Australian Schools:

Social Purposes, Social Justice and Social Cohesion

Vanlyn Jon Davy

B.A., Teachers' Certificate

The conception of education as a social process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society we have in mind. (Dewey, 1915/1966)

A thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Newcastle

May 2008

Statement of Originality

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Signed: ………………………………………………... Date: …………………………

Acknowledgement of Authorship

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this Thesis is the result of original research, the greater part of which was completed subsequent to admission to candidature for the degree.

Signed: ………………………………………………... Date: …………………………

Acknowledgements

My late wife, Jennifer Davy, made this three-year effort possible. She provided for all my emotional requirements—most of all, endless affection, a purity of love, endless encouragement and when life was difficult, an elasticity of approach designed to meet the needs of all her family members. Despite her illness, generated by unresolved childhood injustices, Jennifer provided for her loved ones from a bottomless reservoir of goodwill and good humour. She was my soul mate, my very best friend, a source of endless hope and joy. Jennifer was a supremely intelligent woman who resisted her illness with great courage and determination. At the time of her death, two weeks before the examination of this thesis was completed, Jennifer was "high" with new plans for a new life—a mix of University study, TAFE teaching, volunteer charity work. She was heavily and excitedly engaged in re-union with her mates from Sydney Girls High School, extending her circle of friends, enriching the quality of our marriage. She had a clear view of our future…full of excitement, substance, deep and trusting love. She was confident she had rid herself of the major causes of her depression. She was alive, self-actuating, self-confident—a joy to watch, and to tumble along with. Without this core of my life this thesis would not have happened. Now she is gone forever—a brutal reality which I am now struggling to understand. I also had two excellent supervisors—Professor Jenny Gore who provided the most consistently helpful supervision and timely encouragement when morale was flagging, and Associate Professor James Ladwig. I am indebted to both.

There are others, of course, who helped me get to the start line. I should acknowledge, for example, my step-son Andrew who is already showing strong empathy with those who lead largely disempowered lives and who speaks with a little pride of my efforts despite his own current disdain for intellectual pain; my Mother for her insistence on intellectual honesty and her general political settings; Dr Loretta Giorcelli and Arthur Townsend for seeing value in my thinking when the public schooling system didn't; Vivienne White and John Hughes—for many years my closest allies, friends and tolerant listeners to ideas from a man with too-little leadership skill to do much about them.

One's ideas are not always magic revelations, but rather the product of many and various experiences and contemplation. Some of the key thoughts can be traced back to experiences which can be acknowledged:

   a) *schools serving low SES, Aboriginal and migrant kids*: teachers who gathered in the inner city pubs of Sydney in the 1960s and 1970s to debate, prepare lesson

3

ideas, and prepare to battle ignorant and unresponsive bureaucracies for the most basic of resources, and freedom from the repressive Inspectorate; the parents and teachers of the Inner City Education Alliance (ICEA) who drew attention to what the Karmel Report later described as "a national disgrace," the state of schooling for low SES kids; the NSWTF which, following internal resistance, adopted vanguard differential staffing policies for low SES, Aboriginal and migrant students; the seven women and one male Federation Representatives who led valiant and predominantly female school staffs in the inner-city and Warilla High into unprecedented "indefinite" strike action until differential staffing breakthroughs were achieved;

b) *workers in schools:* Joan Kirner who pointed out to me many years ago that kids had no union and relied on teachers and parent organisations to represent their interests;

c) *seeing the bigger picture*: Jean Blackburn and the Interim Committee to the Australian Schools Commission who listened to the voice of Sydney and Melbourne's inner-city kids and teachers and provided a chapter full of strategic insights for low SES students nationally, insights which, in my view, remain largely unresearched and unimplemented;

d) *student boredom*: my two children David and Emma, and the students of 1981 at Balmain High School who provided the data which first raised understandings for me of widespread student boredom in schools ;

e) e*quality of outcomes*: Joan Brown, Joan Kirner and a gaggle of leaders from the public schools' parent organisations who repeatedly explained the qualitative difference between "equality of opportunity" and "equality of outcomes";

f) *social cohesion*: the Sikh leader from Woolgoolga who explained to ABCTV that the reason there was no social unrest involving Sikhs and others in his heavily Sikh-populated city of Woolgoolga was because everyone went to school together from Kindergarten to Year 12—how could they not get on together? he asked; And a huge Lebanese boy named Mohammed from an inner-city High School who only stopped screaming his intention to return to Lebanon to join an army to kill Christians because he hated all Christians when his girlfriend pointed out to him, quite angrily, that she was a Christian—a situation which stopped the killer mid-flight, led him to explain he didn't want to kill *all* Christians just those that he didn't know, and led to a series of lessons addressing religious acceptance, religious rights, social responsibilities and social harmony; and

g) *the politics of curriculum:* Garth Boomer who enjoyed wrestling with the complexities looking for solutions, whom I miss very much, and who was

responsible for that brief moment on the Commonwealth Schools Commission when we debated and reported on matters curriculum, including the emerging idea of an "essential" curriculum: *In the National Interest.*

Dedication

To the educated and democratic empowerment of disempowered
people, and to the educated and democratic repair of our pillaged
and polluted planet.

Contents

Figures

Tables

Abstract

In this dissertation, the author, Van Davy, makes a case for a cohesive system of schools which can serve the public—both the national interest and individual interests—while directly addressing the current system's major failures to engender schooling success for low SES and Aboriginal students.

Davy's analysis ranges across a number of disciplines, fusing together a number of viewpoints: historical, political theory, educational performance, and educational theory. It searches Australia's schooling outcomes, identifies low SES and Aboriginal outcomes as major areas of failure, and challenges a number of widely accepted schooling practices. In the process, Davy discovers OECD and ACER data, but little official interest or analysis, concerning widespread boredom amongst Australia's students. He argues that, in respect of both low SES students and student boredom, system responsibilities such as the nature of Australia's curriculum, could be just as implicated as concerns for "teacher quality."

Davy's interest extends beyond the purely educational. He examines the purposes that public and non-public school authorities articulate, as well as reasons parents give for enrolling their children in schools. From this research Davy identifies several issues and suggests that very considerable "choice" in schooling could be found in a different curriculum paradigm, and that both public and non-public schools are deficient when measured against widely-accepted concerns for religious freedom, social cohesion, and fundamental democratic principles.

For Davy, a major political issue confronting Australia is the national imperative of "social cohesion." He searches Australia's schooling history for evidence of any social agreement around the social purposes of schooling, including more recent attempts to formulate "essential" and "new basics" and "national" curriculum. He concludes that while many educators, and the OECD, refer to the need for a pre-requisite set of social purposes that outline a preferred future society, the politics of schooling has not permitted this to eventuate and, given the absence of this management fundamental, "it is not surprising that schooling systems are shaped by internal logics (ideologies, religions, personalities, internal politics, quest for advantage and/or privilege) rather than wider concerns for the shape of the globe's and nation's future, and the advancement of the twins: Common Good and Individual Good."

With these three problems laid bare—low SES and Aboriginal outcomes, student boredom, and social cohesion—Davy addresses all three simultaneously.

He draws confidence from contemporary political theorists proposing political processes which engage the public in a "deliberative democracy." He constructs a surrogate "foundation of agreed principles" which, he deduces, the processes of deliberative democracy might lead the Australian people to construct, then outlines a step-by-step means by which these principles can generate an essential curriculum for all Australian children from the earliest to the latest years of schooling. Paralleling this "essential" stream Davy proposes another, elective stream, providing a full range of choice through subject disciplines and sectarian studies. With the dual-stream curriculum paradigm addressing major educational weaknesses apparent in the current system, providing unprecedented subject choice and religious freedom through all grades, while attending to socially-agreed themes concerning the national and Common Good, a new political context is anticipated.

This new, less adversarial and more trusting political context is seen to be fertile ground for the replacement of Australia's fractured schooling system with a cohesive schooling system for the Australian public—an Australian schooling system—to be managed nationally.

Section One: How Effective are Public Schools?

Preface

A few of the comments in this dissertation are better understood with a little knowledge of my background and experience. In 1963, at the age of 18, I was elected Vice President of Wagga Wagga Teachers' College branch of the Trainee Teachers' Association, an industrial and professional body established by the NSW Teachers' Federation (NSWTF) for trainee teachers. Following 11 years being a college student, teacher-in-charge of a quintessentially rural one-teacher school, a staff member of an inner-city school, and 3 years as a "mature-age" university student of Education and Political Science (Hons), I was elected in 1973 as Vice President and in 1975 Deputy President of the NSWTF. In 1977 I was the first elected President of the Australian Teachers Federation (now the Australian Education Union). I held senior positions within the teacher union movement from 1973 to 1990; I experienced considerable national and international engagement and discourse across schooling levels from pre-school to tertiary and TAFE (Technical and Further Education), including membership of the Council of the Curriculum Development Centre, the Commonwealth Schools Commission, the Trade Union Advisory Council (TUAC) to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as chairing the Australian Council of Trade Union's (ACTU) Education Committee.

