CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND THE AUSTRALIAN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT:

BETWEEN MISSION AND THE MARKETPLACE

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Doctor of Philosophy

Submitted by

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I, Madeleine Brennan state that this work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

All research procedures reported in this thesis received the approval of the Macquarie University Research Ethics Committee, Reference No: 5201938286944

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores how the Australian Catholic Church has assisted in the creation of the schooling marketplace and how that marketplace now impacts the ability of Catholic school leaders to meet the religious expectations set by the Vatican and Australian Catholic authorities.

Since colonial times, the Australian Catholic Church has played a significant role in promoting the concept of parental right to schooling choice. In enacting the theological principle which place parents at the centre of their child's education and which highlights the duty of Catholic authorities to support parents in their educational responsibilities, the Australian Catholic Church has established an Australia-wide system of Catholic schools. However, alongside a theology that asserts that parents have the right to schooling choice and which justifies the right and necessity of Catholic Church authorities to establish its own schools, Catholic theology also conveys an expectation that civil society has a responsibility to financially support such an endeavour.

This thesis explores the socio-political presence and power of Catholicism in Australia's secular societal context especially as it relates to the engagement of Catholic authorities in school funding debates. The idea that Australian Federal, State and Territory Governments had a responsibility to support parental right to schooling choice via government funding has become embedded in Australian politics, as well as providing parents with choice on the ground. Moreover, Catholicism's theological views regarding education and its political engagement in funding debates, has assisted in creating Australia's uniquely funded system of schooling. In doing so, Catholic authorities have promoted a marketplace where parents have the right to seek enrolment in one of Australia's three schooling sectors — Government, Catholic or Independent.

Alongside exploring the political role played by Australian Catholic leaders in securing government funding for Catholic schools and thus the Independent schooling sector, this thesis also points to the significance of the Second Vatican Council in reorienting Catholicism's position within secular society. Vatican II brought with it a number of important changes which significantly impacted how Australian Catholic schooling was to develop. The greater emphasis placed on Catholic school enrolment being welcoming of all students, drawing from all religious and non-religious backgrounds, assisted in creating fertile ground for the expansion of the Catholic school enrolment base. Additionally, the decline of Religious sisters and brothers in Catholic schools and the subsequent transference of leadership and teaching responsibilities to 'laity' was pivotal for enhancing the urgency of funding debates. Effectively, Vatican II is proposed as being a significant catalyst in creating a new and emerging identity for Australian Catholic schooling which, in the twenty-first century, remains in a state of transition in terms of deciding what constitutes an authentic Catholic school culture.

This thesis proposes that the impact of the Australian schooling marketplace has established a specific set of circumstances and a context which now troubles the ability of Australian Catholic school leaders to achieve the Vatican's religious goals. Australia's growing secular societal context and its increasing religious plurality, is a context which is reflected within the Catholic school enrolment base and within school staffing. Creating what Vatican authorities define as an authentic Catholic school culture and identity, within such a plural context, presents both challenges and opportunities for the leaders of Australian Catholic schooling.

However, alongside the challenges and opportunities which the schooling marketplace pose for Australian Catholic leaders, parents — the consumers and partners who Catholicism name as having the ultimate responsibility for their child's education, have clear views regarding what they expect of their child's Catholic school. In order to explore parental expectations, especially in terms of the priority placed by parents on the religious context of Catholic schooling, this thesis presents the findings of a Research Project which explored the motivations of parents for selecting a Catholic school for their child's enrolment.

While the voice of Catholicism, regarding the role and mission of its schools, is available to be heard in a raft of Vatican and local documents, the parental voice is far less apparent in the public arena. The Research Project was established to give voice to parents, as well as to collect data denoting a parent's religious, or secular affiliation in order to consider if religious affiliation impacted upon how important a parent viewed the religious nature of a Catholic school. Moreover, it explored what marketplace forces may mean for how *Catholic,* Australian Catholic schooling can afford to be if Catholic authorities want to maintain a strong enrolment base.

Finally, this thesis does not propose particular solutions or answers regarding how *Catholic*, Australian Catholic schools can afford to be in an increasingly diverse marketplace. Rather, it argues that the identity and religious mission of Catholic schools, in the context of the Australian schooling marketplace, is yet to be fully revealed, understood and appreciated for what it can, and perhaps, for what it cannot achieve in terms of Vatican ideals of Catholic education's religious and socio-political mission.

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TERMINOLOGY

Australian Curriculum: This refers to a particular document, commissioned by the Australian Government, developed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) in collaboration with schooling sectors and which was implemented in Australian schools from 2011.

Canonical: This term denotes actions carried out according to or ordered by Catholic Canon Law.[1]

Canon Law: The Code of Law which applies to Roman Catholicism.

Catholic Schools: Schools that are owned and operated by a Roman Catholic Diocese, by a Roman Catholic Religious Congregation or Public Juridic Person, which provides a comprehensive curriculum for students of primary and secondary school age.

Catholic Schooling System: An official grouping of Catholic schools within an Australian State or Territory which are recognised as being 'Catholic' by a local bishop or Catholic Public Juridic Authority and which have government statutory approval to operate as a *System of Schools* for funding purposes.

Charism: The term 'charism' is used in this thesis to describe the particular culture or 'spiritual family resemblance' which members of a Religious Congregation hold in common.

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[1] Definition taken from the Oxford Dictionary.

Holy See: The Holy See is a sovereign State recognised in international law and is the home of the Pope and the central governing body of the Roman Catholic Church.[2]

Interreligious Studies: Refers to an educational programme that embraces a pedagogy which includes a multiplicity of religious beliefs, rituals and cultural expressions.

Otherness: As defined in The Oxford Companion to Philosophy, New Edition: "the other human being in his or her difference."[3]

Parent: An adult who may or may not be a child's biological parent but who possesses the legal right and responsibility to act on behalf of a child and to provide for their care.

Pedagogy: The term 'Pedagogy' is used in two ways in this thesis. Firstly, it is used to describe, "any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning in another."[4] Secondly, it is used in relation to 'site ontology' (see below — site ontology).

Pluralism: As defined in The Oxford Companion to Philosophy, New Edition: "A condition marked by the multiplicity of religions, ethnic groups, autonomous regions, or functional units within a single state, or a doctrine that holds such a multiplicity to be a good thing."[5]

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[2] Australian Embassy, *Welcome to The Australian Embassy to the Holy See,* paragraph 2.
https://holysee.embassy.gov.au/
(downloaded 6/10/21)

[3] Ted Honderich, (editor), *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy,* New Edition (second edition), (Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 672.

[4] Peter Mortimore and Chris Watkins, "Pedagogy: What Do We Know", in *Understanding Pedagogy and its Impact on Learning,* ed., Peter Mortimore, (Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd, London, 1999), p. 17.

[5] Honderich, *The Oxford Companion,* p. 727.

Public Juridic Person: The Catholic Code of Canon Law describes a Public Juridic Person as aggregates of persons which transcend the purpose of the individuals who operate them.[6] A canonical legal entity which has specific school governance responsibilities.

Religion: There is much debate about the meaning and relevance of the term religion. For the purposes of this thesis a definition from Pierre Bourdieu is used: "A symbolic medium, at once structured and structuring, in so far as it is the condition of possibility of an agreement on the meaning of signs and on the meaning of the world."[7]

Religious Affiliation: In the context of this thesis the term religious affiliation is understood as referring to an individual's named religious identity which may reflect shared belief, participation and/or an historical or cultural connection with a religious tradition.

Religious Education Curriculum: Religious Education (RE) refers to a programme or curriculum which is taught as a distinct learning area within a Catholic school's overall formal curriculum offerings.[8]

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[6]   Vatican Document, *Code of Canon Law,* Book 1, General Norms, Chapter 2, Juridic Persons, Canon 114.
https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic_lib1-cann96-123_en.html
(downloaded 25/10/21)

[7]   Pierre Bourdieu, 1971 *Genèse et structure du champ religieux'* (Revue Française de Sociologie X11), p. 295.

[8]   National Catholic Education Commission, *"Framing Paper"*, (2018), p. endnotes.
 https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/NCEC_Framing_Paper_Religious_Education.pdf
(downloaded, 13/12/21)

Roman Catholicism: John Hardon S.J. defines the global nature of Catholicism as: "The faith, worship, and practice of all Christians in communion with the Bishop of Rome, whom they acknowledge as the Vicar of Christ and the visible head of the Church founded by Christ."[9] In addition to the definition provided by Hardon, the Catholic Catechism states that the doctrine of the Catholic faith and its role in proclaiming God's revelation in the world belongs to the magisterium: "The task of interpreting the Word of God authentically has been entrusted solely to the Magisterium of the Church, that is, to the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him."[10]

Roman Curia: "In exercising supreme, full, and immediate power in the universal Church, the Roman pontiff makes use of the departments of the Roman Curia which, therefore, perform their duties in his name and with his authority for the good of the churches and in the service of the sacred pastors."[11]

School: A Government authorised institution which is registered as a school and offers educational services to students in a primary and/or secondary school setting.

Secular/Secularisation: As described by José Casanova: "The decline of religious beliefs and practices in modern societies, often postulated as a universal, human, developmental process."[12]

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[9]   John Hardon, *Modern Catholic Directory,* (Crown Publishing, 1985).

[10]   Vatican Document, *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* Part One, Article 2 *The Transmission of Divine Revelation,* (St Pauls, 1994), section, In Brief.

[11]   Vatican Document, *The Roman Curia.*
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/index.htm
(downloaded 27/11/2022)

[12]   José Cassanova, *Rethinking Secularization, A Global Comparative Perspective.* p. 1.
. http://www.iasc-culture.org/THR/archives/AfterSecularization/8.12CCasanova.pdf
(downloaded 8/07/2021)

Site Ontology: Site ontology, is described by Peter Grootenboer, Christine Edwards-Groves and Sarojni Choy who suggest that: "forms of practice that emerge in a particular site are shaped, enabled and constrained by conditions that exist in that particular site at that time."[13]

STEM: A curriculum acronym which stands for: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Theology: The definition of theology is based on its etymology: "The English word 'theology' is derived from the Greek *theologia,* which in turn comes from two Greek words, *theos (God), and logia (words, utterances, or speech).* The classic Christian definition of theology comes from Anselm of Canterbury (d. 1109), who said that theology was "*fides quaerens intellectum",* faith seeking understanding."[14]

Vatican Hierarchy: The Pope, Bishops and the Curia who have official administrative responsibility to shape and define Catholic theology, doctrine and practice.

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[13] Peter Grootenboer, Christine Edwards-Groves and Sarojni Choy (editors), *Practice Theory and Education: Diversity and Contestation*, (Springer, 2017), p. 9.

[14] Thomas P. Rausch, *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Approach,* (Michael Glazier Book, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 2016), p. 1.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACARA: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

ALP: Australian Labor Party

CEO: Catholic Education Office

CESA: Catholic Education South Australia

DEA: Dominican Education Australia

DLP: Democratic Labor Party

DOGS: Defence of Government Schools

HSC: High School Certificate

EREA: Edmund Rice Education Australia

NCEC: National Catholic Education Commission

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PJP: Public Juridic Person

RE: Religious Education

SACCS: South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools

SACE: South Australia Certificate of Education

SCCE: Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Contextualisation and Topic Rationale

The story of the development of Catholic schooling in Australia demonstrates the profound influence of Catholic authorities in shaping how Australian schooling has developed and now manifests. This thesis argues that the socio-political power and influence of Catholicism in Australia, alongside the manner in which the Australian Catholic Church has addressed funding issues, have significantly contributed to the creation of Australia's schooling marketplace. Furthermore, and perhaps ironically, in contributing to the creation of the schooling marketplace, Australian Catholic authorities have created a context in which it is now questionable whether Catholic schools are capable of achieving the doctrinal, evangelising goals set out for schools by the Vatican.

The term 'marketplace' in this context refers to the principle of parental choice, which has increasingly come to be seen as a parental right in Australia.[1] Campbell, Proctor and Sherington have pointed to the emergence of neoliberalism as a significant driving factor in the development of the schooling marketplace.[2] However,

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[1]   Craig Campbell, Helen Proctor and Geoffrey Sherington, *School Choice*: *How Parents Negotiate the New School Market in Australia*, (Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest NSW, 2009), p. 4.

[2]   Campbell et al, *School Choice, How Parents Negotiate,* p. 4.

particularly since the 1950s, Catholic authorities and affiliated politicians have also articulated and demanded state aid for Catholic schools on the basis of parental choice. The Catholic theology which drives the view that parents have a fundamental right to schooling choice will be explored in detail in Chapter Three. However, for now it suffices to say that the power and political engagement of Catholic authorities in the Australian political arena cannot be underestimated in relation to the impact of their theological stance on parental educational rights.

Equally as important as defining the term 'marketplace' is defining the term 'Catholicism'. While Catholicism can be defined in a macro sense by its global religious presence as a Christian faith tradition whose members are in "communion with the Bishop of Rome, whom they acknowledge as the Vicar of Christ and the visible head of the Church founded by Christ,"[3] Catholicism can equally be understood within a local setting. Therefore, the term 'Catholicism', when used in this thesis can refer to either the macro, global nature and context of Catholicism, or to its particular manifestation within the local Australian context.

In order to explore Catholic schooling in Australia, it is important to note that Catholic schools exist within two complicated contexts. Primarily, Catholic schools exist within the global and local religious mission and context of the Roman Catholic Church which provides the religious rationale for the existence of its schools. Secondly, Catholic schools also belong to a collective of Australian schools, where each school belongs to one of three possible education sectors — Government, Catholic or Independent.

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[3] John Hardon, *Modern Catholic Directory,* (Crown Publishing, 1985).

Catholic schools, along with all Australian schools, operate under a set of educational imperatives which are clearly stated by Federal, State and Territory Governments and their associated Australian educational authorities.[4] The vision of these various bodies is expressed in numerous documents all of which focus on the goal of supporting students to have access to outstanding learning opportunities and educational outcomes.[5] Alongside articulating the learning goals for all Australian students, Australian Governments and educational bodies articulate social goals which all Australian schools are expected to work towards.

The 2008 *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians,* states that schools must contribute to the development of, "a socially cohesive society that respects and appreciates cultural, social and religious diversity".[6] Buchanan and Chapman argue that this document was developed in collaboration with all Australian educational sectors and "set an agenda for Australia's educational future".[7] In educational terms, this document provides a particular vision and pedagogy for the

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[4]   Australian Government, *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (the Declaration),* Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2019.
https://www.dese.gov.au/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration/resources/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration
(downloaded 03/08/21)

[5]   For example, documents include the 2008 *Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians* and its review document, the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration,* various documents from *ACARA: Australian, Assessment and Reporting Authority* and various High School Certificates.

[6]   Australian Government, *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians,* (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2008), p. 6/7.
http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/
National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pd
(downloaded 03/08/21)

[7]   Rachel Buchanan and Amy Chapman, *Utopia or Dystopia A Critical Examination of the Melbourne Declaration*, PESA, (Philosophy of Education Conference, 2011), p. 1.
pesa.org.au › images › papers › 2011-papers › buchanan2011
(downloaded 03/08/21)

development of curriculum and school culture. Catholic schools, like all Australian schools are expected to operate in ways which work towards achieving these societal and academic goals.

However, Australian Catholic schools also work within the context of Catholicism. Catholic documents which emerge from the Vatican and from local Catholic authorities convey that Catholic schools are expected to participate in the global mission of Catholicism. This expectation means that Catholic schools are expected to immerse students in a learning programme and school culture which is steeped in and faithful to Catholic doctrinal teachings.[8] Consequently, education in Catholic schools is intimately and structurally bound to the evangelising mission of the Church.[9] As Pope Paul VI declared in 1965, "evangelisation and integral human development are intertwined in the Church's educational work."[10]

Paul VI statement on the evangelising nature of Catholic schooling is reiterated in all subsequent Vatican documents on Catholic schooling. In addition, all post-Vatican II documents regarding Catholic schooling also comment on the specific complexities associated with achieving a Catholic school's evangelising goals amid the evolving

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[8] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School,* (1977), paragraph 37.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html
(downloaded 05/06/21)

[9] Pope Paul VI, *Declaration On Christian Education, Gravissimum Educationis,* section 3 — The Authors of Education, (1965), paragraph 3.
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html
(downloaded 05/06/21)

[10] Pope Paul VI: *Declaration On Christian Education, Gravissimum Educationis,* paragraph 37.

cultural and societal contexts in which post-Vatican II Catholic schools operate. The

Vatican's 2022 statement on Catholic schooling highlights this point:

> The Catholic school lives in the flow of human history. It is therefore continually called upon to follow its unfolding in order to offer an educational service appropriate to the present times. The witness of Catholic educational institutions shows on their part a great responsiveness to the diversity of socio-cultural situations and readiness to adopt new teaching methods, while remaining faithful to their own identity (idem esse). By identity we mean its reference to the Christian concept of life. The conciliar declaration Gravissimum Educationis and the documents that followed it traced the dynamic profile of an educational institution through the two terms "school" and "Catholic".[11]

Subsequently, and theoretically, whether it be in relation to matters associated with

pluralism and 'otherness', the local curriculum, religious education, other educational

programmes, pedagogy or the nature of teachers and teaching, Vatican documents

frame Catholic schooling within an evangelising religious mission and context.

Additionally, when speaking about the religious mandates for Catholic schools the

Vatican states that the Church has a special responsibility to educate:

> Finally, in a special way, the duty of educating belongs to the Church, not merely because she must be recognized as a human society capable of educating, but especially because she has the responsibility of announcing the way of salvation to all men, of communicating the life of Christ to those who believe, and, in her unfailing solicitude, of assisting men to be able to come to the fullness of this life. The Church is bound as a mother to give to these children of hers an education by which their whole life can be imbued with the spirit of Christ and at the same time do all she can to promote for all peoples the complete perfection of the…

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[11] Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, (2022), paragraph 18.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html
(downloaded 11/07/22)

human person, the good of earthly society and the building of a world that is more human.[12]

This foundational statement, released at the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, leaves no room for ambiguity regarding the mission and purpose of Catholic education.[13] In establishing and maintaining its schools the Vatican sets a clear agenda for their purpose. Additionally, the Vatican claims its right to educate and to "do all she can to promote for all peoples the complete perfection of the human person, the good of earthly society and to building a world that is more human."[14] This statement underlines the expectation on the part of the Vatican that Catholicism should not be considered to be a private religion solely for individual engagement. Rather, it holds to a religious perspective which seeks engagement within society in a manner which is to be transformational.

Alongside statements made in *Gravissimum educationis* are a plethora of other Catholic documents on education, all of which in some manner reiterate the evangelising, public nature of Catholicism and thus the evangelising nature of its schools. No matter how clear or inspiring such statements may be, a most obvious question for those involved in present day Australian Catholic schooling relates to

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[12]   Pope Paul VI, *Declaration on Christian Education, Gravissimum Educationis,* (1965), section 3, paragraph 3.
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html
(downloaded 05/06/21)

[13]   The Second Vatican Council was announced by Pope John XXIII in 1958 and commenced in 1962. From 1963 Pope Paul VI presided over the Council until its conclusion in 1965. The major document which emerged from the Council on education was *Gravissimum educationis*, which was released in October, 1965.

[14]   Paul VI, *Gravissimum Educationis*, section 3, paragraph 3.
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html
(downloaded 05/06/21)

how Catholic school leaders negotiate the sometimes competing demands of satisfying their evangelising mission while operating within the complexities of the schooling marketplace.

This question is particularly pertinent when considering that the Australian Catholic schooling sector operates in a significantly changed context than that which existed in the immediate aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, where many of the Church's key positions on Catholic education were re-defined. The context of Australian society and schooling, as well as the nature of the population that staff Catholic schools, has changed dramatically since the 1960s. Catholic doctrinal mandates, especially those relating to Catholic moral life, remain relatively constant and at times significantly out of step with generally accepted Australian societal moral norms and laws. Whether speaking about marriage and divorce, gay marriage, contraception, homosexuality or abortion for example, the contrast between Catholic moral directives and Australian societal laws and norms is at times profound.[15] Gerald Grace has argued that Catholic schools are "caught up in tensions between

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[15]   The teachings of Catholicism as defined by the Catechism of the Catholic Church, especially in relation to moral issues, highlight the growing divide between Catholic moral teaching and Australian societal norms and laws. For example, article 1640 states that, "marriage concluded and consummated between baptised persons can never be dissolved." Thus, while Catholics can obtain a civil divorce, they cannot be remarried in the Catholic tradition unless they have grounds to apply for an annulment, which after an extensive examination, may or may not be granted to them. The Catechism of the Catholic Church in article 1601 provides another example. It states that marriage is between a woman and a man. Article 1652 highlights the view of the Catholic Church in relation to contraception, stating that sex within marriage should always be open to the creation of new life. Article 2359 states that, "homosexual persons are called to chastity," meaning that homosexual persons are expected to refrain from sexually active relationships. Additionally, in relation to the abortion debate the Catechism of the Catholic Church in article 2270 states that, "from the first moments of his/her existence a human being must be recognised as having the rights of a person — among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life." Furthermore, the Catechism clearly states that: "*You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish.*"

'retreat' and 'mission' both in its historical circumstances and in its present role in modern society."[16]

While there remain significant tensions between many aspects of Catholic moral teaching and societal norms, the cultural and religious changes that have occurred in post Vatican II Australian Catholic schools are also significant. Anecdotally, and by way of example, this researcher's personal experience of principalship in a number of Catholic schools, when contrasted with the experience of attending a Catholic school as a student in the 1960s and 1970s, offers a sense of the great changes that have transpired.

There is no doubt that my parents, who were weekly Mass attenders, selected a Catholic school expecting that the school would play an active role in teaching the Catholic faith, in immersing students in religious rituals and in promoting the moral teachings of Catholicism. There was a clear expectation on the part of my parents that there would be synergy between the values, beliefs and religious experience of home and school. They expected the teaching staff to be practising Catholics, which was clearly the case as the vast majority of teachers were members of a Religious Congregation.

Likewise, their expectation that the majority of families and students who attended the school would also come from practising Catholic homes was never in question. In brief, the school setting that my parents sought was primarily chosen because it

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[16]   Gerald Grace, *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets and Morality,* (Routledge Falmer, London and New York, 2002), p. 18.

offered a *Catholic* education that they believed provided a different schooling experience to that of the local, secular, free state school option that was also available to them. In spite of the pressures that school fees put on the household finances, their decision to seek a Catholic faith-based educational setting was never in doubt.

The contrast between the 'then' and 'now' of Catholic schools in Australia is substantial. When speaking about the changes that have occurred in Catholic schools since the Second Vatican Council, Grace, who describes Catholic schools as citadels prior to Vatican II, argues that what has changed since the 1960s in Catholic schooling is their relationship with the wider world:

> This new discourse of the Catholic school can be contrasted with the cultural characteristics of the Catholic citadel school of the pre-Vatican II era. While an emphasis upon the spirit of charity would be common to both, radical developments are apparent in references to a spirit of liberty, development of the personality and a dialogue with the wider world.[17]

Alongside Grace's assessment of the difference between pre and post-Vatican II Catholic schooling, the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) has also noted the differences between pre and post-Vatican II Australian Catholic schools:

> In the past, Catholic schools demonstrated their religious identity mainly by habit, traditional forms of piety, sacramental practice, family of origin and locality. The very tight and very visible Australian culture of parish and religious life has altered. Participation in Sunday Eucharist has declined significantly. While some adults in Catholic education continue to express elements of confessionality, the traditional notion of handing on faith in…

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[17]   Grace, *Catholic Schools, Mission, Markets and Morality,* p. 18.

family, school and parish can no longer be presumed — either for students or for staff.[18]

One specific and important example of how post-Vatican II schools have changed relates to Catholic school leadership and staffing. The nuns, brothers and priests whose work in Catholic schools was highly visible and prolific in pre-Vatican II Australia no longer have a significant physical presence in the vast majority of Australian Catholic schools. Instead, Catholic schools in Australia are almost exclusively staffed and led by laity.[19] However, like Catholic schools of the previous century, Vatican and local Catholic authorities expect lay staff to remain committed to the overarching global mission of Catholicism:

> The work of the lay Catholic educator in schools, and particularly in Catholic schools, has an undeniably professional aspect; but it cannot be reduced to professionalism alone. Professionalism is marked by, and raised to, a super-natural Christian vocation. The life of the Catholic teacher must be marked by the exercise of a personal vocation in the Church, and not simply by the exercise of a profession.[20]

When speaking about staff in Catholic schools the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) highlights the critical need to be able to employ staff on religious grounds. The document unequivocally states that Catholic schools must be

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[18]　National Catholic Education Commission, *A Framework for Formation for Mission in Catholic Education,* (2017), p. 10.

https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/NCEC_Framing_Paper_Religious_Education.pdf
(downloaded 22/11/2021)

[19]　'Laity' in this context refers to principals and their leadership teams, teachers and ancillary staff who work in Catholic schools but who are not members of a Religious Congregation.

[20]　Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, (2022), paragraph. 24.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/
rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html
(downloaded 11/07/22)

given their constitutional right to exercise religious freedom.[21] This demand is inclusive of schools having the ability to discriminate in matters of employment in order to ensure that they can give preference to staff who are Catholics and/or are supportive of Catholicism:

> The NCEC sought clarity on some aspects of the legislation [religious freedom] and made a case to ensure Catholic schools are free to: hold Catholic beliefs and express them in their day-to-day operations; Speak, preach and teach the tenets and beliefs they hold without hindrance from the state or unnecessary litigation; Give preference to the enrolment of students baptised in the Catholic faith; Give preference to employing staff who are baptised Catholics or are supportive of the teachings of the Catholic Church.[22]

Whether such expectations are realistic in the Australian context is a real question. The task of employing teachers in and across the 1,755[23] Australian Catholic schools, who are practising the Catholic faith tradition, who have significant knowledge, understanding and regard for the theology which underpins the evangelising nature of Catholic schools is at best difficult, and from personal experience, at times impossible.

Alongside the challenges associated with the employment of staff who are expected to be: "profoundly convinced that they share in the sanctifying, and therefore educational mission of the Church",[24] is the decreasing enrolment profile of

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21   National Catholic Education Commission, *2019 Annual Report*, School Profile, (2020), p. 9. https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/resources/catholic-school-statistics/516-catholic-schools-in-australia-2019/file
(downloaded 8/12/21)

22   NCEC, *2019 Annual Report*, p. 9.

23   NCEC, *2021 Annual Report*, p. 6.

24   The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith,* paragraph 24.

practising Catholics. Michael Chambers highlights that there have always been other than Catholic students enrolled in Catholic schools.[25] However, NCEC Annual Reports indicate that the number of students from other than a Catholic tradition is increasing.[26] Additionally, the NCEC acknowledges that of the 63 per cent of families who identify as Catholic, a large majority of those families have little or no connection with Catholicism outside of the school environment.[27] It can be argued that ultimately government funding has created the financial climate for the expansion of Catholic schools.[28] However, there is little doubt that the Vatican's enrolment policy statement which articulates that Catholic schools are "open to all who share in its educational project,"[29] has also provided opportunity for the Australian Catholic system of schools to recruit enrolments from a wider section of the community and to become increasingly diverse.

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[25]   Michael Chambers, *An Especially Delicate Task — The Place of Students who are not Catholics in Catholic Schools in Australia,* Thesis, Australian Catholic University, (2015), p. 91.
https://acuresearchbank.acu.edu.au/download/
a4e33c4bcf4265da70218b698f67fbe0ace1fa132098b363e5f4cf9a13709d2a/
1696458/201510_Michael_Chambers.pdf
(downloaded 15/04/21)

[26]   National Catholic Education Commission, *Framing Paper — Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools*, (Prepared for the NCEC by its Faith Formation and Religious Education Standing Committee, 2018), p. 9.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/NCEC_Framing_Paper_Religious_Education.pdf
(downloaded: 3/04/2021)

[27]   NCEC, Framing Paper, p. 9.

[28]   Chris Ryan and Louise Watson, *The Drift to Private Schools in Australia: Understanding its Features,* Discussion Paper no. 479, (The Australian National University Centre for Economic Policy Research, 2004).
https://rse.anu.edu.au/researchpapers/CEPR/DP479.pdf
(downloaded 17/05/22)

[29]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education*, The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Cultural Identity of the Catholic School,* (1997), paragraph 16.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/
rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html
(downloaded 09/05/21)

In order to explore such matters, this thesis argues that the manifestation of post-Vatican II Catholic schooling in Australia is best understood by viewing its development through multiple lenses, all of which have contributed to profoundly shaping how Catholic schooling has developed. Whether it be viewed from a theological, historical, political or an educative perspective, a number of international and domestic factors have shaped (and continue to influence), the evolution of Catholic schooling in Australia. Moreover, this thesis contends that Catholicism at both the global and more local level has played a key role in shaping the development of the Australian school marketplace, which in turn now impacts upon how Australian Catholic schools undertake their religious mission.

1.2 Justification

1.2.1 <u>Introduction — The Research Question and Its Relevance for Australian Education:</u>

This thesis seeks to add to a body of knowledge in the academic field of education. However, the nature of themes associated with this topic necessitates that while primarily drawing upon research within the field of education, a number of other relevant fields also inform this research. The fields of study which have assisted in shaping the argument presented in this thesis include, theology, politics and history. Each of these areas offers insight into key aspects of a story which explains the establishment, existence, the mission and purpose of Catholic schooling and more particularly, the role of Catholic authorities in promoting the development of a schooling marketplace as well as their subsequent negotiation of it. This thesis

suggests that no one factor adequately explains how the significant system of Australian Catholic schooling, which presently exists in Australia, has come about.

Firstly, the research question demands that the story of Catholic schooling in Australia be explored and viewed from the perspective of the Catholic sector's religious and theological imperatives. Such imperatives are in the first instance articulated by the Vatican and secondly, translated by Australian Catholic education authorities for the local context. Effectively, Australian Catholic schooling cannot be understood without locating it within the overall evangelising mission of Catholicism which highlights that its schools are fundamentally ecclesial in nature:

> …the educational action pursued by the Church through schools cannot be reduced to mere philanthropic work aimed at responding to a social need, but represents an essential part of her identity and mission.[30]

Secondly, while the religious context provides the overall framework for understanding the priority placed on the existence of Catholic schooling by the Vatican, ongoing Catholic engagement in the socio-political arena cannot be ignored. The establishment and flourishing of Catholic schooling in Australia has been underscored both by the theological conviction and the political *might* of Catholicism in Australian historical contexts. Catholicism's organisational structures have enabled the Catholic voice to play a significant role in various Australian political debates, including the debate surrounding the funding of Catholic schools. Moreover, this thesis suggests that public commentary demanding parental right to schooling

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[30]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, (2022), paragraph 10. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html (downloaded 11/07/22)

choice has been a contributing factor in the establishment of Australia's schooling marketplace. In Australia, parental right to schooling choice is embedded in a funding model which has enabled a privatised system of schooling to co-exist alongside the free, secular government schooling sector.[31]

Thirdly, the story of the development of Catholic schooling and the creation of the schooling marketplace will be further nuanced by exploring aspects of both Catholic history and Australian history. The manner in which Catholic schooling has found a home in Australia is a result of historical processes particular to the national context. Catholic schooling in Australia, while being shaped by specific religious goals, has also been informed by Australia's secular and pluralistic context. Whether it be, the Education Acts of the late 1800s, or the role played by Catholic Religious Congregations in Australian Catholic schooling, historical processes have shaped how Australian schooling was envisaged and how the creation of the schooling marketplace emerged.

However, as noted, the research question will be examined primarily through the field of education. Catholic schools are expected to create a particular kind of education which supports achieving the overall goals of Catholicism as well as responding to national schooling priorities. To appreciate the challenges facing Catholic schools in creating the specific religious culture described by Catholic authorities, exploring the realities associated with creating a school pedagogic

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[31]   Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs, *Education, Learning and Development Module,* p. 5.
https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/australian-education-system-foundation.pdf
(downloaded 22/10/21)

culture is essential. Thus, it is helpful to define how the term pedagogy will be used when exploring the research question as a means to talk about school leadership, the role of teachers and school culture.

Like the term 'theology', pedagogy brings with it a number of preconceptions and possible interpretations regarding its meaning, purpose and practice. Watkins and Mortimore suggest that the term pedagogy has been understood and used to describe a number of differing educational contexts.[32] Furthermore, they make the point that, "conceptions of pedagogy have become more complex over time".[33]

When speaking about the term pedagogy, from the perspective of a specific learning environment, Dumont and Istance propose that when describing the dynamics of pedagogical practice the researcher should take into account four contributing elements.[34] They define pedagogy as the production of learning through a complexity of relationships that exist between learners, teachers and other professionals, the content (curriculum), learning tools and school facilities.

> A "learning environment" thus understood is crucially focused on the dynamics and interactions between four dimensions – the learner (who?), teachers and other learning professionals (with whom?), content (learning what?) and facilities and technologies (where? with what?). Such dynamics and interactions include…

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[32]   Peter Mortimore and Chris Watkins, "Pedagogy: What Do We Know", in, *Understanding Pedagogy and its Impact on Learning,* ed., Peter Mortimore, (Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd, London, 1999), p. 2.

[33]   Morimore and Watkins, Pedagogy: What Do We Know, p. 3.

[34]   Hanna Dumont, and David Istance, "Analysing and Designing Learning Environments for the 21st Century", in *The Nature of Learning, Using Research to Inspire Practice*, ed., Francisco Benavides, Hanna Dumont and David Istance, (Corrigenda OECD publishing 2010), p. 29. http://www.conectadel.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2013/03/the_nature_of_learning_1_.pdf (downloaded 18/03/21)

the different pedagogical approaches and learning activities in the learning week or term or year.[35]

Pedagogy, as defined by Dumont and Istance, points to the variety of factors which ultimately shape a teaching and learning programme to generate student learning and achievement.

However, the term pedagogy can also be used when referring to the creation of a school's overall culture.[36] When used to describe a school's specific culture, pedagogy encompasses things such as a school's foundational belief as to its mission, its learning philosophy, its administrative modus operandi, its employment philosophy, and in the case of Catholic schools, its underlying religious and evangelising goals. Effectively, a 'school pedagogy' draws its inspiration from its foundational beliefs and goals, which in Catholic schools are articulated by the Vatican and which are expected to shape how members of a school community relate to one another and how the school's day-to-day operations are informed by its underlying religious values.[37]

While the underlying mission and vision of a school is expected by the Vatican to shape its pedagogical practices, a school's particular 'site ontology' is also constitutive of its pedagogic realities. Grootenboer, Edwards-Groves and Choy have

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[35]   Dumont et al., Analysing and Designing Learning Environments, p. 29.

[36]   Peter Grootenboer, Christine Edwards-Groves and Sarojni Choy, *Practice Theory and Education: Diversity and Contestation*, (Springer, 2017), p. 9.

[37]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith,* (1982), paragraph 21.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html
(downloaded 27/03/22)

deployed the idea of site ontology in their research into school environments. They suggest that 'site ontology' shapes a school's specific learning environment and overall pedagogy.[38] Moreover, they argue every school will be unique in its site ontology in that all schools are influenced by specific local circumstances.[39] Thus, even within a group of local Catholic schools, which are all expected to be based on specific Catholic doctrine, values and religious teaching, a school's specific site ontology will shape, and to some extent, determine how an individual Catholic school will ultimately express its underlying religious principles:

> Practices always occur somewhere in physical space-time.
> Practices, therefore are temporally situated, locally influenced
> locally produced, locally enacted, locally accomplished and locally
> comprehended.[40]

The concept of site ontology when applied to education insists that schools are influenced by the unique circumstances of time and place.[41] Thus, while Catholic authorities demand that all Catholic schools are to "reflect the person and teachings of Christ",[42] the manner in which an individual Catholic school manifests such a goal will ultimately be shaped by particular local circumstances and the marketplace in which Catholic schools exist. This thesis suggests that two particularly important factors need to be taken into account when considering how a particular school's site ontology manifests. These two factors relate to the nature of a school's staff and the school's enrolment base.

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[38]   Grootenboer, et al., *Practice Theory and Education: Diversity and Contestation*, p. 9.

[39]   Grootenboer, et al., *Practice Theory and Education: Diversity and Contestation*, p. 9.

[40]   Grootenboer, et al., *Practice Theory and Education: Diversity and Contestation*, p. 9.

[41]   Grootenboer, et al., *Practice Theory and Education: Diversity and Contestation*, p. 9.

[42]   M. J. Miller, *The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools,* (Strathfield, St Paul's Publications, 2006), p. 23.

In terms of school leadership and staffing, the Vatican articulates that all staff in a Catholic school share in the school's evangelising mission: "For it is the lay teachers, and indeed all lay persons, believers or not, who will substantially determine whether or not a school realizes its aims and accomplishes its objectives."[43] Robyn Horner, et al., suggest that the role which teachers are expected to play in faith based Western Catholic schools is "hotly contested".[44] More so, the point is made that in Australia, debate surrounding the role of teachers as educators of faith has reached a 'crisis point'[45] in many Catholic schools:

> For confessional schools in Western contexts, the role of teachers in promoting the formation of students in any particular faith tradition is a hotly contested issue. In Australia, this has reached a crisis point for many Catholic schools, where the distance between Christianity and culture has become such that not only students, but also many teachers question their identities in relation to the Church. This is a significant problem to the extent that the Church envisions the Catholic School as an educational community offering an evangelising and formative experience of Christian faith, and where the role of the religion teacher, especially, is seen as crucial in witnessing to that faith as radically personal and alive.[46]

Such a scenario points to a key challenge for Australian Catholic school leaders in navigating the tensions that exist between the employment market and Vatican expectations regarding how the Catholic schooling workforce is expected to

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[43] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith,* 1982), paragraph 1.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html
(downloaded 27/03/22)

[44] Robyn Horner, et.al., "Openness to Faith as a Disposition for Teachers in Catholic Schools", in *International Journal of Practical Theology,* (2020), p. 3.
https://doi.org/10.1515/ijpt-2019-0044
(dowloaded 29/10/22)

[45] Robyn Horner, et.al., "Openness to Faith, p. 3.

[46] Robyn Horner, et.al., "Openness to Faith, p. 3.

participate in a "specific mission within the Church by living, in faith, a secular vocation."[47] The changes in the Catholic schooling workforce and their likely implications for Catholic schooling are discussed in detail in Chapter Five, however, for now it is important to note that from an educational perspective principals and teachers play a significant role in shaping a school's site ontological reality.[48]

Alongside the employment market forces which shape a Catholic school's site ontology is the nature of the Australian enrolment marketplace and the motivations which drive parental schooling choice. In examining how the Australian Catholic Church has contributed in creating the schooling marketplace, this thesis relies upon relevant official documents and historiographies. However, when it comes to exploring how the marketplace impacts Catholic schooling it is critical to explore parental views about their reasons for choosing a Catholic school.

In the Australian context, there is a limited amount of field research and data that address parental expectations of a school's religious programme. As such, this thesis has been informed by a Research Project — *The Motivations of Parents for Seeking Enrolment in a Catholic School.* The Research Project presents data and commentary from seventy-seven parents who took part in a one-on-one interview process. Interviews focused on gathering data as to why a parent selected a Catholic school for their child's enrolment, the importance that was placed on the school's

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[47]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith,* (1982), paragraph 24.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html
(downloaded 27/03/22)

[48]   Kathleen Cotton, "Principals and Student Achievement, What the Research Says"*, in Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development*, (ACD Publications Alexandria, Virginia, USA, 2003).

religious programme and the reasons which might cause a parent to leave a Catholic school setting. In addition, parents provided details regarding their religious, or secular identity and their regularity of practise within a faith community. Collecting this data provided insight into the relevance of an individual's religious identity to the importance a parent placed on the religious nature of a Catholic school.

The data produced by the Research Project highlights site ontological realities regarding parental expectations of Catholic schooling. Therefore, as well as providing data on parental motivations for school selection, Research Project data also provides specific insights regarding how the Australian schooling marketplace may interact with the religious nature of Catholic schooling. Additionally, the data points to the complexities and challenges facing Catholic school leaders in responding to both the Vatican expectations of Catholic schooling and the expectations of the schooling marketplace which may at times be in conflict.

Alongside Research Project data which points to the religious diversity of enrolment within Australian Catholic schooling, Horner et al., confirm the changing status of religion, stating that the number of people claiming 'no religion' in Western societies, such as Australia, the United Kingdom and in Europe is growing.[49] In effect, the context in which Australian Catholic schooling operates continues to change. However, while acknowledging that Australian society is becoming more secular, in that the number of people claiming a religious identity (particularly Christian identity)

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[49]   Robyn Horner, et al., "Openness to Faith as a Disposition for Teachers in Catholic Schools", in *International Journal of Practical Theology,* (2020). p. 4.
https://doi.org/10.1515/ijpt-2019-0044
(dowloaded 29/10/22)

is diminishing, the religious diversity within Australian society is increasing, albeit as

a small percentage of Australia's total population.[50]

Daniel Fleming and Terence Lovat point to the challenges and possibilities posed by

pluralism both at the institutional level and the personal level.[51] They suggest that it

is helpful to designate the difference between an institution's worldview and an

individual's worldview:

> Institutional worldviews refer to those worldviews which are
> largely prescribed by organisations and institutions (such as
> religions) . . . while personal worldview refers to the more complex
> combination of beliefs that inform an individual's own worldview.[52]

Furthermore, they suggest that in Australia's present societal context the power of

institutional 'worldviews' to influence individuals has diminished.[53]

> Here, the capacity of institutions to ensure that their worldview is
> accepted by their adherents is greatly lessened. As such, there
> exists a situation of diversity within diversity, with the
> institutional worldviews themselves being present in a diverse
> way, as diverse as the individuals within each institutional
> worldview.[54]

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[50]   Australian Bureau of Statistics, *22021 Census Shows Changes in Australia's Religious Diversity.* Released 20/09/2022.
https://www.abs.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/2021-census-shows-changes-australias-religious-div
(downloaded 29/10/22)

[51]   Daniel Fleming and Terence Lovat, "When Encounters Between Religious Worldviews Are a Threat: Applying Triune Ethics Theory in A Religiously Diverse Landscape", in *Journal of Moral Education. 43:3, 377-393, DOI: 10.1080/03057240.2014.945397*, (Published online: 22 Aug, (2014), p. 381.
 https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2014.945397
 (downloaded 29/10/22)

[52]   Fleming et al, When Encounters Between Religious Worldviews Are a Threat p. 381.

[53]   Fleming et al, When Encounters Between Religious Worldviews Are a Threat p. 381.

[54]   Fleming et al, When Encounters Between Religious Worldviews Are a Threat p. 381.

What such a situation may mean for Australian schools — Government, Catholic and Independent, is particularly relevant in that the Australian Government expects all Australian schools to educate students in such a way as to ensure that schooling contributes to building a cohesive society, which is respectful of otherness in all its forms.[55] For educators across each of Australia's three schooling sectors a key question is how to address this government mandate. In relation to Catholic schooling, the challenge expands to include the Vatican's expectations of Catholic schooling, within the growing complexities of a society and religious context where detraditionalisation appears to be the norm.[56]

Fleming and Lovat define the term detraditionalisation as meaning that, "religious as well as other traditions (gender, family, professional context), no longer naturally transfer from one generation to another."[57] In such a situation, these scholars suggest that "traditions may be lost, but at the same time that engagement with them may become more reflexive given that their place and role is no longer as obvious as it may once have been."[58] Research Project data clearly demonstrates the effect of detraditionalisation, especially within the cohort of people who identify as Catholic,

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[55]   Australian Government, *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians,* Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, (2008), p. 6/7. http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/ National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf (downloaded 29/10/22)

[56]   Daniel Fleming and Terence Lovat, "When Encounters Between Religious Worldviews Are a Threat: Applying Triune Ethics Theory in A Religiously Diverse Landscape", in *Journal of Moral Education. 43:3, 377-393, DOI: 10.1080/03057240.2014.945397*, (Published online: 22 Aug, (2014), p. 381. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2014.945397 (downloaded 29/10/22)

[57]   Fleming et al, When Encounters Between Religious Worldviews Are a Threat, p. 381.

[58]   Fleming et al, When Encounters Between Religious Worldviews Are a Threat, p. 381.

many of whom have little knowledge of Catholic religious practices and traditions, of doctrine or religious literacy. When reflecting on a school's specific site ontology and the role which it plays in shaping how a particular Catholic school manifests in time and place, detraditionalisation is one important factor which alongside the totality of market forces impact the ability of Catholic schools to respond to their religious mission.

1.2.2 The Power of Catholicism in the Political Sphere:

In terms of how Australia's system of education has come about, this thesis explores the socio-political power of Catholicism in this national context. The role which Catholic leaders have played in Australian political debate demonstrates the influence of Catholic thought in shaping how Australia's system of education has evolved. Additionally, it points to how a theology of parental schooling choice has assisted in establishing Australia's schooling marketplace. The Vatican, states that Catholic education is not a private initiative.[59] Rather, Catholic schools are named by Vatican authorities as being an expression of the public character of Catholicism.[60] As such, Catholic schools are expected to play a particular educational role within Australia's educational system and more generally, a role within Australian secular

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[59]   The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Cultural Identity of the Catholic School,* (1997).
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/
rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html
(downloaded 11/09/22)

[60]   The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium.*

society.[61] Investigating how the power and presence of Catholicism works across religious and political lines, assists in understanding the connection between theology and why so much political time and effort has gone to ensuring the ongoing existence of Catholic schools in Australia. Moreover, it underscores how such efforts have assisted in securing significant government funding for the Catholic and Independent schooling sectors.

The doctrinal teachings which ostensibly drive Catholic belief and practice have been clearly articulated by Vatican statements. However, mapping Catholicism's operations in political spheres is somewhat more difficult. This point is highlighted by Kristin Heyer and Mark Rozell who suggest that :

> …the universal scope of Catholic concern that can make for strange political bedfellows, confound predictable voting patterns, and leave the Church poised to critique narrowly partisan agendas across the spectrum. This comprehensive, Catholic scope can be politically beneficial as well as divisive, depending on the context and one's perspective.[62]

Furthermore, they suggest that, "social scientists and theologians alike have repeatedly noted, Catholic political identity and engagement defy straightforward categorisation."[63]

What has and does the Catholic Church's anomalous political status mean for Australian Catholic schooling? It means that exploring Catholicism's role in

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[61]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, (2022). https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html (downloaded 11/06/22)

[62]   Kristin Hayer and Mark Rozell, "Introduction", in *Catholics and Politics: The Dynamic Tension Between Faith and Power,* ed., Kristin E. Hayer, Mark J. Rozell and Michael A. Genovese, (Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C, 2008), p. 1.

[63]   Hayer et al, Introduction, in Catholics in Politics, p. 1.

contributing to the development of the schooling marketplace is complex.

Furthermore, exploring how the marketplace now impacts Catholic schools is equally

complex. Alongside the various Vatican documents which define the Catholic mission

and culture of Catholic schooling, Catholic schools are also informed by secular,

plural Australia and the particularity of a funding model which embeds the right of

parents to schooling choice.

In educating approximately one fifth of all Australian students, it can be expected that

the religious, cultural and secular diversity within Australian society, to some extent,

is reflected in Australian Catholic school enrolment.[64] Exploring how Catholic schools

go about achieving their religious and educative mission within the context of the

schooling marketplace and Australia's secular, plural society, offers insight into this

powerful educational sector. Moreover, exploring the complexities of the schooling

marketplace and its impact on Catholic schools offers insight into the broader

implications for Australian education in the current educational marketplace.

Gerald Grace suggests that there has been inadequate research that investigates

how religion engages in the socio-political arena, particularly in relation to

education.[65] He argues that "especially in the academic and media worlds, a secular

culture reigns with the results that religion is subtly ignored as unimportant."[66] This

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[64]   National Catholic Education Commission, *Framing Paper — Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools*, (2018), p. 9.
 https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/NCEC_Framing_Paper_Religious_Education.pdf (downloaded: 3/08/2022)

[65]   Gerald Grace, *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets and Morality,* (Routledge Falmer, London and New York, 2002), p. xii.

[66]   Grace, *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets, and Morality,* p. xii.

thesis is underpinned by a view that religion cannot be ignored when seeking to understand the establishment of the schooling marketplace and when mapping how that marketplace has in turn transformed Catholic education in Australia.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this thesis adds to a body of knowledge which seeks to provide insight into the nature of Australian Catholic schooling and to examine how its religious imperatives are now impacted by the schooling marketplace. In order to achieve this goal, three key stakeholder groups, all of whom make an enormous investment in and commitment to Australian Catholic schooling, will be considered. These stakeholders are parents who have a child enrolled in a Catholic school; State and Federal Government and thus Australian tax-payers; and finally, the Australian Catholic Church.

All three of these stakeholders have particular expectations of Catholic schooling in relation to student learning and achievement, and ultimately, how students ought to be prepared for their engagement within Australian society. While such goals are for the most part clearly articulated in the public arena by government and by Catholic educational leaders, the voices of parents are less heard and less documented.[67] Therefore, this thesis has a specific focus on providing data which offers insight into parental views regarding why they choose Catholic schooling and the expectations which parents have of their child's school.

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[67] For Example, Australian goals for education are clearly stated in a number of documents including the Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians, The Alice Springs Statement and the Australian Assessment and Reporting Authority. In relation to goals stated by the Catholic Church and to the global and local nature of Catholicism, stated goals for Catholic schools need to be considered from two perspectives: 1. The global goals for Catholic education which are articulated in numerous Vatican documents; 2. The local goals for Catholic schooling which are stated in both State (i.e State System Policies and Practices) and in the National context by the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC).

1.2.3 Key Stakeholders — Parents:

By way of introduction, the vast majority of Australian parents choose for their child to attend either a State, Catholic or Independent school setting. In Australia this equates to 65.1 per cent of Australian students enrolled in Government schools, 19.5 per cent in Catholic schools and 15.4 per cent in Independent schools.[68] Of the children who are enrolled in a government school a small percentage of parents choose for their child's schooling to take place at home, with a parent/s generally undertaking all teaching responsibilities.[69] While enrolment in Australian Catholic schools equates to approximately one fifth of all students, in recent times Catholic school enrolment has been declining.[70]

In effect, parental decision-making regarding school enrolment is one significant factor which drives the consumer educational marketplace. Furthermore, enrolment trends have financial and educational consequences for each sector. In the Catholic sector, any significant decline in student enrolment equates to reduced funding from government sources and from income derived from school fees. Much of the Catholic schooling sector is overseen by a State or Territory *Commission for Catholic Schools*. These statutory bodies have established Catholic Education Offices, who

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[68] The Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4221.0 - *Schools, Australia, 2021*. Released 23/02/2022. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/schools/latest-release (downloaded 15/06/22)

[69] The term 'home-school' refers to children who are educated 'at home' by a parent(s) or a responsible adult. The child's education is overseen by a registered school where the child is officially registered.

[70] Association of Independent Schools of South Australia, "Student Enrolment Trends and Projections", ISCA *Research Report,* (2019). https://isa.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ISA-2021-Enrolment-Trends-and-Projections-Public-FINAL.pdf (downloaded 19/06/22)

under the leadership of a Director of Catholic Education oversees, among other things, all matters pertaining to the allocation and distribution of government school funding to each member school. Loss of enrolment in a local school in this context potentially constitutes risk for the sector as well as for individual schools. The nexus between enrolment, funding and the ability of Catholic schools to exist and thus engage in their religious mission is rather obvious.

Thus, the question of why parents choose a Catholic school for their child's education is particularly relevant not only for the parents who make such a choice, but also for those other stakeholders who have a vested interest in the survival of Australian Catholic schooling. The question of why parents choose a Catholic school is especially relevant when one considers the religious profile of Catholic enrolment.[71] The Research Project which was undertaken as a central aspect of this thesis explores these themes and presents its findings in Chapter Two.

1.2.4 Key Stakeholders — Government:

The second group of stakeholders who determine the operations of Catholic schooling is Government. Catholic schools report to both State and Federal governments as is statutorily required, particularly in relation to matters pertaining to government grants and financial expenditure. The 2020 NCEC Annual Report stated that 56 per cent of overall funding to Catholic schools comes from Federal grants, 16 per cent from the State Government grants and 28 per cent from private income

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[71] National Catholic Education Commission, *Framing Paper,* (2018), p. 9.
 https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/NCEC_Framing_Paper_Religious_Education.pdf (downloaded: 3/08/2022)

sources.[72] The combined income from Federal and State Government grant programmes provide approximately 72 per cent of the total funding for Catholic schooling.

Importantly, of the total funds available (grants and fees), approximately 80 per cent of a school's annual budget is taken up with salaries.[73] This is highlighted by a report from Catholic Schools NSW:

> Staff salaries typically constitute over 80% of the total expenditure. Furthermore, the other costs are largely fixed, at least in the short run. Consequently, the most important expenditure decisions relate to the allocation of staff resources. Furthermore, the minimum salaries of teaching staff and others are set according to the relevant employee enterprise agreements and based on years of service.[74]

When one considers that in 2020 the full time equivalent number of staff who were employed by Australian Catholic school authorities totalled 81,069 full-time equivalents, the level of funding required to support teaching and administrative salaries is enormous.[75] Essentially, Australian taxpayers, via State and Federal governments, make a very substantial financial investment in Catholic schools and thus in their ability to deliver on their various educational obligations.

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[72] National Catholic Education Commission, *Annual Report 2020*, *Financial Report,* (2021), p. 18.
www.ncec.catholic.edu.au
(downloaded 09/08/2021)

[73] Catholic Schools NSW, *The Needs-Based Funding Arrangement for the NSW Catholic Schools System,* (2018), p. 6.
www.csnsw.edu.au
(downloaded 24/03/21)

[74] Catholic Schools NSW, *The Needs-Based Funding Arrangement,* (2018), p. 6.

[75] National Catholic Education Commission, *Annual Report 2020*, *Statistics,* (2021), p. 18.
www.ncec.catholic.edu.au
(downloaded 09/03/21)

In addition to funding matters, Catholic schools, like all Australian schooling sectors participate in the development of National curriculum initiatives and are compliant with them, as well as leading and participating in other programmes which monitor and report on student learning and achievement.[76] In brief, the Catholic schooling sector is an active participant in Australian schooling, working in partnership with the Government and the Independent schooling sectors to offer Australian parents choice within a regulated funding and curricular system.

1.2.5 Key Stakeholder — Catholic Leadership:

A third, and perhaps most obvious stakeholder group is that of the Australian Catholic bishops and their appointed senior leaders of Australian Catholic schooling. Leaders of Catholic educational settings are charged with very specific responsibilities. Alongside attending to the various statutory requirements pertaining to education delivery in Australia, bishops and senior Catholic leaders are responsible for propagating global Vatican statements on education within the local school context. Australian Catholic schools are expected to conform with Vatican statements, while thriving within the context of a highly diverse and increasingly secular society.[77] As such, Catholic schools cannot be fully understood without

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[76] National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is a standardised test, which is aimed at gathering data in the curriculum areas of English and Mathematics from Australian students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

[77] Australian Bureau of Statistics, *2021 Census*, *Changes in Australia's Religious Diversity*, Media Release, 28/06/2022.
https://www.abs.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/2021-census-shows-changes-australias-religious-diversity
(downloaded 02/07/22)

placing them within their specific religious context and in grasping how they

negotiate their religious orientation within structural national frameworks.

Arbuckle argues that the overall mission of Catholicism is three-fold and that Catholic

schools should undertake specific responsibilities in their promotion of the faith:

> In implementing the mission of Jesus Christ the church has three
> tasks: to ensure that God is worshipped, that the Gospel is
> proclaimed, and that the needs of those who are poor, ill, or
> marginalised are responded to. Parishes and Catholic schools in
> such countries as the United States, Canada, Britain, Ireland,
> New Zealand, and Australia primarily focus on the first and
> second tasks. Their explicit purpose is to form students in the
> knowledge of God and God's purpose in the world.[78]

Arbuckle presents a picture of Catholic schooling as providing education that is

expected to respond to the religious and socio-political aims of Catholicism that are

Catholic first and foremost.

Numerous documents which have emerged from the Vatican have articulated the

idea that Catholic educational institutions (which includes Catholic Universities)

ought to influence individual consciences and to assist in building a society that is

based on fraternity and solidarity. The Vatican Document *Educating Today and*

Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion, highlights this point:[79]

> Catholic education, with its many schools and universities that are
> scattered all over the world, provides a remarkable support to
> ecclesial communities that are engaged in the new
> evangelisation, and contributes to the fostering of…

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[78]   Gerald Arbuckle, *Catholic Identity or Identities? Refounding Ministries in Chaotic Times*, (Liturgical Press United States, 2013), p. 33.

[79]   Congregation For Catholic Education, *Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion,* (Educational Institutions), 2014), paragraph 2.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/
rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20140407_educare-oggi-e-domani_en.htm
(downloaded 17/05/21)

anthropological and ethical values in individual consciences and cultures, which are necessary in order to build a society that is based on fraternity and solidarity.[80]

Additionally, an array of local documents from bodies such as the NCEC and local Catholic Education Systems highlight matters which focus on Catholic school identity, ethos and the overriding mission and purpose of Catholic schooling in Australia. For example, the NCEC clearly states that, "Catholic schooling repeatedly emphasises the need for an educational philosophy built on the foundation of a Catholic understanding of the human person."[81] More specifically, the NCEC states that "our schools are unapologetically Catholic in inspiration and in nature."[82]

While the NCEC name their schools as being 'unapologetically Catholic', exploring what such a statement actually means in a consumer led enrolment marketplace is a necessary task. In recent times the Catholic Education Office of Victoria initiated a programme of school review in collaboration with the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium called 'The Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project' (ECSIP).[83] This project was implemented in order to provide the means by which to investigate and assess the identity of a Catholic school as well as the means to re-contextualise a school's religious culture and identity.

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[80]   Congregation For Catholic Education, Educating Today and Tomorrow, paragraph 2.

[81]   National Catholic Education Commission, *A Framework for Formation for Mission in Catholic Education*, Resources, Forward (2017), p. 6.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/AFramework4FormationMission.pdf
(downloaded 25/06/21)

[82]   NCEC, Framework for Formation, p. 6.

[83]   Didier Pollefeyt and Jan Bouwens, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity, Research Methodology and Research Results in Catholic Schools in Victoria,* Australia, (Distribution, Global Book Marketing, UK, 2014).

The introduction of the ECSI Project is important to this thesis for three reasons. Firstly, its implementation clearly demonstrates that a group of Catholic leaders in Australia acknowledged the changing nature of the Catholic school enrolment base and the marketplace in which Catholic schools exist. More specifically, Catholic schooling was named as existing within a growing secular and pluralistic context which demanded investigation.[84] The ECSI Project posed the question: "How does a Catholic organisation shape the religious and specifically Catholic components of its institutional identity in a cultural context characterised by increasing secularisation, detraditionalisation and pluralisation?"[85]

Secondly, more than simply acknowledging the context in which Catholic schools were operating, the decision of Catholic leaders in Victoria, and in a number of other Australian States, to implement the ECSI Project indicated a commitment to address the changing circumstances of Catholic schooling. Pollefeyt and Bouwens highlight the emphasis placed on the Project's implementation during the period 2011 and 2015.

