising levels of society’s concerns such as obesity and anti-social behaviour.

The public expects governments to deal with these complex social problems. Governments in turn expect schools to help with the solutions. This situation makes primary schools vulnerable to an expansion of purpose and constantly shifting political motives. What is also clear are the multiple other agendas that influence the decisions in developing what is taught in schools. Reid and Johnson (1999) and Cornbleth (1995, 2000, 2008) argued that for meaningful curriculum change to occur in educational settings, then the curriculum must be controlled by the community. Cornbleth (1995) warned:

... curriculum contestation becomes problematic when the debate is limited to questions and/or participants and/or outcomes determined by the individuals and groups currently in power- when the playing field is tilted so that no contest is possible (p. 168).

Hence, Johnson and Reid and Cornbleth contended that it is important to examine the central concern for curriculum decision-making where establishing processes that are genuinely democratic do not marginalise particular voices. These concerns have also been reflected in more current reports on curriculum development, where the most important requirement for those to be involved in decision-making are the educators– that is, teachers (Eltis & Crump, 2003; Vinson et al. 2002).

A review of Australia's educational systems finds that pressures placed by federal and state policies on curriculum reform have become a priority in recent years. Decisions that are made by politicians through educational policy have had a dramatic effect on schools and students. Reid and Johnson (1999), Crump (2001) and Marsh and Harris-Hart (2009) contended that the central function of administration is directing and controlling the decision-making process. It is not only control in the sense that decision-making is more important than other functions, but it is control in that all other functions of administration can best be identified in terms of the decision-making process. However, decision-making should be more than just control, it must also be concerned with the process. Woods (1973) seminal work on group decision-making in organisations expanded the concept of decision-making to include: the process by which a decision is arrived at; and the process by which it is implemented. However, to make the decision 'work', there is recognition that it is a continuing, dynamic process rather than an occasional event, therefore decision-making becomes the basis of managerial actions (Wood, 1973). It is these managerial actions within the institutional setting of the BOS that establish the decision-making processes that determine curriculum in NSW.

Decisions about curriculum emerge when stakeholders try to reach a consensus on the best possible arguments at any given time to back up and support the decisions being made.

Therefore, curriculum design and development becomes a cyclical, evolutionary and situational process where the task is about constructing and reconstructing the curriculum through complex plans. Deliberation and consensus turn curriculum design into a matter of practical problem solving. Moreno (2007) asserted that consensus can be pursued as a conservative search for the minimum common denominator for finding common ground, or it can be understood to accomplish a commitment among those involved in curriculum decision-making.

2.8 Participation in Curriculum Decision-Making

Marsh (2009) claimed that “schooling occurs as a result of decisions made by various individuals and groups, both professional and lay-persons” (p. 205). The actions of these groups and individuals occur at different levels, namely, national, state and local. In Australia, decisions on curriculum matters are made at all three levels. Curriculum decision-makers are the groups and/or individuals who, because of their professional status or position, are able to make specific decisions about what is to be taught, when, how and by whom (Marsh & Harris-Hart, 2009). Marsh (2009) contended that stakeholders are the groups and individuals “who have a right to comment on, and have input into, school programmes” (p. 205).

The literature on interest groups, pressure groups and stakeholders (terms for groups that are used interchangeably) asserts that groups gain political access to the political decision-making process on the basis of their internal authority and external legitimacy (Abbott, 1996; Singleton, Aitkin, Jinks & Warhurst, 2013). Studies of interest groups in Australia and overseas, have found that groups which are highly representative of their membership, non-competitive in terms of attracting and maintaining members, hierarchical in executive decision-making and able to control the actions of its members, are deemed to have high internal authority. On this basis, it is then expected that groups will have high external legitimacy in the eyes of government and/or their representatives (Abbott, 1996; Warhurst, 2006; Miles & Friedman, 2006; Singleton et al., 2013). Groups are then able to enjoy “relatively open channels of access to the policy processes” (Abbott, 1996, p. xi). It is by virtue of this openness, that the group can assume to be politically influential.

Interest groups play an important function in the Australian political systems because they “provide citizens with an effective vehicle to make their policy demands known to government” (Singleton et al., 2013, p. 370).

Studies on stakeholder practice, engagement and participation span a multiplicity of disciplines– for example, business and corporate management, business ethics, political

science, and education and the social sciences (Freeman, 2010, Friedman & Miles, 2006; Singleton et al., 2013; Abbott, 1996). These studies outline the benefits in joining with other people to make representations to government, business or corporations as a group, particularly those interest groups that are well resourced and professional in their dealings with these structures. Government departments, such as the DET, BOS and the minister's office, have structures built into their organisation to have dealings with stakeholders on a regular basis. Participation of stakeholders represented on the BOS is legitimised in the curriculum decision-making processes through representation of individual group members of the Board or any of its curriculum committees.

In NSW, key educational stakeholders have representational authority to influence what and how students learn. Key educational stakeholders represented on the BOS are those defined in the *Education Act 1990* (s. 100). They are identified in Chapter 1– the context of this study and profiled in Chapter 4. The participation of key educational stakeholders and other educational interest groups is a significant focus of this thesis.

2.9 The Role of Policy Implementation

Policy implementation plays an important role in curriculum development. Educational policy analysts seek to identify those involved in policy implementation and their role in the policy process (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002; Griffiths, Vivovich & Chapman, 2009; Crowley & Head, 2015). These policy analysts make the assertion that education policy faces a familiar public policy challenge where local implementation is difficult. The identification of characteristics of those involved in the decision-making processes for implementation of education policy is limited. However, a key dimension of the implementation process is whether, and in what ways, implementing agents come to understand their practice, potentially changing their beliefs and attitudes in the process. Policy analysts draw on theoretical and empirical literature to develop a cognitive perspective on implementation.

Curriculum policy, discourses of 'policy partnerships' and 'communities of practice' have become increasingly prevalent and are reflected in Australian curriculum policy processes from the mid-1990s to the late 2000s. This was a period of significant and highly contested changes in curriculum development (Griffiths et al., 2009).

Different approaches highlight the power issues at the levels of the policy implementation process. Research has found that despite policy discourses of collaborative and consultative processes to create a democratic shared curriculum understanding, government and non-government education schooling sectors and their representatives remain largely diverse due

to significant power differences, as well as differences in their structural and cultural organisations (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002; Griffiths, Vivovich & Chapman, 2009; Crowley & Head, 2015). These analyses reveal connected processes such as limited collaboration, regulated consultation and enhanced control of curriculum policy agendas by the state. Griffiths et al. (2009) argued that discourses on policy partnerships in the decision-making processes are increasingly evidenced in contemporary curriculum policy, however, sufficient account of the hierarchical power relationships is not taken into account. Strategies, such as legitimisation to promulgate policy changes, are used to enhance the capacity of the state in the implementation of curriculum policy. The literature shows that strategies of power, influence and agency are used simultaneously to represent policy partnerships within the policy community, by both including and excluding particular sets of policy actors (Friedman & Miles, 2006; Pross, 1992; Freeman, 2010). This lays the foundations of the important role stakeholders play in the policy community.

2.10 Outcomes-Based Education

The literature on OBE reveals that the models, originating from the U.S., offer alternative curriculum development frameworks to ‘traditional’ educational practices. Since its inception, OBE models have continually expanded in response to educational research that integrated ideas from the corporate, sociological, psychological and educational sectors and the application and refinement of theory in practice. William Spady, a well-known exponent of the OBE movement in the US and internationally, has published extensively in this area. However, Willis and Kissane (1997) who credit Spady (1994) with first devising the term *outcomes-based education* claim that there was considerable confusion about OBE and its various forms, as well as difficulty understanding the concept. This view is shared with quite a few Australian curriculum researchers such as Eltis (1995), Killen (2000) and Reid (2005) and is one of the main foci of this study.

Spady (1994) defined OBE as:

a ... comprehensive approach to organising and operating an education system that is focused on and defined by the successful demonstrations of learning sought from each student. Outcomes are ... clear learning results that we want students to demonstrate at the end of significant learning experiences ... and ... are actions and performances that embody and reflect learner competence in using content, information, ideas, and tools successfully (p. 2).

NSW Board of Studies curriculum documents define syllabus outcomes as:

Specific statements of the results intended by the syllabus. These outcomes are achieved as students engage with the content of the syllabus... The outcomes are a statement of the knowledge, skills and understandings to be achieved by most students as a result of effective teaching and learning by the end of each stage (BOS, 2002b, p. 18).

Defining outcomes is an important issue as it has created significant concerns for teachers in their understanding of the concept as well as by the impact its use has had on their work. The meaning of ‘outcomes’ is a major issue that has been critiqued and addressed in Australia and in NSW as a result of education reforms emanating from the 1980s. The issue is important because the origins of outcomes arose from the work on OBE which involved a much broader context than that intended for NSW schools (Eltis & Crump, 2003). The review of the literature into the adoption of OBE ideas and the Review (Eltis, 1995) into outcomes and profiles in NSW schools has provided explanations of many different models of outcomes-based learning being used across different disciplines, including education (Spady, 1994). The inclusion of OBE has meant different things to different people within and across systems, resulting in many controversies over the past two decades.

Since its inception, OBE has undergone continual modification to suit particular conditions. Henshaw’s (1996) meta-analysis of OBE literature found that there were significant conceptual components to understand and several different interpretations that have been adopted. Eltis and Crump (2003) pointed out that by simply having the word ‘outcomes’ incorporated in a curriculum does not necessarily mean that the work being conducted is outcomes-based. It seems that some of the conflict surrounding OBE stems from the word being used in different outcomes-based frameworks.

Eltis and Crump (2003) observed that some teachers saw little difference in an outcomes-based curriculum except for the terminology, recognising that it was the output rather than the input that was now mandated in the curriculum. However, an outcomes-based framework also caused disquiet amongst educators about the purpose of outcomes. Claims that outcomes-based education uses “mechanistic terminology suggestive of the business world” (Eltis & Crump, 2003, p. 18) added to the confusion with regard to their purpose in the curriculum. In the 2003 evaluation of outcomes in NSW schools, issues and concerns with an outcomes-based approach in curriculum development continued to play a significant role in educators’ understanding of the approach. What becomes clear is that unequivocal direction needs to be given about the expectations and requirements for outcomes in curriculum development. This important issue has arisen as research into these concerns was investigated as part of this study, and is discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6.

2.10.1 The Adoption of Outcomes-Based Approach

Outcomes-based education (OBE) is a specific area of development, inquiry and strategic experimentation in education. Strategic planning models based on OBE paradigms or frameworks originally developed in the USA, have exerted extensive influence on aspects of Australia's state and territory education systems (Donnelly 2007, 2005; Killen, 2000, Henshaw, 1996). School effectiveness programs conducted in Australia and the U.S.A. reflected a growing awareness in business, industry and politics of the need for effective school management. However, the adoption of an OBE approach to curriculum development in Australia and NSW was significantly different from the original intent of Spady's framework and the American OBE model.

In Australia, changes in the approach to education recognised the need to develop a more competitive economy, with efficient use of resources and the development of national and global perspectives in strategic planning in political and business circles (Marsh, 2009; Ball, Goodson & Maguire, 2007; Marginson, 1993, 1997). A national perspective to curriculum development in Australia resulted from federal government policy statements highlighting national concerns for Australia to build a well-developed skills base through the promotion of wider education participation and the need to monitor the quality of educational outcomes.

Australia's national curriculum developments embodying the use of outcomes were initiated through the Hobart Declaration on Schooling in 1989 and the development of the National Outcomes and Profile Statements. Although state and territory education ministers had initially agreed to the ten common and agreed national goals for schooling, there was much dissention surrounding the incorporation of the National Outcomes and Profile Statements into state-based curriculum documents. The integration of the outcomes and profiles into the states and territories' intended curriculum documents, saw varying responses for their inclusion (Marsh, 1994; Donnelly, 2004; Barcan, 2005; Watt, 2006). However, each state and territory adopted the outcomes and profiles approach into their school curriculum. Thus, an OBE approach in curriculum development was initiated. It is also important to note that the rate of Australia's adoption of OBE across the states and territories was not uniform as it was developed at different times and at different rates throughout the country. (See Chapter 1 for the context of the OBE experience in Australia and results of the implementation of outcomes in NSW curriculum in Chapter 4.)

The interpretation of outcomes used in the Australian education context for curriculum development is similar to Britain but somewhat different from that used in the USA. Where the British approach was designed to be driven from a nationally determined focus

(Cunningham, 2012), the American approach originally emphasised state-based use of outcomes as a condition for student promotion (Spady, 1977, cited in Henshaw, 1996, p. 27). Spady's view of outcomes at the time was similar to the British and Australian interpretations of outcomes developed at a later date:

Educational outcomes are by definition more generic and diffuse. We have plenty of experience of what basic education outcomes are needed, at least in the core areas. If the outcomes are defined in a progressive framework such as the National Curriculum, students can be encouraged to progress as far as they are able (cited in Henshaw, 1996, p. 27).

Henshaw (1996) noted the significance of 'curriculum outcomes' embodied within the statement and the intent for determination at national or state level in Australia. Ken Boston, the Director-General of the NSW Department of Education (1992-2002) explained the Australian national moves towards a student learning outcomes approach as:

Australia is now moving towards an outcomes-based education system, in common with many other developed countries. This means an emphasis on what students are expected to achieve. It is a change from emphasising the experiences students might have or the time they have spent working in a course or subject [KLA]. The move towards an outcomes basis is associated with a call for more explicit specification of what should be valued and reported in schools (cited in Henshaw, 1996, p. 27).

The stance taken by Boston's adoption of outcomes in the National Outcomes and Profiles Statements and in NSW appears to have been developed without close reference to the American OBE models. The American OBE models incorporate management, welfare, and teaching and learning strategies, which align with the necessary planning components within a school or a school system. However, what is noticeable is that Boston's approach is that taken up by NSW Ministry of Education, the Board of Studies and the DET, with the development of the curriculum documents reflecting a curriculum position different from the strategic intent of the American OBE models.

The use of OBE ideas in NSW saw some educators synthesise and implement different components from the BOS curriculum documents and policies, the American OBE models and in some cases by identifying specific outcomes suited to the local contexts (Rowe, 1994). The lack of a clearly articulated OBE curriculum framework, along with curriculum officers and consultants' lack of knowledge and understanding of OBE ideas and principles adopted into the curriculum and professional learning to support this new approach in schools, compounded teachers' understanding of the curriculum to be implemented. Individual schools

and in some areas across the state, school clusters, were seen attempting to achieve alignment of the specified curriculum outcomes in the KLA syllabuses with their local strategic and management priorities such as their school vision statements or exit outcomes in the school management plan (Henshaw, 1996, Killen, 2000; Donnelly, 2004, 2006). It is apparent that some schools in NSW attempted to create their own synthesis of the BOS curriculum framework for the implementation of syllabus outcomes. Some educators met this challenge by sourcing their OBE ideas directly from the American OBE model, while others floundered with the implementation of curriculum documents delivered to schools (Eltis, 1995; Vinson et al, 2002; Eltis & Crump, 2003; Donnelly, 2004).

The approach to outcomes in NSW needed a more strategic plan for its implementation, as well as an approach to develop teachers' general knowledge and understanding of OBE, rather than a focus on the wholesale adoption of curriculum learning outcomes in the KLA syllabus documents. The implication of an outcomes-based approach used in the development of the NSW Primary curriculum documents is discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

2.10.2 The Strengths and Weaknesses of OBE

There are a range of reasons which explain why OBE has been embraced by countries implementing major education reform. Killen (2000) argued that the increasing calls for accountability was one reason for the rapid spread of various forms of OBE in countries such as the US, UK and Australia during the 1980s and 1990s. Adding to claims of increased accountability, Spady (1994) also opined that the return on investments in education could be evaluated in terms of an increase in output. However, Spady (1994) also offered several other reasons for the widespread interest in OBE, such as the transformation of society from the Industrial Age. OBE models claimed to promote learning opportunities for students in preparation for the continuous learning of the Information Age labour market and the challenges that may arise from it (Spady, 1994). OBE was seen as having the potential to address a range of social, economic and educational issues characteristic of many current societies. However, the road to the implementation of using outcomes-based approaches was not smooth even in the US, where it first gained popularity.

McNeir (1993) believed that the increase in interest towards outcomes in the US stemmed from its promise for far-reaching reform, the ability to promote a balance between school autonomy and accountability, and the ability to deliver dramatic results. These can be seen as some of the driving forces that ensured the OBE approaches were implemented across the various states and territories in Australia. Despite obstacles encountered by numerous states in

the US to introduce OBE, countries such as Australia endeavoured to include variations of OBE within their own education systems.

OBE represented a distinctive approach to curriculum that distinguished it from a syllabus or a standards approach (as it is termed in the US). Spady's work on OBE had a significant effect on Australia's adoption of OBE approaches (Spady, 1994; Griffin, 1998; Killen, 2000; Blyth, 2002). Although the use of the term 'outcomes' had a much broader meaning than simply measuring learning outcomes, it was an attempt to hold schools accountable in relation to curriculum development. In regards to the OBE paradigm, Spady (1994) claimed: "... what and whether students learn successfully is more important than when and how they learn something" (p. 8). However, the incongruity between what is being taught and what is being learned led to confusion and a 'watering down' of what was intended by the OBE approach.

Since the development of the national statements and profile statements during the mid-1990s Australian states and territories have adopted various versions of outcomes-based education (OBE). However, with the development of the Australian curriculum in 2005, the states and territories were experiencing a renewed round of curriculum development that, while acknowledging a number of weaknesses evident in an OBE approach to curriculum development, still embodied many of the characteristics of this approach. While NSW has continued to develop its own version of OBE in developing the curriculum for Primary and Secondary school education since the education reforms introduced in the late 1980s, there have been a number of critics of this approach in Australia and overseas. Openly denouncing the merits of OBE, Donnelly (2004, 2007) has published a number of reports and materials about outcomes-based curriculum and its many flaws and weaknesses when compared to a syllabus or standards approach.

In 2005 Donnelly was commissioned to undertake a comparative analysis of the intended Primary curriculum across Australia's state and territory education systems with a selection of overseas countries. Donnelly's (2005) report *Benchmarking Australian Primary School Curricula* highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the different curriculum documents of each state and territory and compares them to other education systems that perform well in international tests such as TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science study).

Donnelly (2005) used Reid's (2005, p. 11) definition of the intended curriculum: "taken to mean an official document of stated curriculum intention"..... While it is proper to define curriculum more broadly so as to include what actually occurs in the classroom (the enacted) and what students have learned and their level of achievement (the attained), the focus of his report is on the intended Primary school curriculum as represented by official KLA syllabus

documents. He aligned his views of curriculum with those represented by researchers associated with TIMSS (such as Robitaille et al., 1993, cited in Donnelly, 2005, p. 2) where differentiation is made between the intended curriculum as syllabuses and course outlines; the implemented curriculum as what is enacted in the classroom; and what is attained as students' levels of achievement from what they have learned. While acknowledging that how well students learn and the levels of achievement attained are necessary in strengthening outcomes, Donnelly (2005) attested that outcomes by themselves are insufficient as the intended curriculum. He added that the whole curriculum needs to include other factors such as what happens in classrooms and the impact of wider cultural and socio-economic influences also need to be considered (Donnelly, 2005).

In his comparative study of education systems, both internationally and in Australia, Donnelly (2005) claimed that the approaches to curriculum countries have adopted can be categorised by embracing: a syllabus, an outcomes-based or a standards approach. Donnelly went on to report that Australia has moved away from a syllabus approach to curriculum development in preference for an OBE model. According to Donnelly (2005) the adoption of OBE in Australia and other countries such as England and Wales, New Zealand, Canada and the U.S. has been less than successful, while in South Africa the implementation of OBE had failed. However, Australia and its states and territories have persevered with the adoption of OBE by synthesising Spady's original OBE ideas to their own unique purposes. This has continued to draw criticism from curriculum researchers such as Marsh (1994), Donnelly (2004, 2005; 2006 2007), and Killen (2000) who commented on the concerns associated with OBE. Reports and reviews over the past 25 years have recognised the enormity of teachers' concerns, as well as the inherent flaws in Australia's approach to developing the curriculum. The evaluation into outcomes-based curriculum planning, assessment and reporting (Eltis & Crump, 2003) in NSW noted the heavy demands placed on teachers because of the outcomes approach to curriculum development. The increased demands of an outcomes-based curriculum, assessment and reporting curriculum on Primary teachers is one of the key focus areas of this research and the findings of the investigation are reported in the first critical incident in Chapter 4.

2.11 The Nature of Primary Education

“At the heart of the educational process lies the child”

(U.K. Department of Education and Science, 1967)

The history of Primary school education in other countries such as in Britain is comparatively recent to that in Australia. It was not until the mid-1960s that all children between the ages of

5 and 11 could be educated in schools specifically allocated to children within this age range. Before 1944 there was not even a Ministry for Education in Britain, however one was established through the 1944 Education Act. Primary education since then has seen many changes, with the autonomy of the Primary school principal and the local school authorities gradually usurped by more and more directives and control from central government. The development of a more centralised bureaucracy was also reflected in education reforms in Australia.

In both countries, parents have a legal obligation to ensure that their child is being educated throughout the Primary years. Primary education is recognised as the first stage of compulsory education for all students. It typically focuses on guiding the development of the child in the context of society through recognisable stages of development. Most institutional documents about the nature of Primary education focus on the general characteristics of various stages of child development whereas the research literature focuses more on the ages of students that encompass the Primary years. Definition of Primary education usually considers the entry of students into the compulsory years of schooling, from five or six years-of-age, and their exit from around 11 or 12 years-of-age. Terminology such as formal compulsory years of schooling is mostly used to describe Primary education along with references to developing the whole child by catering for students' diverse learning backgrounds and needs (DET, 1989; BOS, 1997; Campbell, 2001; Cunningham, 2012).

Statements about the aims of Primary education have traditionally been based on sets of values that are generally accepted by the community (DET, 1989; BOS, 1997; Lambert, 2000; Campbell, 2001; Cunningham, 2012; Brundrett & Duncan, 2015). These statements endeavour to guide primary educators and curriculum writers on the development of the whole child by focusing on "the individual needs of students and the necessity for a wide range of teaching strategies that will identify and respond to these needs" (BOS, 1996b, p. 6). The literature on Primary education focuses strongly on individual needs of students; the diverse ways young students learn; and the different ways to cater for these needs (Cunningham, 2012).

The Primary school curriculum in countries such as Australia and England have undergone multiple, complex and overlapping reforms in the last 30 years where debate on the effectiveness of the basic skills when compared to a broader, more integrated curriculum, has been discussed continually over a long time (Brundrett & Duncan, 2015; Cunningham, 2012; Eltis & Crump, 2003). Primary curriculum reforms in Australia and NSW in the 1990s witnessed a change in curriculum policy from developing students' skills in the broad areas of

communication, investigation and expression, to developing curriculum in six key learning areas in key stages of learning development. This change in developing the Primary curriculum in discrete subject areas was a claim made by the Greiner Liberal/National government that it was a response to “increasing discontent among teachers and parents about the lack of clear guidance on goals or curriculum priorities for Primary schools” (DET, 1990, p. 18). The Primary curriculum had now become a prescriptive set of six Key Learning areas with syllabuses for each KLA. Changes in curriculum and the associated workload in its implementation added to the pressures and concerns of educational stakeholders in terms of curriculum knowledge and understanding. The development of six syllabuses that made up the Primary curriculum also added to teachers’ claims of overcrowding and overload. This seems to be a recurrent theme in the literature on Primary curriculum as countries have instigated educational reforms that cater for developing future generations in terms of economic productivity (Eltis, 1995; Hayes, 2002; Vinson et al. 2002; Eltis & Crump, 2003; Cunningham, 2012; Brundrett and Duncan, 2015).

The nature and scope of the Primary curriculum has been a central theme in many curriculum reforms and reports stemming from the 1980s as changes to social, political, economic and political structures in society impact on what and how students learn. Most significant of these reforms were moves towards the drive to raise standards in literacy and numeracy. In Australia and Britain this was realised with the national curriculum testing schemes, such as National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies (NLNS) in each respective country. However, policy documents mostly reflect Primary education as the “education future of our children” (DET, 1983, p. 3). Ofsted’s evaluation (Ofsted, 2001a; Ofsted, 2001b) of the NLNS had shown that curriculum breadth, particularly within subjects, has been adversely affected by a combination of the two strategies, booster classes, and the requirement on schools to meet increasingly demanding performance targets as measured by national tests.

The Primary National Strategy (DIES, 2003) argued that: “Primary education is about children experiencing the joy of discovery, solving problems, being creative in writing, art, music, developing their self-confidence as learners and maturing socially and emotionally” (DIES, 2003, p.4). The challenge was for teachers to provide enrichment, depth and breadth in the Primary curriculum. Questioning how this was to be done, Burgess (1994) argued for a “whole curriculum” approach where inter-disciplinary links could be made through an integrated curriculum. Maintaining coherence across the curricular subjects and ensuring all the national requirements are met requires careful planning if a whole curriculum approach is to be effective in practice. Lambert (2000), Cunningham (2012) and Brundrett and Duncan

(2015) all support the idea of an integrated approach to the Primary curriculum as a way of providing better manageability of the curriculum.

2.11.1 The Primary Curriculum

The Primary school curriculum in countries such as Australia and England have undergone multiple, complex and overlapping reforms in the last 30 years. Debate on the relative efficacy of a strong emphasis on the basic skills when compared to a broader, more integrated curriculum, has been part of a continual discussion in the U.S.A, Canada, the Britain and Australia for a long time (Brundrett & Duncan, 2015; Cunningham, 2012; Eltis & Crump, 2003).

The Primary curriculum offered to young children is critical in developing their understanding of themselves as individuals and as members of their society, in forming their views of the world and their values (Campbell, 2001; Cunningham, 2012). This is a broad feature of the Primary curriculum in many developed countries. The development of Primary curriculum is based primarily on promoting experiences that lead to active and meaningful lifelong learning that addresses the intellectual, social, emotional, cultural, moral, aesthetic and physical development of the child in a balanced and integrated way. This holistic approach to a curriculum is predicated on developing the whole child and has seen the Primary curriculum become overcrowded and over-demanding since the inclusion of OBE reforms in the 1990s and 2000s.

Primary school education in Australia in the 1960s and 1970s was strongly influenced by ‘progressive’ ideology. Progressivism was characterised by an emphasis on child-centredness over teacher-directedness in curriculum, pedagogy and on the physical arrangements of classrooms and schools. But the 1980s challenged this regime. There was wide publicity, for example, about the need to concentrate on the basics of the curriculum in order to rid the schools of the pervading image of mediocrity and develop a climate of excellence. Indeed, the Carrick Report (1989) and the White Paper on curriculum reform (Excellence and Equity) produced by the Ministry of Education in NSW, 1989, allude to these aspects. As was seen in Chapter 1 these moves occurred at a time when there was building pressure from the federal government to introduce a national curriculum.

In Britain, Oliver (2004) acknowledged the Plowden Report (1967) as the “most influential factor in the emergence of a distinctive ‘child-centred’ primary school practice” (p. 2). However, the Plowden Report's influence on primary practice came from an emphasis on placing the child “at the heart of the education process”, non-streaming and a more humanist

approach to teaching and learning. The philosophical position adopted by Plowden, and the freedom given to Primary teachers and executive to determine their own curriculum, combined to generate many of the characteristics of “good primary practice” that until recently were still the dominant orthodoxy in Primary education: group work, topic-based work and projects, integrated studies, display of pupils' work, discovery learning, independent learning, differentiation, and individual needs.

Alexander (1995) described the evolution of the Primary curriculum and of the processes of teaching and learning in Primary schools as a demonstration of both radical transformation and the abiding influence of long-established structures, ideas and habits. In this respect there was a sense, to assess in a balanced way, the impact of the two post-war ‘revolutions’ in Primary education: that of the 60s and 70s, when teachers were on the whole happy to embrace the ideals and practices associated with the Plowden report (1967) and the traumatic, policy-led changes of the period since 1988 which Primary teachers viewed, initially at least, with much uncertainty and with which they are still coming to terms.

Prior to the curriculum innovations in the 1980s and 1990s Primary schools tended to focus on the basic skills in English and Mathematics (Foster & Harman, 1992; Cunningham, 2012). There has been substantial experimentation in the past three decades with newer forms of organisation (e.g. open classroom and team teaching), pedagogy (e.g. child-centred, peer tutoring, inquiry learning), curriculum (e.g. interdisciplinary studies, the introduction of languages other than English) and staffing (differentiated staffing including the use of subject specialists or teacher aides).

The Primary curriculum is usually contained in a set of published documents bearing the authority of the government of the day and it lays out in considerable detail the range of subject knowledge to be taught to children between Kindergarten and Year 6. It is intended to be clear and comprehensible and is structured in progressive stages. The NSW *Education Act* (1990) established six Key Learning Areas for the Primary curriculum (see Table 1.1). For the first time in NSW teachers were required to provide learning experiences in each KLA during each year of Primary schooling. Each KLA syllabus contained the aims of the subject, a set of objectives, content for each stage of learning and a set of learning outcomes. As each KLA syllabus was developed, it was also accompanied by support materials such as annotated work samples that assisted teachers to make judgements about student achievement; units of work that demonstrated how knowledge, skills and understandings represented in the content and outcomes can be organised to represent meaningful learning experiences; and modules that describe learning over the entire stage (BOS, 1997). What became evident with the

development of each curriculum area was the overwhelming amount of documentation provided to assist Primary teachers with this new way of curriculum implementation. However, what resulted was an overwhelming sense of curriculum overload and overlap.

2.11.2 Implementing the Primary Curriculum

Over the last three decades, the tendency has been to add new subjects and broaden the scope of some of the existing curriculum areas without taking account of what is humanly possible in the finite period of time of the Primary school day. As a result, principals and teachers have expressed serious concerns about the continuing expansion of the Primary school curriculum.

Recent history of the Primary curriculum reforms has shown that with the development of more rigorous and detailed curriculum have come issues with its effective implementation (Eltis, 1995; Lambert, 2000; Eltis & Crump, 2002; Angus et al., 2007; Cunningham, 2012; Brundrett & Duncan, 2015). In Britain OFSTED commissioned research (Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore, 1995) to ascertain key characteristics of effective Primary schools. The factors identified included:

- professional leadership;
- shared vision and goals;
- purposeful teaching;
- high expectations;
- positive reinforcement; and
- monitoring progress.

Oliver (2004) claimed that “good primary practice” had been replaced by “effective primary teaching” (p. 4). Schools had entered a new era where technique and performance were measured and monitored, where the school's standards were determined by students' achievements in national tests and the results published in league tables. Gone were the days where a Primary teacher could determine the curriculum and teachers could decide how to deliver it. Didactic formats, often at odds with teachers' perceptions of good Primary practice, were introduced with the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (DfEE, 1999a). At the turn of the millennium, dialogue about Primary school practice had become characterised by language such as standards, levels, achievement, tests, targets, success, failure, improvement, effective teaching, management, leadership, development plans. In Australia this was also evident in the form of new accountability and performance measures. All these factors increased teachers' concerns to effectively deliver the curriculum.

The overcrowded Primary curriculum also created workload issues associated with curriculum implementation and delivery in many countries such as Australia, Britain and the U.S.A. Reflecting on the curriculum reforms of the 1990s, Hill (1998), Lambert (2000) and Angus et al. (2007) attested to problems of overcrowding in the curriculum and a lack of direction with the curriculum frameworks for each KLA, as well as teachers having to achieve the outcomes in each as “a hopelessly impossible task” (Hill, 1998, p. 8). Other issues raised about the Primary curriculum are around the number of curriculum outcomes to be taught and the professional support and learning required to implement the curriculum. Brundrett and Duncan (2015, p. 756) also reported “pressures on the primary curriculum” that can represent a “serious narrowing of the curriculum”. Despite Britain and Australia, in particular NSW, conducting numerous reviews reporting on the issues affecting Primary education for the last 20-30 years, concerns about workload, curriculum overcrowding and professional learning and support are still central to the challenges faced by balancing and managing the Primary curriculum (Lambert, 2000; Campbell, 2001; Vinson et al., 2002; Eltis & Crump, 2003; Brundrett & Duncan, 2015). The authors of these reports all offered proposals for the future, however solutions have been slow in their application and implementation. This research examined these historical initiatives, interventions and propositions and provides recommendations for the future manageability of the Primary curriculum.

2.12 Interest Group Theory

Since the beginning of human history, people have made decisions in groups—first in families and villages, and now as part of companies, governments, institutions, schools, professional associations, or any one of countless other groups. Sunstein and Hastie (2015) contended that having more than one person to help with decisions is good because the group benefits from the collective knowledge of all of its members, and resulting in better decisions. These authors argued that groups seek power in numbers to achieve consensus in collective decision-making.

An interest group can be defined as an organised group sharing common objectives that actively attempts to influence government (Pross, 1992). Interest groups are private organisations that try to affect public policy and try to influence the behaviour of political decision-makers. Hence, interest groups are sometimes called pressure groups because of their effort to exert pressure in an effort to promote their agenda. The term interest group covers just about any group of people attempting to influence the political process. David Truman (1951) defined an interest group as “a shared-attitude group that makes certain claims on other groups in society” (p. 37) by acting through the institutions of government. Some

interest groups are temporary, while others are permanent depending on the issues the group is pursuing. Some groups focus on influencing a particular policy, others on broad changes. In Australia, the term interest group refers to virtually any voluntary association that seeks to publicly promote and create advantages for its cause. It applies to a vast array of diverse organisations. This includes corporations, charitable organisations, civil libertarian groups, neighbourhood associations, professional, industrial and trade associations. There are many benefits in joining with other people to make representations to government bodies, such as the NSW BOS, particularly with those interest groups that are well resourced and professional in their dealings with government officials, bureaucrats or the media.

In this study, interest groups are groups where members share a common interest advocating for Primary education. The interests of groups represented are in particular areas such as early childhood or Indigenous education. Some groups are formed sharing a common interest in specific subject areas, such as the Primary HSIE Teachers Association (HSIETA); the Primary Association for Mathematics (PAM); the PDPHE Teachers' Association (PDHPETA); Primary English Teachers Association Australia (PETAA); and Science Teachers' Association of New South Wales (STANSW). However, there are also groups that represent the broad interests of teachers, parents and Primary school principals. Interest groups provide citizens with an effective vehicle to make their policy demands known to governments, bureaucracies, organisations, or institutions (Singleton et al, 2013).

Many interest groups join together with other groups who have a similar purpose to form an association, commonly called a 'peak' or 'umbrella' organisation. In NSW, the Professional Teachers Council (PTC) is the peak body that provides support and member services to its member professional teachers' associations with over 45 member associations. PTC unifies the various teaching associations and brings together professional interests and education activities throughout the state. PTC NSW represents teachers from all levels of education; including early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary, and across systems including all Government, Catholic systemic and Independent schools and tertiary institutions. Having an umbrella organisation enables the member associations to strengthen their case to government on the basis that they can claim to speak for the broad constituency of teachers across the NSW.

Much work has been undertaken by political scientists and policy analysts in trying to categorise how interest groups operate, particularly in relation to governmental policy creation. The field is dominated by numerous differing schools of thought:

1. *Pluralism*: This is based upon the understanding that pressure groups operate in competition with one another and play a key role in the political system. They do this by acting as a counterweight to undue concentrations of power (Head & Crowley, 2015).

However, this pluralist theory (formed primarily by American academics) reflects a more open and fragmented political system similar to that in countries such as the United States. Under neo-pluralism, a concept of political communities developed that is more similar to the British and Australian forms of government.

2. *Neo-Pluralism*: This is based on the concept of political communities whereby pressure groups and other such bodies are organised around a government department and its network of client groups. The members of this network co-operate together during the policy making process.
3. *Corporatism*: Some lobby groups are backed by private businesses which can have a considerable influence on legislature.

In a pluralist society interest group activity brings representation to all by competing in the political marketplace. The group theory of politics argues that: groups provide a key linkage between people and government; groups compete; no one group is likely to become too dominant; groups usually play by the “rules of the game”; and groups weak in one resource can use another. Pluralists argue that lobbying is open to all and is therefore not a problem.

2.12.1 Interest Group Strategies

Interest groups use a range of strategies available to them and most established groups employ them all, to a greater or lesser degree. These include meetings, advertisements and the media. Groups use publicity to gain attention for the groups’ demands from the public and therefore acquire some status politically, giving their issues priority on the government’s agenda. This was case in this research whereby particular groups had used the media to gain exposure of their claims and concerns. Other strategies involve campaigning or lobbying; negotiating with other groups and building alliances. Pross (1992, 2007) and Singleton et al. (2013) contended that groups seeking to build a broad base of support for their policy demands find it useful to create a network or alliance with other groups of similar interests or common goals.

Networking is a significant feature of the relationship between interest groups and government. Groups develop formally or informal policy networks or policy communities (Pross, 1992). Informal networking includes the capacity of the group’s members to discuss matters with the government officials or bureaucrats over the phone, in an email, or in

personal meetings. However, formal networking processes include the group's membership on government advisory committees, consultative groups, working parties, statutory boards. Contact is made with the group's representative and policy issues are discussed. A more formal relationship is created with those group members who have gained an 'insider' status where the member has a more substantial, and ongoing impact on government policy. This interaction between groups and government Pross (1992) refers to as a policy network, which is: "a relationship involving a particular set of actors, including interest groups, ministers, government agencies, that forms around a policy area or policy issue" (p. 98).

The functions of interest groups are to promote the interests of the group (Pross, 1992). Pross claimed that groups need to effectively communicate between their members any positions they may take in the promotion of their interests. In doing so they are legitimating the demands their members make on the state and public policy. However, Pross's work makes it clear that groups need to perform certain functions not only to promote their group's interests in the policy arena, it is also necessary for groups to regulate their members so as ensure communication and legitimation. Thus, the critical functions groups perform for their members for effective involvement in the political process are: interest promotion; communication; legitimation; regulation; and administration. A group member representing the interests of their group needs to ensure they perform these functions.

2.12.2 The Policy Community

Some policy analysts have identified the group—government relationship that develops around a policy issue as a "policy community" (Pross, 1992, Warhurst, 2006; Singleton et al., 2013). They argue that all groups with shared interests in a policy area are able to have an influence over government policy. The policy community approach provides a framework for examining the behaviour of a whole range of actors within a political arena (Pross, 1992).

A policy community can be regarded as the actors and potential actors who have an interest in a policy issue whereby the policy network describes the patterns of interactions within the community (Pross, 1992). Policy networks emerge from the policy community to argue for a specific policy issue. The actors within the policy community in this research were initially the group representatives on the Primary Curriculum Committee with the policy issue being the concerns with the Primary curriculum. However, the policy community expanded to include other interest groups when the policy issues shifted to include defining a set of mandatory outcomes for the Primary curriculum. The involvement of other actors witnessed a range of other strategies interest groups employed to influence the policy process.

Singleton et al. (2013) argued that there is nothing undemocratic or improper about the existence or activity of interest groups: “groups are just people acting collectively in politics to secure goals which they think are important” (p. 386).

2.13 The Concept of Stakeholder

Within this framework and from the perspective of Clarkson (1995), Donaldson and Preston (1995), Rowley (1997), Scott and Lane (2000) and Baldwin (2002), the stakeholder management concept serves to ensure organisations recognise, analyse and examine the individual and group characteristics that influence or are influenced by organisational behaviours and actions. This management approach takes place across three levels: the identification of stakeholders, the development of processes that recognise their respective needs and interests, and the establishing and building of relationships with them and with the overall process structured in accordance with organisational objectives. In turn, stakeholders hold expectations, experience the effects of the relationship with the organisation, evaluate the results obtained and act according to their evaluations, strengthening or otherwise their links (Polonsky, 1996; Post, Preston & Sachs, 2002; Neville, Bell & Whitwell, 2004; Mantere, 2005; Almazan, Suarez & Titman 2009; Bosse, Phillips & Harrison, 2009; King, Felin & Whetten, 2010; Shrivastava and Berger, 2010).

Stakeholder theory guides managerial actions even while some theoretical aspects remain at a very embryonic stage with a deepening of the proposals made in recent decades required (Agarwal and Helfat, 2009; Chatterji, Levine & Toffel, 2009; Davis, Key & Newcomer, 2010; Mainardes et al., 2011). Among such proposals are two factors fundamental to the theory: stakeholder classification (setting out criteria for prioritising their respective relevance) and the means of organisational stakeholder interaction. On one hand, it is possible to state that various different proposals for stakeholder classification exist (Goodpaster, 1991; Savage, Nix, Whitehead & Blair, 1991; Clarkson, 1995; Mitchell et al., 1997; Rowley, 1997; Scholes & Clutterbuck, 1998; Frooman, 1999; Bourne & Walker, 2005; Kamann, 2007; Fassin, 2009). However, no consensus has thus far emerged either in the literature or among professionals adopting and putting stakeholder theory in practice.

On the other hand, despite authors approaching stakeholder theory affirming that the organisation should relate to its stakeholders (such as, and for example, Freeman, 1984; Polonsky, 1995; Frooman, 1999; Friedman & Miles, 2006; Lamberg, Pajunen, Kalle & Savage, 2008), there are very few studies describing just what types of relationship actually exist. Correspondingly, models explaining and guiding these relationships represent a clear means of advancing stakeholder theory. Hence, for this study the first objective was to set out

a new classification model for organisational stakeholders. In addition, the second objective was to put forward a model explaining the relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders.

2.13.1 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory has proliferated in recent years. Friedman and Miles (2002) noted that numerous books and articles primarily concerned with the stakeholder concept had appeared. Since then interest in stakeholder theory has quickened, not only in the academic world, but also in common parlance (Friedman & Miles, 2006). References to stakeholders are commonplace in the media, and governments who use the term in specific policies, such as with the introduction of educational stakeholders in the NSW BOS' curriculum development process (BOS, 2006).

Stakeholder theory draws on four of the social sciences: sociology, economics, politics and ethics, and especially on the literature of corporate planning, systems theory, corporate social responsibility and organisational studies. Freeman (1984), in his work *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*, generally accepted as the founding theoretical landmark, defined how stakeholders with similar interests or rights each form a group. Freeman (1984) sought to explain the relationship between the organisation or company and its external environment in conjunction with its behaviour within this environment. The author presented his model as a map in which the organisation is positioned at the centre and interacts with the surrounding stakeholders. In Freeman's model, organisation—stakeholder relationships are dyadic and mutually independent (Frooman, 1999). Although the term has become popular and as richly descriptive as it is, there is no agreement on what Freeman (1984) called "The principle of who or what really counts". That is, who (or what) are the stakeholders of an organisation, company or firm? And to whom (or what) do managers pay attention? According to Mainardes, Alves and Raposo (2012) the first question calls for a *normative theory of stakeholder identification*, to assist in explaining logically why managers should consider certain classes of groups as stakeholder. However, the second question calls for a *descriptive theory of stakeholder salience*, to explain the conditions under which managers consider certain groups as stakeholders.

With the neo-liberal expansion signified by the market discourse in the beginning of the 1980s, the concept gradually diffused from the commercial to the political and educational arena (Lindell, 2004). Since the mid-1990s, a growing number of studies have analysed policy changes and developments; in addition, studies about education have used the concept of stakeholder (Freeman, 2010; Friedman & Miles, 2002, 2006; Finlay et al., 1998).

The ideas of Freeman (1984), which culminated in stakeholder theory, emerged out of an organisational context in which the business community was beginning to understand that it was not self-sufficient and dependent on the external environment, as observed earlier by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978). Freeman (1984) named these external groups stakeholders with a later approach by Frooman (1999) applying the term resource dependency.

According to Jones and Wicks (1999), Savage, Dunkin & Ford, (2004) and Phillips, Berman, Elms & Johnson-Cramer et al. (2010), the core assumptions of stakeholder theory are:

- Organisations engage in relationships with many groups that either influence or are influenced by them, stakeholders in accordance with the Freeman (1984) terminology.
- The theory focuses on these relationships in terms of processes and results for the company and the stakeholder.
- The interests of all legitimate stakeholders are of intrinsic value and no single set of interests prevails over all others, as proposed by Clarkson (1995) and Donaldson and Preston (1995).
- The theory focuses on managerial decision making.
- The theory identifies how stakeholders seek to influence organisational decision-making processes so they become consistent with their needs and priorities.
- The organisations should strive to understand, reconcile and balance the various participant interests.

Within this broad theoretical context, it is perceived how diverse stakeholder groups interact with the company. According to Clarkson (1995), these groups may be divided into two: the primary, those which have formal or official contractual relationships with the company, such as clients, suppliers, employees, shareholders, among others, and the secondary, those not holding such contracts, such as governments and the local community, for example. In this way, a company is conceived as a network of explicit and implicit relationships spanning both the internal and external environments. Furthermore, with the advance of stakeholder theory, greater interest began to be shown in these distinct interest groups and not only company shareholders or owners (Wang, Choi & Li et al., 2008; Forray & Goodnight, 2010; Hirsch & Morris, 2010).

In parallel with its theoretical progress, stakeholders slowly moved inwards from the periphery of organisational activities to take up a more central role in the organisation. Andriof et al. (2002) explained that the concept of stakeholders, their involvement and relationship with the organisation are all contemporary characteristics of more modern companies. In the last two decades, a rising number of research projects dealing with strategy

and the fundamental factors to stakeholder involvement in organisational decision making have been published (Asher et al., 2005). Diverse studies point to the utilisation of Stakeholder Theory in contemporary organisational contexts (Freeman & Liedtka, 1997; Metcalfe, 1998; Baron, 2001; Clarke, 2005; Desai, 2008; Harrison, Bosse & Phillips, 2010).

According to Clement (2005), this emphasis may be attributed to the increased pressures on organisations to respond to different stakeholder group interests. As stakeholders are in ongoing relationships with the company, they are susceptible to generating contributions and important resources. To this end, analysing just who the stakeholders are, their respective interests and how they act is fundamental to contemporary organisations. In particular, attention must centre on identifying the stakeholders most important to organisational survival and meeting their respective needs and expectations (Julian, Ofori-Dankwa & Justis, 2008).