My engagement with teacher unions was not consistent with many people's views of unions, including many within the teacher unions. With school students unrepresented by a union and heavily reliant on the concern, responsibility and goodwill of the adult population, it was my concern that our teacher union interest in salaries and conditions were not antipathetic to the interests of students. As a consequence, my interest was strongly weighted towards equity policies which, unfortunately, differed from a prevailing union view that all union members were equal and should benefit equally from union membership—a theme which works against some equity groups and their need for differential allocations of resources, and culturally sensitive and politically attuned appointment protocols for teachers and executives. In short, I was and remain so, strongly supportive of the democratic role unions played, and play, in Australian history while being critical of their limitations and potential biases against non-members such as students. This is not a universally popular stance within the union.

From 1983 to 1988 I was a member of the Commonwealth Schools Commission fulfilling an ambition to be part of the great equity thinking sponsored by Jean Blackburn and those who comprised the Interim Committee to the Australian Schools Commission (1973). I was hugely disappointed to find myself embroiled, and most of the Commission's time absorbed in the 1980s with the politics of public/private school funding to the huge detriment of matters requiring deep and meaningful research including matters of schooling's social purpose(s), curriculum consequences, and means by which persistently disadvantaged equity groups might have their particular issues identified and addressed so that schooling outcomes might have intrinsic value to them. Like my experience within the NSWTF my "ride" with the Commonwealth Schools Commission was bumpy and resulted in a Minority Report written by me, to the Commission's 1984 Report: *Funding Policies for Australia's Schools*.

From 1983 to 1986 I chaired the ACTU Education Committee and, despite the intransigence of my own (leftish) union and the Catholic-based (rightish) unions we were able to sculpt an agreed policy which subsequently became ACTU policy, was incorporated into the ACTU—ALP Prices and Incomes Accord, and became policy at the ALP National Conference before being abandoned by both the Hawke Labor Government and the Commonwealth Schools Commission.

In 1990 I was appointed as Chief Education Officer—Targeted Programs within the NSW Department of Education's bureaucracy. The position was often called a senior officer's position but in reality it was a middle-management position separate from the decision-making forums of the Executive Service which existed at a level above. As a consequence, I found it difficult to get much of my/our research and proposed policies and strategies discussed. Many of my formal submissions were met with silence. Few were refused, but none were met with argued opposition. None were debated, at least not with me or my Unit. Where real policy changes were being advocated by my Unit, particularly for students of low socio-economic status (SES), the formal submissions were commonly held and never returned, with or without comment, by the Department's senior officers. This was true of many initiatives, the most disappointing being a first draft of a comprehensive "plan for the education of students from low socio-economic communities" which the Director General asked me to produce (within a month) at a formal meeting with the parent organisations representing public schools in NSW. To support my argument about the importance (to DET outcomes as well as to low SES student life-chances) and urgency of the draft plan I had produced, with the assistance of another Departmental Directorate which had responsibility for tracking and recording schools' indicator and outcomes data, I

prepared a series of graphs revealing huge differences between schools with low SES scores and those with middle to high SES scores. The differences recorded were clear, huge (when compared with any other group except indigenous students), and had system-wide implications. The urgency was demonstrably more acute than that generated by data differences between boys and girls, or immigrant and non-immigrant students, or geographically isolated students and those in other locations. The data also indicated that the occurrence of SES related depressed outcomes extended to more than twice the 20% of schools identified as "disadvantaged" by schooling systems. This data set was very powerful because of its accuracy, because it showed a steady and consistent increase in outcomes as SES increased throughout the SES spectrum (except for an intriguingly large positive "bump" in the graph which accorded with the existence of the multi-dimensional Disadvantaged Schools Program) before it was de-politicised and changed into a uni-dimensional literacy program in the late 1990s in NSW), and because of the huge differences in attainment and achievement outcomes it revealed.

In 1996 my position was split in two. I had to apply for them both and go to interview. I was refused interview for the policy-based position on the basis that I had little policy-developing experience and I was beaten for the management-based position in a selection procedure which I appealed (without success—an appeal could only be mounted on the basis of procedure, not fairness or quality of candidature). With a new family to support I reluctantly took on the management of the Distance Education program with which I became thoroughly familiar, and played a part in modernising both its technological flexibility and its pedagogical processes.

During my 42 years serving public schools I have seen many changes—some for the good, some less so. I have experienced, and negotiated across the different strengths and weaknesses of the public and "private" schooling sectors, I've worked across state and territory boundaries with high levels of attendant frustration, and I've been long interested and familiar with international data and practices. Alongside my interests as an educator, I am also a planetary citizen and politically aware. As a consequence, I am concerned about a large number of global matters which affect the Common Good. A view of the Common Good can only be expressed by those who make up the "common" through political processes which exist (imperfectly) in some polities but not in others. With this being the case, my several "big picture" educational issues need now to be researched, analysed and addressed it seems to me, while attending simultaneously to the needs of the Common Good. This leads me now to a dauntingly all-encompassing Big Picture including an examination of the social purposes of schooling, the feasibility of reaching a politically

legitimised and *agreed* set of social purposes, and a potential means of implementing such an idea.

I have no interest in the status of a PhD and I have no employment ambitions. I have low expectations about the political effect of the ideas contained in this dissertation. I am not even confident that political leadership *anywhere* will have either the courage or the skills to take my ideas forward. And yet, I am compelled by a sense of *duty*, to record my views as my contribution to Humanity. Unlike the ideas I have had over time but happily laid aside, the proposals advocated in Section Four of this dissertation have been generated from ideas which persist in my head despite my wish to be rid of their load. They emanate from my unique passage through local, national and international education arenas and the resolutions to conflicts and inequities which many of us yearn for but are denied because— well, because of the matters addressed in this dissertation.

No doubt I bring my own politics to this dissertation. I should therefore declare it. I am interested, primarily, in an appropriately populated and peaceful world in which wealth is generated consistent with sustainable environmental practices, and distributed in ways which satisfy both the Common Good and Individual Rights and Desires within the context of the Common Good. This view depends heavily on the polity's capacity to identify and legitimise the Common Good. This dissertation has been framed within this political perspective, a good deal of which has been generated by the research and analysis associated with producing the dissertation itself.

Summary

This dissertation is a "big-picture" study. Its scope requires me to investigate and discuss matters which, in the first instant, may appear unrelated. Patience will truly be a virtue for my readers. However, I can give some preliminary assistance by outlining a brief summary of the context and course taken in the following dissertation.

The dissertation picks up on a large number of issues currently being discussed in national and international education and political circles. Its contribution is two-fold: it combines several issues into the discussion; it proposes a solution and a method of implementation.

Planet Earth is in peril (A. Gore, 2006). This is a global problem requiring a global response. Yet there is no acknowledged global government, and little democratized input from the globe's citizens into global forums. Earth is victim of this contradiction between globalised issues of importance and nation states as the foci of political power.

Most of humanity is ignorant of the dangers, and of the contradiction. This ignorance exacerbates the perils. This too is a global problem requiring a global response.

It is hoped that despite my narrower focus in this dissertation on the Australian system of schooling, the general analyses contained within it, and the resulting proposals for re-shaping the schooling system employing a particular political method of public engagement and public decision-making, will be seen to have a universality about them and thus be capable of assisting with the development of strategies to overcome the absence of a democratized form of world government and with efforts to remove ignorance of global perils and their solution.

The dissertation scans across national and international schooling data to find where Australia's schooling system is strong and where it is weak. Two major weaknesses are separated out: neglect of students from low socio-economic (SES) communities; student boredom. A discussion of each weakness reveals curriculum—its content and its paradigm—as a common and implicated thread requiring further address. With these major weaknesses identified, the dissertation moves to investigate the motivation behind expanding church-based schooling systems and asks if public schools should exist at all. This requires an examination of the original reason(s) for establishing public schools in Australia, the claims for an "agreed" national statement on the social purposes of schooling (the Hobart and Adelaide Declarations), the absence of a public-based agreement—a social contract—concerning the social purposes of schooling, and the political requirements to make the attainment of such a social contract feasible. I propose a set of political principles which provide the skeletal shape of a safe planet and a desired future society, providing in turn a set of social purposes for schools which, it is proposed, could generate an *essential* curriculum for all students from the earliest to the latest years of schooling.

Producing an essential curriculum which thoroughly addresses the Common Good in this way provides an opportunity to construct a parallel *elective* curriculum from the earliest to latest years of schooling to address each student's additional and different personal interests, sectarian learnings, specialisations, vocational desires, and so on. These two curriculum streams form a new curriculum paradigm which, because of the way it is conceived, will substantially address the major weaknesses originally identified in the existing system—low SES; boredom. Because the proposed curriculum paradigm guarantees the pursuit of political principles which embrace both individual freedoms and the Common Good, previously agreed through highly legitimising public processes, a new

political context will exist. An optimistic view such as that outlined above might be thought to be naïve. This matter is addressed comprehensively in Section Three.

This new political context will be very different from that which exists now, gaudily coloured with the rhetoric of 200 years of religious and political battle for existence and funding. In a new and trusting context it will be possible to sensibly conceive the restructuring of Australia's fractured schooling system to include a national curriculum paradigm within a cohesive system of schooling for Australia's public and, with this new unity, to remove an increasing threat to "social cohesion."