> The ECSIP research programme became a core component of the official *School Improvement Framework* in Catholic schools throughout Victoria. Over the course of four years, all primary and secondary schools in Victoria implemented the empirical research. Each school received an individual report that contained an analysis, description and interpretation of its identity profile, leading to constructive suggestions for enhancing its future during the following school improvement cycle.[86]

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84   Pollefeyt et al, Identity in Dialogue, p. 10.

85   Pollefeyt et al, Identity in Dialogue, p. 20.

86   Pollefeyt et al, Identity in Dialogue, p. 12.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the ECSI Project in seeking to re-contextualise a school's religious culture and identity in ways which addressed each school's specific cultural and religious context, was proposed as doing so in a manner which maintained theological integrity regarding the foundational religious mission and identity of Catholic schooling.

> The ECSIP Project offers support to ongoing processes of *self-assessment* that form the basis for ongoing dynamics of *self-improvement* of Catholic school identity. The identity research enables Catholic schools and other institutions to understand themselves more completely and thoroughly, so that they are in a better position to improve their Catholic identity in ways that are both theologically legitimate and culturally plausible in the short and long term.[87]

While relevant aspects of the ECSIP will be addressed in following chapters, for now it is important to pose the question of whether it is possible for Australian Catholic schools to maintain a balance between secularisation, detraditionalisation and pluralism while remaining unapologetically Catholic as described in Vatican documents. This point is particularly pertinent when considering the specific challenges posed by a schooling marketplace where parental motivations regarding school enrolment may have nothing to do with a school's religious identity or mission. Furthermore, it is also important to note the theological complexities regarding how bishops, school leaders and parents may understand what the term 'unapologetically Catholic' actually means, and, how that should manifest in a Catholic primary or secondary school setting.

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[87] Pollefeyt et al, Identity in Dialogue, p. 11.

1.3 Primary Source Literature Review

1.3.1 Overview:

This Literature Review presents key documents which will be deployed throughout the thesis. Literature which specifically relates to each chapter is reviewed at the commencement of each of the chapters.

Firstly, six post-Vatican II documents have been selected in order to explore the theological themes which inform the religious and political mission of Catholic schools, their implications for Australia Catholic schools and the development of the schooling marketplace. The six documents that have been selected cover a time frame from 1965 to 2022 — a period of nearly 60 years. While the six documents selected do not represent the entirety of Church teaching, they provide poignant insight into how their authors were viewing Catholic schools across that time-frame — a time-frame which saw significant societal changes occurring across the globe, especially in Western Nations.

Effectively, these multi-authored documents each claim to be representing the true essence of Church teaching, while at the same time invariably revealing the historical world which gave rise to much of their content. Thus, the hermeneutic which informs the reading and interpretation of the six documents relates to the historical context in which they were written. Employing a historical contextual hermeneutic provides insight into the topics raised and to the response of Vatican leaders in relation to the perceived problems and challenges that were facing Catholic schooling in time and place.

Whether the documents comment on topics such as the changing nature of the Catholic school workforce or about the growth in cultural, secular and religious plurality in Catholic schools for example, Vatican leaders were fundamentally responding to existing realities rather than predicting, initiating and leading change in a planned and purposeful way. However, with that said, the foundational document — *Gravissimum educationis,* was a document which clearly set a new agenda for post-Vatican II Catholic schools.

Ostensively, the six key Vatican documents referenced in this thesis each maintain consistent theological themes while addressing specific social and political realities of the time. Additionally, document authors are very careful not to overrule previous documents. It can be argued that there has not been a fundamental change in relation to the theology which proclaims the evangelising religious identity of Catholic schooling over the nearly sixty-year period which these documents represent. Thus, each of the documents written in the aftermath of Vatican II set a consistent theological platform which continues to underpin proceeding documents and which inform the specific topic being discussed.

For example, the key theological sentiments contained *Gravissimum educationis,*[88] is referenced in subsequent documents on Catholic schooling. Even in the 2022 Vatican document, *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue,* (for Educational Institutions), the theological links to Gravissimum educationis are highlighted.

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[88]   Pope Paul VI, *Declaration On Christian Education, Gravissimum Educationis,* (1965). https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html (downloaded 05/06/21)

> The conciliar declaration Gravissimum educationis aimed at presenting only certain fundamental principles of Christian education especially in schools, then entrusting a special post-conciliar commission with the task of further developing them. This is one of the commitments of the Office for Schools of the Congregation for Catholic Education, which has dedicated a number of documents to deepening important aspects of education in particular, the permanent profile of Catholic identity in a changing world; the responsibility of the witness of lay and consecrated teachers and school leaders; the dialogical approach to a multicultural and multi-religious world.[89]

Furthermore, while the six documents demonstrate the response of Vatican leaders to the historical circumstances in which Catholic schools were operating, they also provide insight into the motivations of local Australian bishops and key lay Catholic leaders in relation to matters pertaining to Catholic schools at the local level. For example, the fight to secure government funding for Australian Catholic schools, while clearly a political pursuit, secured its theological legitimacy through Vatican documents on Catholic schooling.[90] Additionally, the move to ensure that Catholic school enrolment was to be open to all who shared in the educational project of Catholic schools, found its legitimacy in post-Vatican documentation on Catholic schooling.[91]

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[89] Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue,* (for Educational Institutions, 2022), paragraph 17. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html (downloaded 17/06/22)

[90] This point is explored in detail in Chapter Three.

[91] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Cultural Identity of the Catholic School,* (1997), paragraph 16. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.htm (downloaded 13/06/21)

In essence, the six documents that have been selected provide vital insight and opportunity for exploring the influence of Catholicism in the creation of the schooling marketplace. More so, these six documents provide insight into the increasing concerns of Vatican authorities regarding the effects of the marketplace in terms of the ability of Catholic schools to carry out their religious mission. As such, when seeking to understand the local context, especially in relation to how Catholic schooling developed in Australia, these documents frame a theological position which justified and drove specific political action that this thesis suggests has assisted in creating Australia's unique system of schooling.

The Documents which have been selected and which inform the argument of this thesis are: *Gravissimum educationis,*[92] *The Catholic School;*[93] *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith;*[94] *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third*

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[92]   Pope Paul VI, *Declaration On Christian Education, Gravissimum Educationis,* (1965). https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html (downloaded 05/06/21)

[93]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School,* (1977). https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html (downloaded 14/06/22)

[94]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses To Faith,* (1982). https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html (downloaded 13/06/22)

Millennium;[95] *Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion;*[96] *The Identity of the Catholic School For a Culture of Dialogue.*[97]

As stated, these six documents provide a window for viewing how Catholic schooling in Australia has been envisioned since Vatican II and how various societal changes over the stated period of time have been theologically, and at times, politically addressed. Consequently, frequent references to each of the six named documents occur throughout the thesis. As previously mentioned, these six documents do not represent the totality of Catholic teaching which impacts Catholic schooling. As such, other Vatican documents are taken into account in order to gain clarity and further explore the mission and identity of Catholic schooling. Alongside the six Vatican documents listed above, this thesis also draws upon the *Code of Canon Law,*[98] the

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[95]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Cultural Identity of the Catholic School,* (1997).
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.htm
(downloaded 13/06/21)

[96]   Congregation For Catholic Education, *Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion*, Instrumentum laboris, (2014).
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20140407_educare-oggi-e-domani_en.html
(downloaded 14/06/22)

[97]   Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue,* (for Educational Institutions), (2022).
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html
(downloaded 17/06/22)

[98]   Vatican Document, *The Code of Canon Law,* Copyright © Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/cic_index_en.html
(downloaded 3/05/22)

Catholic Catechism[99] as well as documents which point to Catholicism's post-Vatican II commitment to ecumenism, such as *Nostra Aetate*.[100]

A number of documents from the Australian National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) will also be deployed. These documents provide vital insight into how Australian Catholic authorities view the mission and identity of Catholic schooling. More so, documents from the NCEC highlight an unambiguous theological agenda in terms of parental right to schooling choice and the subsequent political right of Catholic school authorities to fight for and secure funding from Australian Government bodies for Catholic schools. The documents used include *NCEC Annual Reports, Media Releases* and two other highly relevant documents. Firstly, the 2017 document: *A Framework* for *Formation for Mission in Catholic Education,* highlights the challenges associated with staff formation and the priority placed on it.[101] Secondly, the 2018 document: *Framing Paper - Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools,* amplifies the central place of religious education in Catholic

[99]   Vatican Document, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Official edition for Australia and New Zealand, (St Paul's, Homebush NSW, 1994).
https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM
(downloaded 3/05/22)

[100]   Pope Paul VI, *Nostra Aetate Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions,* Revised English Translation, (1965).
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html
(downloaded 07/09/22)

[101]   National Catholic Education Commission, *A Framework* for *Formation for Mission in Catholic Education,* (2017).
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/AFramework4FormationMission.pdf
(downloaded 09/09/22)

schools as well as outlining the challenges that are facing Catholic schools in achieving their religious goals.[102]

In addition to exploring documents which specifically relate to Catholic mandates regarding schooling, documents emanating from the Australian Government and various education departments are used to explore the national goals of schooling within Australia. These documents provide salient insight into how the Australian Government and State and Territory Governments perceive the goals of education, and what that should mean in practice for all Australian students. A key document which remains relevant throughout this thesis is *The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.*[103] Additionally, the revision of the Melbourne Declaration is also referenced — *The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (the Declaration).*[104]

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[102] National Catholic Education Commission, *Framing Paper — Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools,* (2018).
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/NCEC_Framing_Paper_Religious_Education.pdf
(downloaded 09/09/22)

[103] Australian Government, *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians,* (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2008).
http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/
National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf
(downloaded 12/09/21)

[104] Australian Government, *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (the Declaration),* Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2019.
https://www.dese.gov.au/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration/resources/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration
(downloaded 03/08/21)

1.3.2 *Gravissimum educationis:*[105]

Gravissimum educationis was released in 1965 and is a relatively brief statement which addresses twelve areas of Catholic education. The twelve areas include commentary on such matters as the universal right to education, the importance of Christian education, the central role of parents and the importance of the Church's role and responsibility to educate: "In fulfilling its educational role, the Church, is eager to employ all suitable aids, is concerned especially about those which are her very own."[106] The document has been described as failing to address key factors that were emerging in Catholic education during the mid 1960s:[107]

> …the focus of discussion was too exclusively concentrated upon the institutional Church per se and Catholic education in its schools, colleges and universities was relegated to a marginal status. It is difficult to understand why the Council fathers did not appreciate that, in the modern age, it is largely in the contexts of Catholic education, in its schools, colleges and universities, that the future of the Catholic Church will be renewed or weakened in the next generation.[108]

In agreeing with the suggestion that Gravissimum educationis failed to engage with future challenges, it is nonetheless a statement which reasserts Catholicism's commitment to maintaining its religious educational agenda. Rather than being viewed as a 'stand-alone' statement on education, Gravissimum educationis should

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[105]   Pope Paul VI, *Declaration on Christian Education, Gravissimum Educationis,* (1965). https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html (downloaded 15/09/21)

[106]   Pope Paul VI, *Gravissimum Educationis*, paragraph 4

[107]   Gerald Grace, *Vatican II and New Thinking About Catholic Education Aggiornamento Thinking and Principles into Practice,* Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education (CRDCE), (St. Mary's University, Twickenham, London UK, 2016), p. 1.

[108]   Grace, *Vatican II and New Thinking,* p. 1.

be viewed in the light of other Vatican II statements which had the potential to

radically reorientate many aspects of Catholic thinking and practice.

1.3.3 *The Catholic School*:[109]

This document was released nearly twelve years after the conclusion of the Second

Vatican Council and has been described as being ground-breaking.[110] Unlike

Gravissimum educationis, it laid a platform for the future of Catholic schooling:

> Catholic Schools inaugurated a post- Vatican II conception of
> what a Catholic Christian education should be in the era of late
> modernity. It can be called the 'foundation charter or mission
> statement' for contemporary Catholic education.[111]

Not only speaking aspirationally about the goals of Catholic schooling, this document

also recognised the changing nature of Catholic schools. *The Catholic School*

speaks of the problems facing Catholic schooling and particularly identifies what the

writers believe to be a fundamental problem: "The real problem facing the Catholic

school is to identify and lay down the conditions necessary for it to fulfil its

mission."[112] The document, obliquely addressing the rise in lay staff, specifically

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[109] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School,* (1977). https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html (downloaded 8/010/21)

[110] Gerald Grace, *Vatican II and New Thinking About Catholic Education Aggiornamento Thinking and Principles into Practice,* Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education (CRDCE) (St. Mary's University, Twickenham, London UK, 2016), p. 2.

[111] Grace, *Vatican II and New Thinking*, p. 2.

[112] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School,* (1977), paragraph 64. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html (downloaded 8/010/21)

speaks about the importance of those employed in Catholic schools and the heritage they are charged with carrying into the future.[113]

This document presents numerous concepts which continued to be present in most of the Catholic educational documents that followed. It argues that Catholic schools need to review, renew and reconstruct themselves for relevant engagement in contemporary culture.[114] It speaks of a unique Catholic identity which Catholic schools are built upon and are charged to inculcate across all aspects of the school environment. As such, it conveys the importance of a school's staff for creating and maintaining what the Vatican views as an authentic Catholic culture. This theme also continues as a focal point in all future Vatican documents regarding Catholic schooling.

1.3.4 *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*:[115]

This document consists of four sections, each specifically articulating a theology of laity within a Catholic school setting. With the declining numbers of Religious sisters, brothers and priests in leadership and teaching roles in school, the presence of Catholic laity was increasing at the time of the document's writing:

> The most basic reason for this new role for Catholic laity, a role
> which the Church regards as positive and enriching, is…

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[113]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, paragraph 65.

[114]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, paragraph 3.

[115]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses To Faith,* (1982).
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/
rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html
(downloaded 13/07/21)

theological. Especially in the course of the last century, the authentic image of the laity within the People of God has become increasingly clear; it has now been set down in two documents of the Second Vatican Council, which give profound expression to the richness and uniqueness of the lay vocation: The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, and the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity.[116]

This document is particularly important for exploring the thesis topic as it highlights the Vatican's view regarding the critical role that an increasingly lay cohort of teachers, principals and administrative staff play in establishing the culture, identity and pedagogy of Catholic schooling:

Lay Catholic educators in schools, whether teachers, directors, administrators, or auxiliary staff, must never have any doubts about the fact that they constitute an element of great hope for the Church. The Church puts its trust in them entrusting them with the task of gradually bringing about an integration of temporal reality with the Gospel, so that the Gospel can thus reach into the lives of all men and women.[117]

1.3.5 *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium,*

Cultural Identity of the Catholic School:[118]

This 1997 document offers the Vatican's perception of the changes that were occurring in secular society and a sense of the implications that such changes meant for the identity of Catholic schooling. The writers of this document remain committed, perhaps somewhat unrealistically, to a view that consecrated persons (*Religious*

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[116] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics In Schools: Witnesses To Faith,* (1982), paragraph 2.

[117] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics In Schools: Witnesses To Faith,* (1982), paragraph 81.

[118] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Cultural Identity of the Catholic School,* (1997).
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html
(downloaded 15/04/21)

sisters and brothers) would have a significant ongoing role to play in Catholic

schools: "The presence of men and women religious, side by side with priests and

lay teachers, affords pupils a vivid image of the Church and makes recognition of its

riches easier."[119]

The document also conveys Vatican concerns about a widening gap between

Catholic teaching and societal ethics and norms.[120] The document calls for Catholic

schools to undertake "courageous renewal."[121] Such renewal is presented as a

reaffirmation of Catholic doctrine and practice. Alongside the call to re-establish and

build upon the long-standing heritage of education in the Catholic tradition, the

document insists that renewal does not imply that a Catholic school is to simply

adapt and accept new societal norms:

> The precious heritage of the experience gained over the centuries
> reveals its vitality precisely in the capacity for prudent innovation.
> And so, now as in the past, the Catholic school must be able to
> speak for itself effectively and convincingly.[122]

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[119]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of The Third Millennium,* paragraph 13.

[120]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education,*The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium,* paragraph 6.

[121]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of The Third Millennium,* paragraph 3.

[122]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium,* paragraph 3.

1.3.6 _Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion_:[123]

This Vatican document was promulgated by Pope Benedict XVI in 2011 and formed

part of the Vatican's reflections on the fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican

Council:

> The Members of the Congregation for Catholic Education's
> Plenary Assembly, meeting in 2011, accepted the suggestion of
> Pope Benedict XVI and entrusted to the Dicastery the task of
> preparing for the anniversary celebrations of the Declaration
> Gravissimum Educationis (50 years) and the Apostolic
> Constitution Ex Corde Ecclesiae (25 years), both of which fall in
> 2015. The aim is to give new stimulus to the Church's involvement
> in the field of education.[124]

The document builds upon the conceptual framework presented in Gravissimum

educationis and points to the changed societal contexts that Catholic schools existed

within. Addressing both Catholic schools and Universities, the document describes

an _educational emergency_ which requires Catholic schools to establish, "education

relations which, in order to be genuine, should convey vital values and principles to

younger generations, not only to help individual growth and maturation, but also to

contribute to building the common good."[125]

This document covers a number of topics, offering suggestions as to how schools

and universities should be expected to create an authentic Catholic culture.[126] In

addition, it reflects on the challenges that schools and universities were likely to face

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[123] Congregation For Catholic Education, _Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion,_
Instrumentum laboris, (2014).
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/
rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20140407_educare-oggi-e-domani_en.html
(downloaded 14/04/21)

[124] Congregation For Catholic Education, _Educating Today and Tomorrow_, Presentation.

[125] Congregation For Catholic Education, _Educating Today and Tomorrow_, Introduction.

[126] Congregation For Catholic Education, _Educating Today and Tomorrow_, Section 2.

in future times.[127] In particular, the document describes an urgent need in the twenty-first century for a re-identification of Catholic schooling.[128] The concept of 're-identification' was on the agenda for a number of Australian Catholic School Commissions at the time when this document was released. This is especially evident in relation to the project initiated in Victoria, the *Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project' (ECSIP).*[129] The research and work undertaken by the leaders of this Project both acknowledged the cultural and religious changes that were taking place in Catholic schools as well as proposing a way to measure and respond to the changing circumstances.

1.3.7 *The Identity of the Catholic School For a Culture of Dialogue*:[130]

Like previous Vatican documents on Catholic schooling, *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue,* picks up and develops familiar Vatican themes. These include, the mission and identity of Catholic schools, the importance of parents and teachers, the nature of Catholic schooling as ecclesial entities, which have a specific religious mission to fulfil.[131] As the title of the document suggests, at stake is the identity of Catholic schooling. The authors of this document make the

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127   Congregation For Catholic Education, *Educating Today and Tomorrow*, Section 3.

128   Congregation For Catholic Education, *Educating Today and Tomorrow*, Section 3, 1.

129   Didier Pollefeyt and Jan Bouwens, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity, Research Methodology and Research Results in Catholic Schools in Victoria,* Australia, (Distribution, Global Book Marketing, UK 2014).

130   Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue,* (for Educational Institutions), (2022), paragraph 38.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/
rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html
(downloaded 07/05/22)

131   Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Identity of the Catholic School*, paragraph 38.

point that for meaningful dialogue to occur, understanding one's own identity is critical. As such, this document proposes that the unique identity of Catholic schooling should be understood and protected, not only for the purpose of maintaining integrity of mission, but also for respecting the diversity of others:

> Dialogue combines attention to one's own identity with the understanding of others and respect for diversity. In this way, the Catholic school becomes an educating community in which the human person can express themselves and grow in his or her humanity, in a process of relational dialogue, interacting in a constructive way, exercising tolerance, understanding different points of view and creating trust in an atmosphere of authentic harmony.[132]

The comprehensive nature of this document clearly reiterates aspects of Catholic thinking that have emerged in the aftermath of Vatican II. Moreover, it explores what the term 'Catholic' refers to and reiterates the overarching decision-making power of the local bishop: "The diocesan/eparchial Bishop plays a central role in discerning the "Catholic" identity of a school".[133] However, in addition to restating the identity markers of what the Vatican views as an authentic Catholic school culture, this document also insists on the diversity and plurality of Catholic schooling. In doing so, it points to Pope Francis' three principles for ensuring meaningful dialogue:

> The duty to respect one's own identity and that of others, because true dialogue cannot be built on ambiguity or a willingness to sacrifice some good for the sake of pleasing others. The courage to accept differences, because those who are different, either culturally or religiously, should not be seen or treated as enemies, but rather welcomed as fellow-travellers, in the genuine conviction that the good of each resides in the good of all. Sincerity of intentions, because dialogue, as an authentic expression of our humanity, is not a strategy for achieving specific goals, but…

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[132]   Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Identity of the Catholic School*, paragraph 30.

[133]   Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Identity of the Catholic School*, paragraph 59.

rather a path to truth, one that deserves to be undertaken
patiently, in order to transform competition into cooperation.[134]

The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue, acknowledges the

significant plurality of religion and culture which exists in Australian Catholic

schooling. However, a key challenge of this document is to address the question of

how the principles of dialogue can find a home within a Catholic school's overall

pedagogic practices and curriculum.

1.3.8 *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*:[135]

This document provides a window for viewing the educational agenda of the

Australian Government and that of individual State and Territory Governments.

Moreover, it is a document which was developed in collaboration with leaders from

each of Australia's three educational sectors. As such, it presents the voice of a

significant coalition. The document was developed as the foundational statement for

the newly emerging Australian Curriculum.[136] The document articulates a vision of

educational excellence for all students: "Curriculum will be designed to develop

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[134] Pope Francis, *Address to the Participants in the International Peace Conference,* Al-Azhar
Conference Centre, Cairo, (2017), paragraph 5.
http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/april/documents/papa-
francesco_20170428_egitto-conferenza-pace.html
(downloaded 14/7/22)

[135] Australian Government, *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians,*
Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, (2008), p. 14/15.
http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/
National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf
(downloaded 19/06/22)

[136] The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, (ACARA) was established to
develop a National framework for Curriculum and Assessment in all Australian schools. It states its
purpose as being the authority and advisor on the Australian National Curriculum and provides advice
to Australian education ministers. Information on ACARA can be obtained from its website.
acara.edu.au

successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed

citizens."[137] Furthermore, the document places particular focus on the role of schools

in developing a shared vision for Australian society:[138]

> Global integration and international mobility have increased
> rapidly in the past decade. As a consequence, new and exciting
> opportunities for Australians are emerging. This heightens the
> need to nurture an appreciation of and respect for social, cultural
> and religious diversity, and a sense of global citizenship.[139]

The importance of this twenty-page document cannot be overestimated. In stating

what Australian education is meant to achieve, this document, places a responsibility

on all schools to develop a school culture and pedagogy that animates student

learning and achievement in ways which positively shape Australia's future.

1.4 Précis of Chapters

1.4.1 Chapter Two:

Chapter Two introduces the Research Project — *Parental Motivations for Selecting*

Enrolment in a Catholic School. The Chapter begins by providing the rationale as to

why undertaking this project was important for considering the effect of the schooling

marketplace on Catholic schools. It suggests that exploring the parental voice,

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[137]   Australian Government, *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians,* Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, (2008), p. 14/15. http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/ National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf (downloaded 19/06/22)

[138]   Australian Government, *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians,* p. 4.

[139]   Australian Government, *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians,* p. 4.

regarding selection of a Catholic school, is potentially one critical factor in shaping a school's site ontology. In impacting a school's site ontology, parental enrolment choice represents one powerful means by which the marketplace interacts with Catholic schooling.

Chapter Two provides insight and clarity regarding the process used to establish and explore the Research Project. It outlines the technical details surrounding the methodology employed in carrying out the Project. Additionally, Chapter Two also presents Research Project data which provides insight in to reasons which parents gave for selecting enrolment in a Catholic school and the reasons which would potentially cause them to reconsider their enrolment decision-making. The data presented in this Chapter suggests that both Australian Catholic school authorities, as well as parents must negotiate fundamental tensions between the religious and the secular goals of Catholic schooling.

1.4.2 Chapter Three:

Chapter Three explores a number of key topics and theological positions which provide a theoretical foundation for exploring Catholicism's influence on the educational marketplace. Understanding the vision and mission of Catholic schooling demands an appreciation of the significant role that the Vatican plays in driving its international approach to education and in particular, its focus on primary and secondary schooling. In order to reveal the importance accorded to schools in the evangelisation mission of the Catholic Church, a number of important themes will be explored.

Firstly, the political nature of Catholicism's engagements in the global arena is considered. Chapter Three explores the manner in which Catholicism is structured, its significant global membership and the presence of the Pope as a world leader whose voice remains religiously and politically prominent. Secondly, Chapter Three highlights one of the most important Catholic convocations of the twentieth century — the Second Vatican Council. In *bringing up to date the code of canon law* at that Council, Catholicism reimagined how it and its institutions, including its schools, were to journey into the future.[140] What it could not control, was the unforeseen changes which occurred in the Church in the aftermath of Vatican II, as well as the impact of the enormous social changes occurring within civil societies, both of which impacted aspects of Australian Catholic schooling.[141]

Finally, Chapter Three emphasises the importance of the theology which gave rise to Catholicism's focus on schooling and the theology which proclaims the right of parents to have schooling choice. This Chapter does not particularly focus on Australia and the development of Catholic schools within the specificity of this local context. Rather, it provides a foundation and platform for narrating the manner in which Catholic schooling in Australia has emerged. Moreover, this Chapter examines Vatican documents which describe the culture of Catholic schooling and the role that religion is expected to play in shaping a school's pedagogic practices.

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[140]   Pope John XXIII, *Announcement Of An Ecumenical Council,* paragraph 15.
https://vatican2voice.org/91docs/announcement.htm
(downloaded: 24/07/2022),

[141]   Charles, S. Maier, "The Crisis of Capitalism in the 1970s", in *The Shock of the Global,* ed., Niall Ferguson, Charles, S. Maier, Erez Manela and Daniel J Sargent, (Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 44.

1.4.3 <u>Chapter Four</u>:

Chapter Four examines the establishment and maintenance of Catholic schooling in Australia. In doing so it provides an account of the particular Australian variables that have created the vast Catholic schooling system in that national context. In considering the development and embedding of Catholic schooling as a key contributor to Australia's overall schooling offerings, as well as to educational funding policy more broadly, this Chapter investigates a number of topics. Firstly, Catholic schooling will be considered from its early days in colonial Australia. The context of colonial educational structures is particularly important as the decisions taken by both Church and State during this time period were crucial to cementing the future of Australian Catholic schooling.

Secondly, this Chapter demonstrates the significant human resources Catholic institutions deployed in the establishment and servicing of Australian Catholic schools from their earliest iterations. This Chapter suggests that without this ready-made, willing workforce, Catholic schools would not have managed to develop in such a way that this schooling sector can now educate approximately one fifth of all Australian students.[142]

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[142]   The Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4221.0 - *Schools, Australia, 2021,* Released 23/02/2022. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/schools/latest-release (downloaded 15/07/22)

This Chapter also points to the various political debates and interventions which saw the return of substantial government funding to the Catholic and Independent schooling sectors in the 1960s and 70s. Narration of the events surrounding the reintroduction of government funding to Catholic schools will be used to explore both the political power of Catholicism in the political arena, as well as the creation of a system of schooling.

Finally, a further significant topic which will be explored in this Chapter relates to the impact of parental choice in the creation of the Australian schooling marketplace. While acknowledging the impact of neoliberal thinking and government policy as a factor in creating the schooling marketplace, Chapter Four also points to the theology and political power of Catholicism in fighting for parental right for schooling choice and the right of Catholicism to own and operate schools. Effectively, Chapter Four considers the specificities which have given rise to how the present-day Australian schooling system has emerged.

1.4.4 <u>Chapter Five:</u>

Chapter Five examines the complexities facing Catholic schools in responding to the challenges of the schooling marketplace. Three specific themes will be explored in order to assess the capacity of Catholic school authorities to achieve the specific goal of creating an authentic Catholic religious culture and identity. Firstly, this

Chapter notes again that Catholic schools are partners with Australian State and Federal Governments and with the non-government schooling sector in achieving the National goals of Australian schooling. However, unlike Australian government secular schools, this Chapter highlights the particular religious agenda of Catholic authorities, who state that Catholic schools are expected to encase the curriculum and other school activities in an identifiable Catholic school culture.

Secondly, two central themes will be explored in terms of mapping the expectation of the creation of an authentic Catholic school culture. Firstly, the roles of the principal and teacher will be explored. This Chapter demonstrates that principals and teachers are expected to play a central role in creating an authentic Catholic school culture, translating Vatican goals for Catholic schools into a local context. Chapter Five also outlines the cultural and social impediments to this ambition, given the nature of Australian society as well as the expectations of parents. Next, this Chapter considers the central role of the school's programme of religious education and what plurality of belief means for how a religious education programme is envisioned and enacted.

Finally, Chapter Five argues that recognition of a school's individual site ontology suggests that every school has particular circumstances and realities which impact on how a school's pedagogy manifests. This Chapter examines what this recognition may mean for Catholic schooling if we take into account the effects of an

increasingly secular Australian society and increasing religious diversity in school environments. In brief, Chapter Five points to how site ontological realities shape Catholic schools at the local level and suggests that the complexities associated with the schooling marketplace are a shaper of that ontology, a factor which cannot be ignored or underestimated.

1.5 Methodology

This thesis employs a qualitative methodology for exploring how Catholic education authorities have aided in the creation of the Australian schooling marketplace and how that same marketplace now impacts the ability of Catholic schools to achieve its religious goals. The key questions that arise in this thesis will be examined by using both a descriptive and normative methodological approach. Employing a descriptive methodology is essential for providing context via the presentation of relevant historiographies of literature and data which highlight the development of Australian Catholic schools. A normative approach is employed when critiquing and analysing arguments which point to the challenges facing Australian Catholic schools within the schooling marketplace.

Alongside presenting and assessing documents from a range of sources, this thesis will report on the findings of a Research project. The process used for gathering data and reporting on its findings employs a qualitative methodological approach. Furthermore, in relation to the interview process, the methodology of progressive focus is used. This methodology was deemed as being most appropriate in that it

provides opportunity to engage with the interviewee in order to focus progressively on contextualising and deepening the exploration of interview questions with participants. Such a methodology assisted in exploring the complexities associated with the topic of school selection.[143] A full overview and analysis of the Research Project is undertaken in Chapter Two.

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[143]   Rudolf R. Sinkovics and Eva A. Alfoldi, "Progressive Focusing and Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research: The enabling role of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS)," in *Management International Review*, 52 (6), 817-845 (DOI: 10.1007/s11575-012-0140-5), (2012). http://www.manchester.ac.uk/escholar/uk-ac-man-scw:137280 (downloaded 14/05/21)

CHAPTER TWO

The Research Project

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 <u>Overview</u>:

This Chapter provides an introduction to the Research Project — *The Motivations of Parents for Seeking Enrolment in a Catholic School.* The Project was undertaken in order to provide relevant data regarding the interactions between parents, Catholic schooling and the marketplace in which schools exist. As such, Chapter Two presents the organisational aspects of the Research Project and clarifies all matters pertaining to its relevance, its aims, design and implementation. In addition, this Chapter presents key insights and findings which the Research Project has produced.

A number of studies have taken place in Australia that explore why parents select specific schools.[1] These studies point to the various factors which shape parental enrolment decision making. For example, Diana Warren highlights a report from the Independent Schools Council of Australia which suggests that among the many factors which influence parental enrolment decision-making, for the most part,

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[1]   Studies surrounding the topic of the motivations of parents for school selection referred in this thesis include outcomes of PhD studies, relevant texts and government initiated reports.

parents are wanting a school which will provide a child with a "well rounded

education."[2]

> A survey conducted for the Independent Schools Council of
> Australia (ISCA) in 2008 found that, in choosing an independent
> school for their children, parents are influenced by a variety of
> factors, including religious affiliation, broad academic outcomes,
> quality teaching, a supportive, caring environment, the physical
> environment and facilities, the content of the curriculum, quality
> leadership and the range of extracurricular opportunities; but what
> parents wanted above all is for their children to have a well-
> rounded education with a strong emphasis on learning life skills.[3]

Alongside the report from the Independent School's Council of Australia, Warren

suggests other factors which influence parental schooling choice. These factors

include opportunities for a child to develop social networks, whether a school is co-

educational or single-gender and whether a primary school provides a pathway to a

"high school with a good reputation."[4] Many of these factors correlate with Research

Project findings.

The Centre for Independent Studies has also reported on the reasons why parents

select particular schools.[5] This study provides data which identifies the most

frequently reported reasons given by parents for school selection. The report,

presented by Glen Fahey, was carried out across Government, Catholic and

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[2]   Diana Warren, *Parents' Choices of Primary Schools,* Commissioned by the Australian
Government's Institute of Family Services, Growing Up in Australia, (2016), p. 154.
https://aifs.gov.au/research/commissioned-reports/parents-choices-primary-school
(downloaded 15/09/22)

[3]   Warren, *Parents' Choices of Primary Schools,* p. 154.

[4]   Warren, *Parents' Choices of Primary Schools,* p. 153.

[5]   Glen Fahey, *What Do Parents Want From Schools?,* The Centre for Independent Studies, (2019),
p. 2.
https://www.cis.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/pp26.pdf
(downloaded 15/09/22)

Independent schooling sectors and identifies school location as being the number one priority for parents who participated in the study.[6] Additionally, this study suggests that only 12 per cent of parents selected religious reasons as being a key priority alongside such things as location, academic standards, school facilities, cost and discipline.[7]

> The most common priority reported by parents in choosing a school is location (61%), followed by facilities (48%), academic standards (47%), cost (39%), discipline (32%), interests (28%), special needs (13%), religion (12%), and whether a school is co-ed or single-sex (8%).[8]

While Fahey's data is representative of parental comments across all three of Australia's schooling sectors, the Research Project focused on gathering data which specifically related to the priority which parents placed on selecting a Catholic school and the importance which they placed on a school's religious nature. Thus, when assessing data that relates to the importance ascribed by parents to a school's religious nature, data solely reflects parental views within the context of the Catholic schooling sector.

To assess how the marketplace interacts with Catholic schools it is critical to view Catholic schooling from the perspective of its specific religious context. The Vatican states that the 'raison d'être' of Catholic schools is to "proclaim the Gospel to all

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6   Fahey, *What Do Parents Want From Schools?*, p. 2.

7   Fahey, *What Do Parents Want From Schools?*, p. 2.

8   Fahey, *What Do Parents Want From Schools?*, p. 2.

nations",[9] and in doing so, Catholic schools are expected to offer a particular kind of religious educational experience for students.

> It can be said that in the Catholic school, in addition to the tools common to other schools, reason enters into dialogue with faith, which also allows access to truths that transcend the mere data of the empirical and rational sciences, in order to open up to the whole of truth so as to respond to the deepest questions of the human soul that do not only concern immanent reality.[10]

While Vatican authorities clearly articulate what Catholic schools are meant to achieve, data obtained from the Research Project suggests that there is significant variance between the Vatican's goals for Catholic schooling and those of many parents who select this schooling option.

When referring to parental motivations for selecting enrolment in a Catholic school, Warren further suggests that Catholic parents, particularly mothers, demonstrate loyalty to the Catholic education sector. Warren's comment is based on the data which notes that half of the children whose mothers identified as being Catholic, had themselves attended a Catholic school.[11] Research Project data suggests that Warren may be correct in terms of this issue of loyalty, as data points to a connection between a parent who attended a Catholic school for their primary and/or secondary schooling and a parent's decision to enrol their child in a Catholic school setting.

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9   Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue,* (for Educational Institutions), (2022), paragraph 5.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html
(downloaded 07/05/22)

10   Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Identity of the Catholic School*, paragraph 5.

11   Diana Warren, *Parents' Choices of Primary Schools,* Commissioned by the Australian Government's Institute of Family Services, Growing Up in Australia, (2016), p. 157.
https://aifs.gov.au/research/commissioned-reports/parents-choices-primary-school
(downloaded 15/09/22)

Accordingly, one-hundred per cent of practising Catholic parents who were surveyed attended a Catholic school for their own schooling. Eighty-three per cent of surveyed Catholic parents who occasionally practised their faith tradition went to a Catholic school and fifty-three per cent of Catholic parents who had no formal connection with the Church also attended a Catholic school as a child. However, whether such figures denote parental loyalty, or suggests that attending a Catholic school as a child simply represents one factor in the raft of reasons which parents gave for choosing a Catholic school remains unclear.

The Research Project, when viewed alongside other Reports, demonstrates that generally, no one factor is completely responsible for parental schooling choice. Alongside factors such as loyalty, school location or a school's academic results, *religious reasons* are also noted by some parents as being a motivator for parental school selection.[12] However, even if religious reasons are only one factor, they are still significant and it is important to think about what the term, *religious reasons*, actually means. Exploring the importance which a parent placed on the religious nature of a Catholic school and its importance for schooling choice was a key priority for the Research Project.

Chapter Two presents data which suggests that no assumptions can be made, or automatic correlation be drawn between a parent's religious identity and the importance that a parent may place on a school's religious nature. More so,

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[12]   Glen Fahey, *What Do Parents Want From Schools?,* The Centre for Independent Studies, (2019), p. 2.
https://www.cis.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/pp26.pdf
(downloaded 15/09/22)

Research Project data suggests that the term, '*religious reasons',* encompasses a broad range of understandings. Whether a parent identified as Catholic or 'other than Catholic', the range of parental opinions regarding the importance of a school's religious culture and programmes varied significantly. In conclusion, this Chapter presents key aspects of the Research Project's data and begins to explore what parental schooling choice and the schooling marketplace may mean for Australian Catholic schools.

2.1.2 Literature Review:

A number of authors and texts have contributed to the content of Chapter Two and the planning and implementation of the Research Project. In relation to the design of the Research Project, Rudolf Sinkovics and Eva Alfoldi point to the rationale and benefit for using the methodology of *progressive focus* in qualitative research.[13] This methodology was deemed as being most appropriate in that it provided opportunity to engage with an interviewee in ways which focus progressively on contextualising and deepening the exploration of interview questions as there is often complexity surrounding the reasons given by parents for schooling choice. Anecdotally, as a former principal who conducted hundreds of enrolment interviews across both primary and secondary school settings, parental enrolment choice was generally based on a number of complex factors. Sinkovics and Alfoldi suggest that the

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[13]   Rudolf R. Sinkovics and Eva A. Alfoldi, "Progressive Focusing and Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research: The enabling role of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS)," in *Management International Review*, 52 (6), 817-845 (DOI: 10.1007/s11575-012-0140-5), (2012). http://www.manchester.ac.uk/escholar/uk-ac-man-scw:137280 (downloaded 14/05/21)

methodology of *progressive focus* is particularly helpful in situations where there is a high level of complexity associated with the topic.[14]

The Australian Bureau of Statistics provides specific information and data which relates to Australian schooling and is helpful in that it demonstrates the context in which Catholic schools operate. The latest census figures (2021) demonstrate the significant religious diversity of Australian society amid its declining Christian population and its growing secularity.[15] Data from the ABS is used to highlight the context in which Australian Catholic schools function and to frame the implications of the emerging complexities afforded by increasing secularity and religious plurality for Catholic school leaders, all of whom have a responsibility to achieve the Vatican's religious goals for Catholic schooling.

A further source of documentation which demonstrates the context in which Catholic schools operate is presented by the National Catholic Education Commission. The data presented by the NCEC highlights the religious diversity of students within Australian Catholic schools.[16] Moreover, data from the NCEC points to a continuing decline in the number of Catholic students who attend a Catholic school, as well as suggesting that while the majority of students continue to identify as Catholic, no

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[14]   Sinkovics et al., "Progressive Focusing and Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research".

[15]   Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Cultural diversity*: Census, Key Statistics, Reference Period 2021, (2022).
https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/cultural-diversity-census/latest-release
(downloaded 12/09/22)

[16]   National Catholic Education Commission, 2021 *Annual Report, Statistics,* (2022) p. 21.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/about-ncec/annual-reports
(downloaded 15/09/22)

assumption can be made regarding commonality of views based on a religious

identity.[17]

Brian Croke, in a text titled, *Catholic Schools: Hope in Uncertain Times,* considers

the issue of religious diversity in Australian Catholic schools.[18] Croke suggests that

in the years preceding Vatican II and in the immediate years following its conclusion,

bishops had little interest in or need to monitor data regarding school enrolment as it

related to the religious diversity of students.[19] However, he argues that the changing

enrolment data, which relates to the religious affiliation of parents, means that

Catholic authorities must grapple with the changing demographics of their schools.[20]

Croke's argument points to a Church which is struggling to keep pace with the

diversity of Catholic school enrolment and asks what such diversity may mean for

the religious mission of Catholic schooling.

In relation to parental schooling choice, and its implications for Australian Catholic

schooling, a number of papers are referenced. A report commissioned by the

Australian Government's Institute of Family Studies and prepared by Diana Warren,

presents data about parental enrolment choice across each of Australia's three

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[17] National Catholic Education Commission, *Framing Paper - Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools*, prepared for the NCEC by its Faith Formation and Religious Education Standing Committee, (2018), p. 9.
 https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/NCEC_Framing_Paper_Religious_Education.pdf (downloaded: 3/08/2022)

[18] Brian Croke, "Non-Catholics and Catholics in Catholic Schools in Australia*", in Catholic Schools: Hope in Uncertain Times*, ed., A. Benjamin and D. Riley, (67-81. Mulgrave: John Garratt Publishing, 2008).

[19] Croke, "Non-Catholics and Catholics in Catholic Schools in Australia", p. 69.

[20] Croke, "Non-Catholics and Catholics in Catholic Schools in Australia", p. 69.

schooling sectors.[21] The data which Warren presents regarding the variety of reasons which parents give for selecting a primary school correlates with many of the Research Project findings. However, a major difference between Warren's report and the Research Project relates to the emphasis placed by the Research Project on gathering data about the importance parents placed on the religious nature of Catholic schooling for enrolment decision-making.

A report from the Grattan Institute titled — *The Myth of Markets in School Enrolment,* by Ben Jensen, points to complexities of a marketplace based on competition.[22] When speaking about the competitive schooling marketplace Jensen highlights the emphasis which many parents place on academic performance and he challenges the view that a competitive schooling marketplace will necessarily produce an increase in student learning and achievement.[23] Jensen's views seem to point to the failings of neoliberal thinking which suggest that free competitive markets produce the best outcomes for the consumer.[24] Jensen's research is particularly relevant in relation to exploring the schooling marketplace and the priorities which drive parental school choice.

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[21] Diana Warren, *Parents' Choices of Primary Schools,* Commissioned by the Australian Government's Institute of Family Services, Growing Up in Australia, (2016).
https://aifs.gov.au/research/commissioned-reports/parents-choices-primary-school
(downloaded 15/05/22)

[22] Ben Jensen, *The Myth of Markets in School Education,* Commissioned by the Grattan Institute, (2013).
https://grattan.edu.au/report/the-myth-of-markets-in-school-education/
(downloaded 16/05/22)

[23] Jensen, *The Myth of Markets*, p. 3.

[24] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism,* (Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 2.

Another report which considers what the leading motivators are for parents in relation to schooling choice (which has been noted in the introduction to this chapter) is presented by Glenn Fahey, *What Do Parents Want From Schools?*[25] When describing factors which limit parental schooling choice in the government schooling sector Fahey points to location.[26] This point is relevant in that a number of parents who took part in the Research Project, indicated that if schooling choice had been a possibility in the government schooling sector, enrolment in a Catholic school may not have been considered. In addition, Fahey also points to the costs related to schooling in the non-government schooling sector as being a limiting factor.[27] This point is also particularly relevant to Research Project data which also suggests that access to schooling choice is dependent upon cost.

Literature regarding the mission, purpose and identity of Catholic schooling is extensive from both Vatican sources and scholars who have explored how Catholic schooling has manifested in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council. As this thesis is concerned with potential tensions between Vatican mandates for Catholic education and the demands of the marketplace, it is necessary to explore how the marketplace interacts with what Vatican authorities articulate as constituting an authentic Catholic school culture.

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[25]   Glen Fahey, *What Do Parents Want From Schools?,* The Centre for Independent Studies, (2019), p. 2.
https://www.cis.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/pp26.pdf
(downloaded 15/09/22)

[26]   Fahey, *What Do Parents Want From Schools?,* p. 7.

[27]   Fahey, *What Do Parents Want From Schools?,* p. 7.

A text by Didier Pollefeyt and Jan Bouwens — *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity, Research Methodology and Research Results in Catholic Schools in Victoria,* Australia, is referenced in order to highlight the importance which Catholic leaders in Australia place on re-contextualising the identity of Catholic schooling.[28] Pollefeyt and Bouwens' text presents a detailed description of the Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project, which was implemented in a number of Australian Catholic schools and promoted by Victorian Catholic Education. This text is particularly relevant in that it presents a methodology for investigating a school's Catholic identity and secondly, for evaluating the findings and making recommendations to enhance a school's Catholic identity. Research Project data indicates a wide variety of parental expectations in relation to what a Catholic school's religious culture and identity is expected to 'do'. Pollefeyt and Bouwens' work in Australian schools suggests a way to address such diversity while claiming to maintain the integrity of what the Vatican states as critical to maintaining an authentic Catholic school identity and culture.

Margaret Freund in a paper titled '*They Hear All About It Around the Traps', Catholic Ethos and School Choice,* proposes that Catholic schools are participants in the Australian schooling marketplace where enrolment diversity continues to place Catholic schools in a state of religious and cultural change.[29] Freund suggests that

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28 Didier Pollefeyt and Jan Bouwens, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity, Research Methodology and Research Results in Catholic Schools in Victoria,* Australia, (Distribution, Global Book Marketing, UK, 2014).

29 Margaret Freund, '*They Hear All About It Around the Traps*', *Catholic Ethos and School Choice,* Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Notre Dame University Fremantle, (2001).
https://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2001/fre01667.pdf
(downloaded 6/05/22)

parents choose Catholic schools for a number of reasons which include a belief that Catholic schools have a particular focus on pastoral care and that these schools inculcate "values and virtues of character development, disciplinary standards and lastly religious instruction".[30]

In addition to these attributes which parents believe are features of Catholic schooling, Freund also suggests that parents select schools on the basis of their academic reputation, the perception of higher standards of education and teacher quality.[31] Freund's suggestions regarding parental motivations for school selection are reflected in Research Project findings. Moreover, Research Project findings, like a number of the studies to which Freund referred, suggest that Catholic schools in Australia exist within a marketplace that continues to shape the ability of Catholic schooling to achieve its religious mission.

2.1.3 Contextualising the Research Project

There are a number of factors in the Australian schooling marketplace which combine to enable and limit school choice. In mapping how schooling choice has come about in Australia and what factors continue to influence parental enrolment choice, this section suggests four areas that need to be explored to provide appropriate context. First, it is necessary to examine the context of Australian Catholic schooling as it relates to national statistics regarding religious diversity. Like

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[30]   Freund, '*They Hear All About It Around the Traps*'.

[31]   Freund, '*They Hear All About It Around the Traps*'.

Government and Independent schooling sectors, Catholic schools welcome students

from all religious, secular and cultural backgrounds.[32]

Enrolment data for Australian Catholic schooling demonstrates the significant

diversity of religious traditions that exist within Catholic schools, as well as students

who have no connection to a religion.[33] The NCEC presents data in their annual

reports which relate to the nature of school enrolment in terms of student religious

affiliation.[34] Such data indicates that the number of students in Catholic schools who

have a Catholic identity is in decline.

Table 1: National Percentage of Students Listed as Catholic 2015-2020[35]

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
National % of Catholic Students	69%	69%	67%	Not Available	66%	63%	62%

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[32] Catholic Education Office South Australia, *Enrolment and Fees.*
https://www.cesa.catholic.edu.au/our-schools/enrolment-fees
(downloaded 15/09/22)

[33] National Catholic Education Commission, *2020 Annual Report,* Statistics, (2021).
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/about-ncec/annual-reports/570-2020-annual-report-1/file
(downloaded 25/09/22)

[34] NCEC, 2020 Annual Report, Statistics.

[35] Data is taken from NCEC Annual Reports 2015-2020.
www.ncec.catholic.edu.au
(downloaded 25/09/22)

The NCEC's *2020 Annual Report* shows that 63 per cent of students who attend a Catholic school identify as Catholic.[36] Of the remaining 37 per cent, 15 per cent come from an alternate Christian tradition, 11 per cent have no religious tradition, 7 per cent have not recorded a religion and 4 per cent come from other than a Christian tradition.[37] At 63 per cent of the total student enrolment cohort, students who declare a Catholic identity are clearly in the majority. However, what does this statistic mean in terms of the schooling marketplace and its impact upon Catholic schools? Does such a figure suggest that this majority of Catholic students share similar religious beliefs and practices, as perhaps was the case prior to and in the immediate aftermath of the Second Vatican Council?

The NCEC suggests that this is not the case. Rather, its data suggests that the term Catholic cannot be considered as denoting a particular level of connection to Catholicism, belief in its teachings or knowledge of its traditions.[38]

> Of these, [Catholic families] many families are not regular participants in the life and worship of a parish. They, and those who are not Catholic, tend to lack familiarity and confidence with Catholic language and practice. The prevailing pluralisation and secularisation are part of the context in which students and their families live.[39]

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[36] National Catholic Education Commission, *2020 Annual Report,* Statistics, (2021). https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/about-ncec/annual-reports/570-2020-annual-report-1/file (downloaded 25/09/22)

[37] NCEC, *2020 Annual Report*, Statistics.

[38] National Catholic Education Commission, *Framing Paper - Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools,* (2018), p. 9. https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/NCEC_Framing_Paper_Religious_Education.pdf (downloaded 17/06/22)

[39] NCEC, *Framing Paper,* p. 9.

Research Project data supports the statement from the NCEC that there exists a significant diversity of religious belief and practice among the group of parents who identify as Catholic. Thus, when it comes to the Catholic student population, or the other than Catholic student population, there is no clear picture of what these religious labels may mean.

Freund also amplifies this point and suggests that many people who claim Catholic identity tend to fit into a category which could be described as 'cultural Catholics':[40]

> Although there are pockets of conservatism within the Australian church, the old rigidities have disappeared and as Paul Collins argues, more and more Australian Catholics describe themselves as 'cultural Catholics'. That is, they maintain an understanding of themselves as Catholic but are perhaps alienated from various church teachings on contraception divorce or homosexuality, and are not involved in Catholic practice.[41]

This diversity of religious belief and practice within the cohort of parents who identify as Catholic potentially adds to the challenges for Catholic educational leaders. This is especially so in relation to the importance which parents may place on a school's religious programme and culture. Bishops, laity appointed to school governing bodies (such as school boards and Catholic public juridic authorities) and principals have specific responsibilities when it comes to ensuring that the religious vision, which is articulated by Vatican authorities, is implemented across all Australian Catholic schools.

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[40] Margaret Freund, '*They Hear All About It Around the Traps*', *Catholic Ethos and School Choice,* Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Notre Dame University Fremantle, (2001).
https://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2001/fre01667.pdf
(downloaded 6/05/22)

[41] Freund, '*They Hear All About It Around the Traps*'. p. 3.

Accordingly, when parents enrol a child in a Catholic school, they are theoretically *buying in* to a long-established market-brand where religion and education is expected by the Vatican and local Catholic authorities to be inextricably linked. However, determining the degree to which parents want a school's religious culture and educational programme to be interwoven is an important question for both parents and the leaders of Catholic schooling in terms of finding an acceptable level of Catholicity for both groups.

Additionally, determining how possible it is for religion and culture to be interwoven in the Australian Catholic schooling context is an equally important question, given other demands on the Catholic system. Australian Catholic schools exist within an increasingly secularised society and a competitive schooling marketplace.[42] Pollefeyt and Bouwens expand on this point and suggest that Catholic schools are also affected by pluralisation, detraditionalisation and individualisation, all of which impact Catholic school identity.[43] Added to these factors, which shape the nature and identity of Australian Catholic schools, are the market forces which also shape and/or limit the religious nature of the Catholic schooling workforce.[44]

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[42]   Ben Jensen, *The Myth of Markets in School Education,* Commissioned by the Grattan Institute, (2013).
https://grattan.edu.au/report/the-myth-of-markets-in-school-education/
(downloaded 27/09/22)

[43]   Didier Pollefeyt and Jan Bouwens, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity, Research Methodology and Research Results in Catholic Schools in Victoria,* Australia, (Distribution, Global Book Marketing, UK, 2014), p. 20.

[44]   National Catholic Education Commission, *A Framework for Formation for Mission in Catholic Education,* (2018), p. 11.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/AFramework4FormationMission.pdf
(downloaded 27/09/22)

When reporting on the reasons which parents give for school selection, Fahey reports that only 12 per cent of parents name religion as being a first priority.[45] He reveals the top three reasons given by parents for school selection, with 61 per cent of parents listing location as a first priority, 48 per cent of parents listing facilities and 47 per cent listing academics as the main reasons for school selection.[46] What such statistics may mean for Catholic school leaders is particularly relevant when it comes to assessing the importance that parents place on the religious nature of Catholic schools in comparison to other factors which drive enrolment selection.

Secondly, and of equal importance as contextualising the diversity of enrolment within Catholic schools is the need to explore the impact and relevance of government school funding on the sector.[47] Alongside Catholic theological principles which have contributed to shaping how Australian education has emerged, the decision of successive governments to provide funding for the Catholic and the Independent schooling sectors has profoundly shaped and enabled parental market

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[45]   Glen Fahey, *What Do Parents Want From Schools?,* The Centre for Independent Studies, (2019), p. 6.
https://www.cis.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/pp26.pdf
(downloaded 15/09/22)

[46]   Fahey, *What Do Parents Want From Schools?,* p. 6.

[47]   Chris Ryan and Louise Watson, "The Drift to Private Schools in Australia: Understanding its Features", in *The Australian National University Centre for Economic Policy Research*, Discussion Paper no. 479, (2004).
https://rse.anu.edu.au/researchpapers/CEPR/DP479.pdf
(downloaded 17/05/22)

choice.[48] Ryan and Watson highlight the critical nature of government funding in

enabling parental schooling choice in the non-government schooling sector:

> To assume that the shift in enrolments from the government to
> private sector is purely the product of parental choice or that
> government funding for private schools is merely supporting the
> choice exercised by parents is simplistic. Such assumptions deny
> the critical role of government policy in influencing the
> environment (or "market") in which such choices are made.[49]

While also acknowledging, that for some parents, ideological or religious preference

may be a driving factor in schooling choice, Ryan and Watson suggest that the

"economic incentives" for selecting a non-government school have played an

important role.[50] The role played by government funding is a major element for

enabling parental schooling choice, especially in relation to schools which are low-

fee. However, the comments from parents who took part in the Research Project

clearly indicate that parents are making active and deliberate choices between

schooling sectors. Moreover, parents are choosing between schools in the same

schooling sector all of which have a relatively similar fee structure, the implication

being that enrolment choices are not simply or only based on the cost of school fees.

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[48]   Chris Ryan and Louise Watson, "The Drift to Private Schools in Australia: Understanding its
Features", in *The Australian National University Centre for Economic Policy Research*, Discussion
Paper no. 479, (2004), p. 1.
https://rse.anu.edu.au/researchpapers/CEPR/DP479.pdf
(downloaded 17/05/22)

[49]   Ryan et al, "The Drift to Private Schools", p. 1.

[50]   Ryan et al, "The Drift to Private Schools", p. 2.

However, Catholic school fees can vary substantially with Catholic diocesan schools generally having school fees at the lower end of the school fee spectrum.[51] For parents who are considering enrolment in both the Catholic and Independent schooling sectors the significant differential in school fees is often the determining factor for school selection.[52] Cahill and Gray suggest that "parents with limited means have limited choices while those with significant means have far more choice".[53]

The reasons surrounding the establishment of Australia's three-tiered system of schooling and the articulation of the right of parents to have schooling choice is explored in detail in Chapters Three and Four. However, for now it is important to draw attention to the fact that the decision of governments to fund Catholic and Independent schools has been a critical factor in enabling parental school choice.[54]

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[51]   Rosemary Cahill and Jan Gray, "Funding and Secondary School Choice in Australia: A Historical Consideration", in *Edith Cowan University Research Online*, (ECU Publications Pre., 2011, Vol 35, 1.) p. 134.
https://ro.ecu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=7335&context=ecuworks
(downloaded 19/09/22)

[52] An investigation of school websites indicates the difference in school fees associated with accessing a diocesan Catholic school in comparison to high-fee Independent colleges. As an example, the annual school fees for a year 12 student attending a diocesan school in Adelaide, South Australia ranges from approximately $6,000 p.a. to $16,000 p.a. Independent colleges list year twelve student fees from approximately $7,000 p.a. for a student attending an outer suburban Independent school, to approximately $28,000 p.a. for an inner suburban Independent college.
In addition, it must be noted that substantial differences in school fees also exist between Catholic colleges. Annual school fees for a year twelve student in Adelaide suburban diocesan Catholic schools range from approximately $6,000 to $16,000, while non-diocesan secondary colleges indicate that annual fees range from approximately $9,500 to $18,800. Additionally, it is important to note that Catholic schools offer significant discounts to parents on low incomes and to parents who have more than one child attending a school.

[53]   Rosemary Cahill and Jan Gray, "Funding and Secondary School Choice in Australia: A Historical Consideration", in *Edith Cowan University Research Online*, (ECU Publications Pre., 2011, Vol 35, 1.), p. 134.
https://ro.ecu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=7335&context=ecuworks
(downloaded 19/09/22)

[54]   Cahill et al, "Funding and Secondary School Choice in Australia". p. 134.

Moreover, data from the Research Project suggests that for many parents who select enrolment in a Catholic school any significant increase in school fees would necessitate a reconsideration of a parent's enrolment choice.

Thirdly, it is helpful to contextualise parental schooling choice in terms of how the Government schooling sector structures its school enrolment criteria. A number of parents who took part in the Research Project revealed what they believed to be the limitations associated with enrolment in the Government schooling sector. The term *zoning* in South Australia, where the Research Project was undertaken, refers to a process which generally defines a parent's enrolment options in terms of government schooling.

A school zone "is a defined area from which the school accepts its core intake of students. The school gives priority enrolment to children who live inside that zone."[55] Many parents who took part in the Research Project indicated that they considered enrolling their child in their local government school. However, these parents also indicated that they felt that the particular government school that was allocated to their residential area did not meet their expectations. Additionally, it is important to note that a number of parents indicated that if they had better access to a Government school of their choosing, their choice of enrolment would have favoured the government schooling sector.