By definition, Freeman (1984), Mainardes et al. (2010) and Friedman and Miles (2006) have suggested that stakeholders are individuals or organisations that can either influence or be affected by an organisation's actions. Mitroff (1983) suggested that one should distinguish between internal and external stakeholders, (or insider or outsider groups for the purposes of this study). In the education context, insider stakeholders are those single individuals, groups or organisations who affect and impact change within the NSW education system from the inside, e.g. teachers, curriculum writers, education authorities and principals. Conversely, other stakeholders are, for example, the special interest groups who exert their influence and impact change on the Primary curriculum from the outside.

Narrowing the definition somewhat further in order to delimit stakeholders from other non-relevant subjects, Mitroff (1983) argued that stakeholders have at least one of the six features that allow their involvement with an organisation: purpose and motivation; beliefs; control over resources; special knowledge and views, physical and positional resources; and commitment. Moreover, Mitroff (1983) suggested that the stakeholder approach aims to map out the actors and the interests which play a role in their relationship. The stakeholder approach is aimed at determining the policy relevance of stakeholders, the identification of stakeholders and the interests that are at stake (Mitroff, 1983; Freeman, 2010). However, Mitchell et al.'s (1997) view of stakeholder theory offers a variety of signals on how these questions of stakeholder identification might be answered.

2.13.2 Stakeholder Identification

In stakeholder literature there are a few broad definitions that attempt to specify the empirical reality that virtually anyone can affect or be affected by an organisation's actions. Mitchell et

al. (1997) claimed that what is needed is a theory of stakeholder identification that can reliably separate stakeholders from non-stakeholders. These researchers identified stakeholders as:

- Primary or secondary;
- actors or those acted upon;
- those existing in a voluntary or an involuntary relationships with the organisation; or
- risk takers or influencers.

Mainardes et al. (2012) contributed to the literature on stakeholder identification in explaining the relationships between all those involved in the organisation's decision-making processes. Their study aimed to develop a model of stakeholder classification and a model for explaining the relationship between the organisation and its respective stakeholders where the main variable deployed was the stakeholder's respective level of influence from the organisation's management perspective. That is, Mainardes et al.'s (2012) study looked at the stakeholders' levels of legitimacy, power and urgency using stakeholder identification and salience mapping (Mitchell et al., 1997). A stakeholder classification scheme developed by Mainardes et al. (2012) also assists in the organisation's management of the relationships with and between their stakeholders.

Taking into consideration the model proposed by Freeman (1984), Mainardes et al. (2012) included a broader spectrum of stakeholders other than the traditional (clients, shareholders, members of staff, suppliers and competitors). The one issue that has concerned this field of research from the outset has been how to deal with all stakeholders simultaneously. According to Fassin (2008), this is simply not possible where the utilisation of criteria prioritising stakeholders has always been a theoretical requirement. While meeting every need is not always feasible, there is the necessity of paying greater attention to certain specific groups to the detriment of others. Hence, Mainardes et al. (2012) encountered a dilemma as to where should organisations pay greatest attention? Are they targeting their efforts correctly or does there need to be some kind of restructuring so as to best satisfy the demands of those really important to sustainable survival and success? These questions that organisations need to be concerned about were also raised by Friedman and Miles (2006).

The idea of comprehensively identifying a stakeholder, is to equip managers with the ability to recognise and respond effectively to a disparate, yet systematically comprehensible, set of entities who may or may not have legitimate claims, but who may be able to affect or are affected by the firm nonetheless, and thus affect the interests of those who do have legitimate claims (Mitchell et al., 1997). The ultimate aim of stakeholder management practices,

according to this view, could be organisation-centred or system-centred; that is, managers might want to know about all of their stakeholders for organisation-centred purposes of survival, economic well-being, damage control, taking advantage of opportunities, "doing in" the competition, winning friends and influencing public policy, coalition building, and so forth (Mitchell et al., 1997; Friedman & Miles, 2006). However, in contrast, managers might want an exhaustive list of all stakeholders in order to participate in a fair balancing of various claims and interests within the organisation's social system. Both the former public affairs approach and the latter social responsibility approach require broad knowledge of actual and potential actors and claimants in the organisation's environment.

2.13.3 Stakeholder Salience

The literature makes various proposals for classifying stakeholders by their respective level of importance. Of the aforementioned approaches, the most popular has proven to be the Mitchell et al. (1997) model. Entitled stakeholder salience, this has been the most commonly discussed and deployed model in the literature. With the objective of identifying and classifying stakeholder importance, this instrumental stakeholder theory application was primarily designed by Mitchell et al. (1997), who researched manager perceptions of stakeholder characteristics and their salience with regards to the factors of power, legitimacy and urgency. Aaltonen et al. (2008) found that existing research does point to senior management paying attention to stakeholders in accordance with their credibility in terms of power, legitimacy and urgency. The researchers noted that each attribute is a variable rather than a steady state, discussing briefly the dynamism created in stakeholder–manager relations. However, their focus was on defining who or what are the stakeholders of the organisation, rather than the dynamics of the organisation/stakeholder relation. Agle et al. (1999) has tested the model with positive results. However they did not explore:

- (1) why some stakeholders will be perceived as having more of the three attributes than others;
- (2) how managers' perceptions of stakeholders may change; or
- (3) the differences in the way managers behave in relation to stakeholders perceived as possessing widely different degrees of these attributes.

There are some more restrictive definitions that attempt to specify the pragmatic reality in which managers simply cannot take into consideration all the demands, real and potential, and which correspondingly set out a series of priorities for managerial attention (Friedman and Miles, 2006). Within this perspective, a theory of stakeholder relevance is needed so as to

explain to whom and to what should managers really pay their attention (Mitchell et al., 1997).

To resolve this question, Mitchell et al. (1997) advanced a model incorporating these three factors:

- power;
- urgency; and
- legitimacy.

Entitled “stakeholder salience”, this model includes stakeholder powers of negotiation, their relational legitimacy with the organisation, and the urgency in attending to stakeholder requirements (Friedman and Miles, 2006). According to Mitchell et al. (1997), stakeholder salience is a dynamic model, based on a typology of identification that enables explicit recognition of the uniqueness of each situation and managerial perceptions to explain how managers should prioritise relationships with stakeholders. The authors demonstrate how the identification typology enables forecasts to be made for managerial behaviour with regard to each stakeholder class, as well as predictions as to how stakeholders may change from one class to another, and the consequences for management. This model displays three advantages: it is political (considering the organisation as the result of conflicting and unequal interests), is operationally practical (qualifying the stakeholders), and is dynamic (considers changes in interests over social space and time).

The model proposed by Mitchell et al. (1997) suggests strategic behaviour is subject to various groups located in the surrounding environment with organisational strategies needing to meet the needs of these groups in accordance with their respective importance. This is defined by the three aforementioned factors varying in accordance with the situation.

According to the researchers, the proposed model is dynamic for three reasons:

1. the three attributes are variables (and neither static nor stationary);
2. the attributes are socially constructed (and thus not objective); and
3. stakeholders do not always know that they are in possession of one or more attributes.

These aspects render the stakeholder salience model dynamic and frequently changing. The stakeholders, for example, may possess one attribute today before acquiring one or two more at some point in the future.

In order to clarify the term "stake," we need to differentiate between groups that have a legal, moral, or presumed claim on the organisation and groups that have an ability to influence the

firm's behaviour, direction, process, or outcomes. Savage, Nix, Whitehead, and Blair (1991) consider two attributes to be necessary to identify a stakeholder: (1) a claim, and (2) the ability to influence a firm. Brenner (1993) and Starik (1994), however, pose these attributes as either/or components of the definition of those with a stake.

The confusion and contrast between two of the three criteria is seen as important according to Mitchell et al. (1997). They stress that influencers have power over the organisers, whether or not they have valid claims or any claims at all and whether or not they wish to press their claims. Claimants may have legitimate claims or illegitimate ones, and they may or may not have any power to influence the firm. Power and legitimacy are different, whereby sometimes the dimensions overlap, and each can exist without the other. A theory of stakeholder identification must accommodate these differences.

Mitchell et al. (1997) raised another crucial question leading to the comprehensibility of the term "stake" and whether an entity or individual can be a stakeholder without being in actual relationship with the organisation. Some scholars (for example, Ring, 1994; Friedman & Miles, 2006; Frooman, 1999) are emphatic with a resounding "No." However, they argued that, a potential relationship can be as relevant as the actual one. They drew on Clarkson's (1994) idea of involuntary stakeholders as those with something not wilfully placed at risk which addresses this issue somewhat. Starik (1994) clearly included potential when he referred to stakeholders as those who "are or might be influenced by, or are or potentially are influencers of, some organisation" (p. 90). However, Mitchell et al. (1997) suggested that a theory of stakeholder identification and salience must somehow also account for latent stakeholders if it is to be both comprehensive and useful, because such identification can, at a minimum, help organisations avoid problems and perhaps even enhance their effectiveness.

2.14 Summary

There have been significant changes to curriculum decision-making processes in education with the adoption of major education reforms over the last 30 years. Claims of more control by governments over school education matters; a greater emergence of national agendas, agencies and funding sources; and a more comprehensive curriculum and standards frameworks have been reviewed in literature via the various fields of curriculum, interest groups and educational policy.

The pressures of globalisation and the adoption of corporate management approaches led to the incorporation of OBE as a significant assumption underlying national curriculum collaboration. The moves towards a national curriculum provided a way for greater federal

government intervention into traditional state and territory-based responsibilities. The net result of these developments provided greater governmental control, funding tied to curriculum change and a much greater degree of national activity. The bureaucracies that work at the state and national levels now have a much greater capacity to generate curriculum 'output'. At each level, curriculum committees are represented by educational stakeholder groups that interact, make decisions and determine 'what is taught' and 'how students learn'.

The theory of stakeholder identification and salience developed by Mitchell et al. (1997) credits the search for a legitimate normative core for stakeholder theory. It articulates theoretically why certain groups hold legitimate, possibly stable, claims on managers and the organisation and why some stakeholders have more influence than others. Stakeholder theory holds a key for more effective management and to a more useful, comprehensive theory of the organisation in society. Power to influence educational policy is widely shared by many actors at different levels of education decision-making. Interest groups from many and varied sources are widely represented on committees. Participation in the policy processes sees stakeholders use power to influence the decision-making processes. Within the identification of policy actors in the curriculum development process, a hierarchy of actors, and the federal government were able to exercise considerable influence in many areas of state-based educational policy. Interest group activity has a marked input into policy making. Teachers' unions, professional associations and parent groups exert considerable leverage, which directly or indirectly influences policy decisions.

Chapter 3: Research Methods and Design

“Everyday realities are actively constructed in and through forms of social action”.
(Holstein & Gubrium, 2013, p. 253)

3.1 Introduction

This study examined the role of stakeholders in the curriculum development process. The study was therefore concerned with the interplay between stakeholders and the processes through which they accessed and influenced decision-making in the development of the Primary curriculum. The specific methods of research and data interpretation used, in which the data were gathered, managed, analysed and reported using documentary sources and interviews, are presented here.

This study poses the following questions:

1. How have federal and state government education policies and curriculum reforms shaped the development of the *NSW Primary Curriculum Foundation Statements*?
2. How, and to what effect, is the salience of educational stakeholders who are involved in, and shape, decision-making processes in curriculum planning, assessment and reporting?
3. How does the analysis of stakeholders' experiences in curriculum decision-making inform the theories of curriculum development, interest group and stakeholder theories?

This research explored the nature of the interactions between NSW educational stakeholder groups and the state and federal educational authorities, and analysed their actions during the specific decision-making processes of defining mandatory outcomes and the development of the Primary curriculum *Foundation Statements*. Through the lens of interest group theory, it sought to examine the ways in which key educational stakeholders influenced what and how students learn. Pagan (2007) suggested that “Interest group theory is really the acknowledgement that ‘the State’ is composed of actors, both institutional and non-institutional, and these actors are a product of their historical, socio-economic, political and various other contexts” (p. 3). Hence, the research was designed to explore the views, perceptions and actions of stakeholders and how their engagement in the political process for developing the NSW Primary curriculum. The technique of critical incident analysis was used as an organisational framework for presenting the analysis.

3.2 Research Methodology

A research methodology provides a research study with a frame through which the phenomena under investigation can be examined. The methodological frame for this study emanated from the interpretive paradigm and was constructivist in nature. The overarching theoretical lens of this thesis was interest group theory with a focus on understanding curriculum development processes. In developing an understanding of the socio-political processes at play, the researcher worked within a qualitative research framework to identify and apply a range of interpretative practices, such as grounded theory and content analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Flick, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994). This qualitative study used text as its empirical material; started from the notion of the social construction of realities being investigated, and was interested in the perspectives of stakeholders' involvement in specific curriculum decision-making processes.

3.2.1 Through the Lens of Interest Group Theory

Pross (1992) stated that interest groups are “organisations whose members act together to influence public policy in order to promote their common interest” (p. 3), whereas Warhurst (2006) claimed that an interest group “is an association of individuals or organisations which attempts to influence government and public policy” (p. 327). However, there are a range of definitions and classifications of interest groups and stakeholders in the international literature based on distinctions between the behavioural definition of interest groups and a definition focused on a group's organisational characteristics (Baroni et al., 2014; Miles, 2015; Friedman & Miles, 2006). In this study, interest groups and/or individuals with similar concerns have a shared and common interest whereby they all seek to influence government and public policy. It is through this lens that the research sought to investigate the ways representatives of the various educational stakeholder groups pursued their interests in the development of the Primary curriculum.

Interest groups within a well-functioning liberal democracy are accommodated because their activities facilitate and encourage citizen participation and help to maintain genuine and democratic involvement between the different interests (Warhurst, 2006). Pross (1992) claimed that interest groups are essential in any modern state, where they have the ability to work to the advantage of society without jeopardising traditional democratic institutions. Interest groups do this by channelling information to and from policy makers. This study specifically examined the role of individuals representing their interest groups and the ways they interacted within the constraints of the formal curriculum development decision-making processes. Pross (1992) identified how relationships between government agencies, groups

and institutions provide support within the policy community. They all have a vested interest in the policy filed. In this study key educational stakeholders representing the interests of their groups were part of the policy community within the Board of Studies curriculum development processes. Their interactions and involvement within that community allowed them to be part of the democratic decision-making processes in determining the Primary curriculum (see Figure 3.1).

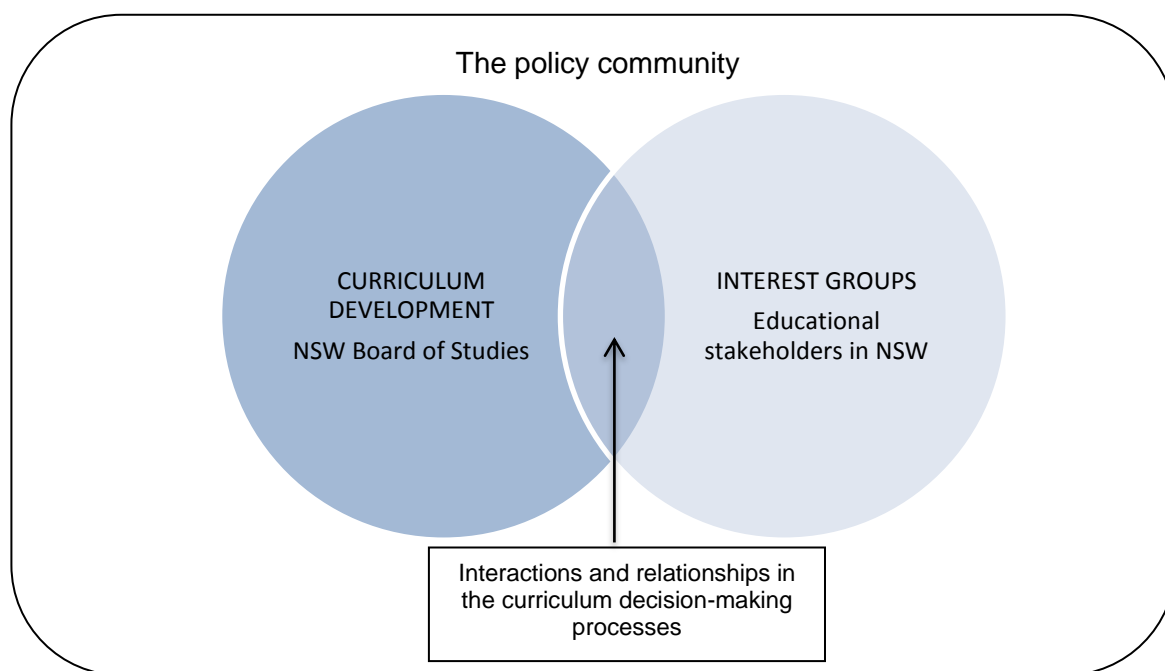


Figure 3.1: Involvement of interest groups in curriculum decision-making in NSW

3.2.2 Interpretive Paradigm

Researchers have long debated the distinctions between traditional conceptions of qualitative and quantitative research paradigms (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013a; Flick, 2006). Increasingly, this dichotomy has been regarded as artificial and simplistic, although many researchers still concede that the epistemological bases and contributions of these paradigms differ (Creswell, 2003; Crotty, 1998). While acknowledging these current issues, the assumptions underlying this study are qualitative in nature. Qualitative research “is an umbrella concept covering forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena” (Merriam, 1998, p. 5). Other terms used interchangeably in the literature include interpretive and/or naturalistic research.

Interpretive researchers “study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings that people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013a, p. 7). The aim of interpretive studies is to understand the phenomena of interest from the participants’ perspective rather than that of the researcher (Tisdell & Merriam, 2015). As

this study was concerned with the ways in which stakeholders interact with the political process of developing curriculum, interpretive research was appropriate for the aims of the study. The aim here was to understand the processes in the development of the *Primary Foundation Statements* from the perspectives of those who were involved.

Two other characteristics of interpretive research reinforce the appropriateness of this paradigm for the study. These characteristics are strengths of the interpretive paradigm; the first is a concern for context. Kaplan and Maxwell (2005, p. 30) believed in “understanding issues or particular situations by investigating the perspectives and behaviour of the people in these situations and the context within which they act”. Thus, it consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. Interpretive researchers aim to enhance the understanding of a particular phenomenon or situation and the context within which it operates, through an in-depth and contextualised investigation.

Second, the interpretive paradigm sits well with constructivism because, as Flick (2007, p. 13) commented, “people, institutions and interactions are involved in producing the realities in which they live or occur and that these productive efforts are based on processes of meaning-making”. The reality of stakeholders’ perspectives and the researcher’s attention to the multiple realities and socially constructed meanings that exist within the social context are acknowledged in this study. The link between interpretation and interest group theory is a critical element of the study’s design, as it allowed the researcher to approach the study by exploring the perspectives of stakeholders’ representatives, whereby the “data relating to the research questions were collected, analysed and then written about” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013b, p. 23).

Smith and Lovat (2003) argued that the “interpretative approach attempts to discover meaning embedded within the text (conversation, written words, or pictures)” (p. 131). Merriam (1998) suggested that education is to be considered as a process, and “understanding the meaning of the process or experience constitutes the knowledge to be gained” (p. 4) within the interpretivist’s theoretical perspective. Using the qualitative methods identified, the researcher has adopted an interpretivist’s approach to gain insights into the interactions of stakeholders in the curriculum decision-making processes.

3.2.3 Constructivist Perspective

Denzin and Lincoln (2013a) stressed that the word *qualitative* implies an emphasis on processes and meanings. This was the central concern of this study, which drew on a social constructivist perspective of curriculum, as well as interest group and stakeholder theories. It

examined the interrelatedness of the socio-political construct of curriculum and the relationships between stakeholders in the decision-making processes.

The emergence and development of constructivist approaches to educational research have been evidenced in a large body of educational literature (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013a; Richards & Morse, 2013; Rapley, 2011). A foundation of constructivism is built on the view that there are multiple realities or worldviews, and these worldviews are continually being constructed and reconstructed. Within the research context, a constructivist approach attempted to understand “the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it” (Schwandt, 1998, p. 230). Therefore, the researcher working within a constructivist paradigm believed that there were dynamic, multifarious and sometimes conflicting versions of ‘social reality’, and that these realities changed as the research participants and the researcher became more informed and knowledgeable about the curriculum development processes. This approach had a clear application to this study, as stakeholders brought with them a range of diverse reasons for being involved in these curriculum development process.

3.3 Research Methods

Two main data sources were used for this study: documentary sources of evidence and interviews with participants. These form the sources of evidence that were gathered from public and private records, mass media and data obtained through interviews. The participants who were interviewed represented key educational stakeholders on the NSW BOS’ PCC and were involved in the BOS’ response to the Evaluation from 2003 to 2006.

3.3.1 Sources of Evidence

The sources of evidence used in this study include those obtained from public records and those held privately. The latter includes personal records (e.g., annotated agendas and meeting notes) of participants on the PCC involved in reviewing the K–6 curriculum. The records defined the mandatory outcomes and developed the *Foundation Statements*. These sources of evidence were selected on the basis of their utility in exploring key issues related to the nature of the Primary curriculum development and the participation of key educational stakeholders involved in the processes.

Classifying the different documents was a difficult task. These cultural artefacts had to be fully appreciated and understood from within their social and historical contexts (Scott, 1990). As explained below, content analysis was used to systematically examine the data sources to extract key words, themes and concepts, and hence draw conclusions about the curriculum

development decision-making processes. The reading of these documents allowed the researcher to establish a historical timeline of critical events and verify the recollections of the stakeholders interviewed, as well as those of the participant observer.

3.3.1.1 Classifying sources of evidence

While documentary sources can be classified broadly into ‘records’ or ‘documents’ (Prior, 2011; Creswell, 2007), there are numerous definitions of the term within the research literature (e.g., Prior, 2011; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013a). Prior (2011, p. 14) made the distinction that many types of “documents are constituted by a combination of authorship (who produced the document) and access to the document”. Flick (2006) commented that classifying documents is useful for assessing their quality. They are not just “a simple representation of facts or reality; rather, a person or institution has produced them for some practical purpose and use” (Flick, 2006, p. 247).

The sources of evidence for this study align closely with Creswell (2007) and Prior’s (2011) definitions of public records and private documents. Evidence was gathered from public records within the institutional settings of the NSW BOS, DET and education ministry, including records that were gathered from the media (specifically, newspapers). Other sources of documentary evidence were drawn from private documents gathered from individual stakeholders, including personal notes, annotated meeting minutes and papers. These sources attest to the events during the period under review of the Primary curriculum and the development of the *Foundation Statements* (BOS, 2005b) from the perspective of the educational stakeholders.

Documents used in this study are classified as materials that can be read and are related to some aspect of the socio-political world of the stakeholder, such as official reports and private and personal notes. Prior (2011) noted that there are certain conditions when using documentary sources, including the decision to produce the record in the first place, the decision to keep it or not keep it, and the decision to store it in a particular archive and in a particular format. These decisions were taken into consideration when choosing the documents to analyse for this study. (See Appendix I for the types of focus questions used to assist in choosing documents.)

3.3.1.2 Sources of evidence

The corpus of documents constructed for use in this study are outlined below.

Public records:

Institutional:

- *Education Reform Act 1990*
- Report of the Committee of Review of NSW Schools (1989)
- NSW BOS Board Bulletin (2000–2006)
- Draft NSW BOS Primary Curriculum Project documents (2000–2004)
- Review—*Focusing on Learning: Report of the review of outcomes and profiles in New South Wales Schooling* (Eltis, 1995)
- Evaluation—*Time to Teach, Time to Learn: Report on the evaluation of outcomes, assessment and reporting in NSW government schools* (Eltis & Crump, 2003)
- NSW BOS Report on the Consultation on Defining Mandatory Outcomes in the K–6 Curriculum (BOS, 2005a)
- NSW BOS Primary Curriculum *Foundation Statements* (BOS, 2005b)
- DET's response to the Eltis Evaluation: *Getting the balance right* (DET, 2005)
- Syllabus Development Handbook (BOS, 2006)
- NSW BOS PCC meeting minutes and papers (OBOS, 2000–2006)
- Keynote address by Dr Nelson, the then Minister for Education, Training and Science, in 2003 at the Pursuing Opportunity and Prosperity Conference on 'Taking schools to the next level'.

Media:

- *The Australian* and *Sydney Morning Herald* newspapers and their subsidiaries that cover national, state and regional education issues, 1990–2006
- *Education* journal of the NSW Teachers Federation, 1990–2006
- ministerial media releases from federal Minister for Education and Training, 1990–2006
- ministerial media releases from the NSW Minister for Education and Training, 1990–2006

Private (non-institutional) documents:

- researcher's annotated copies of the minutes of the NSW PCC meetings (2003–2006)
- notes taken by BOS liaison officers, curriculum officers and inspectors for consultation meetings on Defining Mandatory Outcomes in the K–6 Curriculum 2004
- memoranda involving stakeholder groups, 2000–2006
- copies of meeting notes of the PCC sourced from the then representative member for the Federation of Parents and Citizens Association of NSW.

In gathering these documentary sources, the researcher was mindful of the need to ensure the status of the documents available for analysis and the quality, validity and reliability of the data constructed from them. In this respect, the documents selected for analysis were considered for their authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning of the text to ensure quality of the documentary sources (Prior, 2011). Due to the volume of the data available, samples of data sources were perused and the more pertinent documents, such as those stated above, were analysed to illuminate the key issues, concepts, themes and categories.

3.3.1.3 Benefits of using documents

There are many benefits to using documents as sources of evidence, as they provided a valuable source of text-based data (Creswell, 2007). Coffey (2013) suggested that documents contain a depth of meaning that other, more abstract, forms of evidence may lack. Hodder (1994) claimed that, in seeking to “explore multiple and conflicting voices, differing and interacting interpretations” (p. 394), it is important to note that the documents were once “residues of human activity” (p. 395). The documents used in this study provided a range of alternative insights into the ways in which stakeholders perceived their actions and their lived experiences when they were involved in reviewing the K–6 curriculum and contributing to the decision on the mandatory outcomes. Flick (2006) also suggested that using documents is a way of contextualising information and can be instructive for understanding social realities in institutional contexts. However, texts (records and documents) were used alongside other forms of evidence (e.g., interviews) so that the particular biases of each were understood and compared (Hodder, 1994).

Coffey (2013) highlighted the benefits of using public documents as a useful focus on “social and cultural change” (p. 365). The use of public records was an effective way of exploring historical information regarding curriculum development processes and stakeholders' perspectives during this time.

3.3.1.4 Limitations of using documents

Three main limitations to the use of documents in qualitative research have been identified by researchers such as Denzin and Lincoln (2013c), Glasser and Strauss (1967) and Flick (2006). These are: the completeness of the documentary record, the determination of the document's authenticity and accuracy, and the understanding of the underlying meaning of the documents. The first limitation relates to ensuring that the documents used in the research provided a complete record for the 16-year period being studied. Glasser and Strauss (1967) noted that incomplete documentation can "frustrate the researcher's attempt to establish the continuity of unfolding events" (p. 162). A scan of public and private documents for this time ensured that the researcher had a complete documentary record for the study.

The determination of the documents' authenticity and accuracy was achieved by the researcher taking into account who had produced the documents, for what purpose, who had used them and how the appropriate sample of single documents was selected. The researcher focused on the documents' contents by taking into account their context, use and functions. The documents were a means by which the researcher was able to construct a specific version of an event or process within the historical timeframe established. This enabled the researcher to make a specific case for the curriculum decision-making process.

Institutions' documents should record institutional routines and information necessary for legitimising how things are done in such routines (Flick, 2006). Questioning the authenticity of the documents allowed the researcher to accurately establish the necessary timelines and sequence of events in the identification of each critical incident.

It can be difficult to gain an understanding of the meaning of documents written within institutional settings. Coffey (2013) observed that the routine circulation of minutes of meetings only records a partial and scripted version of events. She claims that "documents are usually recipient designed" (p. 375)—that is, they are produced with specific readers in mind. Due to the researcher's background and familiarity with the institutional documents, she was aware of the nature of these documents and found meaning not only in the actual text, but also in the way it was read and written (Derrida, 1978).

When taken into consideration, these limitations did not represent any significant concern.

3.3.2 Interviews

Interviews were used in this study to provide historical information and stakeholders' perspectives of the development of the Primary curriculum during the period specified. Kvale

and Brinkmann (2009) explained that conversation is a basic human interaction, and when we talk with each other we interact, pose questions and answer questions. Through these conversations, “we get to know other people, get to learn about their experiences, feelings, and hopes of the world they live in” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 5). The interviews allowed the researcher to gain an understanding of individuals’ perspectives in the curriculum development process. Richards and Morse (2013) claimed that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to prepare “broad, open-ended questions as a guide to topics they want covered” (p. 126) with the purpose of eliciting the participants’ stories. The use of semi-structured interviews was appropriate for this study as the researcher was knowledgeable about the different stakeholders involved on the Primary Curriculum Committee and in the BOS’s curriculum development processes. This provided information for the researcher to frame the discussion in advance. However, as noted by Richards and Morse (2013), it is important that the structuring of the interview does not limit the discovery of significant aspects in the curriculum decision-making processes not previously recognised.

Semi-structured interviews offered the researcher the organisation and comfort of pre-planned questions and confidence that data will be reliably obtained from all participants on the questions (Richards & Morse, 2013). Richards and Morse (2013) note that pre-structured questions should be worded so as not to exclude answers that would usefully widen the topic and are worded and presented to participants so as to invite detailed and complex answers. The semi-structured interviews enabled the exploration of the individual’s role as a representative of a stakeholder group, as well as the role of the group they represented, the strategies employed by groups to foster relationships within the group and with other groups, and the ways in which the group made its voice heard within the policy-making context. These interrelationships were explored during the interviews and later analysed so that the interplay and contestations of meaning and diversity of values and ideologies of the participants were examined. An interview guide (Appendix F: Interview Schedule of Areas of Investigation and Questions) allowed the researcher to develop questions about the topics in advance of the interview for exploration or clarification and focus during the interview.

3.3.2.1 Participant selection

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants in this research. It was a deliberate choice of participant selection due to the qualities each informant possessed (Tongco, 2007). Individuals were purposefully selected to inform an understanding of Primary curriculum development and the role of key stakeholders in the decision-making processes. The participants were representatives of stakeholder groups on the NSW BOS PCC. They were

specifically drawn from key stakeholders and educational agencies in NSW, as they represent the various educational interests in the state. Tongco (2007) claimed that the use of purposive sampling is especially exemplified through the key informant technique because “key informants are observant, reflective members of the community of interest who know much about the culture and are both able and willing to share their knowledge” (p. 147).

Eighteen semi-structured interviews were conducted. Due to the nature of the participants’ direct involvement with the BOS, they either self-nominated to participate or were nominated by their interest group. The stakeholder groups and their representatives were selected as they were “able to purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomena in the study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). The decisions made about their selection were based on a specific set of qualifications: school sector representation (government or non-government schools); their representation of their group on representative educational committees; knowledge of BOS curriculum development processes; and knowledge and expertise of the Primary curriculum in NSW. Detailed profiles of each participant and qualifications, and the stakeholder group they represent on the BOS and PCC are provided in Appendix G.

The interviews conducted with these purposefully selected participants explored the attitudes and perspectives of the individual educational stakeholder representatives and their interactions in the Primary curriculum development processes. These individuals represented the interests of the schooling authorities and educational agencies on the NSW BOS. Each schooling authority and/or agency has diverse interests that represent different levels of sectoral interests. This sampling ensured that groups represented the range of interests of key educational stakeholders.

3.3.2.2 Interview preparation

Contact with each participant in the sample group was initially made via email and then followed up with a telephone call, as all participants were known to the researcher. The email briefly outlined the study and explained that the researcher would make contact. To ensure consistency in the information communicated to participants, a prompt sheet was developed prior to contact. Once contact was made, the researcher established the participant’s interest in the study. The participant’s details were documented, and the study information sheet and consent form was sent via postal mail (see Appendix B and Appendix C).

Upon receiving the consent forms, follow-up telephone calls were made to establish the interview time and place and to confirm the participant’s details. All details were recorded on

a participant profile sheet (see Appendix D). This was designed to assist with providing and gathering consistent information about the participant and the group they represented. It comprised the following features:

- study overview—aim and purpose;
- confirmation of participation in the study;
- details of the interview time and place and suggested travel or location tips;
- confirmation of group representation; and
- any other contact details.

Participant profiles sheets were added to after each contact to provide the researcher with information on each participant and the interest group they represented. This information assisted with the introductory briefing at the start of the interview, allowed the researcher to check that the participant's details were correct during the interview, and ensured that there was an opportunity for additional comments to be added at the conclusion of the interview if the participant wanted to include other information they considered relevant to the issues raised. All participants welcomed this opportunity to talk about their involvement in the Primary curriculum development process and their role as a representative of their group. The researcher was encouraged by the candour of the participants in providing their views and insights into the working structure of their organisation.

3.3.2.3 Interview timetable

Following Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) advice to provide structure to an open and flexible interview study, the interview timetable was developed. A table detailing all interviews in chronological order was established on a single page (see Appendix E). This enabled the researcher to make decisions about the method on a more reflective level based on knowledge of the topic and consequences for the project. The researcher was able to effectively organise locations and efficiently manage time between and at interviews.

The openness and flexibility of the semi-structured interviews required advanced preparation. The interviews were conducted within a two-month period to give the researcher time to organise travel to and between participants. Once the interview was conducted, the researcher allowed time for reflection and added any further observations to the participant's profile. Immediately after each interview, the researcher reviewed the participant's profile sheet and noted observations and any additional information requiring follow up. This was an important process, especially when two interviews were conducted on the same day due to the proximity of the participants and the convenience of the locations.

3.3.2.4 Interview schedule

Each interview was conducted to obtain responses in four specific areas regarding stakeholder representation and participation. The interviews consisted of a number of open-ended questions and four areas for investigation related directly to the research questions. These areas were:

1. educational stakeholder and group interactions;
2. building network communities;
3. pursuing group interests; and
4. decision-making processes and the syllabus development process.

Using the interview schedule as a guide, the researcher found that each interview proceeded as a conversation, but with a specific purpose and structure (see Appendix F). This was characterised by a systematic form of questioning that built on the topics being explored (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The questions were brief and simple. Each focus area was introduced, and responses were pursued with interest and meaning. The probes included in the schedule allowed the researcher to further explore the interviewee's response if necessary. They also enabled the researcher to follow up an answer from the participant to seek more information or clarity about what was said (Tisdell & Merriam, 2015). The order of each focus area was not necessarily adhered to—especially when the researcher felt that the interviewee had already responded to the question as part of another area and the conversation had naturally covered the topic.

Although each interview was scheduled to take approximately 30 minutes, the interviews exceeded the timeframe due to participants' interactions with the interview content and the insights gained through their recollections of their involvement in the curriculum development process. As Johnson and Christensen (2004) explained: "qualitative interviewing allows the researcher to enter into the inner world of another person and to gain an understanding of that person's perspective" (p. 183). During the interviews, the researcher made notes about points to follow up, key terms and references made to their group, and other observable attributes, such as the tone used in responding to certain questions, the amount of thinking time required recalling information and body language used in response to particular questions. The researcher added this information to the participant's profile sheet. This information was important for the analysis of the interviews, when examining the spoken text after it had been transcribed to written text.

The interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed (See Appendix H for a sample of an interview transcript). Printed transcriptions were then mailed to the participants, providing the opportunity to check that the transcript was an accurate account of the interview and to verify that the information correctly represented their views. Several participants commented on their speech and use of colloquialisms, but acknowledged that the transcript was their spoken words in print and made only minimal changes where acronyms were used. All transcripts were returned within a specified period of time. At this stage, participants were given another opportunity to withdraw from the study. All participants chose to continue to be involved.

3.3.2.5 Interview data collection

The transcripts of the recordings from the interviews were studied to identify and draw out themes, relationships and concepts that contributed to relevant theories of stakeholder salience and curriculum development decision-making processes espoused in this study. The theories, which were generated fully in the data, were a result of the interplay between the collection of the data and the analysis process. Themes, relationships and concepts were coded to highlight relevant issues and themes important in the curriculum development process and interest groups (Krathwohl, 1997). The data were analysed individually and comparatively with all other interviews, transcripts and documentary sources. The interview data—digital recordings and transcripts—were saved and stored electronically for analysis.

3.3.2.6 Limitations of interviews

Prosser (2013) claimed that a limiting factor of conducting interviews is the narrow parameters of the responses; however, researchers also need to be aware of factors such as trust and reality, which can affect the interview. In addressing the concern regarding a possible narrowing of responses, the development of the interview schedule, which included open-ended questions and probes for further discussion, allowed for continued discussion in the areas under investigation.

Tisdell and Merriam (2015) noted that the “trustworthiness of the data is tied directly to the trustworthiness of those who collect and analyze the data” (p. 260). To overcome the concern of the trustworthiness or credibility of the researcher, and to ensure the essential components of the study and its findings, the researcher was open and forthcoming by providing details of how the data would be managed, analysed and stored. The researcher also gave each participant a transcribed copy of the interview for checking and verification. These were returned with minor corrections.

3.3.3 Ethical Considerations

Formal approval for this study was granted by Macquarie University's Ethics Review Committee (Human Research) on 21 January 2009 (Reference: HE27FEB2009-D06282). Once approval was received (see Appendix A), letters requesting the participation of various stakeholders were forwarded directly to each organisation (Appendix B). The participation of individuals was also sought via a formal written request following an initial approach via email.

Documentary materials sourced from the various stakeholders' websites were already in the public domain and, as a result, did not require ethics approval. To access records of meetings (agendas and minutes) and the internal correspondence of key stakeholders, letters seeking consent were sent to the relevant personnel within specific educational and professional organisations.

Many authors exploring the potential of qualitative research design address the importance of ethical considerations (e.g., Denzin & Lincoln, 2013a; Ryen, 2011; Flick, 2006). They note that the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of informants. Ryen (2011, p. 430) also stressed that "at some point we may intrude into that person's zone of privacy", where sensitive information is revealed and participants' observations can be seen as an invasion into the life of the informant. In terms of this data collection exercise, participants were informed at the beginning of the interview that the researcher would record the interview and take notes. This is of particular concern in this study, where each participant's position and institution were highly visible in the community.

As the participants interviewed were known to the researcher, the following safeguards were employed to protect their rights:

- The researcher ensured that the objectives of the study were clearly articulated verbally and in writing to each participant (this included a description of how the data would be used).
- Written consent to proceed with the study was received from the participants.
- Participants who nominated research exemption were able to do so without prejudice. They had the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason and without adverse consequences. This was clearly stated on the statement of participation form reviewed by the Macquarie University Ethics Committee 2007.
- Participants were informed of all data collection devices and activities.

- Verbatim transcriptions and written interpretations and reports were made available to the participants, and they were invited to correct their record.
- The participants' rights, interests and wishes were considered when decisions were made regarding reporting the data.
- The final decision regarding participant anonymity rested with the participant.

A high level of confidentiality was maintained by the researcher at all times, and the data collected were carefully managed and stored in a secure physical and electronic environment. Paper-based copies of the transcripts were viewed only by the researcher and the participant, and electronic copies were handled by the researcher only. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of participants who requested not to have either their group or identity named. A secretarial service was employed to transcribe the interviews. The service was bound to confidentiality due to the nature of their service.

3.3.4 Researcher as Participant Observer

This study included the researcher in the role of participant observer. It should be acknowledged that, as the researcher, I may well have constructed my own versions of knowledge in this research. I may have brought to it my own biases about processes, policies and procedures while employed at the NSW BOS, and therefore identified as a person involved in the research as a participant observer. Along with these biases, values that I hold as an educator of Primary school students, member of a professional teacher association, syllabus writer and Senior Curriculum Officer, as well as my experiences as a classroom teacher and my knowledge of Primary curriculum, are also relevant.

Schwandt and Jang (2004) used the concept of a 'speech-partner' to express this relationship between the researcher and the person being researched, stating:

... when we converse with another person in an effort to come to some understanding we are always taking ourselves along, so to speak, in the activity. In other words, our being (gestures, emotions, way of understanding, way of questioning, orientation, stance, perspective, etc.) and our knowing are closely related. Each party to the conversation must deal with his or her own way of understanding... as well as the others' way of understanding. (p. 36)

In dealing with the participants in this study, the researcher listened to others without denying or suppressing "the otherness of the other" (Bernstein, 1991, p. 336). During the data collection and data analysis stages, the researcher was vigilant about not dismissing claims as being 'obscure, woolly, or trivial', or dismissing translations that may have been alien to her

own “entrenched vocabularies” (Bernstein, 1991, p. 336). The researcher was aware that her own experiences could affect the study; thus, she took measures to ensure that her biases, values and emotions were not implicated in the gathering and analyses of the data. Extreme caution was exercised and ethical protocols were observed so as not to exert undue influence on the participants she knew.

3.4 Data Management

Richards and Morse (2013) maintained that managing data “involves the physical handling of the growing heaps of records as well as intellectual handling of their growing complexity” (p. 135). Due to the volume of data for this study, procedures had to be established for its physical and intellectual management. Data management requires a systematic, coherent process of collection, storage and retrieval aimed at ensuring high-quality accessible data, documentation of the analyses carried out, and retention of the data and associated analyses after the study is complete (Richards, 2011; Richards & Morse, 2013; Creswell, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). After the data were collected, they had to be processed before any analysis was conducted.

Processing of the interview data required the recordings to be transcribed, verified, corrected and edited if necessary. Participant data was recorded and reported in the text using a “personal communication” citation (APA, 2010, p. 179). The documentary sources were filed chronologically both electronically and physically into clearly identifiable and manageable folders. Electronic copies of audio recordings and transcripts were backed up on two external storage drives and filed. All returned print and electronic copies of transcripts were also filed and stored in a single location for analysis. Print materials were sorted, logged and filed into folders, as well as scanned and filed electronically. The researcher also kept a field book, participant profile folders and a code book (in hard and soft copies) where observations, comments, memos and notes were stored for analysis.

Faced with the large amount of qualitative material, the researcher also sought to manage the interpretation of the datasets through the use of an electronic data management system and computer-assisted models of analysis. The computer-assisted text analysis software program NVivo was used to assist with data management and analysis. NVivo enabled the data to be handled efficiently and effectively.

Storage, access and retrieval were a major concern for the management of the data. Miles and Huberman (1994) stressed that a good storage and retrieval system is critical for keeping track of available data because it provides easy access, flexibility and reliable use of the data. A

clear indexing system in both hard and soft copies was maintained from data collection through to data analysis. The data management system instigated by the researcher was supported by Levine's (1985) "general storage and retrieval functions for the management of data" (cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 430).

Using a computer, these functions were carried out in a straightforward and effective manner once the database and associated spreadsheets had been set up. NVivo provided data security by storing the database and files together in a single QSR NVivo file, thereby enabling the researcher to easily manage the data and conduct searches for retrieval. A manual filing system was also set up to store observation notes, notebooks and copies of validated interview transcripts and paper-based documents.

3.5 Data Analysis

This section outlines the researcher's approach to data analysis and interpretation. Data analysis is a process of "bringing order, structure and interpretation to the mass of collected data" (Richards & Morse, 2013, p. 137). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), data analysis consists of "three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification" (p. 10). The analysis of the data collected for this study was guided by: Miles and Huberman's (1994) descriptions for data reduction, display and verification; Krippendorff's (2004) advice on content analysis components of sampling and recording/coding; and Richards (2011), Richards and Morse (2013) and Saldana's (2009) advice on coding, memoing and coding cycles and the use of NVivo as a specific computer-assisted analysis tool. Content analysis and grounded theory are the theoretical perspectives that informed this analysis. NVivo assisted in the storing and organising of documents and the ideas, thoughts, concepts and categories of analysis that were produced during analysis.

3.5.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis enabled the researcher to make sense of the textual material of the documentary sources in this study—that is, the newspaper articles, newsletters and journals from stakeholder groups. Krippendorff (2004) defined content analysis as a "research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to contexts of their use" (p. 18). Procedures for analysing textual material in the context of their uses involve the systematic reading of the text and the identification of the concepts, phrases or categories of words (Flick, 2006; Krippendorff, 2004).

The procedures for content analysis—“classification, tabulation, and evaluation of key symbols and themes” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. xvii)—were used to ascertain meaning and knowledge from the documentary artefacts. In conducting the content analysis, the following activities, which were adapted from Krippendorff’s (2004) points of entry into the content analysis, were performed to guide the handling and interpretation of the documentary data:

1. *Locating the relevant texts*: The availability of rich texts identified from media, the Internet and from stakeholders (groups and individuals) motivated the researcher to gather sets of texts regarding Primary curriculum development within the established timeframe. A scan of stakeholders’ websites, online newspaper archives and institutional websites (Australian Government Department of Education and Training, NSW BOS, NSW DET) enabled the researcher to locate information relevant to the topic for the period under review. This was noted, downloaded and saved to the desktop in folders. Physical copies of texts, such as stakeholder newsletters, journals, feature articles, minutes of meetings, agendas and papers, were also located and organised into folders.
2. *Sampling the texts*: A simple random sample of newspaper articles, newsletters, news features, journal articles and reports were selected by searching for key words—for example, Primary curriculum, curriculum development, stakeholders, professional groups, and key learning areas. They were then read, and key words and phrases were highlighted. Reading the headlines/titles and the first paragraph of the text enabled the researcher to gain a sense of the topics and issues being reported. All texts were catalogued into their relevant folders.
3. *Developing categories and recording instructions*: The researcher developed a set of instructions of what to look for and how to code it once the text was selected for analysis. This ensured consistency for comparability. The following is a sample set of instructions developed from the sampling of texts:
 - Why was the document written?
 - Who is the text by?
 - What are the issues being discussed?
 - Who is the text about?
 - What key words or phrases are used?
 - What kind of language is being used? Institutional/emotive/advocacy/research.

These instructions were pretested by applying them to the sample texts. Codes and categories that emerged from the sample reading were noted. A spreadsheet with categories and codes was set up and added to as analysis of the documents progressed.