Introduction

Planet Earth has only the United Nations to provide a form of peak government. It is weak, and often marginalized by some powerful nation states. There is no Earth Government to deal with its perils. Many of the most important issues concerning Humanity's existence, including matters of trade, labour availability, tax minimization and movement of capital, have been globalised but according to George Monbiot (2003), this powerful move to globalization has not been paralleled by a globalization of our "consent." That is, global and globalizing behaviour is not subjected to the people's scrutiny. Democratic processes, democratic structures and democratic decision-making have not grown apace with globalizing processes, globalised movement of resources, and globalised business decision-making.

Nation states act in the national interest (Singer, 2002)—not in the interests of an international Common Good. Even where agreement is reached between multiples of nation states, in the absence of a form of international democracy, it is the various national elites who reach agreement, not necessarily with the interests in mind of the many masses of peoples who represent the greater proportion of the world's citizenry including the poor, the homeless, the hungry, the war-ravaged, the dispossessed, the disenfranchised, the disempowered and repressed.

Nation states are not evenly driven by well informed populations engaged democratically in the processes of policy formulation and decision-making. Despite recent expansion of liberal-democratic nation states (into Spain, Portugal, Greece, and former states of the USSR) (Kymlicka, 2006) their role is being eroded as increasing globalisation makes national boundaries appear less and less relevant (Benhabib, 2006).

As a consequence, the world's population remains ill-equipped to deal with threats to its very existence. What is the world doing about this perilous reality? Who represents, or should represent, the Common Good in forums of global governance? Who knows of the perils? Who knows of the structures needed to address the perils? Who is equipped with the knowledge and skills to participate in decisions concerning both the structures and the perils themselves? And, who is best placed to advance knowledge and understanding of all these, and associated, matters?

Many industries can play a part, including the education industry. The education industry is well placed to do a great deal to illuminate the general issues for all to see and understand. It is well placed to replace ignorance of common dangers with widespread commitment to, and engagement in, the pursuit of the Common Good.

In a nutshell—that is the context for this dissertation. This brief sketch deserves a little unpacking.

That Earth's flora and fauna, including Homo Sapiens, are in peril is no longer in dispute. Earth's inhabitants are threatened by a range of out-of-control phenomena such as: accelerating and catastrophic global warming; widespread environmental degradation; ever-worsening over population; unsustainable levels of consumption of power and primary commodities; changing weather patterns and consequent droughts, floods and famines; intercontinental epidemics of life-taking diseases; wars un-authorised by the United Nations; and poverty ("Attenborough: Climate is changing," 2006; Flannery, 2006; A. Gore, 2006; Monbiot, 2003; Singer, 2002; Suzuki, 2007).

All these issues are global in scope, thus suggesting the need for a globally consistent and coordinated response. There are many other issues, but this list serves to establish the serious and urgent nature of the agenda confronting Humanity—globally.

Who is affected by these global challenges? The people of the world. All people.

How will the people of the world learn of these issues? How will they comprehend them and their competing arguments? Should they all know, and comprehend, and act within the civil society and polity, or should that be the preserve of the educated, powerful and/or privileged*? What schooling system(s) can adequately prepare the people for this present and continuing challenge—to understand the issues, to press for an appropriate form of governance, and to address the global realities*?

The inhabitants of Earth are not citizens of the world. Their passports identify them as citizens of nation states. People within nation states engage in political activity to determine the behaviour within the nation state—not at a global level.

Planet Earth has no effective and legitimate government. This has always been so, but with our recent experience of "globalisation" the absence of government is seen as more acute

because we have seen a "migration of power to a realm in which there is no democratic control" (Monbiot, 2003, p. 51).

The closest we have to a form of world government is the United Nations (UN). The organisational structure of the United Nations emerged from World War II and reflects the relative power of nation states at that time. Vetoes by the unrepresentative Security Council are frequent. Although all nations have equal vote at the United Nations General Assembly, this equality is distorted by the existence of the more powerful Security Council. The authority of the United Nations is further diminished by its reliance on funding from the most powerful states and the refusal by some states to pay their dues. Nor does the United Nations have a standing military to swing into immediate action to enforce its will.

Most alarming is the refusal by some of the most powerful nation states to confirm or support decisions made by the UN, or forums sponsored by the UN. The most recent examples include: the insistence of the USA, United Kingdom and Australia to invade Iraq despite the failure of those countries to attain a UN authorisation to do so; USA's refusal to recognise the authority of the International Court of Justice; refusal by a small number of countries including USA and Australia (until November 2007), to support the Kyoto accords concerning environmental sustainability and global warming.

In summary, the world is required to take urgent decisions concerning global matters of concern and peril but the world has no political structure or coherent strategy with which it can successfully and quickly address these matters. Unhappily, the world has only the United Nations—a voluntary and weak confederation of nation states itself rent with internal inequalities. Beyond this weak confederation, some of the more powerful nations "govern" certain events by brokering (bi and multi-lateral) decisions outside otherwise-recognised international forums, or else the global economy and associated political realities are undertaken by a grossly unrepresentative small elite of international business interests.

 As contemporary wisdom in the field of International Relations accepts that each nation state is bound to act in its own self-interest, it is not surprising the confederation (UN) is often unable to influence the powerful nation states where their self-interest is deemed to be inconsistent with the wishes of the UN. Far from being strengthened by the powerful nations on Earth, the UN finds itself being thwarted, undermined, starved of funds, weakened, ignored, as well as attacked for being weak and ineffective by those most responsible for making the UN weak and ineffective.

Thus, given current levels of knowledge, political participation and the absence of effective world government, there is no basis for optimism concerning the capacity of the world's population to successfully deal with the raft of urgent global issues. Changes need to be made.

How can the world's people go about the business of constructing a comprehensive and legitimate international political structure that permits and encourages them—not only the educated, powerful and/or privilege—to find well-informed voice, to have it heard, and to participate in effective decision-making? And, more particularly for this dissertation, what schooling system(s) can adequately prepare the people for this present and continuing challenge?

Humanity's unpreparedness to deal effectively with urgent global matters is not limited to the global level of government. At the next level down—at the level of nation states—there exists a wide range of different political systems with different attitudes and capacities. Infant democracies (such as Indonesia) with as-yet few democratic processes incorporated into recently constructed democratic structures, along with authoritarian, military and dictatorial systems, continue to be a common part of the international landscape.

Even long-term democracies experience internal struggles between those who wish to limit government to basic individual liberties and a guarantee of a free market and, at the other end of the continuum, those who would have government intervention to require equality of life's outcomes. Some of the long-term democracies, exercising their perceived right to pursue their "national interest," are amongst the nations that most energetically deny the legitimacy of the UN and other international structures and agreements (e.g., Kyoto Protocols, International Court of Justice).

Many ruling structures within nation states are hostile to the involvement of the general public in decision-making. Autocrats, oligarchies, religious cliques, dictators, military juntas are still common. Other nation states are in the early stages of democratic development and contain genuine internal struggles between those committed to democratic practices and those who are not. And of course, even within the minority of states with mature democracies, there are those who employ a variety of strategies designed to gratify their own desires and/or their identity group or socio-economic stratum or "class," to maintain privileged status, or to ascribe to religious and political philosophies which bolster their position rather than concerns for the Common Good.

Again, how can the people of nation states go about the business of constructing and maintaining political machinery that permits and encourages them—not only the educated, powerful and/or privileged—to find voice, to have it heard, and to participate in effective decision-making? What schooling system(s) can adequately prepare the people for this present and continuing challenge?

This dissertation proposes a partial answer to these questions. It does not reach closure on matters of world government, but it advances a new schooling system shaped so that it aligns with socially produced social purposes, while locking in individual rights and individual aspirations. Its vision is broad—all encompassing—and designed to periodically adjust to new social priorities and social purpose. It has the capacity, and intention, of educating generations about matters of global concern and the need to provide a democratic framework for the governance of these matters.

The dissertation also concludes that it is possible to conceive a social *process* aimed at achieving a social *agreement* which can be used to generate a curriculum—to be regarded as essential for all students—which will support the creation and maintenance of the preferred features of a future society, including governance over matters of global import. Because this essential curriculum will address matters of the Common Good, and Humans have as strong a need to satisfy *personal* goals, it will be necessary to structure a parallel layer of curriculum which addresses matters of Individual Good to be chosen by parents and students from the earliest to the latest schooling years. These parallel streams of curriculum will comprise a new curriculum paradigm which, it is proposed, will permit the worst educational problems confronting Australia to be addressed directly: poor outcomes from low SES and indigenous students; widespread boredom amongst students. Fortunately, such paradigm will also permit us to address the movement of enrolments towards the new and burgeoning non-Catholic, church-based schooling systems.

With an increasing and successful experience with unifying processes of political engagement a new political context will evolve in which it will be conceivable, in the interests of "social cohesion," that a newly inclusive and coherent system of schooling for the public should replace systems of schools which discriminate against the religiously-inclined, and/or separate students by their ethnicity, creed, religion, or socio-economic status.

The thought processes which lead to the views expressed above are quite complex as they draw from, and integrate, ideas and experiences from several different disciplines. Thinking

these complexities through is made all the more difficult by the terrain itself, littered as it is with revered battlefields of the past, and sentried by passionately motivated warriors for their cause(s). As a consequence, I ask the reader to extend a good deal of patience as I make the argument in each chapter remembering this is not simply a thesis about "education," but also about a broad range of philosophical, political, sociological and management processes designed to replace images of battlefields with amicable processes of mutual understanding, collaboration, negotiation and satisfaction.