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[55] Education Department of South Australia, *Placement in Schools*, School Zones. https://www.education.sa.gov.au/parents-and-families/enrol-school-or-preschool/find-school-zone-or-preschool-catchment-area
(downloaded 17/09/22)

Whether the decision related to a parent wanting a smaller school environment, or

parents who had what they described as a poor experience when visiting their

government zoned schooling option, a number of parents said that they were happy

to pay school fees as it gave them the right of schooling choice. Fahey suggests that

government schools can be structured in ways which limits parental enrolment

choice:

> In some jurisdictions, some government schools may be
> unavailable to families because they are partially or fully selective
> (due to academic or other ability exclusions). For others, their
> assigned local school may not necessarily be the most suitable —
> such as having an inconvenient commute, or being inconsistent
> with a child's interest and/or needs, or a family's values.
> Residence-based school assignment can also limit diversity by
> segregating students according to their place of residence,
> because local areas tend to share similar demographics.[56]

Fourth and finally, while enrolment in Australian Catholic schools remains strong, in

more recent times it has been in decline.[57] A 2019 report on student enrolment in

Australia, noted that since 2014 the Catholic enrolment market share has decreased:

> Catholic sector enrolments peaked in 2013 with a high of 20.6%
> but have since been in decline. The past few years have seen this
> decline worsen to the point where the Catholic sector is now in
> negative growth with an enrolment share of 19.7%.[58]

In contrast to these figures, the report also states that over the same period of time,

student enrolment in both the Independent and Government schooling sectors

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[56]   Glen Fahey, *What Do Parents Want From Schools?,* The Centre for Independent Studies, (2019),
p. 8.
https://www.cis.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/pp26.pdf
(downloaded 15/09/22)

[57]   Association of Independent Schools South Australia (AISSA), *Student Enrolment Trends and
Projections, ISCA Research Report 2019,* (2019).
https://isa.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ISA-2021-Enrolment-Trends-and-Projections-Public-
FINAL.pdf
(downloaded 10/09/22)

[58]   AISSA, 2019.

increased.[59] Likewise, when speaking about the Independent school sector, the report highlights that it "has increased its enrolment share every year since 1996, starting at 10.6% of the Australian school age population and climbing steadily to a high of 14% in 2018."[60]

Even with the declining enrolment pattern occurring across Australian Catholic schools, the data regarding student enrolment across all three of Australia's schooling sectors — Government, Catholic and Independent, displays relative consistency. Highlighting the recent decline in Catholic school enrolment to some extent demonstrates the realities of a schooling marketplace where "citizens become consumers who make choices."[61] Moreover, it demonstrates that parental schooling choice has the potential to shape how each of Australia's three-tiered system of education continues to develop.

Table 2 presents the percentage of students enrolled within each of Australia's three schooling sectors over a six-year period. These statistics show that no sector can afford to take enrolments for granted and that all sectors have to be responsive to parental demand.

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[59]   AISSA, 2019.

[60]   AISSA, 2019.

[61]   Craig Campbell, Helen Proctor and Geoffrey, Sherington, *School Choice: How Parents Negotiate the New School Market in Australia*, (Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest NSW, 2009), p. 4.

Table 2: Enrolment Percentages Government, Catholic and Independent

Sectors 2016-2021[62]

Total Enrolment	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Government Schools	65.4%	65.6%	65.7%	65.7%	65.6%	65.1%
Catholic Schools	20.2%	19.9%	19.7%	19.5%	19.4%	19.5%
Independent Schools	14.4%	14.5%	14.6%	14.8%	15%	15.4%

While such statistics provide data which display enrolment trends, statistics alone do not explain why changes to enrolment patterns have taken place. The answers to such statistical variations are best explored in consultation with the people who continue to make enrolment decisions — the parents. Research Project data reveals that parents explain their school choice in the following terms which included factors such as the size of a school, a school's religious or secular nature, subject offerings, academic performance, location or historical family links. All of these, along with other factors are cited by parents as being reasons for selecting a particular school. Importantly though, a commonality which all parents highlighted as being critical in terms of school selection was the perceived quality of its teaching and learning.

When it comes to schooling choice, some parents described researching schools via the MySchool website as well as through word of mouth and by accessing individual

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[62]   School data for each of the nominated years is taken from the *Australian Bureau of Statistics - Schools.*
https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/schools
(downloaded 26/10/2022)

school websites.[63] Research Project data demonstrates that many parents are actively involved in researching schools when it comes to determining which school will best suit their child and where a parent will ultimately lodge an enrolment application. Even parents who indicated that they were only ever going to consider a Catholic school for their child's education compared and contrasted a number of Catholic schools to assess what those respective schools had to offer in terms of learning environment and school culture.

If there was any doubt that the Australian schooling marketplace is alive and well viewing a school's website will demonstrate the array of professionally sculptured images, information packages and invitations to parents to *come and see!* Schools have a product to sell and parents are the consumers who have the ability to assist a school to maintain or grow its enrolment base. In financial terms, this equates to parents having the power to increase or decrease a school's annual budget. Moreover, enrolment choice, as well as impacting the level of government funding allocated to Catholic schools also potentially impacts the funding which Catholic education offices use to fund their range of school services.

Highlighting such matters is not meant to imply that there is something intrinsically wrong or deficient with such an approach to school choice and/or school marketing. In an educational marketplace, failing to provide parents with detailed information regarding a school's educational philosophy and performance can not only be considered as disrespectful, it also limits a parent's right to make choices based on

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[63]   The *MySchool Website* provides data which reports on annual national testing outcomes in years three, five, seven and nine across schools in all Australian states and territories.
 https://www.myschool.edu.au/

evidence. As such, the Research Project sought to gather data which demonstrates the reasons why parents seek enrolment in a Catholic school and then to consider how consumer opinion and choice may impact schools in their delivery of Catholic content and practice.

2.2 The Research Project — Context, Design and Organisation

2.2.1 Research Project Context — Location, Participating Schools and Interviews:
In the first instance it is important to clarify what the term 'parent' means in relation to the Research Project. When using the term parent/s, this thesis assumes that the title, 'parent', includes an adult who may or may not be a child's biological parent but who possesses the legal right and responsibility to provide care for a child and to act on the child's behalf.

The Research Project was undertaken over a period of approximately eighteen months, commencing in 2019 and concluding in 2021. The project focused on interviewing parents who had at least one child attending a metropolitan Catholic school. Additionally, the project provided the opportunity to interview parents who had previously enrolled a child in a Catholic school but had taken the decision to withdraw enrolment and to select an alternate school setting.

All of the Catholic schools that participated in the Research Project were located in

Adelaide, South Australia. In terms of context, the population of South Australia (1.8

million[64]) is relatively small when compared with Melbourne and Sydney whose

populations are listed as 6.9 million[65] and 8.1 million[66] respectively. The total number

of children of school age in South Australia is listed as 274,282, with 174,224

students attending a government school and 100,058 students attending a school in

the non-government schooling sector.[67] The total number of schools in South

Australia is listed by the ABS as being 716.[68] The number of Catholic schools in

South Australia is listed as 101, or approximately 14% of South Australian schools.[69]

Forty per cent of the South Australian population identify as being Christian which is

nine per cent lower than the previous census in 2016 (49.1%). South Australia's

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[64]   Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Snapshot of South Australia, High level summary data for South Australia in 2021,* (2022).
https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/snapshot-sa-2021
(downloaded 26/09/22)

[65]   Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Snapshot of Victoria, High level summary data for Victoria in 2021,* (2022).
https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/snapshot-vic-2021
(downloaded 26/09/22)

[66]   Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Snapshot of NSW, High level summary data for NSW in 2021,* (2022).
https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/snapshot-nsw-2021
(downloaded 26/09/22)

[67]   Australia Bureau of Statistics, *Schools 2021,* (2022).
https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/schools/latest-release
(downloaded 26/09/22)

[68]   Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Snapshot of South Australia, High level summary data for South Australia in 2021,* (2022).
https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/snapshot-sa-2021
(downloaded 26/09.22)

[69]   South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools, *2020 Annual Report, (2021),* p. 71.
https://www.cesa.catholic.edu.au
(downloaded 22/09/22)

Christian population is in percentage terms, on par with Victoria (40.9%) and below

that of NSW (47.6%). Two Catholic dioceses operate in South Australia — the

Archdiocese of Adelaide and the diocese of Port Pirie. The Research Project was

conducted in the Adelaide Archdiocese and excluded the thirteen schools in the

diocese of Port Pirie due to their rural locations. The total number of Catholic schools

listed in the Adelaide Archdiocese is eighty-eight.[70] Of this number, six schools are

located in rural/country areas. Again, owing to the complexities often associated with

parental schooling choice in rural locations, especially in relation to parents having a

range of primary and secondary schooling options available to them, Catholic

schools in rural and remote settings were not included in the Project.

While nineteen schools from metropolitan Adelaide initially agreed to take part in the

Research Project the Covid 19 pandemic limited the ability of nine schools to

participate in the Project. Subsequently, ten schools participated in the Research

Project — four secondary schools and six primary schools. Schools that participated

in the Research Project included urban primary, secondary and reception to year

twelve schools/colleges.

Additionally, in terms of school selection, priority was placed on securing

participation of schools across a wide range of socio-economic contexts which was

determined by postcodes and the South Australian School Economic Disadvantage

Index.[71] This particular range was included in order to gauge the possible impact of

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[70]   South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools, *2020 Annual Report,* (2021), p. 71.

[71]   Data SA, South Australian Government Data Directory, *Educational Disadvantage Index by School.*
https://data.sa.gov.au/data/dataset/index-of-disadvantage-by-school
(downloaded 6/09/2022)

school fees in relation to schooling choice. In total, seventy-two parents who had a child attending a Catholic school were interviewed. In addition, five parents who had taken the decision to withdraw a child/children from a Catholic school were also interviewed. This meant that the total number of parents who participated in interviews was seventy-seven.

2.2.2 Research Project Aims:

The Research Project was designed to enable a comparison to be drawn between the aims and objectives of Catholic educational authorities to those of the aims and objectives of the parents who had chosen to enrol a child in a Catholic school. The Project sought this data in order to ponder broader questions about the Catholic education sector in Australia and the marketplace tensions it needs to navigate.

Four aims underpin the Research Project, and subsequently informed the development of questions that were to be raised with parents.

1. Investigate the motivations of parents for considering and accepting enrolment in a Catholic secondary, primary, or reception to year twelve school setting, with particular focus on exploring:
    - Parental religious background;
    - Why families of 'other than Catholic' religious traditions and those of no religious tradition investigated and accepted an enrolment place in a Catholic school;

- The importance parents place on the school's religious programme and the overall Catholic nature of the school;

- The importance that parents place on student learning, the school's academic programme and particular subject offerings;

- The impact and perceptions of parents regarding school fees.

2. Investigate the reasons why parents would consider leaving a Catholic school or have already chosen to leave and have sought an alternate school setting.

3. Ensure that schools selected for participation in the interview process represent a cross-section of metropolitan Catholic school settings, for example:

    - Schools located in a range of socio-economic realities;

    - Diocesan and/or Congregational/Public Juridic Person governed schools.

4. Add to an existing body of knowledge regarding parental motivation for school selection in the Australian educational marketplace.

2.2.3 <u>Research Project Methodology</u>:

The Research Project took the form of a qualitative study and the methodology of progressive focus was used for all interviews with parents. This methodology, recommended by Sinkovics and Alfoldi, suggests that *progressive focus* is particularly helpful for gathering data in fieldwork situations where the collection of data is "revealed to be more complex than anticipated, forcing the researcher to

gradually refine/shift their focus to reflect 'what really matters."[72] The methodology of progressive focus was used when speaking with parents in order to ensure that highly relevant topics were canvassed in ways which enabled parents to provide clarity regarding their motivations and priorities for school selection.

2.2.4 Research Project Interview Process and Procedures:

In general, interviews were carried out at the school where a parent had a child attending. Where circumstances dictated that this was not possible, a small percentage of interviews occurred via phone contact. In relation to parents who no longer had a child attending a Catholic school, the interview occurred at a location of their choosing. Interviews that occurred on school premises were held in a dedicated room which ensured privacy. All of the interviews which occurred with parents who had a child attending a Catholic school took place on a one-on-one basis between an interviewee and the researcher. A parent who had children in more than one Catholic school setting was only interviewed once.

The noting of conversations was undertaken by the researcher. No interviews were recorded in audible or video format. At the conclusion of each interview the researcher read the notes of the interview back to the interviewee to check for validity and accuracy and to provide the interviewee with the opportunity to clarify

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[72]   Rudolf R. Sinkovics and Eva A. Alfoldi, "Progressive Focusing and Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research: The enabling role of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS)", in *Management International Review*, 52 (6), 817-845 (DOI: 10.1007/s11575-012-0140-5, 2012) p. 818.
http://www.manchester.ac.uk/escholar/uk-ac-man-scw:137280
(downloaded 14/05/21)

any points that had been raised and noted. Interviews were allocated a timeframe of 20-30 minutes and all interviews followed a set six step process (Appendix 3).

2.2.5 Research Questions:

The Research Project focused on two specific questions which were put to each interviewee:

1. What were the key factors which caused you to investigate and ultimately select a Catholic school for your child's education?

2. What, if any, would be the deal-breakers that would cause you to reconsider your enrolment decision and to seek an alternative school setting?

In relation to both questions, additional themes were pursued with each interviewee in order to explore progressively specific topics. In relation to question one, other areas which were put to interviewees included matters such as the importance of the religious programme, the academic programme and the effect of school fees upon enrolment choice.

In terms of the second question, and the progressive focusing of responses, two topics were raised if they had not already been mentioned by parents. Firstly, all parents were asked to reflect on school fees, and the factors that influenced their preparedness and capacity to pay them. Secondly, all parents were invited to

comment on whether they would consider another Catholic school setting, or an

alternative school setting if they decided to withdraw a child from their present school

(Appendix 4).

2.2.6 <u>Research Project Protocols and Ethics:</u>

Ethics approval for the Project was provided by Macquarie University, NSW.

Additionally, the researcher required the permission of the Director of Catholic

Education in South Australia to carry out research in diocesan schools. In relation to

Congregational schools or their Public Juridic School entities, the responsible person

for such schools provided permission for the Project to be undertaken.

Secondly, the researcher identified schools in various locations across metropolitan

Adelaide taking into account a range of economic profiles. Contact was then made

with all selected schools and an appointment made to discuss the Research Project

with the school principal (Appendix 1). Principals who accepted the invitation to

participate in the Research Project were then asked to facilitate recruitment of

parental interviewees. Methods used by principals to recruit parents included:

invitations via a school newsletter; a dedicated letter to all parents; a principal

making direct contact with an individual and/or a group of parents, such as members

of a parents and friends committee or the parent membership of the school board.

While it could be suggested that principals had opportunity to introduce 'bias' in

relation to parent selection, the diversity of parents interviewed, their religious

background and parental interview statements would suggest that this was not the

case.

2.2.7 Impact of Covid 19:

Covid-19 restrictions impacted the Research Project in a number of ways. Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, interviews were planned to take place across three states: South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. In conducting interviews across these three states, it was intended that the data would be more representative of Australia wide trends. However, due to the onset of the pandemic and subsequent State lock-downs, the Project was amended to base data collection in metropolitan Adelaide Catholic schools. In spite of survey limitations, the data offers a means to analyse parental motivations for school selection and offers insight into the priority which a parent placed on the religious nature and learning culture of Catholic schooling.

2 3 Research Project — A Snapshot of the Data

2.3 1 Religious Affiliation — Context:

For the purposes of the Research Project, the term religious affiliation was categorised under four possible headings:

• Practising: Parents who identify as Catholic, or other than Catholic and who are formally and actively engaged in practising their stated tradition, according to the norms and expectations of their faith tradition.

• Occasional Practise: Parents who claim a Catholic or other religious identity who participate occasionally in formal religious worship in their faith tradition,

i.e. attending services sporadically, which may include attending services on religious holidays, such as Christmas and Easter**.**

- <u>Non-Practising</u>: Parents who identity as Catholic or other than Catholic, but who articulate that they have no current connection or practise with their stated religious tradition.

- <u>Not Religious:</u> Parents who identity as not having any religious beliefs or connection with a religious tradition/organisation.

In order to explore the diversity of religious affiliation in Catholic schooling and to explore what this may mean for how Catholic schools meet the demands of the marketplace and Catholic authorities, the Research Project gathered data from parents pertaining to religious identity. Data from the NCEC highlights the religious diversity of enrolment within Catholic schools and suggests that such diversity has to be taken into account when considering how programmes of religious education are developed.[73]

Table 3 indicates the percentage of parents who participated in the Research Project who nominated each religious identity. The total percentage of parents who identified as Catholic (practising, occasionally practising and who nominated as being non-

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[73] National Catholic Education Commission, *Framing Paper, Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools,* (2018), p. 9.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/NCEC_Framing_Paper_Religious_Education.pdf (downloaded 4/10/22)

practising) was 49 per cent, while 51 per cent of parents (practising, occasional practising, non-practising and no religious tradition), identified as other than Catholic:

TABLE 3 — Percentage of Parents Within Each Identity Group

Catholic - Practising	Catholic Occasional Practise	Catholic No Practise	Other than Catholic Practising	Other Than Catholic Occasional Practise	Other than Catholic No Practise	No Religious Tradition	Total
8%	17%	24%	12%	1%	17%	21%	100%

While it cannot be assumed that data derived from the Research Project is representative of State or National figures, the data indicates that there is a significant level of religious diversity which does exist within and across the specific grouping of schools which took part in the Research Project. However, while data from the Research Project only represents ten schools in metropolitan Adelaide, South Australia, the NCEC suggests that from the National perspective *many* families and students who identify as Catholic "lack familiarity and confidence with Catholic language and practise."[74] Research Project data supports the NCEC's statement and demonstrates that a minority of students in the ten Catholic schools who participated in the Research Project had formal, regular contact with a religious tradition of any type outside of the school environment.

In relation to school enrolment and how parents went about the process of school selection, parents named a number of factors which shaped their thinking and

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[74]   National Catholic Education Commission, *Framing Paper,* p. 9.

decision-making. For some, the religious nature of the school was paramount. For others it was the size of a primary school setting and its locality that mattered. For others the local Catholic school was judged as being a better alternative than the parent's zoned local state school. In all cases, parents noted a number of factors that influenced enrolment choice, rather than simply identifying one overriding reason for school selection.

One factor which many parents named as an enrolment consideration was the cost of school fees and the relative affordability of Catholic schooling when compared to schools in the Independent schooling sector. While school funding has enabled many parents to have the right to schooling choice, data from the Research Project indicates that parents were discerning when it came to exploring schools which best suited their child's wellbeing and learning while taking into account financial constraints.[75]

Table 4 indicates the overall percentage of parents from each of the three cohorts - Catholic, other than Catholic and no tradition and the major reasons which parents gave for selecting enrolment in a Catholic school setting.

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[75]   Chris Ryan and Louise Watson, "The Drift to Private Schools in Australia: Understanding its Features", in *The Australian National University Centre for Economic Policy Research*, Discussion Paper no. 479, (2004), p. 2..
https://rse.anu.edu.au/researchpapers/CEPR/DP479.pdf
(downloaded 17/05/22)

Table 4 Common Themes: Major Reasons For Selecting a Catholic School

Reasons to Select A Catholic School	Catholic Parents 49%	Other Than Catholic Parents 30%	No Tradition/No Practise Parents 21%
Attended a Catholic School as a child	71%	14%	13%
Always going to be a Catholic school	34%	5%	0%
Seeking Christian values	49%	50%	2%
The school's religious nature	43%	59%	13%
Sense of Community and welcome	40%	23%	47%
The importance of the academic/learning	63%	68%	33%
Affordable school fees	29%	32%	47%
Favourable impression of the principal	23%	32%	6%
Close to home	29%	9%	20%
Primary a pathway to Catholic secondary	23%	5%	20%
Small school environment	20%	23%	33%
Looked at more than one school and investigated school websites	37%	45%	53%
Partner wanted a Catholic school	9%	23%	27%

2.3.2 Religious Affiliation — Reasons for Schooling Choice: Catholic Parents

2.3.2.1 Catholic Practising — Data Overview:

All of the parents who identified as a practising Catholic named their connection with Catholicism as being a major reason for their decision to select a Catholic school for their child's education. The majority of these parents articulated that they believed that a Catholic school would educate students in an atmosphere which upheld *their* family's values: *"We chose a Catholic school because we wanted synergy between*

school and home in faith matters." Moreover, many practising Catholic parents

indicated that they wanted the school to develop their child's knowledge of the

Catholic faith: *"I was hoping that a Catholic school would reinforce our family's*

Catholic values and morals and provide our children with knowledge of the Catholic

faith."

In addition,100 per cent of the surveyed practising Catholic parents stated that they

attended a Catholic school for their primary and/or secondary schooling, and

indicated that they valued their schooling experience: *"I went to a Catholic school as*

a child and wanted the same for my children." Moreover, a small percentage of

parents who had a historical family link with a particular Catholic school wanted their

child to attend *that* school. The importance of family historical links for the most part,

related to a parent's connection with a secondary college: *"Our family has a long*

history of children attending [School Name]."

In relation to the importance placed on a school's programme of religious education,

the majority of practising Catholic parents believed that religious education played a

significant role in establishing the culture of their school. Additionally, the large

majority of practising Catholic parents wanted the school's religious education

curriculum to teach about Catholicism in ways which supported their child's faith

development.

However, there were differing views from practising Catholic parents regarding how

'*Catholic*' the religious education programme was or should be and how *Catholic* a

school should be. Some of these parents understood their children to be part of a

Catholic minority in their school and felt that there was lack of focus on catechesis in the school's religious education programme as a result. Others felt that religious education was important for building the relationship between the "school, parish and family", while others indicated that *"there is too much focus on religious education to the detriment of academic learning."* The question regarding how *Catholic* a parent wants their child's religious programme to be, presents as a recurring theme across all parental religious identities. However, even within the group of parents who identify as practising their Catholic tradition regularly there was significant difference of opinion regarding what an acceptable level of Catholicity should be.

2.3.2.2 Catholic Occasional Practise — Data Overview:

Those parents who identified as Catholic and who occasionally have formal interaction with their tradition, totalled 34 per cent of the total number of parents who identified as Catholic. 92 per cent of parents in this category indicated that their primary and/or secondary education was undertaken in a Catholic school. Parents in this category conveyed that in choosing a Catholic school they were particularly looking for the school to provide an atmosphere where 'home and school' values were shared.

Many parents in this category indicated that the values that a Catholic school promotes are more important than directly teaching about Catholicism:

• *"School values and ethos are important, the Catholic religion not so important."*

- *"The RE isn't particularly the reason we chose a Catholic School. It is the value system I was after. I was after Christian values - being nice people, doing unto others and all that."*

Some parents in this category felt that, while they did not have a regular connection with a parish, *"the school provides a sense of being connected with being Catholic."* To some degree, the school, rather than the traditional Catholic parish appeared to have become the primary source for enabling parents to connect formally with their Catholic identity. That being said, some parents noted that the parish was still important for enabling children to participate in sacramental preparation and for supporting parents to have entry into a Catholic school: *"got children baptised to ensure that they got in to a Catholic school."* A small percentage of parents made comments about Catholic sexual abuse scandals and noted that they saw the Catholic school as being separate from a Catholic parish: *"The Catholic school is separate from the parish which is a good thing as didn't want the priest to be too involved."*

Data from the Research Project also demonstrates the level of importance which parents placed on their initial experience when visiting a school, especially in relation to the level of connection that they felt with the school's principal. Comments from both practising and occasionally practising parents, suggest that parents felt that their initial impressions of a school's principal was an indicator of how they and their child would be valued within the school environment: *"The principal was impressive, knew the names of the children and the classrooms look good."* Furthermore, a number of parents in this category stated that they had researched both Catholic and

Government schools and had decided that the Catholic school would provide the best opportunities for their child. For example:

• *"The school [government school] that I'm zoned for isn't the best and we felt that a Catholic school would be better for our kids in the long term."*

• *Checked out MySchool, and the Catholic school had the best outcomes in the area."*

• *"Would have considered a public school if there was a really good one near-by."*

Other priorities, which parents who practised their Catholic faith occasionally highlighted as being a reason for selecting a Catholic school, included factors such as wanting a small school setting and wanting the school to be local so that children would have friends near by. Other reasons named by parents for selecting a particular Catholic school were: *"Other family member's children attend this school and they are happy here",* or, the Catholic primary school was an enrolment *"feeder to a Catholic secondary school".*[76] A number of comments also reflected other marketplace realities such as:

• *"It has an OSHC programme."*

• *"No reason not to go here."*

• *"Great community feel here, you get what you pay for."*

Parental commentary regarding the importance of the religious education programme varied, for example:

• *"RE is not so important nor is it all that relevant to today."*

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[76] The 'term' *Feeder School* denotes a primary school which has an enrolment pathway to a Catholic secondary college. In terms of enrolment priority, students who are attending a Catholic primary school generally have a level of priority for entry into a Catholic secondary college.

- *"More important for children to hear about good morals than Bible stories."*

- *"Having faith means having mindfulness and an understanding of their spirituality. The school should help my children to develop into good citizens and to celebrate learning and achievements."*

- *"The RE programme is not over the top and I am happy with it."*

What *'over the top'* actually may mean in terms of Catholic teaching was not defined. However, this comment was repeated a number of times by parents who saw the religious education programme as primarily providing a means to support the development of values, rather than promoting a child's faith in God or enhancing their understanding of Catholic doctrine. Many parents in the 'occasional practice' category suggested that the religious education programme was important for creating a school culture of care and for the promoting similar values between school and home:

- *"The RE programme is key to the cultural values which underpinned the Catholic values of the school."*

- *"There is some continuity with family values of respect and kindness."*

- *"The Christian values and focus on the child means that their learning is seen as important."*

Parents who identified as occasionally practising their Catholic faith tradition demonstrated a variety of views regarding the importance they placed on a school's religious education programme for promoting a child's faith. However, data indicates that the majority of these parents placed significant emphasis on the school's Catholic nature and culture. The latter was expected to promote Christian values that

inculcated an environment where student wellbeing and learning would be prioritised and supported.

2.3.2.3 Catholic No Practise — Data Overview:

Parents who identified as being Catholic and had no connection with Catholicism outside of the school environment were the largest cohort of Catholic parents at 49 per cent. Just over half of the parents in this category had attended a Catholic school for their primary and/or secondary schooling. A point of similarity which Catholic parents in this cohort shared with both practising and occasionally practising parents was the importance that parents placed on the school promoting a value base that would provide students with continuity between school and home life. A quarter of parents in this category stated that having shared values is more important than directly teaching about the Catholic faith:

- "*It wasn't really about 'being Catholic' it was more about being in a culture which taught them about spirituality and respect for others.*"
- "*The Catholic stuff is a bonus — helps children to have something to believe in.*"
- "*The school encourages a sense of mindfulness.*"

Additionally, a number of parents in this category suggested that pastoral care would be 'better' in a Catholic school environment because of the school's underlying religious beliefs: *"The difference between the pastoral care of students, directly links to the fact that the faith element in Catholic schools provided a more nurturing environment."* Like Catholic parents in the previous two categories, non-practising

Catholic parents also commented on the importance of the principal in terms of their decision to enrol in a particular school:

- *"The principal helped me to see the link between belief in God and what I would see of that in the school."*

- *"The principal seemed disinterested and so visited another Catholic school and was impressed even though it wasn't the first choice."*

- *"Visited a local Catholic primary and was impressed with the principal who knew every child's name and felt that a child wouldn't get lost if they were known - central to the decision to enrol — loved what the principal said."*

A number of other factors were listed by parents as influencing their decision-making, for example:

- *"I wanted a small school with good resources."*

- *"Public schools not the gold standard in this area."*

- *"Visited two Catholic schools one looked like a dogs breakfast and the other was really well cared for."*

- *"Sending children to a Catholic school is a family tradition."*

- *"Being here is important for a pathway to a Catholic secondary school."*

In terms of the religious education programme, a significant number of parents articulated that religious education was, *"OK as long as it's not over the top",* or that it was acceptable because *"religion is not pushed on kids."* More so, a number of parents said that they did not see the religious education curriculum as being important except in its ability to support children to develop a sense of compassion

for others and *"to develop good values."* Other comments included statements such as:

- *"The religion thing is not big for me."*
- *"Good to have some knowledge of Christianity."*
- *"RE not crucial except for helping children to have an understanding about faith - the actual faith doesn't matter."*
- *"RE helps to create links between the values of school and home."*
- *"RE filters across all of the school."*
- *"It helps to feel part of a community."*
- *"Helps children to have an acceptance and care of others."*

In brief, the religious programme was generally seen as important in terms of establishing a particular socio-cultural environment where Christian values underpinned how the school operated.

In conclusion there is a level of alignment regarding why parents who identify as Catholic investigated and selected their particular Catholic school. For many, a parent's personal history and experience of Catholic schooling as a child meant that no other schooling option was considered. However, for some, government or independent schooling was considered and ruled out: *"Would have liked to support the local state school. But the local state school has a poor reputation and so going to the Catholic school was an easy choice."*

Whether it be for reasons pertaining to the perceived quality of teaching and learning, student pastoral care, or in the case of independent schools, the cost associated with accessing many schools in this education sector, all Catholic parents

indicated that they believed that Catholic schools offered a "*good education*" where shared community values were in alignment with family values:

• *"Shared community values are critical and felt that this could not be expected from a state school."*

• *The school has a kind of a 'heart-beat."*

2.3.3 Religious Affiliation — Reasons for Schooling Choice: Other Than Catholic Parents:

2.3.3.1 Other Than Catholic — Practising:

Parents from an 'other than Catholic tradition' who identified as practising their nominated tradition, shared a number of priorities in selecting a Catholic school with their Catholic counterparts. In particular, these parents highlighted that they preferred their child to attend a Catholic school because they wanted their child in an environment which mirrored their family's Christian values: *"Children spend a lot of time at school and we want them to be in a culture which matches our family's values."* The faith traditions represented across all categories of parent participation in an other than Catholic religious tradition included Anglican, Baptist, Buddhist, Church of Christ, Greek Orthodox, Uniting Church and Muslim.

Additionally, the majority of parents in this cohort indicated that it did not matter that the school was Catholic. Rather, parents said that they wanted a well-disciplined Christian environment which promoted Christian values and which increased student knowledge about Jesus. Parents who made such comments suggested that the

Christian environment that they sought was not a possibility in a government school setting, for example: *"In state schools learning about religion and Jesus is missing from the culture so a Catholic school is a better option."* Conversely, when speaking about the culture of a Catholic school, some parents indicated that they felt somewhat concerned about their child *"being in a Catholic school and learning about Catholicism."* However, they went on to indicate that once immersed in a Catholic school, *"it has turned out ok."*

Parents in this category indicated that they were happy for their child to participate in the school's religious programme. Additionally, these parents also articulated that they were looking for a school which had a religious programme that would promote Christian values, for example: "*Religion is important in helping to shape a person's values and actions."* As in previous categories, there was also a belief that the Christian values which underpin Catholic schooling would ensure a "*quality education".* As well as indicating that a Catholic school inculcated values which promoted *"good discipline, manners and respect,"* some parents felt that a child would not, *"get lost in a Catholic school"* and that "*attention is paid to children in a Catholic school."*

2.3.3.2 Other Than Catholic — Occasional Practise/No Practise

The responses from parents in the categories of *Other than Catholic Occasional Practise* and *No Practise* have been combined because of the similarity of commentary from both groups.

As in previous categories, these parents articulated a range of reasons for selecting a Catholic school:

• *"Wanted a small school environment not available in state schools in the area."*

• *"The locality of the school was important in terms of proximity to friends."*

• *"The Catholic identity is not so important to me — I just want a professional service that is clearly different to what is being offered in the local state schools."*

In addition some of these parents indicated that they weren't so much looking for a Catholic school, but rather, they selected "*this one*". Other parents noted that they would have considered a government school if they had access to one which they believed was high achieving. Another parent indicated that she was happy to select a Catholic school as she felt that it would provide, "*a more personal experience of school."* Another parent indicated that she *"liked the fact that the parish and the school were more separate now that the priest is not integrated into the school."*

A number of parents indicated their decision to select a Catholic parish primary school was made to access the pathway it created for a 'non-Catholic' child to have a level of priority access to a local Catholic secondary college. Additionally, the impression made by the school principal or deputy principal at the enrolment interviewed played a role in a nearly a third of all of these parent's decision-making regarding enrolment:

• "*The deputy saw [child's name] as a person with all of her activities and that the total picture was important, rather than just one dimension.*"

• *"I was impressed by the principal."*

Other factors which influenced enrolment decision-making related to a parent's perception of the quality of student pastoral care. A number of parents indicated that they believed that the religious nature of the school created an environment where such a priority was simply a '*given*'. A further important point related to the fact that four of the interviewees in this category had a Catholic partner (not practising) who was keen for their child to attend a Catholic school.

All of the parents in this category were happy for their child to participate in the school's religious programme. However, there were varying views as to the importance of religious education. Views ranged from seeing the religious education programme as unimportant, to seeing religious education as part of creating a 'caring school culture':

- *"Liked the fact that the children get taught about morals and that get to hear about Jesus and develop an understanding of Christian identity and belonging to a community."*

- *"Wanted my daughter to be aware of the Christian religion — I didn't want her to be ignorant of the Christian faith, and to be able to make her own choices about religion in the future."*

- *"No matter who you decide to believe in — the stories that surround Jesus and other Bible figures had a huge impact and I want my children to know about them."*

Overall, the religious education programme was seen by these parents as contributing to building a positive school culture and social climate based on Christian values which mirrored home values and which also played a role in supporting student wellbeing. Moreover, the religious environment and culture of a

Catholic school was understood to enable an inclusive and welcoming environment for parents from other religious traditions.

2.3.3.3 Other Than Catholic — No Religious Tradition:

The percentage of parents who identified as not having a religious tradition was 21 per cent. Parents in this category named a number of reasons for selecting a Catholic school with the academic programme highlighted as being a prime reason for school enrolment:

- "We were blown away. *The children in the JP classes appeared to be engaged and there was a very nurturing environment."*

- *They [the children] looked like they were enjoying themselves, the teacher was working with the students who all appeared happy and were free to move around the room."*

Another parent indicated that she would not compromise on the quality of the education offered and believed that this would be a "*given in a Catholic school and not something that I had to really be concerned about."*

When it came to other reasons that informed their decision-making, over half of the parents mentioned their favourable impression of the school's principal, for example:

- *"I felt a sense of welcome and as I was being shown around the school by the principal, I liked the way he knew student's names."*

- *"I was impressed with the kindness of the principal."*

- *"I met with the principal for an enrolment interview and even though she [the child] 'cracked it' at the interview, the principal was supportive and understanding."*

None of the parents in this category suggested that the school's religious programme was a key factor for their enrolment decision, although all parents indicated that they accepted that their child would participate in the school's religious programme. Furthermore, while a number of parents believed that the religious programme played a role in creating the culture of the school, there was no indication that parents saw religious education as a means for promoting the Catholic faith or for promoting a child's belief in God:

- *"I'm not opposed to the morals of Catholicism, but I want my child to have a broader perspective on life and spirituality."*
- *"I didn't mind the idea that my kids would take part in RE."*
- *They [children] need to have something in their life and they need to hear about the Jesus thing."*

In brief, there was a general sense that religious education contributed to a school culture of respect in which every child was seen as important: *"Religion is more about being in a community, being a good person ,having respect for each other."* What all of this may mean for how Catholic school leaders and teachers undertake the religious mandates set out for them by Vatican and more local Catholic authorities is an important question for both parents and Australian Catholic educational authorities.

2.4 Reasons to Leave A Catholic School — Summary of Data

This section presents the statements which parents made about the reasons which would cause them to reconsider their child's enrolment in a Catholic school. Table 5

presents the data under the three major headings of Catholic, Other than Catholic and No Religious tradition. In addition to the seventy-two parents whose children attended a Catholic school, the views of an additional five parents who had removed a child from a Catholic school setting are included. The commentary from these five interviewees offers additional insight into the reasons why parents would select an alternate schooling option. Thus, the data reported in this section is based on the responses of seventy-seven parents.

Table 5 indicates the common themes which parents raised in relation to the reasons which they suggested would cause them to reconsider their enrolment choice.

Table 5 <u>Common Themes: Reasons For Removing a Child From a</u>

　　　　<u>Catholic School</u>

Issue	Catholic Parents 52%	Other Than Catholic Parents 29%	Parents Non Religious 19%	Total % of all parents 100%
Unresolved Bullying/ Social Issues	65%	23%	67%	56%
Poor Academic Results & Support	35%	43%	73%	45%
Unhappy Child	28%	22%	20%	25%
Unreasonable Fee Rise	18%	22%	47%	25%
Teaching Quality	30%	26%	7%	24%
No Value for Money	40%	0%	0%	21%
Not Catholic Enough	33%	0%	0%	17%
Poor Principal	15%	4%	7%	10%
Poor Communication	3%	9%	33%	10%
Child Abuse	13%	0%	0%	6%
Too Catholic	3%	4%	20%	6%
No Follow on to Secondary	10%	0%	7%	6%
Poor Subject Offerings	3%	4%	7%	4%
Discrimination Racial/Religious	0%	9%	0%	3%

The top six reasons that would cause parents to leave a Catholic school, percentage

wise, related to matters regarding:

1. Unresolved bullying and negative student social issues.

2. Poor academic outcomes and perceived inadequate student learning support,

3. If a child was no longer happy at a school.

4. An unreasonable rise in school fees.

5. The perceived quality of teachers and teaching.

6. Perceived lack of value for money.

In relation to bullying issues, the majority of parents said that they would leave a school *"if bullying became a serious issue and continued to be unsolved."* Parents indicated that they expected to be taken seriously and to have their issues addressed appropriately. Parents suggested that a school's capacity to respond to bullying and other student-to-student negative social issues would play a critical role in making a decision about school removal:

- *"Ultimately, if resolutions to serious problems couldn't be found, that would be a deal-breaker."*
- *"If my children got physically hurt and it wasn't dealt with properly I'd leave."*
- *"If the school didn't take us seriously we would look elsewhere."*

Secondly, student learning and achievement was listed by parents as being one of the most critical factors which led them to enrol a child in a Catholic school, as well as being a major factor in determining if they would remain in a Catholic school. While some parents stated that they did not want academic expectations to place undue pressure on their child, others simply expected that their child would be provided with the necessary support to be academically successful. Parental commentary included statements such as the following:

- *"If she's [child] not progressing well and there isn't the support — I'd think, why am I paying that much and would reconsider being here."*

- *"We've made a great sacrifice and we want the best for our child."*

- *"If I felt that the school wasn't value for money — I'd look elsewhere, probably at one of the good state schools."*

- *"If I feel that my child is not being supported I would put religion aside for the overall well being of my child and their mental health."*

Alongside the importance parents placed on student learning and academic outcomes, the topic of teacher competence was also raised by parents as being a critical factor in considering a change of school. This is not surprising as the nexus between outstanding teaching and student learning is clearly documented:[77]

> Improving the efficiency and equity of schooling depends, in large measure, on ensuring that competent people want to work as teachers, that their teaching is of high quality, and that all students have access to high quality teaching.[78]

The importance of having quality teaching is also highlighted by Elizabeth Leo, David Galloway and Phil Hearne who point to research which suggests that: "Differences in the quality of teaching in individual classrooms explains more than one third of the variation in student achievement between schools."[79] 23 per cent of parents named the quality of teaching staff as critically informing their decision to stay or leave a Catholic school:

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[77]   OECD, *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retraining Effective Teachers*, ISBN-92-64-01802-6 © OECD, 2005, p. 1.
https://www.oecd.org/education/school/34990905.pdf
(downloaded 27/11/21)

[78]   OECD, *Teachers Matter,* p. 1.

[79]   Elizabeth Leo, David Galloway and Phil Hearne, *Academies and Educational Reform: Governance, Leadership and Strategy,* (British Library of Congress in Cataloging Publication Data. 2010), p. 187.

- *"If there was a problem with one of the teachers that couldn't be resolved and it was affecting my child, then that would be a definite dealbreaker."*

- *If I felt the school's pedagogy and curriculum weren't suiting my children that would also be a dealbreaker."*

- *"I didn't expect that teachers in a Catholic school would speak in negative ways to children — language and tone is important, teachers need to reflect back on Jesus' values and model it."*

- *"The first priority in terms of education is that the learning pedagogy needs to suit my child, secondly is that support is available wherever it's needed."*

- *"If their marks were poor and they weren't getting help to improve I'd look elsewhere."*

- *"They weren't focusing on evidenced based learning, they were focusing on what students were interested in but there was no substance as to how to develop a plan of how to get there."*

- *"There is a three pronged reason for leaving that left me in a place of disillusionment*
  - *lack of pastoral support;*
  - *lack of academic rigour and communication;*
  - *lack of sound /well grounded decision making — students didn't seem to come first."*

A number of parents also expressed high expectations regarding the quality of leadership from the school principal. For example: *"If the principal didn't set and achieve a high standard in all aspects of school life — absolute deal breaker. Accountability of staff is essential".* Furthermore, many parents pointed to the vital

role that principal's play in establishing a school's pedagogic culture indicating that *"if a principal left and the culture changed,"* it would be a dealbreaker. Similarly, parents highlighted that they wanted to have a positive relationship with the principal and said that an inadequate relationship could be problematic especially *"If the principal wasn't interested in engaging with the parents."*

A further point which some parents listed as being a reason to leave a Catholic school related to school fees. Cahill and Grey note that the increase in disposable income over a thirty years period is one factor that has enabled growth in the non-government schooling sector. "Disposable incomes for most Australian households have risen by approximately 20 percent — has brought the cost of a 'private school education' within reach of many more Australian families."[80] Factors such as increased disposable income[81] and the substantial government funding that is allocated to Catholic schools has clearly brought affordable Catholic schooling within the financial reach of many families.

While a number of parents indicated that fee increases would be the last reason to leave a Catholic school, others indicated that an unreasonable or unaffordable rise in school fees would be the ultimate impediment for remaining at a Catholic school:

[80]   Rosemary Cahill and Jan Gray, "Funding and Secondary School Choice in Australia: A Historical Consideration", in *Edith Cowan University Research Online*, (ECU Publications Pre, 2011, Vol 35, 1.), p. 122.
https://ro.ecu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=7335&context=ecuworks
(downloaded 19/09/22)

[81]   Cahill et al, "Funding and Secondary School Choice", p. 122.

- *"Fees wouldn't be a major issue these days — if the fees in the Catholic school went up to levels near independent schools we may reconsider the option of an Independent school."*

- *"In our area the fees are quite comparable — not a huge difference in fees, wouldn't be prepared to pay something like $8000 p.a. for example, but if we had to we'd pay it."*

- *"If fees were too high — if I couldn't afford it we'd have to negotiate with the school but would look for another school if we couldn't work things out."*

- *"Have to begin saving for secondary."*

- *"Fees could be a reason to leave and if this was a reason then we would have to consider a public school — school fees are not the only expense for the family and the school is such an important aspect so we would always do our best to keep them here."*

- *"If the school fees became impossible we would move house to get into an area with a good public school."*

Effectively, parents accepted that in selecting a Catholic school they made a commitment to meet the demands of school fees. For the parents with a child in a primary school setting some concern was raised in relation to the cost of Catholic secondary schooling. For others there was a general acceptance that paying school fees was simply *part of the deal*. Clearly, the ability of Catholic leaders to keep school fees within the financial reach of Australian families is something that needs to be seen as a priority, especially in times when there is strain on Australia's domestic economy.

Parents noted two other reasons that might inform a decision to leave a Catholic school. The first was their assessment of the school's capacity to support their child's wellbeing. The second was whether the school was '*Catholic*' in ways that matched their expectations. In relation to student wellbeing, 27 per cent of parents indicated that if their child was unhappy at school they would look for an alternate school setting. Parents did not always use the term, 'unhappy', however parents described a number of factors that may impair a child's wellbeing and which would be a reason they might remove their child from a Catholic school:

- *"If children weren't allowed to express themselves, their religious beliefs, that would be of great concern and could lead to them being unhappy which could ultimately lead to a change of school."*

- *"As long as she is happy to come to school every day — I can't think of any other reason to move."*

- *"If I thought that my daughter doesn't feel included and was unhappy or if she was being bullied we would probably leave."*

- *"If my child wasn't learning anything, not making friends and not wanting to come here it's time to look elsewhere."*

While there was general consistency regarding the top six reasons which parents gave for potentially leaving a school, there was diversity across groups regarding their expectations of the religious nature of Catholic schooling and its relation to school choice. Within the group of parents who identified as Catholic, 33% of parents indicated that if a school was not perceived meeting expectations regarding its Catholic responsibilities, this would be a reason to leave a Catholic school. However,

contra to that view, 20% of parents who had no religious tradition indicated that if a school was perceived as being too Catholic, that would be a reason to leave a Catholic school.

The following comments provide insight into the variety of parental views regarding the religious nature and programme of Catholic schools and how it might, or in fact did, impact their decision to leave a Catholic school:

- *"There was nothing there or in the RE programme that benefitted my child."*
- *"The RE classes are a joke. It was just about having fun wasn't really serious about what they were doing."*
- *"The school we moved to is a Christian school where religion is a part of every lesson — they practise what they preach."*
- *"I took my children to a Christian school. They paid greater attention to ensuring that their teachers were practising Christians."*
- *"I have a growing sense that Catholic schools are a business rather than a faith based organisation."*
- *Parents have the right to send their children to schools who protect their right to religious freedom and employ teachers who are in keeping with the Christian values of the school and the Catholic faith tradition."*
- *"If there was religious pressure placed on my children, if they didn't explore other religions or expected my children to become Catholic we would leave."*
- *"Being in a Catholic school is only relevant in that it presents my children with a 'value-base' which matches our family values."*
- *"If my child didn't believe in certain things that were being taught if she wasn't allowed to have her voice, then that would be of great concern."*

- *"The most likely reason to leave would be the lack of authentic teaching of the Catholic faith."*

- *"Don't want the RE programme to be over the top or Bible bashing — rather, focused on good morals, helping a child to understand right from wrong."*

- *"If the religious programme became draconian, or 'over the top' that too would be a deal-breaker."*

Such comments suggest a challenge which Australian Catholic leaders may face when considering how best to address and accomodate (if at all possible), the expectations of *all* parents regarding the manner in which the religious nature of Catholic schooling is to be expressed. What this may mean in terms of how to balance marketplace pressures, especially regarding the expectations of parents about the religious nature of Catholic schooling, while remaining faithful to Vatican teaching about the 'ecclesial nature'[82] of a Catholic school may well have implications for Catholic school enrolment. Research Project data demonstrates the potential complexities involved in reaching a consensus regarding how the religious identity of Catholic schooling should manifest.

Interestingly, a key aim of the Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project, which was implemented in a number of Australian Catholic schools, was envisioned as a means of addressing the realities of a diverse school enrolment base which often displays plurality of belief and culture. The ECSI Project implemented a suite of survey

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[82]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, (2022), paragraph 22.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html
(downloaded 1/10/22)

instruments to investigate a Catholic school's identity and to assess and evaluate the findings. These two process were designed to provide a Catholic school with recommendations regarding how to address their specific school cultural circumstances in a manner which enables a school community to re-contextualise and enhance their identity, taking into account their specific site's cultural and religious ontological realities.

> The ESCIP research has both a descriptive and an evaluative component. In a first step, we assess the identity of Catholic organisations in an objective, neutral and scientifically validated way. In a second step, we evaluate these findings in the light of the normative-theological views developed and defended by the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies of the KU Leuven, Belgium. This evaluation will give rise to non-committal recommendations for enhancing the Catholic identity of the schools or Catholic organisation in question.[83]

This thesis does not provide detailed insights into the suite of instruments and processes used by Pollefeyt and Bouwens in investigating, assessing and re-contextualising Catholic school identity. Rather, the ECSIP is highlighted in order demonstrate that the matter of Catholic school identity is seen as a critical topic for Australian Catholic school leaders. This is especially so in relation to being able to successfully address the stated, long-standing Vatican theological goals for Catholic schooling while addressing the reality of what Pollefeyt and Bouwens name as the processes of secularisation, pluralisation, detraditionalisation and individualisation which impact Catholic school identity:

> This first research question departs from an analysis of the *'late-modern' cultural* context of Western countries today in terms of processes not only of secularisation but also pluralisation, detraditionalisation and individualisation. This point of view…

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[83]   Didier Pollefeyt and Jan Bouwens, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity, Research Methodology and Research Results in Catholic Schools in Victoria,* Australia, (Distribution, Global Book Marketing, UK, 2014), p. 19.

directs the focus of research in particular towards the relationship and the interaction between the specificity and the irreducible character of Catholic faith on the one hand, and a cultural context characterised by religious and philosophical diversity on the other.[84]

Work undertaken by the leaders of Catholic schools in places where the ECSIP has been implemented had the opportunity to consider how best to respond to diversity of views and expectations surrounding the religious identity of their particular Catholic school. As an example, a school in Queensland, highlighted on their website the outcomes of the ECSI Project and what it meant for their school community in relation to the development of the school's Catholic identity:

> Our survey and questionnaire results presented the following recommendations from KU Leuven:
> - Encourage a post-critical belief amongst students rather than a literal belief. A Post-Critical belief centres around faith in God which is represented symbolically (eg rituals, sacraments, music). This type of belief is open to continuously searching for religious meaning and significance while maintaining a strong belief in God. According to the research, this is the most fruitful type of belief for the development of Catholic identity within a school.
> - Adopt a recontextualised approach. Recontextualisation tries to understand the Christian faith re-interpreted in a contemporary cultural context to ensure that the faith remains recognisable, credible and meaningful for contemporary people. This can be achieved through Biblical interpretation, artwork, music and liturgy.
> - Maintain maximum Christian identity through Catholic inspiration and maximum solidarity with others through dialogue within a multicultural society.[85]

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[84]   Pollefeyt et al, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,* p. 20.

[85]   Our Lady of The Sacred Heart Primary School, Website, *Religious Education, Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project.*
http://www.olshdarra.qld.edu.au/religiouseducation/Pages/Enhancing-Catholic-School-Identity-Project.aspx
(downloaded 22/05023)

While such a statement provides clear articulation of the goals that are intended to ultimately shape a school's Catholic identity, how to embed such goals in a school's overall pedagogical practice is often the most challenging aspect of enlivening such a statement.

Finally, in terms of Research Project deal-breakers it is somewhat surprising, given the findings of the Royal Commission into the Institutional Sexual Abuse of Children, that very few parents specifically mentioned the topic of child abuse in their list of reasons for leaving a school. However, the comments that were made on this topic were clear in demonstrating that matters relating to child protection were paramount:

- *"I would definitely remove my children if there was something around child protection that wasn't being dealt with."*
- *"If there was any sexual abuse occurring anywhere within the school that would be a deal breaker."*

In addition to the five parents who made direct mention of the sexual abuse of children as being an absolute deal-breaker, other comments inferred a mistrust of priests:

- *"If the school became too involved in the parish or rather that the parish priest became too involved in the school, that could be a dealbreaker."*
- *"There's no real priesthood associated with the school and it's a positive that there isn't."*

In conclusion, whether speaking about a school's religious function, the importance of the academic programme, the wellbeing of their child or the cost of school fees, parental commentary indicated that a number of factors combined in influencing

schooling choice. However, when it came to discussing reasons for leaving a school any one of a number of factors were listed. While the majority of parents indicated that a decision to withdraw a child would not be taken lightly, all parents indicated that withdrawing a child from a school was an option that they were prepared to take in order to address a matter of serious concern.

The only factor given for withdrawing a child that did not directly relate to a child's wellbeing and learning was an increase in school fees. However, even in the event of an unreasonable rise in school fees, the majority of parents indicated that they would seek to negotiate with school authorities about school fees prior to taking a decision to withdraw their child's enrolment. Moreover, parents indicated that if they could not meet the cost of school fees, they would look for an alternate Catholic school setting if the possibility was available to them. This correlates with Fahey's findings that there is generally a high level of parental satisfaction in their choice to select a Catholic school: "Parents who chose a Catholic school were most likely to choose the same school again (70%)."[86]

In effect, parental responses indicate that schooling choice is something that continues to be an option for parents who are, or may become, dissatisfied with their present schooling option. Research Project data suggests that parents constitute themselves as consumers who make informed decisions about their child's schooling

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[86]   Glen Fahey, *What Do Parents Want From Schools?,* The Centre for Independent Studies, (2019), p. 8.
https://www.cis.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/pp26.pdf
(downloaded 15/09/22)

in which they seek-out what they consider to be the optimal educational and social

environment.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This Chapter has presented the rationale and findings of the Research Project. The

presentation of data is deliberately descriptive in style in order to convey the integrity

of parental comments as to their reasons for selecting a Catholic school as well as

the reasons that would cause them to reconsider their present enrolment. This

evidence suggests that there are a number of factors which inform parental decision-

making regarding which school or schooling sector will be considered and which

school will ultimately be selected. Warren's data concurs with this finding. She

suggests that while a school's academic profile may be a significant factor for school

selection, a range of factors inform parental schooling choice.[87] More specifically,

Warren's findings, as do those of the Research Project, point to the importance

placed by parents on their sense of the school's values.[88]

More specifically, Research Project data suggests that the majority of parents

expected Christian values to frame the school's pedagogic practices. Additionally,

many parents felt that in choosing a Catholic school they could expect that the

teachers, other school staff as well as other parents, would to some degree, all share

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[87]   Diana Warren, *Parents' Choices of Primary Schools,* Commissioned by the Australian
Government's Institute of Family Services, Growing Up in Australia, (2016), p. 162.
https://aifs.gov.au/research/commissioned-reports/parents-choices-primary-school
(downloaded 01/10/22)

[88]   Warren, *Parents' Choices of Primary Schools,* p. 162.

similar values. Parents believed that having shared values played a role in creating a sense of community cohesion and assisted in supporting the synergy of values between school and home.

While the Vatican states that Catholic schools have a specific religious and educational role to play in forming student spirituality, belief and knowledge overwhelmingly, parents expected that a school's Christian culture would ensure a 'good education'. However, while seeking a school which was based on Christian values, the majority of parents expressed that they were not looking for an especially 'Catholic' environment, with the exception of a minority of Catholic parents who felt that Catholic schools have a particular religious evangelising mission to fulfil. A number of parents commented that they could not expect a government school to teach explicitly about Christianity or to promote Christian values. Effectively, a number of parents conveyed anxiety about what the secular nature of government schools may mean for their child's schooling.

A further important factor which the Research Project has demonstrated from its sample is the correlation between a parent's own experience of Catholic schooling as a child with their decision to enrol their child in a Catholic school. Such data suggests that an important future enrolment market for Catholic schools are the students who are currently attending a Catholic school. Ensuring that present-day students have an experience of schooling which enables them to achieve their future aspirations in an environment where they feel valued may well be a factor which assists the next generation of parents to consider and select a Catholic schooling option.

Equally salient for Catholic school leaders is evidence of the high level of research and comparison that many parents undertook when making decisions about which school to choose. Even within the group of parents who indicated that they were always going to select enrolment in a Catholic school, many parents visited more than one Catholic school when deciding upon enrolment. Moreover, data suggested that when visiting schools, first impressions count.

How a parent experienced their first contact with office staff or the school principal for example, created a lasting impression regarding the level of connection and respect which a parent expected and experienced. And, to some degree, the impressions gained when visiting a school, contributed to whether a parent anticipated that their child, and their child's learning, would be valued within the school environment. While marketing techniques, such as school websites and information packages may precipitate a parent's desire to further explore a school, the quality of service at a school site was a most important factor when it came to school selection. However, there was little doubt that school websites and other forms of marketing played a role in assisting many parents to make decisions about which schools to further investigate.

To assist Catholic schools with their marketing the NCEC has developed what it calls an 'Enrolment Toolkit'.[89] As well as indicating that the NCEC is aware of the power of the marketplace and the necessity that Catholic schools develop marketing

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[89]   National Catholic Education Commission, *Enrolment Toolkit,* (2022)*,* p. 2.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/resources/enrolment-toolkit
(downloaded 11/10/22)

strategies to influence parental schooling choice, the toolkit provides Catholic school leaders with information which is designed to assist in developing the following:

- a range of considerations to support schools/systems in learning
- partnerships and pathways, infrastructure and enrolment
- planning, and marketing and promotion
- links to customisable resources to capture parent perception and student entry/exit data.[90]

Effectively, if Catholic schools are to have an evangelising influence on the lives of Australian students and if they are to create an environment which the Vatican suggests promotes for all peoples, "the complete perfection of the human person, the good of earthly society and the building of a world that is more human,"[91] Catholic school leaders need parents to select this schooling option for their child's education.

In conclusion, this Chapter has presented data which provides insight into why a specific group of seventy-two parents selected a Catholic school for their child's enrolment. While the sampling group is relatively small, it is none the less still highly relevant. Research Project data correlates to what other studies on parental schooling choice have revealed while also adding particular refinements regarding the importance that parents place on the religious nature of Catholic schooling. In addition, Research Project data has produced evidence that indicates the reasons which would cause a parent to reconsider their enrolment or in some instances, that have already prompted a parent to leave a Catholic school setting. This data from

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[90]   NCEC, *Enrolment Toolkit*, p. 2.

[91]   Pope Paul VI, *Declaration On Christian Education, Gravissimum Educationis,* (1965), section 3, paragraph 3.
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html
(downloaded 05/04/21)

the Research Project, alongside other studies which report on how school choice is made, is particularly relevant for assessing what parental schooling priorities may mean for the future of Australian Catholic schooling.

For Catholic school leadership to maintain what it views as its share of Australia's enrolment market,[92] data clearly demonstrates that school leaders need to ensure that government funding for the Catholic sector remains at a level which enable school fees to be as low as possible. When Warren suggests that in general, Catholics remain loyal to Catholic schooling, parental commentary indicates that there is an associated financial cost to school loyalty which at some point could present as a barrier to schooling choice. It is equally important to point out that leaders of Catholic schooling may also have a price to pay when it comes to engendering parental enrolment loyalty. Research Project data suggests that the price for Catholic leaders may be one of compromise when it comes to finding a way to address parental religious expectations which do not necessarily reflect the aims set out for Catholic schools by the Vatican.

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[92]   The NCEC provides an example of what it means by marketshare: "the percentage of Australian students who are educated in a school sector. For example, if there are four million students in Australia and Catholic school enrolments increase to 800,000, then the Catholic sector's market share would be 20 per cent." Marketing Toolkit p. 2.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/resources/enrolment-toolkit
(downloaded 11/10/22)

CHAPTER THREE

Catholicism and Education - A Global and Local Mission

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 <u>Overview</u>:

Research Project data suggests that the majority of surveyed parents felt that the Christian nature of a Catholic school played a central role in creating and promoting a culture which fostered an optimal learning environment. This culture was felt to enable an individual student's learning and wellbeing and to support a sense of shared values between school and home.