1. Selecting an analytical procedure: Text analysis software NVivo was used to calculate the frequency of specific words (e.g., pronouns, war-related words, such as battle, stoush) and capture excerpts of texts with specifically identified words and phrases (e.g., curriculum development, outcomes, mandatory outcomes, consultation).
2. Adopting standards: As the study only had one coder (the researcher), consistency in recording and coding was ensured. Following the set instructions ensured reliability in the analysis. However, as more topics and issues emerged from the data with the inclusion of additional texts (e.g., interviews), extra codes, categories and subcategories were included in the coding process. A consistent approach was maintained because the researcher was the only person handling the data and establishing and following the procedures developed.
3. Grouping, classifying and analysing: This part of the content analysis enabled the researcher to systematically analyse the texts. The texts were manually and electronically coded. Text associated with a code and sub-code were grouped into a spreadsheet and classified under topics. Reference was also made to the source of the text (e.g., line and page numbers and/or paragraphs from interview transcript) and the issues and topics were also noted for analysis.

3.5.2 Grounded Theory and Constructionism

Corbin and Strauss (2008) and Corbin and Holt (2005) viewed grounded theory as a specific methodology that was developed by Glasser and Strauss in 1967 for the purpose of building theory from the data. However, Charmaz and Bryant (2011) claimed that questions have been raised about its epistemological assumptions and methods of knowledge production undermining the credibility of the method. So as to encompass these debates, Charmaz and Bryant (2011) looked at data collection and proposed ideas for shaping it to enhance theory construction. Using grounded theory strategies to increase the methodological power, the credibility of the analysis can be illustrated through the coding of the actions of stakeholders by conducting line-by-line initial coding, thus increasing the credibility of the study.

Charmaz (2013) defined grounded theory as a “method of qualitative inquiry in which data collection and analysis reciprocally inform each other through an emergent iterative process” (p. 293). Charmaz suggested that grounded theory consists of systematic inductive guidelines for collecting and analysing data to build theoretical frameworks that explain the collected

materials. Based on the characteristics of grounded theory, the researcher used a set of essential guidelines or analytical tools to clarify thinking and provide alternative ways of thinking about the data and facilitate the teasing out of relevant concepts.

In responding to the interpretivists or constructivists that truth is made rather than 'discovered' (Charmaz & Bryant, 2011, p. 297) the use of grounded theory in this study addressed the issues of credible data; analytic credibility; and theoretical credibility. To inform the concrete practices involved in this constructivists ground theory methodology, the researcher looked at how the data was collected; coding and theoretical sampling to shape the grounded theory practice to ensure credibility.

The following analytical tools were used for interviews:

- *Initial coding and categorisation of the data:* Open coding of the interviews was conducted on the first two interview transcripts, where initial coding was conducted line-by-line searching for important words, phrases and/or paragraphs, which were highlighted and labelled. Words such as learning, curriculum, outcomes, subjects, mathematics and English were highlighted and classified under the category of curriculum. As categories were developed, they were written into a code book.
- *Concurrent data generation or collection and analysis:* This involved the collection and generation of data, initially from the first two interviews, then the next three interviews, and so on until all interview transcripts were coded and analysed.
- *Writing memos:* These were the written records of the researcher's thinking during the reading of the transcripts, development of the categories, and sorting and classification of the codes. These ideas were added to the code book, allowing the researcher to think about the content, topics and issues, and their usefulness to the findings. This was an ongoing activity throughout the process to assist in the development of theory around stakeholder interaction.
- *Constant comparative analysis:* The collection of data and ongoing analysis enabled constant comparisons to be made between incidents and incidents, incidents and codes, codes and codes, codes and categories, and categories and categories. A concept that emerged from the first few interviews, such as stakeholder strategies, was then further examined in terms of possible connections to other concepts or parts of the data. This was where subcategories were developed and subsequently coded and checked with the reading, coding and analysis of the following interviews.

It is important to establish a procedure for the analysis of the qualitative data. Various researchers (e.g., Creswell, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994) have presented different

approaches to data analysis—all of which include a numbers of steps or stages. The next section outlines the stages of analysis used in this study.

3.5.3 Stages of Analysis

3.5.3.1 Concept identification

The first step in analysis involved discovering concepts, and began with the first and second interviews. Concepts were identified from the distinct events or incidents in the data. The researcher examined the actions, interactions and meanings given to events of stakeholders' involvement in the curriculum development processes. Early coding occurred as the text was dissected into sections or areas of investigation for intensive scrutiny. As the concepts evolved, they were used as the basis for subsequent data from the interviews.

The identification of relevant concepts involved interacting with the different datasets. This enabled comparisons to be made and questions to be asked, thereby heightening sensitivity to the participants' words. Ideas for concepts were placed on sticky notes on a display board to provide a visual representation of the codes, themes and categories. These were moved around the display board when looking for connections between the ideas. Field notes and interview passages were examined line by line or paragraph by paragraph. Questions were asked, such as what is going on here? What are these data all about? As the questions were answered, events were given names that represented and explained what was going on.

The researcher then moved onto the next piece of data and compared it to the first, questioning whether it was expressed the same way or differently. If it pertained to an idea previously expressed, it was given the same name, and the details around it were used to fill in more information about the concept's properties and dimensions. If it pertained to something different, it was given another conceptual name, and that concept was explored for further detail. Other questions included who and what was involved, when, where, how the concepts or ideas are expressed, what meanings are given to it. The idea was to identify as many properties and dimensions of a concept as possible. Properties and dimensions defined the concept by giving it specificity and differentiating it from other concepts. These ideas were added to the memos in the researcher's code book. Once all the codes were identified, they were inputted into NVivo.

3.5.3.2 Data reduction

A stage of data reduction occurred so that the dataset was represented by a manageable number of relevant categories. The data reduction was initially enabled by NVivo by grouping concepts grounded in the interview data and media articles. The researcher grouped concepts

into categories by making comparisons and asking questions. The same strategies were used to identify concepts by looking for commonalities between concepts to indicate how the concepts might come together. Further data reduction of reports and stakeholders' newsletters and journals was undertaken manually.

The data were woven back together around groups of concepts. This occurred simultaneously with the coding because it was possible to pick out a concept while recognising that it was connected to other pieces of data and concepts. Searching the text for recurring words and themes allowed for data reduction and sense-making, which enabled the volume of material to be reduced to manageable 'chunks' of data that connected to a specific incident. The researcher then attempted to identify core consistencies and meanings within the text so they were applied consistently when analysing the data.

Once the concepts had been grouped into categories, the data gathered for each concept became part of the properties and dimensions of what were now subcategories of a larger category.

The researcher was engaged in a constant comparative process by:

1. teasing out codes in the first two interviews and comparing them to the codes formed from the initial content analysis of the sample documentary sources;
2. reading and coding the next set of interview data as transcripts of interviews were returned; categories were formed and codes were then added;
3. manually coding all interviews once they were transcribed and read using the categories and subcategories developed;
4. further exploring newspaper archives by searching for key words and phrases; relevant articles were downloaded and added to the database and uploaded to NVivo to identify key words and classify them into categories and subcategories; and
5. applying codes to all datasets.

By the end of the comparative analysis, eight major categories were identified (see Table 3.1). Each category contained two subcategories, and each subcategory was again subcategorised into six areas (see Table 3.2). Coding for category 1 concepts is shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Formation of codes for category 1

Code	Theme/label		Code	Theme/label
1	Curriculum processes		5	National curriculum
2	Assessment		6	A–E reporting
3	Reporting		7	National testing
4	<i>Foundation Statements</i>		8	Industrial response

Coding for category 1 and subcategories 2 and 3 is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Formation of codes for sub-categories 2 and 3

Code and themes for each pattern (category)	Codes for each process	Codes for types of meetings	Colour codes for stakeholder groups
1. Curriculum processes	a. Formal processes b. Informal processes	i. NSW BOS ii. PCC iii. Consultation meetings iv. Planning meetings v. Writing sessions vi. Other	Black: Government sector groups Burgundy: Catholic sector groups Yellow: Independent schools sector groups Green: Cross-sectoral professional teachers groups Blue: NSW Office of BOS members

3.5.3.3 Abductively inferring contextual phenomena

Abductively inferring contextual phenomena from the texts during the analysis process bridged the gap between the descriptive accounts of the texts and what was meant, referred to, entailed, provoked or caused (Krippendorff, 2004). This allowed the researcher to theorise about the role of stakeholders in curriculum development by making inductions from the data and deductions about the relationships between the concepts.

This part of the analysis involved discovering patterns, themes and categories in the data. Findings emerged out of the data through the researcher's interactions with them. This was essential in the early stages—especially when developing the codes for content analysis and figuring out possible patterns, themes and categories. The open coding that was used emphasised the importance of being open to, and becoming immersed in, the data—being grounded—so that the embedded meanings and relationships between the stakeholders emerged. The final confirmatory stage of analysis was to test and reaffirm the authenticity and appropriateness of the content analysis. This included carefully examining the data that did not fit into the categories developed.

3.5.3.4 Theoretical sampling

Theoretical sampling is defined as “the process of identifying and pursuing clues that arise during analysis in grounded theory study” (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 69). Theoretical sampling was used to gather data directed by emerging concepts. The researcher followed the trail of concepts, looking for websites, people and/or events that enabled further comparisons of data. This extended the knowledge of the properties and relationships between concepts around stakeholder interactions. The following theoretical sampling occasions occurred in the course of the data analysis:

- Dr Phil Lambert was interviewed to obtain greater insights into the historical timeline concerning the adoption of an outcomes-based approach to curriculum development in NSW. Ms Ziems from ECEC suggested interviewing Dr Lambert while she was being interviewed about her group's participation in the consultation on mandatory outcomes. Dr Lambert assisted in filling in the gaps in the timeline and provided further details on the development of Primary curriculum materials throughout the 1990s.
- Professor Gordon Stanley was interviewed to obtain background information about the policy-making aspects and political implications of developing a more manageable Primary curriculum. Interviewing Professor Stanley enabled the creation of a more comprehensive historical timeline and a broader picture of the socio-political imperatives in curriculum decision-making.
- Further sampling and analysis of media articles. After the initial sampling of news articles on the development of the Primary curriculum, further collecting of media articles provided a greater depth of understanding of the issues and concerns regarding outcomes-based curriculum in NSW.

3.5.3.5 Category saturation

In the analysis process, category saturation was reached when no new concepts or further properties or dimensions of existing concepts were identified from the data. Although additional properties and dimensions were found and then added to the memos in the code book, saturation occurred when the data were repeating the same information already coded and categorised.

3.5.3.6 Memoing

Memo writing was an essential component in the analysis because it allowed for theory development and enabled the researcher to keep track of ever-evolving concepts and complex ideas that were generated. Memos were the written records of the researcher's thoughts, interpretations and directions to herself. They allowed the researcher to keep track of the developing theories around curriculum decision-making processes and stakeholder management. The researcher included the memos in the code book and transcribed some into the spreadsheet database. Memos were also added to sections of text categorised in NVivo. This allowed for easy retrieval of conceptual ideas and the formulation of ideas into theory. Figure 3.2 shows how memoing was integrated into all stages in the analysis.

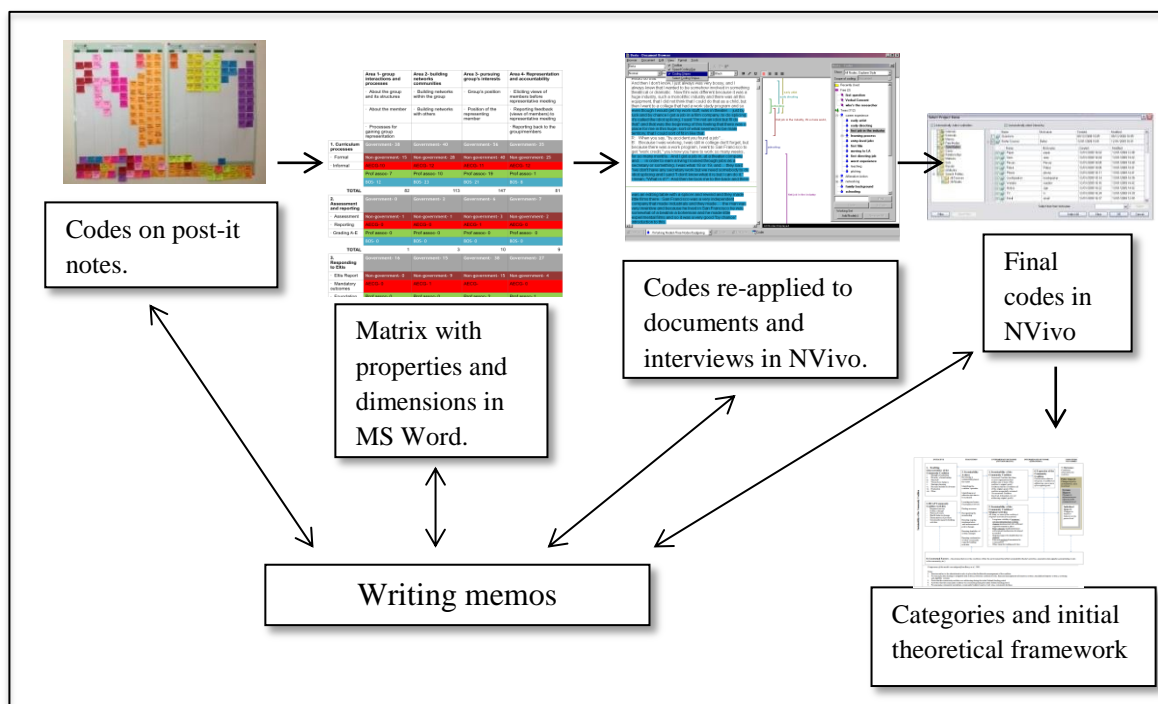


Figure 3.2: Example of the coding process (adapted from Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 104)

3.5.3.7 Narrating the answers to the research questions

Narrating the answers to the research questions enabled the researcher to tell the story of the results so that others could understand the role of the stakeholders in the curriculum development process. In determining substantive significance, the researcher addressed the following questions:

- How solid, coherent and consistent was the evidence in support of the findings? (Triangulation was used in determining the strength of the evidence in support of the evidence.)
- To what extent and in what ways did the findings increase and deepen understanding of the role of stakeholders in the curriculum development process?
- To what extent were the findings consistent with other knowledge? Were they supported by and supportive of other work having confirmatory significance (e.g., a finding that breaks new ground has discovery or innovative significance)?
- To what extent were the findings useful for contributing to interest group theory and curriculum development processes in education policy making?

In lieu of statistical significance, explanations of the practical and substantive significance of the findings and the contributions the study will make to the literature are presented in subsequent chapters.

3.5.4 Frame of the Critical Incident Analysis Technique

The critical incident analysis technique was used as an organisational framework for presenting the analysis. Drawing on the work of Flanagan (1954) and Kirby (2010), the critical incident analysis technique offers a practical approach to collecting and analysing information about human activities and their significance to the people involved. It is capable of yielding rich, contextualised data that reflect real-life experiences. Through the use of the critical incident analysis technique, the researcher was able to identify five distinct developments or incidents. For each critical incident, the framework provides a description of the situation, an account of the actions of key stakeholders, and an outcome or result. This was later developed into a method for structuring, organising and reporting the findings. The five critical incidents are:

1. *A call to arms—Managing the outcomes-based approach to curriculum*: The events and developments in the lead-up to the 2003 state election.
2. *Strategic manoeuvres—Averting industrial action*: Examines the people and events leading to the commissioning of the Evaluation (2003).
3. *The rebellion builds—Challenging the BOS' mandatory outcomes*: The interactions of key educational stakeholders during curriculum decision-making.
4. *The final assault—Abandon the mandatory*: The interactions of other educational stakeholder groups in the curriculum development process.
5. *Strategic retreat—A change in curriculum direction*: Delivering a solution.

The critical incident framework captured the interconnectedness of the different processes, players and responses that converged during each incident.

3.6 Triangulation

The research model adopted for this study included a variation of the Concurrent Triangulation Strategy (CTS) defined by Creswell (2007). A visual representation of this model is shown in Figure 3.3. The variation from the standard CTS strategy allowed the researcher to collect data using different methods over time. The combined methods sought to ascertain stakeholders' perceptions of the curriculum development process during the response to the Evaluation (2003) and the development of the *Foundation Statements* (2005b). The semi-structured qualitative interviews gave stakeholders the opportunity to give a more in-depth account of their experiences (Birks & Mills, 2011) during the consultation phase in the development of the *Foundation Statements*. These data were then matched against the data gathered during the content analysis to determine the reliability and validity

of the findings. Punch (2005) suggested that both qualitative and quantitative methods have strengths and weaknesses, and that an “over reliance on any one method is not appropriate” (p. 241). This is particularly true for this type of study, where stakeholders’ perceptions (qualitative data derived from the interviews) were compared to documentary sources gathered from institutional settings and the media.

As noted by Creswell (2003), the quantitative approach enables standardised objective comparisons to be made of collected data, while the qualitative approach is considered more flexible and appropriate for obtaining stakeholders’ perspectives (Punch, 2005). This was done so the data could be triangulated, with the aim being to further “enhance the validity of the findings” (Punch, 2005, p. 247).

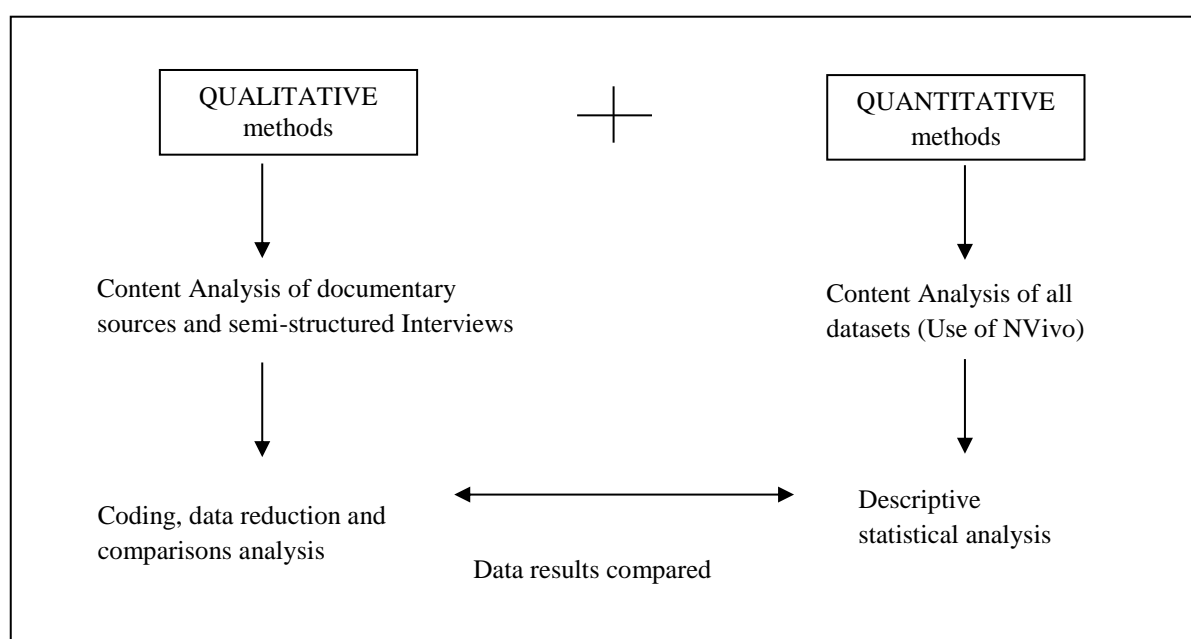


Figure 3.3: Concurrent triangulation design used for the study (adapted from Creswell, 2007, p. 210)

This study used triangulation to validate the findings and conclusions. By triangulating the data sources, the researcher was cognisant that discrepancies or disagreements among the different data could surface. However, the constant comparisons made between the data and the frequent asking of questions strengthened the reliability of the findings.

It was anticipated that the interviews would provide an enhanced level of detail to the qualitative data, which subsequently allowed for a more in-depth examination of the documentary sources. This process allowed stakeholders to describe what was meaningful or important to them using their own words rather than being restricted to predetermined categories. This in turn provided a high level of credibility and face validity, where results ‘rang true’ to participants and made intuitive sense to the researcher (Coffey, 2013).

The data contained deliberate overlaps in the ways in which the questions were asked of both the stakeholders and the documentary sources. This overlap was used to cross-validate and triangulate the results. Robson (2002) considered that validation is attained by overlapping like responses, thereby bringing a form of completeness to the data. Of interest to this research were responses that related to stakeholder advocacy and the reasons for representation on representative committees. Further, it was of interest to determine whether, once a stakeholder was appointed to the committee, the nominees pursued their own personal agendas. The use of the media, whether it was state or national news media or the stakeholder's newsletters or journal for members, were the other artefacts being investigated. In these aspects, this study has sought to find areas of overlap within the data.

The use of a triangulation strategy to compare data sources also served to strengthen the internal validity of this study by identifying whether stakeholders were responding in a consistent way across both forms of data collected (Creswell, 2003). Hesse-Biber (2010) stated that "triangulation can help counter all of the threats to validity" (p. 15). However, Perakyla (2011) noted that triangulation can also open up areas of discrepancy or disagreement between different sources where direct comparisons are required to be made. Therefore, caution was required at all levels when deciding which areas of data should be compared. Lewis and Ritchie (2003) believed that triangulation also strengthens the external validity of research, as "The use of different sources of information will help both to confirm and to improve the clarity, or perception, of a research finding" (p. 275).

3.7 Reliability and Validity

Flick (2006) discussed the importance of reliability in qualitative research coming down to the need for explication. Ellingson (2013) strongly supported this notion, claiming that a credible qualitative study depends upon making design and methods explicit while keeping detailed records throughout the process. For this study, the methods and the description of the steps taken to develop appropriate tools to measure the researcher's intention were reported earlier in this chapter. These measures included procedures for interviewing stakeholders, explicit guidelines for text analysis, and the recording of any concept identification, coding and data reduction through the continual process of memoing. To safeguard reliability, only one recorder worked with the data and entered codes, which were initially applied manually to the transcript and then reapplied to other documents using NVivo. This ensured that the researcher was being thorough, careful and honest with the data by reporting the findings accurately. Flick (2006) contended that "the reliability of the whole process will be better the more detailed the research process is documented as a whole" (p. 370). Thus, the reliability of

the study was improved by checking the dependability of the data and the procedures undertaken.

In discussions about grounding qualitative research, Flick (2006) contended that validity receives more attention than reliability. He suggested that this is because the question of validity can be summarised as a question of whether the researcher sees what he or she thinks they see. The approach adopted for this study drew upon Denzin and Lincoln (2013a), who located criteria for judging the processes and outcomes of constructivist inquiries grounded in concerns of “trustworthiness, authenticity, rigorous or ‘valid’ inquiry” (p. 249). They describe the constructivist approach as directed towards the quality of balance where all stakeholder “views, perspectives, values, claims, concerns, and voices should be apparent in the text” (p. 250). The methods and description of the steps taken to develop the analytical tools to obtain stakeholders’ views were presented earlier in this chapter. As Denzin and Lincoln (2013a) claimed, an “omission of stakeholder or participant voices reflects [...] a form of bias” (p. 250). The researcher heard a number of stakeholders’ voices from a range of interest group backgrounds across the schooling sector to obtain a variety of perspectives, beliefs and accounts of the curriculum decision-making processes of the time. Documentary sources were also used to ensure the validity and reliability of the study.

3.8 Objectivity

In a grounded theory study, the researcher seeks to shed light on a particular phenomenon rather than prove something. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) discussed objectivity as freedom from bias: “Objectivity as freedom from bias refers to reliable knowledge, checked and controlled, and undistorted by personal bias and prejudice” (p. 242). This common sense conception of objectivity as being free from bias implies doing good, solid, craftsman-like research to produce knowledge that can be systematically cross-checked and verified. Denzin and Lincoln (2013a) warned that “any action on the part of the inquirer is thought to destabilise objectivity and introduce subjectivity” (p. 250). To ensure objectivity, it has been important to acknowledge the researcher’s background and interests in this study, as she was a former Primary school teacher and senior curriculum officer for primary education at the NSW BOS. These professional experiences in Primary education have guided her interests in this study. Aware of her familiarity with the topic and the participants, and not wanting to influence any part of the data collection or analysis, the researcher followed the protocols and guidelines established for the collection of data. This provided consistency in obtaining diverse views from stakeholders across the same areas of the investigation, as well as being open to diverse views expressed across the various documentary sources. Maddill, Jordon and

Shirley (2000, cited in Flick, 2006, p. 375) discussed issues of objectivity and reliability in qualitative research, whereby objectivity is interpreted as consistency of meaning. Arriving at the same conclusions surmises them as objective and reliable.

The adoption of reflection and memoing throughout the coding and analysis process also assisted the researcher's objectivity. The application of the codes to different documents minimised any potential researcher bias. Although it was impossible to conduct this research without any bias—especially because the researcher was known to the stakeholders and was familiar with BOS processes—every attempt was made to be open to the data. The final strategy employed by the researcher to remain objective and reduce subjectivity was to triangulate the findings from different data sources to avoid privileging her own knowledge of the Primary curriculum or the views of any of the individual participants.

3.9 Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of this study was that the researcher was employed at the NSW BOS and was one of the Board officers involved in the review of the K–6 syllabuses and the response to the Eltis Evaluation (2003). However, as stated earlier, numerous measures were put in place to ensure that she did not influence the procedures of the study, the data or the views of the stakeholders.

A number of other potential limitations were also taken into consideration during the course of this research. These limitations included the data imbalance and restriction to the full range of stakeholder groups represented at the NSW BOS, and the availability of this data in the public domain. The purposive sampling of participants was used to ensure that members from the three schooling authorities were represented in the data. While there was no direct representation of independent schools sector stakeholders in this study, the participation of professional associations was considered a de-facto example of independent representation, as members in these groups are drawn from across the schooling authorities. The classification of *non-government* schools to include both Catholic and independent schools also sought to minimise this limitation. To this end the conclusions and recommendations featured in Chapters 5 and 6 rely on the triangulation of the data sources and member checking for the non-government school sector.

Restricting the stakeholder groups participating in the study to only those represented on the NSW BOS' PCC could be viewed as another limitation. The specific context of the research allowed for purposive sampling techniques of participant selection and documentary sources used in content analysis. Although this may seem to limit the generalisability of the findings,

it is noted that other educational stakeholders were not involved, nor were their views sought. The views of the stakeholders in this study were those with specific representation on the BOS at the time, and they were aware of the processes involved in the development of curriculum in NSW. Although the participants were those with privileged insider status, they also represented the diverse range of interests across broader educational stakeholders and agencies in NSW at the time. This research provides a snapshot of the interplay of stakeholders during the curriculum development process. Nevertheless, it is possible to apply the findings of this study more widely. For example, they could be applied in other educational contexts that involve the participation and contribution of stakeholders for the purpose of achieving curriculum change.

Other methodological criteria framing the study were trustworthiness and objectivity. Establishing trustworthiness relied on engagement with representatives of stakeholder groups, the use of various documentary data sources and member checks. The triangulation of data sources enhanced the researcher's objectivity. By cross-checking the interview data with documentary analyses of published reports, reviews and media, the researcher maintained objectivity. The findings were grounded in the data.

The final limitation of the study was the availability of data. As some documentary artefacts were only available in the public domain, access was only freely available to what was posted for public consumption. This is considered a limitation as the content uploaded for public consumption were the views and interpretations held by the individuals reporting on the issue. There was also an issue that certain information could only be accessed from websites via a 'members only' portal if membership to the group was granted. However, as the researcher was known to the participants, there were some instances where she was granted permission by individuals to access personal and private records.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the study's research design and the methodology employed to address the research questions. It explained the theoretical framework and described the theoretical perspective undertaken. A detailed description of the methodology followed, where specific methods of research and methods of data interpretation were presented. The investigation into stakeholders' involvement and participation in the curriculum development processes has been framed through the lens of interest group theory. Documentary sources and techniques were used, combined and analysed in a search for areas of convergence and divergence.

An explanation of the data analysis phase revealed a constructivist approach that, coupled with grounded theory and content analysis, used the critical incident analysis technique as an organisational framework for the presentation of the findings. The in-depth stages of analysis allowed the researcher to ensure reliability, validity and objectivity by being thorough, careful, honest and accurate. This was achieved through constant memoing and reflecting on the views and practices of stakeholders, as well as the researcher's own biases and assumptions and the ways in which they might affect the interpretations and conclusions drawn from the data.

This research was designed to provide a clearer understanding of the interactions and interplay of stakeholders involved in curriculum development. Of particular interest is how stakeholders often pursued personal agendas rather than those of the group they represent once they are appointed to representative committees. The following chapters will present the findings and the interpretation of the data from the perspective of stakeholders involved in a specific case of curriculum development in NSW.

Chapter 4: Reporting the Findings: Analyses of Stakeholder Interactions

“It is the stakeholder’s perception of criticality that will determine whether or not the stakeholder mobilises action, as urgency is necessary for execution.”

(Miles, 2015, p. 12)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the key findings drawn from an analysis of the interviews conducted with the key educational stakeholders profiled (see Appendix G), as well as the documentary and media sources identified in Chapter 3. The critical incident analysis technique has been used as a framework for organising and presenting the five major incidents identified in the data analysis. Each critical incident is a significant turning point in the development of the Primary K–6 curriculum over the 16-year period this study covers.

4.2 From 1990 to 2006: Five Critical Developments

Five critical incidents form the focus of this analysis:

1. A call to arms—Managing the outcomes-based approach to curriculum. This incident focuses on the events and developments leading up to the 2003 NSW state election. The data reveal growing resentment among teachers concerning increased demands associated with the introduction of an outcomes-based assessment and reporting regime.
2. Strategic manoeuvres—Averting industrial action. This incident examines the institutional responses to teachers’ claims of increased workloads. The NSW Teachers Federation approaches the Minister for Education and demands a review of teacher workloads associated with an OBE regime. An Evaluation (2003) of outcomes-based assessment and reporting in NSW schools is commissioned.
3. The rebellion builds—Challenging the BOS’ mandatory outcomes. This critical incident explores the responses from key educational stakeholders as they challenge the BOS regarding its capacity to deliver an acceptable set of mandatory outcomes in response to the recommendations of the Evaluation.
4. The final assault—Abandon the mandatory. The fourth critical incident examines the demands by other education stakeholder groups representing specialist curriculum

areas and the broader education community to abandon the defined set of mandatory outcomes.

5. Strategic retreat—A change in curriculum direction. The final incident examines the BOS’ retreat from defining a set of mandatory outcomes for the Primary curriculum. Following state-wide consultation with educational stakeholders, the BOS distances itself from its previous focus on mandatory outcomes and shifts attention to the development of broad statements of learning—the NSW Primary Curriculum Foundation Statements.

4.3 Identifying Critical Incidents

As noted, the five critical incidents identified above have been organised using the critical incident analysis technique proposed by Kirby (2010), as a framework for presenting the findings. These incidents have emerged from the data using grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and content analysis.

Each critical incident explores particular actions of the stakeholders, the institutional response, and the manner in which the incident was resolved. Figure 4.1 illustrates the chain reaction of stakeholders’ actions, reactions and responses, and the resultant decisions that were made for each critical incident. The final decision in each critical incident has consequences that lead to the next issue needing to be addressed.

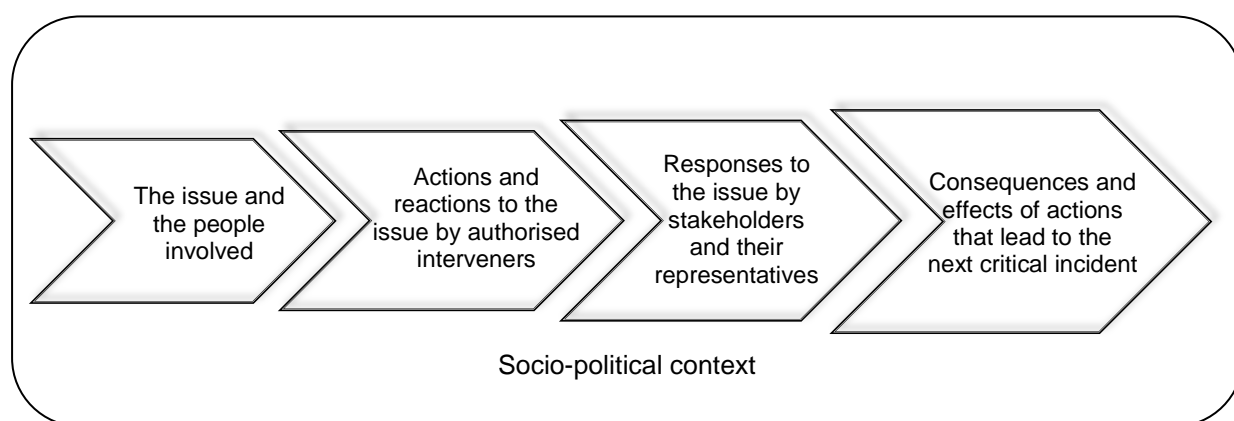


Figure 4.1: Structure of the critical incident

The critical incident analysis technique framework assisted in categorising the structural features highlighted in Figure 4.1. Identifying these structural features facilitated a greater understanding of the dynamic interrelationships that exist between the issues identified and analysed, the stakeholder groups involved (and/or their representatives), the actions of individuals, and the collective reactions of stakeholders. This approach highlights the

interconnectedness that can be found in the three key components of the critical incident analysis framework. These components, adapted from Kirby (2010), are:

- a significant event or threat, identified as each critical incident;
- the current political arena that involves the state and/or federal government; and
- the authorised interveners, such as the bureaucracy represented by the state and federal government ministries, the NSW BOS, and schooling authorities such as the NSW DET.

Of significance in each critical incident is the socio-political context: the NSW government, the NSW education ministry and the associated politics of the day. The intervention of the bureaucracy (NSW BOS) includes the involvement of the PCC, the respective Board officers, the DET (and its officers) and, to a lesser extent, the CEC (and its representatives).

An investigation of the data demonstrates that the critical incidents were sequential in nature, as shown in Figure 4.2. Over time, the culminating effect of these critical incidents led to a resolution that satisfied the education minister, Primary school teachers, NSW Teachers Federation, BOS, DET and Professor Eltis. The development of the *Foundation Statements* was ultimately seen as a way for teachers to better manage the Primary curriculum and the associated number of outcomes for assessment and reporting.

Each critical incident is now presented and examined in detail. Major themes have been identified, analysed and reported for each incident to provide a more nuanced understanding of the role of stakeholders in the development of the Primary curriculum. All interview data is reported in the text using a “personal communication” citation (APA, 2010, p. 179).

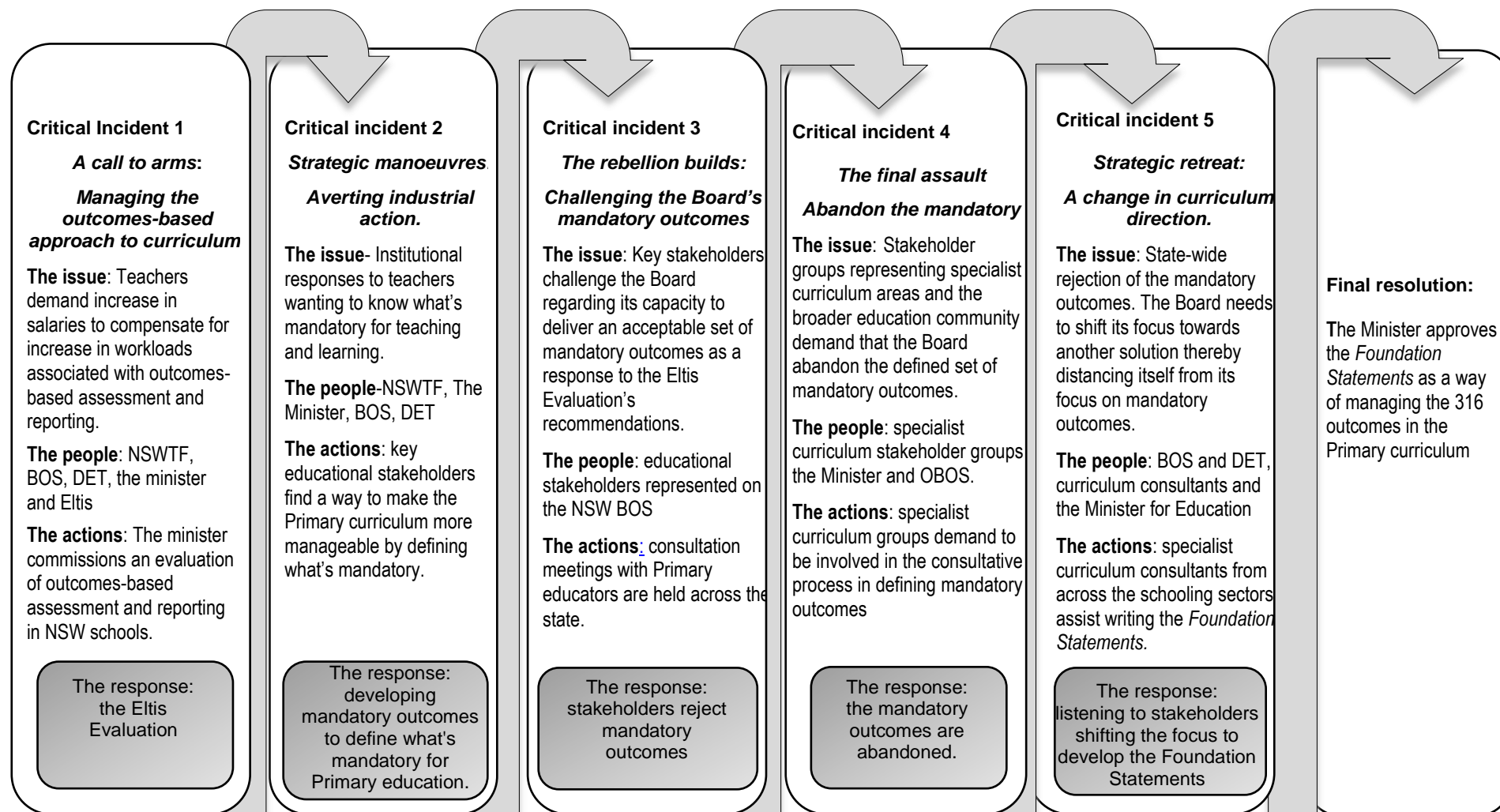


Figure 4.2: Sequence of the five critical incidents; each critical incident continues along a continuum where the response of the critical incident affects the issues, people and actions of the next critical incident that follows.

4.4 Critical Incident One: A Call to Arms—Managing the Outcomes-Based Approach to Curriculum

Strike next in teachers' pay battle

Julie Lewis,
Sydney Morning Herald,
8 November 1994

Teachers walk out as prelude to pay battle Why politicians should not ignore the voices of teachers

Stephanie Raethel,
Sydney Morning Herald
30 November 1998

Strikers plan to march on Parliament

Illawarra Mercury,
9 February 1999

Critical Incident One examines the events leading to the 'call to arms' by NSW Primary school teachers. Their mobilisation over the issue of outcomes-based assessment and reporting was a response to the decade-long curriculum development processes incorporating outcomes in the Primary curriculum. This proved successful in gaining the attention of a state government fearful of the political consequences of taking on the teachers in the run-up to the 2003 NSW state election.

Commissioned reviews supported the stance adopted by teachers. The 1995 Review into outcomes and profiles in NSW schools found that "Primary teachers saw the work associated with implementing *English K–6* multiplied six times" (Eltis, 1995, p. 63). This early period of Primary curriculum development saw the NSW Teachers Federation advocating the need for a balance between the educational benefits of an outcomes-based approach and reasonable working conditions for teachers.

Vinson, Esson and Johnson (2002a), in their inquiry into the provision of public education in NSW, found that teachers were still making the same claims about workload that they raised

in the previous decade: “teachers complain about the time it takes to cover and report on the multiplicity of mandated outcomes” (p. 58).

Media reports from the 1990s highlighted the concerns directly related to outcomes-based assessment and reporting:

... concerns that the new curriculum documents, [...] lacked rigour, emphasising skills at the expense of content. (Scott, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 May 1995a)

The method [outcomes-based assessment and reporting] was unpopular with teachers because it created a heavier workload. (Nelson, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 July 1996)

... the threatened bans showed how frustrated teachers were with policy shifts. (Raethel & Jamal, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 December 1998)

More than 120 media articles were analysed from this period, with 70 directly relating to the potential problems arising from the development of the Primary curriculum. Scrutiny of these media reports revealed the portrayal of the ongoing conflict between teachers and the state government as a stoush or looming battle (Noonan, 21 June 2003). Central to this ‘stoush’ was the anger felt by teachers that their salaries should reflect this additional workload (Noonan, 2003).

Newspaper headlines, such as those above, often referred to negotiations between the teachers’ union, the government and the minister as a *battle*, with many references being made to ‘war’. Metaphors such as *battle*, *impasse*, *conflict*, *revolution*, *battle lines*, *experienced guerrilla fighters* and *foot soldiers* littered press articles during this period of unrest. Noonan (2000) reported that teachers were reacting by “wearily closing ranks” as they were “caught between conflicting demands on their time and energies” (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 April 2000, p. 1). By 2002, the looming battle was seen as a last-ditch effort to get the government to listen to teachers about their concerns.

The following themes were developed from the documentary sources noted in Chapters 1 and 3, and from the minutes of the BOS and PCC meetings. These sources, which were all generated prior to the 2003 NSW state election, reveal stakeholders’ concerns about outcomes in the curriculum and their adoption in NSW. Four significant concerns united teachers and mobilised them into taking action soon after the final K–6 syllabus was released in schools in 2000. Teachers were concerned about:

- grappling with outcomes in the Primary syllabuses;

- their lack of understanding of an outcomes-based approach to curriculum development;
- the deficit of professional development and support; and
- the ministerial interventions in the curriculum development processes.

The important players in these events were:

- the NSW BOS and its officers;
- the NSW Teachers Federation representing the state's public school teachers;
- the DET;
- NSW Ministers for Education: Virginia Chadwick (1990–1995), John Aquilina (1995–2001) and John Watkins (2001–2003); and
- Professor Ken Eltis and the Review panel.

While the significant historical developments relevant to this critical incident are documented in Table 1.2, a summary of the key developments has been isolated in Table 4.1. This Table shows the chronological policy initiatives at the time and what was occurring within the institutional settings of the NSW BOS and in schools. Commentary on significant developments during the same period is provided in the final column of the table.

Table 4.1: Summary of developments for Critical Incident One: 1990–2003

Year	Policy context		NSW BOS		Schools context	Issues and responses
	Federal government	NSW state government	BOS	OBOS		
1990	<p>The <i>Hobart Declaration on Common and Agreed National Goals</i>.</p> <p>Federal election held in March. Labor remain in power; Bob Hawke PM.</p>	<p>NSW Education Reform Act 1990 is passed.</p> <p>DET is stripped of its control over the development of the Primary curriculum.</p>	<p>The NSW BOS is established.</p> <p>The PCARP is established.</p>	<p>K–12 BOS inspectors appointed for each KLA. BOS inspectors have a Secondary school teaching background.</p> <p>Timetable for developing Primary syllabus documents is created. Science & Technology K–6, developed by the DET, is adopted by the BOS to include outcomes for Stages 1–3.</p>	<p>Schooling authorities assume responsibility for implementing syllabuses developed by the BOS.</p> <p>DET restructured to ten regional offices providing professional development and curriculum support to teachers.</p>	<p>Syllabuses indicate desired outcomes in terms of knowledge and skills students acquire by the end of a stage of learning.</p>
1991		<p>State election in May. Liberals remain in power. Nick Greiner is Premier.</p>	<p>Syllabus committees, representative of key stakeholder groups, are established to develop Primary KLA syllabuses.</p>	<p>Development of English, HSIE, Creative Arts and PDHPE syllabuses begin.</p>	<p>Science and Technology K–6 syllabus released to schools. Regional offices develop implementation strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW ECEC lobbies Minister Chadwick to set up BOS standing committee for Primary education.
1992			<p>BOS accepts proposal to establish Primary curriculum working party.</p>	<p>Syllabus committees for K–6 develop drafts syllabuses in English, HSIE and PDHPE.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued lobbying by the ECEC sees the education minister establish a K–6 standing committee of the BOS.
1993	<p>First meeting of MCEETYA. National Outcomes and Profiles released to States.</p> <p>Federal election in March. Labor remains in power Bob Hawke PM</p>	<p>Education Minister Virginia Chadwick approves the inclusion of the National Outcomes and Profiles in syllabuses.</p>	<p>Curriculum support materials for Science & Technology and Mathematics K–6 syllabuses released to schools.</p>	<p>Appointment of the first BOS Inspector for Primary Education.</p> <p>Syllabus writers include outcomes and profiles statements in English K–6 syllabus.</p>	<p>Draft syllabuses and support materials for English K–6 and PDHPE K–6 distributed to schools for consultation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BOS liaison officers based in DET regional offices supporting syllabus implementation. • No formal consultation processes with Primary teachers on outcomes and profiles in K–6 KLA syllabuses.