Reaching a unifying future vision will demand that stakeholders leave aside, for the moment, their areas of combat and/or specialty and instead, look at a Bigger Picture comprising global and national objectives which affect all Earth's citizenry and on which we can all agree. To "think the Big Picture" will require us all, at least for the moment, to step outside our areas of detailed (but narrower) competence such as:

- school funding battles;
- knowledge and advocacy of our subject disciplines versus a cross-curriculum approach;
- contemporary management practices;
- public versus private and church-based issues including State Aid;
- bureaucracy and government versus teacher unions;
- equity concerns versus mainstream provision;
- "quality" teaching versus current practice.

We need to attend to some prior matters which will re-structure our political *raison d'etre* for schooling—an agreed set of socio-political objectives for schooling—thus creating a new and different context for us to enter when returning to our more focussed specialities and competencies.

To understand the current Big Picture and how it performs in Australia—where it is strong and where it is weak—is the first task and will be undertaken in Sections One and Two of this dissertation. To understand the political reasons for the past and current system's shape in Australia, and to identify an appropriate political setting for the future of schooling, is the task for Section Three. Section Four will make proposals for the future of schooling. More specifically, in the following chapters I argue that:

1. Of all the political systems conjured by philosophers throughout the ages, the best suited to successfully address the needs of planet Earth, of nation states, and of

individual citizens, is a democracy with high levels of democratic participation by citizens within the polity and civil society (republican, by definition).

2. For participative democracy to be successful, the general citizenry needs high levels of education which permit:
    a.   the general citizenry to hold those with power to account;
    b.   knowledgeable participation in matters concerning the Common Good;
    c.   vigilance concerning individual freedoms and rights.

3.a. A re-constructed schooling system for the public, consistent with the ideals of a participative democracy and nurturing of individual freedoms and rights (such as the right to learn and practice one's religious beliefs), will be best placed to undertake the will of the people and provide an education which reinforces socially agreed objectives—the Common Good. Citizens with a concern for the Common Good exist across all religions and socio-economic strata and, as long as their agreed civil liberties are guaranteed, are likely to find common cause.

   b. Working against this participative and collectively democratic approach is the quest for privilege, which is inherently exploitative and inconsistent with the quest for the Common Good. It should be resisted. That is not to say it is not a complex matter involving a clash of principles between the Common Good and Individual Good. It is complex, but it is of central concern too, because with this matter left unresolved there is no impediment to a self-propagating elite—the powerful and wealthy determining, by way of coincidence of interest or determination, that they will establish a separate class of privilege which guarantees they and their progeny reproduce generational privileges of wealth and power. This is the antithesis of democratic processes and structures and permits the Individual Rights of a narrow group of people to override the Common Good and the Individual Rights of a wider group. The extent to which a participative democracy with a socially agreed set of political objectives would tolerate any level(s) of privilege would be determined by that polity.

4. A central element of a reconstructed schooling system for the public will be a new curriculum paradigm, widely supported, consisting of two parallel streams from the earliest years of schooling to Year 12. The two streams will comprise:
    a.   An *elective* curriculum which guarantees studies which address individual interests, specialised requirements, sectarian imperatives;

b. An *essential* curriculum generated by a set of socially agreed political principles which, taken together, represent the citizenry's expression of societal objectives—the Common Good.

This dissertation necessarily has broad scope. It encompasses research from the fields of Political Science, Philosophy, Management, and Education. It addresses the Australian schooling system, analyses international comparisons, and has implications for schooling systems internationally. The dissertation's scope presents problems. For example, Australian schooling provision is complex (Karmel, 1973). It is divided into six states and two territory provisions each of which is further divided into:

1. Systems of public schools which, since the mid-19th century, have provided a legislated guarantee of 'free, compulsory and secular' education for all children no matter their geographic or socio-economic circumstances;

2. Systems of Catholic and other church-based schools which provide a similar curriculum with additional sectarian studies within a particular religious environment;

3. A range of non-systematised, relatively high-fee private schools which provide a similar curriculum within a variety of different religious and/or privileged environments.

Within each of the state and territory jurisdictions there are differences in practices in a number of important policy areas such as curriculum control, curriculum content, assessment regimes, use of public (external to school) examinations or not, definitions of student groups (e.g. socio-economic status), availability and presentation of data, management of schools, and so on.

An important difference between the jurisdictions which has a direct methodological effect on this dissertation, concerns the availability of input, output and learning outcomes data. Public schooling systems provide considerable and useful, publicly available data (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2000-2004, 2004b). Non-public schools do not.

However, the publicly available data supplied by the public school systems such as NSW Department of Education and Training (DET), at least in respect of one of the more important elements of this thesis—low socio-economic status (SES)—would be much more useful for comparative, policy-making purposes if data sets (such as: educational participation, subject choice, and learning outcomes) were presented in a way which revealed differences associated with socio-economic status at different points along the

socio-economic continuum. This is not done, for example in NSW, despite a request from me as a student-researcher to the NSW Minister and an unproductive meeting with DET management, in which these data were requested but refused.

Except for data concerning the top 10% of performers at end-of-school exams, church-based and private schools provide no publicly available data which permits analysis of student performance against indicators such as: geographic isolation, Aboriginality, socio-economic status, gender, previous performance, public enrolment *vis-à-vis* private enrolment, and so on.

Thus, *most* learning outcomes from non-public schools are unavailable. This is a major barrier to illuminating research and, at the international level, has drawn rebuke from the Director of Education for the OECD, Professor Barry McGaw (2005; 2006).

The data *are* available. This is known because the Australian Government provides aggregated public and private schools' data to the OECD for international comparative purposes. But the Australian government does not provide separate sector-specific data from church-based and private schools and so, unlike data from all other OECD countries, sector differences are not reported or analysed in OECD publications. Thus, data from the non-public schooling sector are a secret held by two parties: the non-public schooling sector and the Australian Government. It is not known why the government does not disaggregate the data. It may be the case that the various schooling systems agreed to provide data to the Australian Government and the OECD's PISA exercise on the proviso that comparisons between the systems were not made given that such comparisons could lead to some embarrassments.

Public school systems, such as NSW Department of Education and Training (DET), report a huge amount of data, much of it helpful to researchers. There is one important exception to this—an exception which seriously blurs the story surrounding the performance of low SES students. The NSW Minister and the NSW DET refuse to divulge data, known to exist within the DET because it was drawn from the statistical directorate of DET and analysed and graphed (Davy, 2005b) and reported to the Director General by me when working as part of senior management within the NSW DET. The data sought for the purposes of this dissertation, and refused, referred to participation and achievement data *along* the socio-economic continuum. The DET reply (NSW Department of School Education, 2005), following an official approach to the NSW Minister, excused the DET from providing the data because the Department believed that the data so elicited would have "little interest"

for the management of the Department—in a focus area which this thesis argues is the major problem area confronting the public schooling system—the performance of low SES students.

As a consequence of the above mix of problems, it is currently impossible to get data which permits comprehensive analysis and comparisons between students and student groups located in different parts of Australia's schooling provision.

Further to these realities is a confusion of government responsibility for the provision of schooling. The Australian Constitution unequivocally identifies "education" as a state responsibility. Despite this, the Commonwealth provides:

- all capital and recurrent funds for universities;
- funds to establish and manage its own Technical and Further Education colleges;
- all capital funds provided by government to church-based and private schools and the bulk of their recurrent funds;
- half the capital and approximately 12% of recurrent funds to public schools.

Not surprisingly, funding and policy developments within education are complex and highly political with adversarial party politics playing out between different levels of government in each of the state/territory jurisdictions, including differing political preferences towards public, church-based and private schools. The absence of learning outcomes data for students from non-public schools permits many highly-charged political claims to go largely unchallenged and, more importantly, makes the task of dispassionate research based on fresh and indicative data, more difficult.

To the researcher, the difficulties represented by the set of circumstances described above, are daunting, even intimidating. It is a disincentive, and a barrier, to any researcher thinking of undertaking "big-picture" studies aimed at examining the viability and health of Australia's schooling provision and its component parts.

On the other hand, the field is not devoid of data. In recent years in particular, a good deal of national data has been collected, analysed and provided to international bodies such as the OECD and UNICEF. Moreover, as previously acknowledged, states and territories have their own large compendiums of data concerning public schools, much of it publicly available. What follows in this dissertation has been partly shaped by the availability of data, although to provide as full a picture as possible I have drawn on data reported by

Australia to OECD. With these difficulties acknowledged it is appropriate to now provide a sketch of the chapters to come.

To understand the current fractured Australian system of schooling and its comparative performance with OECD countries—where it is strong and where it is weak—is the first task and will be undertaken in Sections One and Two. To understand the political reasons for the current system's shape, and to identify an appropriate political setting for the future, is the task for Section Three. Section Four will make proposals for the future.

Section One:

Chapter One: Following analysis of internationally comparable data, I acknowledge the relatively healthy average outcomes for Australian students but also discuss two major flaws in the schooling system. Both of these weaknesses are mysteriously under-analysed (widespread student boredom) and discounted (educational outcomes for low SES students) by Australia's governments, management of schooling sub-systems, major educational reviews and peak research bodies. The possible association of these two flaws with the way *curriculum* is arranged organisationally and bureaucratically, and presented to students, is raised for the first time.