The data also displays that very few parents who took part in the Research Project were deliberately choosing a Catholic school in order to foster and develop a child's belief in God or knowledge of Catholicism. Even when the Christian nature of Catholic schooling was specifically mentioned by a parent as being a motivating factor for school enrolment, it was one factor among many which ultimately shaped a parent's enrolment decision-making. The NCEC also recognises this diversity of religious belief and practice which exists within contemporary Australian Catholic schools and considers what it means for programmes of religious education.[1]

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[1]   National Catholic Education Commission, *2020 Annual Report,* Statistics, (2021). https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/about-ncec/annual-reports/570-2020-annual-report-1/file (downloaded 25/09/22)

Australian Catholic schools are not alone in grappling with this religious diversity in

their sector. Grace points to a study undertaken in the U.K which also denotes a

similarity to that of the Australian enrolment marketplace:

> In a number of societies Catholic schools have enrolments in
> which Catholic students are the minority. Of the sixty Catholic
> secondary schools which are the focus of this study only twelve
> schools reported a 100 per cent Catholic student enrolment. In
> varying proportions, the other Catholic schools admitted students
> from a pluralistic range of religious cultures, and in five of the
> schools Catholic student constituted only 50 per cent of the
> enrolments.[2]

While Grace points to a diminishing presence of a school's Catholic enrolment, it has

already been stated that no assumptions can be made regarding what the term

Catholic may mean and thus, how marketplace realities may impact Catholic

schooling. Whether a school has 100 per cent Catholic enrolment or 50 per cent, the

Australian experience suggests that Catholic schools have to balance the somewhat

competing demands of a religious and more secular schooling agenda. The priorities

regarding why parents select a Catholic school for their child's education are

complex and may not directly relate to the relevance and importance which a parent

may place on a school's religious nature.

In spite of the diverse cohort of families who utilise Catholic schools, both Vatican

and local Catholic authorities present a unified position as to the centrality of the

religious mission and purpose of Catholic schooling.[3] Vatican documents repeatedly

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[2] Gerald Grace, *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets, and Morality,* (Routledge Falmer, London and New York, 2002), p. xii.

[3] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Cultural Identity of the Catholic School,* (1997), paragraph 10.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/
rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html
(downloaded 12/09/22)

assert the fundamental necessity of the overriding religious mission of Catholic schooling and argue that leaders and teachers in Catholic schools must ensure that an identifiable, authentic Catholic culture underscores a school's pedagogy.

Over the past sixty years Vatican documentation has demonstrated strong concerns as to the implications of secular societal realities for Catholic schooling. In various ways, Vatican documents on Catholic education state that Catholic schools are expected to respond to the challenges of secular society, defined by the Vatican as an attempt to ban, "all reference to religion from the cultural and educational field."[4] Catholic schooling, on the part of Vatican authorities, constitutes an antidote to the secular project. According to the Vatican authorities, the educational project of Catholic schooling is inspired by the Gospel and Catholic schools are expected to take up this challenge and reflect Catholicism's conviction that it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of the human person truly becomes clear.[5]

This Chapter assumes that Catholic schooling in Australia needs to be understood in its religious context. Chapter Three then contextualises Catholic schooling in Australia by placing in within the global evangelising mission of Catholicism. It is this theological context that has repeatedly informed the work of Australian Catholic authorities in seeking government funding for their sector and thereby establishing an Australia-wide system of Catholic schooling which competes for its share of the Australian school enrolment market. Hence, to understand the Australian educational

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[4]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium,* paragraph 10.

[5]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium,* paragraph 10.

marketplace it is imperative to understand the Catholic theology of education that assisted in driving its development. More so, investigating Catholic schooling and its influence within Australian society demands an appreciation of Catholicism's socio-political engagement on the global stage as well as in more local arenas.

In order to contextualise the mission and purpose of Catholic schools, and to assess how these factors have contributed to creating the Australian school marketplace, this Chapter focuses on four key areas of Catholic thinking as well as the theology which underpins it. In addition, exploring Catholicism, its structures, its political influence and how it views the mission of its Catholic schools is vital for providing background that assists in interpreting the importance of the Research Project for demonstrating the likely tensions that exist between secular market realities and the overriding religious expectations of the Vatican for its schools.

Firstly, this Chapter will consider the governance structures of Catholicism, its hierarchal, all male, clerical nature and will explore the manner in which the Church interacts within and across societies. Furthermore, Chapter Three will map the significant presence of Catholicism across the globe, exploring the Church's capacity to influence decision making not only within the lives of its Catholic faithful, but also, its ability to exert influence in wider societal settings. To give an example, this Chapter will briefly explore the presence of the Catholic Church in Australian society and its relevance in the political sphere. The fact that the Catholic Church operates parishes, hospitals, social welfare agencies and approximately 1759[6] schools who

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[6]   National Catholic Education Commission, *2021 Annual Report.*
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/about-ncec/annual-reports
(downloaded 27/01/22)

employ over 100,000 staff,[7] means that the organisation has the potential not only to shape Australian Catholic education, but also and more generally to impact socio-political agenda and outcomes in a wider arena.

Secondly, Chapter Three will consider how Catholic schooling has been viewed by Vatican authorities from the perspective of both pre and post-Vatican II thinking. Importantly this Chapter points to a theological view which pertains to the ability of Catholicism to recalibrate its teachings. Theoretically, the ability of Catholicism to redefine how its teachings manifest, enables Catholic teaching to remain relevant across time and place.[8] More so, this Chapter points to Catholicism's ability revise its teachings and the subsequent implications for its Catholic schools in Australia.

Thirdly, considering perhaps the most famous example of Catholic reform processes, Chapter Three will highlight the significance of the Second Vatican Council, discussing its relevance to the Australian Catholic Church as well as its impact upon schools. As previously noted, the documents that have emerged from the Vatican on education since the conclusion of the Vatican II demonstrate increasing concerns about emerging pluralistic and secular norms in the Western world.[9] Vatican pronouncements on education have consistently underscored the nature of Catholic

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[7]   NCEC, *2020 Annual Report*

[8]   Michele Dillon, *Catholic Identity: Balancing Reason, Faith, and Power,* (Cambridge University Press, UK, 1999), p. 14.

[9]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith,* (1982).
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html
(downloaded 22/09/22)

education as seeking to create a "synthesis between culture and faith."[10] The changing emphases in Vatican documents leave no doubt that ideas about the nature and purpose of Catholic schooling had to change and adapt to social and cultural change.

While a myriad of factors have informed changes in Australian Catholic schools over the past sixty years, the outcomes of the Second Vatican Council were among the most significant. Chapter Three will suggest that the changes which occurred in the Catholic Church in the aftermath of Vatican II, in combination with social and economic changes that were occurring during that period,[11] profoundly impacted the development of the Australian schooling marketplace as well as Catholic schooling itself.

Fourthly, this Chapter will present the core theological rationale for the existence of Catholic schooling. In particular, it will consider Vatican accounts of the inextricable relationship that Catholicism, parents and society share in relation to the education of children and to building the common good. Chapter Three will argue that notions of school choice that come from the Vatican[12] have been instrumental in informing

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[10]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Cultural Identity of the Catholic School,* (1997), paragraph 11.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/
rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html
(downloaded 12/09/22)

[11]   Michelle Arrow, *The Seventies - The Personal, the Political and the Making of Modern Australia,* (NewSouth Publishing, University of New South Wales Sydney, NSW, 2019).

[12]   Pope Francis, *Post- Synodal Apolositc Exhortation Amoris Laetitia Of the Holy Father Francis, to Bishops, Priests and Deacons Consecrated Persons Christian Married Couples and All The Lay Faithful On Love In The Family,* (Vatican Press, 2015), Article 85.
https://w2.vatican.va.francesco.pdf.apost_exhortations
(downloaded 2/12/121)

debates about government school funding in the Australian context.[13] In exploring the particular relationship between Church and parents and Vatican expectations, this Chapter will review four post-Vatican II documents. These documents demonstrate increasing concerns relating to changes which were occurring within Catholic schools, as well as the Vatican's responses to those changes.

While much of Chapter Three will focus on exploring the theological assumptions that drive Catholic schooling, as well as the Church's organisational structures and its manifestations across the globe, this Chapter will also explore aspects of Research Project data. This data, which offers insights into the opinions of parents as to the religious aspect of Catholic schooling, also provides insight and into the complex and competing demands of religious and marketplace forces. Moreover, this Chapter will offer suggestions as to what the data may mean for Australian Catholic school leaders.

In summary, Chapter Three will provide a theoretical foundation for the exploration of Catholic schooling's engagement in the Australian educational marketplace. It will provide context which frames Catholic schooling within its religious and socio-political context and will consider the inextricable and complex three-way partnership between Church, parents and governments. Furthermore, it will provide a framework to understand the role played by Australian Catholic Church authorities in the making of the Australian schooling marketplace.

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[13] Jacinta Collins, "*Catholic Schools Seek Boost In Capital Grants",* in *CN, CathNews*, A Service of the Australian Bishops Conference, Published 21 March, 2019.

3.1.2 <u>Literature Review</u>:

A number of sources will be used to explore the topics of this Chapter. Documents from the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education reveal the Vatican's concerns and responses to the changing societal circumstances across both pre and post-Vatican II timeframes. More particularly, these documents highlight the importance which Vatican authorities continued to place on developing and maintaining its schools. Vatican documents are a useful source for tracking how Vatican II refocused the mission of Catholic schooling and for highlighting the theological back-story of the role played by Catholic authorities in seeking state aid for Catholic schools.

As well as exploring Vatican documents which provide insight into Catholicism's focus on Catholic schooling, this Chapter considers additional texts that provide background for understanding Catholic educational thought in modernity. In relation to Vatican I and its implications for Catholic education, Joseph Komonchak, in *Modernity and the Construction of Roman Catholicism,* and Richard Gaillardetz, in *When the Magisterium Intervenes, The Magisterium and Theologians in Today's Church,* provide insight into the societal circumstances which initiated a specific Catholic response. Both authors argue that Vatican I constituted an attempt on the part of the Vatican to reinstate Catholicism as a powerful force for its faithful within modernity, reasserting itself after the Napoleonic wars and the Risorgimento. Both of of these occurrences marginalised the Papacy as a sovereign. Vatican I centred on revitalising the laity in order to support Catholic families in maintaining their faith in a modernising world.

Michael Attridge, in *From Objectivity to Subjectivity: Changes in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries and Their Impact on Post-Vatican II Theological Education*, argues that prior to Vatican II, the Vatican construed Catholic schools as providing a safe harbour for the Catholic faithful from the temptations of secularism, communism and capitalism.[14] Attridge's insights into pre-Vatican II Catholic schooling also can be applied to colonial and early Australian Catholic schooling where pre-Vatican II Catholic teaching instructed parents to send their children to a Catholic school.[15] The determination of bishops to maintain Australian Catholic schools for reasons of providing a 'safe harbour' for the Catholic faithful provides a context for explaining why such emphasis was placed on the existence of Catholic schools in Australia by local Catholic authorities and the subsequent implications that this theological thinking had for both Church and State.

This Chapter will also consider the way in which Catholic theology has proven itself to be adaptable to changing historical situations. In *Catholic Identity: Balancing Reason, Faith, and Power,* Michelle Dillon offers an account of the ostensibly universal, global nature of the Roman Catholic tradition. She discusses the authority of the magisterium's exegesis to show how the Church frames its

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[14]   Michael Attridge, "From Objectivity to Subjectivity: Changes in The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries and Their Impact on Post-Vatican II Theological Education"*, in Catholic Education in the Wake of Vatican II,* ed., Rosa Bruno-Jofre and Jon Zaldivar, (University of Toronto Press, Toronto Buffalo, 2017) p. 23.

[15]   Margaret Freund, *They Hear All About It Around the Traps, Catholic Ethos and School Choice,* Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Notre Dame University Fremantle, (2001).
https://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2001/fre01667.pdf
(downloaded 06/05/22)

ongoing apostolic and theological mandates.[16] While pointing to the size and highly ordered structure of Catholicism, Dillon also suggests that the Catholic tradition, 'contains diverse symbolic resources', which technically enable it to maintain a 'continuity with the tradition' and to theologically justify change.[17]

Dillon's point is particularly relevant when exploring the significant changes that were instituted by Catholic authorities during Vatican II. The overall changes instituted by the Council provided the platform from which Catholicism was expected to re-engage with societies. More so, the changes that were instituted were expected to inform how Catholic schools were to develop across the globe and more particularly, how Catholic schools should develop in post-Vatican II Australian.

Scholarly accounts of Vatican II have suggested why the Council came about, its major focus and outcomes and reflections about how successful the Second Vatican Council has been in achieving its aims. Theologian John O'Malley, in *What Happened at Vatican II,* explores the religious and political agenda which he suggests drove its establishment. He points to the changes that had occurred during the twentieth century such as the rise of communism and the effects of two World Wars. Moreover, O'Malley suggests that in the aftermath of World War II, particularly when reflecting on the events of the Holocaust, there was an increasing acknowledgement of multiculturalism and religious pluralism and a

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[16]   Michele Dillon, *Catholic Identity: Balancing Reason, Faith, and Power,* (Cambridge University Press, UK, 1999), p. 14.

[17]   Dillon, *Catholic Identity: Balancing Reason,* p. 14.

desire by Pope John XXIII to reconcile with '*the other*'.[18] Additionally, O'Malley suggests that the end of WWII also saw the end of an euro-centric Catholic Church.

Massimo Faggioli presents an interesting view regarding the legacy of Vatican II. With the benefit of hindsight, he suggests that the Second Vatican Council failed to achieve many of the things that it set out to accomplish.[19] Faggioli's point is an interesting one when considering how post-Vatican II Australian Catholic schools have developed. This thesis argues that Catholic schools in Australia could be considered as one of the best examples of the success of Vatican II when it comes to the inclusion of the laity in leading and managing Catholic schooling. Moreover, without the presence of lay leadership, lay teachers and lay administrative staff, present day Australian Catholic schooling would not be able to function.

In the text *Catholic Schools, Mission, Markets and Morality,* and *Vatican II and New thinking About Catholic Education: Aggiornamento Thinking and Principles Into Practice',* Gerald Grace explores the link between Catholic theology and the arguments made for the necessity of Catholic schooling. When speaking about Vatican I, Grace suggests that Catholic schooling provides an explicit example of

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[18]   The term, '*the other*', refers to 'the other person in their difference to '*me',* in the case of institutional or cultural otherness - '*the other in their difference to us'*.

[19]   Massimo Faggioli, "Time to Get Out from Trent's Long Shadow", in *Tui Motu, InterIslands, Independent Catholic Magazine,* Ltd, ed., Ann L. Gilroy, (Dunedin North, New Zealand, Issue Number 235. 2019), p. 15.

of Catholicism's anti-modern stance during the 1800s and 1900s, an approach

that he argues prevails until the Second Vatican Council.[20]

Grace's work provides salient insight into the significant shift in thinking and

practice which Vatican II heralded for Catholic schools across the globe. His work

has particular relevance for Australian Catholic schooling. He points to the

dissonance which can be caused by the success and popularity of Catholic

schooling within the context of a marketplaces which does not necessarily

embrace the Vatican's reasons regarding the overriding religious mission of

Catholic schools.

3.2 Catholicism — Religion, Politics, Parents and Schools

3.2.1 The Vatican — Engagement in the Socio-Political World:

Catholicism's global membership of approximately 1.1 billion people as well as a

centralised administration that resides within its own sovereign State gives

Catholicism a singular global status in religious and socio-political spheres.[21] While

Catholic authorities in the Vatican clearly state that their role precludes providing

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[20]   Gerald Grace, *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets, and Morality,* (Routledge Falmer, London and New York, 2002), p. 7.

[21]   Pew Research Centre, *Religion and Public Life, The Global Catholic Population,* (2013). https://www.pewforum.org/2013/02/13/the-global-catholic-population
(downloaded 26/03/21)

political solutions, they also clearly articulate that the Church has a fundamental

responsibility to make moral judgment on temporal matters:[22]

> It is not the Church's task to set forth specific political solutions –
> and even less to propose a single solution as the acceptable one
> – to temporal questions that God has left to the free and
> responsible judgment of each person. It is, however, the Church's
> right and duty to provide a moral judgment on temporal matters
> when this is required by faith or the moral law.[23]

While the Church may assert that it does not provide political solutions there is no

doubt that Catholic authorities have consistently offered a political voice which, at

times, has entered into political debates and has been influential in shaping aspects

of decision-making. An obvious example is that of the Catholic Church's engagement

in Australian political debate in relation to school funding. While this topic will be

explored in detail in Chapter Four, it is salient that the NCEC continues to play an

active role in commenting on school funding:

> Given the increased need for schools, parents and families at
> Catholic schools will be placed under significant pressure to
> increase their contributions to the increasing cost of capital works
> and self-funded new school infrastructure. This pressure will be
> particularly felt in low socio-economic areas. Students at Catholic
> schools and their parents and families are entitled to support. The
> NCEC proposes that in this federal budget, the Australian
> government not only increase the pool of funds available under
> the act for capital but also review the capital funding program.[24]

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[22]   Congregation for The Doctrine of The Faith, *The Participation of Catholics in Political Life,* (2002), paragraph 3.

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/
rc_con_cfaith_doc_20021124_politica_en.html
(downloaded 09/10/22)

[23]   Congregation for The Doctrine of The Faith, *The Participation of Catholics in Political Life,* paragraph 3.

[24]   Jacinta Collins, "Catholic Schools Seek Boost In Capital Grants", in CN, CathNews, A Service of the Australian Bishops Conference, Published 21 March, 2019.

The political work undertaken by Catholic groups such as the NCEC, State-operated

Catholic School Commissions and grass-roots parent associations work proactively

in the socio-political arena to advocate for ongoing government funding for Catholic

schools.[25]

Catholic involvement in school funding debates is one example that testifies to the

Church's political engagements. More generally, the example reveals the

impossibility of a strict divide between political and religious spheres. Maddox has

argued 'religious currents' tend to be underestimated in Australian political life:

> Australians have not been in the habit of looking for religious
> currents in our public life, nor always very skilled in analysing
> them when they appear. Yet, over the last twenty-five years, such
> currents have been becoming increasingly prominent.[26]

Maddox's point is important, especially when taking into account a large, powerful

and highly organised religion such as Catholicism. Additionally, failing to

acknowledge the impact of Catholicism's interactions in the political arena, especially

in relation to school funding debates and to Catholicism's theological stance on

parental right to schooling choice, also fails to acknowledge the power of religion in

actively promoting and shaping how Australia's schooling marketplace evolved.

Hayer and Rozell point to Catholicism's socio-political interventions. They suggest

that Catholicism has a 'rich history' of engagement in political matters: "Catholic

political engagement benefits from institutional strength and the Catholic tradition's

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[25]   Grass-roots parents associations refers to the Catholic Federation of Parents and Friends Association.

[26]   Marion Maddox, *The study of religion in schools*, Macquarie University, (2019). p. 12.

rich history of intellectually and socially engaging political issues."[27] Moreover,

Heyer and Rozell suggest that in the aftermath of Vatican II, Catholicism's political

engagement in world affairs "constitutes an evolving political force on the

international scene."[28] Whether it be the voice of Pope Francis who calls for a

humane approach to be adopted to the refugee crisis, or the Catholic stance on

abortion or gay marriage, which is also voiced in the public arena by Catholic

authorities, Catholicism's religious beliefs often take their place within societal

political debates. The public nature of the Catholic voice, alongside its global

presence, places Catholicism in a unique position regarding its ability to engage in

the socio-political sphere and to potentially influence the societies in which it

operates.

However, classifying how Catholicism engages politically within and across societies

is complex. When speaking about the global identity of the Catholic Church, Lisa

Ferrari argues that Catholicism has similarities with other global organisations,

although she also suggests that Roman Catholicism is in a unique category:

> The Catholic Church has a unique identity in the international
> system, which allows it to influence international relations in a
> distinctive way. Like the European Union, the Catholic Church
> defies easy classification in the simple international relations
> taxonomy of states, intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), and
> nongovernmental organisations (NGOs).[29]

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[27] Kristin Hayer and Mark Rozell, Mark, "Introduction", in *Catholics and Politics : The Dynamic Tension Between Faith and Power,* ed., Kristin E. Hayer, Mark J. Rozell and Michael A. Genovese, (Georgetown University Press, 2008), p. 2.

[28] Hayer et al, "Introduction", p. 2.

[29] Lisa Ferrari, "The Vatican as a Transnational Actor," in *The Catholic Church and the Nation-State: Comparative Perspectives*, ed., Paul Christopher, Manuel, Lawrence C. Reardon and Clyde L. Wilcox, (Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C, 2006), p. 33.

Ferrari also suggests that the Catholic Church could in some respects be classified as "a transitional NGO",[30] which she identifies as, "a group of private individuals that operates across sovereign boundaries in pursuit of its aims."[31]

However, whether the global leaders of Catholicism can be classified as private individuals is questionable. An examination of Catholicism's governance and leadership structures reveals a tightly organised group of men each of whom have specific religious and organisational roles to fulfil and each of whom are consecrated into a religious tradition where the ultimate leadership of Catholicism resides with the Pope and his brotherhood of bishops.

According to Canon Law the Pope possesses "supreme, full, immediate, and universal ordinary power in the Church, which he is always able to exercise freely."[32] Such a statement clearly portrays not only a style of governance, but also supreme oversight and power in relation to Roman Catholic teachings. More so, it seems fair to assert that the Pope is perhaps one of the world's most public and prominent religious world leaders. Collins takes the power of the papacy even further. He suggests that in recent times the Pope has become one of the most influential political and religious leaders in the world:

> …the modern papacy has risen from a near-death experience in 1799 at the end of the French Revolutions to become more centralised and more powerful than even before in its entire history. Nowadays the papacy is one of the most influential…

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[30]   Ferrari, "The Vatican as a Transnational Actor", p. 34.

[31]   Ferrari, "The Vatican as a Transnational Actor", p. 34.

[32]   Ferrari, "The Vatican as a Transnational Actor", p. 34.

institutions in the world and uses both "soft" and "hard" power with skill and ability.[33]

While much can be said about the religious and political power of the Pope, the Roman Curia also plays a role in determining how Catholic teachings develop. Hilling describes the role of the Curia quite simply as assisting the Pope.[34] However, when we consider the vast array of Vatican documents which are developed by the Curia, including those which relate to Catholic schooling, there can be little doubt that this group of Vatican officials hold a great deal of authority, power and influence.[35]

While Curia documents are global in nature, the global mission of Catholicism, especially as it relates to its schools, must operate locally. The number of institutions which bear the name 'Catholic' provides testament to Catholicism's extensive presence and engagement within local settings. For example, the number of educational institutions owned and operated by Catholic institutions across the globe comprises, on one count, 216,000 schools,1,260 universities, 500 faculties and ecclesiastical institutes.[36] In Australia, the Catholic Church operates 1,755 schools which cater for approximately 785,000 Australian students.[37]

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[33]   Paul Collins, *Absolute Power, How the Pope Became the Most Influential Man in the World,* (Public Affairs New York, Hachette Book Group, 2018), p. 3.

[34]   Nicholas Hilling, *Procedure at the Roman Curia,* (Bibliolife Network, 2009), p. 2.

[35]   John O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II,* (Harvard University Press, 2010), Introduction.

[36]   Vatican Document. *Agenzia Fides.* Information service of the Pontifical Mission Societies since 1927: Vatican - Catholic Church Statistics. 2018 http://www.fides.org/en/news/64944-VATICAN_CATHOLIC_CHURCH_STATISTICS_2018

[37]   National Catholic Education Commission, *Australian Catholic School Statistics 2022.* https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/schools/catholic-education-statistics

The Catholic Code of Canon Law, alongside an array of Vatican documents on

Catholic schooling, mandates that Catholic schools should remain connected to the

overarching global teachings and mission of Catholicism. At the same time, at the

local level, Catholic schools ought to manifest its global mission in ways which

respect the specific cultural/societal context in which they exist:[38]

> Catholic schools and universities fulfil their task, which is mission
> and service, in very different cultural and social contexts, where
> their work is sometimes recognized and appreciated and, at other
> times, stymied by serious economic difficulties and hostility, which
> sometimes can even turn into forms of violence. The way in which
> their presence in different States and world regions is experienced
> varies remarkably, but the basic reasons for their educational
> work do not change.[39]

In general terms, local dioceses link the Vatican and local Catholic schools. Within a

diocese, the local bishop is the ultimate ecclesial authority whose consent is required

prior to the establishment of any Catholic school:[40]

> Since they share the Church's mission, all Christ's faithful have
> the right to promote and support apostolic action, by their own
> initiative, undertaken according to their state and condition. No
> initiative, however, can lay claim to the title "Catholic" without the
> consent of the competent ecclesiastical authority.[41]

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[38]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education (Educational Institutions), *Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion,* Instrumentum laboris, (2014), section 6, paragraph 1.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20140407_educare-oggi-e-domani_en.html
(downloaded 7/12/21)

[39]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, Section 6, paragraph 1

[40]   Zenon Cardinal Grocholewski, *The Catholic School According to the Code of Canon Law,* (Fordham University, 2008), p. 150.
https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1005826.pdf
(downloaded 7/12/21)

[41]   Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference, *About the Conference,* paragraph 1.
www.catholic.org.au
(downloaded 30/01/20)

In relation to the hierarchal and powerful ecclesial authority given to bishops, the Vatican states: "By virtue, therefore, of the Holy Spirit who has been given to them, bishops have been constituted true and authentic teachers of the faith and have been made pontiffs and pastors."[42] Accordingly, the power of a bishop in both the religious and socio-political arena is underpinned by the authority given to them by virtue of their ecclesial office.

> In addition to his governing office, the bishop is his diocese's chief teacher of doctrine and leader of public worship. A bishop's involvement in the activities and institutions in his diocese is, in some instances, no more than consent and encouragement; in others, advice and guidance; and, in others, full ownership and direction.[43]

Finally, when considering how Catholicism maintains its global presence and message within a local context, it is helpful to define the canonical power invested in a 'collective of bishops'.[44] By papal decree they have a right to form a collective and speak as a group on behalf of Catholicism within their jurisdiction. In Australia, bishops have established the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference. This group is constituted by Canon Law which recommends and sanctions the permanence of the Conference for the promotion of the greater good of humanity:[45]

> The Bishops' Conference, a permanent institution, is the assembly of the bishops of a country or a particular territory,…

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[42]   Vatican Document. "The Celebration Of The Christian Mystery, Part Two, Section Two - The Seven Sacraments Of The Catholic Church', Chapter Three, The Sacrament of Holy Orders", in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (Official Edition for Australia and New Zealand, St Paul's, Homebush NSW, 1994), paragraph 1558.

[43]   Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Structure, The Catholic Church in Australia.* https://www.catholic.org.au
(downloaded 7/11/21)

[44]   Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference: *About the Conference,* paragraph 2&3. www.catholic.org.au
(downloaded 30/01/21)

[45]   Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference: *About the Conference*, paragraph 2&3.

> exercising together certain pastoral offices for Christ's faithful of their territory. By forms and means of the apostolate suited to the circumstances of the time and place, it is to promote, in accordance with the law, that greater good which the Church offers to humankind.[46]

What the 'greater good of humanity' may mean for Catholicism's many constituencies is complex and contested. While numerous religious and theological viewpoints may exist within the Australian lay Catholic population, individual bishops and the Australian National Bishops' Conference are authorised to provide the official Catholic position. Thus, when it comes to articulating the national perspective regarding matters such as, the mission and purpose of Australian Catholic schooling, national policies regarding school funding and the central place of religious education in Catholic schools, the Australian National Bishops' Conference has oversight and right to speak on behalf of the Catholic Church.

In conclusion, this section has provided a context for exploring the religious and socio-political nature of the Roman Catholic Church. It has highlighted Catholicism's tight organisational structures and the role of its centralised theological teachings in providing the tools for the articulation of a consistent socio-political voice. Most importantly, this section has also provided a foundation for building the argument that the power of Catholicism in the public arena and the nature of its authority structures are significant factors which must be taken into account when exploring how Australia's system of schooling has emerged.

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[46]   Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference: *About the Conference*, paragraph 2&3.

3.2.2 <u>Vatican I and Vatican II — Catholicism's Ability to Adapt and the Implications</u>

   <u>for Catholic Schools</u>:

This section aims to accomplish two things. First, it describes the ability of Catholic

authorities to redefine Catholic teachings in response to the societal context in which

Catholicism exists and suggests the implications of these redefinitions for Catholic

schooling in the aftermath of Vatican I and Vatican II. Second, and most importantly,

this section provides the backdrop for further exploring how Catholicism's shifts in

theological thinking have also driven a political agenda which have played a role in

the creation of Australis's schooling marketplace.

The theology which proclaims papal infallibility, alongside the power invested in the

magisterium (Pope and bishops), provides the theological platform for Catholicism's

claim that from "Christ they receive the power to act in his person."[47] In effect,

Catholic teaching claims that the magisterium is endowed with the authority of Christ

to proclaim ongoing revelation of His truth. Additionally, in relation to all matters

pertaining to faith, the authority of Catholicism to 'represent Christ on earth, is

theologically guaranteed by Papal infallibility:

> The supreme degree of participation in the authority of Christ is
> ensured by the charism of *infallibility*. This infallibility extends as
> far as does the deposit of divine Revelation; it also extends to all
> those elements of doctrine, including morals, without which the
> saving truths of the faith cannot be preserved, explained, or
> observed.[48]

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[47]   Vatican Document, "The Celebration of the Christian Mystery, Part Two, Section Two - The Seven
Sacraments of the Catholic Church', Chapter Three, The Sacrament of Holy Orders, Part three, I.
Moral Life and the Magisterium of the Church", in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (Official
Edition for Australia and New Zealand, St Paul's, Homebush NSW, 1994), Article 2035.

[48]   Vatican Document, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church,* Article 2035.

This theological view proclaims Catholicism as the true manifestation of Christ's presence on earth:

> The sole Church of Christ which in the Creed we profess to be
> one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, subsists in the Catholic Church,
> which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in
> communion with him. Nevertheless, many elements of
> sanctification and of truth are found outside its visible confines.[49]

Such theological precepts enable Catholic teaching and practices to be reviewed, to be altered and to remain relevant in time and place.[50] This point is emphasised by Dillon:

> Despite the image of a monolithic and immutable tradition, church
> doctrine and institutional practices are open to change and to do
> change. As demonstrated most recently by the Second Vatican
> Council (1962-1965), equality, pluralism, doctrinal reflexivity, and
> historical consciousness are practical values central to the
> church's identity. The Catholic tradition, therefore, is not
> homogeneous but contains diverse symbolic resources that can
> be variously interpreted and used to transform the church while
> maintaining continuity with the tradition.[51]

Both Vatican I and Vatican II provide salient examples of Catholicism's doctrinal flexibility, a flexibility reflected in the changing manifestations of Catholic schools. For example, Vatican I enabled the Church to constitute itself counter-societally, and schools became a crucial part of that project.[52] The establishment of the First Vatican Council in 1869 occurred approximately eighty years after the French Revolution.

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[49] Vatican Document, The Catechism of the Catholic Church, *The Professional of the Christian Faith,* Section Two, Article 780.

[50] Michele Dillon, *Catholic Identity: Balancing Reason, Faith, and Power,* (Cambridge University Press, UK, 1999), p. 14.

[51] Dillon, *Catholic Identity,* p. 14.

[52] S. J. Denig and A. J. Dosen, "The Mission of the Catholic School in the Pre-Vatican II Era (1810-1962) and the Post-Vatican II Era (1965-1995): Insights and Observations for the New Millennium", in *Journal of Catholic Education*, 2009, 13 (2), p. 136.
https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/ce/vol13/iss2/2/
(downloaded 30/03/22)

Komonchak points to Vatican I as playing a central role in reasserting the relevance of the Catholic Church for its faithful and for shaping how Catholicism was to engage within society up to the time of the Second Vatican Council.[53]

Richard Gaillardetz also points to the highly significant events of the Enlightenment for the Catholic Church. He suggests that Catholicism "saw the French Revolution for what it was: the death knell to Christendom and any hope of a state partnership between Church and monarch."[54] In reacting to changing societal realities which occurred post-Enlightenment and to its subsequent loss of power in the public and political arena, Catholicism's interactions with societies changed. Gaillardetz suggests that Catholicism developed a type of 'counter-societal' approach to its existence.[55]

Effectively, in reacting to its historical moment, Vatican I attempted to reassert Roman Catholicism as the authentic manifestation of God's presence in a world in which its authority had declined.[56] In doing so, as suggested by both Gaillardetz and Komonchak, Vatican I created a Catholic "sub-society, marked by a distinctive

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[53]   Joseph A. Komonchak, *Modernity and the Construction of Roman Catholicism,* (Worldpress 1997), p. 376.
https://jakomonchak.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/jak-modernity-rcism.pdf
(downloaded 6/10/21)

[54]   Richard Gaillardetz, "Introduction", in *When the Magisterium Intervenes, The Magisterium and Theologians in Today's Church,* ed., Richard Gaillardetz*,* (Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 2012), p. ix.

[55]   Gaillardetz, "Introduction", in *When the Magisterium Intervenes,* p. ix.

[56]   Joseph A. Komonchak, *Modernity and the Construction of Roman Catholicism,* (Worldpress, 1997), p. 378.
https://jakomonchak.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/jak-modernity-rcism.pdf
(downloaded 6/10/21)

worldview and social organisation."[57] The theology which grew out of such a world view, as well as having implications for Catholic laity, also created a specific context for how Catholic schooling was to develop. Denig and Dosen argued Catholic schooling of this era took on a defensive role, its purpose was defined as catechising the Catholic laity and ensuring that Protestant proselytisation was not influencing Catholic children.[58]

In relation to Vatican I and Catholic schooling, Attridge suggests that during the late 19th century and up to the time of Vatican II, Pope Leo XIII's *Spectata Fides* of 1885 provided a particular platform for Catholic education. Attridge, like Grace, suggests that Catholic schooling was intended to be an educational safe-haven for the faithful, as the language of *Spectata Fides* demonstrates:[59]

> In these days, and in the present condition of the world, when the tender age of childhood is threatened on every side by so many and such various dangers, hardly anything can be imagined more fitting than the union with literary instruction of sound teaching in faith and morals.[60]

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[57]   Komonchak, *Modernity and the Construction of Roman Catholicism,* p. 378.

[58]   S. J. Denig and A. J. Dosen, "The Mission of the Catholic School in the Pre-Vatican II Era (1810-1962) and the Post-Vatican II Era (1965-1995): Insights and Observations for the New Millennium", in *Journal of Catholic Education*, 2009, 13 (2), p. 136.
https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/ce/vol13/iss2/2/
(downloaded 30/03/22)

[59]   Michael Attridge, "From Objectivity to Subjectivity: Changes in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries and Their Impact on Post-Vatican II Theological Education", in *Catholic Education in the Wake of Vatican II,* ed., Rosa Bruno-Jofre and Jon, Zaldivar, (University of Toronto Press, Toronto Buffalo London, 2017), p. 23.

[60]   Pope Leo XIII, *Spectata Fides, Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, on Christian Education*, (Copyright 1885 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1885), paragraph 4.
http://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_27111885_spectata-fides.html
(downloaded 10/10/22)

Statements such as that of Leo XIII clearly demonstrate the idea that pre-Vatican II Catholic schools were expected to offer a profound antidote to modernity. As Grace states, Catholic schools "in their first origins, were constructed and constituted as citadels and fortresses for the preservation of the faith in a hostile external environment characterised by a dominant Protestant order, constituting anti-Catholic prejudice and the growing influence of secularisation."[61]

It is important to note that it is in the context of Vatican I's theological teachings that Australian Catholic schooling developed. Freund highlights the implications for Catholic schooling in Australia in the aftermath of Vatican I. She suggests that Catholic schools existed within a Catholic culture which had "religious certainty, strict religious participation and a sense of separation from the rest of Australian society."[62] The establishment of Catholic schooling in Australia and the role played by Catholicism in shaping the schooling marketplace is explored in the following chapter.

While Vatican I created a context of withdrawal from society and had corresponding implications for Catholic schooling,[63] Vatican II set a different theological agenda for how Catholicism would respond to post World-War II societal realities. The retreat

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[61]   Gerald Grace, *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets and Morality,* (Routledge Falmer, London and New York, 2002), p. 7.

[62]   Margaret Freund, '*They Hear All About It Around the Traps*', *Catholic Ethos and School Choice,* Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, (Notre Dame University Fremantle, 2001), Section: Catholic Ethos.
https://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2001/fre01667.pdf
(downloaded 6/05/22),

[63]   Michael Attridge, "From Objectivity to Subjectivity: Changes in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries and Their Impact on Post-Vatican II Theological Education", in *Catholic Education in the Wake of Vatican II,* ed., Rosa Bruno-Jofre and Jon, Zaldivar, (University of Toronto Press, Toronto Buffalo London, 2017), p. 23.

mentality, which Grace suggests characterised pre-Vatican II Catholic schooling, was abandoned and replaced with a new emphasis on 'mission' and outreach.[64] In 1959 Pope John XXIII announced the reshaping of doctrinal understandings within the Catholic Church and in doing so pointed to the importance of "bringing up to date the Code of Canon Law."[65] While Pope John XXIII pointed to what the Vatican Council was intending to achieve,[66] it is important to note why the Code of Canon Law required modernising and what such changes meant for its global network of schools.

The commentary surrounding the reasons for the establishment of the Second Vatican Council is extensive. Attridge points to "the growth in historical awareness in the late nineteenth century"[67] as enabling a number of changes to occur to theological thinking. O'Malley speaks of what he refers to as the "long nineteenth century,"[68] where he suggests that the teachings of the Catholic Church increasingly became less relevant. Additionally, O'Malley points to the need for Catholicism to reconcile aspects of its pre-Vatican II interactions with society so that new ways of engaging with society could emerge.[69] Furthermore, when referring to post-World

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[64]   Gerald Grace, *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets and Morality,* (Routledge Falmer, London and New York, 2002). p. 7.

[65]   Pope John XXIII, *Announcement of an Ecumenical Council by Pope Saint John XXIII,* (Page updated: 15 December 2016, © Vatican II - Voice of The Church, 2016), paragraph 15. https://www.papalencyclicals.net/the-second-vatican-ecumenical-council (downloaded: 24/01/2022)

[66]   Pope John XXIII, *Announcement of an Ecumenical Council,* paragraph 15.

[67]   Michael Attridge, "From Objectivity to Subjectivity: Changes in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries and Their Impact on Post-Vatican II Theological Education", in *Catholic Education in the Wake of Vatican II,* ed., Rosa Bruno-Jofre and Jon, Zaldivar, (University of Toronto Press, Toronto Buffalo London, 2017), p. 25.

[68]   John O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II,* (Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 4.

[69]   O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II,* p. 4.

War II events like the rise of communism, O'Malley proposed that Vatican II "led politicians and churchmen to believe that a new age was dawning that needed new solutions and approaches."[70]

Both Berger and Wilde suggest that Vatican II was supposed to enable the Catholic Church to establish a new relationship with secular society and to some extent with its membership. Berger suggests that the Council was "supposed to open windows, specifically the windows of the Catholic subculture that had been constructed when it became clear that the overall society could not be reconquered."[71] Additionally, Wilde states that Vatican II was intended to be transformational, particularly in relation to changing the emphasis from hierarchal authority structures to a notion of the Catholic community as being "the people of God."[72]

While different authors place different emphases on various interpretations as to why Vatican II came about, its outcomes had significant implications for the entire Catholic community especially in relation to liturgical practices and a new focus on ecumenism.[73] The changes which were made to Catholic liturgy, appeared to acknowledge the pluralistic nature of the Catholic faithful and in doing so enabled the

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[70]   O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, p. 5.

[71]   Peter Berger, "The Desecularization of the World, A Global Overview", in *The Desecularization of the World, Resurgent Religion and World Politics,* ed., Peter Berger, (Eerdmans Publishing Company Michigan USA,1999), p. 5.

[72]   Melissa J. Wilde, *Vatican II: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Change,* (Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 2007), p. 15.

[73]   For Example: Prior to Vatican II Catholic Masses and other liturgical events such as Benediction were conducted in Latin. However, post Vatican II Catholic liturgies could occur in a culture's native language. Laity participation in Catholic Masses was encouraged as was receiving the Eucharist (Communion) in the hand rather than on the tongue. Priests faced the congregation, rather than having their backs to them during Mass as was previously the case.

Mass and other Catholic liturgical services to use a country's native language rather than Latin — the global language of pre-Vatican II Catholicism. In addition, the rite of the Catholic Mass was modernised in ways which enabled greater participation by the laity. In keeping with the desire for reconnection and re-engagement within societies the Vatican released the document *Nostra Aetate*.[74] This document was proclaimed by Pope Paul VI in 1965 and provides an example of Catholicism's changing stance in ecumenical matters. Moreover, the shift towards ecumenism signalled a transformation in the Church's attitude to religious pluralism which also provided a new context for post-Vatican II Catholic schooling.

In addition, the changes that Vatican II enacted, provided a larger platform and framework from which the Second Vatican Council's document on Catholic schooling emerged.[75] In relation to the major changes that took place during the Council, Thomas Banchoff and Jose Casanova suggest that there were three key developments: "an embrace of human rights and religious freedom, an opening to interreligious dialogue, and an increasingly global framework for Catholic social thought and practice."[76] It is within such a context that the Vatican's document on Catholic Education was proclaimed.

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[74]   Pope Paul VI, *Nostra Aetate*, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, 1965.
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html
(downloaded 15/10/22)

[75]   Pope Paul VI, *Declaration on Christian Education,* Gravissimum Educationis, Proclaimed by Pope Paul VI, (1965), section 2.
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html
(downloaded 15/10/22)

[76]   Thomas Banchoff and José Casanova, "The Jesuits and Globalization", in *The Jesuits and Globalization: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Challenges,* ed., Thomas Banchoff and José Casanova, (Georgetown University Press Washington, D.C, 2016), p. 17.

In 1965 Pope Paul VI released the Council's document on education —

Gravissimum educationis.[77] This document clearly reasserted Catholic education as

being a critical vehicle for the salvation of individuals and the enlightenment of

societies.[78] However, in addition to stating what Catholic schooling was expected to

accomplish Paul VI restated the theological reasoning for Catholicism's commitment

to education by proclaiming that the Church has a particular societal role to fulfil in

which education plays a vital part.

> Finally, in a special way, the duty of educating belongs to the
> Church, not merely because she must be recognized as a human
> society capable of educating, but especially because she has the
> responsibility of announcing the way of salvation to all men, of
> communicating the life of Christ to those who believe, and, in her
> unfailing solicitude, of assisting men to be able to come to the
> fullness of this life.[79]

Additionally, Paul VI reaffirmed the place and importance of Catholic education in the

Church, but moving its role from a defensive mission to an evangelical one. Catholic

schools were to assist in Catholicism's transformational agenda, creating an

educational environment and programme that would work towards the, "perfection of

the human person, the good of earthly society and the building of a world that is

more human."[80] Additionally, Paul VI reasserted that Catholic parents had a "duty of

entrusting their children to Catholic schools wherever and whenever it is possible

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[77]   Pope Paul VI, *Declaration on Christian Education, Gravissimum Educationis*, Proclaimed by Pope Paul VI, (1965), section 2.
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html
(downloaded 15/10/22)

[78]   Pope Paul VI, *Declaration on Christian Education,* paragraphs 1 -3.

[79]   Pope Paul VI, *Declaration on Christian Education*, section 3, paragraph 3.

[80]   Pope Paul VI, *Declaration on Christian Education, s*ection 3, paragraph 3.

and of supporting these schools to the best of their ability and of cooperating with them for the education of their children."[81]

While Paul VI's statement in *Gravissimum educationis* confirmed Catholicism's reliance on education as a means of evangelising the Catholic faithful, in keeping with the sentiments of *Nostra Aetate, Gravissimum educationis* indicated a more ecumenical approach to Catholic schooling:

> This sacred synod likewise declares that children and young people have a right to be motivated to appraise moral values with a right conscience, to embrace them with a personal adherence, together with a deeper knowledge and love of God. Consequently it earnestly entreats all those who hold a position of public authority or who are in charge of education to see to it that youth is never deprived of this sacred right.[82]

Grace suggests that *Gravissimum educationis* could have gone further in proclaiming the importance of Catholic education in a time of great societal change.[83] However, in reasserting the central place of education in Catholicism's overall evangelising platform, *Gravissimum educationis* was particularly important for three reasons.

Firstly, it announced that Catholic schooling had a vital evangelising role to play in post-Vatican II Catholicism. In the Australian context this had profound implications for how Australia's system of schooling was to continue developing. Secondly, and most importantly, in keeping with Vatican II's focus on re-engagement with society,

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[81] Pope Paul VI, *Declaration on Christian Education,* section 8 paragraph 3.

[82] Pope Paul VI, *Declaration on Christian Education,* section 1 paragraph 3.

[83] Gerald Grace, *Vatican II and New Thinking About Catholic Education Aggiornamento Thinking and Principles into Practice,* (Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education (CRDCE), St. Mary's University, Twickenham, London UK, 2016), p 1.

Paul VI emphasised Catholic schooling as being open to all.[84] This significant shift in thinking, while in keeping with Vatican II's theological thinking, cannot be overestimated as providing a platform for the entry of Australian Catholic schools into the schooling marketplace during the latter years of the twentieth century. Thirdly, *Gravissimum educationis* provided the foundation for all subsequent Vatican statements on Catholic education, each of which continued to develop their theological rationale regarding the nature and purpose of education in relation to a post-Vatican II world. These three topics are discussed in detail in the following Chapter.

In conclusion, nearly sixty years on from Vatican II and looking back at what it attempted to achieve, Faggioli suggests that the potential of Vatican II to elicit significant change has yet to be fully realised.[85] He suggests that in contrast to Berger's view, the Second Vatican Council "did not so much open a new era as begin to close down an old one whose remnants are still with us."[86] To illustrate his point, Faggioli describes how Catholicism viewed the 'laity'. While Wilde highlights the shift in understanding that Vatican II implemented from a Church with a hierarchical teaching authority to an emphasis placed on the people of God,[87]

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[84]   Pope Paul VI, *Declaration on Christian Education,* Gravissimum Educationis, Proclaimed by Pope Paul VI, (1965), section 1 paragraph 3.
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html
(downloaded 10/09/22)

[85]   Massimo Faggioli, "Time to Get Out from Trent's Long Shadow", in *Tui Motu InterIslands, Independent Catholic Magazine* Ltd, ed., Ann L. Gilroy, (Dunedin North, New Zealand, Issue Number 235, 2019), p. 15.

[86]   Faggioli, "Time to Get Out from Trent's Long Shadow", p. 15.

[87]   Melissa J. Wilde, *Vatican II: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Change,* (Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 2007), p. 15.

Faggioli highlights an ongoing significant power differential between the Catholic laity and Church hierarchy: "From an institutional point of view, the Church of Vatican II, a Church committed to the priesthood of all believers, is still at a very early stage of construction."[88]

Faggioli's point about the 'priesthood of all believers' is important especially as it relates to the vital role that laity increasingly undertook in post-Vatican II Catholic schooling. In documents on Catholic education which emerged in the aftermath of Vatican II, the role and relevance of the laity as teachers and leaders in schools becomes a common theme. A 1977 document highlights the need for teachers to understand the nature of the identity of Catholic schooling and points to their apparent lack of courage in protecting it.[89] Subsequently, a 1982 document dedicates the majority of its content to promoting deeper understanding about the sacred mission of teaching and that lay staff in Catholic schools play a critical role in the evangelising mission of the Church.[90]

However, while Faggioli paints a scene of twenty-first century Catholicism as remaining in a state of transition where the new possibilities that emerged at the

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[88]   Massimo Faggioli, "Time to Get Out from Trent's Long Shadow",, in *Tui Motu InterIslands, Independent Catholic Magazine* Ltd, ed., Ann L. Gilroy, (Dunedin North, New Zealand, Issue Number 235, 2019), p. 15.

[89]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education,*The Catholic School,* (1977). paragraph 66. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html (downloaded 12/09/22)

[90]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education: *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith,* (1982). https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html (downloaded 12/09/22)

Vatican Council have since failed to find significant expression in Catholic structure and practices,[91] this thesis suggests that this is not the case when it comes to Australian Catholic schooling. In Australian Catholic schooling the reforms of Vatican II are strongly apparent. While there is clearly an ongoing significant power differential between the Catholic laity and Church hierarchy at the macro level, for the most part, Catholic schooling in Australia is overseen at State and System levels by Catholic laity.[92]

Additionally, within the local school context Catholic schools are generally administered, led and governed by laity and the overwhelming majority of teachers in Catholic schools are also lay. However, it is important to note that such a reality has come about more by circumstance than by Vatican planning[93] and at times has been a cause of concern to Vatican officials.[94] Nonetheless, the future of Australian Catholic schooling to a large degree is shaped by Catholic laity, those who work in Catholic schools and parents — Catholic and other than Catholic, who continue to choose a Catholic school for their child's learning and development.[95]

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[91]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education: *Lay Catholics in Schools*, p. 15.

[92]   This point refers to the Directors of Catholic Education Systems in Australia and those persons responsible for the management of schools managed by a Public Juridic Person.

[93]   The circumstance referred to here relates to the unforeseen significant decrease in the membership of Religious teaching Congregations which led to an increased the number of lay teachers in Catholic schools.

[94]   A 1977 document highlights the need for teachers to understand the nature of the identity of Catholic schooling and points to their apparent lack of courage in protecting it. Subsequently, a 1982 document — *Lay Catholics in Schools — Witnesses to Faith,* dedicates the majority of its content to promoting understanding regarding the sacred mission of teaching and the fact that lay staff in Catholic schools are expected to play a critical role in the evangelising mission of the Church.

[95]   Lay staff who work in schools include increasing numbers of staff who have minimal contact with Catholicism outside of the school environment, or other than Catholic staff who have no external affiliation to Catholicism. The Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project in recognising this fact proposed a means of assessing the impact of such a reality on the identity of Australian Catholic schools as well as proposing a way of responding to it.

3.2.3 <u>Justifying Catholic Schools — A Theology of Family, Church and Society</u>:

In order to understand the emphasis placed on Catholic schooling Vatican statements on education must be read alongside Vatican accounts of the family. Whether it be in pre or post-Vatican II times the establishment of Catholic schooling is inextricably tied to the notion that parents should have the right to have educational choice.[96] The Church's demand for parental educational choice is unequivocal and remains at the forefront of the reasoning for the existence of Catholic schooling and for their right to government funding.[97]

In 2015 Pope Francis argued that parents should have the right to schooling choice, and that the State should be prepared to subsidise that choice:

> The State offers educational programmes in a subsidiary way, supporting the parents in their indeclinable role; parents themselves enjoy the right to choose freely the kind of… education – accessible and of good quality – which they wish to give their children in accordance with their convictions.[98]

Such a statement does not simply indicate a personal position which Pope Francis holds in relation to the right of parents to have schooling choice or that the State has particular responsibilities in relation to schooling. Rather, Pope Francis' statement is driven by a long-standing theological position on the family which underpins this declaration.

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96   National Catholic Education Commission, Articles, *School Funding Policy.*
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=42:funding-policy-april-1987&catid=20&Itemid=120
(downloaded 20/11/21)

97   NCEC, Articles, *School Funding Policy.*

98   Pope Francis, *Post- Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Laetitia of the Holy Father Francis, to Bishops, Priests and Deacons Consecrated Persons Christian Married Couples and All The Lay Faithful On Love In The Family, (*Vatican Press, 2015), Article 85.
https://w2.vatican.va.francesco.pdf.apost_exhortations
(downloaded 2/12/21)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) locates the nature of family and the

subsequent educational responsibilities of parents in a theology of marriage.[99] *The*

Catechism states that the nature and purpose of marriage is to be "ordered to the

good of the spouses and to the procreation and education of children."[100] More so,

Catholicism elevates marriage beyond the natural order, suggesting that the

Christian family "constitutes a specific revelation and realisation of ecclesial

communion, and for this reason it can and should be called a *domestic church."*[101]

Catholic theologian Perry Cahall describes the sanctity of marriage in the following

terms:

> The role of marriage in the order of creation is ingrained in nature
> itself, and this design for marriage that comes to us from our
> loving Creator is unalterable. This plan is also one that…
> responds to the deepest desires of the human heart, safeguards
> the dignity of the human person, and both promotes and
> safeguards the well-being of society Jesus even elevated the
> natural bond of husband and wife to the level of a grace-given
> sacrament that helps us to see and experience his own salvific
> love for us.[102]

Such a statement points to an understanding of marriage which locates the union of

husband and wife within God's plan for creation.[103] As Cahall declares "the Catholic

Church holds that marriage was instituted by God from the beginning of creation and

was re-created in Christ's work of redemption to be a sign that makes present the

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[99]   Vatican Document, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "The Family in God' Plan, The Nature of Family", Official edition for Australia and New Zealand, (St Paul's, Homebush, NSW, 1994), Part Three, Chapter Two paragraph 2225.

[100]   Catechism of the Catholic Church, *The Family in God' Plan*, paragraph 2225.

[101]   Catechism of the Catholic Church, *The Family in God' Plan,* paragraph 2204.

[102]   Perry J. Cahall, *The Mystery of Marriage: A Theology of the Body and the Sacrament,* (Hillebrand Books*, Chicago/Mundelein, Illinois,* 2014), p. xvi.

[103]   Cahall, *The Mystery of Marriage*, p. 6.

love to which all of us are unlimitedly called."[104] *The Catechism*, in specifically

locating the educative role of parents in terms of their married state and as part of

their matrimonial responsibilities, which is understood as a God-given privilege,

confers both rights and obligations upon parents which enable them to initiate their

children into the faith.[105]

However, in the Catholic tradition, such a role is not undertaken in isolation from the

institutional Church. The Catholic Church, by virtue of its nature, also claims to have

a responsibility to educate:

> The Roman Pontiff and the bishops are authentic teachers, that
> is, teachers endowed with the authority of Christ, who preach the
> faith to the people entrusted to them, the faith to be believed and
> put into practice. The ordinary and universal Magisterium of the
> Pope and the Bishops in communion with him teach the faithful…
> the truth to believe, the charity to practice, the beatitude to hope
> for. [106]

While this statement is relatively recent, in so far as it was written after Vatican II, it

differs little from pre-Vatican II theological sentiments concerning the rights and

responsibilities of parents and the responsibility of Catholicism to 'teach the

faithful'.[107]

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[104]   Cahall, *The Mystery of Marriage*, p. 6.

[105]   Vatican Document, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Official edition for Australia and New Zealand, (St Paul's, Homebush, NSW, June 1994), "The Duties of Family Members, The duties of Parents" Part Three, section III, Article 2223, paragraph 2225.

[106]   Vatican Document, "The Church Mother and Teacher, Moral Life and the Magisterium of the Church", in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 2034.

[107] [107]   Vatican Document, *The Church Mother and Teacher,* Moral Life and the Magisterium of the Church, paragraph 2034.

The Vatican's theology of the family emerged over the course of the nineteenth

century. In 1891 Pope Leo XIII issued the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* which

expressed this theology of the family, placing it within the natural and original right of

marriage.[108] Leo XIII afforded marriage the role of creating the 'society of the

family,'[109] a society that comes with rights and responsibilities as does any other:

> No human law can abolish the natural and original right of
> marriage, nor in any way limit the chief and principal purpose of
> marriage ordained by God's authority from the beginning:
> "Increase and multiply." [Genesis] Hence we have the family, the
> "society" of a man's house — a society very small, one must
> admit, but none the less a true society, and one older than any
> State. Consequently, it has rights and duties peculiar to itself
> which are quite independent of the State.[110]

Additionally, Leo XIII carved out a distinction between the State and the family, which

constitutes a key plank in arguments for school choice, school funding, the common

good and the idea that the State must respect certain boundaries.

Leo XIII's statement regarding the 'common good' also points to the inextricable

relationship, which he states, should be shared between the family and civil society,

arguing that they ought both be oriented to the common good.[111] Leo argued that

Catholic schools offered excellent foundations in citizenship: "…it is by these schools

that good citizens are brought up for the State; for there is no better citizen than the

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[108]   Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on Capital and Labor, Rome, (1891),
paragraph 12.
http://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html
(downloaded 19/09/22)

[109]   Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, paragraph 12.

[110]   Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, paragraph 12.

[111]   Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, paragraph 35.

man who has believed and practiced the Christian faith from his childhood."[112] Prior

to *Rerum Novarum* Leo XIII had articulated the relationship between ideas of liberty

and educational choice:

> For it is in and by these schools that the Catholic faith, our
> greatest and best inheritance, is preserved whole and entire. In
> these schools the liberty of parents is respected.[113]

Pius XI amplified this theology of the family. Firstly, Pius XI names three societies:

the society of the family, civil society and the society of the Roman Catholic

Church.[114] Pius XI states that there are to two 'natural' societies, naming them as

'the family' and 'civic society'. Secondly, he names one supernatural society — the

Catholic Church, which he describes as a 'perfect supernatural society' which is,

"supreme in its own domain."[115] Pius XI makes the point that these three 'societies',

while "distinct from one another," are "harmoniously combined by God, into which

man is born."[116]

The pre-Vatican II theology articulated by Leo XIII and Pius XI, provide important

examples of how Catholicism viewed the nature of the family, civil society and the

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[112]   Pope Leo XIII, *Spectata Fides*, Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, on Christian Education, (Copyright 1885 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana), paragraph 4.
http://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_27111885_spectata-fides.html
(downloaded 10/10/22)

[113]   Pope Leo XIII, *Spectata Fides*, paragraph 4.

[114]   Pope Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri,* Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Christian Education to the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops and Other Ordinaries in Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See and to All the Faithful of the Catholic World, (1929).
http://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_31121929_divini-illius-magistri.html
(downloaded 12/1022)

[115]   Pope Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri*, paragraph 13.

[116]   Pope Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri*, paragraph 11.

Church. Additionally, their perspective points to how such theologies provided the basis for arguments for parental right to educational choice, Catholicism's engagement in education and its subsequent interactions within socio-political arenas. In pre-Vatican II Australia, this fostered and led to a substantial Catholic presence in schooling.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that the theology of the family, which was prominent in pre-Vatican II documentation, prioritised parental choice of schooling, the right of Catholicism to educate and the responsibility of government to ensure that Catholic schooling had access to financial support. While Vatican II introduced significant changes to how Catholicism was to engage with the societies in which it operated, the theology of the family continued to provide the rationale for the existence of Catholic schooling. Furthermore, in the Australian context, the theology of the family has driven much of Catholicism's political agenda and arguments surrounding government funding for Catholic schools, which in the later years of the twentieth century, has assisted in establishing a schooling marketplace where low-fee Catholic schooling is within the reach of many Australian families.

3.2.4 The Vatican and Its Response to the Changing Context of Post Vatican II

Catholic Schools:

The Second Vatican Council unequivocally reconfirmed the importance of schooling, the right of the Church to 'freely establish schools of every type and level' and the

right of parents to be able to exercise "freedom of conscience."[117] It also clearly reaffirmed the fundamental expectation that education in the Catholic tradition is a partnership of the Church and parents. What did change in Vatican documentation on Catholic schooling in the aftermath of Vatican II was a growing concern about the influence of secular society that seemed to be increasingly permissive and a greater concern for the role played by lay teachers in the provision of education.

In 1977 the Vatican released *The Catholic School*, a text that explicitly addressed what it called 'problematic times'.[118] This document was written during a period of significant societal change.[119] The writers of this 1977 document suggested that serious problems were emerging for Christian education in a pluralistic society.[120] However, while the document does not specifically indicate what is meant by the term *pluralistic society*, historian Michelle Arrow provides insight into the societal changes which were occurring in Australia during the 1960s and 1970s.[121] Arrow, points to such things as anti-Vietnam war sentiment, the fight for gay and lesbian

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[117] Pope Paul VI, *Declaration on Christian Education,* Gravissimum Educationis, Proclaimed by Pope Paul VI, 1965, section 8 'Catholic Schools'.
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html
(downloaded 10/09/22)

[118] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education,*The Catholic School,* 1977, paragraph 2.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html
(downloaded 12/09/22)

[119] Michelle Arrow, *The Seventies - The Personal, the Political and the Making of Modern Australia,* (NewSouth Publishing, University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW, 2019).