Year	Policy context		NSW BOS		Schools context	Issues and responses
	Federal government	NSW state government	BOS	OBOS		
1994		March - Minister Chadwick commissions an independent review of the BOS.	K–6 syllabus committees disbanded. New structure of BOS committees. English K–6 released in September .	Formation of curriculum branch in June . Curriculum inspectors to manage curriculum development processes. K–6 syllabuses amended to include the National Outcomes and Profile Statements.	Teachers respond favourably to Draft HSIE K–6 syllabus. English K–6 implemented in schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BOS standing committees provide opportunity for broader consultation with interested educational bodies such as those in Primary education. • Teachers unhappy with functional grammar approach in new English K–6 syllabus.
1995	Federal election held in March. Liberal government in power. John Howard as PM	State election in March . Labor in government with Bob Carr as Premier. April : Education Minister John Aquilina commissions review of the outcomes and profiles. August : Eltis commissioned to chair. Review released.	The BOS consults with committees on common understandings and principles for Primary education to assist syllabus writers. November meeting: BOS addresses concerns of the Eltis Review . National Outcomes and Profiles Statements to be removed from all syllabus documents.	April : The OBOS is formally established. It is directly responsible to the Minister for Education. K–6 syllabus framework developed. In response to the Review, all syllabuses are rewritten to specify outcomes as explicit statements of knowledge, skills and understanding for learners.	DET is restructured, replacing regional offices with 40 district offices. District superintendents replace cluster directors. District offices engage literacy consultants to provide professional learning and support for the new English K–6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DET restructure: district superintendents responsible for 60–70 schools in each region. Review makes 21 recommendations about: • Outcomes-based assessment and reporting increasing teachers' workload • Lack of understanding of outcomes-based approach to curriculum • English K–6 implementation.
1996			K–6 English rewritten.	New timeframes for reviewing all K–6 syllabuses is developed in response to the Review.	DET develops documents to support teachers assessing and reporting using outcomes. Schools briefed on developments of the English K–6. District offices provide professional support to teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and release of K–6 syllabuses rescheduled due to timetable specified by Review Recommendation 8. • DET develops support material for assessment and reporting. • BOS and DET release information about outcomes for assessment and reporting. • Lack of professional development, training and support on implementing good assessment and reporting strategies for teachers.
1997	Federal election held in October. Liberal gov. retained led by John Howard.		HSIE K–6 advisory committee completes writing brief for the HSIE K–6.	Consultation on draft English K–6 syllabus documents. Revision of the syllabus development processes. Assessment and reporting using outcomes publications developed and released to schools.		

Year	Policy context		NSW BOS		Schools context	Issues and responses
	Federal government	NSW state government	BOS	OBOS		
1998	Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs produce information on assessment and reporting practices in schools.		Production and release of Primary documents: <i>Maths Outcomes and Indicators</i> (Feb); <i>English</i> syllabus documents (Apr) and <i>HSIE</i> Syllabus (Oct) The K–6 Curriculum and Assessment Committee renamed <i>PCC</i> .		Schools receive documents from BOS on assessing and reporting using stage outcomes. DET strategic plan to provide professional development and training on assessment and reporting across the state.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant number of K–6 syllabuses released to schools in the one year. • Schools prioritise professional development on a KLA syllabus according to needs. • The PPA criticises the BOS for not finalising Primary documents sooner. • Teachers concerned about the number of syllabuses released in one year.
1999	April 22: 10th MCEETYA meeting held in Adelaide. Ministers revise the national goals across Australia jointly signing the <i>Adelaide Declaration</i> .	State election held on 27 March. Labor retains government with Bob Carr as Premier.	PCC endorses criteria for evaluating Primary syllabuses. Approval by PCC to develop survey for consultation with teachers. June: PDHPE K–6 Syllabus endorsed and approved by the BOS.	Criteria and survey instrument developed for evaluating the K–6 syllabuses.	HSIE K–6 syllabus package distributed to schools in February . Implemented with limited support from regional curriculum consultants. November: PDHPE K–6 syllabus distributed to schools. Regions provide limited support for professional development.	<p>Numerous events occur simultaneously at the local, state and federal levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Goals for Schooling chart the direction for Australian 21st Century schools with the <i>Adelaide Declaration</i>. • Industrial unrest over pay and conditions concerning workloads. • BOS continues rolling out the remainder of the Primary syllabuses. • BOS introduces a new syllabus development processes seeking greater consultation with stakeholders.
2000	Federal election held in Nov. Liberal government retained led by John Howard.		November the last Primary syllabus—Creative Arts—is endorsed and approved.	Survey sent to PCC and key stakeholder groups to evaluate the K–6 syllabuses.	December- Creative Arts K–6 syllabus distributed to schools. Teachers Federation and P&C sponsor the Vinson Inquiry .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal syllabus implementation support provided by DET regional offices. • Completed suite of Primary syllabuses. • Primary syllabuses developed by individual BCC committees and writing teams led by K–12 BOS inspectors. • A total of 316 outcomes in K–6 syllabuses had been developed.

Year	Policy context		NSW BOS		Schools context	Issues and responses
	Federal government	NSW state government	BOS	OBOS		
2001		September: Vinson Inquiry: Panel consult with schools.	New Mathematics K–6 review- BOS Syllabus Committee established.	Internal process is developed to review the K–6 syllabuses with key stakeholder groups.	DET schools seek ways to manage complex issues for <i>new</i> practices associated with outcomes-based assessment and reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BOS stakeholders note that due continuous cycle of syllabus development since 1990 there has been limited time to monitor K–6 syllabus implementation.
2002	July- The Australian Ministers for Education approve project that addresses the concerns about the lack of consistency in curriculum across the Australian schools.	November: Vinson Inquiry releases its reports. Minister Watkins meets with Teachers Federation. Minister commissions Eltis to conduct a review into the workload associated with outcomes.	<p><i>Mathematics K–6</i> syllabus developed with 11–13 outcomes developed for each stage.</p> <p><i>Mathematics K–6</i> syllabus endorsed and approved. Distributed to schools.</p>	BOS officers conducts state-wide Primary review on all K–6 syllabuses and support documents. Project is called the PCP. Questionnaires sent to schools and online survey available to for all stakeholders.	NSW Teachers Federation approaches Minister for Education to request that Eltis conduct a study into the demands created as a result of outcomes-based assessment and reporting. Findings of the Vinson Inquiry used to support salary campaign leading up to 2003 NSW election.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal review undertaken by the Office identifies key issues affecting teachers’ use of the K–6 syllabuses. • Seven years since the release of Review for the BOS to complete the development of six K–6 syllabuses and conduct its syllabus evaluation. • Teachers threaten industrial unrest over concerns to increases in workload • Minister Watkins avoids industrial unrest by commissioning Eltis to conduct review in outcomes-based assessment and reporting.
2003		<p>February the Evaluation panel begin consulting with teachers, principals and parents.</p> <p>State election in April. Labor Government retained. Bob Carr Premier.</p> <p>August: release of the Evaluation.</p> <p>November: Response from DET and BOS</p>	<p>November meeting: PCC accepts findings of an internal review evaluating the K–6 syllabuses and endorses projected scope of the projects.</p> <p>December meeting: The findings are submitted to the BOS’ and are approved to progress.</p>	<p>Officers analyse data collected on evaluating the K–6 syllabus documents. Primary project is developed to gather information about the effective use of six Primary syllabuses.</p> <p>BOS officers are assisted by the working party of Primary principals to develop a response to the Evaluation’s Recommendations 1–8: <i>Adjusting Curriculum Demands</i> for the PCC and the BOS.</p>	<p>Teachers from 106 Primary schools across the schooling authorities provide feedback to BOS officers about the K–6 syllabuses.</p> <p>Teachers in government schools involved in providing feedback to the evaluation panel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BOS requests officers to stop working on the PCP reviewing the K–6 syllabuses • Officers are required to develop a response to the recommendations of the Evaluation. • BOS forgoes reporting on its PCP that evaluated the Primary syllabuses in light of ministerial response to the Evaluation.

4.4.1 Grappling with Outcomes in the Development of Primary Syllabuses

As noted in Chapter 1, the pre-1990 reforms of the Greiner government set in motion a wide-ranging reform agenda for education in NSW, including the requirement that all syllabuses indicate the ‘desired outcomes’ for each curriculum subject area (*Education Reform Act 1990*, s.3:14). The *Education Act 1990* also established a syllabus development model that gave prominence to the inclusion of outcomes in the development of each KLA syllabus. To give clarity to its intent, the *Education Act 1990* provided a definition of learning outcomes and was “hailed as a revolution” (Nelson, 1996, para. 5). However, by the mid-1990s, “the method was unpopular with teachers” (Nelson, 1996, para. 6) due to a lack of understanding of the nature and purpose of outcomes in the curriculum.

As noted earlier, the impetus to introduce an outcomes and profiles approach into NSW schools came from the federal government. In NSW, the education minister, Virginia Chadwick (1990–1995), had given her support to this national approach, commenting that such an approach “clearly gives a far more national perspective to the curriculum” (Powell, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1993b, p. 7). Minister Chadwick was quick to inform the other states and territories that NSW had made considerable inroads towards incorporating the National Outcomes and Profiles Statements into NSW syllabuses (Powell, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 August 1993b, p. 13). Media headlines at the time reported a “Revolution in our schools” (Powell, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 November 1993d), with “unprecedented upheaval in NSW education” (p. 15). However, on the ground, this was not the case.

State-based media reported on the opposition coming from teachers and academics regarding the federal government’s push to “include the national framework in NSW syllabuses” (Lewis, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1994a, p. 1). Lewis (1994a) reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that some draft syllabuses were “‘seriously flawed’ as a result of the effort to make them conform to the national framework” (p. 1). Professor Terry Gagan, head of the Mathematics Syllabus Committee, was reportedly outspoken about the national framework, but lamented that “[The minister] has demanded that the (national) outcomes shall be in the front (of the syllabus)” (Lewis, 1994a, p. 1). Although many teachers and academics were opposed to the inclusion of outcomes in the syllabuses, they continued to be included in each KLA syllabus.

During this period of intense curriculum writing, the first Primary outcomes-based syllabus, English K–6, was developed and ready for implementation. However, Primary teachers found it difficult to implement due to a controversial new (and largely unfamiliar) approach used to

teach grammar. The terminology used in the writing of the learning outcomes also created confusion among teachers: “the terminology was highly technical and unfamiliar to many teachers and parents and proved to be over-elaborate and excessive in detail” (Raethel, 1997a, p. 3).

Confusion reigned as teachers grappled with not only a new syllabus model, but also new terminology for the inclusion of outcomes into the Primary syllabuses. The BOS’ conceptual framework for each syllabus, and OBE on which it was predicated, had not been effectively enunciated to teachers and educational stakeholders. Dr Phil Lambert, Board Inspector of Primary Education (1993–2001), recalls the disquiet around the development of the Primary syllabuses, especially with English K–6. This led to an outpouring of concerns about the BOS’ capacity to deliver the Primary curriculum: “there was a groundswell, an opportunity prior to an election for the Teachers’ Union and other stakeholders to effectively say, ‘It’s all too hard, something has to be done’” (P. Lambert, personal communication, 19 August 2013).

Two important issues became evident in the early years of the development of the Primary curriculum. The first was a distinct lack of Primary education expertise represented on the BOS. The second was a lack of staff within the OBOS with a background in Primary curriculum. Dr Lambert refers to a ‘groundswell’ of discontent (personal communication, 19 August 2013) expressed by stakeholders who had the expertise and interests in Primary education but were not fully represented in the decision-making processes.

While stakeholders were becoming increasingly vocal in rejecting the federal government’s interventions of outcomes and profiles in state-based syllabus documents, Dr Lambert claims that the NSW Government’s commissioning of the Review in 1995 had “in effect, put the Board on notice”, and that ‘it had not been successful with its first go at a Primary syllabus, and it had not been well-received’ (P. Lambert, personal communication, 19 August 2013).

Dr Lambert’s secondment as the first Primary inspector was a significant move towards quelling the unrest from Primary educational stakeholders. He saw his role as effectively guiding the development of the K–6 syllabuses with the BOS, whose expertise up until that time had principally been in Secondary education: “I’d been brought in because there was some disquiet already in the nineties—that the Board didn’t understand Primary, and that it was too heavily Secondary subject-based” (P. Lambert, personal communication, 19 August 2013).

The inclusion of outcomes in the Primary syllabus documents required syllabus writers to have an understanding of, and expertise in, Primary education. The appointment of Phil

Lambert demonstrated the BOS' willingness to respond to stakeholders' concerns. Dr Lambert was now viewed by Primary curriculum stakeholders to be in a position to assert his influence on the syllabus writers and curriculum committees.

The lack of confidence in the BOS' ability to produce quality Primary syllabuses was also raised by stakeholders within the Primary education community. Primary interest groups such as the ECEC lobbied the Minister for Education, Virginia Chadwick, for better representation of Primary education expertise at the BOS. This resulted in the establishment of a dedicated PCC aimed at balancing representation from Kindergarten to Year 12. Primary education groups started to align their interests and form alliances to ensure there was a better balance of Primary education expertise represented at the BOS.

The underrepresentation of Primary education interests at the BOS was recognised by groups such as the ECEC in the early 1990s. The *Education Act's* (1990, s.99–100) and the BOS' annual reports (1992–2006) show only four specific Primary educational stakeholders out of 23 stakeholder positions on the BOS (see Figure 1.1). The same disparity was evident with the appointment of BOS officers, where 11 out of the 12 curriculum inspectors were from Secondary teaching backgrounds. Lobbying of education ministers over a four-year period finally saw the BOS establish a Primary standing committee. The executive committee of the ECEC at the time felt that the Primary standing committee deeply affected the need to develop, support and evaluate all Primary documents, citing that “a major concern was the development of outcomes for K–6, in all KLA due to inadequate consultation” (ECEC, 1994, p. 9).

Stakeholders such as the ECEC exerted pressure on the BOS by directly lobbying the minister about the importance of Primary education. Supporting Dr Lambert's notion of inadequate support and expertise in this area, the ECEC executive committee later reproduced a letter it had sent to the minister informing its membership of the current situation with regards to the development of Primary syllabuses in NSW and the BOS' lack of Primary expertise:

... the balance within the Board structure clearly favours Secondary Education. Although there are far more K–6 students and schools in NSW, the Board has only one Primary Inspector compared with ten Secondary Board Inspectors.

... The number of Secondary Syllabus committees, much in excess of the eight KLA means that the six KLA in the K–6 area are often not able to have the appropriate amount of time devoted to them. (ECEC Newsletter, August 1994, p. 1)

Dr Lambert had also spoken of concerns of inadequate representation of Primary stakeholders in the curriculum decision-making processes. He concurred with the ECEC's position on inadequate resourcing and expertise allocated to Primary education. Dr Lambert explained the significance of his appointment to the OBOS as addressing the concerns of stakeholder groups such as the ECEC:

... there was already a concern that Primary education was not getting a focus, [...] it was part of a growing concern that the Board did not understand or appreciate Primary education. The English K–6 syllabus [1994] had been overseen by people from Secondary background. When the English syllabus was to be replaced as a result of Eltis [1995], they needed the Primary inspector to have carriage of it. (P. Lambert, personal communication, 19 August 2013)

The 1995 Review of outcomes and profiles in NSW syllabuses was an important development for the BOS. It brought about a change of attitude to Primary education and the inclusion of an outcomes-based approach to curriculum development. The Review's recommendations gave the BOS an opportunity to re-evaluate the writing of outcomes in its Primary syllabuses. As a result, the BOS reassessed its schedule for developing the Primary curriculum. However, it disregarded the Review's recommendations regarding outcomes by continuing to use its own approach to developing outcomes in the curriculum. In doing so, the BOS failed to deliver syllabus documents that provided a clear framework for the use of outcomes to Primary teachers.

Professor Lesley Lynch attested to this lack of clarity and the delay in the delivery of curriculum documents in her series of articles written for the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1998. Previously holding various senior roles with the DET and the NSW Ministry of Education between 1985 and 1996, Lynch drew on her insider knowledge when she criticised the development and implementation of the Primary curriculum documents. She particularly noted the “shameful delays in the delivery of key curriculum documents to schools” (Lynch, 1998a, p. 14) and the “urgent need to provide Primary teachers with clear syllabus documents” (p. 14). Lynch apportioned some of the responsibility on the political process and “the inability of ministers to act decisively [...] as many of the policy casualties of the past decade were in part the result of grossly inappropriate time frames” (Lynch, 1998a, p. 14).

The new millennium saw the final K–6 syllabus for Creative Arts delivered to schools. Regardless of the many criticisms the Primary curriculum had received, the BOS continued to follow its own program for developing the K–6 curriculum documents, irrespective of the timeframe stipulated by the Review (Eltis, 1995). As shown in Table 4.1, at least one KLA

syllabus was under development every year of the 1990s. However, it was not immediately apparent to stakeholders that the concerns raised by the Review (Eltis, 1995) regarding the number of outcomes and the manner in which they were expressed had not been fully addressed until the BOS had completed its suite of Primary documents.

By 2000, Primary teachers were still struggling with a lack of understanding around an outcomes-based curriculum framework, as well as the multiplicity of outcomes the curriculum contained. With a total of 316 syllabus outcomes across the six K–6 syllabuses, there was a widely held perception that the BOS and the respective schooling authorities had not given teachers the necessary guidance or time to develop their understanding around outcomes in the Primary curriculum.

4.4.2 Lack of Understanding of an Outcomes-Based Approach to Curriculum Development

The analysis of published reports and reviews showed an impetus from state and federal governments to adopt the use of outcomes in curriculum development. However, there were also concerns about understanding the outcomes approach adopted and the research it was predicated upon. Although the BOS had wholeheartedly accepted the approach of including learning outcomes in each syllabus document, it did so without fully acknowledging the literature and current research into the OBE (BOS, 1991b). Eltis had attested to this in his 1995 Review, stating that “major change should not be introduced into schools until the needs, methods and materials of the change had been fully trialled” (Eltis, 1995, p. 31).

The analysis of curriculum artefacts from the early 1990s reveals that the BOS was willing to report that it had engaged in research and development activities. In its 1991 annual report, in a section entitled ‘*Research on Responses to Curriculum Initiatives*’, it stated that “32 meetings were held in all education regions to discuss the proposals in the documents” (BOS, 1991a, p. 32). However, scant details were reported of these initiatives in the annual report. It was simply noted that ‘some research’ had been conducted into OBE. Missing from the report were references to the OBE literature to “introduce curriculum based on KLA, outcomes and stages” (BOS, 1991a, p. 32) and references to outcomes-based theorists such as Spady (1993, 1994).

The lack of a conceptual framework in developing teachers’ understanding of OBE became more evident by 1995, when Eltis (1995) reviewed the outcomes and profiles in NSW schools. Eltis (1995) reported that “Primary teachers did not have a clear understanding of outcomes and were interpreting outcomes differently from the Board and the Department” (p.

33). The Review panel (1995) fielded many concerns from educational stakeholders on the apparent lack of research undertaken to substantiate the OBE model used for the curriculum reforms:

... quite a number [of stakeholders] raised the issue: Is there a strong research base for the wholesale adoption of an outcomes and profiles approach? [...] the question remains whether there is a strong research base that bears out the claimed benefits of establishing a large number of outcomes coupled with detailed assessment and reporting mechanisms. (Eltis, 1995, p. 12)

The Review had raised concerns about teachers experiencing difficulties with outcomes; however, some fundamental differences persisted in teachers' understanding of outcomes. Eltis (1995) had reported a lack of clarity or consensus held by teachers, which led to many different perceptions and practices, where descriptions of outcomes were "susceptible to many different interpretations" (Eltis, 1995, p. 40).

The Review's (Eltis, 1995) recommendations raised awareness of the confusion around the purpose of the outcomes and the need for clarity: "syllabus outcomes [need] to be explicit statements of knowledge, skills and understandings expected to be learned from teaching programs developed from NSW syllabuses" (Recommendation Two, Eltis, 1995, p. i). Nonetheless, the BOS did not specifically address these concerns until much later. Although syllabus writers were informed of the need to be more explicit when writing outcomes, there was still a "general lack of understanding of the role of outcomes in each syllabus" (BOS, 2002, p. 13). The overwhelming lack of understanding of outcomes led to perceptions of an increasingly busy curriculum: "Large number of outcomes has created a perception of an overcrowded curriculum. Teachers are stating problems with time management and *fitting it all in*" (BOS, Primary Curriculum Project—Update, 26 November 2002).

The BOS' PCC meeting documents, such as the draft report on the PCP, found that 'Teachers are still uncertain of what is mandatory in each KLA syllabus. There is wide variation among teachers in "their understanding of how to efficiently and effectively use the outcomes"' (OBOS, 2003c, p. 4). The BOS' consultation on the evaluation of the K–6 syllabus documents reported:

... a widespread lack of understanding of the outcomes approach in general and a number of the specific outcomes in some syllabuses. This is due mainly to the following factors: 1) Training and Development; 2) Support documents; 3) What is mandatory?; and 4) Integration of the syllabuses. (OBOS, 2003b, p. 1)

Another stakeholder reported:

A new syllabus creates new stresses because there is not a clear understanding of the background of the syllabus (philosophies, pedagogies, assumptions, etc.) underpinning the document [...] the outcomes are hard to use and difficult to understand and interpret. (OBOS, 2003b, p. 10)

Documentary sources revealed that Primary teachers, along with principals and parents, were overwhelmed by the multiple changes in the syllabuses and were expressing “a range of concerns about the changing curriculum” (Vinson et al., 2002a, p. 57). Vinson et al. (2002a) questioned the concerns as “inherent structural weakness in the existing arrangements” (p. 57) between the BOS’ responsibility to develop syllabuses and the DET’s responsibility for their implementation.

The widespread lack of understanding of the outcomes-based approach to curriculum development led to many interpretations of outcomes that inherently added to teachers’ confusion as they grappled with implementing each new syllabus. Teachers needed ongoing professional support to develop their understanding of the new documents and their implications for teaching and learning. However, the role of curriculum implementation had been entrusted to the schooling authorities.

4.4.3 Deficit of Professional Development and Support

The published reports by Eltis (1995) and Vinson et al. (2002a) found that the implementation of the Primary syllabus materials required sustained professional development and support if teachers were to gain an understanding of the outcomes approach. They concluded that the changes in knowledge, accountability and outcomes had reshaped the architecture of the curriculum in NSW schools and significantly affected the nature of the work that teachers and students undertook in classrooms.

Vinson et al. (2002a) claimed that there were systemic flaws in terms of inadequate support for teachers in the curriculum reforms initiated by the *Education Act 1990*. Changes in responsibilities between the two institutions left the state’s Primary teachers confused as to who was to provide professional learning. Vinson et al. (2002a) related that these inherent structural concerns between the two bodies were due to:

... a lack of coordination between the Board of Studies and the Department of Education (DET). The split responsibility between the two bodies [...] is thought by some to be akin to policy making in an unreal atmosphere detached from knowledge of, or responsibility for,

the allocation of resources needed to implement programs successfully. (Vinson et al., 2002a, p. 57)

There was a perception among Primary teachers that there was a certain amount of ‘buck passing’ between the two authorities with the introduction and implementation of the K–6 syllabuses. Curriculum documents were seen as “being ‘dumped’ onto the schools, without adequate consultation, with little or no staff development, and with insufficient time or additional resources for successful implementation” (Vinson et al., 2002a, p. 58).

Teachers continued their claims about inadequate support and training on new syllabus documents irrespective of who was providing the training. A response from the CEC to the BOS’ internal Primary curriculum review also raised concerns about the lack of professional development by the BOS: “the lack of appropriate support from BOS is a deeply held concern: There is a perception that OBOS simply releases a Primary syllabus to schools without providing schools and systems the information needed to develop effective professional development” (OBOS, 2003b, p. 12).

Perceptions of deficiencies in professional development and curriculum support of new syllabus documents, along with a lack of understanding around the outcomes-based approach, continued to disrupt the work of the BOS and the implementation of syllabus documents in schools. There was growing dissatisfaction from teachers about the development and implementation of the new outcomes-based curriculum and assessment regime.

4.4.4 Ministerial Intervention in the Curriculum Development Processes

The analyses of documentary sources and media reports found that policy makers considered OBE compatible with the drive for economic reform because it promised the delivery of measurable outcomes. These policies, originating in ministerial offices, provided a means by which ministers were able to influence directions in curriculum development. As noted in Chapter 1, there were three significant ministerial interventions during this period:

1. the National Outcomes and Profiles introduced in 1988 by the federal Minister for Employment Education and Training, the Hon. John Dawkins, and agreed to by state and territory education ministers;
2. state-based education reforms in NSW instigated by the Greiner coalition government and the Minister for Education and Training, Dr Terry Metherell, between 1988 and 1990; and
3. the Review of outcomes and profiles in NSW schools commissioned in 1995 by the Labor Education Minister, the Hon. John Aquilina.

4.4.4.1 National Outcomes and Profiles—A federal government policy intervention

Prior to 1990, the federal government had moved to reinvigorate national curriculum collaboration between the states and territories. However, there were critics of this development. For example, on 1 July 1993, the *Sydney Morning Herald* featured an article on the *folly* of the national curriculum being caught up in the “euphoria for the national vision [which] tended to blur good judgment” (1993, 1 July, *The National Curriculum Folly*, p. 10).

The process for the development of the National Outcomes and Profiles Statements was criticised as being “highly centralised, leading to marginalisation of educational practitioners and discipline experts with inadequate opportunities for consultation and public critique” (Eltis, 1995, p. 7). With the states and territories regaining their curriculum development responsibilities, there was now a requirement to consult with their own education communities to determine how they would proceed with implementing these federal government initiatives.

The criticisms from the states and territories about the federal government’s intervention into the education policy arena prompted Professor Hedley Beare (reported in *The Age*, 10 May 1993) to critique the many different and conflicting interests that were now influencing the national curriculum approach. These included the federal government itself, state and territory education ministers, teachers’ unions and state departments of education. In his critique, Beare (1993) discussed the important role of key educational stakeholders, such as teachers and education departments, in determining what happened in schools because it was they who were responsible for implementing the curriculum. In NSW, it became evident that concerns with implementing the federal government’s interventions were not entirely compatible with the state’s education reforms.

4.4.4.2 Implementing New South Wales education reforms

An analysis of historical documents confirmed that there were concerns within the state government about the implementation of curriculum reforms. As stated earlier, these new reforms shifted curriculum development away from the DET to the newly formed statutory body. Changes in the control of the bureaucratic processes from the DET to the BOS provided an enormous shift in power over the Primary curriculum. To facilitate these changes, the education minister, Dr Metherell, took swift action with minimal consultation with teachers and educational stakeholders.

This shift in power over curriculum development initiated a period of turbulence and turmoil (Lynch, 1998b). Lynch, in a feature article entitled “How the power had shifted” (*Sydney*

Morning Herald, 1 June 1998b), alluded to the shift in power from the bureaucrats in the DET to the education ministry, thus moving the policies and decision-making directly under ministerial influence: “[The Minister] had no real penchant for a back-seat role. [...] He eventually intervened quite widely across educational matters—even where this brought him into disagreement with the Department” (Lynch, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 June 1998b, p. 14). Lynch was strident in her conviction about the nature and extent of Metherell’s interference.

In the same article, Lynch noted the minister’s willingness to continue with his reforms regardless of any consultation with the education communities’ stakeholders. In the three years of Metherell’s term of office, he had implemented his reform agenda, which included a complete review of the DET and a new method for developing curriculum for schools. Previous education reforms had never been implemented so expeditiously: “Terry Metherell arrived in 1988 with a determination to shake up the education bureaucracy, to break the highly centralised nature of the system and to introduce a wide range of education, staffing and administrative reforms” (Lynch, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 June 1998b, p. 14).

The election of the Carr Labor government in 1995 resulted in another wave of curriculum reform. The newly elected government initiated a review of outcomes and profiles. Dr Lambert recalls this change of government and how the Carr Labor government was aware of teachers’ concerns about the curriculum prior to the election:

The Labor Government came to power with a commitment to look into that whole drive in education towards the national profiles, and particularly English K–6. Prior to the election, the Labor Party sensed that there was disquiet in Primary [education]. (P. Lambert, personal communication, 19 August 2013)

Concerns about increased ministerial influence in curriculum development heightened teachers’ awareness of who was setting the curriculum agenda. As a result, teachers became unsettled by the speed of reforms and the lack of consultation. With a new state education minister, the commissioning of a review of outcomes and profiles seemed to be a positive response to teachers’ concerns.

4.4.4.3 Eltis Review—A state government response

The commissioning of the Review (Eltis, 1995) was an attempt by the incoming government to placate the concerns of teachers and other educational stakeholders. The Labor government was keen to fulfil its policy promises to teachers. The new minister for education, John Aquilina (1995–2000), commissioned an extensive review into the inclusion of outcomes and

profiles in the curriculum. This intervention by the minister halted the work of curriculum writers amid concerns from stakeholders that the new curriculum documents “lacked rigour” by emphasising the skills students needed at the expense of curriculum content (Scott, 1995a).

The pause in the implementation of the National Outcomes and Profiles Statements allowed all stakeholders “breathing space [...] to review fully existing policy” (Eltis, 1995, p. 1). While the government was willing to fulfil its pre-election policy promises, some of the state’s major stakeholders became disgruntled with the establishment of the review due to the nature of the stakeholders included on the panel. The exclusion of two key stakeholders—the NSW Teachers Federation and the P&C Federation—was a source of concern for public school teachers, especially given that the review was to be conducted in government schools.

As the major educational stakeholders representing the majority of the state’s teachers and students enrolled in government schools, tensions increased between the state government and the NSW Teachers Federation and the P&C Federation, culminating in a “threat to black-ban the review” (Scott, 1995a, p. 1). Such an act would “cripple the Government's efforts to restructure the curriculum and create controversy in its first big area of education reform” (Scott, 1995a, p. 1). Not wanting to exacerbate these tensions, Aquilina remonstrated that the panel had been selected so that the individuals did not represent a particular group or organisation’s interests or agendas. This was later reported as the minister “wanted a committee that would not be answerable to ‘vested interest groups’ but be more closely connected to what was going on in classrooms” (Scott, 1995b, p. 9).

The exclusion of these two key groups from the panel created further concerns regarding the review process. It paved the way for individuals to promote their own views and personal agendas. The minister’s choice of seven individuals (plus Eltis) provoked criticism from stakeholders, as they did not represent any key educational stakeholder groups. This view was further reinforced when Eltis was installed as chair of the review panel. Lewis (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 June 1995) highlighted a widespread concern that Eltis had brought with him many interests and views he had held over the years preceding the review:

Eltis the academic once had a five-year stint as a bureaucrat. He was appointed the Director of Studies in the NSW Department of School Education [...] in the Unsworth [Labor] Government, and stayed until Terry Metherell replaced him. (Lewis, *The School Rulers*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 June 1995)

The minister’s choice in commissioning Eltis to chair the review proved to be expedient in providing recommendations that suited the government’s election commitment to review the issues around outcomes-based curriculum. The review was completed within a short time

frame and delivered recommendations that were promptly accepted by the minister. It was hoped that the government would, on this occasion, listen to its stakeholders by “promising extensive consultation with teachers in the process” (Scott, 1995c). However, also weighing in on the direction that curriculum development should take, Premier Bob Carr stated that the new syllabus documents should contain: “clear ‘outcomes statements’ that specify what students are meant to know and be able to do at different levels of schooling, and the statements would be very specific to instruct teachers on precisely what should be taught” (Scott, 1995c, para. 5).

Two years after the review had been conducted, and with another election looming, it appeared that the development of the Primary syllabuses had stalled again due to the lack of accountability for ensuring systemic change in curriculum development and the BOS’ failure to adequately address the Review’s recommendations. As noted earlier, the BOS claimed that it had spent the following five years implementing the recommendations of the Review (1995). However, Director of Curriculum, Mr Rob Randall, reassured the minister and Eltis that the BOS was adhering to its syllabus development process by working through its existing syllabuses and practices and conducting its own reports on curriculum development progress: “The Board was working in a much more orderly way. It had commissioned a report on English K–6 and the second half of this report would go to the Board this month” (Raethel, 1997c, para. 11).

The inquiry into public education (Vinson et al., 2002a) also reported on the direct intervention and influence by ministers on issues in curriculum that were depicted in the minister’s functions in the *Education Reform Act 1990* (s.7–21). Vinson et al. (2002a) saw ministerial interference as inevitable: “ultimately the minister for education, would be able to question the practical feasibility and timing of proposed changes and act to raise or divert the resources needed for successful implementation, before ‘signing off’ on curriculum proposals” (Vinson et al., 2002a, p. 73). However, the minister’s role in curriculum development was seen as political interference to pacify the teachers through a veneer of concern about the curriculum reforms being implemented. Elections came and went, reviews and reports were conducted—all promising to address issues raised by teachers—but the underlying concerns about the outcomes-based approach to curriculum development were not fully addressed. Now in a second decade of developing curriculum materials using outcomes, educational stakeholders were still struggling with the outcomes-based model in NSW.

4.4.5 Outcomes—It's All About the Workloads!

The issue of the workload associated with outcomes had been the single ongoing concern of teachers since the early 1990s. Numerous media reports, commissioned reviews and the BOS' own internal review processes concluded that teachers' workloads, associated with an outcomes approach in their curriculum planning, assessing and reporting, had increased.

This increasing workload of teachers was the major concern of key educational stakeholders. The release of the Review (Eltis, 1995) also established favourable community sentiment from parent groups as they became more aware of the changes in curriculum and the approaches to teaching, assessing and reporting. Nelson, education reporter for the *Sydney Morning Herald* (21 July 1996) reported on the "major changes in the way they [schools] report to parents", that "The rate and extent of change from school to school has been so varied", and that the changes had become so "unpopular with teachers because it created a heavier workload" (Nelson, 21 July 1996). Nelson reported confusion among parents as they "did not always understand what the outcomes their child had achieved meant [as they were] unmanageable and time consuming" (Nelson, 21 July 1996, para. 6).

By 2003, the "battlelines were now marked and teachers were in the trenches" (Noonan, 2003). In his article 'Blood on the blackboard', Noonan noted that "There's more at stake than meets the eye in the looming pay stoush between teachers and the state government" (Noonan, 2003, p. 32). Drawing upon the *war* metaphor, the reporter claimed that "Parents, students and teachers are wearily familiar with the triennial stoush between the NSW Teachers Federation and whoever holds the reins in Macquarie Street" (Noonan, 2003, p. 32). Noonan explained that teachers were finally ready to do battle with the government.

There was a *call to arms* as teachers prepared to have the workload issue addressed. Noonan (2003) reported that there was a "distinctive sound of armour being buckled on as teachers prepare for what could be a drawn-out conflict over wages with the NSW Government and its self-styled education Premier, Bob Carr" (p. 32). The NSW Teachers Federation used the upcoming 2003 election to confront the minister. Seeking an audience with education minister John Watkins and using his ministerial office as the *battlefield*, representatives of the Teachers Federation approached the government in an effort to alleviate the industrial unrest among its members. The meeting resulted in a commitment to evaluate the curriculum, assessment, and reporting practices associated with outcomes. Eltis was once more commissioned to undertake the review. Finally, teachers were going to be heard and a light was going to be shone on the overall workload effect of the outcomes-based syllabuses and an over-demanding Primary curriculum.

4.5 Critical Incident Two: Strategic Manoeuvres—Averting Industrial Action



Critical Incident Two investigates the strategic manoeuvres employed by the state government to avert industrial action proposed by the NSW Teachers Federation. Years of apparent inaction by governments and education bureaucracies to adequately address the concerns of teachers resulted in a *call to arms* by teachers. The Teachers Federation, on behalf of its members, decided to take direct action with the minister. However, the commissioning of a review into teachers' concerns seemed to avert disruption in the election run-up in March 2003. Industrial action did not go ahead, and teachers were placated while the state-wide evaluation was conducted.

The appointment of Eltis to chair the review was seen as a strategic manoeuvre by Minister Watkins to appease teachers. This allowed the government to continue preparing its education policies for the state election, while the Eltis Panel evaluated the workload of teachers associated with outcomes-based curriculum, assessment and reporting.

This critical incident probes into the institutional responses to these commissioned reports and reviews. The timeframe for this critical incident overlaps with the last few years of Critical

Incident One. It was found that major developments during 2002 and 2003 occurred concurrently with the events of the previous decade around curriculum reform. Figure 4.3 shows these overlapping events from 1990 to 2003.

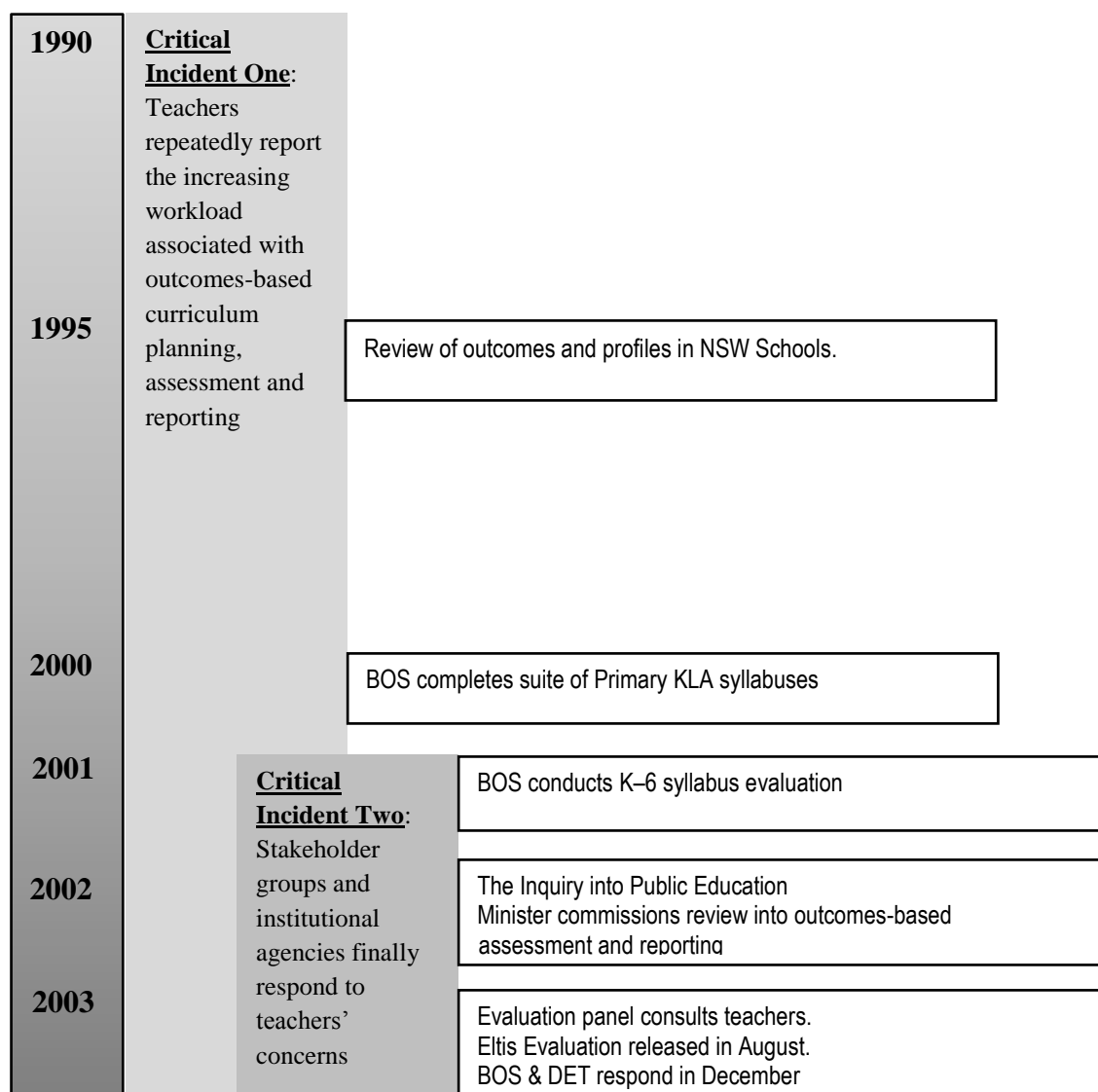


Figure 4.3: Timeline of major developments for Critical Incident Two that overlap with Critical Incident One

This critical incident examined the institutional responses and actions of the following key stakeholder groups:

- NSW Teachers Federation, representing the state's teachers;
- Education ministers: John Watkins (2001–2003) and Dr Andrew Refshauge (2003–2005);
- NSW BOS; and
- DET.

The actions of these stakeholders have been analysed in an attempt to discover whether the state's teachers' concerns were finally addressed. Also examined is the commissioning of the Evaluation (Eltis & Crump, 2003) as a response by the minister to the issue vis-à-vis workloads associated with curriculum outcomes and the minister's demands on education institutions to find a solution to quell these longstanding concerns.

The following themes have been developed from documentary sources such as media reports and press releases, The Inquiry (Vinson et al., 2002a) and the Evaluation (Eltis & Crump, 2003), institutional documentary artefacts (e.g., minutes from BOS and PCC meetings), and stakeholders' journals and newsletters (e.g., the NSW Teachers Federation *Education Journal*). Interview data representing stakeholders are included in these findings. These sources—some of which were published prior to the 2003 NSW state election—reveal concerns about an outcomes-based approach to curriculum development in NSW. Analyses of these sources found three significant themes that cast light on the way teachers' concerns were addressed. They are:

1. strategies employed by stakeholder groups to have their demands met;
2. ministerial intervention: strategies employed by governments to meet stakeholders' demands; and
3. institutional responses to stakeholder pressure.

The significant developments in this critical incident (summarised in Table 4.2) were, in part, a response to the previous critical incident, when teachers were constantly protesting that the workload associated with outcomes-based curriculum development was excessive. It was then up to the NSW Teachers Federation to exert pressure on the minister to find a way of addressing these issues.

Table 4.2: Summary of major developments for Critical Incident Two: 2002–2003

Year	Policy context		NSW BOS		Schools context	Issues and responses
	Federal government	NSW state government	BOS	OBOS		
2002		<p>Vinson Inquiry releases reports in May, July and September</p> <p>November: Minister Watkins meets with the NSW Teachers Federation.</p> <p>Minister commissions Eltis to conduct a review into the workload associated with outcomes-based assessment and reporting.</p>	<p><i>Mathematics K–6</i> developed with 11–13 outcomes developed for each stage.</p> <p><i>Mathematics K–6</i> endorsed and approved. Distributed to schools.</p>	<p>BOS officers conduct state-wide Primary review on K–6 syllabuses and support documents. Project is called the PCP. Questionnaires sent to schools and online survey available to for all stakeholders.</p>	<p>NSW Teachers Federation approaches Minister for Education requesting that Eltis conduct a study into the demands created as a result of outcomes-based assessment and reporting.</p> <p>Findings of the Vinson Inquiry used to support salary campaign leading to 2003 NSW election.</p> <p>DET establishes a reference group with representatives of government school stakeholders to support the Evaluation panel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal review undertaken by the Office identifies key issues affecting teachers' use of the K–6 syllabuses. • Seven years since the release of Review for the BOS to complete the development of six K–6 syllabuses and conduct its syllabus evaluation. • NSW Teachers Federation threatens industrial unrest over teachers' pay and conditions by following up on increase in teachers' workload. • Minister Watkins avoids industrial action by commissioning Eltis to conduct evaluation into outcomes-based assessment and reporting.
2003	<p>July: Australian Ministers for Education approve project that addresses concerns about the lack of consistency in curriculum across Australian schools.</p>	<p>February: the Evaluation panel begin consulting teachers, principals and parents across the state.</p> <p>August: The Eltis Evaluation is released.</p> <p>November: Education Minister Dr Andrew Refshauge requires the DET and the BOS to respond to the Evaluation's Recommendations in.</p>	<p>PCC accepts findings from an internal review evaluating the K–6 syllabuses. Findings of the Review are submitted to the BOS' December meeting.</p> <p>November: PCC endorses projects developed from review of K–6 syllabuses.</p> <p>December: BOS approves PCC endorsed projects about managing the Primary curriculum.</p>	<p>Board Officers analyse data collected on evaluating the K–6 syllabus documents. Primary project is developed to gather information about the effective use of Primary syllabuses.</p> <p>BOS officers assisted by working party of Primary principals develop response to the Evaluation's Recommendations 1–8: <i>Adjusting Curriculum Demands</i> for the PCC and the BOS.</p>	<p>Teachers from 106 Primary schools in government, Catholic and independent schools provide feedback to BOS officers about the K–6 syllabuses.</p> <p>Teachers in government schools are also involved in providing feedback to the evaluation panel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BOS officers for Primary education are requested by the BOS to stop working on the PCP reviewing the K–6 syllabuses and to respond to the recommendations of the Evaluation. Part of this work is to develop a project that will define a set of mandatory outcomes for the Primary curriculum. • BOS forgoes reporting on its PCP, which evaluated the Primary syllabuses.

4.5.1 Strategies Employed by Stakeholder Groups to Have Their Demands Met

“Groups perform one function—the promotion of members’ interests—that serves the needs of members”.

(Pross, 1992, p. 87)

Analyses of the BOS’ minutes of meeting and papers, reports and media found that the Teachers Federation had employed a number of overt strategies to have its demands met by the government. These strategies involved:

- sponsoring an independent inquiry into education to gain political leverage;
- using a series of stop-work meetings that brought their case to the attention of the public in an effort to gain community sympathy; and
- using the media to communicate information about their case.

In 2000, the NSW Teachers Federation and the Federation of P&C Associations of NSW initiated and funded an independent *Inquiry into the provision of public education in NSW*, chaired by Professor Tony Vinson. The findings and its recommendations, presented in three volumes, received a great deal of media and political attention at the time. In a feature article, *Teachers must be allowed to teach*, Maree O’Halloran, president of the Teachers Federation, wrote that the Inquiry was: “a most important contribution to public policy formulation” (O’Halloran, 2002, para. 1) and advocated that the report would provide the government with a comprehensive plan where “teachers are free to teach, students can learn and the public education system can thrive” (Vinson et al., 2002a, p. 9).

The reports (Vinson et al., 2002a; Eltis & Crump, 2003) contained a wealth of information and insights from students, teachers and parents about education in NSW. The NSW Teachers Federation effectively used the media to communicate the report’s findings to the public, thus advancing their campaign and building public sympathy: “the report [Vinson et al., 2002a] sees much to admire in NSW public schools [...]. At the same time, it paints a picture of a school system under increasing financial and social pressure” (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 May 2002, p. 12).