Chapter Two discusses features of successful learning, reasons suggested by researchers to explain good learning, and policy settings adopted by governments. The chapter argues that important data sets associated with low SES students and "bored" students are either ignored by governments and private schooling managements, or imperfectly interpreted. It then discusses both issues concluding that both low and high SES students experience schooling boredom, that higher SES students endure the experience more successfully, that this phenomenon should be most urgently acknowledged by governments and education authorities, that there is a common element in these issues—curriculum—and this common element is important enough to be urgently and thoroughly researched. In the course of this discussion, attention is drawn to the organisation of curriculum into separate subject disciplines, and the possibility that the *curriculum paradigm* is responsible for a deal of student boredom and higher levels of disengagement amongst low SES students, is raised.

Chapter Three: With some of Australia's "equity" groups heavily concentrated in the bottom half of Australia's student performers, this chapter quantifies the proportion of poor learning outcomes the public schooling system experiences from each of the "equity" groups. As no data are available from church-based and private schools, the exercise is limited to public schools and, to keep the exercise manageable, data from the biggest public

schooling system in Australia—NSW—has been used. It concludes that, despite indigenous outcomes being the most starkly deficient, the overwhelmingly greatest "load" of poorly performed students shouldered by the NSW public school system is that from low SES students. In response to this analysis, a comprehensive *Plan for the Education of Students from Low SES Communities* is proposed and a skeletal plan, its elements arranged in order of conceptual difficulty is sketched out. It is suggested that systems have been persistently resistant to the plight of low SES students, and that where they have taken some action it has generally been at the easier end of the conceptual scale, leaving unaddressed the more difficult, possibly most important, and urgently-researchable issues, such as the need for multiply disadvantaged and disempowered low SES students to see *"intrinsic value" in curriculum offerings.* Again, the matter of curriculum structure and content emerges as a possible major issue.

Section Two:

Chapter Four: In all Australian states and territories, the latter quarter of the 19th century saw government funding withdrawn from church-based and private schools and focused only on public schools. For almost 100 years the resulting schooling system comprised an all pervasive public school system, an extensive system of Catholic parochial schools serving approximately half the Catholic student population, and a much smaller higher fee group of private schools. Paralleling renewed and progressively ramped up government support to church-based and private schools since the 1960s, there have been significant changes to the shape of this landscape. This chapter describes the composition of the expanding and complex school market with reference to: enrolment levels, school identification, enrolment trends, level of fees, and stated missions from systems and schools. Further, the shift of enrolment proportion away from public schools is fuelling political conflict. Different types of schools have their different advocates and lobbyists. This chapter also presents claims and *argument* from major interest groups, vested interests, and disinterested researchers—to reveal the nature of different explanations for the evidence presented earlier.

Chapter Five: The evidence and arguments described in the previous two chapters generate a raft of important issues with relevance to the shape and nature of a future schooling system. These issues are now listed and discussed. The discussion challenges a number of views and policies currently held within Australia's schooling system, including: the absence of sectarian studies in public schools, the independence of "independent" schools, the compatibility of democracy and self-perpetuating privilege, the "privateness" of low-fee church-based schools, the "publicness" of public schools, values, relative

performance of public and private schools, social cohesion, and choice. The chapter concludes with a brief description of a range of different types of schooling systems proposed by a variety of proponents from across the political spectrum, including a sketch of my own proposal outlined in Section Four and derived from Sections One to Three.

Section Three:

Chapter Six: The Australian schooling system since 1788 has a history influenced by its English origins, its colonial derivation and the immigrant and religious mix associated with its European history. Chapter Six traces the historical development of the schooling system since 1788 and reveals the long-term combative nature of Australian schooling politics and the fractured system of schooling it has produced. It establishes the absence of social agreement underlying either the structure of Australia's schooling system or the curriculum content for which it is responsible.

Chapter Seven: It is hypothesised that an alternative to combative policy development is possible. Chapter Seven scans the full spectrum of political philosophy with a view to discovering a method—a different method—of decision making which might have the potential to replace Australia's over-reliance on adversarial politics with a process of thoughtful collaboration and public involvement, such that the basis of schooling in Australia might be agreed amongst its citizens.

It is proposed that a new and deliberative political process be employed to generate a publicly-constructed and public-supported statement of political principles to then be used within different industries—including the schooling industry—to generate within-industry policies aligned to preferred societal outcomes incorporated into the agreed set of political principles. In the case of schooling, the principles could, it is proposed, be used to inform an entirely new curriculum stream for all children throughout their schooling years—a curriculum stream which might be regarded by the polity and civil society as *essential*. It is then hypothesised, for further discussion in Section Four, that in this new context it may be possible to better, and more directly, address the matter of social cohesion and envisage a *real politik* re-negotiation of the schooling system's structure which provides for the public, such that it is a coherent *system* serving the goal of *social* coherence. It is thought that this chapter makes a contribution to political theory by applying contemporary understandings of "deliberative democracy" to education (schooling) and, in the process, points out the central role education should play in those debates.

Section Four:

Chapter Eight: Over many decades there have been important thinkers and policy advocates who spoke of the desirability and/or necessity of having agreed social purposes of schooling but who have been frustrated either by the immensity and complexity of the task, or else they believed it to be an impossible task to undertake because of the range and size of the differences between people. In this chapter I outline this history but reach a more optimistic conclusion and, based on this optimistic view, I proceed to construct a surrogate social agreement and use it to propose a different curriculum content and paradigm. With this completed, I discuss how the end result might successfully (or not) address the original concerns displayed in the earlier chapters, to wit:

1. Low levels of performance from low SES students;
2. High levels of student boredom with schooling;
3. Movement of large proportions of enrolments to church-based schools;
4. Potential social disharmonies as communities increasingly divide along ethnic, religious and socio-economic fault-lines.

Chapter One: Major Successes and Failures of Public Schooling in Australia.

No Agreed Content and No Agreed Standard

When international comparison of educational achievement is made, the comparison is made against a set of pre-determined benchmarks. Measures of literacy, numeracy and Mathematics and Science are benchmarked at different proficiency levels so that comparisons between students, schools and countries can be made. This is fair enough, as far as it goes.

For those interested in constructing a schooling system with *declared social purpose* there are four matters worth commenting on early in this dissertation:

1. The predetermined benchmarks do not indicate that a human being of such-and-such an age, under optimum learning conditions, is *capable* of achieving a certain benchmark, either on the basis of researched data, or well-informed estimates of expectations, until normative data becomes available, with another human being operating at, say 20% less capability and another operating at, say 40% capability. Rather, experts from the subject disciplines, working within the subject disciplines, set different levels of achievement as benchmarks, against which they can measure achievement. Except that these benchmarks measure some level of performance within a set discipline, they do not represent anything else at all. They do not represent a scientific, or even best-guess, at what a human being under optimum learning conditions could achieve, even within the separateness of the subject silo being measured and compared.

2. The predetermined benchmarks, or series of benchmarks, do not relate to anything that educationists, psychologists, sociologists, political scientists, or any other body, have determined or suggested might be worthwhile *societal* goals against which the schooling system generally, or each subject discipline separately, might be compared. In other words, to know that a country has x% of students achieving at top performance levels in literacy, numeracy, high school Mathematics or high school Science (for example) tells us nothing about what the schooling system is producing, or contributing to, as far as a set of societal objectives might be concerned, unless of course, the societal objectives are to produce a certain number

of graduates at a certain performance level in each of the designated subjects. The schooling system's objective of raising good citizens, presumably a cross-discipline objective, is not identified as worth measuring separately, and nor are its assumed multi-disciplinary components cross-referenced to the Mathematics benchmarks, or the literacy benchmarks, or the Science benchmarks…and so on. The same may be said for other potential societal objectives for schooling such as: global environmental knowledge and responsibility; benefits of, and knowledge and skills of democratic processes; a technologically advanced economy within an environmentally sustainable society; social cohesion; concern for the Common good; guaranteed individual rights and liberties; and so on.

3. Following 2 above, the very choice of specified subjects for measuring and comparing exhibits an absence of consciousness of the importance of many cross-disciplinary social goals, and helps reveal the total reliance, internationally, on a curriculum paradigm which embraces a subject-based organization of the curriculum which bears no relationship to social goals of schooling, unless of course, the actual subjects and their organization are incorporated as the core of schooling's social purposes (as is done in the Adelaide Declaration).

4. The best attempt to break out of this assumed subject organization has been *Problem Solving for Tomorrow's World: First Measures of Cross-Curricular Competencies from PISA 2003* and this study does what it set out to do well. The study was set up to test "problem-solving tasks intended to parallel situations in life and not to draw on specific curriculum knowledge" (OECD, 2004). As a consequence of this construction it was able to better establish the "effects of family, socio-economic and cultural background" (p. 104) which, incidentally, showed by far the greatest problem being with the education of students from low SES communities "with parents in lower status occupations performing on average at the level of *basic problem solvers (Level 1)*, while students with parents in higher status occupations performing on average at the level of *reasoning, decision-making problem solvers*" (p. 111). The study concluded that small differences in average outcome existed between the genders but that "students from less advantaged backgrounds are disadvantaged not only in relation to how well they pick up the school curriculum, but also in terms of their acquisition of general problem-solving skills. Countries should be concerned that social background has such a strong effect not just on curricular outcomes but also on acquisition of general skills" (p. 120). It did not attempt to measure levels of knowledge and

skills required to (a) meet or approach Human Being's scientifically assessed, or educator best-guessed, potential (b) attain levels of achievement regarded as necessary to meet a set of pre-determined societal objectives for schooling.