[120] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education,*The Catholic School,* 1977, paragraph 2.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html
(downloaded 12/09/22)

[121] Michelle Arrow, *The Seventies - The Personal, the Political and the Making of Modern Australia,* (NewSouth Publishing, University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW, 2019).

rights, traditional views on marriage and sex being challenged and a developing focus on woman's rights.[122]

Arrow's points, when considered alongside as the diminishing presence of Religious sisters and brothers who had been entrusted in former times to create and maintain the 'authentic' identity and mission of Catholic schools, and an increasing lay presence may explain the Vatican reference to '*problematic times*'.[123] Moreover, the '*Catholic School*' clearly addressed what the Vatican saw as the complexities associated with a lay workforce having the courage to follow all of the consequences for maintaining the uniqueness of the identity of the Catholic school':[124]

> Often what is perhaps fundamentally lacking among Catholics who work in a school is a clear realisation of the identity of a Catholic school and the courage to follow all the consequences of its uniqueness. One must recognise that, more than ever before, a Catholic school's job is infinitely more difficult, more complex, since this is a time when Christianity demands to be clothed in fresh garments, when all manner of changes have been introduced in the Church and in secular life, and, particularly, when a pluralist mentality dominates and the Christian Gospel is increasingly pushed to the side-lines.[125]

While the document focused on broad societal changes, we can speculate that these changes were becoming more apparent to the Vatican as staffing profiles of Catholic schools began to change dramatically.

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[122]   Arrow, *The Seventies*.

[123]   Robert Dixon, "Post-Secularity and Australian Catholics", in *Faith and the Political in the Post-Secular Age,* ed., Anthony Maher, (Coventry Press, Melbourne, 2018), p. 79.

[124]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education,*The Catholic School,* (1977), paragraph 66. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/ rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html (downloaded 12/09/22)

[125]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education,*The Catholic School,* paragraph 66.

Finally, this document only makes brief mention of the role of parents.[126] At the same time it highlights that parents are, "bound to cooperate actively with the school - which means supporting the educational efforts of the school and utilising the structures offered for parental involvement, in order to make certain that the school remains faithful to Christian principles of education."[127] So while this document reasserts the important role that parents undertake, it encourages parents, presumably Catholic parents, to play a role in ensuring that the identity and mission of Catholic schooling remains strong in a society where, "the Christian Gospel is increasingly pushed to the side-lines.[128]

In 1982 the Vatican released — *Lay Catholics in Schools, Witnesses to Faith*.[129] As its name suggests, this document was clearly intended to provide clarity regarding the mission and purpose of Catholic schools and the role of lay teachers within them. More so, it pointed to the religious role that lay teachers were expected to undertake, stating that they are involved in "prophetic mission of Christ".[130] Interestingly, by 1982, when this document was released, the Vatican acknowledged the ongoing decline of its Religious workforce,[131] which showed no signs of abating. As such *Lay*

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[126] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School,* paragraph 73.

[127] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School,* paragraph 73.

[128] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School,* paragraph 66.

[129] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith,* (1982).
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html
(downloaded 22/09/22)

[130] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools*, paragraph 16.

[131] The 'term' *Religious* in this context refers to Religious Sisters and Brothers who are members of Religious Congregations.

Catholics in Schools, insisted on the need to educate lay staff so that they could

support the mission and purpose of Catholic schooling as described by the

Vatican:[132]

> Lay Catholic educators must be very aware of the real
> impoverishment which will result if priests and Religious disappear
> from the Catholic schools, or noticeably decline in number. This is
> to be avoided as far as is possible; and yet, the laity must prepare
> themselves in such a way that they will be able to maintain
> Catholic schools on their own whenever this becomes necessary
> or at least more desirable, in the present or in the future.[133]

In authorising lay teachers to be involved in the prophetic mission of Christ, the

Vatican metaphorically *passed the baton* from the Religious sisters, brothers and

priests to a lay staff who were expected to ensure that Catholic schools did not

become victims of a secular educational culture. Lay teachers in Catholic schools

were reminded that they, "must be profoundly convinced that they share in the

sanctifying, and therefore educational mission of the Church; they cannot regard

themselves as cut off from the ecclesial complex."[134]

This 1982 document also reaffirms the role of parents as the primary educators of

their children, as well as emphasising the role of the Catholic school to assist them

with their educative responsibilities. The document lays out the expectation that

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[132] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith,* (1982), paragraph 45.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html
(downloaded 22/09/22)

[133] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools,* paragraph 45.

[134] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools,* paragraph 24.

teachers would play a substantial role in supporting parents to "educate their own children properly":[135]

> The family is the first and fundamental school of social living therefore, there is a special duty to accept willingly and even to encourage opportunities for contact with the parents of students. These contacts are very necessary, because the educational task of the family and that of the school complement one another in many concrete areas; and they will facilitate the "serious duty" that parents have "to commit themselves totally to a cordial and active relationship with the teachers and the school authorities. Finally, such contacts will offer to many families the assistance they need in order to educate their own children properly; and thus fulfil the "irreplaceable and inalienable" function that is theirs.[136]

While the duty of teachers to assist parents in their educative role sounds perfectly reasonable, especially as student learning *is* a prime responsibility of any schooling system, towards the turn of the century a further document demonstrates concerns about the contribution of parents in Catholic schools.[137]

In 1997 '*The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium'* offers what might be considered a somewhat patronising view of parents.[138] This document puts forward a view that many of parents delegate their unique educative responsibilities to the school rather than serving as the focal point for their child's education.[139] The document suggests that the Catholic school has an educational role beyond that of

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[135]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools*, paragraph 34.

[136]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools*, paragraph 34.

[137]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Seminaries and Educational Institutions), *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium,* (1997), paragraph 20.
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/
rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html
(downloaded 28/05/2022)

[138]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Seminaries and Educational Institutions), *The Catholic School on the Threshold,* paragraph 20.

[139]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Seminaries and Educational Institutions), *The Catholic School on the Threshold,* paragraph 20.

educating students. It implies that the school also needs to educate parents about the unique educative role and responsibilities that they have, which includes more than just selecting a Catholic school for their child's education:

> Parents have a particularly important part to play in the educating community, since it is to them that primary and natural responsibility for their children's education belongs. Unfortunately in our day there is a widespread tendency to delegate this unique role. Therefore it is necessary to foster initiatives which encourage commitment, but which provide at the same time the right sort of concrete support which the family needs and which involve it in the Catholic school's educational project.[140]

What prompted such an opinion to be expressed by Vatican authorities is not reflected in the document. However, the document could be historically contextualised with the decline in weekly Mass attendance in the Western World since Vatican II.[141] Stephen Bullivant notes that as early as 1975 Paul VI was commenting on the number of baptised Catholics whom he considered to be indifferent to living their faith.[142] John Paul II expressed similar concerns in 1990.[143] Furthermore, commenting on the declining presence of Catholics across the Western world at church services, Bullivant writes that, "it would seem that the post-conciliar laity have not so much 'come of age', as that they have packed up, moved out of the family home, and rarely — if ever — call." [144]

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[140]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Seminaries and Educational Institutions), *The Catholic School on the Threshold*, paragraph 20.

[141]   Stephen Bullivant, *Mass Exodus: Catholic Disaffiliation in Britain and America Since Vatican II,* (Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 3.

[142]   Bullivant, *Mass Exodus*, p. 3.

[143]   Bullivant, *Mass Exodus*, p. 3.

[144]   Bullivant, *Mass Exodus*, p. 3,

Australian Catholics are no different. Dixon *et al* have pointed out that after Vatican

II, Catholic Mass attendance started and continued declining.[145] A research project

commissioned by the Australian Bishops' Conference also reiterates this point:

> For quite some years now, Catholics have been drifting away from
> active parish involvement, so that by 2001 the percentage of the
> Catholic population at Mass on a typical weekend had fallen to
> 15.3 per cent. Anecdotal reports suggest that in recent years this
> drift has been noticeable even among people who were regular
> Mass attenders and active parishioners for many years of their
> adult lives.[146]

It is unclear whether concerns about the active engagement of parents[147] in worship

and parish life may have provided the catalyst for statements made in *The Catholic*

School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium. Whatever the reasoning behind the

suggestion that schools should 'foster initiatives which encourage commitment' from

parents suggests that there was a level of dissonance regarding the Vatican's

expectations of Catholic parents.

In 2015 Pope Francis reiterated these calls for parental responsibility and

engagement in cultivating the religious lives of their children. As in all previous

examples, Francis names parents as active agents in their children's education. His

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145   Robert Dixon, Stephen Reid and Marilyn Chee, *Mass attendance in Australia: A critical moment,*
A report based on the National Count of Attendance, the National Church Life Survey and the
Australian Census*,* Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Pastoral Research Office, (2013).
https://ncpr.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Mass-attendance-in-Australia-2016-Final.pdf
(downloaded 23/05/22)

146   Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Catholics Who Have Stopped Attending Mass, Final
Report,* (2007).
www.catholic.org.au › pastoral-research-office-1 › file
(downloaded 26/10/21)

147   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Seminaries and Educational Institutions), *The Catholic
School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium,* (1997), paragraph 20 .
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/
rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html
(downloaded 28/05/2022)

statement is directed to the Catholic faithful, extolling them to appreciate their proper

role and highlighting that the Church has a particular responsibility to assist Catholic

parents in this task[148]:

> The Church is called to cooperate with parents through suitable
> pastoral initiatives, assisting them in the fulfilment of their
> educational mission. She must always do this by helping them to
> appreciate their proper role and to realize that by their reception of
> the sacrament of marriage they become ministers of their
> children's education. In educating them, they build up the Church,
> and in so doing, they accept a God-given vocation[149]

This statement from Pope Francis demonstrates a clear tension between aspirational

Vatican accounts of Catholic schooling and for example, the demographic realties of

Australian parents who have children in Catholic schools. Research Project data

demonstrates the priority which parents place on education and their commitment to

providing their child with the best possible schooling experience. However, it is

questionable whether the vast majority of parents would accept that their decision to

enrol a child in a Catholic school had anything to do with building up the Church and

accepting a God-given vocation. Effectively, when reflecting on Catholic schooling in

the Australian context, the statement made by Pope Francis provides an ideological

perspective on what parental schooling choice means to the Church itself, rather

than necessarily reflecting the views of parents.

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[148] Pope Francis, *Post- Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Laetitia of the Holy Father Francis, to Bishops, Priests and Deacons Consecrated Persons Christian Married Couples and All The Lay Faithful On Love In The Family,* (Vatican Press, 2015), Article 85.
https://w2.vatican.va.francesco.pdf.apost_exhortations
(downloaded 2/12/21)

[149] Pope Francis, *Post- Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Laetitia,* Article 85.

Most recently, in 2022, the Vatican released *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue.*[150] This text responded to the changing demographics of parents in Catholic schools. Moreover, in addition to repeating numerous themes from preceding documents, it approaches the topic of the plurality of religion and culture which exists in Catholic schools:

> Dialogue combines attention to one's own identity with the understanding of others and respect for diversity. In this way, the Catholic school becomes an educating community in which the human person can express themselves and grow in his or her humanity, in a process of relational dialogue, interacting in a constructive way, exercising tolerance, understanding different… points of view and creating trust in an atmosphere of authentic harmony.[151]

When addressing the plurality of faith which exists in Catholic schools, this document upholds the need to maintain, protect and develop the Catholic identity of its schools, and as in past documents, it charges parents with assisting in this responsibility:

> It is necessary for parents to co-operate closely with teachers, getting involved in decision-making processes concerning the school community and their children, and participating in school meetings or associations. In this way, parents not only fulfil their natural educational vocation, but also contribute with their personal faith to the educational plan, especially in the case of a Catholic school.[152]

While such sentiments are not new and reiterate that parents have a part to play in assisting in maintaining the authenticity of Catholic schooling, the Research Project

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[150]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, (2022), paragraph 22.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html
(downloaded 1/10/22)

[151]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School*, paragraph 30.

[152]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School*, paragraph 44.

points to the complexities in achieving such an aim in the Australian Catholic schooling context. The diversity of practice and knowledge and the importance that parents place on a school's Catholic nature varies. Considering that the greatest proportion of students come from families who have little or no contact with, or significant knowledge of the Catholic tradition,[153] the 2022 Vatican document seems to suggest an 'ideal' rather than a reality.

Taken as a collective, these documents reveal the Vatican's changing conceptions of Catholic schooling relative to the time of writing. Furthermore, they demonstrate the Vatican's determination to continue to frame Catholic education within changing evangelical ambitions. However, these documents also reveal an irony. In 'bringing up to date the Code of Canon Law,[154] which Pope John XXIII suggested was a key objective of Council, Vatican II laid the foundations for a new dynamic relationship to emerge between Catholic schools and the societies in which they operated. In creating such a scenario, Vatican documents in the aftermath of Vatican II, demonstrate the tensions caused by newly emerging realities and how Vatican authorities suggest such tensions need to be addressed in order to preserve the overriding religious evangelising nature of Catholic schooling.

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[153]   Both data from the Research Project and commentary from the NCEC suggest that a minority of parents have regular contact with their nominated religious identity and have background and knowledge of Catholic teaching and practice.

[154]   Pope John XXIII, *Announcement of an Ecumenical Council,* by Pope Saint John XXIII, Page updated, 15 December 2016, (© Vatican II - Voice of The Church), paragraph 15. https://www.papalencyclicals.net/the-second-vatican-ecumenical-council (downloaded: 24/01/2022)

3.3 Chapter Summary

Chapter Three has focused on providing a theoretical platform which contextualises Catholic schools in terms of the theology which legitimises their existence and which has contributed to the development of an Australian educational marketplace. In particular, this Chapter has highlighted four critical areas of Catholic thinking and practice all of which are interrelated and all of which are vital in terms of laying a foundation for exploring Catholic schools in the Australian context.

In the first instance, this Chapter points to the religious and political power of Catholicism and its ability and willingness to engage in the socio-political arena within and across nations.[155] The theology which proclaims that the "Church is missionary of her very nature,"[156] is also a theology which states the "she bears in herself the totality of the means of salvation"[157] and that "she is sent out to all peoples."[158] Hence, by its very nature, Catholicism views itself as having a particular role to fulfil in both the religious and socio-political spheres.

Additionally, this Chapter focused on Vatican II and what it had to say about Catholic schooling. Most importantly, it highlighted that the Second Vatican Council

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[155]   Kirstin Hayer, and Mark Rozell, "Introduction", in *Catholics and Politics: The Dynamic Tension Between Faith and Power,* ed., Kristin E. Hayer, Mark J. Rozell and Michael A. Genovese, (Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C, 2008)*,* p. 2.

[156]   Vatican Document, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Official edition for Australia and New Zealand, (St Paul's, Homebush, NSW, 1994), "The Profession of Faith", Part One, Article Nine, p. 868.

[157]   Vatican Document, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "The Profession of Faith", Part One, Article Nine, p. 868.

[158]   Vatican Document, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "The Profession of Faith", Part One, Article Nine, p. 868.

reconfirmed the place of Catholic schooling, the nature of its evangelising mission and how its schools were to engage with civil society into the future.[159] Alongside the view that Catholicism has a specific role and responsibility to educate humanity,[160] this Chapter presents the Vatican's view of Catholic schooling as having an explicit role to support parents in their God-given responsibility to educate their children.[161] Thus, according to Catholic documentation the right of Catholic schools to exist emerges from a theological perspective which calls for Church, parents and society to engage in a mutually beneficial relationship.[162]

This position provides the basis which underscores the right of Catholicism to own and operate its schools, the right of parents to have educational choice and the responsibilities of government to make such a scenario possible.[163] With that said, while Catholicism places parents at the centre of their child's education, this chapter

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[159]   Pope Paul VI, *Declaration on Christian Education,* Gravissimum Educationis, Proclaimed by Pope Paul VI, 1965, section 8 '*Catholic Schools.'*
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html
(downloaded 10/09/22)

[160]   Pope Paul Vi, Gravissimum Educationis, paragraph 3.

[161]   Vatican Document, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Official edition for Australia and New Zealand, (St Paul's, Homebush NSW. June 1994), "The Duties of Family Members, The duties of Parents" Part Three, section III, Article 2223.

[162]   Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on Capital and Labor, Rome, May 1891, paragraph 35.
http://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html
(downloaded 19/09/22)

[163]   Pope Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri,* Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Christian Education to the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops and Other Ordinaries in Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See and to All the Faithful of the Catholic World, (1929), paragraph 11.
http://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_31121929_divini-illius-magistri.html
(downloaded 12/1022)

has pointed to post-Vatican II concerns regarding the ability of Catholic schools to maintain their religious identity.[164]

In conclusion, Chapter Three suggests that Catholicism does not only yield an enormous religious presence across the globe, it is also powerful in terms of its political influence.[165] When taking into account both of these facts, and the significant presence of Catholicism in schooling across the globe, and more locally in Australia, the Catholic voice, within and across societies, remains active. The question is how potent can its voice remain in an educational marketplace where parents have their own agenda for schooling and make choices based on more than simply a school's religious nature.[166] Thus, while the Catholic voice may have been a potent force in the making of the Australian schooling marketplace, it appears less obvious that it will remain potent in its control of how Australian Catholic schooling will continue to develop.

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[164] Congregation for Catholic Education, (for Seminaries and Educational Institutions), *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium,* (1997), paragraph 11. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html (downloaded 25/01/2022)

[165] Kristin Hayer, Kristin and Mark Rozell, "Introduction", in *Catholics and Politics: The Dynamic Tension Between Faith and Power,* ed., Kristin E. Hayer, Mark J. Rozell and Michael A. Genovese, (Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C, 2008), p. 2.

[166] This statement reflects the sentiments of results gained from the Research Project on the '*Motivations of Parents for Selecting Enrolment in a Catholic School*', which is reported on in chapter four.

Chapter Four

Catholicism and its Role in Creating the Australian Schooling Marketplace — A Historical and Political Narrative

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 <u>Overview</u>:

Chapter Three explored how the role and mission of Catholic schooling has provided a platform for the development of a schooling marketplace from the perspective of Catholicism's theological underpinnings and organisational strength. Chapter Four develops this theme by specifically focusing on how the Catholic Church has engaged within the Australian socio-political context. It explores Catholicism's theological aspirations and political activities which have ultimately given rise to today's extensive system of Australian Catholic schooling, and additionally, how Catholic authorities have contributed to the development of Australia's schooling marketplace.

When considering the development of Australian schooling it is important to begin by acknowledging that the story of teaching and learning across First Nations communities in the great Southern land of Australia well precedes any forms of education instituted by British colonisers. However, when it comes to contextualising Australia's present-day system of schooling and the events which have shaped its

development and contributed to the establishment of an educational marketplace, colonial Australia has a particular and important part of the story to reveal.

This Chapter suggests that the creation of Australia's three-tiered system of schooling, the educational marketplace that enables it and which provides parents with schooling choice, has a colonial past. Contextualising Australia's colonial past provides an important backdrop for understanding much of Australia's present day schooling realities. In effect, the theological and socio-political views of Catholic authorities in the Australian colony, informed a persistent commitment to the establishment and maintenance of Catholic schooling as a separate entity to free and secular government schooling. Furthermore, the theology which provided the rationale for the development of Catholic schooling in colonial times, for the most part, remains relevant for present day Catholic socio-political arguments which have been deployed by proponents of non-government school funding.[1]

This Chapter presents three key themes which explore the development of Catholic schooling in Australia and its influence on creating Australia's educational marketplace. Firstly, the story of Catholic schooling in Australian is explored from the perspective of its colonial historical context. The social-political interactions of Catholic leaders in colonial Australia laid the foundation for a system of Catholic schools to emerge in the latter half of the twentieth century which has greatly assisted in the creation of Australia's educational marketplace.

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[1]   Pope Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri, Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Christian Education to the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops and Other Ordinaries in Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See and to All the Faithful of the Catholic World*, (1929), paragraph 11.
http://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_31121929_divini-illius-magistri.html
(downloaded 03/04/22)

Secondly, this Chapter points to the role which Religious Congregations have played in enabling Catholic schooling to grow and become a viable financial option for many Australian parents. It argues that without Catholicism's historically low-cost workforce, Catholic schools would not have been able to expand and exist in numbers which, in more recent times, have contributed to the establishment of a second major national system of education alongside that of the government schooling sector.[2] Moreover, this Chapter highlights the challenges faced by Catholic school leaders due to the declining presence of Religious sisters, brothers and priests in Catholic schools. It suggests that this post-Vatican II phenomenon increased the urgency for Australian Catholic authorities to secure government funding for its schools.

Thirdly, this Chapter locates the various funding debates which have taken place within the context of two basic Catholic theological positions — the right of all parents to have schooling choice and the responsibility of society to ensure such a right exists. Moreover, it explores the impact of the Second Vatican Council and the socio-political debates which occurred in its aftermath. These changes not only impacted Catholic schools, they also had profound implications for how Australian school funding evolved and thus how Australia's educational marketplace was to emerge.

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[2]   Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicate that Australian Government schools cater for 65.1% of Australian students, Catholic schools 19.5% - educate nearly a fifth of all Australia children. When the number of Catholic and Independent school enrolment is combined, approximately 35%, or just over a third of all Australian students attend a Non-Government school.
https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/schools/latest-release
(downloaded 5/10/22)

4.1.2 <u>Literature Review</u>:

In focusing on the Australian experience of Catholic schooling, documentation and data is sourced from a number of relevant government and Catholic organisations and agencies. For example, documentation from the NCEC provides insight into how Australian Catholic school authorities view the place of Catholic schooling in contemporary Australia.[3] As well as highlighting the NCEC's conviction that its schools are linked to the global religious and socio-political mission of Catholicism, documentation from this organisation also makes clear the Australian Catholic position regarding government school funding.

Data and commentary from the Australian Bureau of Statistics is accessed for the purposes of demonstrating the plural nature of Australian society. Documents are also accessed from the Australian Parliament. These documents are particularly important as they provide specific historical background and commentary on the funding of Catholic and non-government schooling and the complexity of debate which surrounded matters pertaining to school funding.

This Chapter also references texts and articles from a number of scholars that contextualise particular periods within Australian history. For example, Helen Northey[4] and Marie Foale[5] provide insight into how the Catholic Church

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[3] Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference, *About the Conference,* paragraph 2&3.
www.catholic.org.au
(downloaded 30/04/22)

[4] Helen Northey, *Living the Truth, The Dominican Sisters in South Australia 1866-1958,* (Published by the Dominican Sisters (South Australia), Hyde Park Press, 1999).

[5] Marie Therese Foale, *The Josephite Story, The Sisters of St Joseph: their Foundation and Early History 1866-1893,* (Published by St Joseph's Generalate Sydney, Printed Gillingham Printers of Adelaide South Australia, 1989).

established its schools across colonial Australia. These authors point to aspects of

the political and sectarian tensions of the era and how Catholic authorities

responded to the withdrawal of state-aid. Michael Chambers also highlights the

political tensions which existed between Catholicism and the colonial

governments who were developing non-denominational schooling. He suggests

that the development of non-denominational schooling had particular ramifications

for Catholic schooling authorities for ensuring that Catholic schools remained as a

feature in the Australian educational landscape.[6]

In terms of twentieth-century Australia, Michelle Arrow highlights the changes

which were occurring within Australian society.[7] Arrow's commentary on this

period of history adds clarity to the many Vatican documents which also appear at

this time and which indicate the impact of changing social norms upon Catholic

schooling. Additionally, Charles Maier clarifies the global nature of the changes

which were occurring during this period of history.[8] Understanding the global

context in which Catholic schools were operating is important in that it provides a

a framework from which to interpret the various statements made in Vatican

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[6] Michael Chambers, "Vitality and Loyalty in Religious Education Renewing Forms or Perpetuating the Myth?", in *Journal of Religious Education* 55(1) 2007, p. 1.
https://acuresearchbank.acu.edu.au/download/
4699a00acb3048177e562dda23b2a4f69d00e0634bdf857b5d992b6ff54d89b1/237244/
Chambers_2007_Vitality_and_loyalty_in_religious_education.pdf
(downloaded 17/05/22)

[7] Michelle Arrow, *The Seventies — The Personal, the Political and the Making of Modern Australia,* (NewSouth Publishing, University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW 2052, 2019).

[8] Charles S. Maier, "The Crisis of Capitalism in the 1970s", in, *The Shock of the Global,* ed., Niall Ferguson, Charles S. Maier, Erez Manela and Daniel J. Sargent, (Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 44.

documentation regarding the concerns which Catholic leaders had for Catholic schooling.

In terms of the critical role played by Religious sisters, brothers and priests a number of scholars contribute to highlighting the reliance on Religious Congregations for enabling the continuance of Catholic schooling. Michael Caruso,[9] Robert Dixon[10] Kelvin Canavan[11] and Patricia Wittberg,[12] are helpful sources for exploring the impact of Religious Orders on the establishment and maintenance of the Catholic system of schooling. Moreover, these scholars also consider the challenges facing Catholicism in the aftermath of Vatican II when the diminishing number and presence of Religious Congregations became evident in the Australian Catholic schooling landscape. In addition, Canavan's insights reveal the central place of Catholic Systems in the overall development of Catholic schools and their importance in matters relating to school funding.

In relation to the interactions between neoliberal economic realities, the development of Australian Catholic schools and the establishment of a schooling marketplace a number of authors assist in examining the complexities associated

[9]   Michael P. Caruso, *When the Sisters Said Farewell: The Transition of Leadership in Catholic Elementary Schools*, (Rowman and Littlefield Education, A division of Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc, Plymouth, United Kingdom, 2012), p. 14.

[10]   Robert Dixon, "Post-Secularity and Australian Catholics", in *Faith and the Political in the Post-Secular Age,* ed., Anthony Maher, (Coventry Press, Melbourne, 2018), p. 79.

[11]   Kelvin Canavan, "The Quiet Revolution in Catholic Schooling in Australia", in *Journal of Catholic Education*, 2 (1), (1998), p. 47, Table 1.
https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/cej/article/download/64/62/
(downloaded 13/06/22)

[12]   Patricia Wittberg, *The Rise and Fall of Catholic Religious Orders: A social Movement Perspective*, (State University of New York, Press, Albany, 1994), p. 39.

with these intertwined processes. Craig Campbell, Helen Proctor and Geoffrey

Sherington argue that neoliberalism offers a core explanation for the creation of

the Australian schooling marketplace.[13] These authors suggest that neoliberal

philosophy has been brought about by "new approaches to markets and

consumption,"[14] which has heightened a consumer marketplace based on

consumer choice.[15] Additionally, David Harvey provides a concise definition of

neoliberalism and what its influence may have meant for government funding

policy.[16]

In terms of the particular history of the funding of Catholic and non-government

schooling in Australia, a number of scholars have offered accounts. Each of these

scholars provides a perspective on the importance of government funding to

Catholic and non-government schooling sectors. Moreover, each of the accounts

given by these authors provides insight into the underlying arguments and

tensions which exist between viewpoints regarding perceived funding equity for

Australian government schools and the non-government schooling sector.

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[13]   Craig Campbell, Helen Proctor and Geoffrey Sherington, *School Choice: How Parents Negotiate the New School Market in Australia*, (Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest NSW, 2009), p. 4.

[14]   Campbell, et al, *School Choice: How Parents Negotiate*, p. 4.

[15]   Campbell, et al, *School Choice: How Parents Negotiate*, p. 4.

[16]   David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism,* (Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 2.

Chapter Four also draws upon the work of Jan Gray and Rosemary Cahill —

Funding and Secondary School Choice in Australia: A Historical Consideration.[17]

Gray and Cahill discuss the emergence of government funding for non-government

schools in Australia and the complexities which the authors suggest surround that

funding. Gray and Cahill's paper is particularly relevant in that it demonstrates the

unique historical context in which school funding in Australia emerged and which has

enabled many Australian families to have access to a low-fee Catholic school option.

Research Project data clearly supports aspects of Gray and Cahill's findings in that

its data suggests that there is a significant correlation between school funding,

school fees and the ability of parents to have access to schooling choices which falls

within house-hold budget constraints.

Chris Ryan and Louise Watson point to the significance of government decision-

making regarding the reintroduction of school funding for the non-government

schooling sector in the 1960s and 1970s.[18] These authors suggest that

government funding should not be considered as the only contributing factor in

enrolment growth in the non-government schooling sectors: "Such assumptions

deny the critical role of government policy in influencing the environment (or

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[17]   Rosemary Cahill and Jan Gray, "Funding and Secondary School Choice in Australia: A Historical Consideration", in *Edith Cowan University Research Online, ECU Publications,* Pre. 2011, Vol 35, 1, (2010).
https://ro.ecu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=7335&context=ecuworks
(downloaded 13/05/22)

[18]   Chris Ryan and Louise Watson, "The Drift to Private Schools in Australia: Understanding its Features", in *The Australian National University Centre for Economic Policy Research Discussion Paper*, No. 479, (2004), p. 8.
https://rse.anu.edu.au/researchpapers/CEPR/DP479.pdf.
(downloaded 3/10/22)

"market") in which such choices are made."[19] Ryan and Watson point to the policy which drives a needs based funding model as enabling schools in the non-government sector to use funds to improve educational outcomes rather than for reducing school fees. Such a situation is suggested as benefiting the non-government schooling sector, especially in relation to privileging student learning outcomes and what this may mean for parental schooling choice.

Greg McIntosh[20] and Marilyn Harrington[21] highlight various aspects of the funding debates of the 1960s and 1970s. Decisions made in the 1960s and 1970s effectively set the scene for how schooling in Australia was to develop in the latter part of the twentieth century and into the new millennium. In addition, Lyndsay Connors and Jim McMorrow argue that there is relative stability of funding for the Catholic and non-government schooling sectors in contemporary times.[22] However, these authors also point to the challenges of ensuring equity of funding amid the complexities of schooling choice within the duality of Australia's publicly

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[19]   Ryan et al, "The Drift to Private Schools in Australia, p. 1

[20]   Greg McIntosh, *State Aid for Non-Government Schools: The Emerging Debate*, *"State-Aid": The Background*, (Parliament of Australia, Current Issues Brief 2 1996-97).
https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/CIB/CIB9697/97cib2
(downloaded 13/06/22)

[21]   Marilyn Harrington, *Australian Government Funding for Schools Explained, The Early History of Australian Government Funding for Schools*, (Parliament of Australia, 2011).
https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BN/1011/SchoolsFunding
(downloaded 13/06/22)

[22]   Lyndsay Connors and Jim McMorrow, "*Imperatives in Schools Funding: Equity,Sustainability and Achievement",* in *Australian Council for Educational Research*, Australian Education Review number 60, Series, ed Suzanne Mellor, Copy edited by Carolyn Glascodine Typeset by ACER Creative Services (Printed by BPA Print Group 2015), p. iii.
https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1024&context=aer
(downloaded 14/06/22)

owned government schooling sector and the privately run sectors of schooling which are both supported by government funding.[23]

4.2. A History in the Making — Australian Catholic Schooling in Pre-Vatican II Times

4.2.1 Colonial Australia — Establishing Catholic Schooling:

Schooling in Australia has been contested since colonial times. The clash between liberal Enlightenment models and religious models of education came to Australia in January, 1788, when Captain Arthur Phillip and his fleet of eleven ships anchored in the area known by First Nations peoples as '*Kamay*', or what the colonisers named *Botany Bay.* Campbell and Proctor suggest that it is likely that the first school was established by Isabelle Rosson in 1789.[24] Furthermore, they highlight the importance placed on schooling by some governors whom, they suggest, prioritised the development of small schools over the establishment of places of worship,[25] believing that schooling was a means of maintaining order and in developing a prosperous future:[26] "Here, the thinking was influenced by Enlightenment Lockean thought which asserted the power of education to mould lives for the better."[27]

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[23]   Connors et al, "*Imperatives in Schools Funding*, p. iii.

[24]   C. Campbell, H. Proctor, *A History of Australian Schooling,* Sydney, (Allen and Unwin, 2014), p. 9.

[25]   Campbell, et al, *A History of Australian Schooling,* Sydney, p. 10.

[26]   Campbell, et al, *A History of Australian Schooling,* Sydney, p. 10.

[27]   Campbell, et al, *A History of Australian Schooling,* Sydney, p. 10.

When it came to the establishment of Catholic schooling, archives reveal that the first Catholic school in Australia was opened by an Irish Catholic priest and led by George Marley a lay person and convict.[28] The school was established in NSW thirty-two years after the first fleet arrived[29] and fourteen years before the first Catholic bishop stepped foot on Australian soil.[30] For the purposes of exploring the present day schooling marketplace, in the first instance it is helpful to focus on Australian Catholic political engagement during the late 1800s. The various societal debates which ultimately led to the development of government schooling, had ramifications for how Australian Catholic schooling developed.

When considering Catholic political engagement it is important to note that it varied to some degree across colonial boundaries and the approach taken by differing bishops. Australia's first Archbishop — John Bede Polding, an English Benedictine monk, arrived in the colony of NSW in 1834. Many of the bishops who followed Polding were Irish and brought with them Irish nationalist views. Helen Northey has argued that the arrival of *Irishism*[31] as she called it, brought with it a particular

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[28] Parramatta Marist High School, *School History*.
https://www.parramarist.catholic.edu.au/About-Us/School-History
(downloaded 25/06/22)

[29] City of Parramatta: *Parramatta History and Heritage*, Research Collections, (2020).
https://historyandheritage.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/research-topics/education/200th-anniversary-of-catholic-education-in-parramatta
(downloaded 19/06/22)

[30] The first bishop to arrived in Australia was John Bede Polding — a Benedictine monk who came from England to the colony of New South Wales (NSW) in 1834.

[31] Helen Northey, *Living the Truth, The Dominican Sisters in South Australia 1866-1958,* (Published by the Dominican Sisters, South Australia, Hyde Park Press, 1999), p. 33.

Catholic point of view that was specifically connected to Anglo/Irish tensions which were carried over into colonial politics:[32]

> For some time education had been made the focus of ideological differences which divided Catholics, both lay and clerical, in the eastern colonies. The growing number of Irish bishops increased the likelihood that Irishism would displace Polding's Benedictine dream for New South Wales and, ultimately, for the entire Catholic Church in Australia.[33]

In relation to Polding's Benedictine dream for Australia, Polding is presented as having concern for all of the people of the colony, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, which differed from many of the Irish bishops in colonial Australia.[34]

A variety of religious denominations played an important role in the provision of schooling in the colonies.[35] Denominational schools were generally supported financially by the government by way of grants and state aid. However, by the mid 1800s the NSW government established their own 'national' schools which were owned and operated by the state and coexisted with denominational schooling providers, including the Catholic Church:[36]

> By the 1830s almost all the churches were seeking aid from the colonial state. Eventually, in the interests of efficiency as well as in the hope of religious harmony the state created its own 'national schools'. These were based on the Irish National system of…

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[32]   Northey, *Living the Truth*, p. 33.

[33]   Northey, *Living the Truth*, p. 33.

[34]   Sisters of the Good Samaritan, *The Good Oil, Our Story — The Legacies of Benedict and Polding,* (2014).
https://www.goodsams.org.au/article/the-legacies-of-benedict-and-polding/
(downloaded 27/06/22)

[35]   Geoffrey Sherington and Craig Campbell, "Education"*, in, Sydney Journal* 2 (1). ISSN 1835-0151. (2009), p. 2.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326472203_Education
(downloaded 19/06/22)

[36]   Sherington, et al, "Education", p. 2.

education which sought to teach a non-denominational but still Christian-infused curriculum.[37]

The debates that accompanied the 1844 parliamentary bill which focused on the establishment of National schools, indicated a strong degree of resistance on the part of Catholics.[38] The Catholic position favoured the continuance of the denominational model of schooling which, from the Catholic perspective, would enable Catholic schools to receive government support. As Michael Chambers notes: "In the ensuing years the majority of Australian Catholics, specifically the Irish, were to resist the National system in favour of a Denominational system."[39]

In keeping with Catholic theology and belief regarding Catholicism's fundamental right to establish and run schools and parental right to schooling choice, bishops were fighting to secure Catholicism's right to coexist with any other form of education that may have emerged in colonial Australia. In addition to the theologically based argument for the existence of Catholic schooling, from the perspective of Irish Bishops, the likelihood of the government's decision to establish free secular schools may have been seen as part of the Anglo/Irish sectarian agenda.

However, whether the decision to establish free secular schools was based on sectarianism or on altruistic Enlightenment principles of separation between Church

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[37]   Sherington, et al, "Education", p. 2.

[38]   Michael Chambers, "Vitality and Loyalty in Religious Education Renewing Forms or Perpetuating the Myth?", in *Journal of Religious Education,* 55(1), (2007), p. 1.
https://acuresearchbank.acu.edu.au/download/
4699a00acb3048177e562dda23b2a4f69d00e0634bdf857b5d992b6ff54d89b1/237244/
Chambers_2007_Vitality_and_loyalty_in_religious_education.pdf
(downloaded 17/06/22)

[39]   Chambers, "Vitality and Loyalty in Religious Education", p. 1

and State, there is no doubt that the Catholic world view, regarding its relationship to society during colonial times and up to the Second Vatican Council, was one of withdrawal. As previously noted, the Church understood itself to be in a hostile relationship with secular society.[40] Its schools were expected to be "citadels and fortresses for the preservation of the faith in a hostile external environment characterised by a dominant Protestant order."[41] Within such a framework, Catholic bishops not only were duty bound to exert their right to establish and run schools, they clearly expected Catholic parents to send their child to a Catholic school if one was available.[42] Freund makes the point that Catholic schools in the pre-Vatican II era were based on "religious certainty, strict religious participation and a sense of separation from the rest of Australian society."[43]

Cahill and Gray also note the pressure placed by bishops on Catholic parents to send their child to a Catholic school. Describing the establishment of government schooling in Victoria they suggest that the Catholic Bishops' of Australia continued "establishing their own Catholic school system to enable Catholic families to adhere

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[40]   Gerald Grace, *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets and Morality,* (Routledge Falmer, London and New York, 2002), p. 7.

[41]   Grace, *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets*, p. 7.

[42]   Margaret Freund, *They Hear All About It Around the Traps', Catholic Ethos and School Choice,* Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Notre Dame University Fremantle, (2001), '*Conclusion'.*
https://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2001/fre01667.pdf
(downloaded 26/07/22)

[43]   Freund, *They Hear All About It Around the Traps'*, p. 4.

to a decree that the Bishops issued in 1879 stating that the children of all Catholic families must regularly attend Catholic schools."[44]

While Catholic bishops were clearly in favour of Australian schooling remaining denominational, debate seemed to come to a close with the establishment of National schools set alongside denominational schools and both receiving funding from State authorities: "By 1848, there was a Board of National Education to administer these schools and a Denominational Schools Board to oversee the schools of the churches, which continued to receive state aid."[45] However, the funding for denominational schooling was short-lived. The Education Acts that were passed by colonial governments from 1872 to 1893 withdrew government state-aid from all denominational schools.[46]

Unlike the financial arrangements in the Eastern colonies, Catholic and other denominational schools in South Australia did not receive any government state-aid and as such, always needed to be self funding. Events in South Australia during this period amplify the effects of Catholic political action in relation to school funding. In

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[44]   Rosemary Cahill, and Jan Gray, "Funding and Secondary School Choice in Australia: A Historical Consideration", in *The Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(1), (2010) p. 121-138.
https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks/6334
(downloaded 26/07/21)

[45]   Geoffrey Sherington and Craig Campbell, "Education", in *Sydney Journal.* 2 (1) June 2009, ISSN 1835-015.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326472203_Education
(downloaded 19/06/22)

[46]   Australian Catholic Historical Society, *Catholic Education in Australia*, *Withdrawal of State Aid.*
https://australiancatholichistoricalsociety.com.au/history-resources/australian-catholic-education/
(downloaded 4/07/2022)

1859, the then Bishop of Adelaide, Patrick Geoghegan, called on Catholics to

withdraw their support from government schools:

> He [Patrick Geoghegan] denounced the existing arrangements,
> aroused people to present petitions to parliament, goaded priests
> into calling meetings to arrange for independent Catholic schools
> to be set up and commanded Catholics to sever all connection
> with government schools. So enthusiastic did people and clergy in
> South Australia become about Catholic education that the number
> of schools in the colony grew from two in 1859 to eight in 1862,
> the year Geoghegan departed from Adelaide.[47]

No matter what Catholic political action in South Australia may or may not have

achieved, state-aid to denominational schools across all colonies was eventually

withdrawn.

The decision by governments to withdraw financial support from denominational

schools had profound implications for the future of Catholic schooling in Australia as

well as for other denominational schools.

> Between 1872 and 1893, every State passed an Education Act
> removing state aid to Church schools. This was a turning point for
> Catholic schools and, indeed, for the Catholic community in
> Australia. Bishops and people decided to persevere with the
> Catholic system. With no money to pay teachers, the bishops
> appealed to religious orders in Ireland and other European
> countries, and soon religious sisters and brothers were
> responding to the crisis.[48]

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[47]   Helen Northey, *Living the Truth, The Dominican Sisters in South Australia 1868-1958,* Holy Cross Congregation, Cumberland Park, South Australia, (Hyde Park Press, Richmond, South Australia, 1999), p. 33.

[48]   Catholic Australia, *History, Catholics in Australia.* https://australiancatholichistoricalsociety.com.au/history-resources/australian-catholic-education/ (downloaded 5/09/22)

The changes made by Australian governments to school funding from 1872 to 1893[49] which established free, non-denominational schooling, also created a specific environment where many denominational school authorities decided to hand over their schools to the government. Catholic bishops, on the other hand, were very clear about their decision to maintain their Catholic schools:

> Most of the religious denominations, with the exception of the Roman Catholics, allowed their schools to form part of this new system. The Education Act, although contentious and accused of being politically motivated, was the first of its kind in the Australian colonies, and Victoria became one of the first regions in the world to offer free, secular and compulsory education.[50]

Worth noting, in terms of demonstrating the global nature of Catholicism and the theology which drives the establishment of Catholic schools, is that a similar situation was occurring in Britain during the late 1800s in regards to the funding of Catholic schools. McLaughlin, O'Keefe and O'Keeffe cite the argument used by the Catholic Church in Britain for maintaining a separate system of schooling based on a theology which espoused the rights of parents to have school choice and the subsequent rights of Catholic schools to access taxpayer funding:

> The basic claims of the Catholic Church for a separate school system and control over the religious curriculum and moral teaching were based on the natural rights and duties of parents to have their children educated according to their consciences; and a civic right in respect of financial justice, in the sense that the education of a child should not cost a Catholic parent…

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[49] 1872-1893 were the years in which various States instituted the Education Act which abolished funding to denominational schools.

[50] National Museum of Australia, *Free Education Introduced, 1872: Free, compulsory and secular education introduced in Victoria.* https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/free-education-introduced (downloaded 23/05/22)

relatively more than parents who sent their children to other schools.[51]

While the Australian and British Education Acts occurred in the late 1800s, the

theology which drove the argument then regarding parental right to educational

choice and civic society's responsibility to ensure financial justice, remains just as

relevant and potent in present times. In Australia, the NCEC articulates the same

theological themes and uses them to argue for the equitable distribution of education

resources.[52]

> Parents are the first educators of their children. Hence they have the primary obligation and right to ensure an adequate education for their children. Wherever possible, therefore, government expenditure should enable them to choose a type of schooling consistent with their rights and obligations and with their beliefs and values. This legitimate exercise of the right of choice is to be made with due regard for appropriate community educational standards and equitable distribution of the community's educational resources.[53]

Statements which have emerged from Catholic authorities in relation to financial

equity for Catholic schools, whether it be in the 1800s or in modern day Australia, all

display a common theme. That is to say, from a theological perspective, authorities

argue strongly for the unequivocal right of parents to have educational choice.[54] The

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51   Terence McLaughlin, Joseph O'Keefe and Bernadette O'Keeffe, (editors), *The Contemporary Catholic School: Context, Identity, and Diversity,* (The Falmer Press, London, Washington, D.C, 1996), p. 5.

52   National Catholic Education Commission, *School Funding Policy,* Articles. https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=42:funding-policy-april-1987&catid=20&Itemid=120
(downloaded 20/11/21)

53   NCEC, *School Funding Policy,* Articles.

54   Pope Paul VI, *Declaration on Christian Education,* Gravissimum Educationis, Proclaimed by Pope Paul VI, (1965), paragraph 3. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html
(downloaded 10/09/22)

right of Catholicism to be involved in education and to support parents in carrying out

their educative responsibilities is also asserted unequivocally.[55] And, in terms of the

responsibility of society to contribute to building the 'common good',[56] governments

are expected to play a role in making educational choice possible via equitable

funding arrangements.[57] The matter of the return to the public funding of Catholic

and non-government schools will be addressed later in this Chapter.

In conclusion, the establishment of schools in colonial Australia, be it the

development of Catholic schools or the establishment of Australia's free, non-

denominational schooling system, paved the way for present-day schooling realities

to emerge. If Catholic authorities had decided, like many other denominational

school authorities,[58] to hand their existing schools over to the government when the

various Education Acts were passed into law, Australia's three-tier schooling system

may look significantly different to how it has evolved and now manifests. However,

given the pre-Vatican II socio-political realities which defined Catholicism's view of

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[55]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, (1982), paragraph 12.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html
(downloaded 13/10/22)

[56]   Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on *Capital and Labor,* (1891), paragraph 35.
http://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html
(downloaded 12/10/22)

[57]   National Catholic Education Commission, *School Funding Policy,* Articles.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=42:funding-policy-april-1987&catid=20&Itemid=120
(downloaded 20/11/21)

[58]   National Museum of Australia, *Free Education Introduced, 1872: Free, compulsory and secular education introduced in Victoria.*
https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/free-education-introduced
(downloaded 23/05/22)

itself, in relation to its existence in a hostile world and its specific theological views regarding parental choice, the determination of Catholicism to secure the future of its schools in Australia was never in question.

4.2.2 Religious Congregations — Creating an Australian System of Catholic Schooling:

The Education Acts of 1872-1893, which withdrew state-aid from denominational schools, had significant implications for how Catholic schooling was to develop across Australia. In order for Catholic schooling to remain as a viable schooling alternative to free, government schooling, Australian Catholic leaders faced the task of finding a way to keep the cost of attending a Catholic school within the financial reach of the Catholic population. This section considers the development of Catholic schooling and the creation of a schooling marketplace from the perspective of Catholicism's ability to harness a low-cost army of Religious sisters, brothers and priests who established and ran Australian schooling for over a century.

From the time of the withdrawal of government funding[59] to the introduction of a needs based funding model by the Whitlam Government for Catholic and Independent schools in 1973, Religious sisters, brothers and priests were the

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[59] Catholic Australia, *History, Catholics in Australia.*
https://australiancatholichistoricalsociety.com.au/history-resources/australian-catholic-education/
(downloaded 5/07/22)

mainstay of the Catholic school work force.[60] Without the large number of Religious Congregations establishing and operating colonial and twentieth Catholic schools it is doubtful that the extensive system of Catholic schooling, which is now a feature of the Australian schooling landscape, would have occurred.

With that said, it is also important to note that prior to the work undertaken by Religious Congregations in early colonial Australia, lay staff played a vital role in the establishment and the running of colonial Catholic schooling.[61] Prior to enacting the various Education Acts (1872-93), the majority of Australia's Catholic schools were staffed and led by lay teachers.[62] Ironically, present day Australian Catholic schooling has turned the full circle and is now again almost exclusively staffed and led by laity. While Catholic laity played a critical role in the establishment of early colonial Catholic schooling, this situation was short-lived for two reasons.[63]

Firstly, the result of the Education Acts did not only cement a National system of free state-run schooling across Australia, it also gave rise to increasing numbers of

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[60]   Whitlam, Institute, *Policy Research Culture/Heritage Civics Education, What Matters?* Learning Resources PM Collection, Australian Schools Commission.
https://www.whitlam.org/whitlam-legacy-education
(downloaded 30/05/22)

[61]   The term 'lay staff' refers to teachers in Catholic schools who did not belong to Religious Congregations.

[62]   Debra Towns, "Catholic Schools"*, in, The Encyclopaedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia*.
http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0688b.htm
(downloaded 16/06/22)

[63]   Thomas A.O'Donoghue, "Rescuing Lay Teachers in Catholic Schools from Anonymity for the Period 1870-1970", in *Education Research and Perspectives,* Vol.1, No.2, (2004), p. 82.
http://erpjournal.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ERPV31-2_ODonoghue-T.-A.-2004.-Rescuing-lay-teachers-in-Catholic-schools-.pdf
(downloaded 23/05/22)

Catholic Religious Congregations that had the specific task of establishing and running Catholic schools. Secondly, while there were clear financial reasons for inviting Religious Congregations to establish and operate Catholic schools, the manner in which Catholicism regarded Catholic laity also played a role in the transfer from lay to Religious leadership in colonial Catholic schooling.[64] In a sense, whether government funding remained or was withdrawn, the way in which laity was perceived, would have in all probability still given rise to Australian schools being established, led and staffed predominantly by members of Religious Congregations.

Thomas O 'Donoghue suggests that Australian bishops, during the 1800s and early to mid 1900s, did not regard Catholic laity in the same light as vowed religious sisters and brothers.[65] He writes that, "for the bishops there was no sense in the laity being part of the Church's mission."[66] Moreover, he points to the place of Religious Congregations within Catholicism and the superior status which they held in terms of their religious vocation.[67] Members of Religious Congregations to some extent had removed themselves from the norms of daily life and were seen as providing an education that was steeped in Catholic ideals and theological principles:[68]

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[64]   O'Donoghue, *Rescuing Lay Teachers in Catholic Schools*, p. 82.

[65]   Vowed Religious, refers to members of Religious Congregations who had taken public vows committing themselves to living a Rule of Life according to their Congregation's Constitutions.

[66]   Thomas A.O'Donoghue, "Rescuing Lay Teachers in Catholic Schools from Anonymity for the Period 1870-1970", in *Education Research and Perspectives,* Vol.1, No.2, (2004), p. 82.
http://erpjournal.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ERPV31-2_ODonoghue-T.-A.-2004.-Rescuing-lay-teachers-in-Catholic-schools-.pdf
(downloaded 23/05/22)

[67]   O'Donoghue, "Rescuing Lay Teachers in Catholic Schools", p. 83.

[68]   O'Donoghue, "Rescuing Lay Teachers in Catholic Schools", p. 79.

> The staffing of Catholic schools with members of religious orders ensured that Catholic education could be provided for the 'masses' since the labour provided was cheap. It also ensured that young Catholics were shaped in a manner which served the Church's interests, the most crucial of which were to ensure the teaching of religion, the infusion of the various subjects on the secular curriculum with Catholic principles and ideals, and the creation of a religious atmosphere in the schools which was all-pervasive.[69]

Furthermore, O'Donoghue's commentary suggests that for the most part, the role of the laity in Catholic schooling was underwhelming and remained so up to the latter years of the twentieth century:

> In considering the anonymity of the lay teacher within many accounts of teachers and teaching in Catholic schools throughout much of the English-speaking world in the century prior to the 1970s, it is necessary in the first instance to view the phenomenon as a reflection of the trend at the time by the religious orders to view themselves as superior to all lay people, and not just the lay teachers.[70]

However, while O'Donoghue's views may well point to the internal politics of a Catholic hierarchical system and the status that was attributed to various Catholic lifestyles, there is no doubt that the withdrawal of funding to denominational schools posed a problem as well. If Catholic schools were to be a part of Australia's future, finding an answer to the ongoing financial problems caused by the withdrawal of funds was essential.

As already noted, Catholic Australia states that as a result of the withdrawal of funding to denominational schools "bishops appealed to religious orders in Ireland and other European countries, and soon religious sisters and brothers were

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[69]   O'Donoghue, "Rescuing Lay Teachers in Catholic Schools", p. 79.

[70]   O'Donoghue, "Rescuing Lay Teachers in Catholic Schools", p. 79.

responding to the crisis."[71] Chambers points to the critical role played by Religious

Congregations in Australia between the passing of the Education Acts and the mid

1960s:

> They have an esteemed place in Australian Catholic education,
> especially in the period between the Colonial Education Acts of
> the 1870s and 1880s and the Second Vatican Council in the
> 1960s. It was in the period after the Colonial Education Acts that
> the Australian bishops recruited the religious orders with greater
> vigour so that the religious orders might support the ongoing
> survival of Catholic schools in the newly established period
> without state aid.[72]

An example of a Religious Congregation which had a profound effect on Australian

Catholic schooling is that of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. Jointly founded by Fr Julian

Tenison Woods[73] and Mother Mary MacKillop,[74] the first school established and

operated by the Sisters of St Joseph was opened in Penola, South Australia in 1866.

Within ten years of the establishment of this Religious Congregation, the Sisters of

St Joseph were servicing thirty-eight schools across South Australia.[75] By 1885, the

Sisters were operating schools in Sydney, Armidale NSW, Western Australia,Victoria

and New Zealand and by the turn of the century there were four hundred and

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[71]   Catholic Australia: *History, Catholics in Australia.*
https://australiancatholichistoricalsociety.com.au/history-resources/australian-catholic-education/
(downloaded 5/07/22)

[72]   Michael Chambers, *An especially delicate task*: *The Place of Students who are not Catholics in Catholic Schools in Australia,* Thesis, Australian Catholic University, (2015).
https://acuresearchbank.acu.edu.au/item/866wy/-an-especially-delicate-task-the-place-of-students-who-are-not-catholics-in-catholic-schools-in-australia
(downloaded 3/03/22)

[73]   Julian Tenison Woods, a priest and scientist, was born in London in 1832 and arrived in Australia in 1854.

[74]   Mary MacKillop was canonised by the Roman Catholic Church in 2010 as Australia's first Catholic saint. As such she is now known as Saint Mary MacKillop by Catholics.

[75]   Marie Therese Foale, *The Josephite Story, The Sisters of St Joseph: their Foundation and Early History 1866-1893,* (Published by St Joseph's Generalate Sydney, Printed Gillingham Printers of Adelaide South Australia, 1989), p. 228-231.

fifty-eight members of the Congregation.[76] In effect, it could be argued that the significant contribution of this *home grown* Religious Congregation created the first National system of Catholic schooling in Australia that was under the central control and leadership of the Sisters of St Joseph rather than a local bishop.

The reliance upon Religious sisters, brothers and priests for the development of Australian Catholic schooling in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first seventy or so years of the twentieth century is unquestionable. Catholic Australia states that: "By 1880, there were a total of 815 sisters from all orders teaching in schools; by 1910 the number exceeded 5000."[77] To understand the significance placed on government funding for Catholic schools in the mid and later part of the twentieth century it is important to highlight that the decline in population of Religious sisters and brothers meant that there was an urgent need to agitate for government funding.

The decline in the membership of Religious Congregations in post-Vatican II Australia mirrored global trends.[78] Wittberg highlights the rapid decline of the Catholic workforce across many Western nations in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council:[79]

> The major women's religious communities in Quebec lost 31
> percent of their membership between 1966 and 1975…

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[76]   Foale, *The Josephite Story,* p. 228-231.

[77]   Catholic Australia: *History, Catholics in Australia - The Growth of Religious Orders.*
https://australiancatholichistoricalsociety.com.au/history-resources/australian-catholic-education/
(downloaded 5/07/22)

[78]   Patricia Wittberg, *The Rise and Fall of Catholic Religious Orders: A social Movement Perspective*,
(State University of New York Press, Albany, 1994), p. 2.

[79]   Wittberg, *The Rise and Fall of Catholic Religious Orders*, p. 2.

alone. In Ireland, over 57 percent of religious sisters, 47 percent of religious brothers and 40 percent of religious priests are over sixty years old. In 1970, 300 religious order priests were ordained in Ireland; in 1987, only twenty-five were. Figures from Italy, France and other Western European countries show similar trends. Such a severe decline in its primary source of personnel obviously has profound implications for the operations of the Roman Catholic Church.[80]

The picture in Australia was similar. The decline of the low-cost workforce that had been the mainstay of Australian Catholic schooling reflected global trends. Dixon highlights that the decline of Catholic schooling's Religious workforce was relatively rapid:

> If the decline in the number of clergy has been relatively modest, the same cannot be said for the decline in the number of religious sisters and brothers. In 1967, there were 13,720 religious sisters and 2,234 religious brothers. By 2016, this numbers were 4,294 and 680 respectively. A 2009 study of Catholic religious in Australia found that the median age of religious sisters was 74, and that there were only 36 religious brothers under the age of 50.[81]

Additionally, to indicate the declining presence of Religious sisters and brothers in Australian schools it is helpful to cite NSW statistics.

Canavan cites the declining numbers of Religious in schools and the transfer to laity in NSW over a thirty-one year period.[82] In 1965, he states that 69 per cent of all teaching staff in NSW Catholic schools were made up of Religious.[83] Within ten

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80 Wittberg, *The Rise and Fall of Catholic Religious Orders*, p. 2.

81 Robert Dixon, "Post-Secularity and Australian Catholics", in *Faith and the Political in the Post-Secular Age,* ed., Anthony Maher, (Coventry Press, Melbourne, 2018), p. 79.

82 Kelvin Canavan, "The Quiet Revolution in Catholic Schooling in Australia"*,* in *Journal of Catholic Education*, 2 (1), (1998), p. 47.
https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/cej/article/download/64/62/
(downloaded 13/06/22)

83 Canavan, "The Quiet Revolution in Catholic Schooling in Australia", p. 47.

years (1965-1975) that number had declined to 32 per cent.[84] By 1985, the number

of Religious in NSW Catholic schools had declined to 9 per cent[85] and within eleven

years the number of Religious in NSW Catholic schools had declined to 2.4 per cent.

In 1965, 3,654 Religious brothers and sisters were servicing NSW Catholic

education in comparison to 1,628 lay staff who were also employed.[86] Furthermore,

Canavan states that by 1996 that number had declined to 354 sisters and brothers

remaining in Catholic schools in NSW and lists the number of lay staff employed as

14,502.[87]

The transition from a labour force that would work for mere subsistence,[88] to a

salaried workforce of lay teachers and leaders was ultimately contingent on the

reinstitution of government funding. However, while lay staff were replacing roles in

schools that Religious sisters and brothers had traditionally undertaken, there is little

doubt that it took the Vatican time to accept that the future of Catholic schooling

depended upon the laity. Vatican sources reveal that there was little explicit

acknowledgment, or perhaps understanding, that the presence of sisters, brothers

and priests in schools was coming to an end. As late as1997, *The Catholic School*

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[84] Canavan, "The Quiet Revolution in Catholic Schooling in Australia", p. 47.

[85] Canavan, "The Quiet Revolution in Catholic Schooling in Australia", p. 47.

[86] Canavan, "The Quiet Revolution in Catholic Schooling in Australia", p. 47.

[87] Canavan, "The Quiet Revolution in Catholic Schooling in Australia", p. 47.