The Inquiry (Vinson et al., 2002a) had given the Teachers Federation political leverage to re-establish negotiations for its campaign. The NSW Teachers Federation’s senior officers approached Minister Watkins about its concerns regarding the workload associated with the outcomes-based assessment and reporting regime that had not been properly addressed from the previous review by Eltis (1995). Armed with the findings from the Inquiry (Vinson et al., 2002a), the Teachers Federation was able to substantiate the decade-long claim “that

excessive workloads combined with a lack of support from the NSW Education Department was greatly affecting morale” (Wood, 2002, para. 3). Jennifer Leete, Deputy President of the NSW Teachers Federation, confirmed the success of the union’s tactics in being promised another substantial review that would examine the effects of outcomes-based assessment and reporting. In a feature article in the *Education* journal, Leete (2002) wrote to the union’s membership of the significance of this review and the importance of having an independent chair leading it:

... the Minister has agreed to appoint an independent reviewer to consider the implementation of outcomes-based assessment and reporting. ... One of the important terms of reference for the review will be to ensure that workload at the school level is reasonable and manageable. (Leete, 18 November 2002, p. 4)

Vinson was reported as saying that the Inquiry had “served to elevate, to the highest rank, the commitment of teachers to their work, notwithstanding the many complaints they have about the conditions under which they operate” (Wood, 2002, para. 15). The Inquiry was a significant bargaining tool for the NSW Teachers Federation. In highlighting the need for adequate remuneration for teachers, the Report became an important element in the federation’s campaign to increase teachers’ salaries.

4.5.2 Ministerial Interventions—Strategies Employed by Governments to Meet Stakeholders’ Demands

“It is important that government recognize and understand the effects of its procedures on interest groups”.

(Finkle, Webb, Stanbury & Pross, 1994, p. 11)

In an effort to pacify teachers’ concerns, Minister Watkins pledged a renegotiation of public teachers’ salaries in a bid to avoid the damaging industrial campaigns associated with award negotiations since 1968 (Sewell, 2003). These negotiations saw the NSW Teachers Federation vigorously re-enter discussions with the state government. However, while discussing teachers’ concerns and conditions, the minister agreed to conduct an evaluation into outcomes-based assessment and reporting, thus side-stepping the issue of salaries.

The Eltis Panel began its consultation with teachers across the state in early 2003, just prior to the election. The Teachers Federation again returned to the salary negotiation table. A major recommendation of the Inquiry (Vinson et al., 2002a) was that teachers should be given an immediate 5 per cent increase independent of any salary agreement. Although Vinson et al. (2002a) saw this as a starting point for the restoration of the professional identity of teachers

and the successful implementation of many of his other recommendations, an increase in salaries was yet to be granted.

Once the election was over and Carr was returned to the premiership of NSW, Minister Watkins was reassigned and the education portfolio was allocated to Dr Andrew Refshauge. The new minister informed teachers that the government could only afford a minimal pay increase of 3 per cent in 2004 and 3 per cent in 2005 (Noonan, 2003). Minister Refshauge argued that while the government recognised the professional worth of teachers, it could not afford their claim, stating that “It wasn’t that the Government didn’t love and respect teachers, it was simply a question of capacity to pay” (Noonan, 2003, p. 32).

The government had again managed to stall any salary increases to compensate teachers for the workload associated with the outcomes-based assessing and reporting regime. Furthermore the promised Evaluation (Eltis & Crump, 2003) of outcomes-based curriculum development had only averted industrial action in the short term.

4.5.3 Institutional Responses to Stakeholder Pressure

“... the future belongs to bureaucracy because it is impersonal, relentless, methodical, and capable of both great and small undertakings”.
(Pross, 1992, p. 111)

Throughout the 1990s, the bureaucratic structures of the BOS allowed for reforms and interventions from state and federal governments to be absorbed into its work. While there was some disruption to its timetable for producing all of the Primary curriculum materials, the BOS remained methodical in ensuring that its practices and processes would deliver quality syllabuses to schools. The BOS’ perseverance with its schedule for the development of the Primary syllabuses did not allow for a detailed analysis of the Review’s recommendations. It was not until 2001 that it fully evaluated the concerns of stakeholders. However, after the Review by Eltis in 1995, there were small adjustments to its processes and procedures, whereby the director of curriculum was reported as saying that: “The Board was working in a much more orderly way” (Raethel, 1997c, p. 5), thereby intimating that the BOS was taking on the Review’s recommendations.

The completion of the suite of the six Primary KLA syllabuses in 2000 enabled the BOS to conduct its own evaluation and review of the Primary documents to “ascertain whether the intentions of the syllabus are being achieved” (BOS, 2006, p. 16). The BOS’ internal review of the Primary curriculum, the PCP, coincided with the Evaluation (2003) commissioned by

the state government. The results from the BOS' PCP supported the findings of the Evaluation (Eltis & Crump, 2003).

The findings from both reviews reported that teachers wanted to know what they had to teach as well as what was mandatory so they could deliver the curriculum effectively and efficiently to cater for students' learning. Supporting the findings of the Evaluation, Ms Malone, Inspector for Primary Education, recollected that teachers' concerns were with curriculum delivery: "Far too many outcomes, and what exactly do Primary teachers have to teach? They had six enormous piles of syllabuses and support documents. It was a matter of manageability" (M. Malone, personal communication, 9 September 2009).

Key stakeholders on the PCC assisted BOS officers by overseeing the drafting of the mandatory outcomes for Primary education. While seeking strong input from Primary school teachers (Eltis & Crump, 2003, p. 82, Recommendation Two), BOS officers ensured that they worked closely with the DET (Eltis & Crump, 2003, p. 82, Recommendation One). This reinforced the perception that the BOS and the DET were responding to the Evaluation's (2003) findings that there had been a lack of productive communication between these institutions, and that this failure was affecting schools. The Evaluation (2003) had noted that there was "poor communication between relevant officers responsible for curriculum matters in each organisation" (p. 48), although the OBOS had maintained adequate "strategies to improve the linkage and cohesion of curriculum related activities between the DET and the OBOS" (BOS, 30 November, Document No: D2003/6922, p. 15).

The BOS was confident that its officers were now working towards greater cohesion with the DET. This was achieved by officers providing "a series of complementary briefings and training sessions for schools and systems involving Board and DET officers" (BOS, 2004, p. 15). The Teachers Federation's representative on the BOS agreed that this approach had provided a consistent message from both agencies. Ms Forster, aware of the difference in roles and responsibilities of each agency, acknowledged that many teachers were unaware of their roles: "As long as the Board's setting our curriculum and DET's our employer, why the hell can't they talk to each other?" (T. Forster, personal communication, 14 September 2009).

With the exception of Recommendation One, responses to the other 28 recommendations were divided between the two institutional bodies. The BOS endeavoured to reassure its stakeholders that this time it was responding to the Evaluation's recommendations. In a paper to key stakeholders, BOS officers explicitly wrote of this collaboration in addressing the Evaluation's recommendations: "The Office of the Board and the Department of Education and Training have been working together to develop actions for each of the Report's 29

recommendations and appropriate timelines” (M. Malone, personal communication, 9 September 2004). However, staff within the DET’s curriculum directorate were already working towards what they perceived to be the Department’s involvement in addressing the recommendations: “investigating a strategic approach had huge implications for us as a directorate, and as a system. So we were conscious of the recommendations, what did that mean for implementation [...] what needed to be put into place?” (K. Long, personal communication, 24 September 2009).

Collaboration between the two institutions became evident in the course of developing the mandatory outcomes, and personnel from both institutions were to work together to provide a unified voice in delivering this longstanding response to teachers’ concerns on this matter. The DET’s Assistant Director for Curriculum, Robyn Mamouny, recalled her role while working in consultation with BOS officers as:

a significant Primary role. The process of responding to Eltis was an opportunity to clarify requirements. Primary schools were unsure about what they had to do when we had outcomes-based curriculum. My role was the management of the implementation in relation to the stakeholder group and in carrying out actions to meet the recommendations. (R. Mamouny, personal communication, 15 December 2009)

The BOS and the Department were making an effort to consult with each other in the development of a response to the Evaluation (2003). In a BOS PCC meeting, the meeting paper noted that “Since the release of the report [Eltis & Crump, 2003], Senior Officers of the DET and officers of the BOS have worked together to develop a plan to implement the report’s recommendations” (OBOS, Paper to the Board: Progress report on implementation of the Evaluation report, Document No: PCC04/05-E1, 5 May 2004).

The BOS made its stakeholders aware that they were consulting and collaborating with the Department and thereby satisfying the recommendations of the Evaluation (2003). Pross (1992, pp. 111–112) claimed that the bureaucratic structure of the modern state “imposes its form of organisation on all those who must work [...] to effectively interact with its complex machinery where interest groups must develop an organisational capacity” that is compatible with the policy system. However, as BOS officers showcased the OBOS’ democratic processes through consultation, there was still opposition from stakeholders across the state to its response to the Evaluation’s recommendations (Eltis & Crump, 2003).

4.5.4 Eltis Evaluation Delivers in Responding to Teachers' Concerns

“... pressure groups act to influence the decision centres that can best effect the changes they wish to bring about”.

(Pross, 1992, p. 109)

Teachers had sent a clear message across the educational landscape that the workload issues and problems of balancing the demands of an outcomes-based approach to curriculum were of critical concern. Although the Evaluation (2003) had focused on what had transpired in government schools since 1995, the evidence collected also indicated that the demands on teachers “were indeed shared by schools outside the government school sector” (Eltis, 2003, p. 80).

The release of the Evaluation (Eltis & Crump, 2003) and the acceptance of its recommendations by the Minister for Education demonstrated that the state’s key educational stakeholders were finally ready to listen to teachers’ concerns. This was highlighted by a media release from the deputy premier’s office (*New Reports for all NSW public school students*, 13 November 2003) ensuring that the bureaucracy had to find a solution: “All recommendations have been adopted by the Government. Dr Refshauge said we need to have the best assessment and reporting procedures for students, teachers and parents”.

While the minister focused on outcomes-based assessment and reporting, the Evaluation (2003) found that other issues still needed to be addressed:

... there is not a shared understanding of what teachers are required to do. It is especially the case that if we could give a clear delineation of what is mandatory for teachers to do by way of curriculum, assessment and reports, we would be doing schools a great service. (Eltis & Crump, 2003, p. 41)

Receiving a strong message from teachers during its own reviews of its syllabus documents, the OBOS concluded that: “Teachers are still uncertain of what is mandatory in each KLA syllabus. There was wide variation among teachers in their understanding of how to efficiently and effectively use the outcomes in Primary syllabuses” (OBOS, 2003c, p. 4). Findings from an internal project initiated by the Office validated the findings of the Evaluation (2003). To answer the ‘what’s mandatory?’ catch-cry became the BOS officers’ quest as they sought to respond to the recommendations of the Evaluation (2003).

The Evaluation (2003) found that there were still issues with the curriculum that had not been satisfactorily dealt with in the intervening years since the 1995 Review: there were “... problems needing to be addressed, not the least of which is the clear specification of just what

is mandatory for teachers in relation to curriculum assessment and reporting outcomes” (p. 3). Eltis (2003) claimed that it was important that curriculum advice be clear about expectations and requirements for outcomes assessment and reporting. BOS officers supported the notion of providing clear direction for what was required in curriculum delivery, claiming that its most current work on the PCP found that Primary teachers were still unclear on what was mandatory to deliver in the K–6 curriculum, thus supporting the findings of the Evaluation (2003).

Recommendation Two of the Evaluation (2003) was significant in driving the work of the BOS during 2004 and 2005. Stakeholders on the PCC worked with BOS officers during 2004 to respond specifically to this recommendation. At its meeting on 6 February, the PCC considered and endorsed work to implement the curriculum adjustments recommendations of the Evaluation (OBOS, paper for BOS meeting, 4 May 2004). Additional meetings of the PCC provided another veneer of stakeholder involvement in the mandatory outcomes decision-making processes by declaring that “The Primary Curriculum Committee was the Steering Committee that convened the special meetings’ and “... that the Office will consult further with key groups”. This reassured the BOS that the projects to address the Evaluation “have emerged as priorities for Primary education” and will “assist teachers with the effective implementation of the Primary curriculum” (OBOS, Primary Curriculum Project, Document No: D2003/6922, 5 November 2003, p. 3).

The Evaluation (2003) questioned what was needed in curriculum development and implementation to move outcomes-based assessment and reporting into the future. It had found that although Primary teachers appeared to be happy with using an outcomes-based approach, they were concerned about the work demands around assessment and reporting of outcomes (Eltis & Crump, 2003). There were concerns that “Australia has crafted its own version of outcomes-based education” and that, in NSW, OBE had been “systematically documented in the work of the Board of Studies NSW and the NSW Department of Education and Training” (Eltis & Crump, 2003, p. 30). This had created deficiencies in teachers’ understanding of an outcomes-based curriculum, along with an excessive number of outcomes for the total Primary curriculum.

It was now time for the Office to see whether educational stakeholders were able to determine what outcomes should be defined as mandatory for teaching, assessing and reporting to make teaching across the K–6 curriculum manageable. BOS officers were required to consult with their key stakeholders to develop a response to the Evaluation’s (2003) recommendations to resolve the perennial concerns of what Primary teachers should teach:

I think Ken [Eltis], with these recommendations, tried to dutifully report back what teachers were saying to him, and put the task to the Board and the Department to solve, and I don't think he necessarily knew whether there would be a perfect solution, but these were the concerns he kept hearing. (P. Lambert, personal communication, 19 August 2013)

The Office prepared to consult broadly with its stakeholders in an attempt to discover how mandatory outcomes would enable teachers to manage the K–6 curriculum. In an unprecedented number of consultation meetings with teachers, professional teachers' associations, academics and other interest groups, the Office discovered that the Evaluation's (2003) recommendation to define a set of mandatory outcomes was not a task in which it could achieve consensus among all stakeholders. However, John O'Brien, Director of Curriculum at the OBOS, ensured that the BOS would address the recommendations and try "to find a mandatory subset of what existed" (J. O'Brien, personal communication, 18 December 2009).

What happened next was a clash of views from educational stakeholders on the issue of whether mandatory outcomes would provide 'clarity, manageability and balance' (OBOS, 2004) for Primary school teachers in NSW.

4.6 Critical Incident Three: The Rebellion Builds—Challenging the Board of Studies' Mandatory Outcomes

To make a difference to teacher workload there would need to be a maximum total of 20–30 outcomes per stage.

Primary Principals Association (2004)

There is concern that some teachers may only teach the *mandatory* outcomes, resolving some workload issues but not necessarily improving teaching and learning.

Council of Catholic School Parents (2004)

When mandatory is taken literally it narrows the curriculum

Independent Education Union (2004)

This critical incident examines the involvement of key stakeholders in the controversy surrounding the Board's consultation on "what outcomes should be defined as mandatory for teaching, assessing and reporting purposes" (Eltis & Crump, 2003, p. 82). Responses from the key stakeholder groups represented on the Board's PCC illustrated the polarising points of view that challenged the Board's capacity to deliver an acceptable set of mandatory outcomes. However, the Board was insistent on addressing this recommendation. Thus, the BOS continued to seek the views of its stakeholders—even in the face of their opposition—to define a mandatory set of outcomes for the Primary curriculum.

As key stakeholders became more aware of the implications of having a defined set of mandatory outcomes, Board officers became inundated with requests to discuss their implications. Table 4.3 shows the Board's key stakeholder groups and their participation in the consultation process.

Table 4.3: NSW BOS key stakeholder groups involved in the consultation on defining mandatory outcomes in the K–6 curriculum

Stakeholder group	Represented on the NSW BOS (1)	Represented on BOS–PCC (2)	Written response submitted as part of the consultation process (3)	Key group consultation meeting attended by representatives (4)	Stakeholder group representative participating in this study	Other members in attendance
DET	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	
PPA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2
NSWTF	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3
P&C	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
CEC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
CCSP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
IEU	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
IPSHA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
NSW Parents Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3
NSW Vice Chancellor's Committee	✓	✓		✓		
AECG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
ECEC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
AASE	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Note. DET= NSW Department of Education; PPA= NSW Primary Principals Association; NSWTF= NSW Teachers Federation; P&C= NSW Parents and Citizens Association; CEC= Catholic Education Commission; CCSP= Council of Catholic School Parents; IEU= Independent Education Union; IPSHA= Independent Primary School Heads Association; AECG= NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee; ECEC= Early Childhood Education Council of NSW; AASE= Australian Association of Special Educators (NSW).

Information in columns (1)–(4) was adapted from the following sources: (1) and (2): BOS (2005) annual report, BOS: Sydney; (3) OBOS (2004) consultation submissions summary; (4) M. Malone (2004) personal notes on feedback from consulting with key stakeholder groups.

It can be seen that of the key stakeholder groups represented on the PCC, 85 per cent were also represented on the BOS. This meant that these agents had representation on both committees. All 13 stakeholder groups attended consultation meetings with BOS officers and provided written submissions. Analyses of the meeting agendas and notes found that approximately half of the groups had multiple representations from members attending various meetings. Although representatives of each key group were involved in the process of defining the mandatory outcomes, the ‘rank-and-file’ members of each key stakeholder group opposed the decisions made by the BOS.

This critical incident explores the responses from key educational stakeholders as they challenged the BOS’ capacity to deliver an acceptable set of mandatory outcomes. In doing so, it examines the strategies employed by stakeholder groups as they participated in the curriculum development consultation processes.

The following themes have been developed using interview data, institutional documentary artefacts, and stakeholder groups' journals and newsletters (e.g., *Journal of the Federation of Parents and Citizens' Association* and *ECEC Newsletter*). These sources revealed that the individual committee representative communicated information they considered important in the interests of their group. However, in some cases, the group felt that their representative had not effectively advocated their group's interests during the process.

The patterns grounded in the data, revealed that:

- stakeholder participation was explicit in the BOS' consultation process;
- stakeholder groups form a policy community as they work within institutional processes;
- groups align when they have similar interests; and
- group actions influence the policy community.

The players in these events were:

- key stakeholder groups represented on the Board's PCC;
- representatives of key stakeholder groups;
- the working party represented by principals from the three schooling sectors; and
- NSW BOS officers.

This critical incident examines the Boards' processes for determining the set of mandatory outcomes. In doing so, it explores the established processes used for consultation with its key stakeholders. The Board's challenge was twofold: key stakeholders questioned the decision-making processes for which the set of mandatory outcomes were developed; and once the mandatory outcomes were ready for consultation, stakeholders again challenged the legitimacy of the mandatory outcomes as opposed to the non-mandatory outcomes for Primary education. An overview of the key developments for this critical incident is presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Summary of developments for Critical Incident Three: 2004

Year	Policy context		NSW BOS		Schools context	Issues and responses
	Federal government	NSW state government	BOS	OBOS		
2003	November- Education Minister, Dr Brendan Nelson announces ‘plain English report cards’ to be developed.	November: Release of the Evaluation (2003).	Considers its response to the Evaluation’s recommendations.	Director of Curriculum, Inspector for Primary education and Senior Curriculum Officer— Primary education prepares response to recommendations of the Evaluation about adjusting curriculum demands.	DET prepare response to the Evaluation’s recommendations concerning schools, assessment and reporting and tracking student progress.	BOS responds to the minister’s acceptance of the 29 recommendations of the Evaluation by identifying and adopting the curriculum-related recommendations.
2004		October: Minister Refshauge announces new report cards in.	<p>25 February: PCC meeting discusses the effect of the Evaluation on teaching, assessment and reporting.</p> <p>June: PCC meeting endorses mandatory outcomes for consultation with teachers and stakeholders.</p> <p>September to December: State-wide consultation meetings on defining mandatory outcomes with stakeholders.</p>	<p>BOS officers work with sample group of teachers to develop draft set of mandatory outcomes.</p> <p>BOS officers, working party and PCC steering committee refine mandatory outcomes for BOS endorsement.</p> <p>Consultation on defining mandatory outcomes with teachers and stakeholders groups via survey (online and paper-based); written submissions; and meetings.</p> <p>(July to December). BOS officers conduct state-wide consultation meetings</p>	<p>Stakeholder groups provide feedback on the mandatory outcomes.</p> <p>Stakeholders attend consultation meetings.</p> <p>Schools and professional teaching associations invite BOS officers to discuss mandatory outcomes.</p> <p>DET consult with government schools and groups on ‘Curriculum planning and programming, assessing and reporting to parents K–12’ policy and student reporting formats.</p>	<p>BOS and DET consult with their stakeholders on their respective responses to the Evaluation. BOS develop a set of mandatory outcomes with strong input from Primary school teachers.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><i>Critical Incident Three: The rebellion builds—Challenging the BOS’ mandatory outcomes.</i></p> </div>

4.6.1 Stakeholder Participation is Explicit in the Board of Studies' Consultation Process

“To wield influence regularly in the formation and application of public policy, groups have to work with bureaucracies”.

(Pross, 1992, p, 116)

Following the minister's 2004 announcements in parliament concerning the mandatory curriculum requirements for Primary and Secondary students, BOS officers adopted an extensive schedule of consultation to ascertain the views of stakeholders. In seeking advice from its Primary education experts, the BOS refined its syllabus development process to review the number of outcomes in the six K–6 syllabuses. The aim was to develop a set of mandatory outcomes to manage the Primary curriculum. Using this reduced set of outcomes, BOS officers consulted with stakeholders across the state on the feasibility of having outcomes that were mandatory for Primary education. While key stakeholders initially worked within the BOS' institutional processes, it quickly became apparent that some groups found that there were multiple ways of influencing curriculum decision-making processes.

The syllabus development process developed by the BOS involved a project management approach with four phases, where “advice is sought at key points from teachers, significant individuals and organisations” (OBOS, 2006, p. 11). However, with no formal evaluation of any individual Primary syllabus after its release and implementation throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, there was mounting pressure for the BOS to evaluate the entire suite of Primary documents.

As noted in Critical Incident One, the BOS had initiated its own state-wide review of the six K–6 syllabuses in 2002; however, due to delays and timeline extensions, this review phase later coincided with the BOS' internal review responses to the Evaluation (Eltis & Crump, 2003). What became clear during this period was that although there was a requirement for each syllabus to be evaluated after its development and implementation, this was not the case with the release of each Primary syllabus to schools. It was only upon completion of all six syllabuses that the review and evaluation phase of the syllabus development process was initiated. In a letter to stakeholders, the BOS endeavoured to review all K–6 at the same time: “*Evaluation Criteria for K–6 Syllabuses* document will assist the Board to undertake a consistent and comprehensive approach to the evaluation of these and other Primary syllabus documents” (BOS, 1999b, para. 2). This deviation from the process of individual KLA syllabus review and evaluation provided a way for key stakeholders to have multiple representations throughout the consultation phases on the mandatory outcomes and the *Foundation Statements*. The review of all six Primary KLA syllabuses at the same time

allowed stakeholders to participate across the various KLA reviews. This in turn provided stakeholders multiple opportunities to represent their interests in the different areas of the Primary curriculum.

Consultation in the syllabus development process was built into the four phases: syllabus review; writing brief development; syllabus development; and implementation. The major feature of this process was that it ensured “advice is sought at key points from teachers, significant individuals and organisations” (BOS, 2006, p. 11). Consultation with stakeholders during each phase of the syllabus development was instrumental to the democratic processes the BOS had established. However, the processes for consultation did not strictly follow those of its established procedures as all six Primary KLA syllabuses were being reviewed collectively. Table 4.3 highlights the engagement with key stakeholders during the consultation on mandatory outcomes. During the consultation on the mandatory outcomes and the development of the *Foundation Statements* it transpired that representatives of stakeholder groups were aware of exercising their right to be consulted during the syllabus development process (see Table 4.5). Different forms of consultation occurred between November 2003 and December 2005 to demonstrate that stakeholders were involved continuously and systematically throughout this period. Nonetheless, it can also be claimed that the curriculum development processes provided opportunities for interested individuals and groups to participate during the various consultation stages.

Consultation can be defined as “the act to consult or confer” (Merriam-Webster, 2015). Analyses of the data found that consultation with stakeholders took many forms depending on the stakeholder group and/or individual. The findings show the following approaches:

- formally planned meetings at the BOS;
- formal meeting requested by the stakeholder or individual;
- informal meetings on request;
- written submissions; and
- informal correspondence such as email and telephone call.

4.6.1.1 Formal planned meetings at the Board of Studies

Consultation with the members of the PCC key stakeholders occurred during formally planned meetings of the committee organised by the OBOS secretariat. These formal meetings were scheduled PCC meetings (six were held between November 2003 and December 2004), working party meetings (seven meetings, of which three involved attendance at PCC meetings), and on special occasions; for example, when the PCC became

the steering committee for the development of the mandatory outcomes, an additional two meetings were held in March and April 2004 (M. Malone, personal communication, 10 February 2004). Representatives of key stakeholder groups who were nominated to be on these committees attended these meetings.

Table 4.5: Types of consultation with different stakeholders during the various phases in reviewing K–6 syllabus outcomes

Phase in developing the <i>Foundation Statements</i>	Structured consultation			Optional consultation	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professionally facilitated meetings with teachers and sectors Representatives of key groups on PCC 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory outcomes document <i>Foundation Statements</i> document 	
	Key Groups represented on the PCC and the Working Party	Sample group of Primary school teachers	Sample group of curriculum consultants	General Open access to all education stakeholder groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure of groups determined by PCC
Review of K–6 syllabus outcomes	✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate intention Gather views Determine direction
Development of mandatory outcomes by writing team of Primary school teachers (writing brief development)	✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness Determine direction
Consultation on <i>Defining mandatory outcomes in the K–6 curriculum</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness Identify issues
Development of the <i>Foundation Statements</i> (syllabus development)	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness Identify issues Confirm content and intent of the <i>Foundation Statements</i> Inform Minister
Implementation of the <i>Foundation Statements</i> in schools across NSW	✓		✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official release of document by Minister Schooling sector briefings

Source: Adapted from OBOS (2006), *Syllabus Development Handbook*, p. 52: Consultation in syllabus development.

4.6.1.2 Formal meetings requested by the stakeholder

Stakeholders would occasionally formally request a meeting with BOS officers so they could actively engage in the process. This ensured that their positions were heard on the specific issues of concern to their group: “we would use all sorts of avenues [...] often we requested a meeting and we were always successful making contact and saying we have an issue” (S. Ziems, personal communication, 7 October 2009). Stakeholders who had representation on the Board’s committees and were involved in the curriculum development were knowledgeable of the BOS’ consultation processes and how to access personnel who were managing these processes.

Other examples of formal meetings included requests by individuals to meet with BOS officers after specific meetings, such as consultation meetings, committee meeting or syllabus writing meetings. This allowed representatives to further advance their views through direct involvement in the curriculum decisions outside of the formal meeting time: “I would ring particular people on the Board. I knew that that was actually more effective than bringing it up at the meeting” (C. Benedet, personal communication, 26 August 2009).

4.6.1.3 Informal meetings on request

Informal meetings typically occurred when a stakeholder or PCC member contacted a BOS officer at an unspecified time to discuss an issue of concern. This usually occurred when the representative was seeking extra information about the process and how decisions would affect the final outcome. Ms Clancy, representing the CEC on the PCC, attested to contacting BOS officers and asking them to speak with staff at CEO Sydney about current work at the BOS: “we actually had Margaret [Malone, Inspector for Primary education] come and talk to a group of principals about the mandatory outcomes” (personal communication, 9 September 2009). Mr Ella, President of the AECG during this period, concurred with Ms Clancy on the freedom to contact Board Officers in seeking clarification on issues relevant to their group. He observed that if there was a need for clarification on an issue, he would contact the BOS inspector in the Aboriginal education unit: “I’d just go to Kevin [who] would chase it up because Kevin was a man that we trusted within the organisation. So we used our peers within the organisation” (D. Ella, personal communication, 4 September 2009). This was a way for the representative to gain insider knowledge of the decision-making processes so as to advance their group’s agenda.

4.6.1.4 Written submissions

Written submissions are part of the consultation process. They provide stakeholders with a formal way of communicating their views. Submissions were recorded as part of the data gathered during the consultation process. Written submissions from stakeholders were usually written by the executive committee of the group on behalf of its membership. These submissions were not written by the group's representative on the BOS committee, although they may have input into the group's submission. Suzanne Ziems, President of the ECEC, confirmed that her group's involvement in the BOS' consultative process allowed them to submit a written response: "the way the process of the Board works, we also write—we put in a submission for Eltis" (personal communication, 7 October 2009). Caroline Benedet, representing the CCSP, was clear about her role in the consultation process and the multiple responses to consultation that could be attained by individuals: "I think the consultation process was basically similar for most of the syllabuses [development]. You could also make private submissions as well" (C. Benedet, personal communication, 26 August 2009).

The analysis of the *Report on the Consultation on Defining Mandatory Outcomes in the K.6 Curriculum* (BOS, 2005) found that there were 65 submissions from key groups, of which 12 written submissions were from the key groups represented on the PCC and the BOS. All groups represented on the PCC submitted written responses to the consultation about defining mandatory outcomes, even though they were all part of the original decision-making processes in their development. Although key stakeholders had representation on the BOS' committees and were in privileged positions for being involved in the decisions being made, the groups still exercised further influence by formally submitting their responses to the mandatory outcomes.

4.6.1.5 Informal correspondence

The use of email and telephone calls to a BOS officer was also considered an effective way for stakeholders to consult informally on issues or to access information: "There would be times where I'd actually ring people at the Board and just ask certain questions if I didn't quite understand anything, or just to gauge what was going on, so there was some informal collaboration" (C. Benedet, personal communication, 26 August 2009).

On other occasions, committee members felt confident to contact BOS officers to gain clarity on an issue: "I have emailed Board officers when there seemed to be a conflict between what was being expected in the school" (S. Fern, personal communication, 11 September 2009).

Most of the informal contact with BOS officers was from the non-government schooling sector.

Informal communication from the members of the DET came from individual representatives who emailed or telephoned BOS officers. This was considered expedient because it was “not on the record and you could personalise it because it was just two people having a chat” (B. Powyer, personal communication, 21 September 2009). This allowed individual DET representatives, such as curriculum consultants and education officers, to gain information on their specific area of curriculum responsibility, and subsequently report back to the organisation. This in turn enabled the smaller branches in the DET to make decisions in their specific curriculum area that later affected reporting for the whole organisation: “Each of the CEOs and curriculum officers would manage differently. They had different relationships with Board officers and different ways of getting information” (B. Powyer, personal communication, 21 September 2009).

Key stakeholder groups effectively used the BOS’ consultative processes to gain information and be involved in decision-making within the curriculum development processes. Importantly, as part of the consultation on defining mandatory outcomes, some stakeholders aligned with other groups to formulate collective decisions about the mandatory outcomes.

4.6.2 Stakeholder Groups Form a Policy Community-Working Within Institutional Processes

“Modern policy systems are so constructed that some degree of organisation is a prerequisite to participation”.

(Pross, 1992, p, 116)

A number of key stakeholder groups represented on the PCC formed part of a *specialised policy community* that drew on their expertise in reviewing the Primary curriculum. They were able to use their insider status in the process to dominate decision-making during consultation about mandatory outcomes. This was especially evident when the PCC became the steering committee to respond to the Evaluation (2003). Pross (1992) defined a policy community as “that part of a political system that has acquired a dominant voice in determining government decisions in a field of public activity. This is by virtue of its functional responsibilities, its vested interests, and its specialised knowledge” (p. 119). The representatives on the PCC thus became a specialised policy community that included the BOS officers managing the project. Pross (1992) posited that groups, individuals, the media and the government agency with an interest in a particular policy field attempt to influence it. To interact effectively within the institutional setting, some groups combined forces with

other groups or adapted so they were compatible with the policy-making procedures (Pross, 1992).

The Primary curriculum policy community had formed networks as part of the curriculum decision-making processes on the evaluation of curriculum outcomes. This community of Primary education experts, drawn together in this policy field, activated networks such as those within the government school sector (e.g., DET, NSWTF and P&C). Representatives from different positions and units within the DET's curriculum directorate—the Assistant Director, CEOs and curriculum consultants—all spoke about the importance of consulting with their own networks to further develop their own policy positions on mandatory outcomes and *Foundation Statements*. The two assistant directors, Ms Mamourney and Mr Powyer, confirmed the involvement of other groups within the DET so they were able to gain feedback and concerns about the mandatory outcomes. This was in turn used to strengthen their positions when consulting with the BOS:

The individual KLA [units] are always encouraged to have good networks, to make sure that they had the views of teachers—one of their networking strategies is to be involved with professional associations (R. Mamourney, personal communication, 15 December 2009).

They [staff in the Directorate] had their networks, so they would bring in people and run workshops, or get feedback, and they all had those networks in place (B. Powyer, personal communication, 21 September 2009)

That each KLA had its own networks was confirmed by Kerry Long, Chief Education Officer (Assessment and Reporting) and Harry Vassila, Senior Curriculum Consultant (Science and Technology), who used their networks to further consult with their stakeholders to strengthen their own curriculum positions:

There was so much liaising with stakeholders; even though we're DET, we liaised with P&C, Teachers' Federation, Secondary Principals' Council, the Primary Principals' Council [*sic*], to ensure that all of their voices were heard. (K. Long, personal communication, 24 August 2009)

When it came to Science and Technology, we pulled in a number of stakeholders to respond and contribute to the Board's development, we brought in a number of professional organisations: the Science Teachers' Association; TIPS [Technology in Primary Schools], Primary science teachers. (H. Vassila, personal communication, 24 August 2009)

DET personnel would not only seek the views of people within their own curriculum networks, but also those networks they had within the curriculum directorate and the broader education community.

Counterbalancing this notion of a policy community, Pross (1992) claimed that networks are formed to assist in the identification of issues and bring together those who share the same values and perceptions about which policies are to be adopted. Mr Ella, President of the NSW AECG, went about building networks across the schooling sectors and within the DET, P&C and Catholic education sectors as the interests of indigenous students were drawn from across all three schooling authorities:

We were building a strong alliance with the P&C. We've really worked with each other and supported each other, we're both family groups, and we were a strong united strength. So we've become very strong with the P & C and with the Catholic Education sector. (D. Ella, personal communication, 4 September 2009)

The specialised policy community of the PCC had assisted in building networks between the stakeholder representatives sharing common interests and forming alliances as they “‘plug in’ or leave as issues emerge and their concerns are aroused and resolved” (Pross, 1992, p. 120).

4.6.3 Groups with Similar Interests Align

*“... bureaucratic policy-making forces individuals to combine
if they wish to have their voices heard”.*

(Pross, 1992, p. 118)

Groups with common interests often align over similar issues. Pross (1992) found that groups composed of similarly like-minded people shared common values and were able to debate issues. This, in turn, further enhanced their opportunities for networking. All three parent groups on the PCC—the P&C, CCSP and the NSW Parent Council—although representing different schooling authorities, all shared a common interest in that they were all representing parents of Primary-school-aged students. This allowed the parent groups on the committee to, on occasion, seek each other out and come together with a united voice:

I had quite good relationships with all sectors: people who represent the Department, members of the Council of Catholic School Parents, people from the Commission, also the New South Wales Parents' Council, which is an independent parent group (C. Benedet, personal communication, 26 August 2009)

I often had coffee with Caroline Benedet [from CCSP] and sometimes with the PPA representative (D. Lloyd, personal communication, 9 September 2009)

Ms Benedet confirmed that networking with parent groups and professional teachers' groups from both Catholic and DET backgrounds allowed her to discuss issues because of their similar interests: "Only the parent groups because that's the link" (personal communication, 26 August 2009).

There were also occasions for members of the PCC to network:

Occasionally there'd be collaborations between Teachers' Federation or Primary Principals, or Catholic Parents. There'd be often reasonably vigorous discussion—over coffee [...] nothing particularly formal, but the key issue would be curriculum, and having this opportunity for discussion with people from a wide variety of perspectives, because there were differences in views. (D. Lloyd, personal communication, 9 September 2009)

The same was seen with principals' groups, such as those on the working party and representing the PPA:

Even though we came from different contexts and different worlds, and different sectors, it was very evident that we were dealing with the same issues, the same worries, and the same concerns [...] and that unified us. (B. Lacey, personal communication, 9 September 2009)

Mr Lacey implied that the debate over issues between principals from different schooling authorities was overcome because of their shared interests in the leadership of schools. However, the networking between the members of the working party went beyond formal meetings to include informal communication. Stressing the significance of the nature of the different schooling systems, Mr Lacey explained the importance of the network he had with other members of the working party, suggesting that the communication between members was continuous, and that members shared common interests and concerns:

We'd chat either before or after meetings, or by email. I suppose we trusted each other. We were sensitive to those responsibilities we had. We were doing the best we could to strategically get the greatest benefit from these changes. (B. Lacey, personal communication, 9 September 2009)

Mr Powyer supported this notion of stakeholders aligning with other groups using both informal and formal methods. He placed great importance in the value of the meeting break, which allowed stakeholders to informally catch-up over morning tea. This allowed members to reacquaint with their contacts, establish alliances and share information in an informal way:

when you went for the cup of tea and the biscuits, you could actually say, 'I was listening to you at the last meeting, and I think there's something in that'. That little gathering—was quite significant, it was about half an hour before the meeting—you could, make those

comments; or—I'm terribly Machiavellian—you could see how other groups were meeting, who was talking to who, and you could make some assumptions about that. You could say, 'Oh, that's interesting. The Teachers' Federation is talking to the parents over there today.' And you might take your bickie over and start a conversation by asking 'How's it going?' [they might reply] 'Oh, yeah, we're just talking about this,' or, 'We're just going through this,' or they might suddenly clam up, and you think, 'I've intruded into something! I better back away.' But some of that alignment stuff occurred there. (B. Powyer, personal communication, 9 September 2009)

Mr Powyer's observations of the interactions of stakeholders during this informal break provide valuable insights into the strategies and methods used by stakeholders to communicate in a less formal manner to strengthen alliances or to enhance their positions on similar interests or concerns. Pross (1992) claimed the value of the term *network* is associated with an image of the actors, who are "consciously in touch with one another as a result of shared interests in the resolution of a specific issue" (p. 120). These alliances and allegiances of the groups, along with their actions, are investigated below to gain an understanding of how they influenced the policy community.

4.6.4 Group Actions Influence the Policy Community

"To influence the policy community, a group must be prepared to deploy its lobbying activities".

(Pross, 1992, p. 144)

Consultation about defining a set of mandatory outcomes saw the diverse interests of the key stakeholder groups across schooling sectors align in their agreement that mandatory outcomes for the Primary curriculum were not going to deliver a more manageable curriculum. The working party of the three cross-sectoral principals' groups provided feedback to the OBOS that there were still too many outcomes (OBOS, 2005). Brian Lacey claimed that "The reduction in the number of outcomes was not going to be sufficient in reducing teachers' workload in schools" (personal communication, 2 September 2009). This unified the Primary school principals' position irrespective of their schooling sector. Although key stakeholder groups on the BOS and PCC were involved in the decisions in developing mandatory outcomes, the same key groups then opposed them during the consultation phase: "There is strong concern from key stakeholders and some teachers about the actual mandatory outcomes selected" (BOS, 2005b, p. 33).

Representatives of key stakeholder groups on the PCC were in privileged positions. They were provided with opportunities to be involved in the consultation outside of their

participation on the committee. Some representatives attended state-wide meetings, stakeholder consultation meetings and sector briefings to ensure they represented the views of their constituents: “We went to briefings. It’s always interesting to see who chooses to go. [...] You get to see and hear different perspectives from people” (S. Fern, personal communication, 11 September 2009).

Meanwhile, representatives also ensured that their own group had every opportunity to respond during the consultation period through the range of pathways available. The PPA achieved this input by:

Being involved in the process. It’s having the opportunity to respond to Eltis through the Executive and through the Curriculum Reference Group and the Assessment Reporting Reference Group. (P. Patterson-Allen, personal communication, 16 December 2009)

Working within the BOS’ representative meeting structures, Mr Powyer was able to exert his influence within the policy community by maintaining a working relationship with the PCC:

There are these dominant people in the committee, and there are people who talk a lot and don’t do anything. But one of the things that comes out of there is that a lot of decisions, a lot of the alignment, occurs in the car park after the meeting. In the Board’s meetings, when we had the little pre-eaties, that’s where this type of thing could occur. It wasn’t necessarily in the formal structure, but it was inside another formal structure where we were meeting. (B. Powyer, personal communication, 9 September 2009)

Ms Benedet echoed the importance of informal networking between key stakeholder group representatives within the formal meeting structure. Through networking, she was able to gain information on how other groups were intending to influence the agenda:

Well, there’s always ways to do things. I believe that there was probably quite a bit of discussion before meetings. I’m pretty sure that there was strategising going on. On the whole we weren’t particularly militant, but there is always talk at another level, at the Commission, in the Department, they all would have talked at a different level outside of the meeting at the Board. (C. Benedet, personal communication, 26 August 2009)

Ms Benedet not only made some insightful observations on how different members of the committee interact with others on the committee, but she also commented on the interactions within her own group. She claimed that groups have a hierarchical structure for decision-making and that, within this structure, strategies are developed to ensure the group’s claims are heard. Ms Benedet’s insights are predicated on effective communication between and among the stakeholders and their representatives.

Pross (1992) believed that groups and their representatives, especially those who are familiar with decision-making processes, have a considerable advantage when it comes to injecting supporting information and “whether, when, and where to apply pressure, as well as the ability to monitor discussions” (p. 145). Ms Benedet, a longstanding BOS member, was well versed with its workings. Knowledge of the BOS’ processes allowed representatives such as Ms Benedet and Mr Powyer to use their personal connections and interpersonal skills to effectively communicate their positions directly to BOS officers and to their group.

Throughout the consultation on the mandatory outcomes, there were many instances where key stakeholder groups were able to influence decisions and pave the way for a shift away from curriculum outcomes. Through their involvement in the consultation processes, all groups made it clear that mandating selected outcomes would diminish the status of the outcomes currently in syllabus documents.

4.6.5 Brave World of the Consultation Process

“Interest groups must organise themselves and to some extent abide by the norms of consultation”.

(Pross, 1992, p. 147)

The resounding feedback from key stakeholders was that the term *mandatory* was not a suitable term to use in Primary education. Many groups agreed that the term *mandatory* implied “compulsory, obligatory and necessary and that the additional outcomes will then be seen as not-compulsory, not-obligatory or not-necessary and therefore won’t be taught” (OBOS, 2005a, p. 29). There was an undercurrent of disharmony from stakeholders and a strong message that, although “there was no general agreement, the use of the word mandatory was overwhelmingly negative” (OBOS, 2005a, p. 29). John O’Brien (personal communication, 18 December 2009) reflected on the difficulty of achieving consensus and providing all stakeholders with a voice that did not privilege one group over another:

... those meetings were the toughest meetings to have. They were fundamentally important to try to make sure that you get all the stakeholders, knowing that they’d had a say, to share their views with the views of others. (J. O’Brien, personal communication, 18 December 2009)

As the director for curriculum and the overall manager of the BOS’ response to the Evaluation, Mr O’Brien acknowledged the difficulties with managing the various views of stakeholders and the importance of ensuring that all stakeholders were part of the process.

At a special meeting of the PCC on 27 April 2005, representatives of the stakeholder groups presented their groups' concerns and possible solutions: "There seemed to be a genuine sort of consistency from all the groups and [...] there was probably an unwritten consensus" (B. Powyer, personal communication, 21 September 2009).

At its meeting in June 2005, the BOS' response was to abandon the mandatory outcomes (OBOS, 29 June 2005, Primary Curriculum report Doc No P05/06-R1). Extensive consultation with its key stakeholders had allowed BOS officers to conclude that there was not going to be agreement on mandatory outcomes for the K–6 curriculum. However, the process allowed the BOS to respond to the specific recommendations of the government-commissioned Evaluation into outcomes, assessment and reporting. In doing so, key stakeholders on the PCC vigorously challenged the BOS' capacity to deliver an acceptable set of mandatory outcomes. Persevering with its processes for curriculum development, and ensuring there was broad consultation with interested individuals and groups, the consultation on defining mandatory outcomes continued (OBOS, 2006). The BOS' consultation processes also involved engaging the broader education community. What followed was that a number of other stakeholder groups with interests in specific curriculum subjects or KLAs also became part of the broader policy community and demanded that their voices be heard.

4.7 Critical Incident Four: The Final Assault—Abandon the Mandatory

New subjects guide for primary years

Linda Doherty and Natasha Mills,
Sydney Morning Herald,
17 January 2005

Education fads come
and go, but this time
it's back to basics as
parents demand ...

DO IT OUR WAY

Linda Doherty and
Justin Norrie, *Sydney*
Morning Herald,
8 August 2005

Critical Incident Four examines the involvement of ‘other’ interested stakeholders during the BOS’ consultation about defining a set of mandatory outcomes. While these groups did not have representation on the BOS or PCC, they had interests in specific KLAS of the curriculum and therefore had a stake in any mandatory outcomes. These interest groups wanted their concerns about their specific syllabus areas to be addressed, and they found ways of ensuring their involvement during the consultation period. These ‘other’ groups represented subject areas such as: HSIE, Science and Technology, PDHPE, and Creative Arts. Interestingly, specialist English and Mathematics professional teachers’ associations and groups also sought to become involved in the decision-making processes regarding which outcomes should be mandatory for their particular syllabus areas.

BOS officers established an extensive program of consultation in an effort to consult widely on the Primary curriculum outcomes. The number of consultations held across the state was unprecedented for Primary education, and the process provided an insight into the BOS’ desire to include as many stakeholders as possible in its first review of the K–6 curriculum documents. Ms Malone, alluded to the scope and significance of the consultations: “certainly

the process of including as many people, and getting the ideas of as many people was absolutely critical in the Board's process" (personal communication, 9 September 2009).

Structured consultations are defined as professionally facilitated meetings, interviews, etc., with representatives of all groups (BOS, 2006). The Syllabus Development Handbook (BOS, 2006) also clarified key groups as a "standard list, [of] academics, school authorities, professional associations etc." (p. 52). These groups were already involved in three of the four phases of the curriculum development processes. The *structured consultation* classification was where all representatives of key stakeholder groups were able to participate in formally *structured consultation* meetings, whereas participation through *optional consultation* only gave stakeholders *general open access* to the process by providing access to electronic/online forms and documents sent to schools.

Consultation meetings ranged from briefings with representatives from schooling sectors to large venue meetings with groups of educators held in regional and metropolitan areas. Meetings with individuals and representatives of other education stakeholder groups were also an integral part of the process. Moreover, BOS officers were able to obtain additional feedback from the consultation surveys and written submissions: "There were 28 statewide after-school meetings and an additional 25 meetings with key groups. Approximately 1500 Primary teachers attended meetings to discuss and give feedback on the paper. Almost 600 survey responses and 65 submissions had been received" (OBOS, 2005a, p. 5).