With these four explanations it can be said that there are (a) no optimum benchmarks and (b) no benchmarks of learning outcomes equating to predetermined social purposes of schooling, against which Australia's schooling system can be measured. No optimum or socially-targeted national benchmarks. No internationally agreed optimum or socially-targeted benchmarks. That is, the academic and research literature reveals *no* educational standards in literacy, numeracy, the sciences, humanities and arts, which have been determined on the basis of good educational theory, practice and resourcing, to represent an appropriate, good, or excellent set of outcomes for a schooling system either in respect of individual Human potential, or in terms of desired social outcomes. There are only assessment tasks, or tests, devised by researchers including OECD researchers, to provide comparative data between students and countries within a number of subject disciplines.

This is an important point, because in the absence of such benchmarks what does it mean to say that a particular schooling system has x% of students achieving at the highest predetermined benchmark in a particular discipline beyond the comparative point that one system does better than another? Does it mean, for example, that the highest performing system is performing well against a benchmark which has been determined as a high benchmark when measured against Human's potential? No, not necessarily. Does it mean that the highest performing system is performing well against a benchmark of desired social purposes for schooling? No, not unless it has been first established that the subject benchmarks, or a mix of subject benchmarks, equate to a high benchmark of social outcomes, and this has not been established.

 The levels of competency established for OECD (for example) comparative measurements, means that assessments of the performance of schooling systems can, at best, be comparative assessments. Without an objective and pre-determined benchmark for Human potential, or for social purposes, each system can only be compared with other systems without there being a measure of the success or failure of the systems as a whole. In other words, a comparative analysis may show a nation state to perform very well (or poorly) against other states when the undisclosed reality may be that all nation states are producing poor (or good) outcomes relative to the yet-to-be-determined benchmarks, or they may be producing outcomes which are discipline-oriented and not geared appropriately to the important themes of life and socially agreed objectives for schooling.

Nevertheless, and with this caveat, Australia's performance, within defined subject groupings (Key Learning Areas—KLAs) can be *compared* with systems in countries with similar levels of development and similar political structures.

On Average, Australia Compares Favourably

The Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), comprising 30 member nation states with developed capitalist economies, in 1997 launched the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in response to the need for cross-nationally comparable evidence on student performance. PISA comprises a series of research projects concerning a range of educational outcomes of member states' schooling systems. Australian data used and reported by the OECD is an aggregated representation of Australia's complex national system of schooling. They are national data which do not make distinctions between the different states and territories. Moreover, unlike *any* other OECD member country, Australia continues to "suppress" (McGaw, 2006) the provision to the OECD of data which would enable the OECD to make comparisons between the performance of public, church-based and private schools. In McGaw's words "the information distinguishing government and non-government schools in the Australia database is suppressed before it is submitted for international analysis. That practice should be changed" (McGaw, 2006, p. 31).

The first PISA assessment was conducted in 2000 and focussed on reading literacy while addressing some questions in mathematics and science.

The second PISA assessment, conducted in 2003, focussed on mathematics while seeking follow-up data for science and reading. The data are analysed by the OECD to provide international comparisons concerning gender differences, performance at different socio-economic levels, students' motivation to learn, different learning strategies, and students' beliefs about themselves.

The OECD report *Education at a Glance* (2005) provides a series of data snapshots which, when taken together, provide an overall sketch of Australia's performance when compared to other OECD members and associated countries. Australia comes:

- 10th of 31: in educational attainment of the adult population: measured by average number of years in the education system (p. 28).
- 20th of 31: in proportion of the population that has attained at least upper secondary education (p. 31).

- 11th of 31: in proportion of the population that has attained tertiary education (p. 32).
- 8th of 29: in overall distribution of student performance on mathematics scale (p. 58).
- 5th of 29: in distribution of student performance on problem solving scale (p. 72).
- 7th of 13: in mean performance in 8th grade Mathematics—as measured by the Trends in International Maths and Science Study—TIMSS (p. 91).
- 6th of 13: in mean performance in 8th grade Science—TIMSS (p.91).
- 14th of 26: in annual expenditure on educational institutions per student between primary and tertiary education 2002 (p. 158).
- 13th of 28 (primary + secondary), 12th of 26 (tertiary): in annual expenditure on education institutions per student by level of education 2002 (p. 162).
- 14th of 28: in expenditure on education institutions as percentage of GDP for all levels of education 2002 (p. 176).
- 23rd of 28: in total public expenditure as percentage of GDP 1995—2002 (p. 203).
- 1st of 28: in education expectancy—the average years a 5 year old can expect to be formally enrolled in education during his or her lifetime (p. 228).
- 1st of 28: in education expectancy by level of education (p. 231).
- 19th of 23: in average class sizes in lower secondary education (p. 344).
- 4th of 29: in reading literacy profile of 15 year olds (p. 277, cf. OECD, 2003b, 2005).

In summary, "Australia is a relatively high performer, on average, among OECD countries" (McGaw, 2006, p. 7). Taken as a whole, Australia delivers relatively good average levels of literacy (OECD, 2003 and 2005), numeracy (OECD, 2005), science (OECD, 2005), and high participation and retention rates in primary and secondary schooling (OECD, 2005). Australia has the highest education expectancy within OECD at secondary and tertiary levels of education (OECD, 2005). Even on the matter of equality of outcomes, a separate UNICEF analysis, using the OECD data, shows Australia with the 5th lowest level of absolute educational disadvantage—meaning that Australia is amongst the best OECD countries when it comes to absolute disadvantage (UNICEF, 2002, p. 4).

From this data, it is possible to conclude that:
- on average, and in comparison with OECD countries, Australia educates its citizens moderately well;

- using *averaged* data, while Australia appears in the top half of OECD countries for most of the comparisons there is considerable room for improvement;
- there are no independently determined benchmarks either of Human potential or social purposes of schooling against which Australia's performance can be measured.

If the third point is left aside for the moment, then the temptation is to be complacent. Media coverage of comparative international data reflects this complacency (Zyngier, 2004). Official summations also reflect this complacency with no attention being drawn to the major negative features of the data (O'Reilly, 2002).

Australia Has Significant Problems

These seemingly satisfying results sit uneasily with persistent dissatisfactions with schooling expressed within Australia. Some of these dissatisfactions are ignored, others are the subject of report and review after report and review stretching out over decades (see analysis in Section Four), while yet others regularly erupt politically.

A search through a mass of contemporary research data concerning students' learning outcomes, students' motivation and engagement, indicators of teaching and learning quality (Davy, 1991; McGaw, 2005, 2006; OECD, 2001a, 2002a, 2003b, 2004, 2005; Rothman & McMillan, 2003; UNICEF, 2002) and public reportage of schooling-related issues, leads me to the view that the issues of greatest import which need to be directly and urgently addressed are:

- widespread student disengagement;
- serious inequality;
- replacement of public schooling with church-based and private schooling.

In the process of reaching this judgement, it has emerged as a possibility, strong enough to warrant further investigation, that the first two of these issues may well be tightly linked together and will continue so until the nature of the current curriculum paradigm is successfully addressed. Furthermore, I explore whether a new curriculum paradigm has the potential to meet many, if not all, of the needs of many students who currently enrol in church-based and private schools and therefore link with the third issue identified above.

But how serious are these three concerns? And are the reasons for them located more or less, in one or other, of the various systems which comprise Australia's schooling

provision? In particular, how does the public schooling system perform in respect of these concerns?

Boredom

Alarmingly, the majority of Australia's 15 year-olds are bored, disengaged or alienated from school (OECD, 2002a). This crucial phenomenon is ignored or misrepresented in the media (Zyngier, 2004) and often overlooked by others, maybe because of the absence of an effective student "union" or professional organisation with the capacity for formalised and promotional self-interest. The issue of student boredom is not one which teacher unions or associations, or schooling bureaucracies, are keen to raise publicly, despite its exquisite relevance in an industry which relies on students' levels of motivation as teachers assist them to move from the known to the unknown.

According to a 2002 study by OECD (2002a, p. 330), 60% of Australian 15 year-old students agree, or strongly agree, with the statement, "My school is a place where I often feel bored." This high level of reported boredom exists with the same students who see school as a place where "other students seem to like me" (92%) and "I make friends easily" (89%) and "I feel like I belong" (85%). By this information, school is a place where a huge proportion of students feel comfortable and surrounded by friends but, despite this, find school boring. A further layer of concern must be generated by the data from the same students, 34% of whom agree, or strongly agree, with the statement, "My school is a place where I do not want to go." These data are worth embedding in our consciousness. Despite students seeing school as a comfortable place to be, where they feel they belong, where other students like them and where they make friends easily, 60% are frequently bored and 34% are so alienated they do not want to be there at all!

Of the 27 OECD countries for which data is reported, Australia is one of the 7 countries with the highest incidence of student boredom equal with New Zealand and Finland and surpassed only by the United States (61%), Greece (66%), Spain (66%) and Iceland (67%) (OECD, 2002a, p. 330). There is no apparent correlation between countries with higher levels of student boredom and countries' performance as measured by the proportion of the population that has attained at least upper secondary education (OECD, 2005, p. 31), student performance on OECD PISA mathematics scale (p. 58), and problem-solving scale (p. 72).