[88] Michael P. Caruso, *When the Sisters Said Farewell: The Transition of Leadership in Catholic Elementary Schools*, (Rowman and Littlefield Education, A division of Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, Plymouth, United Kingdom, 2012), p. 14.

on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, reasserted the ongoing importance of

Religious Congregations for schooling:[89]

> We should also remember that the presence of consecrated
> religious within the educating community is indispensable, since
> "consecrated persons are able to be especially effective in
> educational activities"; they are an example of the unreserved and
> gratuitous "gift" of self to the service of others in the spirit of their
> religious consecration. The presence of men and women religious,
> side by side with priests and lay teachers, affords pupils "a vivid
> image of the Church and makes recognition of its riches easier.[90]

While Vatican authorities may have failed to appreciate the extent to which Catholic

schooling would ultimately depend on lay staff, many Australian Religious

Congregations had already initiated processes to transition their schools to lay

leadership and to a new model of lay canonical school governance known as a

Public Juridic Person (PJP).

In describing the nature of a canonical public juridic person, David Caretti highlights

that public juridic persons are, "corporation-like entities that are governed within the

structure of the Church."[91] Additionally, Caretti adds that public juridic governance

covers a number of Catholic organisational structures:

> Public juridic persons come into perpetual existence by virtue of
> the law or they may be created by decree of competent Church…

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89   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Cultural Identity of the Catholic School,* (1997), paragraph 13.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html
(downloaded 25/08/22)

90   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium,* paragraph 13.

91   David Louis Caretti, *Ownership, Control, Sponsorship, and Trusteeship: Governance Relationships Within Private Catholic Religious-Sponsored Secondary Schools in the United States,* Doctoral Dissertations. 83, (2013), p. 46.
https://repository.usfca.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1080&context=diss
(downloaded 3/11/22)

authority. Those that have juridic personality by law include institutions, such as (arch)dioceses, seminaries, parishes, or religious institutes and their individual provinces.[92]

The Catholic Code of Canon Law describes a public juridic person as aggregates of persons which transcend the purpose of the individuals who operate them:[93]

Juridic persons are constituted either by the prescript of law or by special grant of competent authority given through a decree. The are aggregates of persons (universitates personarum) or of things (universitates rerum) ordered for a purpose which is in keeping with the mission of the church and which transcends the purpose of the individuals.[94]

This thesis does not explore in any detail the concept and complexities of school governance. However, it is helpful to note that the PJP mode of Catholic governance establishes a direct line of authority between the PJP to Vatican authorities[95] rather than to the authority and control of a local diocesan bishop. In order to explore what this structure may mean for the Australian Catholic sector, it is helpful to highlight the development of one such governance structure.

In 2007 the Christian Brothers of Australia established a PJP for the ongoing governance, leadership and administration of their schools — Edmund Rice

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[92]   Caretti, *Ownership, Control, Sponsorship*, p. 46.

[93]   Vatican Document: *Code of Canon Law,* Book 1. General Norms Liber1. De Normis Generalibus, Title VI Physical and Juridic Persons, Chapter II. Juridic Persons, (1987), Canon 114.
www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_PD.HTM.
(downloaded 10/09/22)

[94]   Vatican Document: *Code of Canon Law,* canon 114.

[95]   David Louis Caretti, *Ownership, Control, Sponsorship, and Trusteeship: Governance Relationships Within Private Catholic Religious-Sponsored Secondary Schools in the United States,*. Doctoral Dissertations. 83, (2013), p. 46.
https://repository.usfca.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1080&context=diss
(downloaded 3/11/22)

Education Australia.[96] This civil incorporated body (EREA) was given Vatican

(canonical) approval for its schools to operate in their own right under the

responsibility of a PJP. EREA say of themselves:

> In 2007 the Brothers entrusted the mission in education —
> inherited from Edmund Rice — to a new body: the Australian
> schools with their governing and administrative structures formed
> Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA).[97]

In establishing EREA, the Christian Brothers sought to preserve the unique character

and charism of their fifty Australian schools.[98] In addition to establishing a mode of

governance for their fifty schools, it could be suggested that the Christian Brothers

established an alternative mini 'system of schools' within the larger System of

Catholic schooling:

> EREA, as part of the mission of the Catholic Church, was charged
> with the responsibility for the governance of over 50 schools
> throughout Australia. Each school has a separate character and
> history but all draw life from the same charism of Edmund Rice
> and from the Gospel.[99]

In developing this structure, the Australian Christian Brothers placed the overall

governance of their schools in the hands of laity. Even though lay principalship had

existed in Christian Brothers schools for a number of years, the shift in canonical

governance to laity was a profound change in Australian Catholic school governance

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96   'Edmund Rice Education Australia' was formed in 2007 and continues the work of the Christian Brothers which in Australia commenced in 1874. The Christian Brothers of Australia entrusted their educational mission to a new governance, leadership and administrative body known as Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA).

97   Edmund Rice Education Australia, "Public Juridic Person (PJP)".
https://www.erea.edu.au/our-catholic-identity/our-story/
(downloaded 2/09/22)

98   Edmund Rice Education Australia, "Public Juridic Person (PJP).

99   Edmund Rice Education Australia, "Public Juridic Person (PJP).

modus operandi. Moreover, it signalled a significant step towards Australian lay school leaders having a direct, canonically authorised relationship with the Vatican.

Such a leadership and governance structure in the Australian Catholic educational environment may well produce interesting relationships. The real test of how successful the transference to lay PJP leadership will no doubt become evident if, or when the Religious Congregations that established them no longer exist. Without the powerful voice of a Religious Congregation to support and protect lay leadership structures, the clericalism which continues to dominate senior level Catholic decision-making, may well find lay authority for a significant grouping of Catholic schools, too much of a challenge.

The establishment of lay canonical school governance is also important from the perspectives of its engagement in the schooling marketplace. This mode of governance is expected to maintain a unique schooling experience which is based on the charism and reputation of the school's founding Religious Congregation. In market terms, schools that exist within a specific PJP, offer parents and the schooling marketplace an established and specific 'market-brand' within the context of the larger framework of Australian Catholic schooling.

Interestingly, data taken from the Research Project indicates that some parents felt a close and positive connection to the particular 'Order owned' school which they attended for their own schooling. For some parents it was important to maintain a family tradition and connection with a specific Catholic college. For example:

• *My partner wanted our children to attend the school he attended; a family tradition.*

- *My partner went to [Catholic secondary college] and wants our children to go there too.*

- *I wanted my children to go the school that I went to.*

The relevance of these comments are twofold. First, it suggests that tradition and past experience of Catholic schooling has the power to influence parental enrolment decision-making. Second, even in circumstances where a parent had little or no connection with a traditional Catholic parish, their schooling history, combined with a school's prestigious reputation maintained a kind of market-brand loyalty and trust in the educational product that a parent was purchasing.

In conclusion, from the first Catholic school that opened in Australia to the Second Vatican Council, Catholic schooling was never at risk of disappearing from Australia's schooling landscape, despite significant funding challenges. The theology which underpinned the importance and central place of Catholic schooling, alongside Catholicism's long history of reliance upon apostolic Religious Congregations, not only provided the reason for establishing Australian Catholic schools, it also provided the means for doing so.

Additionally, pre-Vatican II Catholic anxieties about nineteenth century secular liberalism[100] ensured that there was urgency in creating Catholic schools which would protect the Australian Catholic population from a *hostile world*[101] and to ensure

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[100]   Marie Therese Foale, *The Josephite Story, The Sisters of St Joseph: their Foundation and Early History 1866-1893,* (Published by St Joseph's Generalate Sydney, Printed Gillingham Printers of Adelaide South Australia, 1989), p. 16.

[101]   Gerald Grace, *Catholic Schools, Mission, Markets and Morality,* (Routledge Falmer, London and New York, 2002), p. 7.

the preservation of *the* faith.[102] Moreover, the circumstances which led to the withdrawal of government funding from Catholic schools (and other denominational schools) added to the urgency of placing Australian Catholic schools in the hands of Religious Congregations which provided a low-cost, willing workforce.

The role undertaken by Religious Congregations in Australian schooling should not be underestimated as their labour enabled Catholic schooling to survive and thrive for well over one-hundred years, educating generations of students and cementing a future for Catholic schooling in Australia, and also, for having a powerful presence in the developing Australian schooling marketplace.

4.3 Catholic Schools, Parental Choice and Neoliberalism — A Developing Australian Schooling Marketplace

4.3.1 <u>Post-Vatican II — Ramifications for Australian Catholic Schooling</u>:

In order to explore the creation of Australia's schooling marketplace and the role which Catholic authorities have played in its establishment, this section specifically focuses on the religious and socio-political changes that were occurring in Australia from the 1960s onwards. This time-frame is particularly relevant for two reasons. First, the twenty years following Vatican II facilitated a raft of important religious changes for Australia's Catholic population some of which had profound implications

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[102] Grace, *Catholic Schools, Mission, Markets and Morality,* p. 7

for how Catholic schooling was to develop.[103] Second, the changing nature of Australian society and the decision of the Australian Government to reinstate funding to the non-government schooling sector precipitated significant changes not only to Catholic schooling, but for how Australia's system of schooling would continue to develop.

Firstly, it is important to consider how the Second Vatican Council's decision to maintain its reliance on Catholic schooling, as a prime means for its evangelising mission, established fertile ground for Catholic schooling to play a role in the development of Australia's schooling marketplace. The statement by Paul VI at the conclusion of Vatican II makes it clear that Catholicism has a particular role to fulfil when it comes to educating not just the Catholic faithful, but rather, all peoples:

> To fulfill the mandate she has received from her divine founder of proclaiming the mystery of salvation to all men and of restoring all things in Christ, Holy Mother the Church must be concerned with the whole of man's life, even the secular part of it insofar as it has a bearing on his heavenly calling. Therefore she has a role in the progress and development of education.[104]

Vatican II's focus on closing down an old era redefined how Catholic schooling was to move into the future. *Gravissimum educationis* exhorted the, *sons of the Church* to "give their attention with generosity to the entire field of education, having especially in mind the need of extending very soon the benefits of a suitable education and

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[103]   Robert Dixon, "Post-Secularity and Australian Catholics", in *Faith and the Political in the Post-Secular Age,* ed., Anthony Maher, (Coventry Press, Melbourne, 2018), p. 79.

[104]   Pope Paul VI, *Declaration on Christian Education,* Gravissimum Educationis, Proclaimed by Pope Paul VI, 1965, Introduction, paragraph 4.
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html
(downloaded 10/09/22)

training to everyone in all parts of the world."[105] Such a statement pointed to the emergence of a new era in Catholic schooling. The implication was that evangelising *everyone* in all parts of the world, potentially enabled Catholic schooling to extend its enrolment base to include greater numbers of students from other than Catholic traditions.

The long-term outcomes of this fundamental shift in thinking by the Vatican over a sixty year period has seen the percentage of 'other than Catholic' students assist in maintaining the Australian Catholic schooling enrolment base at nearly 20% of the Australian student population.[106] The fact that Catholic schools are open to all who 'share in its education project',[107] effectively means that Catholic schools, like government schools, offers their educational services to all Australian parents irrespective of religious affiliation. In effect, Australian Catholic schooling offers what could be deemed as a public, low-fee paying system of schooling that operates alongside the free government schooling sector.

The Research Project, alongside student statistical data from the NCEC, clearly demonstrates the significant number of students who are from 'other than Catholic' religious, or non-religious backgrounds who are enrolled in a Catholic school.

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[105]   Pope Paul VI, *Gravissimum Educationis*, Introduction, paragraph 4.

[106]   ABS data highlights that the 2021 statistics regarding the enrolment of students in Australian Catholic schools remains relatively constant at 19.5%. While Australia's overall student population has increased by 6% from the previous year (2020), Catholicism's share of the enrolment market has remained constant increasing from 19.4% in 2019, to 19.5% in 2020.

[107] The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Cultural Identity of the Catholic School,* (1997).
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html
(downloaded 25/08/22)

Research Data highlights that across the ten schools and seventy-one parents interviewed, 51 per cent of parents who had a child in a Catholic school were from an 'other than Catholic religious tradition, or, had no religious affiliation. When it comes to NCEC data, the number of students from an 'other than Catholic background' is listed in the 2021 Annual Report as 38 per cent, a 1 per cent increase on the 2020 Annual Report.[108]

In effect, the decision of the Second Vatican Council to place Catholic schools at the forefront of Catholicism's evangelising mission has provided opportunity for significant religious and cultural diversity to exist within its schools. In Australia, this has also provided Catholic authorities with a theological rationale for maintaining and/or increasing the Catholic schooling enrolment base. The number of students who come from other religious traditions, or come from more secular settings, suggest that many Australian parents, who have no connection with Catholicism, or desire to do so (outside of the school setting), are comfortable in selecting a Catholic school environment for their child's education.

Again, Research Project data and commentary indicate that whether a parent is Catholic, or 'other-than-Catholic', enrolment decisions are made by consumers who make choices, which are often driven by motivations which are not predominantly of a religious nature:[109]

• *"Wanted a small school environment not available in state schools in the area."*

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108   Australian Bureau of Statistics, *2021 Schools*, section 'students'.
https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/schools/latest-release
(downloaded 16/06/22)

109   Craig Campbell, Helen Proctor and Geoffrey Sherington, *School Choice: How Parents Negotiate the New School Market in Australia,* (Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest NSW, 2009), p. 4.

- *"The locality of the school was important in terms of proximity to friends."*

- *The schools that I'm zoned [government school] for isn't the best and we felt that a Catholic school would be better for our kids in the long term."*

- *Checked out MySchool, and the Catholic school had the best outcomes in the area."*

Secondly, alongside the religious changes made by the Vatican Council which shaped how Catholic schools were to continue developing in the Australian context, the 1960s and 1970s marked the beginning of a time which heralded significant ongoing change within Australian society.[110] It is important to note that the societal changes that were occurring in Australia were also occurring across many Western nations.[111] In the global context, Charles Maier refers to the 1970s as a time of turmoil across the Western world,[112] while the Vatican refers to this era as being problematic for its schools.[113] In brief, the Vatican's comment regarding the 1970s as being problematic, pointed to the fact that Catholic schools were not immune from either the religious or the social changes that were taking place across Western societies.

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[110]   Michelle Arrow, *The Seventies - The Personal, the Political and the Making of Modern Australia,* (NewSouth Publishing, University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW, 2019)

[111]   Charles S. Maier, "The Crisis of Capitalism", in *The Shock of the Global, ed.,* Niall Ferguson, Charles S. Maier, Erez Manela, and Daniel J. Sargent*,* (Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 44.

[112]   Maier, "The Crisis of Capitalism", p. 44.

[113]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education. *The Catholic School,* (1977), paragraph 2.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html
(downloaded 18/10/22)

In addition to the social changes which were occurring in the 1960s and 1970s these decades also brought about changes within Australian schooling. Cahill and Gray propose that in the 1960s Catholic schools "were in serious danger of closure."[114] They point to a number of factors which were impacting Catholic schooling. For example, the decreasing number of Catholics entering Religious Congregations, (pointing to the changing nature of staffing in Catholic schools), the baby-boomer generation reaching school age and that educational practices were changing: "huge class-sizes was no longer acceptable."[115] Additionally, limited funding meant that many Catholic schools were unable to bring, "aged school buildings up to date."[116] Similar points are also conveyed by Ryan and Watson who suggest that "Catholic schools were struggling to provide education services to the standard of government schools."[117]

The financial costs associated with addressing such matters curtailed the ability of Catholic school leaders to maintain the Catholic schooling sector's share of Australia's growing school enrolment base.[118] Over the period 1965 to 1973 the percentage of Australian students accessing Catholic and non-government schooling

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[114]   Rosemary Cahill, and Jan Gray, "Funding and Secondary School Choice in Australia: A Historical Consideration", in *The Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(1), p. 121-138, (2010), p. 124. https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks/6334
(downloaded 26/07/21)

[115]   Gray, "Funding and Secondary School Choice in Australia", p. 124.

[116]   Gray, "Funding and Secondary School Choice in Australia", p. 124.

[117]   Chris Ryan and Louise Watson, "The Drift to Private Schools in Australia: Understanding its Features", in *The Australian National University Centre for Economic Policy Research Discussion Paper,* No. 479, (2004), p. 8. https://rse.anu.edu.au/researchpapers/CEPR/DP479.pdf.
(downloaded 15/10/22)

[118]   Ryan et al, "The Drift to Private Schools in Australia", p. 8.

declined in relation to the percentage of Australia's school age population. Ryan and

Watson recount the statistics of Catholic and non-government schools during that

period and note the successful funding campaigns which were waged to address

funding shortfalls:[119]

> The Catholic sector's share of total enrolments declined from 19.5
> per cent in 1965 to 17 per cent in 1973. The private sector's
> enrolment share as a whole fell from 23.3 per cent in 1966 to a
> trough of 21.1 per cent in 1977. To arrest the declining enrolment
> share of Catholic schools, a successful political campaign was
> waged for government recurrent subsidies to private schools.[120]

However, prior to exploring the Catholic funding campaigns during the latter years of

the twentieth century, it is particularly important to mention one other mitigating factor

which has been suggested as impacting the development of Australia's schooling

marketplace. Campbell, Proctor and Sherington point to the growing acceptance of

neoliberal economic philosophy by government and to its influence in the creation of

Australia's schooling marketplace.[121]

In describing what neoliberalism is, David Harvey suggests that it is an economic

philosophy which seeks to harness the power of free markets.[122] He further notes

that the role of government in promoting neoliberalism is to ensure that the

framework for embedding its principles are in place:

> …human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual
> entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional
> framework characterised by strong private property rights, free
> markets, and free trade" The role of the state is to create and…

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[119]   Ryan, et al, "The Drift to Private Schools in Australia" p. 8.

[120]   Ryan et al, "The Drift to Private Schools in Australia", p. 8.

[121]   Craig Campbell, Helen Proctor and Geoffrey Sherington, *School Choice: How Parents Negotiate the New School Market in Australia,* (Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 2009), p. 5.

[122]   David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism,* (Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 2.

preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices.[123]

A further insight into neoliberalism is provided by Campbell, Proctor and Sherington, who suggest that neoliberalism is recognised in the context of Australian schooling by its economic policy goals which focus on decentralisation, competition and the construction of markets which have set a particular agenda for parental schooling choice in Australia:[124]

> New regimes of 'school choice' are part of a wider set of practices and discourses across the Western world and beyond that transform citizens into consumers who make choices. The origin of the approaches to markets and consumption are found in the rise of neoliberalism as a dominant set of beliefs that govern both economic and public policy. Government policy frameworks for the last three decades have underpinned radical changes to school structures, systems and accessibility.[125]

Moreover, Campbell, Proctor and Sherington suggest that prior to the economic philosophy of neoliberalism, schooling choice for the vast majority of Australian citizens was not a significant factor:

> For most of the twentieth century at least, it was uncommon for Australian parents to actually 'choose' a school for their children Governments provided schools for the vast majority of the population. If there was a family tradition of attending Catholic or other non-government schools, then tradition barely conceived such attendance as 'choice'. Very few urban parents looked at the schools in their city and imagined that they constituted a market from which they could freely choose.[126]

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[123] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, p. 2.

[124] Craig Campbell, Helen Proctor and Geoffrey Sherington, *School Choice: How Parents Negotiate the New School Market in Australia,* (Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 2009), p. 4.

[125] Campbell et al, *School Choice: How Parents Negotiate the New School Market in Australia,* p. 4.

[126] Campbell et al, *School Choice: How Parents Negotiate the New School Market in Australia,* p. 4.

However, while it may have been 'uncommon for Australian parents to actually choose' a school', it can be argued that for Catholic parents the principle of schooling choice was a part of their religious heritage and practice. As previously noted, pre-Vatican II practising Catholic parents existed within a particularly protective and prescriptive religious culture.[127] Catholic bishops made it extremely clear that Catholic parents had an obligation to select a Catholic school over other schooling alternatives which may exist.[128] Whether it be in political debates in nineteenth century Britain,[129] in Australian colonial times or in the aftermath of Vatican II, the Catholic mantra of parental right to schooling choice and the expectation that society had a role to play in enabling such rights to exist, by means of government funding of Catholic schools, was unambiguous.[130] Even if tradition played a role in influencing Catholic parents to enrol their child in a Catholic school, there is little doubt that many practising Catholic families would have deliberately made the choice to select a Catholic school out of a sense of duty and loyalty to their faith.

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[127]   Gerald Grace, *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets and Morality,* (Routledge Falmer, London and New York, 2002), p. 7.

[128]   Rosemary Cahill, and Jan Gray, "Funding and Secondary School Choice in Australia: A Historical Consideration*",* in *The Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(1), p. 121-138, (2010), p. 124. https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks/6334
(downloaded 26/07/21)

[129]   Terence McLaughlin, Joseph O'Keefe and Bernadette O'Keefe, (editors)) *The Contemporary Catholic School: Context, Identity, and Diversity,* (The Falmer Press, London, Washington, D.C, 1996), p. 5.

[130]   Pope Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri, Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Christian Education to the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops and Other Ordinaries in Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See and to All the Faithful of the Catholic World,* (1929), paragraph 12.
http://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_31121929_divini-illius-magistri.html
(downloaded 12/10/22)

In effect, it is difficult to name any one factor as being the overall driver in constructing the Australian schooling marketplace. Neoliberal principles and policy may well have impacted Australian society and the way in which schooling was to developed.[131] However, this thesis suggests that Catholicism's decision to maintain and expand its schools, as far back as when funding was withdrawn from denominational schools via Australian Education Acts (1872-1893), provided the foundation from which Catholic schooling in Australia was eventually to become a significant contributor in shaping the Australian schooling marketplace.

4.3.2 <u>School Funding — Making the Schooling Marketplace Accessible</u>:

The events which have led to the funding of Catholic and other non-government schools is a story which demonstrates the political strength and involvement of Catholicism within the Australian political sphere. The extensive network of Australian Catholic schooling has been and continues to be supported by parents, teachers, educational leaders, clergy and Religious Congregations.[132] In political terms, and when it comes to matters regarding school funding, there is no doubt that Catholic authorities have a substantial power-base to draw upon in order to influence political decisions of government.

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[131]   Craig Campbell, Helen Proctor and Geoffrey Sherington, *School Choice: How Parents Negotiate the New School Market in Australia,* (Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 2009), p. 4.

[132]   According to 2020 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, a total of 4,006,974 students were enrolled across all Australian schools. The largest group of students — 65.6% attended government schools; 19.4% attended the Catholic school sector and 15% attended other independent schools.

Alongside the network of individuals who are associated with Catholic schooling and have a vested interest in its ongoing success, in 1974 Australian Catholic bishops established the National Catholic Education Commission.[133] This Commission has a number of responsibilities which includes: "Working towards national policy consensus and resourcing that represents and serves the needs and interests of Catholic school communities."[134] In Australia, Catholic authorities have been explicit in yoking their demand for funding to Human Rights claims:

> Parental choice means that: In accord with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all Australian parents and carers have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children. The right of parents and carers to choice of schooling, including schooling based on the Catholic tradition, is a right deserving of government support. Future parents and carers must have the same capacity as current and earlier generations of parents and carers to exercise their freedom of choice in schooling.[135]

Without the significant funding allocated by the Australian Government to Catholic schools the cost of accessing a Catholic school would be dramatically increased. As such, it is highly unlikely that Catholic enrolment figures could remain at present day levels were the subsidy removed. The Research Project demonstrates that any substantial increase in school fees would cause many parents to reconsider their enrolment. Even with the present funding allocated by government to the Catholic

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[133] National Catholic Education Commission, *Role and History.*
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/about-ncec/role-history
(downloaded 22/10/22)

[134] NCEC, *Role and History.*

[135] National Catholic Education Commission, *Funding Principles for Catholic Schools, Basic Funding Principles,* (2015).
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/resources/publications/388-funding-principles-for-catholic-schools-2016/file
(downloaded 4/09/22)

sector, 27 per cent of all parents who took part in the Research Project listed an

unreasonable rise in school fees as being a reason to leave a Catholic school:

• "*Fees are the ultimate deal breaker — ultimately everyone has a budget — but that would be very low down on my list of deal breakers.*"

• "*Would do everything possible to ensure fees did not become a deal breaker.*"

What such statements means for parental choice and the schooling marketplace is

clear — Catholic schools have to remain affordable and thus Catholic authorities

have to remain politically astute in monitoring and pursuing government funding.

The challenges faced by Australian Catholic school authorities during the late 1950s

and 1960s, like the time of the withdrawal of funding to denominational schools in the

late 1800s, played a role in shaping how the story of Australian Catholic schooling

continued to develop.[136] Furthermore, the funding decisions taken during the 1950s

and 1960s prepared the soil for the growth of a schooling marketplace, which at the

time, may well have been unforeseen and unintended. The debates surrounding the

right of parents to have schooling choice and to have access to schools which were

appropriately funded was a priority for Catholic leaders.[137]

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[136]   Chris Ryan and Louise Watson, "The Drift to Private Schools in Australia: Understanding its Features", in *The Australian National University Centre for Economic Policy Research Discussion Paper,* No. 479, (2004), p. 8.
https://rse.anu.edu.au/researchpapers/CEPR/DP479.pdf.
(downloaded 20/10/22)

[137]   Greg McIntosh, "State Aid for Non-Government Schools: The Emerging Debate, "State-Aid": The Background", in *Parliament of Australia*, Current Issues Brief 2 1996-97.
https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/CIB/CIB9697/97cib2
(downloaded 20/10/22)

The political campaigns undertaken by Archbishop Daniel Mannix and B.A Santamaria both of whom played a key role in the establishment of the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) in 1955,[138] also played a key role in driving political debate and action, which eventually saw the Menzies government provide a level of funding to Catholic and non-government schools.[139] Mayrl refers to the DLP as basically being a Catholic political party where a "vast majority of DLP voters — as high as eighty-eight percent in some surveys — were Catholic."[140] Effectively, the activism of Mannix and Santamaria's DLP produced the idea of using the power of the Catholic vote — an idea that Whitlam and his Labor government mobilised in the 1972 Federal Election.

However, prior to Whitlam taking leadership of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) in 1967 and exploring what his electoral success in 1972 meant for school funding, it is important to point to the importance of the DLP in creating a political context where tensions between the DLP and the ALP included a difference of opinion regarding the government funding of Catholic schools:[141]

> The ALP had been consistently opposed to 'state aid' since the 1957 split when much of its Catholic support went to the…

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[138]   Patrick Morgan, (editor),) *B.A. Santamaria Running the Show Selected Documents,* (Miegunyh Press, in Association with the Library of Victoria, 2008), p. 17.

[139]   James Jupp, *Australian People, An Encyclopaedia of the Nation, its Peoples and Their Origins, The Settlers - Irish*, Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies Australian National University, (Cambridge University Press, 2001, first published 1988, Angus and Robertson).

[140]   Damon Mayrl, *Secular Conversions; Political Institutions and Religious Education in the United States and Australia 1800-2000*, (Cambridge Press, United Kingdom, 2016), p. 214.

[141]   Greg McIntosh, "State Aid for Non-Government Schools: The Emerging Debate, "State-Aid": The Background", in *Parliament of Australia,* Current Issues Brief 2 1996-97.
https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/CIB/CIB9697/97cib2
(downloaded 20/10/22)

> Democratic Labor Party (DLP). However, by 1966, after much infighting, the ALP had changed its policy platform to include the provision for federal aid to non-government schools.[142]

The Menzies government, while also being initially opposed to providing funds to Catholic and non-government schools, in 1964 "began the process of direct Commonwealth aid to schools."[143]

Alongside the DLP providing Catholic voter support to the Menzies government,[144] the political campaigns which took place during and after the 1960s, also played a critical role in securing limited funding for Catholic and non-government schools.[145] Canavan highlights the actions taken by Catholic parents in relation to their role in lobbying local politicians:

> The 1960s saw a marked increase in the campaign for educational justice for parents with children in Catholic schools. Politicians from major political parties accepted invitations to speak at public meetings organized by Catholic parents, while the bishops issued statements and encouraged the lobbying of political parties and individual politicians.[146]

In relation to funding campaigns actioned by parents, perhaps the most noteworthy relates to actions taken in Goulburn in 1962. The lack of government support for

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[142]   McIntosh, "State Aid for Non-Government Schools".

[143]   McIntosh, "State Aid for Non-Government Schools".

[144]   Damon Mayrl, *Secular Conversions; Political Institutions and Religious Education in the United States and Australia 1800-2000*, (Cambridge Press United Kingdom, 2016), p. 214.

[145]   Kelvin Canavan, "The Quiet Revolution in Catholic Schooling in Australia", in *Journal of Catholic Education*, 2 (1). http://dx.doi.org/ 10.15365/joce.0201052013, (1998), p. 8. https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1073&context=ce (downloaded 21/10/22) p. 8

[146]   Canavan, "The Quiet Revolution in Catholic Schooling in Australia", p. 49. https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1073&context=ce (downloaded 21/10/22)

funding a toilet-block precipitated a strike which saw students from the local Catholic

school turn up and enrol at the local government school.[147] While the toilet block was

clearly a priority for the school, the political action taken by the bishop, school

authorities and parents sent an unambiguous message to government about the

political presence and power of Catholicism when it came to mounting a case for

funding its schools. Cahill and Gray suggest that the longer term effect of the

Goulburn school closure precipitated Prime Minister Menzies' decision to establish

limited state-aid to Catholic and other non-government schools by way of Science

grants and the introduction of student scholarships:[148]

> The Prime Minister of the day, Robert Menzies, saw the electoral
> advantage to be gained over the issue and changed Liberal Party
> policy to include State Aid for science blocks in non-government
> schools and Commonwealth scholarships for students in
> government and non-government schools.[149]

The actions of the Menzies government in restoring a level of state aid, while having

a positive effect on the Catholic and non-government schooling sectors, also had it

critics and significant opposition from a lobby group known as 'Defence of

Government Schools', or as it is referred to, DOGS.[150] This group, established in

1965, set an agenda which proposed that the free government schooling sector

would be financially compromised if Catholic and non-government schools gained

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[147] Robert Menzies Institute, *Goulburn Catholic School Strike.*
https://www.robertmenziesinstitute.org.au/on-this-day/goulburn-catholic-school-strike
(downloaded 5/12/22)

[148] Rosemary Cahill, and Jan Gray, "Funding and Secondary School Choice in Australia: A Historical
Consideration*", in *The Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(1), p. 121-138, (2010), p. 125.
https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks/6334
(downloaded 26/07/21)

[149] Cahill et al, "Funding and Secondary School Choice", p. 125

[150] Cahill et al, "Funding and Secondary School Choice", p. 125.

government funding support.[151] Moreover, DOGS argued that the funding of "church-affiliated schools would embroil the government in sectarian activities."[152]

The political campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s alongside the decision of the Menzies government to extend limited financial support to Catholic and non-government schools cannot be underestimated in terms of demonstrating the power of the Catholic vote for securing school funding. A further major step in the Catholic school funding story occurred in 1969. The States Grants (Independent Schools) Act of 1969, established general recurrent grants to Catholic and non-government schools on a student per capita basis:[153]

> Australian Government general recurrent per student grants for non-government schools were introduced in 1970, the rationale being to assist the struggling Catholic school sector. The *States Grants (Independent Schools) Act 1969* authorised payments to non-government schools at the flat rates of $35 per primary school student and $50 per secondary school student. From 1973, these grants were fixed at a rate equivalent to 20 per cent of the cost of educating a child in a government school.[154]

However, the election of the Whitlam government in 1972 brought with it changes to Australian school funding. The Whitlam government made clear its intention for *all*

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[151]   Cahill et al, "Funding and Secondary School Choice", p. 125.

[152]   Cahill et al, "Funding and Secondary School Choice", p. 125.

[153]   Marilyn Harrington, "Australian Government Funding for Schools Explained, The Early History of Australian Government Funding for Schools", in *Parliament of Australia.* January 31, 2011. https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BN/1011/SchoolsFunding (downloaded 22/10/22)

[154]   Harrington, "Australian Government Funding for Schools Explained", 1973: *The Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission.*

Australian students to have access to appropriately funded schools.[155] The decision

was made on the basis that those schools in most need, would receive the greatest

level of funding:[156]

> The Committee was established in December 1972 by the
> Whitlam Labor Government to examine the needs of schools and
> advise on school financing. The Committee's recommendations
> advocated needs-based funding to ensure that all schools
> achieved minimum acceptable standards. As a result of these
> recommendations, Australian Government recurrent funding was
> extended to government schools in 1974. In the same year
> special funding programs (targeted programs) were introduced for
> disadvantaged schools, special education, teacher professional
> development and innovation.[157]

The implications of such a decision were particularly significant from two

perspectives. First, it could be argued that the mandate of Catholic education to have

a preference for disadvantaged and vulnerable families,[158] to some degree,

advantaged the funding arrangements for Catholic schooling under the Whitlam

government's needs-based school funding policy. Furthermore, it could also be

suggested that the 1970s were pivotal in terms of cementing the future of Catholic

schooling, and to some extent, sowed the seeds from which neoliberal thinking and

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155   Rosemary Cahill, and Jan Gray, "Funding and Secondary School Choice in Australia: A Historical Consideration*", in *The Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(1), p. 121-138, (2010), p. 126. https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks/6334
(downloaded 26/07/21)

156   Marilyn Harrington, "Australian Government Funding for Schools Explained, The Early History of Australian Government Funding for Schools", in *Parliament of Australia*, January 31, 2011. https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BN/1011/SchoolsFunding
(downloaded 22/10/22)

157   Harrington, "Australian Government Funding".

158   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School,* (1977). paragraph 58 https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html
(downloaded 8/10/22)

action further shaped how the Australian schooling marketplace continued to emerged.

A further salient example of the powerful lobby of the Catholic and Independent schooling sectors regarding the funding of Australian non-government schooling relates to the Gonski Review of Australian school funding. This review, instituted by the Rudd/Gillard government (ALP) in 2010 was established to consider how Australia's school funding principles would assist all students to access high quality schooling outcomes regardless of a student's background circumstances.[159] The Gonski Review was said to be extensive:

> …one of the most exhaustive reviews of schooling that we [Australia] have had for decades, going back to the mid-1970s'; a means of assessing the effectiveness of the approach to Australian Government school funding which had been in place since the 1970s.[160]

The final report of the Gonski Review was released in December 2011 with forty-one recommendations being made.[161] However, recommendations from the Report regarding suggested changes to the existing school funding model failed to come to fruition. The Executive Director of the NCEC made it clear to the Rudd/Gillard

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[159]   Australian Government: *Review of Funding for Schooling, Final Report,* December 2011, Executive Summary, p. xiii.
https://www.education.gov.au/school-funding/resources/review-funding-schooling-final-report-december-2011
(downloaded 12/10/22)

[160]   Parliament of Australia: *Chapter 2: History of Australian Government Funding of Schools,* section 2.3.
https://www.aph.gov.au/parliamentary_business/committees/senate/school_funding/school_funding/report/c02
(downloaded 21/10/22)

[161]   Parliament of Australia: Chapter 2: *History of Australian Government Funding of Schools,* section 2.3.

government that from the perspective of the Catholic sector, any withdrawal of financial support from the Catholic system would have *widespread consequences,* not only for the Catholic schooling sector, but also for the government schooling sector:[162]

> With many families making significant financial sacrifices to send their children to a Catholic school, which they have chosen as the best fit for their child, fee increases of that magnitude would place a Catholic education out of reach.That would see tens of thousands of students seeking enrolment in government schools, placing pressure on those schools and ultimately increasing government spending on education – which will likely have to be paid for by tax increases.[163]

While not referring to the impact of the 1962 chaos caused by the Goulburn Catholic school strike, the political statement made by the NCEC press release certainly aimed at reminding the government about the financial consequences for government schooling and the Australian tax payer if Catholic schooling became an unaffordable option for parents. Effectively, it could be suggested that the attempts of the Rudd/Gillard government to reform the funding system failed due to Catholic political activism and the Church's insistence on school choice as being a fundamental human right.[164]

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[162]   National Catholic Education Commission: *Further Scrutiny of Gonski Recommendations Needed.* Media Release, October 21, 2016, (2017).
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/news-events/media-releases?limit=10&limitstart=110
(downloaded 23/10/22)

[163]   NCEC, *Further Scrutiny of Gonski Recommendations.*

[164]   National Catholic Education Commission: *Funding Principles for Catholic Schools*, *Basic Funding Principles.* (2015).
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/resources/publications/388-funding-principles-for-catholic-schools-2016/file
(downloaded 4/09/22)

Finally, in terms of exploring Catholicism's school funding arrangements with government it is important to briefly consider the important place of Catholic Systems. The term 'System' refers to a grouping of schools who receive government grants via the administrative body known as a System. It is then the job of the System to redistribute government funding to member-schools via a local funding formula according to System funding priorities. In relation to the emergence of Catholic Systems and their ability to assist in maintaining and expanding Catholic schooling, Canavan provides a salient insight into the emergence of the Sydney Catholic System:

> Before 1965, Catholic schools in Sydney were relatively independent. Each school raised its own funds and paid its own lay teachers. In response to a financial crisis, a decision was made in 1965 to annually pool all financial resources and liabilities from parish elementary and diocesan high schools, and to pay teachers' salaries and stipends for religious from a common fund. The Catholic Education Office in Sydney was made responsible for the management of this new system of schools.[165]

Canavan states that "all 28 dioceses in Australia established Systems along the lines similar to those in Sydney."[166] Moreover, he points to the construction of Systems as being fundamental to ensuring the viability and "survival of many Catholic schools that would have otherwise closed."[167]

The construction of Catholic Systems by local Catholic authorities clearly made the distribution of government funds somewhat more 'streamlined' for governments in

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[165]   Kelvin Canavan,"The Quiet Revolution in Catholic Schooling in Australia", in *Journal of Catholic Education*, 2 (1). http://dx.doi.org/ 10.15365/joce.0201052013, (1998), p. 51. https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1073&context=ce (downloaded 21/10/22)

[166]   Canavan, "The Quiet Revolution in Catholic Schooling in Australia", p. 51.

[167]   Canavan, "The Quiet Revolution in Catholic Schooling in Australia", p. 51.

terms of not having to deal directly with individual schools.[168] However, it could also be suggested that the ability of Catholic Systems to prioritise how funds are to be allocated and expended across the schools within a particular System enabled the sustainability and growth of Australian Catholic schooling in the latter years of the twentieth century.[169]

In conclusion, whatever the past stories reveal about the power of the Catholic voice to influence government decision-making regarding the funding of Catholic schools, present-day Catholic schools continue to remain reliant upon government funding for their existence. With that said, in the Australian schooling context, arguments about the right of Catholic and Independent schools to have access to government funding no longer appears to be in question. Rather, funding arguments tend to focus on the rights of all Australian students to have an equitable share in how the educational dollar is expended.[170] Connors and McMorrow suggest that: "debates over 'state aid' to Catholic and other non-government schools are now just a distant memory."[171]

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[168]   Canavan, "The Quiet Revolution in Catholic Schooling in Australia", p. 51.

[169]   Canavan, "The Quiet Revolution in Catholic Schooling in Australia", p. 51.

[170]   Parliament of Australia: *Chapter 4: The Economic Effect of School Funding Policy*, 4.2.
https://www.aph.gov.au/parliamentary_business/committees/senate/school_funding/school_funding/report/c04
(downloaded 21/10/22)

[171]   Lyndsay Connors and Jim McMorrow, "Imperatives in Schools Funding: Equity,Sustainability and Achievement", in *Australian Council for Educational Research*, *Australian Education Review,* number 60, Series Editor: Suzanne Mellor, Copy edited by Carolyn Glascodine, (Published by ACER Services. 2015), p. iii.

https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1024&context=aer.
(downloaded 21/10/22)

More so, they highlight that since the Whitlam government, and despite policy differences across political parties, "equity has been a major theme in the evolution of the national schools funding policy."[172]

That said, it can be suggested that when it comes to the right of all Australian parents to have access to schooling choice there is still inadequacy. Presently, even with substantial government funding, parents without the financial means to pay school fees, be it in a Catholic or Independent school, do not possess equal opportunity when it comes to enrolment choice.[173] Moreover, when considering that government schooling is often zoned, low-income families not only lack opportunity to consider which sector may best suit their child's learning, they also have limited opportunity for schooling choice even within the government schooling sector.

If schooling choice is to be a right for every Australian parent, vexing questions about how to review present funding arrangements to non-government schools will need to be raised. In an article in the Sydney Morning Herald, Adrian Piccoli, (director of the Gonski Institute for Education and a former NSW education minister), highlights what he believes to be the difficulties associated with Australia's model of school funding and schooling choice which is not universally accessible to all parents.[174] When referring to providing school choice in primary school settings, he suggests that cost

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[172] Connors et al, "Imperatives in Schools Funding", p. 9.

[173] Rosemary Cahill, and Jan Gray, "Funding and Secondary School Choice in Australia: A Historical Consideration", in *The Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(1), p. 121-138, (2010), p. 125. https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks/6334
(downloaded 26/07/21)

[174] Adrian Piccoli, "There's a Way to Fix the Biggest Structural Problem in Australian Education", in *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 11, 2020.
https://www.smh.com.au/national/there-s-a-way-to-fix-the-biggest-structural-problem-in-australian-education-20200808-p55jv4.html
(downloaded 07/11/22)

would no longer be a factor if all Australian schools were fully funded and school fees

eliminated:

> Eliminating primary school fees means the cost is no longer a
> factor when parents look to choose a school. State and territory
> governments would continue to operate public schools and the
> existing, mostly faith-based organisations, would continue to
> operate their schools. Faith-based schools could still teach
> religion as they do now.[175]

While Piccoli's suggestion may sound perfectly reasonable, the likely implications for

the autonomy of Catholic authorities, in relation to their right to govern their schools

with minimal government intervention, may well be considered a risk that is not worth

taking. Connors and McMorrow make the point that Australian Catholic systemic

schools "have retained a high degree of (heavily subsidised) independence"[176] and

that the strength of the Catholic Church becomes particularly evident when the

matter of school funding is on the agenda: "If you're tempted to think this is no more

than an artefact of ancient history, just try fiddling with it."[177]

Effectively, the Catholic System of schooling can now be considered as an integral

service provider alongside Government and Independent schooling sectors. Thus,

while government funding has enabled Catholic schools to become an integral

partner in Australia's educational offerings, it does so within a context where Catholic

school leaders are expected to respond to the educational demands of parents and

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[175]   Piccoli, "There's a Way to Fix the Biggest Structural Problem".

[176]   Lyndsay Connors and Jim McMorrow, "Imperatives in Schools Funding: Equity,Sustainability and
Achievement", in *Australian Council for Educational Research*, *Australian Education Review,* number
60, Series Editor: Suzanne Mellor, Copy edited by Carolyn Glascodine, (Published by ACER Services.
2015), p. iii.
https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1024&context=aer.
(downloaded 21/10/22)

[177]   Connors et al, "Imperatives in Schools Funding", p. iii.

governments. In addition, leaders of Australian Catholic schooling are also expected to discern how best to inculcate an authentic Catholic school identity in such a way as to balance the Vatican's religious agenda with the demands of a secular schooling marketplace. No longer are Catholic schools only oriented to the demands of the Church, rather, the partnership which exists between parents, government and Catholic schools calls for Catholic school leaders to serve a broad constituency.

4.4 Chapter Summary

Chapter Four has sought to provide a brief 'snap-shot' of three key elements which have shaped the development of Catholic schooling in Australia, all of which have contributed to embedding Catholic schools as a key player in the schooling marketplace. It has pointed to the fact that from the time of the withdrawal of state-aid to Catholic and non-government schools, which saw the demise of many other denominational schools, Australian Catholic bishops called upon its army of sisters, brothers and priests to ensure its schools would continue to feature in the Australian schooling context.[178] This chapter has shown that the changes instituted by Vatican II in relation to Catholicism's new approach to its mission and outreach, set a new agenda for Catholic schooling, calling on schools to be *open to all.*[179] Such a significant change not only paved the way for enrolment to be more inclusive of

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[178] Michael Chambers, '*An especially delicate task': The Place of Students who are not Catholics in Catholic Schools in Australia,* Thesis, Australian Catholic University. https://acuresearchbank.acu.edu.au/download/a4e33c4bcf4265da70218b698f67fbe0ace1fa132098b363e5f4cf9a13709d2a/1696458/201510_Michael_Chambers.pdf (downloaded 13/10/22)

[179] Pope Paul VI: *Declaration On Christian Education, Gravissimum Educationis,* (1965), section 1. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html (downloaded 12/10/22)

'other than Catholic students', it also enabled Australian Catholic schools to be marketed as an alternative schooling option for *all* Australian students.[180]

This Chapter has noted the importance of the funding campaigns and debates staged by Catholic authorities in the 1950s, 1960s and beyond. It has suggested that funding campaigns orchestrated by Catholic authorities achieved the overarching Church goal of securing the future of Australian Catholic schooling. In more recent times, as Connors and McMorrow suggest, the funding narrative has changed. Today, the question is not about whether Catholic and non-government school should be funded, it is a question about establishing the policy which determines how much funding goes to the Catholic and non-government schooling sectors.[181]

This Chapter has suggested that the government funding which has been secured for Catholic schools offers all Australian parents (who have the financial means), access to an Australian, low-fee,[182] Christian system of schooling as an alternative to that of the free, secular, government schooling option which is also available to all

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180   National Catholic Education Commission, *Funding Principles,* (2015). https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/resources/publications/388-funding-principles-for-catholic-schools-2016/file (downloaded: 14/10/22)

181   Lyndsay Connors and Jim McMorrow, "Imperatives in Schools Funding: Equity,Sustainability and Achievement", in *Australian Council for Educational Research*, *Australian Education Review,* number 60, Series Editor: Suzanne Mellor, Copy edited by Carolyn Glascodine, (Published by ACER Services. 2015), p. iii.

182   Rosemary Cahill, and Jan Gray, "Funding and Secondary School Choice in Australia: A Historical Consideration*",* in *The Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(1), p. 121-138, (2010), p. 125. https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks/6334 (downloaded 26/07/21)

Australian parents. The NCEC emphasises its partnership with Australian "families,

the broader community and with Federal, State and Territory governments."[183]

However, even with the stage set for Catholic schools to continue playing their part in

the landscape of Australia's schooling marketplace and Catholic leaders being

committed to working in collaboration with Federal, State and Territory

governments,[184] in the end, Catholic schools rely on parental choice for their

existence. What this means for the religious mission of Catholic schools in an

increasingly secular society where religious affiliation is declining, is a particularly

relevant question for the leaders of Australian Catholic schooling. Projects such as

the Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project provides testament to the desire of

Catholic school leaders to explore how to respond to the changing nature of Catholic

school enrolment. The latest ABS statistics on Religion in Australia demonstrates

some of the cultural complexities which Catholic school leaders will need to navigate

while undertaking and attempting to achieve their school's religious purpose:

> The 2021 Census has revealed increasing diversity in the
> religions Australians identified, reflecting continuing changes in
> our social attitudes and belief systems.
> Christianity is the most common religion in Australia, with over 40
> per cent (43.9 per cent) identifying as Christian. This has reduced
> from over 50 per cent (52.1 per cent) in 2016 and from over 60
> per cent (61.1 per cent) in 2011. As in earlier Censuses, the
> largest Christian denominations are Catholic (20.0 per cent of the
> population) and Anglican (9.8 per cent).
> While fewer people are reporting their religion as Christian, more
> are reporting 'no religion'. Almost 40 per cent (38.9 per cent) of
> Australia's population reported having no religion in the 2021…

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[183]   National Catholic Education Commission, *Pre-Budget Submission*, 2019-2020.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/index.php?option=com_content&view...id…
(downloaded 28/08/1922)

[184] NCEC, *Pre-Budget Submission*, 2019-2020.

Census, an increase from 30 per cent (30.1 per cent) in 2016 and 22 per cent (22.3 per cent) in 2011.[185]

In conclusion, when it comes to Australian schooling, whether in colonial times, the later years of the twentieth century or in present times, Catholic theology proclaims the right of Catholic schools to exist, the right of parents to have schooling choice and the expectation that society has a responsibility to ensure such rights exist.[186] This theological and policy position, when viewed alongside the powerful interactions of Catholic authorities in Australia's socio-political debates, especially in relation to schooling, has not only shaped Catholic schooling, but also the manner in which the Australian system of schooling has developed and presently exists. The story of the emergence and development of the Australia schooling marketplace cannot be fully appreciated or understood without taking into account the powerful, targeted and ongoing interactions of Australian Catholic authorities with government.

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[185]   Australian Bureau of Statistics, *2021Census Shows Changes in Australia's Religious Diversity*, Media Release.

[186]   National Catholic Education Commission, *School Funding Policy*. Articles, https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=42:funding-policy-april-1987&catid=20&Itemid=120
(downloaded 20/11/22)

Chapter Five

Australian Catholic Schools and the Schooling Marketplace —

Assessing the Challenges and Opportunities

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 <u>Overview</u>:

This Chapter explores the specific religious goals of Catholic schooling which are expressed by the Vatican and local Catholic authorities. Furthermore it points to the specific religious goals that Catholic schools are expected to achieve and the difficulties that face Catholic leaders in achieving them.[1] The responses from parents to questions raised in the Research Project demonstrated clarity regarding expectations of what their child's school is expected to achieve, especially in relation to student learning and achievement, and what is expected of a school's religious nature

Parental commentary about the reasons for selecting a particular school confirmed that parents are discerning consumers who make choices when it came to deciding between schools and schooling sectors. Parents who took part in the Research Project affirmed many of the social, cultural and educational goals stated by

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[1]   National Catholic Education Commission, *A Framework for Formation for Mission in a Catholic School,* (2017), p. 5.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/AFramework4FormationMission.pdf
(downloaded 22/08/22)

government. For the most part, parents expected that schools would strive to provide students with outstanding learning and achievement opportunities and that schools would assist students to develop a sense of respect for *otherness*. However, when it came to discussing the religious nature of a Catholic school there was significant diversity in their responses.

The partnership which exists between government, local Catholic authorities, as well as the parents who make choices regarding which school they ultimately select for their child's schooling, place parents in a particularly powerful position. While Warren suggests that Catholic schools may still have a level of parent loyalty when it comes to enrolment selection,[2] it must be noted that Catholic schools are also highly dependent on market forces which shape consumer enrolment choice and which have the potential to impact the number of Catholic schools which exist within the Australian schooling marketplace.

At every step of a child's educational journey, parents have the right to assess whether their child's school is upholding its 'end of the educational contract' and accordingly, parents have the power to reassess their enrolment decision. This is an important point given that any significant decrease in a school's enrolment figure will see a corresponding decrease in a school's per capita government funding and the income collected from school fees, thus affecting the annual budget's bottom line.[3]

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[2] Diana Warren, "Parents' Choices of Primary Schools"*, in Growing Up in Australia,* Commissioned by the Australian Government's Institute of Family Services, (2016), p. 157. https://aifs.gov.au/research/commissioned-reports/parents-choices-primary-school (downloaded 6/10/22)

[3] 'Per-capita funding' refers to an annual amount of funding that a school receives based on each child that is attending a Catholic school at a set date (census date) which is set by government for funding purposes.

Such a scenario, if significant, could result in staff losses, curriculum offerings being reduced and/or a rise in school fees to make up for the reduction in enrolment numbers and the subsequent funding short-fall. Effectively, maintaining or growing an enrolment base is a crucial factor in ensuring the ongoing viability of a school.

Catholic schools clearly offer parents an alternative religiously based style of education which differs from the secular public school system alongside which it operates, as well as from other non-government schools. The Catholic system offers an education which, according to the Vatican, ought to promote a number of religious goals, including developing an identity which promotes the ecclesial nature of a Catholic school:

> …because of its identity and its ecclesial roots, this community must aspire to becoming a Christian community, that is, a community of faith, able to create increasingly more profound relations of communion which are themselves educational. It is precisely the presence and life of an educational community, in which all the members participate in a fraternal communion, nourished by a living relationship with Christ and with the Church, that makes the Catholic school the environment for an authentically ecclesial experience.[4]

However, this thesis suggests that such a goal is challenging to achieve in the context of the diverse religious and secular nature of the consumer enrolment base which Australian Catholic schools now serve.[5] Additionally, associated challenges of

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4   Congregation for Catholic Education, (of Seminaries and Educational Institutions), *Educating Together in Catholic Schools, A shared Mission Between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful,* 2007, paragraph 14.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20070908_educare-insieme_en.html
(downloaded 25/05/23)

5   National Catholic Education Commission, *Framing Paper - Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools,* (2018).
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/NCEC_Framing_Paper_Religious_Education.pdf
(downloaded 22/08/22)

employing and educating staff, who also come from diverse religious and more

secular backgrounds and beliefs, create a specific challenge in meeting the religious

goals of Catholic schooling.[6]

In Australia, perhaps the most obvious and extensive example of how a group of

Catholic leaders have responded to the Vatican's call to ensure that Catholic school

identity remains as ecclesial, while addressing the diversity of beliefs, cultural and

religious practices of students and their families, was the introduction of the

Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project. This project was seen as providing the

means to assess a school's specific cultural and religious profile while seeking to

respond in a manner which enabled a school's identity to be authentically Catholic.

In addressing the importance of the ECSIP Stephen Elder, Executive Director,

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd states:

> Our world is increasingly complex and diverse and so it is that a
> central role of the Catholic school is to offer to the whole community
> a faithful and authentic expression of the Catholic tradition. Catholic
> schools today are called to do this in ways that are culturally
> plausible for the community, meaningful to each member and
> relevant to the context in which they find themselves.[7]

Whether Australian Catholic schools are able to offer to the 'whole community a

faithful and authentic expression of the Catholic tradition' by means of the ECSI

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[6]   National Catholic Education Commission, *A Framework for Formation for Mission in a Catholic School,* (2017), p. 11.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/AFramework4FormationMission.pdf
(downloaded 23/08/22)

[7]   Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd, *The Guide to Reading and Interpreting* the *Enhancing Catholic School Identity (ECSI) Standard Report of Your School,* (First published November 2018 Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd, James Goold House, 228 Victoria Parade East Melbourne VIC, 3002), 2018, p. *Forward.*
https://issuu.com/ceosand/docs/esci_the_guide_version_2
(downloaded 25/05/23)

Project, while operating within a schooling marketplace where enrolment selection is not necessarily based on religious grounds is a pertinent question.

In order to explore the challenges facing Catholic school leaders, who have the responsibility to balance the somewhat competing goals of both marketplace and Australian Catholic school authorities, Chapter Five considers three major themes. Firstly, this Chapter briefly points to the interrelationship that exists between the Australian Catholic Church and secular society. As Dixon has argued, "Catholic institutions are interwoven with Australian society and cannot help but be affected by the secular nature of that society."[8] In exploring the complex interrelationship between religion and society in the Australian context, this Chapter considers the significant implications that pluralism of faith and culture may hold for Australian Catholic schooling.

Secondly, Chapter Five explores how realistic Vatican and local Catholic authorities expectations are when it comes to considering the role which teachers and principals are expected to undertake in Australian Catholic schools. In a Catholic school principals are charged with developing a particular religious pedagogic identity which is expected to provide the foundation for students, staff and parents to belong to a school community which is based on Christian principles. However, such a task is complicated, especially when taking into account the importance and impact of a school's specific site ontology and its role in shaping the nature a school's pedagogic culture. Effectively, Catholic school principals lead and manage their school within a

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8   Robert Dixon, "Post-Secularity and Australian Catholics", in *Faith and the Political in the Post-Secular Age*, ed., Anthony Maher, (Coventry Press, Melbourne, 2018), p. 90.

marketplace informed by parental choice, but at the same time, they are subject to the demand that their school be adequately Catholic. Negotiating these sometimes contradictory imperatives can be a complex task.

Thirdly, Chapter Five considers the ability of Catholic schooling to achieve its evangelising mission via its religious education curriculum. Given the diverse religious backgrounds of the families who attend the schools, as well as the diversity of staff who are expected to teach a programme of religious education, exploring what such realities may mean for constructing and teaching an RE programme is an important consideration. The goals for Catholic schooling, as articulated by Vatican authorities, place all curriculum and learning within a religious, evangelising context:[9] "The various school subjects do not present only knowledge to be attained, but also values to be acquired and truths to be discovered."[10] However, given that a large percentage of students in Catholic schools have little or no connection with Catholicism outside of a school environment,[11] the capacity of a faith based religious education programme to achieve aspirational religious goals is anything but straightforward.

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[9]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Cultural Identity of the Catholic School,* (1997), paragraph 14.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html
(downloaded 24/08/22)

[10]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold*, paragraph 14.

[11]   National Catholic Education Commission, *Framing Paper - Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools,* (2018), p. 9,
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/NCEC_Framing_Paper_Religious_Education.pdf
(downloaded 22/08/22)

Finally, this Chapter draws together the various themes associated with this thesis topic and provides a summary that assesses the potential challenges which Catholic leaders and parents may encounter as Catholic schools continue to be shaped by the many societal and religious factors. Moreover, this chapter argues that while Australian schools are owned and operated by the Catholic Church, their ongoing viability as a significant schooling sector in Australia is reliant upon ongoing significant funding from government. In Australia, government funding of the non-government schooling sector has created a schooling system where Catholic and Independent schooling authorities are integral partners in the overall system of Australian schooling.

In addition, while parents may be categorised by government and schooling authorities as being consumers who make choices about which schooling sector and which school they will ultimately decide best suits their child's learning, in a Catholic school parents are expected by Catholic authorities to be partners in a specific religious educational project. What such a partnership may mean for both parents and Australian Catholic school authorities is explored in the final section of this Chapter.

Effectively, in drawing together the themes associated with this thesis, Chapter Five argues that the universal message of Catholic authorities, as to the right of parents to schooling choice,[12] which has been financially backed by successive Australian

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[12]   Pope Paul VI: *Declaration On Christian Education, Gravissimum Educationis, (*1965). https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html
(downloaded 24/08/22)

governments, has created a somewhat unique context in which parental right to schooling choice has found a home.

5.1.2 <u>Literature Review</u>:

When considering the impact of the schooling marketplace upon Catholic schooling, exploring a school's specific site ontological realities is critical. Site ontology suggests that "forms of practice that emerge in a particular site are shaped, enabled and constrained by conditions that exist in that particular site at that time".[13] As noted, every school has its own specific site ontological realities which combine in ways which shape a school's pedagogic culture.

When further exploring the importance of site ontology for creating a school's overall pedagogic culture and identity, Peter Grootenboer, Christine Edwards-Groves and Sarojni Choy highlight the unique factors which combine to form a school's learning culture.[14] The concept of site ontology provides insight into one significant way in which the schooling marketplace interacts with and shapes how individual Catholic schools manifest.

Educational literature points to a school's principal as being a key contributing agent in creating a successful school where student learning and achievement is prioritised and is of a high standard. In relation to the site ontologies which shape Catholic schools, principals have delegated authority to manage a number areas

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[13]   Peter Grootenboer, Christine Edwards-Groves and Sarojni, Choy, (editors), *Practice Theory and Education: Diversity and Contestation*, (Springer, 2017), p. 9.