The aim of consulting broadly was to affirm that the Evaluation's recommendations were being addressed. As BOS officers prepared for meetings with stakeholders, many other education stakeholder groups were organising their responses to what they thought *mandatory* meant for teaching and learning for their specific subject areas. Table 4.6 presents a summary of the critical events in this intense period of the BOS' consultation with educational stakeholders on mandatory outcomes.

This critical incident examines the actions of 'other' educational stakeholders who were determined to have a voice in the curriculum decision-making processes.

Table 4.6: Summary of developments for Critical Incident Four: consulting with other stakeholder groups

Year	Policy context		NSW BOS		Schools context	Issues and responses
	Federal government	NSW state government	BOS	OBOS		
2004	MCEETYA agrees to states and territories' departments of education to develop national consistency in curriculum outcomes.	Minister Refshauge announces new report cards in October that will be easier for parents to compare their child's progress against state-wide benchmarks.	<p>25 February meeting: PCC discuss the effect of Evaluation.</p> <p>June PCC meeting endorses mandatory outcomes for consultation.</p> <p>Sept-Dec. State-wide consultation conducted on the mandatory outcomes.</p>	<p>BOS officers work with PCC, working party and a sample group of teachers to develop draft set of mandatory outcomes.</p> <p>July to December: BOS officers conduct state-wide consultation meetings with teachers and key stakeholder groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation survey available all to schools and educational community via online. • Copies of survey sent to all Primary schools in NSW. • Subject area specialist groups meet with officers on mandatory outcomes. • Receipt of 65 written submissions from stakeholder groups. <p>December to February BOS officers and working party analyse data collected on mandatory outcomes. Consultation report developed.</p>	<p>Stakeholder groups provide feedback mandatory outcomes.</p> <p>DET consults with government schools and groups on 'Curriculum planning and programming, assessing and reporting to parents K–12' policy and student reporting formats.</p>	<p>BOS and DET consult with stakeholders on their respective responses to the Evaluation.</p> <div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><i>Critical Incident 4: The final assault: Abandon the mandatory.</i></p> </div>

The following themes have been developed from documentary artefacts generated by the OBOS, interview data from study participants, and stakeholder groups' newsletters, journals and websites. The various documentary sources revealed that stakeholder groups other than those formally represented on the PCC sought to air their concerns regarding reducing the number of outcomes for specific KLAs. Although specialist KLA groups adhered to the methods established by the BOS' consultation processes, stakeholders' voices were multiplied many times over by the number of members who demanded to be heard. The following themes, grounded in the data, revealed that groups used various approaches to ensure their participation:

- Inclusion in the BOS' consultation processes: All Primary curriculum stakeholders used the opportunities provided by the established consultation processes.
- Employing other strategies to ensure a voice: Stakeholders used other strategies to guarantee involvement in the decision-making processes.
- Exploitation of the BOS' consultative processes: Individuals who represented multiple stakeholder groups through multiple channels exploited the established consultation processes to advance their own cause.

This critical incident investigated the strategies used by the following KLA stakeholders:

- Primary Association for Mathematics (PAM) and Mathematical Teachers Association of NSW (MANSW);
- Primary English Teachers Association Australia (PETAA);
- Science Teachers Association of NSW (STANSW);
- Primary HSIE Teachers Association (Primary HSIETA); and
- Australian Council for Health Physical Education and Recreation NSW (ACHER) and the NSW Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Teachers Association (PDHPETA).

Other key players in this critical incident were the members of the PCC, DET and BOS.

Of prominence in this critical incident is the access that stakeholders had to the consultation processes. Once an interest group pursued a strategy to voice their group's concerns, it was then guaranteed a pathway of *structured consultation* and/or *optional consultation* (see Table 4.5). This classification gave the KLA groups direct access to the consultation documents that were available during the various phases in the consultation of mandatory outcomes.

4.7.1 Inclusion in the Board of Studies' Consultation Processes

“A number of key stakeholder and community groups raised concerns about specific KLAS”.

(BOS, 2005a, p. 29)

Determined to consult broadly, BOS officers established a consultation program that included a diverse range of education interest groups. Analysis of interview data and documentary sources found that a range of stakeholders were able to participate in the consultation processes by using a variety of approaches. It quickly became evident that, although stakeholder groups did not agree with the mandatory outcomes, they were still positive about their involvement in the consultative processes. Harry Vassila, a Science and Technology curriculum consultant for the DET, conveyed positive feelings about being listened to when he had the opportunity to contribute to the consultation on the *Foundation Statements*. He observed that the BOS' consultative processes allowed for an open and democratic process where the views of all members were heard:

I thought we were listened to [...] as part of our contribution [by DET- Science Unit], we actually developed a set of our own foundation statements and presented them to the Board, and then the Board worked with what we had. I think we had a very good collaboration with the Board (H. Vassila, personal communication, 9 August 2009)

By acknowledging his own position as one with the Department (with the use of the personal pronoun *I* and *we*), Mr Vassila was firm in his view that as part of the DET curriculum directorate, his views were considered and respected.

Other DET personnel also felt strongly supported by the BOS' participatory and inclusive consultative processes. Jane Law, a principal in a school government, joined the working party in 2005. Ms Law had also witnessed the BOS' broad consultative processes as a positive experience for stakeholders' involvement:

I saw the way the Board had really worked hard to consult fully on the mandatory outcomes, and had honoured teacher and parent comments. They'd honoured it by saying, 'No, that's not the way through.' I didn't have a problem with this because consultation needs to happen strategically. (J. Law, personal communication, 4 September 2009)

Although Ms Law confirms that others, namely, parents and teachers, were involved in the consultation, she is unclear how this consultation had occurred. Her comment that the views of the parents and teachers were *honoured* is followed by a negative acknowledgement that their views were not necessarily considered in the way forward.

Consulting broadly with stakeholders and honouring the inclusive nature of the consultation processes was viewed as a positive outcome of the processes facilitated by BOS officers: “I’ve got to say the NSW BOS process stands up because of its inclusiveness of listening to people and gathering information” (M. Malone, personal communication, 9 September 2009). Ms Malone stated that the consultative processes enabled groups outside of the BOS’ key representative groups to be involved:

I remember the PDHPE and the Science and Technology groups were fairly vocal—they raised particular issues about their Key Learning Area. We had to consider what they said and how it sat with the other KLA. Yes, these groups had specific issues they wanted to talk about. (M. Malone, personal communication, 9 September 2009)

These groups were determined to have their views considered in the feedback. Ms Malone’s emphatic use of the word *yes* emphasised the need for ‘other’ groups to be involved in decisions on mandatory outcomes. She also affirmed the consultation processes as being inclusive, even though these ‘other’ groups had to employ various strategies to have their claims addressed.

4.7.2 Employing Other Strategies-Ensuring a Voice in the Process

“To leave a group outside the circle of accepted groups is to invite its leaders to adopt unorthodox tactics, to make exaggerated demands, and generally, to be a disruptive and uncertain element”.

(Pross, 1992, p. 156)

Analyses of documentary evidence revealed that discord on the mandatory outcomes issue mostly came from specific KLA stakeholder groups. Although these groups did not have representation on the PCC or the BOS, their involvement was initiated through the formal channels of the BOS’ consultative processes. Professor Gordon Stanley reflected on the tensions from groups who were outside of the BOS’ formal representative committees:

... there was always a little bit of tension. Different groups would have liked to have been represented, [...] there were times some of those specialist groups would feel that they would like a seat at the table. We tended to weigh up the pros and cons of whether it made sense for that person to be there. All I was interested in was making sure we had the people who needed to be there, and if somebody said somebody else ought to be there, I would try to find if we could do it. (G. Stanley, personal communication, 3 April 2012)

Professor Stanley was aware of the tensions between those groups represented on committees and those groups who were not represented. He tried to bridge this gap by agreeing to meet with them so they were part of the consultation processes.

Analysis of the *Consultation submissions summary* (OBOS, 2005a) found that interested groups were able to gain entry and access to the BOS' decision-making processes by securing a meeting with BOS officers. The strategies they employed involved:

- Following established consultation procedures: By calling the Office directly, stakeholders were able to request a meeting using the enquiries notification detailed on the consultation papers.
- Using known networks: By using known contacts and networks within the OBOS, BOS, PCC or Professional Association, stakeholders were able to gain a more privileged meeting opportunity with the Project team members.
- Access via a higher authority: By contacting the minister or general manager directly, stakeholders were able to gain immediate entry to consultation with BOS officers.
- Formal written submission: By submitting a formal written response, stakeholders were able to have their concerns, expressed in writing, accepted as a contribution to feedback for the consultation report.

4.7.2.1 Following established consultation procedures

The most common strategy for groups to gain access was to follow the established protocols developed by the syllabus development process (BOS, 2006). This required stakeholders to contact the Office using the details supplied in the consultation papers. Under the pretext of stating a group's intention of providing feedback, an individual would make contact with the Office and arrange a meeting. This process allowed interested outsider groups such as the Georges River Environmental Alliance and individual independent schools to make contact with those managing the process (OBOS, 2005a).

4.7.2.2 Using known networks

Being a stakeholder on any of the BOS' representative committees allowed group members to use any existing contacts and networks to access BOS officers managing the project. This strategy was used by individuals who had an existing relationship with a member of the BOS, PCC or staff in the Office. Establishing and maintaining networks allowed an individual to advance their group's concerns with those overseeing the project. The use of these networks gave groups such as MANSW, PETAA, STANSW, PDHPETA and the AECG direct access to BOS officers. The links with BOS officers stemmed from recent curriculum reviews of the Years 7–10 syllabuses in each of the respective subject areas. Harry Vassila, Science and Technology Consultant with the DET, openly declared his networks within the BOS, stating:

I was part of the science network group. It's organised by Gina [BOS Science Inspector], it's more of an update of what's happening within science K–12, and issues that arise out of the Board's work, and in particular around the syllabus. (H. Vassila, personal communication, 9 August 2009)

This strategy of using known BOS networks and associates gave groups the ability to gain entry to the process or access to people who were able to assist them to become more involved in the process. This was also the case with some Primary teachers' professional associations, such as PAM and the Primary HSIETA, which relied on the larger arm of its group to legitimise its representation and influence. Although many professional teachers' associations in NSW cater for both Primary and Secondary educators, most have a membership dominated by Secondary school teachers. Primary teachers' professional groups are smaller in terms of their membership due to the more generalist nature of Primary teaching. The Primary committees of MANSW and STANSW also had representatives from its Secondary teachers' association to assist in gaining access to the consultation processes. This enabled the Primary teachers' arm of the association to use the collective knowledge and influence of its Secondary counterparts to assist with the processes of compiling written submissions and preparing for meetings (OBOS, 2005a).

This strategy of using networks became evident when the newly established Primary HSIE teachers association was able to use its network of connections with other HSIE subsidiary associations such as the Geography Teachers' Association (GTA). Working with the GTA helped the Primary HSIE group to develop its response regarding the HSIE mandatory outcomes (BOS, 2005a). Conversely, the PDHPETA drew on its national body, the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) to provide a broader national perspective on its response to the PDHPE mandatory outcomes. The exception to a smaller group using the collective wisdom of a larger associative group was the PETAA. PETAA was already a well-established national body representing Primary English and PETAA in NSW had already established its influence on Primary English matters with its previous involvement with the development of the English K–6 syllabus in the 1990s.

4.7.2.3 Access via a higher authority

Gaining access to a person in a higher authority than the Board officers managing the consultation processes was exercised by individuals who wanted their claims to be heard immediately by a more influential audience. By doing so, an individual was able to go over the heads of those managing these processes at the BOS and thus force speedy attention to their concerns. In this study, the Minister for Education and the General Manager of the BOS

are considered *higher authorities*, as their positions were more senior than that of the BOS officers. Accessing a higher authority allowed an individual and their interest group to gain the authority's immediate attention where their claims could be heard.

Stakeholder groups already familiar with the curriculum consultation processes were able to use their prior knowledge to gain access to the minister and the general manager. By taking this more direct route, stakeholders such as STANSW, ACHPER and the Primary HSIETA were able to raise their concerns in a more immediate manner. This allowed a particular stakeholder group to gain greater access than those who followed the established process of contacting those who were managing the project.

Contacting the minister or the general manager was a direct strategy that set in motion a series of procedures that ensured the concerns of stakeholders were heard in a timely manner. Going directly to the minister resulted in the Office being contacted by Registered Ministerial Letter (RML). As dictated by the Government Information Public Access Guidelines (BOS, 2010), correspondence to public authorities required the agency to acknowledge the letter within five working days of its receipt and review and reply to the request within 15 working days (BOS, 2010). The same process is also used if a letter or request is sent to the general manager. By addressing concerns directly to personnel of higher authority rather than the project officers, representatives of these other stakeholder groups, such as STANSW and the Primary HSIETA, were assured of access to the process and to people responsible for consultation.

The receipt of an RML by staff in the Office required a process of *tracking* the letter, as responses were supplied by relevant BOS officers. Direct contact with the minister was a strategy used by more seasoned stakeholders because they were aware that once an RML was received by the Office, it had to be acknowledged and addressed immediately. Approaching the minister circumvented direct interaction with the Office and ensured immediate action because it initiated a chain of official communication. The five stakeholder groups—PAM/MANSW, PETAA, STANSW, Primary HSIETA and ACHPER/NSW PDHPETA—investigated in this critical incident participated in the decision-making processes through the use of one or more of these strategies. As a result of the strategies they employed to gain access to these processes they were granted the immediate attention of the BOS officers.

4.7.2.4 Formal written submission

Members representing the various KLA groups were also able to contribute to the consultation processes by writing a formal submission. The opportunities for an individual to submit a written response were the same as those afforded to any interested stakeholder

group. As noted in the *Report on the consultation defining mandatory outcomes* and *Board Bulletins*, many written submissions were received from stakeholders and individuals (BOS, 2005) to formally oppose the mandatory outcomes. Submitting a formal response provided the group or individual with assurances that their concerns would be noted in the report on the consultation processes.

4.7.3 Exploitation of the Board of Studies' Consultative Processes

The representatives of the KLA stakeholder groups appeared to take advantage of the consultation processes by seeking multiple representations at various meetings. Documentary artefacts (e.g., committee meeting papers for the BOS and PCC meetings, consultation papers on Defining Mandatory Outcomes in the K–6 Curriculum, and the consultation survey) were analysed to produce Table 4.7, which illustrates the various opportunities individuals had to be involved in the consultative processes. Thus, an individual was able to participate at various consultation meetings, as a representative of their local group, as a member of a school group, through their affiliation with their union, with their professional association, and as a representative of the schooling sector in which they taught.

Table 4.7: Stakeholder strategies groups and individuals employed to respond to the consultation processes on defining mandatory outcomes in the K–6 curriculum

Ways of responding	State-wide consultation meeting	Key group consultation meeting	Sector briefings	Written submission	Survey
Individual	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Local Group	✓			✓	✓
School group	✓			✓	✓
Union		✓		✓	✓
Professional Association		✓		✓	✓
Schooling sector or Institution *			✓	✓	✓

Table 4.7 illustrates that an individual was able to actively participate in the consultation processes multiple times:

- by completing the survey on their own, submitting their own written response and/or attending a state-wide consultation meeting;
- with a small group of like-minded people (e.g., with a local group in the school or directorate/unit/branch/department of a school authority) contributing to a survey and/or written response;

- as a member of the school by contributing to the school's response via a survey and/or a written submission;
- as a member of a professional association or with interests in multiple interest groups by contributing to their interest group's response via the survey instrument, written response and/or consultation meetings; if they were a member of more than one professional association—for example, the Primary teacher could be a member of the PETAA as well as the Primary HSIETA—then the individual had multiple opportunities to be heard; and
- as a school teaching staff member (government or non-government school), individuals were available as members to contribute to their union's response (e.g., the Teachers Federation for members of the government school sector and the IEU for members in non-government schools).

Curriculum consultants and tertiary academics were two other categories of interested parties also involved in the consultation processes. These participants were classified as being in a non-teaching position within schooling sectors or tertiary institutions (denoted with an * in Table 4.7). Briefings with educators and consultants ensured that individuals in non-teaching positions other than schools and in the tertiary sector were also included. Institutions such as the DET, Association of Independent School (AIS), the 11 diocesan CEOs in the state, and teacher education faculties in NSW universities also participated. Individuals who identified in these broad categories attended special briefing days organised by the Office as part of the consultation stages in the curriculum development processes.

Individuals were able to promote their views in the process by exploring the many and varied opportunities provided to stakeholder groups for consultation. An examination of stakeholder consultation meetings showed that some representatives attended multiple meetings depending on their varying interests (M. Malone, personal communication, 9 February 2005). The ultimate goal for stakeholders—both groups and individuals—was to have their concerns heard by those in positions of authority. As individuals exercised their right for active participation in the decision-making processes, their identification or alliance with a particular interest group or curriculum area gave them a scheduled meeting to express their concerns to the BOS officers.

The desired outcome for individuals and groups was to bring their interests and concerns to the curriculum decision-making table. The data have shown that non-PCC groups used a number of strategies to gain access to the process and the BOS officers managing it. STANSW's strategy was to air its concerns with the then minister for education, Refshauge.

The state body for PDHPE—the NSW PDHPE Teachers Association—called upon its national body to seek an audience with the minister. The newly formed Primary HSIETA used its existing networks (with its Secondary subject associations) to advance its concerns. The analyses of documentary sources verified these approaches used by individuals and groups that granted them a seat at the table, providing immediate access to the process.

4.7.4 All Respond to Abandon Mandatory Outcomes

Stakeholders had overwhelmingly called for the abandonment of mandatory outcomes. Their concerns were highlighted regarding the use of the term mandatory, stating that “the term mandatory could also cause problems when reporting on student achievement of outcomes” (BOS, 2005a, p. 25). Stakeholders were concerned that it would be difficult to implement mandatory outcomes in schools, particularly for students with diverse learning needs. The alignment of responses was unanimous and their message clear: “defining a set of mandatory outcomes was not going to provide a more balanced Primary curriculum” (BOS, 2005a, p. 28).

Board officers involved with members of the working party acknowledged the considerable amount of consultation with the various stakeholder groups:

... there was a lot of consultation around mandatory outcomes. A huge amount. [...] I saw the way the Board of Studies had really worked hard to consult fully on the mandatory outcomes, and had honoured the teachers and parents’ comments. (J. Law, personal communication, 4 September 2009)

The writing of a consultation report is a requirement of the BOS’ syllabus development process to represent the views of all those who have participated and contributed in the consultation processes (OBOS, 2006). Chapter 4 of the Consultation Report recounts the strong endorsement from stakeholders on the consultation processes. However, in attempting to express the concerns of stakeholders, writers of the consultation report (BOS, 2005a) were also forthright in citing the negative feedback it had received:

Process used to reduce the number of outcomes is fundamentally flawed... the outcomes should be rewritten not just ‘chopped’ in order to reduce their number ... Whilst primacy needs to be given to English and Mathematics the reduction in outcomes in the other KLAs is extreme and will be to the detriment of tomorrow’s citizens. (OBOS, 2005a, p. 29)

Stakeholders were clear in their deliberations that “Nothing that is mandatory is flexible” (BOS, 2005a, p. 29). Other KLA groups repeatedly claimed “the importance of maintaining the uniqueness and integrity of the individual KLA” (BOS, 2005a, p. 31). There were

concerns by stakeholders that the BOS' capacity to deliver a set of mandatory outcomes was not necessarily what Eltis had intended:

We are not convinced that the proposed reclassification of outcomes would necessarily result in the changes advocated by Professor Eltis. A number of issues remain to be considered, including, the implications of 'mandatory' outcomes for schools and systems; the coherence and consistency of the curriculum K–6; and the links between teaching, learning, assessment and reporting. (OBOS, stakeholder response, 2005a, p. 33)

Ms Law, a member of the working party, verified that “there were a lot of dissident voices’ and that ‘the consultation around the mandatory outcomes was very negative” (personal communication, 4 September 2009). By acknowledging the many negative responses, the Office laboured in finding a way forward: “I was really quite impressed with John [O’Brien] saying, ‘This is not the way through’. I remember when we changed we were offered a way forward. It was a tight time-line because consultation needs to happen strategically” (J. Law, personal communication, 4 September 2009). Ms Law was able to witness first-hand the machinations of stakeholders vying to be heard by using various strategies for their contributions. However, the BOS needed to find a solution and to move forward with the process to seek a resolution that would satisfy both its stakeholders and political masters.

After considering the views of its stakeholders, the final response from the Office was to shift the focus away from the mandatory outcomes approach. Board officers now looked towards a standards approach that focused on the ‘big ideas’ of what students should know, do and understand by the conclusion of each stage of learning. Representatives of the BOS acknowledged that stakeholders did not agree with the mandatory outcomes because “people come from different perspectives” (J. Law, personal communication, 4 September 2009).

Mr Powyer accepted that stakeholders had different perspectives; however, he also acknowledged that there was a need to seek a resolution through negotiation and consensus:

I think the other stakeholders put [forward] points of view that we were quite receptive to ourselves, and in fact would improve our position. I always found that those groups were quite forthright. [...] I remember the comments were quite strong and quite definite about where they stood, but it wasn't that it couldn't be negotiated or collaborated, in terms of working towards a solution. (B. Powyer, personal communication, 21 September 2009)

Mr Powyer explained that while some stakeholders held views contrary to his own, he was able to gain further support for his group's position on mandatory outcomes.

Representatives on the PCC acknowledged that although members held different views, the focus needed to remain on achieving an appropriate response to satisfy the recommendations of the Evaluation (Eltis & Crump, 2003). While stakeholders responded negatively to Recommendation Two—“We knew that consultation with stakeholders would reject the mandatory outcomes” (J. O’Brien, personal communication, 18 December 2009)—the minister still needed a solution to be achieved quickly due to pressure from the federal government:

The [federal] Government had an agenda that it wanted to simplify reporting [...] It was only when Nelson wanted to have a common reporting system across the whole of education that it became an important part of the agenda. (G. Stanley, personal communication, 3 April 2012)

By foreshadowing a bigger picture than that of state-based political machinations, Professor Stanley alluded to the Evaluation’s other recommendations around the issues of assessing and reporting students’ progress. By recognising the assessment and reporting requirements for schools in NSW, there was an acknowledgement that fulfilling the other recommendations centred on building effective assessment and reporting strategies. Assessment and reporting in the area of Primary education had not been seen as the work of the BOS, but with the move to abandon mandatory outcomes, the Office now recognised an opportunity for developing the notion of *standards* for Primary schools. While teachers still wanted to understand *mandatory content*, the overwhelming response was to abandon any notion of mandatory outcomes.

Hearing the strong messages from its stakeholders, the Office concluded in its report to stakeholders that mandatory outcomes were not the answer, and a different solution was needed. Accepting the feedback about concerns regarding mandatory outcomes, the BOS’ proposal was to “shift the focus from syllabus outcomes to the revised statements—syllabus stage statements” (BOS, 2005a, p. 36). This shift diverted the attention away from the Evaluation’s Recommendation Two and put an end to having mandatory outcomes in the Primary curriculum.

The development of broad statements of learning was strongly supported by the BOS’ key stakeholders:

Abandon the selection of mandatory outcomes approach as a way of reducing the specificity of the K–6 curriculum and reducing workload for teachers ... affirm the KLAs and shift the focus from syllabus outcomes to simplified stage statements for the purposes of programming, assessing and reporting. (OBOS, Primary Curriculum report Doc No P05/06-R1, 29 June 2005, p. 4)

This change in focus now met the needs of all stakeholders involved in the curriculum decision-making processes. The change was considered “reasonably well-received because they [stage statements] were a broad interpretation of what a student can do” (T. Forster, personal communication, 14 September 2009). It provided “a carefully designed balance of knowledge and skills provided in a developmental framework for teachers” (BOS, 2005a, p. 22).

Representatives of key stakeholder groups on the PCC accepted that while representatives of the different interest groups had differing views and concerns, they were able to align their agreement through their role on the committee: “I think some groups had to make reasonable compromise to achieve that, and so while they may have altered their view incrementally, they knew that it was all moving towards a common outcome for everybody” (B. Powyer, personal communication, 21 September 2009). Mr Powyer acknowledged that the consultative processes of finding a response to the Evaluation had kept the committee focused, but he also conceded the importance of compromise and consensus. Ms Mamourney summed up her opinion of the consultative processes and the role of bureaucrats and stakeholders in the process:

Somehow you’ve got to gather all those views fairly and equally, put them together in some sort of cohesive way, because that’s a role of bureaucracies: to try and make sense of all the voices. And in the end you don’t always satisfy everyone when you do that.
(R. Mamourney, personal communication, 12 December 2009)

Ms Mamourney accepted that the institution’s role was to balance the views, concerns and claims of its stakeholders and to formulate a solution that moved the process forward. Ms Mamourney claimed that it was up to the bureaucracy to ensure a resolution was reached, and that this would occur through negotiation and reaching consensus.

The BOS had vigorously pursued defining a set of mandatory outcomes, prompting many to ask why it was so important to adhere to the recommendations of the Evaluation’s Recommendation Two when it was so overwhelmingly opposed by the stakeholders and likely to not be accepted by the education community. Dr Lambert, who had been involved with the BOS over many years, put the historical overview into focus:

There were those who were devastated by Eltis’ first report. The withdrawal of the English K–6 Syllabus in 1995 was a major blow for a lot of people at the Board, and the Board’s credibility. I suspect a review like that was quite damning. [...] I think it was a wake-up call that ultimately the Board and the Office had to respond to it. It may not have liked having to

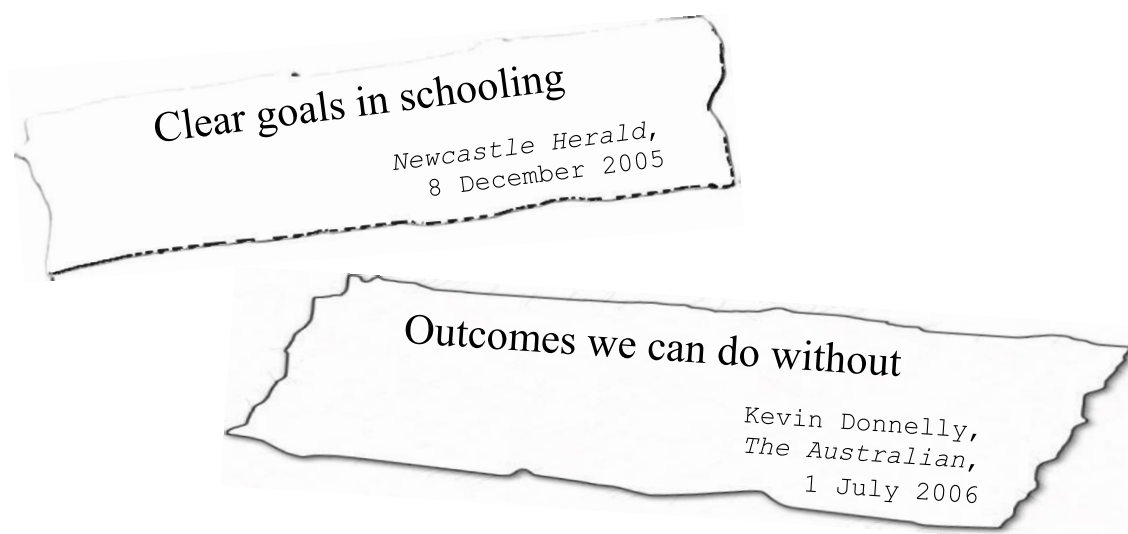
do that, but in some respects it did give them a chance to show what they could do. (P. Lambert, personal communication, 19 August 2013)

Dr Lambert's reasons for the BOS' response to the Evaluation's recommendations were taken literally and were deeply rooted in the evolution of Primary syllabuses. The historical background provided legitimate reasons for the BOS and the OBOS to be seen as consultative in their approach, as well as producing favourable outcomes to the Evaluation. Although the Office endeavoured to provide results specific to the recommendations, it became clear that finding a specific solution to Recommendation Two was not possible.

The BOS concluded that "it is necessary to shift the focus from syllabus outcomes to broader statements of what students learn" (BOS, 2005, p. 35). Board officers and stakeholders questioned the motive behind such a futile objective of delivering mandatory outcomes for the Primary curriculum: "We knew that the consultation report would reject the set that we had" (J. O'Brien, personal communication, 18 December 2009), and that by "making some mandatory and some not mandatory outcomes was a nonsense" (M. Malone, personal communication, 9 September 2009). Ms Lloyd, representing the P&C, also claimed that: "... the mandatory outcomes approach wasn't going to work and that there needed to be a way of shifting the focus" (D. Lloyd, personal communication, 4 September 2009).

Defining a set of mandatory outcomes on which educational stakeholders agreed had not been successful. The project was abandoned, but in its place the Board officers managing the project moved to a broader focus that encompassed the total Primary curriculum. This saw a return in confidence to the BOS' decision-making processes for Primary curriculum development.

4.8 Critical Incident Five: Strategic Retreat—A Change in Curriculum Direction



Critical Incident Five examines the BOS' retreat from reducing the number of outcomes in the Primary KLA curriculum to a mandatory set. This final critical incident explores how BOS officers shifted stakeholders' attention from *mandatory outcomes* to developing *Foundation Statements*, thereby making the K–6 curriculum more manageable (BOS, 2005). This change in focus satisfied stakeholders and the then Minister for Education, Carmel Tebbutt. The BOS was finally able to deliver a response to the Evaluation's (2003) recommendations to the minister and teachers across the state.

The development of the mandatory outcomes had been seen as a political exercise on the BOS' behalf. It was keen to prove that it was a credible authority in Primary school curriculum. The BOS wanted to demonstrate to the minister, the Evaluation panel and its stakeholders that it was serious about addressing the issues raised in the Evaluation (2003):

Some [stakeholders] understood that there were political and bureaucratic boundaries placed on us. So we worked very hard to get that message out. (M. Malone, personal communication, 9 September 2009)

There were some political sensitivities at the time [...] the Minister was getting a little bit agitated about Eltis [Evaluation], the implications of mandatory outcomes. (B. Lacey, personal communication, 4 September 2009)

I would not be surprised if the minister would have regular checks to see how the implementation of Eltis [Evaluation] was going. (P. Lambert, personal communication, 19 August 2013)

The political sensitivities and boundaries referred to are those imposed by the minister in trying to keep the state's teachers on side. The minister was insistent that the BOS finally address the longstanding concerns of teachers. Stakeholders had exerted pressure on ministers for the last decade, and due to election promises and political timelines, these issues needed to be finally resolved. Stakeholders were again applying pressure on the government with the threat of industrial action and disruption. Facing such pressures, the minister wanted a guarantee by the BOS that this time there would be a workable solution.

Table 4.8 presents a summary of the developments that resulted in the development and publication of the *Foundation Statements*. It covers a period of approximately 12 months, from the end of the consultation on mandatory outcomes to the ministerial release of the *Foundation Statements*. The actions of the bureaucrats within the BOS and the Ministry for Education, as well as the stakeholder representatives on the PCC, are examined in this final critical incident.

Table 4.8: Summary of developments for Critical Incident Five: shifting the curriculum direction from mandatory outcomes to the development of *Foundation Statements*

Year	Key Events				Issues and responses	
	Policy context		NSW BOS			Schools context
	Federal government	NSW state government	BOS	OBOS		
2005		December -Minister for Education Carmel Tebbutt releases the Foundation Statements	<p>Negative findings from the consultation on defining mandatory outcomes.</p> <p>Consultation report on defining mandatory outcomes for the K–6 curriculum is published on the BOS’ website.</p> <p>Recommendation from stakeholders is to develop broad statements of learning.</p> <p>August: PCC endorses <i>Foundation Statements</i>.</p> <p>October meeting: BOS recommends the <i>Foundation Statements</i> be released by the Minister, Carmel Tebbutt.</p>	<p>December to February: BOS officers and the working party analyse data collected on mandatory outcomes. Develop consultation report.</p> <p>March: BOS officers and the working party formulate recommendations where stakeholders respond to abandon the mandatory outcomes.</p> <p>BOS officers seek another solution in managing the curriculum by shifting focus away from outcomes to broad statements of learning.</p> <p>May and June develop the <i>Foundation Statements</i>.</p> <p>Consultation with key stakeholder groups represented on PCC on the draft <i>Foundation Statements</i>.</p>	<p>DET develops policy to clarify requirements in curriculum planning, assessing and reporting, in response to state government election commitments, the Eltis report recommendations and Australian Government legislative requirements.</p> <p>Curriculum consultants from the schooling sectors assist in the writing of the <i>Foundation Statements</i>.</p> <p>November: The DET reports on the consultation on future directions for public education and training. Findings are similar to the Evaluation’s findings.</p>	<div><p><i>Critical Incident 5: Strategic retreat—A change in curriculum direction. A shift in focus: Shifting issues—developing the NSW Foundation Statements.</i></p></div>

Documentary artefacts gained from the OBOS, interview data and stakeholders' newsletters and journals reveal that educational stakeholders were again able to influence the curriculum decision-making through consultation and negotiation. Finally, there was consensus regarding the development of a broader set of statements of what students were to learn. Two themes regarding these issues have emerged from the data. They are:

1. the policy process—allowing for equality in representation in the consultation on the Primary curriculum; and
2. reaching consensus—moving towards an agreed outcome for the development of the *Foundation Statements*.

Key players in this critical incident are:

- members of the PCC and the groups they represent;
- NSW BOS; and
- NSW Minister for Education.

4.8.1 Policy Process—A Democratic Model

“... the processes of policy-making must formally engage the views of citizens and the groups they have created to represent them”.

(Pross, 1992, p. 272).

From the outset, stakeholders, the PCC and BOS officers used the guidelines established for the syllabus development process to engage educational stakeholders in deciding “what is or is not mandatory in syllabuses” (Eltis & Crump, 2003, p. 82). As noted in previous critical incidents, the parent groups were particularly positive about the contributions they made to the process:

I think parental involvement has been a good thing, because it's allowed us to have a say in what our kids learn. (C. Benedet, personal communication, 26 August 2009)

I felt very strongly about that when we went on to the *Foundation Statements*. I felt really included. That's really important when you're talking about parent participation: even if you have a digressing view, it's still welcome. (D. Lloyd, personal communication, 25 September 2009)

It was important for the BOS that its representatives were involved in the decision-making processes. This is evident from the two parent representatives on the PCC, who both expressed appreciation for not only being involved, but also being heard. However, in both of

these responses, their personal perspectives are significant. Although Ms Benedet and Ms Lloyd were clear that they represented the interests of their parents, the nature of their involvement demonstrated that they were also personally engaged in the process. They were keen to voice their own views and personal perspectives.

When asked what individuals sought from their group's involvement in the process, most stakeholders, perhaps understandably, advocated the interests of their particular group. For example, the ECEC "wanted to ensure that the K-2 area was covered, that what was being proposed catered to the needs of young children" (S. Ziems, personal communication, 10 October 2009), while the representative for the PPA, although still advocating the group's interests, was specific about what the group wanted to achieve as part of the consultation on the Evaluation's recommendations:

I should be voicing the views of most of the Primary principals in New South Wales. [...] With regards to Eltis, of course, they [the PPA] were a very vocal group in expressing concern over a number of outcomes, over the amount of time, the complexity, around assessment reporting. (P. Patterson-Allen, personal communication, 16 December 2009)

Meanwhile, the NSW Teachers Federation representative sought assurances on behalf of her group that the BOS' response to the Evaluation would find a way to alleviate workload concerns: "They wanted to see a process that would clarify the expectations of teachers, as well as provide a lower workload" (T. Forster, personal communication, 14 September 2009).

Representation of the different stakeholder groups was an important part of the process. Equality of representation was considered important because it enabled each group to "contribute to the decision-making process" (Pross, 1992, p. 261). The importance of giving each group access to the processes, and the opportunity to contribute, was seen in Critical Incidents Three and Four.

The structure and organisation of the PCC meetings gave key stakeholders the opportunity to voice their concerns:

when he [Professor Stanley] could feel there were tensions, he'd separate it enough to allow each group to free themselves and not lock into positions, and he could sense that [...]. The work in interpreting those meetings, when we came back to the next meeting, actually used to clarify a very mixed discussion. (B. Powyer, personal communication, 21 September 2009)

we also got to have some input at various meetings in how we saw things at a PCC level—we had broader input and I think for the parents it actually opened up more conversations.
(C. Benedet, personal communication, 26 August 2009)

Ensuring that groups had access to the processes enhanced the breadth of opinion the committee had to draw on. The free flow of information ensured that everyone who had a seat at the table had the opportunity to participate in the decisions being made. Pross (1992) attributed this approach to enhancing understanding and promoting consensus between and among stakeholders. In an effort to ensure the legitimacy of the policy process, group participation was encouraged. This was noted earlier, when Mr Powyer commented on the significance of Professor Stanley's position in chairing the meeting. Professor Stanley was keen to facilitate open discussion on matters and ensure that the committee as a whole was able to agree on decisions.

However, Pross (1992) made it clear that dangers are inherent in institutionalising consultation with groups. The process of consultation used to find a solution to assist Primary teachers with outcomes-based curriculum had consumed vast amounts of time, energy and resources of the PCC, BOS officers and key stakeholder groups. Consultation can frequently delay the implementation of change due to the number of different interest groups wanting to be involved. In spite of this, Pross (1992) stressed that “public interest dictates that the process of policy making must formally engage the views of citizens and the groups they have created to represent them” (p. 272).

Pross (1992) claimed that for as long as stakeholder groups have sought to influence government and policy, they have allied themselves with other groups. As noted in earlier critical incidents, some groups aligned with other groups throughout the consultation processes for various reasons. Alliances were seen to strengthen a group's credibility. The alliances sought by groups broadened the base of support of the decisions being made, thus reflecting the communal nature of policy making (Pross, 1992).

4.8.2 Reaching Consensus

“Consultation, and the search for consensus, became the outstanding characteristic of government/[stakeholder] group relations”.

(Pross, 1992, p. 61)

Stakeholder groups quickly reached a consensus on changing the curriculum direction away from *mandatory outcomes* to developing *statements of learning*. At the August 2005 meeting of the PCC, stakeholders concluded that the stage statements in Primary KLA syllabuses were

to be used as a basis in the development of essential learning statements (later renamed the *Foundation Statements*) (BOS, 2005b).

Developing the *Foundation Statements* involved the BOS' key stakeholder groups and the early intervention of "members of the professional associations for all key learning areas" (BOS, 2005b, p. 1). This ensured that the BOS was able to secure a consensus on the final product by giving all of those affected an opportunity to influence the decisions about the development of the *Foundation Statements*. Sue Fern, who represented the IEU on the PCC, attested to the rapid rate at which a consensus emerged on the *Foundation Statements*: "The foundation statements were very timely and done very, very quickly and surprised me when they arrived in schools" (S. Fern, personal communication, 11 September 2009).

By developing the *Foundations Statements* so quickly, it could be argued that they were a product of consensus within the policy committee responsible for their development. This ensured that, as long as the BOS' processes provided opportunities for participation, the BOS could repudiate any charges of manipulating its own processes.

Many stakeholders commented on the achievement of consensus during this time:

... there was probably an unwritten consensus. Gordon could hear the sentiment and the feeling, and he was very good at drawing us to a clear statement. I thought the chairing of that committee, and the manner in which the feedback was given to us, played a big role in getting a solution, or a product at the end. (B. Powyer, personal communication, 21 September 2009)

I think there was negotiation backwards and forward to try and bring people together to the same view. Ultimately a decision had to be made. It's not necessarily a democratic decision, or there is perfect consensus, but in the end that was the decision. (R. Mamourney, personal communication, 15 December 2009)

Mr Powyer and Ms Mamourney both agreed that the institutional structures—namely, the role of the chairperson, the committee and BOS officers during the committee meetings—proved significant in reaching a consensus. Some agreed to the change in direction:

... given that we couldn't agree what *mandatory* meant, the best response was what the Board of Studies did with the development of the foundation statements. [...] that gave us a clear direction of what should be taught. In some ways, it took away from the importance of outcomes. (H. Vassila, personal communication, 24 August 2009)

For the Teachers Federation, ensuring a solution to its concerns relating to teacher workloads was of great importance. Ms Forster reiterated her group's interests in this consultation process:

They thought the Foundation Statements were good. I think, from a curriculum point of view, the Teachers' Federation will say there wasn't anything that was that controversial, especially to do with Foundation Statements. (T. Forster, personal communication, 14 September 2009)

Board officers attributed the successful change in curriculum direction to the fact that the stakeholders were not as controversial as defining a set of mandatory outcomes from the existing curriculum outcomes. Another reason was that the decision-making processes used were democratic in the sense that key stakeholders actively contributed to their development. The internal workings of the PCC had facilitated negotiation and allowed a consensus to emerge, resulting in a workable solution. Mr O'Brien attributed the acceptance of the *Foundation Statements* by Primary teachers to the support of the minister:

What it did immediately was reduce the small 'p' political message because they were released by the Minister and therefore they had the power of the Minister. [...] once the Minister released the foundation statements, it made it very clear that the position of the New South Wales Government, through its Minister, in relation to the Primary School Curriculum. (J. O'Brien, personal communication, 18 December 2009)

Mr O'Brien's comment shows that the minister played a significant role in the curriculum decision-making processes. The power base was identified with the minister, who had the final say in what is taught in Primary schools. Mr O'Brien claimed that the underlying political message is that the minister made the ultimate decision on the curriculum that goes out to schools and thus, played a significant role in the policy process. Although stakeholders also played an important role in the curriculum development decisions, what students learn was ultimately at the minister's discretion.

Professor Stanley concurs with Mr O'Brien's claim regarding the minister's role. He attributed the change in curriculum direction to Minister Tebbutt wanting clearer specifications of what learning was expected by students at certain stages of development: "The foundation statements, that was really pushed by, and really came about through [Minister] Carmel Tebbutt wanting to have a clear sense of the progression of students" (G. Stanley, personal communication, 3 April 2012).

However, trying to ascertain a balanced view of the curriculum development processes and the role of stakeholder involvement, Dr Lambert summed up his view that the Primary curriculum development process was challenging. It involved trying to engage all stakeholders, bringing together the different perspectives and ideologies, and then coming to an agreement on what students should learn: “the challenge is to create a curriculum that people will find both manageable and incorporates everything that people want kids to learn” (P. Lambert, personal communication, 19 August 2013).

The participation of stakeholders in the development of the Primary curriculum involved continuous negotiations to ensure the diverse views of stakeholders were being heard. Although it was seen that the processes of consultation consumed vast amounts of time and human resources of the BOS, those that were employed during the consultation about the Primary curriculum outcomes provided important insights into the potential of group representation within the policy community. The processes engaged by the PCC encouraged stakeholders to be involved in making decisions on what Primary students should learn and do. The strong impetus for the BOS and the minister to provide stakeholders with opportunities to engage in these processes ultimately provided a resolution that was agreed to by most stakeholders.

4.9 Summary of Findings

The NSW BOS consultation processes provided key educational stakeholders with opportunities to be involved in decision-making during different stages of the development of the Primary curriculum over a 16-year period. The establishment of the BOS as a statutory body responsible for the development of the Primary curriculum in NSW, together with the new *Education Act 1990*, had seen far-reaching curriculum reforms in the state, especially in the area for Primary education.

Initially the domain of the DET, the responsibility for developing the Primary KLA syllabuses came under the authority of the BOS. However, lacking in Primary expertise, the development of the six KLA syllabuses took more than a decade to produce using an outcomes-based approach. Furthermore, without appropriate structures and training to inform Primary teachers of the changes underpinning the curriculum, many factors contributed to teachers’ concerns with the curriculum.

Primary teachers were overwhelmed with the demands associated with outcomes-based planning, assessment and reporting. They lacked an understanding of the outcomes-based framework, there was a deficit in sustained professional development and support, and

continual interventions from state and federal governments led to Primary teachers being unable to manage their curriculum and workload. Numerous reports and reviews consistently found that the pressures of the workload associated with outcomes were severely affecting teachers' work. Teachers sought the help of their union, and they united and aligned with different stakeholders and became involved in the decision-making processes of the curriculum they were to implement in schools. There needed to be a clear conceptual understanding of the total Primary curriculum, the role of outcomes in teaching and learning, and how these were to be used for assessing and reporting.

Stakeholders identified as having an interest in Primary education found ways to become involved in the curriculum development processes and influence changes in the Primary curriculum through their representation in the process. Stakeholders—both groups and individuals—employed many strategies to be actively involved, and in some cases, some individuals pursued multiple methods through various representative roles to voice their concerns and bring their views to the table. Within the policy community, it became evident that many stakeholders, with or without legitimised representation, sought out the inclusivity of the consultation processes, with the ultimate goal being that a consensus of views was reached on a solution to the workload impasse.

For collaborative models of curriculum development to work, there needs to be a collaborative, democratic process for stakeholders. This requires openness for genuine collaboration, and negotiation for consensus to be reached between stakeholders, where their transparent involvement requires groups' representatives to reflect the interests of their group.

This chapter identified the various players at different stages of the curriculum decision-making processes and the strategies employed by stakeholder group representatives to voice their concerns. Chapter 6 discusses the nature of curriculum development and the role of stakeholder groups and their representatives in the decision-making processes.

Chapter 5: Discussion

“The process of curriculum policy making has become more complex because it has become more political”.

(Angus et al., 2007, p. 37)

5.1 Introduction

The investigation into the role of stakeholders in the development of the NSW Primary curriculum has informed our understanding of curriculum development processes within a democratic context. The interactions of key stakeholders over a 16-year period were examined through a series of five critical incidents. By studying the nature of the interactions between stakeholders during these times of heightened contestation in Primary curriculum development, a better understanding of the complex interplay between stakeholder groups and individuals within an institutional setting has been obtained.