With student interest at the heart of the successful learning process, it is logical to think that students who have no intention to learn and are disengaged from learning are more likely to

perform relatively poorly, leave school earlier, and/or absent themselves from higher learning. With 60% of its 15 year-old students bored at school and 34 % not wishing to attend, Australia, contrary to sustained and positive media reports (Berliner & Biddle, 1998; Zyngier, 2004) has a *serious* schooling problem that must be properly diagnosed and remedied.

But, is the problem peculiarly Australian, or limited to just a few OECD countries? The OECD average level of student boredom appears, at 48%, to be very high and the incidence of not wanting to attend, at 29%, also very concerning. Even the lowest scoring countries of Portugal, Mexico, Ireland, France and Japan report boredom at 24%, 28%, 30%, 32% and 32% respectively. Again, a comparatively lower incidence of student boredom appears to exist independently of the country's level of performance (OECD, 2005, pp. 31, 58, 72). Clearly, Australia has a worse problem than most OECD countries as the number of bored students is well above the average and only a few percentage points from the very worst performers.

Acknowledging widespread boredom in a schooling system may be a difficult thing to do, especially for schooling administrators. It may also be a complex matter to understand. It may be linked to schooling's compulsory nature, or its institutional character. It may be that students in different countries are subject to different cultural and social norms that interact with perceptions. But, whatever the reasons, OECD reports in 2002 that a massive 60% of Australia's students are frequently bored. This will be discussed at length later, and with reference to decades of studies which identify widespread student disinterest. For now it is sufficient to establish and accept that Australia is, to its students, amongst the most boring of national schooling systems.

Australia is not alone. Most OECD countries report levels of student boredom which would make any educator, from individual teachers to visionaries and managers of systems, seriously worried about the nature of schooling provision. To put it another way, Australia performs poorly compared to other countries and, prima facie, OECD countries in general appear to perform poorly against an imagined benchmark of high interest, raising doubts about even the *comparatively* successful OECD countries being *actual* high performers.

The data reveal, at least from many students' point of view, an unsatisfactory environment for learning in Australia's schools. But which schools? All of them? Public? Church-based? Private?

As previously noted the data (frustratingly) do not distinguish between church-based, private and public school students. In the absence of direct data it is difficult to make judgements about comparative proportions of boredom and disengagement in the various schooling sectors. However, we do have some clues.

It is highly unlikely, from the data, that all student boredom exists in public schools, or even that disproportionate amounts of boredom exist in public schools. This deduction is fortified by the OECD analysis of PISA 2000 in which it compared the prevalence of low SES and high SES students in different groups of students categorised as: non-academic students; engaged students; students feeling isolated; top students.

The study found:

> the likelihood of a student being in the group non-academic students is strongly negatively related to family socio-economic status … whereas a student with a family socio-economic status that is one standard deviation below the OECD average is twice as likely of being in the non-academic group, (OECD, 2003c, pp. 31-32)

and

> in contrast, students in the other three categories tend to be from a wide range of family backgrounds, ranging from well below the OECD average to well above the OECD average. The prevalence of students in each of these three groups is not strongly related to socio-economic status. The gradients are markedly non-linear for the engaged and isolated groups, with students of average SES more likely to be in these groups than students with low or high SES. (OECD, 2003c, pp. 31-32)

These data, when considered together with data concerning "bored" students, suggest that unlike learning outcomes which are highly linked to SES, "isolated" and "disengaged" students are likely to be found across the SES spectrum. Thus, while we would expect to find a greater proportion of "non-academic" students in schools where higher proportions of low SES students enrol (such as the public schooling system and, to a lesser extent, the Catholic parochial system) we would *not* expect to find a higher proportion of "isolated" or "disengaged" students in schools with concentrations of low SES students. It might therefore be fairly deduced that, despite Australia's failure to disaggregate their data, students who report high levels of "boredom" are not concentrated in public schools.

This should be an alarming conclusion for all Australians. We have deduced that, *across Australia's schools*, the overwhelming majority of students are happily surrounded by friends in a school where they feel they "belong," but most of them are frequently bored and a third of them don't want to be there at all. To put it another way, Australia's schools

are sites in which students are happy to meet their friends and engage in social intercourse, but they are also sites where there is a high level of resistance from the mass of the industry's consumers (students) to the industry's (compulsory) product. In educators' terms, these students are not motivated by schoolwork, not engaged by schoolwork, and less likely to learn from the curriculum provided by the school than students who are not bored, or students who are so highly motivated by other factors that they o'erleap the hurdle of boredom. With the proportion of these students so very high (60% at age 15) it is clear that the problem, whatever it is, relates not to the public/private divide, nor to low or high SES.

It is possible that the problem lies, as is so often asserted by some researchers (e.g. Rowe, 2003) and some of the public (e.g. Saulwick & Associates, n.d., p. 10), with teachers and their delivery (pedagogy) of the product (curriculum). It may also be that the problem lies with the product itself, or else it may be a mix of the two with each being of equal consequence, or one being of more consequence than the other. There is much activity, research and concern shown for the first but, on the part of curriculum authorities and public school management, concern only around the margins for the second. The current dominant curriculum paradigm, organised around a central concept of separate subject disciplines, each becoming rapidly specialised and organised vertically, remains largely unaltered despite considerable literature on, for example, the pedagogical benefits of cross-disciplinary treatment of themes throughout curriculum offerings. Curriculum alterations in recent decades, despite the grouping of subjects into KLAs and the identification of types of "essential" knowledge in several states and territories, have left the disciplines relatively untouched as a central structure while new streams of lesser, or vocationally oriented courses, have been added.

Here we find the matter of curriculum—particularly the way it is structured—emerging from a discussion of "boredom" as an issue. Later in this dissertation, curriculum's *structure* as well as its *content* will be discussed at length, particularly in reference to the social purposes it might, or should, be serving and the effects a newly generated curriculum paradigm might have on levels of student boredom.

Inequality

Equity in educational outcomes has been the subject of many reviews and reports in Australia. At the national level, the Commonwealth Schools Commission undertook a range of reviews during its existence between 1973 and 1988, with the Interim Committee to the Australian Schools Commission beginning the process (Karmel, 1973) and the

Quality of Education in Australia Review Committee delivering an appraisal of developments (Karmel, 1985). According to UNICEF (2002), most governments are concerned about education as a means of furthering equality of opportunity and social cohesion, and governments have this objective amongst their most important.

Australia's relatively encouraging average educational outcomes and educational disadvantage rankings mask a darker side of the Australian schooling system. A more detailed examination of data reveals Australia's relative position to 24 other OECD countries, on a measure of *absolute* disadvantage is moderately acceptable at 6th in literacy and 10th in Mathematics (UNICEF, 2002, Figure 2a, p. 7) but, further, when employing the measure of *relative* disadvantage Australia sinks well into the bottom half of OECD countries—15th of 24 (Figure 4, p. 9).

This result runs counter to impressions generated by OECD data noted earlier, which located Australia as 5th best in terms of absolute educational disadvantage. That is, Australia has an absolute level of disadvantage that is bigger (worse) than only 4 other OECD countries. So, how is it possible that the same country (Australia), according to the same reporting source (OECD), can now be worse than 14 OECD countries?

UNICEF (2002, pp. 6-9) defines a difference between "absolute" and "relative" disadvantage as outlined below.

In respect of absolute disadvantage, while Australia is not a star performer it *is* in the top half of OECD countries, scoring a fifth ranking overall. This ranking is established after averaging the rank Australia scores in five measures of absolute disadvantage, each ranking being based on the percentage of students scoring below a fixed international benchmark in surveys of: reading literacy, maths and science literacy, maths and science 8th grade achievement.

Because average ranking is a means by which the various surveys can be placed on a common scale, they serve *only* to place countries in relative order. They do not reveal the actual *levels* of educational disadvantage in each country (UNICEF, 2002, p. 6). The level of disadvantage, or the gap in outcomes between the performers and the non-performers, is defined as *relative* educational disadvantage. UNICEF reports that a measure of relative disadvantage between the extremes of student performance might imply a wish to limit the performance of the top performers. Instead, UNICEF points to a "consensus that allowing the lowest-achieving students to fall too far behind is a bad thing" and concludes "that the

more useful measure of inequality or *relative* disadvantage is the gap in scores between lowest and average scores" (p. 8). Based on this criterion—the difference in performance between Australia's bottom half of (poor) performers and the country's average performance—Australia plummets to 15th of 24 OECD countries!

This conclusion is consistent with an OECD analysis arising from Literacy Skills Assessment in PISA 2000. This analysis took the argument a little further by establishing that amongst OECD countries, Australia's system of public, church-based and other private schools is among the best *average* literacy performers but is one of the countries with the biggest gap between students from "well-to-do families and their counterparts from disadvantaged backgrounds" (OECD, 2001a, p. 253, Table 2.3a; 2003b, p. 178).

In other words, Australia is amongst the worst OECD countries when it comes to educating the bottom half of its schooling population despite Australia's comparatively good average overall performance. The gap between the performance of the bottom and top halves of school enrolments in Australia is amongst the biggest in the OECD.