[14]   Grootenboer et al, *Practice Theory and Education,* p. 9.

which impact the learning and cultural environment. For example, principals in

Catholic schools determine who is and who is not employed. They also play a key

role in how school budgeting priorities are set. Thus, when it comes to

establishing a particular school's site ontology, the principal is a crucial figure in

creating its culture and its negotiation of how Catholic thought and practice is

embedded in the school context. As such, the role of the Catholic school principal

is explored in this Chapter.

Kathleen Cotton describes the critical role which principals play in shaping a

school's pedagogic learning culture.[15] She suggests that the standards and

expectations which are set by principals play a vital role in establishing a school's

culture and in creating a successful learning environment. The emphasis placed

on successful school leadership in meeting educational goals is also suggested

by Elizabeth Leo who provides insight into how the term 'leadership' can, or

perhaps should be viewed.[16] Leo suggests that the term leadership needs to be

contextualised in terms of asking the question, 'what is leadership for'?[17] Leo's

point is particularly relevant when considering the extensive responsibilities which

principals of Catholic schools are expected to undertake in relation to their

religious leadership of a Catholic school.

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[15]   Kathleen Cotton, *Principals and Student Achievement, What the Research Says,* Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, (ACD Publications Alexandria, Virginia, US, 2003).

[16]   Elizabeth Leo, *Take Me to Your Leader, Leadership and the Future*, Australian Council for Education Research, The Leadership Challenge — Improving Learning in Schools, Conference 2007, Conference Archive, (2007).
http://research.acer.edu.au/research_conference_2007
(downloaded 28/08/22)

[17]   Leo, *Take Me to Your Leader*.

Helga Neidhart and Janine Lamb are also referenced and highlight the critical role which a principal plays in establishing school culture. However, these authors particularly discuss the challenges facing principals in developing Catholic schools as communities of faith, and what this may mean for their leadership.[18] More so, Neidhart and Lamb suggest that there is no clear understanding of *what* faith leadership is',or *how* to undertake faith leadership in the context of a Catholic school.[19] Such a statement raises fundamental questions about the likelihood of leaders, teachers and staff in Catholic schools being able to undertake the religious leadership which is expected of them by Vatican and local Catholic authorities.

The increasing cultural and religious pluralism within Australian society is a further important factor to consider when assessing the interactions of the marketplace with Catholic schooling. What increasing plurality in Catholic schools means for how school leaders engage with pluralism, within the context of a Catholic school environment, is explored in this Chapter. A number of authors provide insight into pluralism and what it may mean for how Australian Catholic schools engage with it.

Terence McLaughlin, Joseph O'Keefe and Bernadette O'Keeffe, point to the religious and cultural diversity of enrolment within Catholic schools. They suggest

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[18]   Helga Neidhart, and Janeen Lamb, "Australian Catholic Schools Today: School Identity and Leadership Formation", in *Journal of Catholic Education,* Australian Catholic University, Vol. 19, No. 3, May 2016.
https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1101499.pdf
(downloaded 31/08/22)

[19]   Neidhart, et al, "Australian Catholic Schools Today, p. 11.

that such diversity demands an appropriate educational response from Catholic

school leaders. They suggest that Catholic schooling in a highly pluralist society

cannot simply assume that it is '*business as usual'* when it comes to how Catholic

schools and programmes of religious education engage with *otherness.*[20] This

point is further highlighted by Angelo Belmont, Neil Cranston and Brigid Limerick

who suggest that there is need to balance the religious goals of Australian

Catholic schools with a responsibility to educate students about pluralism of

religion and culture.[21]

At stake in these conversations about plurality and education are competing

notions of the ethical obligations of pluralism. Diana Eck presents a view that

pluralism demands more than simply tolerance or acknowledgment of the *other.*[22]

Rather, Eck suggests that pluralism demands engagement with the other. Adam

Seligman amplifies the importance of engaging with otherness.[23] He suggests that

a person's religious identity and how acceptance and acknowledgment of a

religious identity by others has the potential to assist in creating a sense of

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[20] Terence McLaughlin, Joseph O'Keefe and Bernadette O'Keeffe, (editors), *The Contemporary Catholic School: Context, Identity, and Diversity,* (The Falmer Press, London, Washington, D.C, 1996), p. 16.

[21] Angelo Belmonte, Neil Cranston, and Brigid Limerick, *Voices of Lay Principals: Promoting a Catholic Character and Culture in Schools in an Era of Change.* Paper prepared for the 2006 International Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) – Adelaide, Australia, (2006), p. Introduction.
https://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2006/bel06236.pdf
(2/09/22)

[22] Diana L. Eck, "Prospects for Pluralism Voice and Vision in the Study of Religion", in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion,* (Oxford University Press, on behalf of the American Academy of Religion, 2007).

[23] A. B. Seligman (editor), *Religious Education and the Challenges of Pluralism,* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2014).

'national belonging'.[24] Charles Taylor also highlights the importance of pluralism and what it may mean for societal cohesion. He proposes that pluralism is perhaps the most significant matter facing science and politics in present times.[25] Such views, if taken seriously, potentially have significant ramifications for how programmes of religious education in Catholic schools are imagined, planned and implemented.

In terms of religious education and how programmes could take into account the diversity of Catholic school enrolment, Didier Pollefeyt, Michael Richards and Jan Bouwens provide insight into how programmes of religious education can be reimagined. Pollefeyt, Richards and Bouwens' suggest that Catholic schooling needs to respond to the increasing secularisation, detraditionalisation and pluralisation within societies[26] and in doing so reshape programmes of religious education in ways which take into account *otherness*.

Furthermore, these authors suggest that it is critical to construct programmes of religious education which enable students to learn about life, about oneself and about the other.[27] In essence, these authors point to addressing the diversity that exists within Catholic schooling in new ways. This Chapter suggests that the manner in which Australian Catholic school leaders go about the process of

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[24]   Seligman, *Religious Education and the Challenges of Pluralism.*

[25]   Charles Taylor, *Dilemmas and Connections: Selected Essays.* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, USA, 2011), p. 24.

[26]   Didier Pollefeyt and Jan Bouwens, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,Research Methodology and Research Results in Catholic Schools in Victoria,* (Australia, Distribution, Global Book Marketing, UK, 2014), p. 20,

[27]   Pollefeyt et al, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,* p. 318.

reviewing the *assumptions* underlying the role of religious education programmes will be key in enabling this curriculum area to respond in contemporary ways to plurality and to the expectations of the Australian Catholic school enrolment base.

5.2 The Schooling Marketplace — The Ability of Catholic Schools to Achieve Their Religious Goals

5.2.1 Introduction: The Relationship Between Religion and Society — Engaging with the Religious and Secular *Other*:

The Australian educational system provides a salient example of how the Catholic tradition has shaped the manner in which Australian schooling has emerged and how Australian secular society continues its engagement with religion in the public sphere. The ongoing engagement between Catholic authorities and government especially when it comes to schooling, demonstrates that a clear line of demarcation cannot be drawn between Church and State. Such a scenario has had, and continues to have implications for both Church as well as for the State. The story which underlies the embedding of Catholic schooling as a significant and influential presence in the Australian schooling marketplace is one of interplay between a religious tradition and Australian secular society.[28]

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[28]   Robert Dixon, "Post-Secularity and Australian Catholics", in *Faith and the Political in the Post-Secular Age,* ed., Anthony Maher, (Coventry Press, Melbourne, 2018), p. 90.

Numerous authors suggest that religion and society share a complicated relationship where religious belief has the power to interact with and to shape societal ethics, laws and social norms.[29] Conversely, the societal context in which a religious tradition resides potentially plays a role in influencing and shaping how a religious tradition continues to develop.[30] Reder and Schmidt highlight this point and suggest that religion remains relevant in present times, playing a role in supporting and influencing public life:

> The social significance of religion is becoming even more clearly apparent from a global perspective, for today religious communities play an important public role in very many regions of the world. They shape the individual practical attitudes of human beings in a variety of cultural ways, they influence cultural life, and they are part of public discourses and political processes. As a result, religions represent an important factor which merits attention when analyzing social developments in many parts of the world.[31]

Dixon also considers this mutually constitutive relationship between the secular and religious in the Australian context. When speaking about the interactions between the Catholic Church and Australian secular society he suggests a profound entanglement between the two:

> The Catholic people and Catholic institutions are interwoven with Australian society, and cannot help but be affected by the secular nature of that society and any post secular trends that emerge from within it. Indeed, they also influence and in some cases help to initiate those trends.[32]

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[29]   John D'Arcy, *After Pluralism: Towards an Interreligious Ethic*, (Munster, Lit Verlag, 2000) p. 16.

[30]   José Cassanova, "Rethinking Secularization: A Global Comparative Perspective*",* in *Essays, The Hedgehog Review,/Spring & Summer 06*, (2006), p. 10.

[31]   Michale Reder and Josef, Schmidt, "Habermas and Religion Starting Point: The Renewed Visibility of Religion"*,* in, *An Awareness of What is Missing, Faith and Reason in a Post-Secular Age,* Habermas, Jurgen, Translated by Ciaran Cronin*,* (Polity Press Cambridge CB2 1UR, UK, 2010), p. 2.

[32]   Robert Dixon, "Post-Secularity and Australian Catholics"*,* in *Faith and the Political in the Post-Secular Age,* ed., Anthony Maher, (Coventry Press, Melbourne, 2018), p. 90.

In exploring the place of religion in secular society, Casanova highlights the expectations of the secularisation theory. He suggests that one interpretation of the secularisation theory argues that the process of modernisation would ultimately lead to the demise of religion within secular societies. However, Casanova in commenting on the relationship which religion and society shares states that, " it is unlikely that either modern authoritarian regimes or modern liberal democratic systems will prove ultimately successful in banishing religion to the private sphere."[33]

In order to understand the problems and possibilities which face Catholic schooling in Australia, secularism as an academic idea does not provide the answer. Instead there is need to take stock of the peculiarities which create tensions for Catholic school leaders in achieving the religious goals of Catholic schooling, while also responding to marketplace realities which, in some circumstances, may appear as problematic or incompatible. While previous Chapters have demonstrated how Australian Catholic Church authorities have shaped the manner in which Australian schooling has developed, this section considers how the particularities of Australian society shape Catholic schooling.

Australian Catholic schools draw an enrolment base from a marketplace which reflects the societal trends of declining religious institutional membership and increasing religious diversity.[34] While Vatican authorities also acknowledge that there

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[33]   Dixon, "Post-Secularity and Australian Catholics", p. 19.

[34]   Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Cultural diversity: Census, Key Statistics*, Reference Period 2021. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/cultural-diversity-census/latest-release
(downloaded 19/09/22)

is a bilateral, cultural transfer between a Catholic school and the culture in which it exists, leaders of Catholic schools face particular challenges in creating what the Vatican posits to be an authentic Catholic school culture.[35] However, a key question is whether the description of a Catholic school culture, as named within Vatican documents, is possible to achieve given the context in which Australian Catholic schools now operate. Moreover, possible or not, when taking into account the likely diverse enrolment profile within Catholic schools, opportunity exists for engagement with '*otherness*', even if that *otherness* happens to be within the diverse cultural traditions that exist within Catholicism.

Marian de Souza points to the diversity that exists within Australian Catholicism and notes the challenges which Australian Catholic school leaders face in addressing such diversity. Speaking about the number of Catholic cultural traditions that existed in Australia in 2011, she suggests that any attempt to simply identify a Catholic population as 'one' community fails to recognise the diversity of belief and practice that exists within Australian Catholicism.

> The census data from 2011, then, provides an insightful picture of the multicultural nature of Australian Catholics today. At one level, these are people identified as a community that is unified by being named Catholic and sharing Catholic beliefs and practices. At another level, however, there is quite significant diversity within this community and, if we examine the countries of origin of members of this broad Catholic community, it is not difficult to understand that there are important cultural and language differences which are bound to impact on their ways of being…

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[35]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith,* (1982), paragraph 20.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html
(downloaded 23/09/22)

> Catholic. These visible differences tend to impact on any efforts to identify them as members of one and the same community.[36]

Effectively, de Souza points to Australian Catholic identity as being culturally diverse. Additionally, she suggests that within the multiplicity of Catholic cultural and religious practices, students from non-Anglo/Celtic cultures have had to learn to exist within Australia's dominant Anglo/Celtic Catholic schooling context.[37] de Souza's comments highlight a challenge for Catholic school leaders, who as well as addressing inter-religious plurality and secular realities, also need to be culturally attuned to the cultural and religious plurality that exists within Catholicism.

> …we are not talking about different religious belief systems but rather, different ways of believing and practicing one belief system. Here there is need to recognise that there are different shades of Catholic identity — the one they have inherited from their parents' religious culture and the one they have learnt to adopt through their experiences in Catholic schools.[38]

While Catholicism presently remains as the dominant Christian religious group in Australia[39] and the dominant enrolment group within Catholic schools, what such statistics actually mean for Australian Catholic schools is opaque in that nothing can be taken for granted about what the term Catholic actually means. Research Project data highlights the significant variance in regards to what the term Catholic means among those who identify as Catholic especially in relation to how individual parents viewed the importance of a school's religious programme.

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[36] Marian de Souza, *Journal for the Study of Religion,* Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 210-233 (24 pages), (Published by Association for the Study of Religion in Southern Africa, 2014), p.218.

[37] de SOUZA, *Journal for the Study of Religion*, p. 212.

[38] de SOUZA, *Journal for the Study of Religion*, p. 228.

[39] de SOUZA, *Journal for the Study of Religion*, p. 228.

Thus, when Vatican authorities state that, "today's societies are characterised by a multicultural and multi-religious composition" and suggest that schools should display, "courageous and innovative fidelity to one's own pedagogical vision, which is expressed in the capacity to bear witness, to know and to dialogue with diversity,"[40] the most obvious question is how? How do Catholic school leaders not only recognise cultural and religious diversity, but more specifically, engage with such diversity though its curriculum and pedagogical practices? Belmont, Cranston and Limerick, point to a delicate balancing act when it comes to the possibility of Australian Catholic schools maintaining their fundamental religious culture within the complexities of a multicultural and pluralist society:

> At present, Catholic schools are especially challenged to maintain their overall character and ethos and at the same time be integrated into a new context that is more appropriate to the multicultural and pluralistic dimensions of modern Australian society.[41]

There is an array of scholarly commentary about engagement with cultural and religious diversity. The question facing Catholic school leaders is how to maintain a Catholic school culture amid increasing enrolment diversity in ways which embrace the pluralism within Catholicism and the pluralism that is external to Catholicism. Hollenbach suggests that the term pluralism by definition means that there is "no

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[40]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, (2022).
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html
(downloaded 19/09/22)

[41]   Angelo Belmonte, Neil Cranston and Brigid Limerick, *Voices of Lay Principals: Promoting a Catholic Character and Culture in Schools in an Era of Change,* Paper prepared for the 2006 International Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) – Adelaide, Australia, (2006), p. Introduction.
https://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2006/bel06236.pdf
(downloaded 20/09/22)

agreement about the meaning of the good life."[42] Yet, even if such a definition is in some ways correct, Australian Federal, State and Territory governments, as well as representatives from all three education sectors agree that all Australian schools are expected to explore with students what the *good life* means in the context of Australian society.[43]

All Australian school leaders have a responsibility to respond to the aspirational goals made in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration[44] (the 2019 revision of the Melbourne Declaration[45]) and the goals set by the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA). Statements made by ACARA and those articulated in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration call on schools to provide a learning programme that provides all students with a range of skills and knowledge which are expected to enable students to develop attitudes that are intended to support the building of a cohesive Australian society:[46]

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[42]   David Hollenbach, *The Global Face of Public Faith, Politics, Human Rights and Christian Ethics,* (Georgetown University Press, Washington D.C, 2003), p. 3.

[43]   The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* suggests that *all* Australian schools are expected to contribute to achieving stated learning goals and to enabling students to appreciate and respect cultural and religious diversity.
http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/
National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf
(downloaded 11/11/22)

[44]   Australian Government, *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration,* Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2019.
https://www.dese.gov.au/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration/resources/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration
(downloaded 25/05/23)

[45]   Australian Government, *The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.*
http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/
National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf
(downloaded 28/10/22)

[46]   Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority, *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum*, p. 14.

> The curriculum will include a strong focus on literacy and numeracy skills. It will also enable students to build social and emotional intelligence, and nurture student wellbeing through health and physical education in particular. The curriculum will support students to relate well to others and foster an understanding of Australian society, citizenship and national values through the study of civics and citizenship.[47]

Needless to say, such statements imply that a rich and diverse curriculum exists for students to engage in a learning programme which can deliver on the aspirational statements made by government and ACARA. For example, the Civics and Citizenship curriculum is named by ACARA as, among other things, fostering an understanding of Australian society,[48] which includes studies about culture, religious diversity and identity.[49] While Catholic schools, like all Australian schools are expected to provide students with access to the Civics and Citizenship curriculum, Catholic schools also have the potential to address matters of religious and cultural diversity throughout their programmes of religious education.

While religious programmes are explored in detail later in this Chapter, for now it is important to note that the NCEC states that this curriculum area is aimed at providing all students with an opportunity to, "engage in an open narrative and dialogue between the richness of the Catholic tradition and their personal experiences and

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[47] Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority, *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum*, p. 14.

[48] Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority, *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum*, p. 14.

[49] Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority, *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum*, p. 14.

contemporary cultural contexts."[50] However, a critical question for all Catholic school

leaders is how to ensure that the cultural and religious diversity that exists both

within Catholicism as well as the diversity which exists in other religious and more

secular traditions is appropriately addressed within a Catholic school setting.

Eck offers a one account of what 'pluralism' might mean in a multicultural society.[51]

She suggests that pluralism is not merely a synonym for diversity. Rather, in Eck's

view, pluralism is defined by a commitment to a significant level of dialogue,

engagement with, and respect for otherness. She writes: "Today, religious diversity is

a given, but pluralism is not a given; it is an achievement".[52] Eck's definition of

pluralism emphasises the importance of being at the table — "with one's

commitments."[53]

The 2022 Vatican Document, *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of*

Dialogue, Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions)[54]

specifically defines the challenges associated with responding to diversity while

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[50]   National Catholic Education Commission, *Framing Paper — Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools,* (2018), p. 11.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/NCEC_Framing_Paper_Religious_Education.pdf
(downloaded 22/08/22)

[51]   Diana L. Eck, "Prospects for Pluralism Voice and Vision in the Study of Religion", in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion,* (Oxford University Press, on behalf of the American Academy of Religion, 2007).

[52]   Eck, "Prospects for Pluralism Voice and Vision in the Study of Religion".

[53]   Eck, "Prospects for Pluralism Voice and Vision in the Study of Religion".

[54]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions),*The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, (2022), paragraph 28.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/
rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html
(downloaded 24/09/22)

maintaining an authentic Catholic identity which is firmly based on Christian Gospel principles.[55] What such a statement actually means for students who are not of the Catholic faith tradition, or any faith tradition, is particularly relevant and at times a complex question to ponder. This point is particularly relevant when considering a topic such as compulsory student attendance at Catholic school religious liturgical services.

How bishops and senior Catholic school System leaders choose to engage with Australia's religious and cultural diversity, especially via a school's religious curriculum and liturgical practices, is particularly relevant when it comes to expectations that are placed on principals, teachers, parents and students who are the recipients of policy decisions. McLaughlin, O'Keefe and O'Keeffe, in speaking about the diversity of enrolment in American Catholic schools suggest that diversity demands an appropriate educational response from Catholic school leaders.[56] Effectively, these authors suggest the plurality which exists within a school's enrolment base, calls for a significant re-evaluation of how best to engage with plurality of belief, as well as a redefining of the religious goals which underpin the mission Catholic schooling.

There is little doubt that at the local level Catholic leaders continue to reflect on how best to respond to the plurality of belief in Australian Catholic schools. However, redefining the religious goals which underpin the mission of Catholic schooling is a

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[55]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School,* paragraph 28.

[56]   Terence McLaughlin, Joseph O'Keefe and Bernadette O'Keeffe, (editors), *The Contemporary Catholic School: Context, Identity, and Diversity,* (The Falmer Press, London, Washington, D.C, 1996), p. 16.

significantly more difficult task. This is particularly so if refining the religious goal calls

for leaders, at the local level, to deviate from what the Vatican states the mission of

Catholic schooling is. At present, any official programme which seek to redefine how

to engage with plurality in Australian Catholic schools is done so in a manner which

is expected to be faithful to Vatican documentation on what constitutes an authentic

Catholic school.

As previously noted, the *Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project* sought to

address the diversity of belief and the changing societal circumstances that impacts

Australian Catholic schools, while responding to the theological goals which underpin

them.[57] The means to accomplish this task is based on the implementation of three

diagnostic instruments designed to provide empirical data regarding the diversity of

belief which exists within a particular school community. As an example of how this

project sought to respond to the changing nature of Catholic school enrolment, while

remaining faithful to the religious mission of Catholic schooling, it is helpful to briefly

explore one of the instruments used in the ECSI Project — the *Post-Critical Belief*

Scale.

This scale is used to identify an individual's response to their personal belief. The

scale is based on four key designated belief styles.

> The Post-Critical Belief Scale is an empirical instrument that was
> developed in the 1990s by the Leuven psychologist of religion
> Dirk Hutsebaut. The questionnaire operationalises the typology…

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[57]   Didier Pollefeyt and Jan Bouwens, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,* Research Methodology and Research, Results in Catholic Schools in Victoria, Australia, (Distribution, Global Book Marketing, UK. 2014), p. 11.

by David M. Wulff on the four different ways that people deal with belief content.[58]

The four positions of the *Post-Critical Belief Scale* are termed, *Literal Belief, External Critique, Relativism* and *Post-Critical Belief.*[59] In describing these four position Pollefeyt and Bouwens highlight that "that these faith styles are ideal-typical, meaning that they are theoretical, extreme positions in a continuum with many in-between positions and mixed forms."[60] In order to gain insight into each of the four typologies, it is helpful to briefly explore how these belief styles are represented.

Literal Belief ,as presented by Pollefeyt and Bouwens, suggests that this typology is typical of a person who, "stresses the possibility and the desirability to present God unmediated, to meet him directly in words and rituals."[61] Additionally, this position is highlighted as being literal when interpreting the Bible. When it comes to how a person's faith can be described, Pollefeyt and Bouwens suggest that "one single, exact, certain and unchangeable answer should be given".[62] They suggest that the positives of this typology relates to its ability to maintain a strong position on the existence of God. On the negative side, they suggest that at its worst, this typology can become rigid and intolerant of other beliefs, or adopt an extremist, fanatical position.[63]

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[58]   Pollefeyt, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,* p. 48

[59]   Pollefeyt, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,* p. 45-48.

[60]   Pollefeyt, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,* p. 45.

[61]   Pollefeyt, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,* p. 45.

[62]   Pollefeyt, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,* p. 45.

[63]   Pollefeyt, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,* p. 45.

A second position described in the *Post-Critical Belief Scale* is that of *External Critique*, or put another way, *Literal Disbelief*.[64] This typology is described as holding a view that "all this 'religiousness' must be nonsense, because the literal interpretation — reasonably speaking — is untenable".[65] People who hold such a position are described as seeing religious belief as a form of 'dependence or weakness'. As with the typology of Literal Belief, *External Critique* is also described as potentially holding views which can lead to an intolerance towards religion and a kind of anti-religious fundamentalism.[66]

A third typology is that of *Relativism*. The concept of *Relativism* is described as having an understanding of religion and religious belief without necessarily having any personal belief in God. Pollefeyt and Bouwens suggest that "relativists do not believe in the existence of a transcendent reality outside or beyond the human being."[67] Additionally, relativists are described as holding a view there is no one way of interpreting belief or meaning.[68] Moreover, Pollefeyt and Bouwens suggest that relativists may maintain an interest in religion, belief and philosophical positions while not making any personal commitment to a particular belief set.

The fourth typology that is presented is that of *Post-Critical Belief.* This typology is described as having "faith in a transcendent God and in a religious interpretation of

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64   Pollefeyt, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,* p. 45.

65   Pollefeyt, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,* p. 45.

66   Pollefeyt, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,* p. 46.

67   Pollefeyt, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,* p. 46.

68   Pollefeyt, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,* p. 47.

reality in which the transcendent is not considered literally present but is represented symbolically".[69] *Post-Critical Belief* holds that faith needs to be continuously reinterpreted in order to reveal "new layers of significance in the symbolic relationship with God".[70] While, Pollefeyt and Bouwens go into a great deal of detail in describing aspects of *Post-Critical Belief,* most importantly, they indicate that this typology is the most appropriate for creating the identity of today's Catholic schools:

> We openly acknowledge that the *Post-Critical Belief* type is the faith style promoted at the *Centre for Academic Teacher Training* of our Faculty of Theology. Based on theological arguments and on empirical research results, we defend that a symbolic style of faith is the most fruitful for the development of the identity of Catholic schools in a pluralising society, today and tomorrow.[71]

However, whether or not such a position enables Australian Catholic school leaders to fully respond to Vatican expectations regarding the mission and identity of Catholic schooling is an important question. Theologian Peter John McGregor questions the ability of the ECSI Project, and, the ability of *Post-Critical Belief* to address the matter of school identity in a manner which is in keeping with the authentic evangelising nature of a Catholic school. When speaking about the Christian narrative McGregor suggests that Pollefeyt and Bouwens make a fundamental mistake.

> The fundamental mistake of recontextual theologians such as Pollefeyt and Boeve is a failure to grasp that our context as Christians is much greater than that of a narrative. Christians do not just believe in and proclaim a narrative. . . They are *in* the story!…

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[69]   Pollefeyt, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,* p. 47.

[70]   Pollefeyt, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,* p. 47.

[71]   Pollefeyt, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,* p. 48.

> They have been baptised *into* Christ, and they invite others to be baptised into the story with them.[72]

However, irrespective of Mc Gregor's 2022 critique of the ECSI Project, Pollefeyt and Bouwens, had previously indicated (in 2014) that the Project received 'ample positive support' from the Vatican Congregation of Catholic Education:

> In March 2014, the ECSIP Project was presented by Prof. Dr. Didier Pollefeyt to the Vatican Congregation of Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions) in Rome, in the presence of the prefect of the congregation, Mgr Zenon Grocholewski. Also present were the governing body of the KU Leuven led by Rector Rik Torfs, as well as Archbishop André-Joseph Léonard of Mechelen-Brussels and Bishop Johan Bonny from Antwerp. The research and monitoring trajectory received ample support.[73]

Additionally, theologian Robyn Horner provides a direct response to the article by McGregor. In doing so she presents a detailed description of the *Post-Critical Belief* scale and for its ongoing relevance and appropriateness for use in Australian Catholic schools.

> By simplistically interpreting ECSI, he [McGregor] undermines the seriousness of the issue it seeks to address: how can Catholic schools remain Catholic in a world where secularization, pluralization, detraditionalization and individualization — not to mention a severe and continuing loss of moral authority on the part of the Church — make it increasingly difficult for students and their teachers to be touched by the Gospel? By demonizing the research and its calls for authentic renewal, Dr McGregor remains blind to the finding that further, frantic efforts at just telling people what they should believe are correlated with increased levels of secularization. It is time to stop shooting the messenger and accept that the research provides a scientific basis for…

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[72] Pete John McGregor, "The Leuven Project: Enhancing Catholic School Identity?", in *Sage Journals*, volume 87, issue 2, 2022.

https://doi.org/10.1177/00211400221078904
(downloaded 29.05/23)

[73] Didier Pollefeyt and Jan Bouwens, *Identity in Dialogue, Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity,* Research Methodology and Research, Results in Catholic Schools in Victoria, Australia, (Distribution, Global Book Marketing, UK. 2014), p. 13.

> understanding the current situation in Catholic schools in Australia
> and beyond, and a genuinely Catholic way forward.[74]

Essentially, in briefly exploring a central aspect of the ECSI Project (*Post-Critical Belief* scale), this thesis seeks to highlight two critical points. First, defining and creating an authentically Catholic school identity continues to be a priority for Catholic school leaders. If one accepts that Australian Catholic schools are operating in a societal context which is characterised by 'secularization, pluralization, detraditionalization and individualization', such a context cannot afford to be dismissed or somehow assumed as irrelevant when it comes to successfully implementing the Vatican's evangelising goals for Australian Catholic schools.

Second, while Vatican documents outline what actually constitutes an 'authentic' Catholic school identity, to some degree, the realities of market forces, particularly in terms of enrolment and workforce market forces, will likely determine what is actually possible when it comes to determining what constitutes an authentic Catholic school in the Australian context. Research Project data highlights that the market forces which impact enrolment in a Catholic school mean that no assumptions can be made about how parents view the religious nature and mission of a Catholic school irrespective of their religious or cultural background.

In conclusion, deciding on how twenty-first century Australian Catholic schooling will develop and how the increasing plurality of enrolment will be accommodated within

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[74]   Robyn Horner, "Enhancing Catholic School Identity: A Response to Peter McGregor", in *Sage Journals,* volume 88, issue 2, 2023.
https://doi.org/10.1177/00211400231160385
(downloaded 29/05/23)

individual school communities is one of the most profound questions facing Catholic school leaders. However, the question of how best to engage with plurality of belief and culture is more than simply a question for Catholic school authorities. When Taylor suggests that pluralism and understanding *otherness* is, "the great challenge of this century both for politics and social science," he highlights that the importance of engaging with 'otherness' calls for ongoing dialogue and action.

Thus, deciding on who will have a seat at the 'decision-making table' when it comes to planning the road forward, will in itself provide some insight as to how pluralism of belief is viewed and accommodated within Australian Catholic schooling. With that said, if Catholic school leaders want to maintain their significant share of the Australian schooling enrolment market, they will need to continue taking account of the demands of a schooling marketplace where parents ultimately decide on the type of schooling that will best suit their child's educational, social, religious and cultural needs. Research Project data suggests that if parental expectations regarding Catholic schooling are not met, parents, be they Catholic, or other than Catholic, are prepared to find alternate schooling options.

5.2.2 <u>Creating a Catholic Pedagogy in the Australian Schooling Marketplace —</u>
<u>Implications for Principals and Teachers</u>:

While Catholic schools are expected to provide an educational programme within a specific religious culture and context, each of Australia's three schooling sectors are fundamentally structured in very similar ways. In effect, Catholic schools in Australia

share more in common with Government and Independent schooling sectors than that which separates them.

Like all Australian schools, Catholic authorities have agreed to base their schools' curriculum offerings on the Australian National Curriculum and to participate in National testing.[75] All of the statutory expectations for Australian schooling, including standards regarding teacher qualifications and professional registration requirements are implemented within Catholic schools. Teacher workload, salary and conditions for employment are negotiated and stated, as is the workload and conditions for the employment of principals in Catholic schools.

When it comes to naming the overriding goals for Australian schooling, all three sectors — Catholic, Independent and Government, collaborated on *The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.* The 2019 revision of the Melbourne Declaration — the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration,* continues to set out both the learning goals and the socio-cultural goals which schools are expected to achieve.[76] Thus, when considering Australia's present-day

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[75]   Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), *Monitoring and Evaluation of the Australian Curriculum*, ACARA Copyright Administration, (ACARA Level 10, 255 Pitt Street Sydney NSW 2000, 2012).
https://www.acara.edu.au/_resources/20141219_ANR_2012_Parts_1-6_and_10.pdf
(downloaded 30/09/22)

[76]   Australian Government, *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration,* Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2019.
https://www.dese.gov.au/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration/resources/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration
(downloaded 25/05/23)

plurality of religion and culture and a schooling marketplace which reflects such

plurality, Catholic schools, like all Australian schools are expected to contribute to

student knowledge of 'otherness' and to assist in shaping a prosperous and cohesive

Australian society.[77]

However, while Catholic schools share much in common with the Independent and

Government schooling sectors, Vatican and local Catholic authorities articulate a

number of specific traits which are intended to establish a specific Catholic school

culture and context that shapes the student learning experience. Catholic authorities

place particular emphases on the importance of principals and teachers in creating a

truly *Catholic* pedagogy where every student, all staff members and members of the

parent community interact in ways which model and inculcate an authentic Catholic

school identity:

> Everyone has the obligation to recognise, respect and bear
> witness to the Catholic identity of the school, officially set out in
> the educational project. This applies to the teaching staff, the non-
> teaching personnel and the pupils and their families. At the time of
> enrolment, both the parents and the student must be made aware
> of the Catholic school's educational project.[78]

The specific religious context of a Catholic school points to every member of the

school community as having a particular role to fulfil in assisting the creation of an

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[77] Australian Government. *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.*
Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, (2008), p. 4/5.
http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/
National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf
(downloaded 30/09/22)

[78] Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic
School for a Culture of Dialogue*, (2022), paragraph 48.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/
rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html
(downloaded 30/09/22)

environment where the Catholic school is experienced by its membership as "an

instrument for integral formation."[79]

In relation to a pedagogic philosophy which underpins the culture of Catholic

schooling, Catholic authorities recognise the importance of a school's specific site

ontology.[80] As such, a local educative community has a responsibility to shape its

specific identity in ways which are informed by the Catholic macro religious agenda

while ensuring that a school's culture reflects its distinctive local nature:

> The educational mission is carried out in a spirit of cooperation
> between various parties — students, parents, teachers, non-
> teaching personnel and the school management — who form the
> educational community.[81]

However, while highlighting the specific role of the entire school community in

developing school culture, Vatican authorities point to the role played by principals as

being critical in shaping how a school's local expression of '*Catholic'* develops.

In relation to a school's site ontology it is important to reiterate that each school is

unique in that it is shaped by its specific local circumstances which impact how the

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[79]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith,* (1982), paragraph 21.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html
(downloaded 28/09/22)

[80]   Site ontology refers to the specific circumstances which influence how a particular school operates in time and place.

[81]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, (2022), paragraph 37.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html
(downloaded 30/09/22)

learning environment and overall school pedagogy manifests.[82] The role of the

principal in shaping a school's site ontological realties is significant when taking into

account that in a Catholic school, principals are given delegated authority to employ

staff, enrol students, to have oversight of the school's religious culture, the teaching

programme and the day-to-day modus operandi of school life. The Vatican states

that, "It is extremely important, then, that the Catholic educator reflect on the

profound relationship that exists between culture and the Church."[83]

In terms of principalship, it is helpful to briefly point to some of the literature which

highlights the role that a principal plays in establishing a school's pedagogic culture.

Cotton suggests that principals perform a key role in developing a successful

school's learning climate and pedagogy:[84]

> The principal's expression of high expectations for students is part
> of the vision that guides high-achieving schools and is a critical
> component in its own right. Researchers from Edmonds to the
> present have consistently found that high-achieving schools
> (including poor and minority schools) are successful in part
> because the principals communicate to everyone in the school
> their expectations of high performance.[85]

Additionally, Cotton also suggests that the active and visible presence of the

principal within the school and more specifically, in classroom settings, plays an

important part in creating a successful learning environment. A key challenge for

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[82]   Peter Grootenboer, Christine Edwards-Groves and Sarojni Choy, (editors), *Practice Theory and Education: Diversity and Contestation*, (Springer, 2017), p. 9.

[83]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith,* (1982), paragraph 20.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html
(downloaded 23/09/22)

[84]   Kathleen Cotton, *Principals and Student Achievement, What the Research Says,* (Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, ACD Publications Alexandria, Virginia, USA, 2003), p. 14.

[85]   Kathleen Cotton, *Principals and Student Achievement,* p. 11.

principals is to manage the vast array of administrative duties in ways which enable them to be "unvaryingly present and approachable in the everyday life of the school."[86]

When speaking about effective leadership, Leo suggests that the term 'leadership' needs to be contextualised.[87] Rather than simply asking 'what is leadership', Leo advises a reframing of the question to ask, "what is leadership for, and who should be leading?"[88] She argues for conceptualising leadership in terms of, "the context in which it acts,"[89] thus emphasising context as a critical factor in any leadership inquiry.[90]

In terms of context, it is helpful to note that when Religious sisters, brothers and priests were in senior leadership positions in Catholic schools, their leadership of a school was clearly linked to the school's religious nature.[91] What may appear as less obvious, is that lay principals are charged with the same religious leadership responsibilities as their former Religious counterparts, albeit within a schooling

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[86]   Kathleen Cotton, *Principals and Student Achievement,* p. 14.

[87]   Elizabeth Leo, *Take Me to Your Leader, Leadership and the Future*, Australian Council for Education Research, The Leadership Challenge - Improving Learning in Schools, Conference 2007, Conference Archive.
http://research.acer.edu.au/research_conference_2007
(downloaded 29/09/22)

[88]   Leo, *Take Me to Your Leader,* p. 8.

[89]   Leo, *Take Me to Your Leader,* p. 8.

[90]   Leo, *Take Me to Your Leader,* p. 8/9.

[91]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Cultural Identity of the Catholic School,* (1997), paragraph 13.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/
rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html
(downloaded 25/09/22)

context which is far more administratively, religiously and culturally complex than in

the past:[92]

> School leaders are more than just managers of an organization.
> They are true educational leaders when they are the first to take
> on this responsibility, which is also an ecclesial and pastoral
> mission rooted in a relationship with the Church's pastors.[93]

Principalship, in the context of any of Australia's schooling sectors, demands

successful engagement in a range of administrative and leadership duties. However,

in the context of a Catholic school, asking the question 'what is leadership for',[94] is

particularly pertinent when taking into account the religious leadership which

principals of Catholic schools are expected to undertake. The leadership of the

principal, in the context of an Australian Catholic school, differs significantly from that

of principals in a secular government school setting and Independent schools, where

principals do not have to deal with an institutional apparatus of the size and

complexity of the Catholic Church.

Effectively, principals in Catholic schools are expected to play a leading role in

promoting a learning environment which is inextricably linked with a Catholic school's

underlying religious goals. In commenting on the extensive responsibilities that

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92   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, (2022), paragraph 48.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html
(downloaded 30/09/22)

93   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, paragraph 48.

94   Elizabeth Leo, *Take Me to Your Leader, Leadership and the Future*, Australian Council for Education Research, The Leadership Challenge - Improving Learning in Schools, Conference 2007, Conference Archive.
http://research.acer.edu.au/research_conference_2007
(downloaded 29/09/22)

principals of Australian Catholic schools undertake, Shane Lavery defines the

importance which is placed on the leadership role of a principal as a leader of faith:

> The role, responsibilities and duties of Catholic school principals
> are extensive. Under the authority of the diocesan bishop, they
> are accountable for every aspect of the Catholic school's ethos,
> life and curriculum. They have the task of leading and developing
> their school as a community of faith. They are responsible for the
> school's effectiveness as a community of evangelisation.[95]

Leadership, by such a definition, implies that the principal ought not only to be a

leader of an educational community, but also, to be a leader of a faith community,[96]

which according to Vatican documents on Catholic schooling, is one and the same

thing.

Vatican authorities maintain that principals are charged with the responsibility of

leading the ongoing evangelisation and spiritual development of their staff, students

and the wider school community.[97] Leo's point about the importance of

'conceptualising leadership within the context in which it operates',[98] is particularly

relevant in such a situation, especially when taking into account that successful

leadership within a Catholic school setting expects the principal to be both pastor

and educator. For example, an Australian Catholic Education Office outlines the

duties of a principal in a way that amplifies the pastoral aspects of the role:

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[95]   Shane Lavery, "The Catholic School Leader: A Transcendent Leader?" in, *Journal of Catholic School Studies,* ACU publishing, Volume 84 / Issue 1 May–June 2012, p. 37.
https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/edu_article/96/
(downloaded 30/08/22)

[96]   Lavery, "The Catholic School Leader", p. 37.

[97]   Lavery, "The Catholic School Leader", p. 37.

[98]   Elizabeth Leo, *Take Me to Your Leader, Leadership and the Future*, Australian Council for Education Research, The Leadership Challenge - Improving Learning in Schools, Conference 2007, Conference Archive.
http://research.acer.edu.au/research_conference_2007
(downloaded 29/09/22)

- Promotes the mission of the Catholic Church and actively engages in its ministry
- Articulates his/her own Catholic faith in a contemporary and accessible way
- Demonstrates a deep appreciation of Catholic beliefs and values
- Promotes parish/school partnership
- Provides leadership in the development of the Religious Education curriculum
- Promotes a vibrant sacramental life
- Provides leadership in prayer/liturgy/retreat programs and other religious celebrations
- Provides leadership in the spiritual formation of staff
- Promotes awareness of, and commitment to, issues of social justice
- Builds on and nurtures the religious culture of the school including, where relevant, the charism of the school's founding community.[99]

The statement made above demonstrate the conviction on the part of Catholic educational authorities that a principal's educational, administrative, industrial and community leadership is expected to be framed by and enacted within a religious context. The principal is responsible for the implementation and maintenance of that context.

How a principal undertakes such responsibilities in ways which elicit the desired outcomes is an important consideration when taking into account the complexities of the schooling marketplace in which Catholic schools exist. Research which specifically explored the faith leadership of principals in the context of Catholic primary schools, highlights the challenges associated with achieving the expectations of Vatican authorities. Neidhart and Lamb suggest that underlying questions need to be raised regarding the concept of Catholic schools being

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[99]   Catholic Education South Australia, *Position Information Document*, Archdiocese of Adelaide and Diocese of Port Pirie. https://www.cesa.catholic.edu.au/__files/f/50644/PIDEssentialCriteria.pdf (downloaded 30/09/22)

understood as a 'faith community' and thus the religious leadership which a principal

is expected to undertake:

> It seems that today there are more questions than answers in
> respect to the faith leadership dimension of the primary principal's
> role. Even the concept of the Catholic school as a faith community
> is contested. Such issues point to the fact that we do not have a
> clear understanding of *what* faith leadership is or *how* to go about
> faith leadership in the context of the Catholic primary school.[100]

Whatever the answer to such questions may be, research and literature

demonstrates that it is hard to negate the critical nature of principalship in setting the

tone and direction of a school.[101] Moreover, it is hard to negate the impact of a

principal in shaping a school's site ontological realities.

However, in terms of how principals balance the expectations of Vatican and more

local Catholic school authorities, within a schooling marketplace where parental

schooling choice shapes school enrolment patterns, the principal has to take into

account both market and religious mandates. Noting similar tensions in the schooling

marketplace in the United Kingdom, Grace suggests that school principals face

particular challenges leading schools within a schooling marketplace culture:

> In short, the market relations of schooling have emerged as the
> dominant preoccupation of the 1980s and 1990s. School
> survival and job survival depend upon being successful in the
> market, just as business survival depends upon a successful
> market relation, Contemporary headteachers [principals] are…

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[100]   Helga Neidhart and Janeen Lamb, "Australian Catholic Schools Today: School Identity and
Leadership Formation", in *Journal of Catholic Education*, Australian Catholic University, Vol. 19, No. 3,
May 2016, p. 11.
https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1101499.pdf
(downloaded 31/08/22)

[101]   Kathleen Cotton, *Principals and Student Achievement, What the Research Says,* Association for
Supervision & Curriculum Development, (ACD Publications Alexandria, Virginia, USA, 2003).

therefore expected to 'market the school', to 'deliver the curriculum. and to 'satisfy the consumer'.[102]

While there are distinct differences between the schooling system of the United Kingdom to that of Australia, Grace's point remains salient here. Australian Catholic schooling also exists between competing realities — a marketplace, where there is substantial diversity of motivation for consumer enrolment choice and the religious expectations which Catholic authorities have for their schools. Whilst the marketplace and Catholicism's religious expectations do not have to be envisioned as always being at opposite ends of an educational spectrum, there is little doubt that principals need to be cognisant of the tensions which can exist between marketplace realities and religious expectations. Belmont, Cranston and Limerick suggest that one of the greatest challenges which face school principals relates to their leadership and management of the context in which Catholic schools operate:

> This research has demonstrated that lay principals play a prime role in determining the quality and the future of Catholic schools. In an era of unprecedented social, economic and ecclesial change, their greatest challenge is preserving and enhancing the school's Catholic character and culture for future generations. It is clear, that as architects and caretakers of Catholic schools, preserving the Catholic character of a school is not something that will happen automatically. A deliberate and conscious approach to integrate the religious and academic purposes in every dimension of the school is what will be required.[103]

Whether it is possible for principals to integrate the religious and academic purposes in every dimension of the school given the diversity and complexities associated with

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[102]   Gerald Grace, *School Leadership - Beyond Education Management, An Essay in Policy Scholarship,* (The Falmer Press, London, Washington, 1995), p. 21.

[103]   Angelo Belmonte, Neil Cranston and Brigid Limerick, "Voices of Lay Principals: Promoting a Catholic Character and Culture in Schools" in *An Era of Change,* (2006). p. Conclusion. https://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2006/bel06236.pdf (downloaded 29/09/22)

enrolment and staffing realities is the question.[104] Furthermore, whether it is possible for Catholic authorities to continue employing principals who recognise, or accept the importance attributed to the role of principalship in being a religious leader is also questionable. Given the increasing secularity of Australian society and the disassociation that many Catholics — teachers, parents and students have when it comes to the formal practice of their tradition, Australian Catholic school leaders will be increasingly challenged to redefine the identity markers which constitute an authentic Australian Catholic school culture.

Research Project data highlighted overwhelmingly that parents believed a principal played a key role in setting the overall culture and standards of the school and as such, was a factor to be considered when making a decision about school enrolment. Moreover, a number of parents indicated that poor leadership by a principal would be a reason to leave a Catholic school. Research Project data pointed to a schooling marketplace where parental schooling choice was influenced by the perceived ability of a school's principal to establish a caring, respectful culture which upheld Christian values and maintained focus on student learning and achievement. Parental commentary would suggest that as long as a principal was able to promote such goals a principal's personal religious affiliation was not a consideration for parents when it came to schooling choice.

Alongside the critical role which a principal plays in creating the culture of a Catholic school, teachers are also recognised as having specific religious responsibilities when it comes to developing and promoting a Catholic school culture and a strong

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[104] Belmonte, et al, "Voices of Lay Principals", p. Conclusion.

learning environment. Vatican documents define the role of teachers as leaders who participate in the ecclesial nature of Catholic schooling and are thus, *"rooted in a relationship with the Church's pastors."*[105] In describing the role of a teacher in a Catholic school in such terms, Vatican authorities point to teachers as also having a key religious leadership role:

> Among all the members of the school community, teachers stand out as having a special responsibility for education. Through their teaching-pedagogical skills, as well as by bearing witness through their lives, they allow the Catholic school to realise its formative project. In a Catholic school, in fact, the service of the teacher is an ecclesiastical munus and office.[106]

In addition to performing the religious role expected of teachers in Catholic schools, they must also undertake the myriad of tasks that are expected of all teachers. Whether those duties be undertaking classroom teaching responsibilities, resolving student behaviour issues, meeting with parents, ensuring that all student learning needs are catered for, teachers are expected to respond effectively and professionally to whatever situation they encounter. Thus, when added to the variety of expectations placed on all teachers and school leaders in any sector, the demand on educators in Catholic schools to support the overall evangelising mission of Catholicism, adds a further degree of complexity.

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[105]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, (2022), paragraph 48. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html (downloaded 30/09/22)

[106]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School*, paragraph 45.

This additional complexity not only relates to what is expected of a teacher, but also what is expected of the principal when it comes to matters of employment. Principals in Catholic schools have delegated responsibility for the employment of all staff — teaching and ancillary. Given the data which confirms that the number of Australians claiming a religious affiliation is declining,[107] as is the number of younger Catholics who have a connection with a local Catholic parish,[108] only employing teachers who are practising Catholics and who have significant knowledge of Catholic traditions and practices is an unrealistic goal. For example, if a principal requires a highly skilled teacher in the areas of mathematics and physics, music or any other curriculum area, employing the best candidate who can elicit outstanding academic results for students may mean bypassing a less skilled Catholic candidate — that is of course, if an employment application is even received from a Catholic candidate.

The NCEC has gathered data which points to the number of teachers in Catholic schools who do not regularly practise their faith tradition, or who have no specific religious beliefs, as being 29 per cent of the total teaching population of Australian Catholic schools.[109] Furthermore, the NCEC states that, "80 per cent of primary

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[107]   The Australian Bureau of Statistics states that the past 50 years has seen an overall decline in religious affiliation. When considering the figures, this overall decline appears to be largely due to the diminishing membership of the dominant cultural religious grouping — Christianity. Other religious groups, when taken as a combined figure have increased over the same period.

[108]   Phillipa Martyr, "It's All in the Numbers", in *The Catholic Weekly*, January 12, 2021.
https://www.catholicweekly.com.au/its-all-in-the-numbers/
(downloaded 30/09/22)

[109]   National Catholic Education Commission, *A Framework for Formation for Mission in a Catholic School,* (2017), p. 11.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/AFramework4FormationMission.pdf
(downloaded 30/09/22)

school teachers and 61 per cent of secondary school teachers identify as

Catholic."[110] However, it must be noted that such figures may vary considerably

within and across individual schools.

The potential challenges associated with such statistics do not relate to teacher

quality or competence in terms of their professional expertise and ability to provide

outstanding learning pedagogy and support for student learning. Rather, it simply

points to the challenges associated with particular site ontological realities, which

relate to the ways in which teachers perceive their professional responsibilities,

which in a Catholic setting is expected to include a significant religious dimension:[111]

> Following the doctrine of the Church, it is therefore necessary for
> the school itself to interpret and establish the necessary criteria
> for the recruitment of teachers. This principle applies to all
> recruitments, including that of administrative personnel. The
> relevant authority, therefore, is required to inform prospective
> recruits of the Catholic identity of the school and its implications,
> as well as of their responsibility to promote that identity. If the
> person being recruited does not comply with the requirements of
> the Catholic school and its belonging to the Church community,
> the school is responsible for taking the necessary steps.
> Dismissal may also be resorted to, taking into account all
> circumstances on a case-by-case basis.[112]

While the above statement highlights the commitment of Vatican school authorities to

protect the religious identity of Catholic schools, it takes no heed of Australian

employment law and the position it would place a principal in when taking a decision

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[110]   NCEC, *A Framework for Formation for Mission,* p. 11.

[111]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, (2022), paragraph 46.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/
rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html
(downloaded 30/09/22)

[112]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School,* paragraph 46.

to dismiss a teacher on such grounds. Stating that, "the life of the Catholic teacher must be marked by the exercise of a personal vocation in the Church, and not simply by the exercise of a profession",[113] can only be considered as an unrealistic expectation in the context of Australia's employment marketplace — a marketplace which also considerably shapes the manifestation of Catholic schools.

In conclusion, this section has considered the specific role which principals and teachers are expected to undertake in relation to their religious leadership within the context of Australian Catholic schooling. It has argued that principals and teachers are expected by Catholic school authorities to play a leading role in developing and establishing an identifiable Catholic culture. In doing so, principals and teachers are expected to provide students, parents and staff with a particular experience of education which includes belonging to a community of faith.[114] Furthermore, this section has pointed out that while all Catholic schools are expected to share in a commonality of traits which identify them as being Catholic, specific site ontologies shape how a school's individual expression of Catholic identity manifests.

In effect, this section has argued that the challenges which principals and teachers face in maintaining what Vatican and local Catholic authorities name as being an authentic Catholic schools culture, do not only emanate from Australia's changing societal circumstance and a marketplace which promotes parental schooling choice.

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[113]   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School,* paragraph 24.

[114]   Helga Neidhart and Janeen Lamb, "Australian Catholic Schools Today: School Identity and Leadership Formation*",* in *Journal of Catholic Education,* Australian Catholic University, Vol. 19, No. 3, May 2016, p. 1.
https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1101499.pdf
(downloaded 30/09/22)

To some degree, the challenges for principals and teachers are compounded by Catholic authorities who maintain the conviction that Catholic schooling, in post-modern Western realities, such as Australia, have the capacity to act successfully as an agent of Catholic evangelisation as described by Vatican and local Catholic authorities.[115]

5.2.3 <u>Religious Education in a Diverse and Plural Schooling Marketplace</u>:

The growing secular and religious plurality of students and teachers within Australian Catholic schools raises questions about how the schooling marketplace impacts the ability of a Catholic school's programme of religious education to elicit its intended results.[116] In a Catholic school, irrespective of belief or background, all students are expected to engage in the study of religious education, (RE) and all teachers to some degree are expected to teach and to support the schools overall religious programme. The NCEC names religious education as being at the heart of Catholic schooling:

> Those [students] whose parents or caregivers entrust them to the Catholic school have the opportunity to engage with a range of formative and educative experiences that support their overall development and growing religious self-understanding and spirituality. In this regard, children and young people benefit from Religious Education, the learning area at the heart of the Catholic school.[117]

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[115]   Neidhart et al, "Australian Catholic Schools Today", p. 1.

[116]   National Catholic Education Commission, *Report, Australian Catholic Education Statistics.*
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/schools/catholic-education-statistics
(downloaded 02/10/22)

[117]   National Catholic Education Commission, *Framing Paper - Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools,* (2018), p. 5.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/NCEC_Framing_Paper_Religious_Education.pdf
(downloaded 02/10/22)

To contextualise the place of religious education in Australian Catholic schools, it is important to note that unlike the Australian National Curriculum which articulates National goals and outcomes associated with each curriculum area, programmes of religious education in Catholic schools can vary from diocese to diocese. Ultimately, a local diocesan bishop authorises the content and programme of a religious education programme.[118] Moreover, programmes of religious education in Australian Catholic schools tend to focus on Christian scripture and Catholic doctrine:

> All diocesan curriculum documents identify Sacred Scripture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church as principal sources for Religious Education. The organising strands of Religious Education curricula across Australia demonstrate a high degree of commonality of content even though the number and titles of strands vary across dioceses. Strands do not stand alone as each area of study is infused with Sacred Scripture and are interrelated in order to give an organic presentation of what the Church believes, celebrates, lives and prays.[119]

In effect, programmes of religious education in Australian Catholic schools are primarily faith based, within which, according to the NCEC, students "consider profound questions within their world, reflecting on 'who I am' and 'how I am' in relation to God, the world and others",[120] in ways which enable a student to, "grasp an appreciation of a Catholic worldview."[121] However, while the goal of religious education, from the perspective of Catholic authorities is clear, Research Project data suggested that parental expectations regarding the importance and relevance of a school's religious education programme varied significantly.[122]

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[118]   NCEC, *Framing Paper,* p. 16.

[119]   NCEC, *Framing Paper*, p. 16.

[120]   NCEC, *Framing Paper,* p. 16.

[121]   NCEC, *Framing Paper,* p. 16.

[122]   Refer to Chapter Two, Religious Education responses from parents.

Many parents indicated that, among other things, they wanted a school's RE programme to inculcate Christian values in ways that reflected a family's values and which created a culture of respect and care for student learning and wellbeing.[123] While some parents wanted a programme of religious education to support their child's faith development and knowledge of Jesus, others simply believed that it was just 'part of the deal' and would not do any harm.[124] Parental commentary highlighted the reality of a marketplace where a programme of religious education was seen as one factor among many which may, or may not, have been considered by parents as essential to a decision to enrol a child in a Catholic school. However, it is important to note that neither was a school's programme of religious education seen as being a reason not to select enrolment in a Catholic school.[125]

The NCEC states that "irrespective of their situations, all students have an entitlement to learning in Religious Education that seeks to develop deep knowledge, understanding and skills".[126] While the NCEC does not use the word 'compulsory' in relation to student participation in religious education lessons, this subject is no less compulsory for students to undertake than subject areas such as English, Mathematics, STEM, History or the Arts. On one hand, it could be argued that if a

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[123]   National Catholic Education Commission, *Framing Paper - Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools,* (2018), p. 16.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/NCEC_Framing_Paper_Religious_Education.pdf
(downloaded 15/08/22)

[124]   NCEC, *Framing Paper*, p. 16.

[125]   Research Project Data — See Chapter Two.

[126]   National Catholic Education Commission, *Framing Paper - Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools,* (2018), p. 6.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/NCEC_Framing_Paper_Religious_Education.pdf
(downloaded 05/10/22)

parent selects a Catholic school for their child's schooling, irrespective of their religious tradition or secular beliefs, they simply have to accept that religious education is compulsory — *after all, it is a Catholic school.* Such a position seems perfectly reasonable considering that Australian parents have other schooling options if they do not want their child in a school which introduces them to Catholic/ Christian values, beliefs, doctrine and practices.

On the other hand, it could also be argued that in welcoming *all* students to be a part of a Catholic school community, bishops and Catholic schooling authorities have specific ecumenical responsibilities. Creating a programme of religious education which significantly addresses the plurality of religious and cultural traditions of *'the Other'* would not be an unreasonable position to adopt.[127] This is especially so in terms of engaging with the diversity of beliefs which exist within Catholic schools and in celebrating all students' religious identities. In doing so, Seligman suggests, that students can be helped to develop a "sense of national belonging and identity."[128]

As a separate study area which is undertaken by all students in Catholic schools, religious education is described as being a scholastic discipline:[129] "a learning area with a formal curriculum for the classroom learning and teaching of religion."[130] With

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[127] The term '*the Other'* used in this context describes the other person in his/her difference from 'me'.

[128] A. B. Seligman (editor), *Religious Education and the Challenges of Pluralism,* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2014), p. 11.

[129] National Catholic Education Commission, *Framing Paper - Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools,* (2018) p. 6.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/NCEC_Framing_Paper_Religious_Education.pdf (downloaded 05/10/22)

[130] NCEC, *Framing Paper,* p. 6.

that said, religious education within a Catholic school setting is based on a curriculum which is designed and framed by Catholic thinking and teaching.[131] In general terms, programmes of religious education in Australia do not tend to explore plurality of religious belief in significant depths across the year levels. Rather, the NCEC indicate programmes of religious education are Catholic in origin and nature:

> Religious Education in Australian Catholic schools develops students' knowledge and understandings of Christianity in the light of Jesus and the Gospel, and its unfolding story and diversity within contemporary Australian and global society. It expands students' spiritual awareness and religious identity, fostering their capacities and skills of discerning, interpreting, thinking critically, seeking truth and making meaning. It challenges and inspires their service to others and engagement in the Church and the world.[132]

While the NCEC insists that religious education in Australian Catholic schools is part of a schools overall scholastic disciplines, it is also framed by a school's liturgical practices. Whether in classrooms settings or at whole school liturgical celebrations, irrespective of religious beliefs, all students are expected to attend and to participate, as fully as possible, in classroom and the school's liturgical celebrations:

> Religious Education interacts with and is reinforced by the religious life of the Catholic school which aims to nurture and enrich the religious and spiritual development of students through prayer, celebration of the liturgy and sacraments, faith formation and social justice activities. Religious Education and the religious life of the Catholic school are expressions of a wider partnership with parents — the primary educators of their children — and with the parish.[133]

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[131] NCEC, *Framing Paper,* p. 7.

[132] NCEC, *Framing Paper,* p. 7.

[133] NCEC, *Framing Paper,* p. 6.

Is religious education and the religious life of a Catholic school an expression of a wider partnership with parents and with a parish?[134] While at some level all Catholic schools share in a partnership with parish communities, the likelihood of a majority of parents and students having a relationship with Catholicism outside of the school environment is decreasing.[135] Given the percentage of students who do not claim a Catholic identity[136] and that those who claim a Catholic identity often having little or no contact with Catholicism outside of the school environment, the term '*partnership*', if referring to a parents relationship with a Catholic school more likely represents an *educational* partnership than a *religious* partnership.[137]

However, the documentation that comes from Vatican and local Australian Catholic school authorities demonstrates that there is a clear expectation that Catholic schools are to remain as an agent of evangelisation[138] and "unapologetically Catholic

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[134] NCEC, *Framing Paper,* p. 6.