For the purpose of this study, a ‘stakeholder’ was defined as the individual or group affected by the decisions made by the NSW Board of Studies, and one who could affect the BOS’s deliberations and actions by pursuing the interests of their group. Stakeholder groups relevant to this study were the key educational groups and teachers’ organisations identified as having an interest in the development of the curriculum in NSW. These stakeholders included the state and federal governments, and interest groups representing teachers, parents, academics and the Officers and staff of the NSW BOS. The latter groups are important because of their legislated status as ministerial appointees to the BOS and their perceived possession of the three critical attributes: power, legitimacy and urgency (Mitchell, Agle & Wood, 1997).

The ideas of Pross’s (1992) interest group theory and Freeman’s (1984) stakeholder theory have emerged out of the organisational context in which the relationship between stakeholders and the BOS was positioned around the curriculum development and decision-making. Furthermore, according to Mitchell et al. (1997) identifying and mapping stakeholders can assist in classifying them by their respective level of importance (salience) under which the BOS consider certain groups as key stakeholders within the policy community by perceiving stakeholders in accordance with their credibility in terms of power, legitimacy and urgency.

5.2 Revealing Stakeholder Involvement in Curriculum Decision-Making

This study revealed that for stakeholder groups to be actively involved throughout the decision-making processes for the Primary curriculum, they needed to have a clearly defined

framework or model to work from. The syllabus development model used to engage stakeholders in the different phases needed to be clearly articulated to all so there was a shared understanding of the nature and purpose of the curriculum task. The lack of clearly articulated roles and responsibilities found that stakeholders were unsure of what they were doing and how they were to go about the task of deciding what outcomes should be mandatory in the Primary curriculum. Ensuring that the roles and responsibilities are clearly defined allows for effective and efficient collaboration within the decision-making processes (Pross, 1992; Brady & Kennedy, 2003; Smith & Lovat, 2003; Botha, 2007). Pross (1992) asserted that information and communication is valuable in the relationship between the group and the organisation. He stressed that the information provided in the policy process is important along with substantive knowledge which can ensure genuine and continued engagement.

This study identifies four key areas that highlight the importance of having a clearly defined curriculum development processes. This should ensure that, in future, all stakeholder groups are genuinely involved in the decision-making processes to shape what and how students learn. The four key findings are:

1. *The importance of establishing a clear and shared understanding of the nature, scope and intent of the curriculum development activity* being undertaken. A clearly articulated purpose in a curriculum development task enhances genuine engagement from stakeholders. This study demonstrates that a lack of clear direction for curriculum writers and those involved in curriculum decision-making added to confusion over outcomes-based terminology. This resulted in numerous re-definitions of outcomes and the re-writing of syllabus materials such as the English K–6 in 1994–1996. Without a clear direction of what the Primary curriculum was to ultimately look like, it took the BOS more than a decade to finalise, review and evaluate the totality of the K–6 syllabuses.
2. *The importance of collaboration in curriculum decision-making*, where the BOS' curriculum development processes provide effective management for genuine engagement of its key stakeholder groups and their representatives. The data gathered from members of the PCC revealed that individuals sought to establish their own networks—mostly informal in nature—by aligning with members with similar interests and schooling sector backgrounds. By effectively communicating and disseminating information to and between stakeholders, the collaboration and success of the curriculum task was enhanced.

3. *The nature of stakeholder group representation in curriculum development* needs to be effectively managed so the interests of any one group do not dominate the process. The task of determining what outcomes would assist Primary teachers in managing the curriculum involved many of the state's Primary educational stakeholders. Due to the heightened contestation of the task, many groups sought to engage in the process sometimes using multiple pathways. The voices of stakeholders who chose to engage with the consultation processes were many and varied. The study found that some voices were more dominant than others, depending on the interests and representation of the individual representing the group. Some individuals sought to influence what the Primary outcomes should contain or exclude through multiple representations in the process. In some instances, individuals represented their own views, while others presented their views in addition to those of the group they represented. In the development of the *Foundation Statements*, it became necessary for the BOS to ensure that individuals and groups were effectively managed so the interests of the groups were appropriately reflected in the decisions being made.
4. *The nature and effectiveness of stakeholder group processes* was seen as being central to the sustained support for, and genuine engagement in, the curriculum development processes. Effective group representation, including issues of representative selection, reporting lines and accountability, provided the BOS with responses that accurately reflected the interests of the stakeholders.

What was expected of the selected group representative needed to be clearly communicated to everyone involved. Stakeholder group representatives often commented on the difficulties they experienced in eliciting responses from within their group because they were unsure what their role was in the Primary curriculum decision-making processes. Data from group representatives such as the CCSP, IEU and ECEC found that although there were some structures in place for the representative to gain responses from their group on specific agenda items, they were not always followed. For example, the past President of the ECEC was aware of a flaw in her organisation's processes, as she had been one of the original members to formulate these procedures. Thus, while some representatives commented that they had been entrusted by their group's executive to put forward their own views on specific agenda items and then provide feedback to the group after the meeting had taken place, others were unsure of what the group's expectations were in terms of keeping the group updated. Communication to a group about the BOS' decisions ranged from formal report writing to informally contacting some members of the group. This lack of information flow to and from stakeholder groups resulted in many individual members of stakeholder groups attending

consultation meetings *en masse* to gain first-hand information on the BOS' mandatory outcomes development process. This resulted in an extraordinary number of state-wide meetings and written submissions on mandatory outcomes.

These findings highlight the contested nature of curriculum development. Stakeholder groups and their representatives played a significant role in the decision-making processes. The lack of clarity regarding the nature and scope of the assigned curriculum task and the institutional failure to make clear the expectations of stakeholder groups and their representatives added to stakeholders' discontent and disagreement around the issue of mandatory outcomes. Some groups—especially those not represented at the BOS or PCC—found other ways to ensure their involvement, while those on the representative committee found alternative ways of influencing the review of the Primary curriculum outcomes. Representatives formed networks and aligned themselves with other like-minded members of the committee. This was witnessed first-hand by Mr Powyer, who noted that at the PCC morning tea break, particular members could be seen in deep conversation and fell silent when others approached and tried to intervene (personal communication, 21 September 2009). Ms Law, a principal on the working party, also witnessed the machinations of stakeholders trying to influence the decisions around mandatory outcomes during a consultation meeting (personal communication, 4 September 2009).

The interactions of stakeholders and the interplay of those wanting to influence curriculum decision-making disrupted the established syllabus development process. While the interests of all educational stakeholders were of value to the BOS, Clarkson (1995), and Donaldson and Preston (1995) suggest that no single set of interests should prevail over all the others involved. However, the rejection of mandatory outcomes by the numerous stakeholder groups saw the BOS shift direction to quell the vocal stakeholder opposition. If the BOS had communicated its framework/curriculum model with a clear focus on the final desired outcomes, groups would have had a clearer sense of purpose for their participation. However, as a direct response to stakeholders' engagement throughout the consultation process, the BOS was compelled to change direction and develop a set of prescriptions—namely, the *Foundation Statements*. Friedman and Miles (2006) contended that successful curriculum decision-making is highly complex and should involve a framework of collaboration where stakeholders are empowered in the process. Accordingly, there should be clearly defined processes and structures so that stakeholder groups and the people who represent them are aware of their role and responsibilities. This would have facilitated genuine collaboration throughout all stages of the process.

5.3 Providing a Clear Sense of Purpose

“Curriculum design was inherently a political process by means of which the curricular worker sought to attain a just environment”.

(Pinar et al., 2004, p. 182)

As this study demonstrates, a number of key factors affected the development of the Primary KLA syllabuses in which outcomes were to play a central role, especially in terms of curriculum planning and student assessment and reporting.

Analysis of the documents reporting on teachers’ understanding of the nature of curriculum development found that even after a decade of developing and implementing the Primary syllabuses, teachers still lacked an understanding of an outcomes-based approach (Eltis, 1995, 2003; Vinson et al., 2002). Henshaw (1996) found that, in NSW, the interpretation of an *outcome* was considerably different from the OBE models originating in the US. The NSW BOS had communicated its definition of outcomes to teachers in a document entitled ‘Implementation of Curriculum Initiatives’ (1991). However, limited professional learning was provided and as a result, there was inconsistent information about learning or desired outcomes. Schools and schooling authorities were left to conduct their own professional learning to engage teachers with these new curriculum reforms. As no consistent working definition was established, confusion reigned in teachers’ understanding of outcomes. Indeed, both Henshaw (1996) and Eltis (1995) noted that the BOS’ interpretation of ‘curriculum outcomes’ differed significantly from the viewpoint of some educators using OBE.

The eagerness of the BOS to establish itself as a K—12 curriculum developer and produce the full suite of Primary syllabus documents in the early 1990s became evident in its initial development schedule. It aimed to produce the six KLA syllabuses within what would ultimately be seen as unrealistic timeframes with inadequate knowledge and information given to stakeholders. Each KLA-based writing team set about writing their syllabus separately, without a clear overview of the curriculum framework for the Primary years. There was no overarching conception of Primary education, no overview of the ideal number of outcomes for each KLA, no definition of the outcomes-based approach being adopted, and no collaboration to ensure the genuine engagement of all stakeholders in the process. Killen (2000) claimed that “the starting point for outcomes-based programming must be a clear definition of the outcomes that students are to achieve, and some effort must be made to indicate the priority of each of these outcomes” (p. 12). The lack of a shared understanding of the nature of Primary education and the role and purpose of outcomes resulted in the various stakeholder groups and their representatives having differing views of what was being asked

of them. However, as this study has revealed, some stakeholder groups exercised too much urgency and power in the decision-making processes and, as a result, the development of K–6 syllabuses was not effectively managed (see Table 4.1).

The historical events in the development of the Primary syllabuses (see Table 1.2) showed the drive by the federal government for national curriculum collaboration for the inclusion of the National Outcomes and Profiles Statements in state-based curriculum. Reviews and reports at the time showed that while the BOS was working hard to develop the Primary KLA syllabuses, there was a lack of understanding of the outcomes-based approach used:

There followed a period of intense activity on the part of the Board of Studies, in particular, to see that the Minister's request was put into effect. [...] what is missing is an educational rationale for the adoption of outcomes and profiles that underpin all areas of the school curriculum in the State (Eltis, 1995, pp. 8–9).

Another factor that played a significant role in shaping the curriculum in the 1990s concerned the multiple stakeholders involved in the new formal structures governing syllabus development in NSW (Harris, 2001). Pinar et al. (2008) suggested that instead of focusing on the organisation of materials and step-by-step written instructions, curriculum writers need a new approach, requiring them to know how the curriculum could be developed to cater for the needs of Primary learners. Critical Incident One shows that the leaders of the curriculum development processes in the early 1990s—BOS officers, curriculum committees and curriculum writers—were largely from Secondary school backgrounds; therefore, lacking in Primary education expertise. It took the BOS at least five years from its initial establishment to invite experts in the area of Primary education to be involved as syllabus writers. As a result, the BOS' first foray into curriculum development—the K–6 English syllabus—was highly criticised (Eltis, 1995; Scott, 1995; Raethel, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c; Lambert, 2013). Smith and Lovatt (2003) contended that curriculum development involves informed decision-making and requires knowledge about each of the determined subject areas, encompassing the unity of the processes in planning, design and construction. These key aspects were not effectively formulated in the Board's processes.

Without a framework of what the Primary curriculum would look like—especially in terms of its nature and scope of the outcomes-based approach—writers and BOS committee decision makers set about developing individual KLA syllabuses without a clear definition being provided. For example, no guidance was provided regarding the desirable number of outcomes that each syllabus should contain. This oversight resulted in the total number of outcomes across the Primary curriculum reaching 316—an average of 79 outcomes per stage

of learning and approximately 13 outcomes written for each KLA. The number of outcomes to be assessed and reported on became a major concern for Primary teachers. If the BOS had mapped the outcomes across the six Primary syllabuses, provided a clear definition of the outcomes and established a strong research-based OBE framework, stakeholders would have been better equipped to make considered curriculum decisions. This lack of initial planning and limited design of the curriculum development processes exacerbated the lack of institutional understanding of what constituted an outcome and how the framework for the Primary curriculum was to be constructed.

Angus et al. (2007) also raised concerns about the totality of the curriculum having no agreed mechanism for deciding what should be included. They asserted that the process of curriculum policy making became more complex because of the increasingly political nature of federal and state government interventions. Conducting a major review of Primary education across Australia, Angus et al. (2007) claimed that the pressure for changes in the Primary curriculum had trickled down from Secondary schools, where subject-based interest groups were influencing particular curriculum areas. These issues had resulted in *ad hoc* development of the Primary syllabuses. A curriculum plan that effectively facilitates collaboration in the decision-making processes needs to be clearly defined so it will engage all stakeholders at all levels to work towards a common and shared goal.

5.4 Nature of Collaboration in Curriculum Decision-Making

“Influencing decision-making is usually the result of interaction between various interests”.
(Powell, 2008, p. 388)

The distinguishing feature of the curriculum development processes in NSW is the extent to which stakeholder groups are regarded as necessary participants in curriculum decision-making and policy development. These processes allowed for multiple opportunities for stakeholders to participate. Participation occurred early in the process, with consultation systematically occurring throughout the development of the mandatory outcomes. Stakeholder groups sought to influence decision makers by demanding that BOS officers hear their claims. As the review of Primary curriculum outcomes progressed, there was a move away from the democratic procedures established as other stakeholders acted more politically to secure their objectives in the process. Friedman and Miles (2006) suggest that there are three factors for stakeholder satisfaction, that of timeliness of communication, honesty and completeness of information, and empathy and equity of treatment by those managing the process. They argue that effective dialogue is dependent on symmetrical communication, transparency, unbiased facilitation, inclusivity and an early start to facilitate any required change (Friedman & Miles,

2006). Although the consultation process had established a procedure for democratic decision-making, aspects of effective communication, transparency and unbiased facilitation were lacking in some phases of the curriculum development process.

The study found that groups sought involvement via the BOS' consultation processes at different phases during the development of the mandatory outcomes and the *Foundation Statements* (BOS, 2005a). The process of consultation took many forms depending on the individual voices within the interest groups. Pross (1992) claims that in these instances groups act to "influence decision centres that can best effect the changes they wish to bring about" (p. 109). This leads me to agree with Pross that "interest group behaviour provides us with a nice index of power in the sense that groups mainly seek access" (p.109) to where the authority and power to make decisions reside. Key stakeholder groups, such as those represented on BOS committees, had access to knowledge of these processes, as well as access to the key BOS personnel managing the project. Stakeholders were able to use these processes to oppose the proposed mandatory outcomes. Their participation was achieved through formal processes such as attendance at scheduled meetings and writing group submissions. However, most stakeholders used informal strategies, such as directly contacting known associates within their networks via email, telephone and in person to ensure access to information on the project. These networks included other members of the BOS policy community, such as other committee members, the BOS officers managing the projects, those within the Office, and those who had previously been on or at the BOS and had insider knowledge of the processes involved.

Other stakeholder groups not represented on the BOS or the PCC sought other ways to be involved in the decision-making processes. Here, the study found that although some groups fully participated within the formal consultative processes, there were others that sought to employ strategies that guaranteed that the interests of their group were heard. These strategies involved groups' representatives acting more politically and 'subverting' the formal processes to exert their influence in the decision-making processes. Some took their concerns directly to other *higher* authorities, such as the Minister for Education or the General Manager of the BOS. This in turn ensured that the group's concerns and interests were actioned immediately, and the urgency of their claims was addressed.

However, as the BOS progressed with its review of the Primary curriculum, there was a shift away from the democratic model, initiated as part of the Carrick Review (1989), towards a model that emphasised wider consultation. This move was driven by the need to accommodate the increasingly conflicting interests of the broader community of educational

stakeholders. The BOS was now working with a consultation model that provided more authority over the management of the process to BOS officers. This new managerial role allowed BOS officers such as Mr O'Brien and Ms Malone to guide stakeholders towards a solution. This change in the decision-making processes can be interpreted as "institutional changes that provide a degree of autonomy to managers" (Friedman & Miles, 2006, p. 79). It is an institutional response to a situation where authorities are confronted by dilemmas, conflict and confrontation from their numerous stakeholders.

This study has revealed that although the state's educational stakeholders had numerous opportunities to voice their concerns prior to any final decisions being made on the mandatory outcomes, it was a strategic alliance between BOS officers and key representatives within the DET that facilitated a decision to shift the focus away from mandatory outcomes to developing broad statements of learning. This study has shown that there are a number of strategies employed by stakeholder groups or individuals to attempt to change or influence the organisation. Noted in the stakeholder literature are extensive lists of strategies or actions that stakeholders utilise however, Frooman's (1999) contribution to stakeholder theory is to construct a strategic model that classifies stakeholders' actions and their impact on the organisation. This way the organisation is aware of the potential strategies stakeholders may employ to influence the decision-making processes.

The curriculum development processes outlined in this investigation required representatives from various interest groups to cooperate within the process throughout the different developmental stages of each KLA syllabus. The views of the interest groups were considered as part of this model. All five critical incidents demonstrated that the BOS consulted with its stakeholders multiple times throughout the curriculum decision-making processes. Although the BOS' phases in the development of curriculum intended to be consultative, and can be seen as democratic because stakeholders were involved in the decision-making, the processes was not always collaborative (Pross, 1992). Tight timelines and political interventions added to the need for the BOS to achieve a result as quickly as possible.

Curriculum development researchers such as Keogh, Fourie, Watson and Gay (2010) contend that developing a curriculum and its associated documents is a challenging task. This study also highlighted the challenges encountered with the consultative approach to curriculum development. The model can be seen as democratic, as those stakeholders who wanted a say had a way of expressing their concerns. However, there were not always times throughout the development phases where collaboration with stakeholders occurred. Although it appeared as though the BOS was bringing groups and their representatives together, it became clear that

some representatives had already collaborated prior to actually making decisions. This was revealed when the Directors of Curriculum from the BOS and the DET devised a solution to shift the stakeholders' focus away from the now objectionable mandatory outcomes. The BOS needed to regain its position of curriculum authority, and it did this by collaborating with the schooling sector that employed the largest number of Primary classroom teachers.

Keogh et al. (2010) claim that collaboration between the institution and stakeholders can be defined as the process of toiling directly with other individuals in an attitude of teamwork that benefits the organisation, individuals and the interests of stakeholders. As was evident throughout the five critical incidents, stakeholders used a variety of strategies to either cooperate with or disrupt the development of the mandatory outcomes. This in turn resulted in a shift in curriculum direction to the development of the *Foundation Statements*. The review of the Primary curriculum outcomes involved stakeholders working within the democratic model of curriculum development; however, for collaborative models of development to succeed, processes need to be developed that facilitate the engagement of stakeholders at the different phases of decision-making.

5.5 Nature of Stakeholder Group Representation in Curriculum Development

“The decision-making processes are subject to competing interests of individuals and groups”.

(Powell, 2008, p. 389)

This study demonstrates that these particular curriculum decision-making processes were open to *political* interventions. Political interventions, dating from the late 1980s to the early 2000s, had a major effect on the decisions relating to the development of the Primary curriculum made by the BOS. Interventions such as the state-based education reforms instigated by the Liberal government, which culminated in the passing of the *Education Act 1990*, the incorporation of the National Outcomes and Profiles Statements, and the reviews commissioned by NSW education ministers in 1995 and 2002 enabled the interests of individuals and groups to influence the work of the BOS. Following such interventions, the BOS was required to address these issues; however, the protocols for stakeholder involvement and participation were not fully developed.

As revealed in Critical Incident One, politicians have a much shorter timeframe in which to achieve results (or to be seen to achieve results) than institutions such as the BOS (which allowed curriculum development decisions and processes to drift along for the best part of a

decade). These competing interests conflicted with the BOS' democratic model for curriculum development, especially as the BOS was required to respond to stakeholders' issues and concerns as they were raised within the public arena.

This study demonstrates that among the educational interest groups, some stakeholders exercised more influence than others due to their position within the relevant institutional setting and their access to, and control of, information. This was noted when the NSW Teachers Federation used its influence to access the Minister for Education to ensure the interests of its membership were being addressed. Specifically, this involved industrial issues concerning the workload of teachers associated with the outcomes-based approach to curriculum development and implementation. Friedman and Miles (2006) suggested that stakeholders mobilise "to take effective action" (p. 189). The mobilisation of stakeholders can be an effective strategy to influence an organisation and groups can be more effective if they're able to rally the support of their own members and the support of other groups, especially if they share similar or common interests. This was seen in the mobilisation of teachers in critical incident one with the support of the parent body, the P&C, and the media, who were sympathetic to their claims.

Given that these aforementioned reviews reported on issues affecting teachers working within government schools, it was incumbent upon the BOS to work with its government school stakeholders. To ensure that the BOS addressed the minister's concerns, the DET strategically assigned its curriculum director and two assistant directors to the PCC, thus advancing its interests in the decision-making processes.

A number of relationships that exist between the BOS and its stakeholders; Freeman (1984) recommended that organisations should map all stakeholders (both current and potential) to decide on how to ensure their effective engagement within the organisation's structures. By identifying relationships, coalitions, nature of their interests, nature of their power, and monitoring networks and shifting alliances, managers will be better equipped to effectively manage stakeholders' involvement in the organisation (Friedman and Miles, 2006)

Analyses of the documentary sources revealed that the DET had positioned its officers on the PCC to ensure that they had better access to BOS decisions and the BOS officers managing the project. Having key personnel from the DET directly involved in the decision-making at the committee level enhanced the flow of information to other key players within the DET's curriculum directorate. For example, DET curriculum consultants such as Ms Long and Mr Vasilla, advanced the DET's position through their networking with the BOS officers. As noted in Critical Incident Three, both personnel were not members of the BOS or PCC;

however, they represented the views of the DET and their own specific area of curriculum (assessment and report and Science and Technology K–6, respectively) by contributing to the DET's written submission and the writing of the *Foundation Statements*. Whereas Ms Long made a point of stating that her decisions were made on behalf of her team, Mr Vasilla's view was that his position provided him with the expertise and capacity to make decisions on behalf of the Primary teachers in his curriculum area. Although Mr Powyer stressed the need for his curriculum directorate managers to contribute to the overall response to the BOS consultation on mandatory outcomes and the *Foundation Statements*, other DET personnel found ways to contribute other than through the DET's authorised representatives on the BOS or PCC.

Mitchell et al. (1997) researched manager's perceptions of stakeholder characteristics and their salience within an organisation in regards to factors of power, legitimacy and urgency as important aspects that need attention in accordance to the stakeholders' credibility. Within this perspective, the relevance of stakeholder is needed so as to explain to whom and to what should the managers of the organisation really pay their attention (Mitchell et al., 1997). Friedman and Miles (2006) claimed that a model of stakeholder salience is necessary to explain how the manager should prioritise relationships with stakeholders. The identification of salience enables the explicit recognition of the uniqueness of the situation and the managerial perceptions by identifying relationships such as: stakeholder powers of negotiation; their legitimacy with the organisation; and the urgency in attending to the stakeholders' claims. That claim, that ensuring the salience of stakeholders is identified and mapped, enables forecasts to be made as to the managerial behaviour of each stakeholder, as well as predictions as to how stakeholders may network and develop coalitions and alliances, and the consequences of these behaviours for their management in the organisation.

This study also concluded that some stakeholder groups had a formal process for consulting and conferring with their members. For example, Mr Powyer gathered responses from DET curriculum managers before writing a submission on behalf of the DET. The objective here was to ensure a unified response from the stakeholder group. Powell (2008) noted that the choices of individuals and/or groups in the decision-making processes should be "implemented through collaboration of the interest group and depend upon their willingness to secure the compliance of their members" (p. 389). Although some individuals sought ways to seek additional information via their own personal contacts and networks, the overall response of the groups was one that represented the collective interests of the entire DET.

Similar to Mr Powyer seeking views from the DET's members through a series of information sessions and collaborative brainstorming meetings, other PCC representatives had similar ways of eliciting information and feedback from their group members. Ms Benedet, who represented the CCSP, noted that she would share the agenda and papers for a committee meeting with members of her group so that she was able to appropriately represent her group's position (personal communication, 26 August 2009). However, other stakeholder group representatives reported that they found it more difficult to secure compliance and/or consensus from their group due to the size of the group and the diversity of its members. For example, Ms Fern, who represented the IEU, was only able to secure feedback and advice on behalf of her group from Catholic schools in her diocese, as she had limited access to teachers outside of her region and to teachers in independent schools (personal communication, 11 September 2009).

Moreover, some representatives used their own position of power to exert influence over the decision-making processes. This was evidenced when individuals from within the DET, who were opposed to mandatory outcomes for HSIE, found ways to ensure that their views were heard other than via their group's response. Although it was found that these individuals were also able to include their own views in other ways, they sought to further disrupt the process by seeking their own personal representation using a variety of strategies. For example, they sought additional individual representations on a number of occasions; they attended more than one state-wide meeting, and they formed their own single-issue group to specifically become a key stakeholder and thereby legitimise their access to stakeholder group meetings with BOS officers. They also wrote additional formal submissions, and they completed many of the surveys under different representations. Powell (2008) claimed that for organisations managing stakeholders' participation, it can be time consuming, exhausting and frustrating to make decisions within the institutional setting when there are many competing interests vying for influence. This was seen multiple times during consultation with the stakeholders, with BOS officers holding many contact meetings with different interest groups.

Although the democratic curriculum development processes had given stakeholder groups, and in some cases individuals, the opportunity to exert influence at different levels and different stages of consultation, the study found that there were not always opportunities for group representatives to accurately reflect the views of their group. Representatives needed to know how to respond on behalf of their group and what was expected of their representative role. While representatives were entrusted to represent their group and advocate its interests, there needed to be a process that established clear guidelines for such representations. Friedman and Miles (2006) claimed that the management of stakeholders needs to involve

principles of effective communication. The organisation needs to implement explicit stakeholder management processes—especially as they relate to its official procedures, policies and allocated lines of responsibility (Binderkrantz, & Krøyer, 2012; Mitchell et al., 1997; Friedman & Miles, 2006)). The explicit nature of this approach can also afford greater institutional legitimacy to the BOS. Stakeholders are subsequently seen as working collaboratively towards a common goal—in this instance, curriculum development.

5.6 Nature of Stakeholder Group Processes for Effective Representation

“It is important that all groups are represented and that participants be authorised to speak on behalf of the stakeholder groups they represent and provide feedback on the results to the group”.

(Friedman & Miles, 2006, p. 170)

Critical Incidents Three and Four demonstrated occasions where individuals acted independently and in their own interests. During these times, BOS officers viewed individuals as having urgency in their claims regarding the mandatory outcomes. However, as individuals, they lacked power and legitimacy because they were not part of the collective voice. While the study revealed many examples of individuals representing their group’s views, there were times when individuals acted on their own and/or sought multiple representations to disrupt the process. In these instances, their claims were seen as individuals driving their own agenda and not as reflecting the collective view of their group.

As noted in the analysis, the DET’s curriculum directorate was represented at the BOS and the PCC by its curriculum director and two assistant directors. The committee members represented the directorate—the curriculum consultants and managers—and the state’s classroom teachers. They were authorised to provide feedback to the BOS on behalf of the DET. In Critical Incident Three, Brian Powyer (personal communication, 21 September 2009), one of the assistant directors, revealed the processes within the curriculum directorate for obtaining information from the curriculum consultants to feed back to the BOS during the consultation on mandatory outcomes. Ms Long (personal communication, 24 August 2009) and Mr Vassila (personal communication, 24 August 2009), who were curriculum consultants in the curriculum directorate, confirmed the process of information-gathering meetings conducted by Mr Powyer. The staff of the directorate had direct access to the BOS’ decisions on mandatory outcomes through their representative as well as through their established networks and personal contacts with BOS officers.

As the largest schooling authority, the DET’s curriculum directorate had invited BOS officers to brief its curriculum consultants on the development of the mandatory outcomes. Two of the

BOS officers had previously worked in government schools and were known to curriculum consultants. This relationship further enhanced the individual's access to the decision-making processes. Both Ms Long and Mr Vassila confirmed their participation in the DET's response to the mandatory outcomes and their individual involvement in the development of the *Foundation Statements* through their informal networking with BOS officers. The direct involvement of these curriculum consultants was seen as being legitimate by BOS due to their position of authority within the DET, as well as their relationship with the BOS officers. Although Ms Long and Mr Vassila were not authorised to represent the DET directly, they involved themselves in the consultations via emails and phone calls to the Office. Briefings provided by Ms Malone at the curriculum directorate provided other KLA curriculum officers with direct access to the BOS' consultation processes. However, other individuals were inclined to become involved due to the importance the BOS had placed on ensuring that it worked closely with the DET. One such curriculum consultant became an unauthorised representative of the DET's response by pursuing multiple representations for her concerns. There is evidence that some individuals sought to influence the process through multiple representations and in as many forums as possible.

Some individuals were members of up to three different groups. As a curriculum consultant, one individual had a role in developing the DET's response to the HSIE K-6 mandatory outcomes via her role in the curriculum directorate. She was also able to exercise her influence to speak about HSIE through multiple representations at the state-wide meetings, survey responses and via direct contact with BOS officers. To seek further legitimacy in having a voice in opposition to the mandatory outcomes, this individual then sought to form a professional association with teachers who shared similar interests in the HSIE. Once the group was formed, she was able to gain further access to the consultation processes by seeking a group consultation meeting at the BOS, thus enabling her to submit another written response, this time on behalf of the new group, with the support of its Secondary school curriculum colleagues. An extensive body of literature illustrates how stakeholder groups or individuals employ numerous strategies in an attempt to influence the decisions or outcomes made by an institution or organisation (e.g., Friedman & Miles, 2006; Freeman, 1984, 1994; Frooman, 1999).

While the individual in this particular case sought to be involved in multiple ways, the DET and BOS officers did not consider her an authorised representative who could speak on behalf of the DET. Mitchell et al. (1997) suggested that stakeholders (groups and individuals) become significant to managers when the managers (BOS officers) perceive stakeholders as possessing power, legitimacy and urgency. These three attributes can be gained, as well as

lost, throughout the stakeholders' involvement depending on the influence they garner. Board officers had previously identified stakeholders whose claims were the most important based on their possession of these attributes; thus, they could determine which stakeholders would receive the most attention.

Further to the claim that stakeholders can influence the decision-making processes through multiple representations, Critical Incidents Three and Four demonstrated that stakeholders were able to associate themselves with groups they identified with. Pross (1992) claimed that when interest groups form alliances around common issues and concerns, they are endeavouring to generate a shared identity and network. Examining the social movement literature in stakeholder-centric models, Ashforth and Kreiner (1999, cited in Friedman & Miles, 2006) suggested that the collective identity can act as an alternative basis for mobilisation through the creation of individual commitment and group solidarity. This became evident in Critical Incident Four, when individuals in the PDHPE Teachers' Association were able to gain support from their national body (ACHPER) for their concerns regarding the reduction of outcomes for PDHPE.

There are two notable examples of representatives forming alliances through networking and coming to a collective decision during the BOS' consultation on mandatory outcomes. The first was when Brian Powyer (personal communication, 21 September 2009) witnessed stakeholder representatives *catching up* over a cup of coffee during the committee meeting break and the conversation becoming hushed when he ventured to join the conversation. When members returned to the boardroom after the break, Mr Powyer claimed that decisions made by the committee were more assured by the collective due to the perceived discussions held during periods outside of meeting times for networking and consensus decision-making. The other example was when the Primary HSIETA, originally a group of disparate Primary teachers passionate about the teaching of HSIE, amalgamated to form the association so they could respond as a collective on mandatory outcomes.

Friedman and Miles (2006) claimed that the organisation–stakeholder relationship involves a complete set of intermediate decision makers and influencers. This involves both sides of the relationship—the BOS and the stakeholder group—working together. Collaborative models in decision-making cannot be made by a single mind, such as the BOS officer or the group representative; rather, they are made by the collective during a time of genuine engagement. This was seen when Brian Powyer elicited feedback from the curriculum consultants to respond to the BOS' mandatory outcomes. Friedman and Miles (2006) contended that “one individual can belong to several groups, each with different claims and needs” (p. 150).

However, it must be noted that, in practice, these multiple interests can be conflicting, thereby leading to a further problem of how to balance stakeholder groups' interests. It is important for groups to be clear about what they want from their representation and their representative.

In their attempt to conceptualise stakeholder theory and practice, Friedman and Miles (2006) offered of a set of principles developed by the Clarkson Centre for Business Ethics that can assist as a general managerial aid for management stakeholders by institutions such as the BOS. This may help inform the implications of this study around collaborative decision-making in curriculum development to ensure that all vested interests are genuinely involved in the processes.

5.7 Summary

For stakeholders to effectively participate in curriculum decision-making, this study has revealed that certain factors need to be utilised. Stakeholders need to have a clear understanding of the curriculum task, where they are then able to collaborate with members of the policy community through established democratic processes. Other factors such as formalising processes and procedures for effective communication within and amongst groups can assist in the management of stakeholder groups and enhance genuine engagement of stakeholders in the decision-making processes. Although all stakeholder groups were given opportunities to respond to the consultation on mandatory outcomes as a response to the Evaluation (Eltis & Crump, 2003), individuals still sought to influence the decision-making processes through the pursuit of personal agendas in the quest to be heard. The discussion of these significant issues in the four key areas identified revealed that, for effective stakeholder group engagement, representatives need to understand the nature and scope of the curriculum task and their role in the curriculum decision-making processes so that the resultant curriculum decisions are based on collaboration and democratic processes.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

“The policy community has to engage in a constant process: new issues are raised, new individuals are included, changes in the environment accommodated”.

(Pross, 1992, p. 242)

6.1 Introduction

This study examined the socio-political processes shaping what and how students learn. It is about the people, power and politics involved in curriculum-related decision-making processes, especially as they relate to Primary school education in NSW throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. During this period, key educational stakeholder groups struggled to influence the curriculum development agenda due to factors such as the Federal and State governments’ education policy agendas. By casting a spotlight on the interactions of key stakeholders—groups and individuals, and the institutional processes in which the curriculum development activity took place, valuable insights have been gained into how stakeholders influence the curriculum development process. This study explored the micro politics in the curriculum development decision-making processes. In doing so, it highlighted the ways in which interest groups and their representatives networked and formed alliances with like-minded groups with similar interests.

Listening to the voices of key educational stakeholders has important implications for both the curriculum development and the management of stakeholders. The role of the stakeholder is to advocate for the interests of the group and ensure that these interests shape the curriculum. Representatives typically employed a range of formal and informal strategies to ensure their voices were heard over the many competing perspectives, ideologies, personalities and agendas. The findings about the nature and role of stakeholders during the review of the K–6 outcomes and the development of the *Foundation Statements* provide an important contribution to our understanding of Primary curriculum development. This study is also significant because it provides important insights into the democratic model in curriculum decision-making employed in NSW, and it will help to inform curriculum developers on how to better manage the involvement of key stakeholders in these processes.

This chapter highlights the theoretical contribution of the thesis to stakeholder theory and curriculum development, and it identifies related areas for future research. To this end, the research questions are revisited and the effectiveness of the theoretical orientation and methodology used to address these questions is evaluated, the major findings are reiterated, and the theoretical contribution of the thesis is subsequently addressed. It is argued that this

thesis makes a theoretical contribution to two specific fields of inquiry: curriculum development and the nature of stakeholder interactions in decision-making processes. Finally, the implications of this thesis for future research are examined.

6.2 Research Questions, Theoretical Orientation and Methodological Issues

This study sought to investigate the role of stakeholders in the development of the Primary curriculum in NSW. The research was framed within the contexts of:

- the effects of outcomes-based curriculum planning, assessment and reporting on the workloads of Primary school teachers from 1990 to 2006; and
- the role of stakeholder groups and their representatives in shaping the decisions for the development of the K–6 curriculum.

Three specific research questions guided the study:

1. How have federal and state government education policies and curriculum reforms shaped the development of the *NSW Primary Curriculum Foundation Statements*?
2. How, and to what effect, is the salience of educational stakeholders who are involved in, and shape, decision-making processes in curriculum planning, assessment and reporting?
3. How does the analysis of stakeholders' experiences in curriculum decision-making inform the theories of curriculum development, interest group and stakeholder theories?

6.2.1 Research Question 1

How have federal and state government education policies and curriculum reforms shaped the development of the NSW Primary Curriculum Foundation Statements?

The analyses of documents and media found that state and federal government policies during the late 1980s and 1990s shaped the curriculum through the instigation of education reforms. The passing of the Education Reform Act (1990) established the participation of stakeholders in the curriculum development process and a new approach to developing the curriculum. These policies and reforms were significant in the development of the Primary curriculum due to numerous factors negatively impacting the model of the outcomes-based curriculum framework for the Primary KLA syllabuses, the curriculum expertise to develop them and the necessary knowledge and understanding required for its delivery into Primary classrooms

across the state. As a consequence, there was much concern from stakeholders about the nature of the curriculum, its development and hence its implementation in schools.

The effects of the decisions made by the policy reforms resulted in industrial solutions that finally saw the refocusing of learning outcomes in Primary curriculum planning, assessment and reporting to the development of the *Foundation Statements* for greater manageability of the Primary curriculum.

6.2.2 Research Question 2

How, and to what effect, is the salience of educational stakeholders who are involved in, and shape, decision-making processes in curriculum planning, assessment and reporting?

This study, conducted through the lenses of interest group and stakeholder theories, and theories of curriculum development, found stakeholders use multiple strategies to promote their interests and to guarantee their engagement in the curriculum decision-making processes that shaped the Primary curriculum. This investigation extends Pross's (1992) interest group theory into the development of the policy community through its application in an educational setting. By examining the stakeholder group interactions within the context of the BOS' decision-making processes it was clear that stakeholders interacted in certain ways within the institutional structures to ensure their interests and claims were addressed. Within the policy community, it was possible to identify the key stakeholders and their authorised representatives, the legitimacy and/or urgency of their claims, where their interests in curriculum were positioned, and how their involvement shaped decisions relating to Primary curriculum outcomes. Strategic alliances were developed between stakeholder representatives through informal and formal networks, contributing to our understanding of negotiation and consensus building during heightened times in curriculum contestation. The study found that stakeholder groups and individuals aligned and networked with other groups and individuals that had similar interests or concerns. Explicit in everything the stakeholders did was the notion that shaping these documents was a competitive and contested process and so they become political players in the process as they formed alliances, networked and advocated.

6.2.3 Research Question 3:

How does the analysis of stakeholders' experiences in curriculum decision-making inform the theories of curriculum development, interest group and stakeholder theories?

The use of the critical incident analysis technique as an organisational framework enabled an in-depth analysis of stakeholders' interactions, motives and perceptions in the curriculum

development process. The use of the framework facilitated the identification of the micro politics that stakeholders used throughout their involvement. This enabled the identification of the different types of strategies employed by stakeholders at certain times during the curriculum decision-making processes. Stakeholders employed both formal and informal strategies to ensure their concerns and claims were heard. Formal strategies such as those established by the BOS' consultation processes of attending consultation meetings, submitting surveys, and writing submissions, provided groups and individuals with formal documented ways to be part of the decision-making process. Informal strategies, such as emailing or phoning, established contacts, and coffee meetings allowed stakeholders to gain privileged meeting opportunities with the other committee members and Board officers. However, stakeholders who were more knowledgeable of the Board's processes were able to access other authorised personnel in order to have their claims heard expeditiously. These findings provided a significant contribution to our understanding of the approaches that can be used to more effectively manage the different and sometimes conflicting views of those involved.

By applying stakeholder (Freeman, 1984, 1994) and stakeholder management theories (Mitchell et al., 1997; Friedman & Miles, 2006) in the field of education and curriculum development, the types of stakeholder interactions in the decision-making processes were investigated by examining the strategies employed throughout the process. The use of stakeholder theory makes a significant contribution in the area of curriculum development as its application has not been previously adopted in this area. It allows us to identify stakeholders and their salience to the organisation. Establishing procedures for managing stakeholders in curriculum development can provide pathways for those managing the curriculum development task with effective strategies to ensure all stakeholders are engaged in the decision-making processes.

6.2.4 Contributions to Knowledge

This study makes an important contribution to the body of curriculum development related knowledge. The study:

- Constitutes the first substantive account of curriculum decision-making processes instigated by the curriculum-based reforms of state and federal government education policies of the 1990s, the impact of which resulted in concerns regarding an outcomes-based curriculum for Primary education;
- Confirms, in an Australian educational setting, that curriculum is a socio-political construct where the interactions of stakeholder groups and individuals are of significant importance in curriculum decision-making;

- Endorses stakeholders' involvement within a policy community by legitimising their actions to influence and be influenced during the determination of Primary curriculum;
- Extends the application of interest group theory and stakeholder theory into the area of Primary curriculum development that has received little attention in the Australian Primary education area; and
- Further extends our understanding of the institutional structures within which bureaucrats and managers strive to understand, reconcile and balance the various interests of stakeholders.

6.3 Implications of the Research

6.3.1 Shared Understanding of the Curriculum Task

The role of stakeholders in curriculum development and the nature of their interactions as revealed in this study highlight the importance of stakeholders holding a shared understanding of the curriculum task. Throughout the development of the Primary syllabuses, stakeholders repeatedly focused on the confusion surrounding outcomes and the outcomes-based approach. It became clear to all stakeholders—namely, groups, their representatives and curriculum writers—that there was no established process for developing outcomes in each KLA syllabus, and with a lack of Primary education expertise, there were many differing views about how to go about the task of developing a Primary curriculum document.

This research highlights stakeholders' urgent and legitimate need to influence the curriculum agenda. Stakeholder representatives utilised alliances and networking—both formal and informal—to gain access to the decision-making processes. Stakeholders employed these strategies to gain a clearer understanding of the task at hand by using their officially endorsed positions within the policy community. However, for those who were not within the policy community, networking with those who were granted them access to the processes. From these findings, it became evident that, for stakeholders to be effectively involved in the process, they had to have an understanding of the task at hand, and a knowledge of the processes involved. The lack of clarity of the curriculum development task contributed to stakeholders having competing views and conflicting perspectives.

Developing an explicit shared understanding of the curriculum task needs to be established so that stakeholders are clear regarding their role in the processes. The curriculum project needs to be defined and stakeholder involvement needs to be mapped against different stages of the

process. Furthermore, terms of reference should be developed that clearly state the nature of stakeholder involvement in all or different phases in the decision-making processes.

6.3.2 Collaborative Curriculum Decision-Making

The findings of this investigation reveal that a more collaborative approach to decision-making, within the already democratic model of consultation, would contribute to the genuine engagement of all stakeholders. The study revealed that those stakeholders not represented at the BOS employed a range of influence-seeking strategies to ensure that their concerns regarding the inclusion of mandatory outcomes were heard. While consultation provided opportunities for all stakeholders to participate, not all stakeholders perceived that their contributions were appropriately acknowledged. The types of involvement, such as online surveys and submissions and large group meetings, left some individuals feeling disenfranchised as a result of their perceived, and in some cases apparent, isolation in the process.

Ansell and Gash (2008) have reviewed of a number of the studies that point toward the value of collaborative strategies where: stakeholders have learned to engage in productive discussions; managers have developed more fruitful relationships with stakeholders; and the development of sophisticated forms of collective learning and problem solving. They have noted that other studies on collaborative decision-making point to problems regarding stakeholder manipulation of the process; a lack of real commitment to collaboration by public agencies; and distrust of the process, as a barrier to negotiation. Ansell and Gash's (2008) meta-analysis of 137 studies on collaborative governance and decision-making across a range of policy areas found two strategies for effective collaboration: commitment to the process, and trust. Ansell and Gash (2008) claim "Stakeholders are no longer simply critics of the process" (p. 560), but are part owners in the decision-making process. They share responsibility collectively, with other stakeholders who may hold opposing and/or similar views. Ownership here implies a shared responsibility for the process. This responsibility requires stakeholders to see their relationship with other stakeholders in a new light, one in which they share responsibility with their opponents.

Stakeholders' level of commitment to collaboration is a critical variable in explaining success or failure, suggested Ansell and Gash (2008). In a survey of American and Australian collaborative groups, they found that "member commitment" was the most important factor in facilitating collaboration. However, the weak commitment of public agencies and stakeholders to the collaboration was often seen as a particular problem. Commitment is closely related to the group's motivation to participate in the collaborative process. However,

stakeholders participate in order to make sure their perspective is not neglected or to secure legitimacy for their position. By contrast, commitment to the process means developing a belief that bargaining and negotiating for mutual gains is the best way to achieve desirable policy outcomes (Ansell & Gash, 2008). This was especially evident in Critical Incident Four with the involvement of other special interest groups who were determined that their interests were considered in the decisions on the mandatory outcomes.

Trust building is critical in ensuring stakeholders work together to achieve the goals required, however they stressed that collaborative decision-making is probably not a good strategy in situations in which groups must make or implement decisions quickly. Ansell and Gash (2008) pointed out that an initial “up-front investment in effective collaboration can sometimes save considerable time and energy in downstream implementation” (p. 563). Once stakeholders achieve a working consensus, the literature suggests that implementation can occur quite rapidly. Thus, policy makers might be more favourable to collaborative governance where they expect a difficult implementation process. Had the managers of the BOS’s curriculum development processes invested in establishing the roles, responsibilities and outcomes of the groups involved in the development of the Primary curriculum, the syllabuses may not have taken over a decade to develop.

By applying carefully considered guidelines for stakeholder participation with clear expectations of the collaborative task, stakeholders can be effectively engaged during different phases in the curriculum development processes. Collaborative decision-making processes can be achieved by ensuring that opportunities for successful stakeholder collaboration are facilitated. This can be achieved by ensuring that different groups are included at different times in the process and by noting the contributions made by all. This will enhance genuine negotiation and collaboration and sustain the engagement of stakeholders. Brundrett and Duncan (2015) reinforced the concept that cooperation and collaboration strategies need to be encouraged so that there is a specific focus on learning and teaching and curriculum development.

6.3.3 Stakeholder Group Representation in Curriculum Development

This study revealed that at different stages in the development of the Primary curriculum a number of key stakeholders used their position of power and influence to engage in the political processes of curriculum development. Throughout the study, the political interventions of politicians and interest groups were able to influence the curriculum development process. In some instances this involved the amending of decisions already established within institutional processes. Stakeholder groups such as those represented on the

NSW BOS were assigned greater importance (and thus power) in the process due to their position being legitimatised by the *Education Act 1990*. While the Act ensures a broad representation of interests, guidelines for stakeholder engagement have not been formulated.

This research revealed that, at times, stakeholders strategically placed selected individuals in positions that enabled them to advance the group's interests. The DET, for example, positioned its assistant directors of curriculum and its curriculum consultants in ways that enabled them to communicate directly with the BOS officers managing the project. This was seen as advantageous to the DET. Once individuals were selected to network directly with the project managers they were able to pursue their own personal agendas and exploit their expertise all in the guise of advocating for the interests of the group. However, this often proved a source of confusion, with individual views sometimes contradicting those of the stakeholder.

Pross (1992) claimed that stakeholder groups need formal organisational structures through which they are able to articulate and aggregate common interests. They also need to show a willingness to act within the political system.

To facilitate stakeholder participation within a collaborative model for curriculum development, clearly defined processes of engagement need to be articulated (Friedman & Miles, 2006). Once groups and their roles are defined, questions of how, when and where they play these roles and, most significantly, why they play them, can be tackled to ensure accountability to the processes by the representative and the group (Pross, 1992).

6.3.4 Stakeholder Group Processes for Effective Representation

The findings revealed that stakeholders used various approaches to nominate appointees to BOS' committees. As a result, there were demonstrated inconsistencies in the representatives' understanding of their role. The study found that some groups selected their members through an 'expression of interest' application process, while other groups choose their representative by a *hands-up*, *handshake* or *tap-on-the-shoulder* approach. The findings revealed that whatever the selection process, once the member was appointed to the committee, they often drew on their own expertise or views to represent the group's interests rather than actively trying to ascertain the collective view of the group.

This investigation found that some individuals sought multiple avenues of representation to ensure their personal claims were heard. Due to a lack of established procedures for recognising the representative as the legitimate advocate of the interests of the group, individuals often became a lone voice seeking to advance their own interests. The study

revealed that individuals with similar claims and concerns often united around points of agreement. While some individuals were able to disrupt decision-making processes, their claims often lacked legitimacy, especially when they were contrary to the collective views others represented within the democratic process.

Ideally, the stakeholder group is responsible for ensuring that its representative delivers the interests of the group rather than those of the individual. It is important for the group to be clear about the expectations of their representation and their representative. The representative needs to be accountable for providing information to its members, as well as ensuring they represent the interests of the group. The study revealed that one particular stakeholder group—the ECEC—became aware that its processes were flawed because they had not provided their representative with key information about the group’s position on particular curriculum concerns. This left the representative speaking on her own behalf, as she was unaware of the group’s procedures for ascertaining the group’s position and then providing feedback to the group.

While acknowledging that the curriculum decision-making processes are highly bureaucratic, it is important to note that the most successful groups within the policy community were those that were familiar with the curriculum development processes and were able to communicate their interests in a bureaucratic fashion and within the existing bureaucratic structures (Pross, 1992). If stakeholder groups support continued genuine engagement in these processes, there needs to be effective communication between the stakeholder and the decisions made within the institution.

6.4 Recommendations for Further Research

This thesis makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of the curriculum development process and the application of interest group and stakeholder theory in an educational context. It achieves this through an examination of the nature and scope of stakeholder engagement in the decision-making associated with the development of the Primary curriculum in NSW. It revealed that the entire curriculum development processes were open to a range of political pressures. The opportunity for such interventions had its origins in the lack of institutional understanding regarding key elements of the suite of Primary curriculum documents. Added to this was the stakeholders’ lack of understanding of curriculum development and their role in the decision-making process.

Education policies at both the state and federal level, together with the personal ambitions of politicians and the politics undertaken by stakeholders all shaped the development of the

NSW Primary curriculum. As a result of these interventions, the BOS struggled to achieve a consensus. It was too reactive. Its curriculum development agenda was determined by forces it struggled to control. It was too readily influenced by the loudest voice amongst the stakeholders and captive to the vagaries of the political cycle. For too much of the curriculum development cycle it was formulating policy ‘on-the-run’. It lacked clear understanding of what the suite of Primary curriculum documents should look like when complete.

The findings of this research demonstrate that there is much to learn about the contested nature of curriculum development through the application of stakeholder and interest group theory. Building on the results of this study and those conducted by Kleeman (2005), Harris (2002) and Henshaw (1996), there are opportunities to further investigate the role of stakeholders in decision-making processes in the curriculum development context and their salience within the institutional setting. This research provided an example of the highly contested development of six outcomes-based K–6 KLA syllabus documents in NSW. An analysis of these particular curriculum development processes will provide researchers with greater insights into how and why stakeholder groups and individuals seek to influence curriculum development. Stakeholders’ involvement in the political processes is multi-faceted, with individuals employing various strategies of power, legitimacy and urgency to ensure that their interests influenced curriculum decisions at different stages.

The driving force for stakeholder groups and their representatives is *political* engagement in the policies and procedures of curriculum-related matters and the opportunity to shape the collective mind-set of a generation and, therefore, the future of the nation. In the current educational climate, this research is necessary if stakeholders are to have continued genuine engagement in developing curriculum for the future.

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Appendix A: Ethics Approval to conduct the research



30 March 2007

Ms Vilma Fyfe
4/19 Pinner Close
North Epping NSW 2121

Reference: HE23FEB2007-PG04960

Dear Ms Fyfe

FINAL APPROVAL

Title of project: *How government primary schools in New South Wales are implementing the NSW Primary Curriculum Foundation Statements*

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your responses have satisfactorily addressed the outstanding issues raised by the Committee. You may now proceed with your research.

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. Approval will be for a period of twelve months. At the end of this period, if the project has been completed, abandoned, discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are required to submit a Final Report on the project. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. The Final Report is available at <http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/ethics/human/forms>
2. However, at the end of the 12 month period if the project is still current you should instead submit an application for renewal of the approval if the project has run for less than five (5) years. This form is available at <http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/ethics/human/forms>. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report (see Point 1 above) and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).
3. Please remember the Committee must be notified of any alteration to the project.
4. You must notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
5. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University (<http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/ethics/human>).

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide Macquarie University's Research Grants Officer with a copy of this letter as soon as possible. The Research Grants Officer will not inform external funding agencies that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Officer has received a copy of this final approval letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'F. The' or similar, written over a printed name.

P.P. Dr Margaret Stuart
Director of Research Ethics
Chair, Ethics Review Committee [Human Research]
cc. Ms Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan

HLTR08.2 : CRO File: 06/1645

ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (HUMAN RESEARCH)

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY (E11A)
SYDNEY, NSW, 2109 AUSTRALIA

Secretary: Ph: (02) 9850 7850 Fax: (02) 9850 4465 E-mail: ethics.secretariat@vc.mq.edu.au
<http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/ethics/human>

Portrait (85%)

Appendix B: Information Letter to Stakeholder to Conduct Research

Dear «TITLE» «Last_Name»

Research project: Unrealised expectations: Managing multiple stakeholders in the development of NSW Primary Curriculum Foundation Statements

My name is Vilma (Fyfe) Galstaun and I am a postgraduate student at the Department of Education at Macquarie University. My current research is being conducted to meet the requirements for Doctor of Philosophy under the supervision of Dr Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan, Senior Lecturer, Department of Education, kerryann.osullivan@mq.edu.au phone: 9850 8702. The aim of my study is to investigate the nature of the interactions between educational stakeholder groups and state and federal educational authorities and the impact these had on decision-making processes on the development of Primary curriculum in the period following the 1999 *Adelaide Declaration on the National Goals for schooling in the twenty-first century*.

In 2004, the then NSW Minister for Education, Dr Andrew Refshauge announced 'new report cards for Primary students' that would 'allow all parents to compare their child's progress against statewide benchmarks'. Later that year the federal government legislated the introduction of common national tests in literacy and numeracy. Other elements of the federal government's agenda included the linking of student assessment to performance payments for teachers and the tying of government funding to school performance. Stakeholder groups involved in the development of the *Foundation Statements* argued against these practices that sought to report student performance on a developmental continuum.

Educational stakeholders involved in the developmental processes of the *Foundation Statements* have been invited to participate in this study. Should you choose to participate, the research will be conducted during **Terms 2 and 3, 2009**. Interviews will be digitally recorded as audio and later transcribed. They will take approximately thirty to fifty minutes. Interview will be one-on-one and times will be arranged at a mutually convenient time for both participant and researcher.

It is intended that quotes and information gathered from specific individuals may be used in the course of the study, such as in presentations and publications. At such times only your name and stakeholder group will be published with your permission. If permission is not granted a pseudonym will be used. You will have an opportunity to withdraw or amend the information when a copy of the interview transcript and final analysis is sent for review. The results of the study will be published in a completed PhD thesis and will also be disseminated in journals and at conferences. Participants can request a copy of the summary of the overall results of the study once it has been completed by contacting the researcher.

I do hope you will participate in this research. It will enable the development of greater insight into the ways educational stakeholders get involved in, and shape decision-making processes related to curriculum, assessment and reporting in NSW. A statement of agreement

to participate in the research is attached for you to sign and return. I would appreciate the return of the consent form in the reply paid envelope by **Friday 24 April 2009**. Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Vilma (Fyfe) Galstaun

PhD research student, Macquarie University

Phone: 9351 3512

Email: vilma.fyfe@students.mq.edu.au

<p>The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Subjects). If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through its Secretary (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.</p>

Appendix C: Letter of Consent for Interview

STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY

Title of study:

Research project: Unrealised expectations: Managing multiple stakeholder agendas in the development of curriculum, assessment and reporting with specific reference to the development and implementation of *NSW Primary Curriculum Foundation Statements*

I _____ agree to participate in the research study named above being conducted by Vilma Galstaun from the School of Education at Macquarie University and outlined in the information letter.

I understand that any information I give may be identifiable and can be used for publication.

I understand that only my name and the stakeholder group I represent may be used in such publications and presentations.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw at any time, without having to give a reason and without adverse consequences.

Please tick the relevant box below:

I give permission for my name and/or stakeholder group to be used in any publications arising from the research Yes ☐ No ☐

Where permission has not been granted, a pseudonym will be used.

Participant's Name: _____ (block letters)

Name of Stakeholder Group: _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: _____ (block letters)

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Chief Researcher: Ms Vilma (Fyfe) Galstaun
 PhD student, Macquarie University
 Phone: 9351 3512
 Email: vilma.galstaun@students.mq.edu.au

Appendix D: Participation Profile Sheet

- Introduce self and project.
- Willing to participate in an interview: day, time, place, length of interview.
- Interview will be recorded, then transcribed.
- Confirm all contact details.

Name:

Title:

Email:

Telephone:

Mobile:

Fax:

Interview:

YES

NO

Time/place

Interest group:

Role in group:

Representative
committees:

Consent form signed
and returned:

YES

NO

Other information:

Appendix E: Interview Timetable

Date	Participant details	Transcript sent	Transcript returned
	Name		
	Time		
	Place		
	Name		
	Time		
	Place		
	Name		
	Time		
	Place		
	Name		
	Time		
	Place		

Appendix F: Interview Schedule of Areas of Investigation and Questions

Interview schedule of questions and areas of investigation

Interview schedule: These questions are to assist in drawing out themes and issues. The nature of the questions will vary according to the person and the stakeholder group they represent.

Area 1: The educational stakeholder and group interactions

Focus of Investigation: types of educational stakeholder groups, purpose and role of the group within educational decision-making contexts, within group decision-making and reporting processes.

What is your role in <Name of interest group>?

Can you tell me about your group?

- *What interests does your group advocate?*
- *Is your group represented on any curriculum committees? What are they?*
- *What processes are used to gain and/or disseminate information to/from members?*
- *How are issues pursued within the group and on representative committees?*

Probe: in terms of what educational interests the group advocates, the views and attitudes about the interests of the group particularly in relation to Primary curriculum, the group's processes of gaining and disseminating information by members and from members, how are decisions reached about which claims, concerns and issues should be pursued?

Working in an environment of organisational complexity means that groups must be ready to contribute advice, are there formal structures, clearly defined roles, a system for generating and allocating resources, rules for governing behaviour and procedures for reaching and implementing decisions?

Area 2: Building networks communities

Focus of investigation: building network communities, forming policy communities, levels of interaction, interest promotion

Who does your group work with?

Can you tell me about the groups you work with?

- *How did you form an alliance?*
- *Did you network with other groups? How?*
- *Did other groups network with you? How?*
- *How were decisions made?*
- *Were there particular members of a group that you worked more closely with? Why?*

Probe: What other groups have similar interests, claims, concerns and issues to your group?

Once similar interests are established, was a network between your groups formed?

What did you do to foster relationships with other like groups?

Area 3: Pursuing group interests

Focus of investigation: responses to state and federal education authorities, processes of decision-making within representatives on committees, pursuing groups' interests versus individual interests, identification of critical incidents/flash points, institutional structures that support stakeholder group participation (processes of consultation)

What processes does your group go through when responding to curriculum-related decision-making matters?

- *How does your group respond to curriculum-related decision-making matters? (within the group? To external groups who are consulting with you?)*
- *Does your group hold a position on particular matters? How was it formulated? Are these views held with your networks?*
- *When formulating responses or wishing to raise issues, do you network with other committee members?*

Probe: levels of participation and involvement: how long have you been a member of the group? How do you raise issues, interests or concerns that are important to you within your group? How have you represented your group on curriculum policy committees? How does your group formulate response or positions on policy decisions? Do you talk with your policy network?

Area 4: Decision-making processes and the syllabus development process

Focus of investigation: understanding of the syllabus development process, attitudes to and knowledge of the shift from outcomes to standards—an ideological shift in curriculum, assessment and reporting, decision-making, policy making.

In what ways do you try to represent your groups' interests? In general? On representative committees?

What do you do to pursue your group's interests?

Probe: Were your group's interests pursued within the process? Were concerns and issues you pursued within the process listened to? How did you get your group's interests on the committee's agenda for discussion? Were your views heard? By whom? Did you align your views with that of other groups? How did you do this? during meeting? Through submissions? Lobbying?

Appendix G: Profiles of the Participants and Their Stakeholder Groups.

This section profiles the participants in this research study. A brief summary of the stakeholder group the participant represents precedes the representative's profile. The information about the group and its representatives is organised under the headings of government or non-government schools, professional groups and institutional settings.

Government Schools

In NSW, government schools are staffed through a centralised system that is structured and organised by the state's education department. The DET's responsibilities include the management of government Primary schools.

Eight representatives from the government school sector participated. Their profiles follow a description of their stakeholder group, the NSW Department of Education and Training.

Department of Education and Training

The NSW DET connects all stages of education from early childhood through to tertiary education. The DET represents the administrative and managerial arms of the Department of Education, as well as its schools, principals, teachers and students. This study deals with the interests of those in the DET's School Operations and Performance division (DET, 2016) and its representatives on the BOS' standing committees. DET representatives appointed to the BOS are given 'ex-officio' membership. Due to their leadership positions within the department, they are appointed members of the BOS (BOS, 2011). These executives and/or their nominees are also members of BOS committees that are relevant to their portfolios. The Director of Curriculum was the Deputy Director-General of Schools' nominee on the PCC during the period of this study.

Representatives from the DET on the PCC at the time of this study were two assistant directors for the Curriculum K–12 Directorate. Together, they were nominees of the Director of Curriculum. Both assistant directors have a background in schools. The other two representatives from the curriculum directorate had roles for the implementation and delivery of the curriculum set by the BOS.

The following individuals represented the DET in this study.

Ms Robyn Mamouney

At the time of this study, Ms Mamouney was the Assistant Director for Curriculum in NSW schools responsible for policies and the implementation of curriculum for K–12. In 2004, she coordinated the DET’s response to the Review (2003) and was the representative on the PCC for the Director of Curriculum. Ms Mamouney has many years of experience in executive and managerial roles in the Department. She was previously a secondary school teacher. Working with Mr Brian Powyer, also Assistant Director for Curriculum with a Primary school background, she assisted in developing the DET’s response to the Evaluation’s recommendations.

Mr Brian Powyer

Mr Powyer was the Assistant Director Curriculum K–12 for the DET between 2002 and 2007. He has been involved in education for more than 20 years, and is now retired from the DET. Mr Powyer’s background is in Primary school and middle school education and as a principal in various schools in the Sydney metropolitan area for more than 22 years. Working with Ms Mamouney, Mr Powyer assisted in the DET’s coordinated response to the Evaluation (2003) and the subsequent policy development and implementation of the DET’s ‘Getting the Balance Right’ (2005) initiative.

Ms Kerry (Long) Weston

Ms Weston had two managerial roles during the time of this study. From 2003 to 2006, she was Principal Education Officer for Literacy, and in 2006, she was the Manager for School-based Assessment and Reporting. Ms Weston was involved with the BOS during the consultative phases of its response to the Evaluation. Ms Weston assisted in the development of the mandatory outcomes (2004) as an expert in literacy, and as a literacy consultant in the production and implementation of the *Foundation Statements* (2005b).

Mr Harry Vassila

Mr Vassila has a background as a Primary school teacher with expertise in curriculum and specialist knowledge in the area of Science and Technology. In 2003, he was appointed to the position of Senior Curriculum Advisor in Science and Technology for K–6. Prior to this appointment, he was a Primary school teacher and Assistant Principal in government Primary schools in the Sydney metropolitan area. Mr Vassila was involved with the BOS during the consultative phases in the development of the Science and Technology mandatory outcomes and *Foundation Statements* (2005b).

Primary Principals' Association of New South Wales

The NSW PPA is a professional association of Primary principals of public schools in NSW. Its mandate is to be instrumental in shaping a better public school system for Primary school students in the state. The Primary principal appointed to the BOS is also the nominated member of the PPA on the PCC. This group is also an advisory body to the DET and the Minister for Education in NSW.

The PPA's prime function is to be the peak advisory body on matters relating to Primary education in NSW. With a current membership of more than 1800 Primary school principals, the PPA also reports to the Director General of the DET (NSW PPA, 2012). One of its aims is to promote school leadership by maintaining and improving communications between its Primary school principal members and 'other peak educational organisations' (NSW PPA, 2012, p. 3) by forming positions on current educational issues and communicating them to bodies such as the NSW BOS. There are two PPA representatives participating in this study. Ms Patterson-Allen, was the PPA's representative and member on the BOS and the PCC, and Ms Law, was invited to join the Primary curriculum working party.

Ms Peta Patterson-Allen (pseudonym)

Ms Patterson-Allen was a representative on the NSW BOS and PCC. She has many years' experience in Primary education in a variety of public school settings in a number of roles, including classroom teacher, school executive and Primary school principal. She has held a number of project officer positions within the DET and its state-based committees. Ms Patterson-Allen has remained an active member of the PPA and has been a member of two subcommittees of the association (Curriculum and Assessment and Reporting Reference Groups). While holding these positions, she was elected to become the PPA's representative at the NSW BOS. While at the BOS, Ms Patterson-Allen chaired the PCC and the BCC for Science K–6, worked on the BOS' strategic planning committee and chaired the BCC for History K–10.

Ms Jane Law

Ms Law has been a Primary school educator for many years. She has taught in a range of public school settings and has held consultancy positions within the DET. Ms Law has been a classroom teacher, school executive and Primary school principal and has held a number of project officer positions within the DET and state-based committees. As a Primary school principal, Ms Law joined the PPA and has continued to be an active member of the association. Ms Law has been involved in school and district-based committees in

Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting and Music education. Ms Law was an elected representative of the PPA and was invited to join the working party due to her work on the association's curriculum and assessment subcommittee.

New South Wales Teachers Federation

The NSW Teachers Federation (referred to as the Federation), which is a registered trade union whose members are NSW public school teachers. The Federation represents all teachers in NSW public pre-schools, infants, Primary, Secondary schools and TAFE. The federation campaigns for betterments for all public school students so they will receive a quality education (NSW Teachers Federation, 2013). Throughout its history, the Teachers Federation has campaigned on issues affecting public education and teachers' salaries and working conditions.

The NSW Teachers Federation is affiliated with the Australian Education Union, the national union covering public school teachers in Australia. The federation consults with its members at the school level, where its representatives are teachers—those who have the right to speak for teachers on behalf of their union (NSW Teachers Federation, 2013). Teachers elect representatives to their state council. The Teachers Federation has a clearly defined process for the selection of members to become representatives on major committees or statutory bodies. Representatives for selected committees and subcommittees, such as the NSW BOS and DET's reference groups, follow a process of Expressions of Interest (EOI) for nominations to these committees.

Ms Tori Forster (pseudonym)

Ms Forster is the Primary teacher representative for the NSW Teachers Federation on the NSW BOS and PCC. Ms Forster has taught in a variety of public school settings in a number of roles, including classroom teacher and school executive. Ms Forster has been a federation councillor and the federation representative on the DET's Primary Education Development Committee. Prior to 2002, Ms Forster was a member of the Teachers' Federation Executive and a NSWTF representative on the DET's Primary Curriculum Advisory Committee. She gained a nominated position on the BOS and the PCC in 2000 through elections held internally due to her membership on curriculum subcommittees of the Teachers' Federation. Ms Forster was invited to work with Board officers on the working party on the development of the *Foundation Statements*.

Federation of Parents and Citizens' Association of NSW

The Federation of Parents and Citizens' Association of NSW (P&C), which aims to promote the education of children in public schools, facilitate community involvement and cooperate with the DET and community agencies interested in furthering education (P&C, n.d.). Representatives of the P&C have been members of the BOS since the introduction of the *Education Act 1990*. Members of the P&C are committed to a free public education system and must be contributing members of the society (Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations of NSW, 2013). To represent the P&C for a position on the NSW BOS, members need to have an interest in school education and a child enrolled in a government school.

Ms Deborah Lloyd

Ms Lloyd is an active member of the NSW Federation of Parents and Citizens' Association and participates at all levels (school, regional and state) of the association. Ms Lloyd's involvement in Primary school education has been through her generous participation in the P&C as a parent of school-aged children. Her interests are in community development, student-centred curriculum and equity in different school settings. These interests gained her a life membership in the P&C. Prior to her nomination and successful membership to the BOS and PCC. She was elected by the members of the P&C to the BOS and PCC for one three-year term.

Non-government Schools

Non-government schools include schooling systems, loosely co-ordinated groups and individual schools other than government schools such as Catholic diocesan schools and schools aligned with other religious groups including the Church of England, Uniting Church, Islamic and Jewish, Christian Schools, and international schools. Most independent schools have a religious affiliation, but some are non-denominational. This section profiles the key stakeholder groups and their representatives from the Catholic schools system. These groups represent the interests of the schooling authority—the CEC; principals; teachers; and parents in Catholic schools. Three of the four groups had representatives on the PCC, while the fourth representative profiled here was a representative of a Catholic Primary principals group and was a member of the working party.

Catholic School Systems: Catholic Education Commission and Catholic Education Offices

The Catholic Education Commission (CEC) mandate in NSW includes advocacy, governance of the organisation and its representation on behalf of Catholic schools across NSW. It fulfils its mandate through the development of state-wide education policies and the enhancement of its quality education programs. To do this effectively, the commission liaises with and coordinates the various Catholic Schools Authorities, especially in relation to curriculum and assessment. The CEC is also affiliated with other interest groups in the Catholic schooling sector, such as the Council of Catholic School Parents (CCSP), the Association of Catholic School Principals (ACSP), the National CEC, and other state CECs.

Through these and other interest groups in the Catholic schools system, the CEC ensures that it develops cooperative links with other educational institutions—both government and non-government (CEC, 2013). It provides advocacy for its Catholic schools with governments, the NSW BOS and other education bodies, employer groups, and the public. Representing the CEC on the BOS was a member of the executive on the Education Policy Committee. Catholic Education Offices (CEOs) provide support to schools in the implementation of the CEC and the CEO's policies and initiatives in the Primary and Secondary curriculum.

Ms Kate Clancy

Ms Clancy's background in Primary education has extended over many years in teaching and numerous consultancy roles. Her experience in Primary education as a teacher, principal, manager and leader demonstrates a depth of knowledge and expertise in curriculum development. In 2006, Ms Clancy was nominated to represent the CEC on the PCC. Ms Clancy was the Director of K–6 Curriculum in the Sydney CEO while representing the CEC at the BOS on the PCC. Ms Clancy oversaw the development and implementation of curriculum policy and programs in Catholic schools in the Sydney diocese, including the implementation of the recently developed *Foundation Statements* (2005b).

Association of Catholic School Principals New South Wales

The Association of Catholic School Principals in NSW (ACSP) grew out of attempts in the 1980s to establish an association that would give Catholic school principals representation in both professional and industrial forums. The ACSP acts as the peak professional body for Catholic school principals in NSW. Its members are all principals appointed to Catholic schools in NSW. While there was no representative of this peak group on the BOS PCC at the time of this study, a representative from the ACSP, was invited to participate on the working party.

Mr Brian Lacey

Mr Lacey has been a school principal for more than 20 years, with experience in a range of Catholic systemic schools. He has accepted appointments in small rural schools as well as large city Catholic schools. Mr Lacey was an executive member of the National Executive Council of the Australian Primary Principals Association and served on the state executive of the ACSP in NSW. In 2002, Mr Lacey was appointed to the NSW CEC as the Primary principal nominee elected by the ACSP. While at the CEC, he was appointed Chair of the commission's Education Policy Committee until 2008. Mr Lacey represented Catholic Primary school principals on the working party from 2004 to 2006. As a member of the working party, he collaborated with Primary principals from the other schooling sectors in the DET and independent schools.

New South Wales Council of Catholic School Parents

The NSW Council of Catholic School Parents (CCSP) is the peak representative body for parents with children in Catholic schools in NSW. The CCSP was established in 1995 and officially incorporated in 1997. It is the officially recognised body representing the interests of parents in Catholic schools. All Catholic systemic school parents are members of this parent group and are represented on 'important government committees who seek state level parental representation via consultations and on review panels, committees of enquiry and statutory boards' (CCSP, 2013).

Ms Caroline Benedet

Ms Benedet has a teaching background and works in adult professional learning in the Human Resources directorate at the Sydney CEO. Her work as a Parent Community Educator with the CEO gave her experience and expertise with parent groups in schools. In 1995, Ms Benedet became the inaugural Chairperson of the CCSP and is still actively involved at local, diocesan and state levels. She has previously chaired the CCSP NSW & ACT association and has represented non-government school parents on the BOS. As the CCSP's representative, Ms Benedet has been a member of the NSW BOS since 1998. In 2002, Ms Benedet became a member of the PCC as the elected representative for CCSP until 2009.

Independent Education Union

The Independent Education Union (IEU) represents the professional interests and concerns of its members—teaching and administrative staff—in schools at the state and national level, and like any union, it exists to protect and advance its members' interests. IEU members are

staff working in non-government schools such as Catholic systemic schools and independent schools. The IEU is structured into geographical branches, each of which elects member delegates to its council every two years. The IEU represents its members industrially and professionally to achieve improvements to pay and conditions by using its collective voice to ensure that its members are heard on issues in education policy.

Ms Sue Fern

Ms Fern was elected to represent the IEU in 2006, where she became a member of the PCC. She was elected to represent the interests of teachers in non-government schools in NSW as the regional representative for the IEU. Ms Fern's expertise in curriculum and assessment gained her membership to the IEU's subcommittees in the area of the Primary curriculum, and she was nominated by the IEU council to be its representative on the PCC. Ms Fern served on the PCC until 2007. Although Ms Fern was a teacher in the Catholic school system, she represented both Catholic and independent Primary school teachers for the IEU.

Other Educational Stakeholders

Representatives from other educational stakeholder groups such as professional teachers associations are also represented.

Early Childhood Education Council of New South Wales

The Early Childhood Education Council (ECEC) NSW is a professional association that promotes 'child-centred practices through advocacy and professional development, and ensures a high profile on early childhood issues' (ECEC, 2010). Members of the ECEC are teachers, school executives, parents, community members and adult educators, including tertiary educators. Members have been represented on the NSW BOS' PCC since 1994. Membership of the group to consultative committees gives the ECEC opportunities to ensure that the needs of young children and their teachers are being addressed. The ECEC's membership is drawn from 'all those who have an interest, as well as those whose work involve them in the education of young children' (ECEC, 2013).

Ms Suzanne Ziems

Ms Ziems has been involved in Primary education for more than 30 years. She has taught in schools and has been involved in the delivery of professional learning in a diverse range of metropolitan and rural Primary schools. Ms Ziems joined the ECEC in 1984 at the group's first annual general meeting and has been on the executive committee ever since. Ms Ziems

has represented the ECEC on many committees that met regularly with officers of the DET and the BOS to discuss issues directly related to the teaching and learning of students in the early years. She has regularly written submissions on draft syllabus documents, policies and programs. Ms Ziems was the group's spokesperson to the Senate Standing Committee on Pre-School Education Enquiry and was involved in lobbying the Minister for Education in 1993 to make provisions for a PCC as a standing committee of the BOS.

New South Wales Aboriginal Education Consultative Group

The NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) is the peak group for the education of Aboriginal people in NSW. The AECG is the principal advisory body to both state and federal governments on all matters relating to Aboriginal education and training. The President of the NSW AECG is an elected representative determined by members of the organisation, who then becomes the representative on the BOS. The President of the AECG in NSW chairs the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee at the BOS and provides advice to the BOS and the Chief Executive on matters that are relevant to the education of Aboriginal students in schools.

Mr Dave Ella

Mr Ella was President of the NSW AECG at the time of this study. Mr Ella has worked in school education for many years and has taught in both government and non-government school systems. Mr Ella has been in consultancy positions as an Aboriginal Education Officer in the DET, as well as in the CEO of Broken Bay. Mr Ella chaired the BOS' Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee from 2004-2007. He was a member of the Director-General's Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee for the DET. Mr Ella works with Aboriginal teachers in the area of profession learning and curriculum development. During the time of this study, Mr Ella held the position of Aboriginal Education Officer in both government and non-government school sectors.

New South Wales Board of Studies

Established in 1990, the NSW BOS develops the curriculum for all Primary and Secondary schools. The following participants were officers at the BOS, guiding the review of the Primary curriculum, the consultation on defining the mandatory outcomes for K—6 and the development of the *Foundation Statements*.

President of New South Wales Board of Studies

The president of the NSW BOS is appointed by the Governor of NSW under the *Education Act 1990*. The role of the president of the BOS is to provide educational leadership to BOS members in the development of curriculum. The president assists in the promotion and support of the effective implementation of BOS' policies and programs for the benefit of students across the state. The president is also responsible for advising the NSW Minister for Education about the work of the BOS. The presidency is a full-time position appointed for a term of three years. While in this position, it is the president's responsibility to prepare, in consultation with the OBOS and the secretariat, the agendas for the BOS and other BOS standing committee meetings to ensure that members are informed of decisions made by the BOS.

Professor Gordon Stanley

Professor Gordon Stanley was President of the BOS in NSW from 1998 to 2008. In his role as president, he was responsible for curriculum and assessment for K–12, the registration and accreditation of non-government schools, and overseeing the development of standards-referenced reporting in public examinations (BOS, 2004). Professor Stanley has a long association in education. Prior to his appointment to the BOS, he was Chair of the Commonwealth Higher Education Council from 1995 to 1997. In 1990, he was Chair of the WA Higher Education Council and Chief Executive Officer of the Western Australian Education Policy Coordination Bureau. From 1998-2008 Professor Stanley was Chair of the PCC. From 2002-2006 Professor Stanley led members of the committee through a review of the Primary curriculum documents, responding to the Eltis Evaluation's recommendations, consultation on defining mandatory outcomes and the development of the *Foundation Statements*.

Office of the Board of Studies

The OBOS administers the functions of the NSW BOS. The role of the Office is to manage and lead "statewide developments in school curriculum" under the directions of the BOS (*Education Act 1990*, p. 41). The Office provides professional and administrative advice and services to the BOS and its committees, establishing "strong and effective partnerships with key educational stakeholders" (BOS, 2012, p. 101). The Chief Executive is the Department Head of the Office under the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002*.

At the time of this study, the OBOS had nine directorates, of which the curriculum branch was one. The role of the curriculum branch was concerned with the development of

syllabuses and support materials for all KLAs for K–12. Inspectors and senior curriculum officers provide leadership in curriculum by working with its committees, managing project teams for curriculum development, presenting presentations at conferences, responding to inquiries, developing papers for the BOS and liaising with all educational institutions within NSW and nationally (BOS, 2004).

Mr John O'Brien

Mr O'Brien was Director of the curriculum branch in the OBOS from 2002 to 2008. Before his appointment to the BOS, Mr O'Brien worked in assessment and reporting with the Queensland Department of Education. Mr O'Brien's teaching background is in secondary school mathematics in a variety of school settings. During the time of this study, Mr O'Brien was also a member of the NSW Institute of Teachers Quality Teaching Council (now the Quality Teaching Council (QTC)) and the DET Outcomes Assessment and Reporting Evaluation Reference Group. In 2004, Mr O'Brien, in collaboration with Ms Malone, developed the terms of reference for a working group of Primary school principals to provide advice on the Evaluation's recommendations.

Ms Margaret Malone

Ms Malone has more than 30 years' experience as a Primary educator in many different public school settings. Ms Malone's extensive knowledge and expertise in Primary education led to numerous educational consultancy positions within the DET. In her position as Inspector for Primary Education at the BOS, Ms Malone was on state and agency-based committees such as the DET's Outcomes Assessment and Reporting Evaluation Reference Group. Ms Malone was Inspector for Primary Education from 2003 to 2009. Working with Mr O'Brien in 2004, the terms of reference for the working party were created to set up an advisory group of Primary school principals.

Dr Phil Lambert

Dr Lambert was appointed as the first Inspector for Primary Education in 1993. Dr Lambert's extensive experience in education was grounded as a Primary school principal, inspector, policy director, Assistant Director-General and Regional Director. Dr Lambert has overseen a number of major policy initiatives in NSW in early childhood, primary education, rural education and Aboriginal education. These initiatives include the delivery of distance education to isolated students using satellite computer-based technologies and the expansion of preschools in government schools. Dr Lambert was the Primary Inspector at the BOS until 2002. He is now the General Manager of ACARA.

Primary Curriculum Working Party

A working party was established to assist the OBOS' response to the Evaluation. As part of the BOS' consultative processes, and specified by the *Education Act 1990*, such committees are appointed where it is "considered appropriate to assist the Board in its functions" (*Education Act 1990*, s.103). Primary school principals representing each schooling sector were invited to assist Board officers in reviewing the Primary curriculum and provide advice to the PCC about ways to respond to the Review's recommendations. The Primary Curriculum Working Party provided Mr O'Brien and Ms Malone with access to work directly with senior school personnel. The terms of reference of the working party were created to work with the officers on the development of a set of defined mandatory outcomes for all KLAs of the Primary curriculum. Membership of the working party consisted of:

- a principal who was a member of the PPA, representing the DET;
- a Catholic Primary school principal, who was a member of ACSP;
- a principal from an independent Primary school, who was a member of IPSHA;
- the NSW Teachers' Federation (Primary) representative on the PCC; and
- three officers from the curriculum branch of the OBOS, namely, the Director of Curriculum; the Inspector of Primary Education and the Senior Curriculum Officer for Primary Education.

Appendix H: Sample of an interview transcript

Date: 071009

Participant: SZ

Interviewer: Thanks, <<participant>> for your time. We'll be about 30 minutes. I'll send the transcript back to you, and then if you can just check through it, make any adjustments and send it back, that would be great. I'm going to take you on a little journey through time! I'm going to take you back to the period between 2003 and 2007, when Eltis put out his report, and both the DET and the Board of Studies responded to the recommendations. There are four different areas that I'll go through. The first is about groups, and your particular group, and then the interactions between groups, and the syllabus development process. OK. During this time the Board and the DET were asked to respond to Eltis' recommendations. You were representing the <<stakeholder group>> at this time. What did the <<stakeholder group>> seek to get out of this process?

Subject: I think <<stakeholder group>> really wanted to ensure that the K-2 area was covered, that what was being proposed – whatever it turned out to be – catered to the needs of young children. While we would like to see more play in the curriculum, we weren't sure that that was really going to be part of what came out of the Eltis report. When we looked at the report, I think we probably thought it didn't say anything very much from what it said in 1994, '95, the original report. There was more emphasis, probably, this time on assessment and reporting, which there wasn't on the previous one. It was more about curriculum. I think we were hopeful that the Board, and particularly the DET, would actually work more closely together in responding to Eltis and then working together in whatever the outcomes were to be. I think we also would like to see greater balance. We're looking for greater balance rather than – while literacy and numeracy are really strong, I think in those early years it's really important to get that balance, and to encourage the integration of learning of young children, so that it wasn't just "We'll do English now, and now we're doing Creative Arts, and now we're doing Science and Technology," because little children's learning – they don't cut it up into little boxes. It's all part of one big whole, and I think that's really important when, in looking at their curriculum, that it has that integration in it for them.

Interviewer: So, during this time, what position did you (hold)?

Subject: I was the President.

Interviewer: You were the President of <<stakeholder group>>. During that time you had a member of your Association on the Primary Curriculum Committee.

Subject: Yes.

Interviewer: Can you go through the process of how you get a member on the Committee, and how that person is nominated?

Subject: Originally, when the Board was first made a K-12 board, we wrote to the Minister and said we thought Early Childhood should be represented. Hence, they had a special position for Early Childhood, which is currently still <<an academic>>, and <<our stakeholder group>> were invited to have a representative as well, so Carol

was on that from the very beginning. When she retired, we needed to nominate another person, and so at the Committee meeting we called for nominations, and we had two people who put in an expression of interest, and the Executive chose one of them. She was a teaching deputy, and seemed very politically aware and so on, and so she represented <<stakeholder group>> on the Committee each time. She would...I think the nature of the Primary Curriculum Committee had changed a little over the time, as well, because I think – and that's also, I think, because the nature of the Board was changing, too. Initially the Primary Curriculum Committee was to provide advice to the main Board on primary issues in particular, and there were – we had (FOSCO), which is the parent body for Early Childhood, and Early Childhood, and the P&C people were keen on that as well, particularly primary. And in the early times, they used to – when they'd get the agenda, our representative would informally meet with them, and they'd discuss some of the agenda items and their position, so they knew who was going to lead the discussion and who would chime in.

Interviewer: This is your <<group representative>> member and the (FOSCO) –

Subject: (FOSCO) and P&C and Teachers' Federation would often get together, just to...I guess to share each other's positions on particular items and papers that have been given. When we got to our new person, (FOSCO) had then disbanded and that liaison seemed to have fallen off. Whether that was...I think it was because the nature of the meetings was changing, too. I think the meetings were a lot more of information being delivered to the committee rather than advice being sought from the committee, and I think that's been a significant change from our point of view as an organisation, because we also have representation in the Department on several committees as well, for which we were able to provide advice, and then suddenly those avenues were closed off, and the Board seemed to have started to go that way as well. Which meant that to get your point of view over, you needed a really strong advocate, and perhaps our nominee was not as strong as she could have been, or not attending the meetings – I don't know. There was never an occasion of her to be able to, you know, stand up to things. I think from our point of view we also, perhaps, didn't support our representative enough in terms of discussing issues that were coming up or items that were going to be on the agenda, but I think part of that, too, was also the delay in getting them to the representative, and her not having time to liaise with anybody to get a point of view.

Interviewer: Did that happen more so when Carol was the member- getting information out, distributing that information to your members, getting feedback?

Subject: When Carol was on the PCC, she would always – if she got an agenda, even if it was a couple of days before the meeting – they're supposed to come out a week before, which would give her time to ring – she would always ring myself and maybe one or other people on the committee and say, "What do you think about this? What do you think our position would be?" and we would have a bit of a conversation on the phone. I think only once, when Kate was the new person, did that happen. I think perhaps she did talk to Carol a little bit, because occasionally Carol would say, "Ring <<participant>>," and I think it's part of the fault of our organisation, is that we haven't built in enough of that time to consult when the agenda comes – at least to ring one or two people on the committee and say, "What do you think about this?" But I think because the nature has changed now, the Board is telling us things rather than asking for our advice.

Interviewer: So the process for a member to be on that committee – is that a set process for getting responses, getting information, then taking some recommendations back?

Subject: It's supposed to be. In the brief for the responsibilities, that's written down: once they're nominated they need to make contact at least with the Executive, if they don't get an opportunity to take it to a meeting. Obviously when they report there'll be issues coming up, and people will provide feedback then, but sometimes the way the process of the Board works, it's too late. We also write – we put in a submission for Eltis the same as we had previously done before, but I was also on Eltis, the original Eltis.

Interviewer: Reference group?

Subject: Yes, where that didn't seem to be the same for the second Eltis review. Mm. It had a broader community consultation representation, and we used to meet – oh, every couple of months or something, to discuss feedback that they'd had, and provide our comments. But with the second review, there wasn't that process.

Interviewer: There was a Departmental Eltis Reference Group for this second Eltis Review that came out in 2003. Was your group or association involved in that one?

Subject: No. No.

Interviewer: So the only representation you had was through the Primary Curriculum Committee on the Board?

Subject: Yes. And also putting in submissions.

Interviewer: All stakeholder groups were invited to put in submissions –

Subject: They were invited to put in submissions, yes.

Interviewer: What did you seek, as the President of the <<stakeholder group>> and personally? What did you want to get out of this whole process?

Subject: In terms of...?

Interviewer: In terms of responding to Eltis, getting out your position in terms of Early Childhood Education.

Subject: Well, I think...we wrote a submission that...I'm trying to think...I should try to dig it out...that actually stated, again, the need for curriculum in the early years to be age-appropriate and include a balance, to be integrated in those years rather than in little silos, and that would happen. But I'm not sure...I guess...this is probably a criticism of our group, I think: is that enthusing members to actually engage with those sorts of issues, for many people, particularly on a committee...I think we did, through the newsletter, always mention that the review was happening, and people needed to respond, and they needed to look at consultation papers and all of that. Always, that would be in the newsletter, to make sure that people were doing it. Making people aware.

Interviewer: And that went out State-wide, your newsletter?

Subject: Yes. It goes out to members across the State. If we had a function, a professional development meeting, part of the introduction or finishing-off would mention anything that was like that. I think – I don't know what it is, I don't know whether

it's apathy, or people are so busy – they don't seem to want to engage. To try to get a submission written, it comes down, often, to a couple of people who are keen to do something. You'll get a bit of a brainstorm at the meeting with ideas that people want, and then somebody else has got to go away and write it, and see that it gets out to members.

Interviewer: So did you feel it was important that throughout this whole time, the voice of Early Childhood education is continually heard?

Subject: It does – yes, it is, but you also needed to use a whole lot of other networks to find out what was going on, because the Primary Curriculum Committee meets once a term. There's a long time between what you hear, say, in May, and what you hear in July or August. So you've got to use other contacts and other networks to keep on top of what's happening, because things can happen in the interim, and you've missed out on an opportunity to make a comment.

Interviewer: OK. Can we talk about those networks now, <<participant>>? So, who are those people? What networks would you use?

Subject: Well, one of the...in the early days, we always used to use (?FOSCO), because we had a (?FOSCO) member on our committee, but often, if you had a colleague who worked at the Board, or a colleague who worked at the Department, you might phone them and say, "Do you know what's happening with this?" or it might be that somebody had been to a meeting and had mentioned, "Have you heard what's happening with Eltis?" or whatever. So it was, I guess, informal-type contacts most of the time. It's difficult when some on the committee do work in positions, say, at the Board, or at the Department. They are able to – they do hear some information, some of which they can share, some of which is confidential and they're unable to share. So I guess the contacts in this day and age, now, are much more informal. It's who you know somewhere. People like our patron, like Phil Lambert, you could always ring and say, "Do you know what's happening here?" and Phil will give us time, and let us know. We've had people working at the Board, people working at the Department, which has been really helpful because they're in on the ground floor and can make – I guess raise our awareness to the fact that "this is happening, and you need to know about this," or, "Here's a website you need to go to."

Interviewer: What would you do with that information? You've used your informal contacts, you've gained some information...what would you then do with it?

Subject: Well, then we raise it at a committee meeting, hopefully, because we tend to meet every month except in the holidays. So it would be on the agenda, to be something discussed at the meeting to make sure it got on the agenda. In the event that there was some sort of short time between – we'd do it by email, and say, "Have you heard?" or "Do you know?" "What do you think about this?" "Should we do something about X, Y, Z?" That was probably the way that we would do it. We have, in the past, written and asked for interviews with the Board. We've prepared submissions for the Board. We've attended consultation meetings and things, and if there's an opportunity to put forward members for those sorts of things, then we do, but it's – yeah, through meetings, or informally through emails.

Appendix I: Focus Questions for Documentary Analysis

These questions are to assist in drawing out themes and issues, and depending on the nature and source, scope and authorship of the documents; they will be drawn from a range of documentary sources. Questions will be adapted as new issues and themes emerge. The questions have been grouped under the type of document being investigated:

- Public documents and official records—these include policy documents
- Private and personal records
- Media reports

<i>Public documents and official records</i>	
	Why was the document written?
	Who were the authors of the document? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are their positions? • What are their roles within the organisation/institution?
	When was the document written?
	Did the document have any terms of reference?
	What were the terms of reference of the authors/committee who wrote the document?
	What were the parameters of the terms of reference?
	Were the terms of reference met by the review?
	What are the conventions of the document? (That is, are there any standard procedures or set formats particular to the document in regard to who the author is?)
	What is the document about?
	What are the main themes of the document?
	What issues do the themes draw upon?
	What literature do the authors draw on?
<i>Private and personal records</i>	
	What kind of private and/or personal record is it?
	Who wrote it?
	Why was it written?
	When was it written?

	To whom was it written?
	What information does it contain?
	What issues are communicated within the record?
	Can these issues be drawn under any themes?
<i>Media reports</i>	
	What was the name of the paper or magazine the report was in?
	When was it published?
	Who was the reporter?
	What event is reported? What is the article about?
	What are the main themes of the article?
	What issues do the themes draw upon?
	Are references included in the article?
	What references are used to provide research for the article?
	Has the author/reporter cross-referenced any part of the article?
	Did the reporter use any literature/research to back up any claims or arguments?