[135] NCEC, *Framing Paper,* p. 6.

[136] National Catholic Education Commission, *Report, Australian Catholic Education,* (2022), *Statistics.*
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/schools/catholic-education-statistics
(downloaded 10/10/22)

[137] National Catholic Education Commission, *Framing Paper - Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools,* (2018), p. 6.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/NCEC_Framing_Paper_Religious_Education.pdf
(downloaded 05/10/22)

[138] Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, (2022), paragraph 16.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/
rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html
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in inspiration and in nature."[139] When it comes to how parents view the importance of a Catholic school's religious education programme, the Research Project demonstrated that parents held a variety of viewpoints.

Practising Catholic parental comments tended to affirm statements made by Catholic authorities regarding the importance and purpose of religious education. However, even within this group there was diversity regarding how the religious education programme was perceived. A minority of parents indicated that the religious education programme was disappointing. Comments ranged from, the RE programme *"really lacked an overall connection with faith",* or that, *"too many teachers knew very little about Catholic teaching"*, or that students "*didn't get a chance to learn about the sacraments with their school friends".*

However, more generally, practising Catholic parental comments indicated that the religious education programme was seen as a positive factor in contributing to a child's faith development: "*the RE programme was another reason that I wanted my children to be in a Catholic school",* or, *"I want my boys to be Catholic and so RE is important".* However, for parents who had a faith tradition but did not practise it, and, for parents who had no faith tradition, their responses to questions about the school's religious education programme offered a range of views. For some the RE programme was about reinforcing a climate of care, underpinned by Christian values: *"RE is only relevant in that it presents my children with a 'value base' which*

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[139]   National Catholic Education Commission, *A Framework for Formation for Mission in a Catholic School*, Preface, by Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB, Chair, Bishops' Commission for Catholic Education, (2018), p. Preface.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/AFramework4FormationMission.pdf
(downloaded 05/10/22)

matches our family values." Others did not believe that RE was important but were happy for their child to participate in RE lessons: *"I don't see the RE programme as important but I'm happy for my children to do it."*

When it comes to schooling choice within Australia's schooling marketplace, Research Project data suggests that a Catholic school's religious education curriculum needs to accomodate an array of parental expectations. Walking a middle path which accommodates both the views of traditional practising Catholics alongside parents who do not want RE to be 'over the top', is not always an adequate solution for parents at either end of a philosophical spectrum regarding the purpose of religious education. However, easy or not, it is a path that cannot be avoided when taking into account the diversity of belief which exists within the Australian schooling marketplace and the subsequent diversity of belief which exists within Catholic schools.

Thus, when it comes to how a programme of religious education is envisaged and what theological paradigm could best underpin its development, it is helpful to explore some highly relevant research. Large scale research undertaken by Didier Pollefeyt presents a view of how religious education can be conceptualised and enacted according to four hermeneutic paradigms. Firstly, Pollefeyt and Richards in an article titled: *The Living Art of Religious Education: a Paradigm of Hermeneutics and Dialogue for RE at Faith Schools Today,* suggest that religious education can

exist within a hermeneutic where it is contextualised within the theological concept of exclusivism.[140]

These scholars suggest that, "exclusivism as a theological paradigm posits that truth is binary: every 'hermeneutical' endeavour can only result in a 'right' or 'wrong' interpretation."[141] In religious terms, the concept of exclusivism was particularly evident in pre-Vatican II thinking where, Catholicism held a view that there was no salvation outside of the Church.[142] In simple terms, such a view means that, 'if I am right, (which I am), you are 'wrong'. The authors highlight that a faith based programme of religious education based on the hermeneutic of exclusivism, when implemented in a multi-religious setting, fails to appropriately appreciate the '*other*'.[143]

A second hermeneutic approach to religious education highlighted by Pollefeyt and Richards is 'inclusivism', which they suggest has been the preferred method used in Catholic schooling since the Second Vatican Council. They highlight that 'inclusivism': "identifies the possibility of truth beyond one's own (Catholic) perspective; however, the awareness of such truth is only possible through the action of Christ, even while standing in that truth does not require that one consciously

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140   Didier Pollefeyt and Michael Richards, "The Living Art of Religious Education: A Paradigm of Hermeneutics and Dialogue for RE at Faith Schools Today"*, in British Journal of Religious Education*, Vol. 42, No. 3, 313–324, (2020), p. 315.
http://www.didierpollefeyt.be/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/The-living-art-of-religious-education-a-paradigm-of-hermeneutics-and-dialogue-for-RE-at-faith-schools-today.pdf
(downloaded 12/10/22)

141   Pollefeyt et al, "The Living Art of Religious Education", p. 315.

142   Pollefeyt et al, "The Living Art of Religious Education", p. 315.

143   Pollefeyt et al, "The Living Art of Religious Education", p. 315.

knows Christ".[144] Effectively, religious education programmes based on inclusivism maintain the supremacy of Catholic and Christian teaching while acknowledging the importance of other religious traditions in so far as they fit into a Christian religious world view: "Put differently, 'inclusivism' treats the 'other' not so much as an agent of his or her own search for truth, but only insofar as he or she serves to advance mine (Christian truth)."[145]

Programmes of religious education, in the context of Australian Catholic schools, have reflected the hermeneutic approach of inclusivism. Pollefeyt and Richards propose that inclusivism is problematic in that it can be result in what authors, Pollefeyt and Bouwens, term 'monocorrelation'.[146] Pollefeyt and Bouwens suggest that monocorrelation seeks to link the 'common' experiences of others, and other traditions, with Christian scripture and Catholic doctrine:

> These 'correlations' are typically drawn in a (predictable)
> unidirectional movement from so-called 'universal' experiences
> (that is, presumed commonality without regard for diversity or
> difference) to the Bible and body of church teachings.[147]

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[144]   Pollefeyt et al, "The Living Art of Religious Education", p. 316.

[145]   Pollefeyt et al, "The Living Art of Religious Education", p. 316.

[146]   D. Pollefeyt and J. Bouwens, *Identity in Dialogue: Assessing and Enhancing Catholic School Identity, Research Methodology and Research Results in Catholic Schools in Victoria, Australia,* (Berlin: Lit-Verlag, 2014).

[147]   Didier Pollefeyt and Michael Richards, "The Living Art of Religious Education: A Paradigm of Hermeneutics and Dialogue for RE at Faith Schools Today"*, in British Journal of Religious Education*, Vol. 42, No. 3, 313–324, (2020), p. 315.
http://www.didierpollefeyt.be/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/The-living-art-of-religious-education-a-paradigm-of-hermeneutics-and-dialogue-for-RE-at-faith-schools-today.pdf
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Moreover, the authors suggest that research into the effects of monocorrelation point to students feeling "coerced or manipulated into identifying themselves as Christian",[148] and consequently can become disinterested in religion.

Thirdly, Pollefeyt and Richards propose that religious education can be framed within a paradigm of pluralism. The authors point to this paradigm as suggesting that, "all religions reflect various human interpretations of the same so-called 'ultimate reality', "be it true or untrue".[149] The authors also suggest that programmes of religious education framed within the paradigm of pluralism are generally used in a comparative study of religion.[150]

This approach to religious education is in common use in the UK.[151] In commenting on this approach to religious education Phillip Barnes suggests that a programme was intended to build a sense of religious tolerance and understanding, with an expectation that it would assist in building social cohesion.[152] However, Barnes also suggests that there is insufficient empirical evidence to definitively claim such a correlation:[153] "Forty years after its introduction in Britain we do not know if there is a positive correlation between multi-faith education and respect for others."[154]

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[148] Pollefeyt et al, "The Living Art of Religious Education", p. 315.

[149] Pollefeyt et al, "The Living Art of Religious Education", p.317.

[150] Pollefeyt et al, "The Living Art of Religious Education", p. 317.

[151] Phillip L. Barnes, *Education, Religion and Diversity Developing a New Model of Religious Education,* (Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group. London and NY, 2014).

[152] Barnes, *Education, Religion and Diversity*, p. 19.

[153] Barnes, *Education, Religion and Diversity,* p. 19.

[154] Barnes, *Education, Religion and Diversity*, p. 19.

Fourthly, Pollefeyt and Richards point to religious education which is framed by

particularism which presents almost an opposite view point to that of religious

education programmes based on inclusivism and plurarism: "in particularism each

religion exists as its own unique reality, understandable only from within."[155] Such a

view suggests that the pedagogy for engaging in a programme of religious education

in a Catholic school context, if based on the paradigm of particularism would rely on

what Pollefeyt and Richards suggest as a kind of 'neo-catechesis'.[156] The religious

education curriculum and pedagogy would present Catholic teaching, to both

Catholic and other than Catholic students, in a way which represents the fullness of

Catholic belief.

The authors suggest that the challenges of undertaking a programme of religious

education in this way, effectively, 'drowns out the voice of the other':[157]

> Such a monologic environment therefore not only poses a kind of
> injustice to the religious and philosophical others involved in faith
> schools, but it also unjustly results in a grand missed opportunity
> for students who identity with the school's faith tradition to learn
> with and from others on the questions that lie in front of them
> all.[158]

When taking into account the commentary of parents who took part in the Research

Project, the paradigm of particularism may well create dissonance for the parents

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[155]   Didier Pollefeyt and Michael Richards, "The Living Art of Religious Education: A Paradigm of Hermeneutics and Dialogue for RE at Faith Schools Today"*, in British Journal of Religious Education*, Vol. 42, No. 3, 313–324, (2020), p. 315.
http://www.didierpollefeyt.be/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/The-living-art-of-religious-education-a-paradigm-of-hermeneutics-and-dialogue-for-RE-at-faith-schools-today.pdf
(downloaded 12/10/22)

[156]   Pollefeyt et al, "The Living Art of Religious Education", p. 318.

[157]   Pollefeyt et al, "The Living Art of Religious Education", p. 318.

[158]   Pollefeyt et al, "The Living Art of Religious Education", p. 318.

who consider the major benefit of a religious education programme as assisting in creating a school culture of care and in promoting Christian values.[159]

Considering how programmes of religious education are best envisaged into the future Pollefeyt and Richards suggests a combination of the paradigms of pluralism and particularism. They highlight the importance of learning about religion and the specific language of a religion which is rooted in a particular culture:[160]

> In short, in order to learn about life, others and oneself in a religiously hued world, one must – in a sense – learn a specific language rooted in a specific culture, aware of the greater realities to which it refers and conscious of both its interactions with other linguistic systems as well as its own internal linguistic plurality.[161]

The work undertaken by Pollefeyt, Richards and Bouwens cannot be overlooked when speaking about contemporary programmes of religious education and their importance for engaging students in a motivational and relevant curriculum area. In presenting their analysis of how religious education can be envisaged and classified, this thesis highlights that scholarly research of this nature is vital. This is especially so terms of supporting principals to find balance between the religious goals set by Catholic authorities with parental expectations of a Catholic school's religious education programme.

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[159] 'Over the top', refers to parental statements made in the Research Project which stated that 'religious education was OK as long as *it's not over the top,* Refer Chapter Two.

[160] Didier Pollefeyt and Michael Richards, "The Living Art of Religious Education: A Paradigm of Hermeneutics and Dialogue for RE at Faith Schools Today"*, in British Journal of Religious Education*, Vol. 42, No. 3, 313–324, (2020), p. 315.
http://www.didierpollefeyt.be/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/The-living-art-of-religious-education-a-paradigm-of-hermeneutics-and-dialogue-for-RE-at-faith-schools-today.pdf
(downloaded 12/10/22)

[161] Pollefeyt et al, "The Living Art of Religious Education", p. 318.

More so, while it is crucial to establish a religious education curriculum which is engaging, informative and relevant for all students, it is equally crucial to ensure that there are teachers who have the pedagogical expertise and subject knowledge to teach religious education. With many teachers in Catholic schools having limited, or any background in the Catholic tradition, deciding on who has responsibility for teaching religious education is a decision that requires as much consideration as who teaches science, mathematics, physics or any other curriculum area.

Thus, when considering how programmes of religious education are envisaged, constructed and taught it is important to address the goals of all stakeholders, which includes the parents who elect to enrol a child in a Catholic school setting. The insights gained from the Research Project, which points to how a group of parents viewed the importance of religious education, proves that parents have views about the teaching of religion. Additionally data suggests parental schooling choice could potentially have significant implications for Catholic school enrolment if those who plan and develop the religious education curriculum fail to appreciate the diversity of parental views and expectations.

5.3. Thesis Conclusion — Challenges and Opportunities

Many scholars have explored the theology which drives Vatican directives regarding Catholic schooling and the unquestionable role of Catholic authorities in establishing and developing Australia's extensive system Catholic schools. While accepting that the evolution of Catholic schooling is driven by a particular theology regarding the right of parents to schooling choice, theology alone does not explain the whole story

of how Catholic schooling has developed in Australia. When exploring the factors which have combined to shape Australia's particular iteration of Catholic schooling, this thesis has sought to contextualise its development through multiple lenses.

Catholic schooling needs to be contextualised by considering such things as: historical circumstance; the political power of the Catholic voice; the impact of government funding; the nature of the present day Catholic school workforce, and the increasing secularity, plurality and religious diversity of the Australian population. While suggesting that no one factor tells the whole story about how Australian Catholic schooling has developed, this thesis suggests that one single factor has significant power to shape how present-day Catholic schools continue to develop — Australia's schooling marketplace. This thesis has suggested that the schooling marketplace presents particular challenges for Catholic leaders who are faced with decisions of how best to balance the religious goals of Catholic schooling, as defined by Vatican documents, with present-day parental expectations of Australian schools.

In order to explore how schooling marketplace realities interacts with Catholic schooling, this thesis has presented the data from a Research Project which provides insight into how a particular group of 72 parents, across ten Catholic schools in Adelaide, South Australia viewed Catholic schooling. This data provided a snap-shot as to why this group of parents choose to enrol a child in a Catholic school. Moreover, the Research Project, when viewed alongside other larger projects, which have explored parental enrolment motivations, enables some insight into how the Australia's schooling marketplace may well challenge the ability of

Catholic leaders in Australia to achieve the religious goals set out for schools in post-Vatican II documents.

However, while acknowledging that the *raison d'être* of Catholic schooling remains fundamentally religious in nature, leaders of Australian Catholic schooling have more to do than just address religious goals.[162] Today's leaders of Catholic schools are now partners with their Government and Independent schooling colleagues in the provision of Australian education and have a prime responsibility to provide all students with outstanding educational opportunities. This means that Catholic school leaders have specific responsibilities to ensure *all* students in Catholic schools have access to highly trained teachers who have the knowledge and pedagogic ability and skill to meet Australia's National vision for education.[163]

In relation to the specific factors which have been explored in this thesis and which are posited as shaping the development of Catholic schooling in Australia, in the first instance it is important to reiterate the critical and inextricable relationship which Catholic schools are expected to have with the evangelising mission of Catholicism. In exploring and contrasting the religious and historical contexts which shaped both pre and post-Vatican II Australian Catholic schooling, this thesis has suggested that the Second Vatican Council, in changing aspects of Catholic thinking, teaching and

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[162]   Australian Government .*Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (the Declaration),* Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2019. https://www.dese.gov.au/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration/resources/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration (downloaded 26/05/23)

[163]   Australian Government, *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration.*

practices during a time where societal change in Australia was also significant, had profound implications for how Catholic schooling continued to emerge.

Vatican documents during the latter years of the twentieth century clearly display the struggle of the Catholic hierarchy to come to terms with the changes that were occurring within Catholic schooling across the globe. Whether commenting on the ongoing importance of Religious sisters and brothers in Catholic schools in the face of their declining presence[164] or the perceived difficulties of an increasing laicised workforce,[165] Vatican documents on schools during this timeframe, point to the underlying concerns of religious and societal impact upon Catholic schooling.

This thesis has also suggested that the Australian schooling marketplace, which provides parents who have the financial means to enact their right to schooling choice, has not simply emerged. Rather, schooling choice has been suggested as being constructed by a number of forces which have combined in ways which have established a uniquely funded system of schooling. For example, alongside the changes made to Catholic schooling in the aftermath of Vatican II, where Catholic

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[164]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Cultural Identity of the Catholic School,* (1997).
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html
(downloaded 14/11/22)

[165]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School,* (1977).
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html
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schooling was explicitly named as being open to all,[166] in Australia, the significant government funding that was made available to all Catholic schools enabled the concept of, *'open to all'* to become a possibility for many Australian parents.

There is no doubt that the political campaigns staged by Catholic clerics and laity from the mid 1950s onwards played a significant role in convincing Australian politicians of the benefits of the Catholic vote.[167] However, in the longer term, the provision of government funding to Catholic schools (and other non-government schools), has created a unique system of schooling which sees the free government schooling sector operating alongside the partially, but substantially funded Catholic schooling sector and the Independent schooling sector.

Hence, the ability of Catholic schools to offer parents a low-fee schooling option[168] offers many Australian families access to the schooling marketplace. The NCEC's statement regarding the number of students enrolled in Catholic school demonstrates the impact of the changes made to Catholic school enrolment by the Vatican, in combination with Government funding: "Catholic schools across Australia

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[166]   The Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education,*The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Cultural Identity of the Catholic School,* (1997). https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html (downloaded 14/11/22)

[167]   Kelvin Canavan, "The Quiet Revolution in Catholic Schooling"*, in Australia, Journal of Catholic Education*, 2 (1). http://dx.doi.org/ 10.15365/joce.0201052013, (1998), p. 49. https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1073&context=ce (downloaded 21/10/22)

[168]   Rosemary Cahill and Jan Gray, "Funding and Secondary School Choice in Australia: A Historical Consideration*", in The Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(1), 121-138,(2010). https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks/6334 (downloaded 23/10/22)

are thriving. From humble beginnings 200 years ago, Australia's 1,759 Catholic

schools now educate more than 794,000 or one in five Australian students."[169]

Alongside the political activism of Australian Catholic leaders which assisted in

convincing the government of the benefits of funding Catholic schools, this thesis

has acknowledged the likely impact of neoliberal philosophy. However, while

accepting Campbell, Proctor and Sherington's suggestion that economic, free-

market neoliberal principles contributed to the establishment of the schooling

marketplace,[170] this thesis suggests that the role played by Catholic leaders whether

it be in colonial Australia or in the aftermath of Vatican II, religious engagement in the

public domain also laid the foundations for the schooling marketplace.

Moreover, when Australia's Constitution was developed, the seeds were sown for

religion and religious institutions to continue to play a role in public life.[171] The right of

religious freedom, which is enshrined in the Australian Constitution, has also created

a context from which the diversity of schooling sectors have emerged and from

which the schooling marketplace also operates within. Clause 116 of the Australian

Constitution states:

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[169]   National Catholic Education Commission, *Australian Catholic School Statistics 2022,* p. 1.
https://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/schools/catholic-education-statistics
(downloaded 26/05/23/)

[170]   Craig Campbell, Helen Proctor and Geoffrey Sherington, School Choice: *How Parents Negotiate the New School Market in Australia*, (Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest NSW, 2009), p. 4.

[171]   The Parliamentary Education Office states that the Australian Constitution came into effect on the First of January 1901.
https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/how-parliament-works/the-australian-constitution/australian-constitution/
(downloaded 15/11/22)

> The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth.[172]

While the government does not make any law to establish or impose any religious observance, neither does this Constitutional statement preclude the Australian government from financially supporting religious endeavours which support the overall wellbeing of Australian society, such as the Catholic and Non-Government schooling sectors. Thus, when a Government *Learning and Development Module* points out that, "the Australian education system is distinctive in that it is highly privatised in both the school and higher education sectors compared with the systems in other countries",[173] it is important to recognise that government funding has been a critical factor in assisting the creation of Australia's highly privatised schooling system.

The suggestion that schooling choice is, "part of a wider set of practices and discourses across the Western world and beyond that transform citizens into consumers who make choices",[174] points to a schooling marketplace where parents have significant power to influence how each of Australia's schooling sectors operate

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172   Parliament of Australia, *The Australian Constitution,* Chapter V. The States (s. 106 to 120), Clause 116.
https://www.aph.gov.au/constitution
(downloaded 18/10/22)

173   Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs — Education, *Learning and Development Module,* p. 5.
https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/australian-education-system-foundation.pdf
(downloaded 18/10/22)

174   Craig Campbell, Helen Proctor and Geoffrey Sherington, School Choice: *How Parents Negotiate the New School Market in Australia*, (Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest NSW, 2009), p. 4.

and evolve. This thesis has argued that parental schooling choice, which operates within the context of Australia's schooling marketplace, now impacts how Catholic schools are able to respond to the religious mandates set by Vatican and local authorities.

This proposition is supported by both data from the Research Project and the NCEC. Research Project data points to significant diversity of parental opinion regarding the purpose of Catholic schooling, while NCEC data suggests that a large number of students who attend a Catholic school, have little or no connection with religion outside of the school environment. Data from the Research Project and the NCEC suggests that the effects of *detraditionalisation*[175] are evident within the enrolment population of Australian Catholic schooling. More so, when taking into account the significant number of teachers in Catholic schools who have limited knowledge of or connection with Catholicism, the ability of Australian Catholic schools to achieve the Vatican's vision of what a Catholic school is expected to achieve is challenging, if not impossible.

When Pope Francis suggests that Catholic school leaders have a duty to respect their own identity within the plurality which exists within Catholic schools, as well as having the courage to accept differences, he sets an exceptionally challenging

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[175]   Daniel Fleming and Terence Lovat, "When Encounters Between Religious Worldviews Are a Threat: Applying Triune Ethics Theory"*, in Journal of Moral Education, A Religiously Diverse Landscape*, 43:3, 377-393, DOI: 10.1080/03057240.2014.945397, Published online: 22 Aug 2014, p. 381
 https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2014.945397
(downloaded 29/10/22)

agenda.[176] However, coming to an agreement about what constitutes an authentic Catholic school culture and identity in Australia is no longer simply determined by Catholic leaders. Parents who select Catholic schooling for their child's enrolment also have an exceptionally high stake in ensuring that principals and teachers are able to deliver on providing an educational school setting which nurtures the learning and social development of each and every child.

If Casanova's suggestion that "the relationship which binds the religious and the secular in an inextricable relationship which mutually conditions one another"[177] is correct, Australian Catholic schools will continue to evolve, conditioned by Australia's secular and religiously pluralistic society. In doing so, the Christian principles which inform the culture of Catholic schools may well play a role in shaping student's values, thinking and beliefs and encourage students to "act with moral and ethical integrity"[178] — a goal set by the Australian Government and Catholic educational authorities. Whether Catholic schools are able to achieve the more specific goal of assisting students to develop faith and belief in God is a more challenging question.

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[176]   Pope Francis' statement is taken from his "Address to the Participants in the International Peace Conference", Al-Azhar Conference Centre, Cairo, 28 April 2017, and is quoted in Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions), *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, (2022), paragraph 30.
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/
rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html
(downloaded 19//10/22)

[177]   José Casanova, "Rethinking Secularization: A Global Comparative Perspective," in *Essays, The Hedgehog Review/*Spring & Summer 06, p. 10.
https://s3.amazonaws.com/berkley-center/
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[178]   Australian Government, *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians,* Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, December (2008) p. 9.
http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/
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It is difficult to make conclusive statements about how Australian Catholic schooling has been impacted by the schooling marketplace. To some degree each Catholic school is different, shaped by its own particular site ontological realities. Whether it be how principals view the importance of their role as religious leaders, how teaching staff embrace their stated religious responsibilities, or how families and students view the relevance of religion and religious education, the secularity and diversity of belief within Australian society is reflected in Catholic schools.

Accordingly, Australia's growing plurality of belief alongside a schooling marketplace, which enables, *parents to be consumers who make choices,*[179] will continue to profoundly shape how '*Catholic',* Catholic schools can afford to be. The question for Australian Catholic leaders is how best to respond to the changing circumstances in which Catholic schools now operate, especially in relation to how the religious mandates for Australian Catholic schooling are envisaged within the context of Australia's present day societal realities and market forces.

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[179]   Craig Campbell, Helen Proctor and Geoffrey Sherington, *School Choice: How Parents Negotiate the New School Market in Australia,* (Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest NSW, 2009), p. 4.

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Appendix 1

<u>Participant Information and Consent Form - Principals</u>

![Macquarie University logo]

Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations
Faculty of Arts
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY   NSW   2109
Phone: +61 (02)-9850-7032.
Email: marion.maddox@ mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name:

**Participant Information and Consent Form —
Principals**

Name of Project: *Parental Motivations for Selecting
Enrolment in a Catholic school.*

Dear [ ],

I am writing to seek your permission and assistance to invite
individual parents from your school to participate in a study
regarding their motivations for selecting a Catholic school for
their child's enrolment. The purpose of the study is to invite
participants to speak about why they decided to *investigate*
enrolment in a Catholic school and most importantly, to
discuss the motivations that led them to accept a position in a
Catholic school. Aspects of their decision making that will be
canvassed include topics such as the importance of the
religious nature of the school and their hopes and aspirations
for their child. Interviews with participants will occur in a
one-on-one informal, confidential interview setting and last
for approximately 15-20 minutes.   Key points from the
interview will be documented by hand and I will summarise
these points for participants at the conclusion of our meeting.
No audio or visual device will be used to document the
interview.

The study is being conducted by me — Madeleine Brennan a PhD candidate in the Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations. The project being conducted forms an important element of my research and supports me to meet the requirements for completing my Doctor of Philosophy, under the supervision of: [add name] from the Department of History Politics and International Relations. Email: Phone:.

In terms of the process and confidentiality, any personal information, or school details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. No individual or school will be identified in any publication of the results. The data will be held by me and Professor Marion Maddox. Participation in this study will be on an entirely voluntary basis – it will be made clear that if participants decide to take part in the study, they are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence. In terms of a time line regarding the interviews, I am happy to discuss a time that fits in with your school calendar, with interviews preferably occurring sometime within the next two months.

A confidential summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request. Additionally, the outcomes of the study may be made available for further use in Human Research Ethics Committee-approved projects. I have permission from [ ] who is supportive of my project and has given me authorisation to speak with principals in this diocese and to seek your assistance in undertaking my research. If you are happy for me to conduct my research in your school, I ask that you sign the permission form attached and return it to me via email at: [add email] Alternatively, I am happy to meet with you personally to further discuss any matters regarding my research.

Yours sincerely,

Madeleine Brennan
Participant Information and Consent Form
Page 1 of 2

I, ..., have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked, have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to allow parents from my school, to be invited to participate in this research. I understand that I can withdraw my permission for participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Principal's Name: ....

Principal's Signature: _____Date:

Investigator's Name:...

Investigator's Signature: _____Date:

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix 2

<u>Participant Information and Consent Form - Parents</u>

MACQUARIE
University
SYDNEY-AUSTRALIA

Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations
Faculty of Arts
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY   NSW   2109
Phone: +61 (02)-9850-7032.
Email: marion.maddox@ mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name:

Participant Information and Consent Form —Parents

Name of Project: Parental Motivations for Selecting
Enrolment in a Catholic school.

Dear [ ],

I am writing to invite you to participate in a study regarding the motivations for selecting a Catholic school for a child's/ children's education. The purpose of the study is to invite you and other participants to speak about why you decided to *investigate* enrolment in a Catholic school and most importantly, what led you to accept a position in a Catholic school. I am keen to hear about topics such as the importance of the religious nature of the school, how you believe a Catholic education will enable your hopes and aspirations for your child to be achieved. Interviews with participants will occur in a one-on-one informal, confidential interview setting and last for approximately 15-20 minutes. Key points from the interview will be documented by hand and I will summarise these points for participants at the conclusion of our meeting.   No audio or visual device will be used to document the interview.

The study is being conducted by me - Madeleine Brennan a PhD candidate in the Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations.   The project being conducted forms an important element of my research and supports me to meet the requirements for completing my Doctor of Philosophy, under the supervision of [add name, email and phone number]

In terms of the process and confidentiality, any personal information, or school details gathered in the course of the study are strictly confidential, except as required by law. No individual or school will be identified in any publication of the results and your name will not be recorded in any of the data obtained at your interview.   The data will be held by me and [add name]. Participation in this study will be on an entirely voluntary basis – if you decide to take part in the study and you change your mind, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence. I am liaising with your school principal to arrange a place and time for interviews and if you agree to take part, I will liaise with you to arrange a suitable time.

A confidential summary of the results of the data will be prepared and can be made available to you on request. The outcomes of the study may be made available for further use in Human Research Ethics Committee-approved projects. If you are happy to participate in this research, I ask that you sign the permission form attached and return it to me via email at: [add email]

Yours sincerely,

Madeleine Brennan JP
MPhil.,MEd.,BEd.,GradDipRE.,DipT
MACE

I,.., have read and understand the information above and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in the interview and for my comments to be documented by the researcher. I understand that I can withdraw my permission for participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Name:_____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature_____

Date:

Name:_____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature_____

Date:

-

-

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact [add contacts]

Appendix 3

<u>Research Project — Interview Format:</u>

<u>Parental Motivations for Selecting Enrolment in a Catholic school</u>

Time Frame: 20-30 Minutes per person.

1. <u>Introduction and welcome</u>: Explanation of the purpose and process of the interview; Collection of all relevant permission and signatures; Addressing all required ethics, protocols and organisational elements of the Research Project with the interviewee.

2. <u>Invitation to the Interviewee to Discuss Relevant Aspects of their Background:</u> Religious denomination and frequency of practice; If the interviewee attended a Catholic, Government or Independent school; number of children attending a Catholic school; Any other relevant matters.

3. <u>Process and Methodology:</u> Advising the interviewee of the process of documenting responses - ie note taking of responses; Progressively focusing responses.

4. <u>Summarising:</u> The responses to the interview questions will be summarised and reported back to each participant in order to check for accuracy and to seek any clarification.

5. <u>Final Editing</u>: Inviting the interviewee to make any further statements or points of clarification prior to the conclusion of the interview.

6. <u>Interview conclusion</u>. Thanking the interviewee for their participation.

Appendix 4

<u>Interview Question Template</u>

<u>Research Project</u>

<u>*Parental motivations for selecting enrolment in a Catholic school*</u>

<u>School</u>:

<u>Area:</u>

<u>Interview Number</u>:

• Date:

• Parent Name:

• Religion:

• Number of Children Attending a Catholic School

Introduction/Administration:

Finalising paper work

Highlighting Confidentiality

Time Frame of the Interview

Any Questions

Parental Background and Context — Possible Further Consideration:

Religious context

Schooling background

Family considerations

How many schools and what type of schools did you consider and/or visit

How did you hear about this school

Distance from the school

Previous contact with the school

<u>Question one</u>:

<u>What were the reasons that led you to investigate and ultimately select a Catholic school setting for your child's/children's education?</u>

1. **List of possible Sub-Topics (if not mentioned)**
   - How important was the school's Religious Education programme and the school's liturgical life in terms of your decision making?
   - How important was the school's Academic/learning programme and how did you assess the school's learning programme?
   - Was having a pathway to a Catholic secondary school a motivating factor in terms of your decision making?
   - How important were school fees in terms of your decision making regarding school enrolment choice?

<u>Question Two</u>:

<u>What would be the deal breakers for you - or the things that would cause you to reconsider your present choice of school and seek an alternative educational setting?</u>

1.Possible Sub-Topics if not mentioned:
   - Where would you go if you left a Catholic School?
   - Impact of School Fees on decision making.

<u>Summing Up</u>:

Note-taking Summary.

Final Opportunity to Comment.

Reading through of the interview data for clarification or further comment.

Conclusion:

Thanking the interviewee

Reiteration of the confidential nature of the interview

Appendix 5

<u>Research Project Summary of Data</u>

The Motivations of Parents for Seeking Enrolment in a Catholic

School.

Madeleine Brennan

2022

Research Project Summary of Data

1. <u>Title:</u>
The Motivations of Parents for Seeking Enrolment in a Catholic School.

2. <u>Date Undertaken:</u>
<u>2019-2021</u>

3. <u>Location:</u>
Metropolitan Adelaide, South Australia.

4. <u>Number of Participating Schools:</u>
Ten

5. Number of Participating Interviewees:
Seventy-Two parents who had a child attending a Catholic school.
Five parents who had withdrawn a child from a Catholic school.
Total parents: Seventy-Seven.

6. <u>Aims:</u>
A. Investigate the motivations of parents for considering and accepting enrolment in a Catholic secondary, primary, or reception to year twelve school setting, with particular focus on exploring:
  • Parental religious background;
  • Why families of 'other than Catholic' religious traditions and those of no religious tradition investigated and accepted an enrolment place in a Catholic school;
  • The importance parents place on the school's religious programme and the overall Catholic nature of the school;
  • The importance that parents place on student learning, the school's academic programme and particular subject offerings;
  • The impact and perceptions regarding school fees.
B. Investigate the reasons why parents would consider leaving a Catholic school or have already chosen to leave and have sought an alternate school setting.
C. Ensure that schools selected for participation in the interview process represent a cross-section of metropolitan Catholic school settings, for example:
  • Schools located in a range of socio-economic realities;
  • Diocesan and/or Congregational/Public Juridic Person governed schools.
D. Add to an existing body of knowledge regarding parental motivation for school selection in the Australian educational marketplace.

7. <u>The Research Questions</u>
The Research Project focused on two specific questions which were put to each interviewee:
• What were the key factors which caused you to investigate and ultimately select a Catholic school for your child's education?
• What, if any, would be the deal-breakers that would cause you to reconsider your enrolment decision and to seek an alternative school setting?

8. Definitions of Religious Affiliation

For the purposes of the Research Project, the term religious affiliation was categorised under four possible headings:

• <u>Practising:</u> Parents who identify as Catholic, or other than Catholic and who are formally and actively engaged in practising their stated tradition, according to the norms and expectations of their faith tradition.

• <u>Occasional Practise</u>: Parents who claim a Catholic or other religious identity who participate occasionally in formal religious worship in their faith tradition, i.e. attending services sporadically, which may include attending services on religious holidays, such as Christmas and Easter**.**

• <u>Non-Practising</u>: Parents who identity as Catholic or otherwise, but who articulate that they have no connection or practise with their stated tradition.

• <u>Not Religious:</u> Parents who identity as not having any religious beliefs or connection with a religious organisation.

9. Data Summary - Religious Affiliation:

A. Percentage of Parents Who Have A Child Attending A Participating Catholic School by Religious Identity:

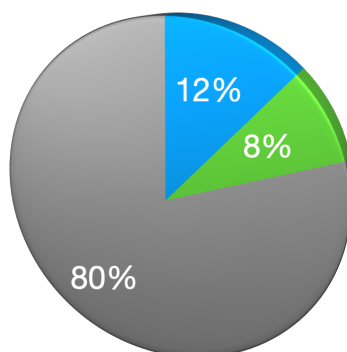| Catholic - Practising	Catholic Occasional Practise	Catholic No Practise	Other than Catholic Practising	Other Than Catholic Occasional Practise	Other than Catholic No Practise	No Religious Tradition	Total
8%	17%	24%	12%	1%	17%	21%	100%

B. Percentage of Catholic to Other Than Catholic Parents:
Catholic 49%; Other Than Catholic 51%

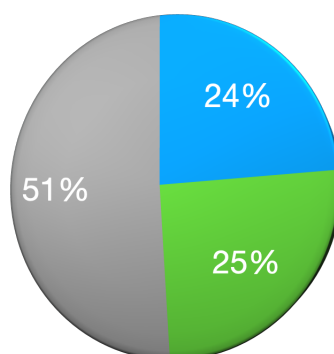● Catholic ● Other than Catholic
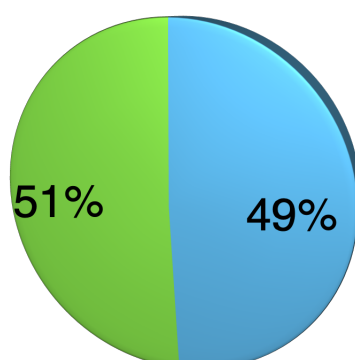
C. Percentage of Practising Catholic and Other Than Catholic Practising combined - 20%

Legend:
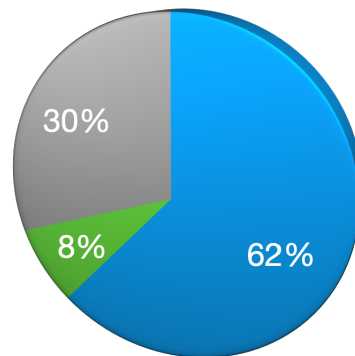- Other Than-Catholic
- Catholic
- Other

12%
8%
80%

D. Percentage of Catholic Practising and Occasional Practise to No Practise Catholic - 25%/24%

Legend:
- Catholic No Practise
- Catholic Practising and Occassional Practise
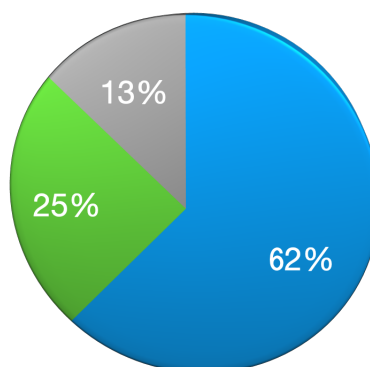- Other

24%
25%
51%

E. Percentage of Catholic practising to No practise No tradition - 8%/61%

- 🔵 No Tradition/No Practise of a Tradition
- 🟢 Catholic Practise
- ⚪ Other

F. Percentage of Catholic Practising and Occasional Practise to Total No Practise 25%/62%

- 🔵 No Practise
- 🟢 Catholic Practising and Occassional Practise
- ⚪ Other

10. Major Responses from Parents - Reasons for Selecting a Catholic School

Reasons to Select A Catholic School	Catholic Parents 49%	Other Than Catholic Parents 30%	No Tradition/No Practise Parents 21%
Attended a Catholic School as a child	71%	14%	13%
Always going to be a Catholic school	34%	5%	0%
Seeking Christian values	49%	50%	2%
The school's religious nature	43%	59%	13%
Sense of Community and welcome	40%	23%	47%
The importance of the academic/learning	63%	68%	33%
Affordable school fees	29%	32%	47%
Favourable impression of the principal	23%	32%	6%
Close to home	29%	9%	20%
Primary a pathway to Catholic secondary	23%	5%	20%
Small school environment	20%	23%	33%
Looked at more than one school and investigated school websites	37%	45%	53%
Partner wanted a Catholic school	9%	23%	27%

11. Examples of Comments From Catholic Parents:

A. Why Choose a Catholic School - Comments Made by Catholic Parents about Catholic Schooling:

- *"The Catholic identity is not so important to me — I just want a professional service that is clearly different to what is being offered in the local state schools."*
- *"Got children baptised so they would get in to a Catholic school."*
- *"The school should help my children to develop into good citizens and to celebrate learning and achievement."*
- *"Wanted my children to have an education where the morals and values matched our families values, very important in a secondary school setting."*
- *"My child would be known personally in a Catholic school environment."*
- *"It was clear that the facilities were impressive and they (school staff) didn't seem as arrogant as I thought that they were going to be."*
- *"I felt a good connection with the principal who clearly had a focus on boys' learning."*
- *"In the end, the principal, the community and the location was right."*
- *"Wanted my child and our family to be known personally which we are."*

- *"I was hoping that a Catholic school would reinforce our family's Catholic values and morals and provide my children with knowledge of the Catholic faith."*
- *"My children would be influenced in a 'good way' in a Catholic school."*
- *"I felt welcomed by the principal, and there was an immediate sense of connection with him and a sense of a very welcoming and warm community."*
- *"When it came to deciding on the Catholic school for our children, location was a key priority."*
- *"Most families would be 'like minded', on 'the same page', when it comes to upholding values of respect, care for each other and would be cared for in a Catholic school."*
- *"I immediately liked the principal, she seemed warm and she got to get some children to show me around the school."*
- *"It's a family tradition."*
- *"This is the best school in the area."*

B. The Importance of The RE Curriculum - Comments from Catholic Parents:
- *"Teachings of the Catholic Church not crucial — Christian Values most important."*
- *"Too many teachers knew very little about Catholic teaching and that at times my children and other practising Catholic children knew more than the teacher and were asked to 'help out' in telling the teacher what the Catholic teaching was on various topics."*
- *"Didn't want the RE programme to be fundamentalist — Bible stories are good."*
- *"Having faith means having mindfulness and an understanding of [child's name] spirituality."*
- *"I want them to know about Religion."*
- *"The religion thing is not big for me."*
- *"The school encourages a sense of mindfulness."*
- *"I'm not opposed to the morals of Catholicism but I want my child to have a broader perspective on life and spirituality."*
- *"One of the things that deterred me from [school name] was that they seemed more conservative — standing to attention, saying Good Morning God Bless you, seemed old fashioned. Here it seems more contemporary and inclusive — celebrating other religions, celebrating difference."*
- *"The RE reminds me a lot of how I was taught when I was at school."*
- *"No so much about RE as about overall well being programmes."*
- *"The RE isn't particularly the reason we chose a Catholic School. It is the value system I was after. I was after Christian values — being nice people doing unto others and all that."*
- *"The Catholic Church needs to re-configure."*
- *"Learning about the Catholic faith was not a factor in my decision to select a Catholic school, but as long as isn't over the top it was ok."*
- *"School celebrations are important, including liturgies. Catholic schools celebrate with children the milestones in their life, like first eucharist, confirmation and it creates a real connection with their home."*
- *"My family will remain the teachers of faith, rather than my children being influenced by teachers who are suppose to teach about the Catholic faith, yet have little or no background in it or love of it."*
- *"RE programme is not a problem, I didn't want a fundamentalist approach."*

- *"The values are very important. The kids need to know why we celebrate Christmas, Easter."*

C. The Importance of The Academic Programme and Student Learning and Achievement — Comments from Catholic Parents:

- *"The more you pay the better or more academic support there is and the more 'good' pressure your child receives."*
- *"I want my children to be able to read confidently, write and have the basics of maths, although a lot of that is done at home."*
- *If I'm paying good money for my children to be here I want and expected a good education."*
- *"I want them to have a great education and that the quality of teaching matters."*
- *"The difference between the pastoral care of students, directly links to the fact that the faith element in Catholic schools provided a more nurturing environment."*
- *"I wanted a school that would support my children in their learning."*
- *"The children's academic progress is important and the school will ensure that my children will get the support they need to be successful."*

D. The Importance of School Fees — Comments from Catholic Parents:

- *"Would meet the fees as long as the children were happy."*
- *"Fees always have to be balanced out with the usual cost of living and lifestyle. Fees are always a bit difficult but education is a priority."*
- *"If you can't afford it, you can't afford it."*
- *"We can afford it and understand that it's user pays."*
- *"At some stage if fees increased it would be a dealbreaker."*
- *"I understood that as long as you pay something generally things would be OK."*
- *"If fees were too high and I couldn't afford it I wouldn't want to pull them out but may have to."*
- *"On a mercenary side there are social and socio-economic challenges in this area. When parents choose to pay fees it's a statement that they care and value education."*

E. General Comments:

"It's difficult to have conversations about the difficult issues like child sexual abuse, the church, gay marriage — you need to keep your opinion yourself."
"This school has a good reputation and my children happy".

12. Examples of Comments From Other than Catholic Parents:

A. Why Choose a Catholic School — Comments Made by Other Than Catholic Parents:

- *"I want the children to know something about faith. The actual faith of Catholicism isn't crucial. It's not the first priority but perhaps handy for learning about the bigger picture of religion."*
- *"Because of the demographics we have chosen a Catholic school. If we lived in a better area with a better demographic we would have considered a public school."*
- *"Catholicism is inclusive and values driven and related to societal and family values."*
- *"As long as it was a faith-filled Christian school it really didn't matter what type."*
- *"Spirituality is evident within the school and it doesn't feel like a religion."*
- *"It's a Christian school — I didn't choose a Catholic school."*
- *"More about choosing 'this school' than a Catholic school."*
- *"Home and school are on the same page."*
- *"Good sense of community."*
- *"I was also looking for a smaller school environment." (a place where her child could have a sense of 'belonging' to a community).*
- *"I liked the fact that the children get taught about morals and that they get to hear about Jesus and develop an understanding of Christian identity and belonging to a community."*
- *"The principal had a lovely manner with the children and he knew them by their names."*
- *"It's a family tradition — my parents sent me to a Catholic school and I want my children to follow in the footsteps of Jesus."*
- *"The guaranteed pathway to a Catholic secondary school was key."*
- *"We want our girls in a school that has an expression of God."*
- *"Locality is a huge factor — I live locally and work locally."*
- *"The one State school that we may have considered we weren't zoned for."*
- *"It felt safe and it was small — the security was excellent."*

B. The Importance of The RE Curriculum — Comments from Other Than Catholic Parents:

- *"Didn't want the RE programme to be over the top or Bible bashing. Rather focused on good morals — helping children to understand right from wrong."*
- *"The actual teachings of the Catholic Church were not a reason for seeking a place at the school — but the RE programme helps to create a culture of care."*
- *"Important that my child knows about our community Christian traditions and where they have come from."*
- *"Don't have strong feelings about RE — the overall school culture is more important."*
- *"Didn't care if there was an RE programme — but are keen for children to be taught values."*
- *"The RE programme mainly focuses on passing on values."*
- *"I see RE as mainly a history lesson — it won't do any harm."*

- *"There are so many non-Catholics and non-practising Catholics that the RE programme is more about values such as caring, looking after each other, making sure that everyone is safe and nurtured."*
- *"The RE programme gives children an understanding of others and their beliefs."*
- *"RE is only relevant in that it presents my children with a value base which matches our family values."*
- *"I want my children to hear about the Bible at school and I want the school to help in introducing my children to Jesus."*
- *"I see the RE as supporting family values and as treating people with respect — we liked the morals and values."*
- *"I wouldn't get this from a State school." "[child] doesn't feel as though she doesn't fit in — she is welcomed with open arms."*
- *"I was hesitant about her learning about Catholicism — it was a bit of an issue for me at the beginning, but not now — in the end it is up to her and she will decide what she believes."*

C. The Importance of The Academic Programme and Student Learning and Achievement — Comments from Other Than Catholic Parents:
- *"I wanted a less 'traditional approach' to learning."*
- *"Learning goes hand in hand with good quality teaching."*
- *"I like the fact that they see every child as a whole and that academics are not pushed and other gifts are acknowledged."*
- *"The academics were important but it wan't the focal point of my decision to enrol my children."*
- *"This school feels like a good fit, especially in terms of its ability to support my children's educational success."*
- *"I didn't believe that a State school would necessarily support him and I believed that the support from Catholic schools would be better."*
- *"The main focus for schooling is academic — we wanted learning to be at the centre and we wanted to have our daughter develop her learning in maths, science — religion is just for a few minutes of the day and otherwise it's just a normal school here."*

D. The Importance of School Fees - Comments from Other Than Catholic Parents:
- *"Fees — the choice between school and an annual family holiday."*
- *"Fees are always a concern but we decided that the fees were affordable at this stage — fees may be more of a concern at secondary."*
- *"If school fees were to increase significantly or circumstances changes in employment then we would reconsider our options."*
- *"Fees would be a deal breaker if they were much higher — it's not just fees, it camps and all of the extras like uniforms."*
- *"Their fees here are a bit higher than other local schools but we made the decision that we can afford it here."*

E. General Comments — Other Than Catholic Parents:

- *"Like that the parish and the school are more separate now. The priest is not integrated into the school."*
- *"It's probably difficult for a Catholic school to realise how different or strange liturgies are when children are not use to them or understand them."*
- *"Schools need to prepare children to be capable, efficient and confident learners that can problem solve and communicate."*
- *This school is a community, we work to understand each other and accept each other's beliefs and ways of life."*

13. Examples of Comments From Parents — No Practise/No Tradition:

A. Why Choose a Catholic School — Comments Made by Other Than Catholic Parents:

- *"My partner wanted our children to attend the school he attended — a family tradition."*
- *"It [the school] just had a really warm family feel and the principal was welcoming and seemed to know everyone."*
- *"It all started because we were zoned for a public school that we hadn't heard good things about."*
- *"Pastoral care was key — the house system here looked really good."*
- *"This particular school had a good community feel when I visited it."*
- *"I felt that being a younger mum I was ignored and looked down on when I went into a public school, I didn't feel welcomed."*
- *"Wanted my son to go somewhere where he would be supported and cared for."*
- *"I was impressed with the kindness of the principal."*
- *"I wanted my children to feel safe and secure and I knew that this was the right place."*
- *"Public schools have changed. Because of the demographics here, we have chosen a Catholic school."*
- *"If we lived in a different area with a better demographic we would have considered a public school."*

B. The Importance of The RE Curriculum — Comments from Other Than Catholic Parents:

- *"I want the children to know something about faith. The actual faith of Catholicism isn't crucial — It's not the first priority but perhaps handy for learning about the bigger picture of religion."*
- *"I didn't want the religious programme to be too "over the top' or 'Bible Bashing'."*
- *"The Catholic side of the school' is more focused on being a good person."*
- *"We aren't religious and didn't really care if there was an RE programme, but were keen to ensure that the children were taught values."*
- *"I see RE lessons as more of history lesson, rather than religious instruction and I'm happy with this approach."*
- *"It's up to the children to make decisions about their religious beliefs."*
- *"I've never felt that RE has been pushed on me — I respect it and understand that you have to do it, but don't feel that its being pushed on my children."*

- *"It's teaching them something that I can't teach them."*
- *"It's important for my children to develop a big picture in relation social justice and their responsibility towards others".*
- *"I didn't mind the idea that my kids would take part in RE. They need to have something in their life and they need to hear about the Jesus thing".*
- *Religion is more taught about being in a community, being a good person ,having respect for each other."*

C. The Importance of The Academic Programme and Student Learning and Achievement — Comments from Other Than Catholic Parents:

- *"The children in the JP classes appeared to be engaged and that there was a very nurturing environment."*
- *"Academics were of less important than the pastoral care."*
- *"The lessons and subjects that they had on offer seemed to cover all bases."*
- *"I felt my child's learning wasn't being supported I would look elsewhere".*
- *"Academics are important — it's a part of a whole picture and not the main focus of the school."*
- *"It [academics] was the reason that we selected this school in the first place."*
- *"The academic environment was important — one of the reasons that we are here."*

D. The Importance of School Fees — Comments from Other Than Catholic Parents:

- *"If fees became too unmanageable we would reconsider a public option."*
- *"I didn't want money to be the reason that my kids would miss out on a good education."*
- *"Even state schools have fees, and they are not too much under the fee level of Catholic schools."*
- *"It was so clear that this is where I wanted to be, paying fees were a priority."*
- *"Fees could be an issue especially in high school."*
- *"I had to consider what impact paying school fees would have on the family."*
- *"It was a big jump from public fees to a Catholic school, but having them in a Catholic schools made me feel safer."*
- *"Fees in secondary school may become an issue — but we would have to make it work."*

E. General Comments — Other Than Catholic Parents:

- *"Private school wasn't what I thought that it was going to be. I thought that the religion side would be pushed on me - but that's not the case. I have tested the waters and I'm really happy that my kids are here."*

14. Common Themes: Reasons For Removing a Child From a Catholic School

Issue	Catholic Parents 52%	Other Than Catholic Parents 29%	Parents Non Religious 19%	Total % of all parents 100%
Unresolved Bullying/ Social Issues	65%	23%	67%	56%
Poor Academic Results & Support	35%	43%	73%	45%
Unhappy Child	28%	22%	20%	25%
Unreasonable Fee Rise	18%	22%	47%	25%
Teaching Quality	30%	26%	7%	24%
No Value for Money	40%	0%	0%	21%
Not Catholic Enough	33%	0%	0%	17%
Poor Principal	15%	4%	7%	10%
Poor Communication	3%	9%	33%	10%
Child Abuse	13%	0%	0%	6%
Too Catholic	3%	4%	20%	6%
No Follow on to Secondary	10%	0%	7%	6%
Poor Subject Offerings	3%	4%	7%	4%
Discrimination Racial/Religious	0%	9%	0%	3%

A. Deal Breakers- Reasons Why a Parent Would Withdraw a Child's Enrolment — Catholic Parents:

- "If the fees were too high and the educational experience wasn't great, or [child] was unhappy, I'd look for another setting and wouldn't waste money."
- "If the pedal comes off, or if teachers start discussing their private life with the children, or if there are negative rumours about a teacher circulating around the school, I would have serious concerns."
- "The most likely reason to leave would be the lack of authentic teaching of the Catholic faith."
- "If my children were being bullied and it wasn't being dealt with or couldn't be resolved to my satisfaction."
- "If their marks were poor and they weren't getting help to improve I'd look elsewhere."

- *"If they weren't able to respond to my child as an individual and if my child didn't feel safe that would be a dealbreaker."*
- *"Academic outcomes are important and at present the school isn't suiting my children's learning — books weren't displaying the content of work that I expected from a Catholic school."*
- *"When the principal moved the nature of the school changed, the community changed."*
- *"If the culture of the school didn't meet up with my family's values, that would be a dealbreaker."*
- *"If the principal didn't set and achieve a high standard in all aspects of school life, that would be a definite dealbreaker."*
- *"If my child's pathway post school wasn't catered for I'd consider a school which offered the needed subjects — which could include a state school."*

B. Deal Breakers — Reasons Why a Parent Would Withdraw a Child's Enrolment — Comments — Other Than Catholic Parents:

- *"Would leave if the balance of the Catholic component was more extreme — would reconsider public education."*
- *"If bullying was occurring and it was not being addressed in a way which resolved it we would look for another school."*
- *"If there was pressure placed on my children, it they didn't explore other religions or expected my child to become Catholic we would leave."*
- *"The first priority is the learning pedagogy needs to suit my child, the secondly is that support is available wherever its needed, ie social needs, friendships and learning needs — if these things were missing I would certainly look at other school options."*
- *"If my child didn't want to go to school and was unhappy, that would be a deal breaker."*
- *"If I felt that the school wasn't 'value for money' I'd look elsewhere — probably at one of the good state schools."*
- *"The cost of school fees would be the major dealbreaker."*
- *"If there was a problem with one of the teachers that couldn't be resolved and it was effecting my child, then that would be a definite dealbreaker."*
- *"If the school became too involved in the parish or rather that the parish priest became too involved in the school, that could be a dealbreaker."*
- *"If there wasn't a good option for transition to high school or if they were unhappy with their present location this would be a dealbreaker."*
- *"If results started to fall or if a child isn't getting the subjects that they need to get the pathway that they want after school that would definitely lead to a school change."*
- *"If my daughter wasn't having yearly learning growth and I was feeling that I wasn't being supported by the school — if the teachers weren't doing what they said they would do —working with me to support my child, I'd leave."*

C. **Deal Breakers — Reasons Why a Parent Would Withdraw a Child's Enrolment — Comments from Parents — No Tradition or Practise:**

- *"If I wasn't heard, if I came to the school with concerns or issues."*
- *"If there were behavioural issues that hadn't been addressed satisfactorily or if the educational programme is not adapted to suit my child's needs and present capabilities."*
- *"If my children started to experience problems socially, or with a teacher and if those problems weren't addressed I'd go elsewhere."*
- *"If the discipline became problematic and the children are in charge rather than the teachers that would be a reason I'd look at other schools."*
- *"If there was religious pressure placed on my children, if they didn't explore other religions or expected my children to become Catholic we would leave."*
- *"If my children were bullied and it was being dealt with in a way which solves the problem I'd leave."*
- *"If my children weren't being heard, if something serious couldn't be resolved (it would have to be serious) I would probably find another school."*
- *"Leaving wouldn't come lightly."*
- *"Probably the kids happiness and their mental state at school — if they are happy and not anxious — welfare and happiness are key."*

15. PARENTS WHO HAVE LEFT A CATHOLIC SCHOOL - REASONS FOR LEAVING

In addition to the comments make by the 72 parents who had a child or children attending a Catholic school, five parents were interviewed who had taken the decision to withdraw a child, or who had made a decision to home school based on their perception of Catholic schooling and other schooling options. The following comments come from Catholic parents who do not presently have a child in a Catholic school setting.

- *"Education is about standards — I'm more interested in schools that name literacy numeracy and how they measure and support the basic skills — looking at the 'learning loop' and feedback to students and parents."*
- *"With any future enrolment I'll be considering what's available to my child in terms of interventions if they are having trouble and how that is communicated to my child and to me."*
- *"In the school that I left, compassion wasn't turned into action."*
- *"There is a three pronged reason that left me in a place of disillusionment:*
    - *lack of pastoral support;*
    - *lack of academic rigour and communication;*
    - *lack of sound /well grounded decision making — students didn't seem to come first."*
- *"At their new school they come home and speak about the religious aspect of their school. The religion at the new school permeates the entire day."*
- *"Our decision to move was the most difficult thing I have done, but has been the best thing that I have done."*

- *"The school the children attend is a Christian school where it's in every lesson — they practise what they preach. They show the kids how to act — not just tell them."*
- *"I would 100% recommend the school I am in now — it's little, welcoming, problems are addressed with consequences — sometimes quite harsh consequences — which are explained. Lots of positives, students are treated with respect even when they do the wrong thing."*
- *"Teachers of religious education or religious studies may not be practising or even believe in the Catholic faith tradition."*
- *"How can a non-practising' or even non-Catholic teacher educate students in faith?"*

15 A full summary of the Research Project can be accessed in Chapter Two.

Appendix 6 Ethics Approval

Arts Subcommittee
Macquarie University, North Ryde
NSW 2109, Australia

MACQUARIE
University

01/02/2019

Dear Professor Maddox,

Reference No: 5201938286944
Project ID: 3828
Title: Parental motivation for enrolment in a Catholic school.

Thank you for submitting the above application for ethical review. The Arts Subcommittee has considered your application.

I am pleased to advise that ethical approval has been granted for this project to be conducted by Professor Marion Maddox, and other personnel: Ms Madeleine Brennan.

This research meets the requirements set out in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007, (updated July 2018).

Standard Conditions of Approval:

1. Continuing compliance with the requirements of the National Statement, available from the following website:
   https://nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2007-updated-2018.

2. This approval is valid for five (5) years, subject to the submission of annual reports. Please submit your reports on the anniversary of the approval for this protocol. You will be sent an automatic reminder email one week from the due date to remind you of your reporting responsibilities.

3. All adverse events, including unforeseen events, which might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project, must be reported to the subcommittee within 72 hours.

4. All proposed changes to the project and associated documents must be submitted to the subcommittee for review and approval before implementation. Changes can be made via the Human Research Ethics Management System.

The HREC Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedures are available from the Research Services website:
https://www.mq.edu.au/research/ethics-integrity-and-policies/ethics/human-ethics.

It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to retain a copy of all documentation related to this project and to forward a copy of this approval letter to all personnel listed on the project.

Should you have any queries regarding your project, please contact the Faculty Ethics Officer.

The Arts Subcommittee wishes you every success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Mianna Lotz

Chair, Arts Subcommittee

The Faculty Ethics Subcommittees at Macquarie University operate in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007, (updated July 2018), [Section 5.2.22].