McGaw (2006) presents this problem in a different manner. Looking at PISA 2000 Reading Literacy results, he has plotted the performance of countries into four quadrants on a social equity and reading literacy graph: low quality/low equity; low quality/high equity; high quality/high equity; and high quality/low equity. It shows Australia to be in the quadrant: high quality/low equity. McGaw concludes that:

> the presence of countries in the 'high-quality, high-equity' quadrant demonstrates that there is no necessary trade off between quality and equity. They show that it is possible to achieve both together. Korea, Japan, Finland and Canada are among them. Australia is a 'high-quality, low-equity' country, with a high average performance but a relatively steep regression line. (McGaw, 2006, Slide 12)

When this result is placed together with the now-widely acknowledged high correlation of low SES with lesser learning outcomes ("Interview with Barry McGaw," 2006, 23 March; McGaw, 2005) the size of the low SES-related problem in Australia becomes evident. McGaw again puts the problem concisely:

> In Australia, 70 per cent of the variation between-schools can be accounted for in terms of differences between schools in the social background of their students— 40 per cent individual social background and 30 per cent the average social background of students in the schools. Where differences in social background account for a large percentage of the between-school variation, this suggests that the educational arrangements in the country are inequitable. (McGaw, 2006, slide 16)

In the attempt to identify which part of Australia's complex schooling provision is most responsible for this situation, I again run into the problem of missing data. Except for data concerning their top 10% of students at exit-school examinations, church-based and private schools do not permit access to their schooling outcomes data. Requests of mine to the CEO of the NSW Catholic Education Commission (2006) for such data elicited a zero data response such that my analysis of Catholic system learning outcomes data, against equity groups' outcomes, was thwarted.

Nevertheless, using alternative data with strong correlations, it is possible to deduce that the greatest numbers of educationally disadvantaged students, both in quantum and proportionately, are located in the public schooling system (Bonner & Caro, 2007).

The strong relationship between socio-economic status and schooling outcomes is repeatedly acknowledged by professional and widely respected research-based organisations such as the OECD, UNICEF and ACER. In 2003 the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) (Rothman & McMillan, 2003) acknowledged that its *Longitudinal Study of Australian Youth* (LSAY) "concentrated on school-to-work transition" and as such "the data collected on school and student characteristics is not as extensive as the data collected for PISA 2000" (p. 34). ACER reports PISA 2000 results showing "that between 80 and 90 percent of between-school variance could be explained by school characteristics, and between 23 and 26 of the within-school variance explained by student characteristics" while the LSAY data "found that between 58 and 66 per cent of the between-school variance in literacy and numeracy achievement could be explained, and between 10 and 11 per cent of the within-school variance could be explained. Nevertheless, the LSAY data reflect the PISA 2000 finding that school SES and school climate explain some of the differences in achievement between schools" (p. 34). Many research reports come to similar conclusions (J. Ainley, Graetz, Long, & Batten, 1995, pp. xiv, 1, 4; Davy, 1991; Department of Employment, Education, & Training, 1989b; McGaw, 2005, frames 32 & 37; 2006; OECD, 2002a, pp. 42, 49, Figures 2.3 & 2.5; 2004, pp. 111, 120, 111-154, Figure 5.5; Rothman & McMillan, 2003).

With public schools enrolling the bulk of low SES students it can be readily deduced that the weight of responsibility for the education of low SES students remains with public schools. This conclusion is made with reference to achievement scores alone, leaving aside the data concerning attainment levels of public schools with their much lower rates of retention and progression to the later years of schooling, and their lower participation in university-oriented courses of study.

The outline above should be sufficient to establish that there is an "equity" problem facing Australia's public schooling system. However, this matter has been hotly contested for many years with management of public schooling systems, and a number of public authorities ignoring or downplaying the effects of SES on schooling outcomes.

One of the results of such a benignly ignorant, or neglectful head-in-the-sand, or consciously culpable, approach to the management of public schools has been the absence of a plan for the education of students from low SES communities. The appropriate contents of such a plan will be proposed later. For now, it is sufficient to report that such a plan does not exist despite its flagging in the 1973 Karmel Report's exhortations through the Disadvantaged Schools Program (DSP) to pursue school and *system* "action-research," to "light the fires of re-appraisal" and to provide "disadvantaged" students with a less alienating curriculum designed to be "relevant and meaningful" to the circumstances of low SES students. To no avail. None of the major and more conceptually difficult insights of the Blackburn-led "equity" themes of the Karmel Report were followed up. In NSW, increasingly the system treated the DSP as a persistently irritating opponent rather than a vehicle for testing a range of hypotheses concerning the education of low SES students. Advice, including advice concerning a comprehensive plan for the education of low SES students was ignored (no internal reply to submissions), draft equity plans never proceeded beyond draft stage, and the scope of the DSP was narrowed. I was ordered by the Director General in 1991 to a meeting in Canberra where I was instructed to argue and vote for the demise of the DSP (an order reversed as I entered the meeting following the intervention of the Minister who had been tipped off overnight by the then-President of the Australian Teachers Union of the Director General's action). Further, a movement back to less collegial and more authoritarian decision-making processes was supported, de-politicisation of thinking was supported, the staffing differential for class sizes was diluted until it disappeared, the action-research base and the wider scope of the DSP was neutered with replacement of the range of educo-political issues with a sole focus on "literacy" and later "numeracy." Not that the DSP should have existed forever. To the contrary, the DSP's role was to investigate on behalf of the system, how to manage the education of low SES students, using all its major arms of policy and administration in a co-ordinated manner, and to formulate those successful experiences into a plan.

Looking more to the future, a pre-requisite element of any plan for low SES students would be the discovery and use of data which can illuminate the sub-issues pertaining to the several arms of policy.

It has already been noted that I sought in 2006 from the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) a series of data sets I know to exist within the DET. The DET replied that "relevant Directors" within the DET had given "careful consideration" to my request but because my request included "data that the DET does not hold and data that would involve a considerable amount of work by Departmental officers for little benefit to DET" it was denied (Davy, 2005b; NSW Department of School Education, 2005, 2006). While the blocking response was frustrating, it was not surprising as the same sets of data had been presented, *with zero response*, many times to senior DET management including Directors and Deputy Directors General (internal to the DET), once each to two Directors General, on one occasion with a draft and comprehensive *Plan for the Education of Students from Low Socio-Economic Communities* after such a draft had been requested of the Director General as an outcome of a meeting between the Director General, myself (as Manager of the Targeted Programs Unit), and representatives from the parent and teacher organisations associated with NSW public schools (Davy, 1993).

My interest in the aforementioned data lies in its detail and accuracy. While most government funds for SES-based programs are allocated to entities identified using relatively large geographic areas (such as census collector districts), the NSW DET DSP Program invited all schools which thought they may qualify for DSP funds to nominate and they have been surveyed every 3 years since the late 1970s. The survey is school-specific, with large samples of students being identified from several layers within each school. The students' parents' socio-economic particulars are then surveyed and an SES level, or score, is calculated for each school. The ranking of the schools is particularly accurate because of the quality and specificity-to-the-school of the data collected. In 1990, 56% of NSW DET schools were nominated for survey, and in one of the ten regions, 100% of schools were nominated for survey. As a consequence, a huge number of schools (about 59% of 2,500 public schools) were surveyed and *each school* given an SES score. From this 59% of NSW public schools, 22% of the state's public schools were identified for inclusion on the DSP list of schools as those 22% of schools had the lowest SES scores.

Paralleling this DSP exercise, a different DET Directorate had developed expertise in collecting and computerising data from *each school* concerning Basic Skills Test (BST) results and other educational indicators associated with all NSW public schools. It was not a difficult task for that Directorate (and it would be less difficult now, 17 years on) to "flag" to the computer, all the DSP schools, and the other surveyed schools with their designated SES scores, and then to compute correlations of learning outcomes to specific SES scores. This exercise allowed the DET to graph a series of learning outcomes data

against the *full* continuum of SES scores derived from the 59% of schools surveyed (Basic Skills Test results at Years 3 and 5, subject choice at School Certificate and Higher School Certificate [HSC], School Certificate results, HSC results including Tertiary Education Rank [TER] and Tertiary Education Score [TES], retention rates, attendance, gender, indigenous, Non-English Speaking Background [NESB]).

The results were extremely informative and powerful. They revealed correlation after correlation—each one much more powerful than those between girls' and boys' literacy and numeracy, for example, which, at the time, dominated much of the public debate over schooling—and educationally daunting patterns for low SES schools' retention rates and participation in powerful curriculum streams such as advanced levels of University-entrance subjects.

Since that time, DET interest in the complexities associated with schooling low SES students appears to have contracted and narrowed. The DSP, which had previously been responsible for challenging all the wider system's major arms of policy as they related to DSP schools and students, was changed to a de-politicised Priority Schools Program (PSP) dealing only with literacy, and later, literacy and numeracy. "PSP focuses on improving the literacy, numeracy and participation outcomes for students. These are the most critical requirements for student achievement across the full range of education and training outcomes" (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2006b). The key strategy to achieving this narrow aim does not allow for investigation into a plethora of matters identified later in this thesis as important components of a plan to educate low SES students. Options for action are entirely laid at the schools' doors with responsibility for improvement driven solely into teacher-based responsibilities:

- quality teaching and learning;
- home, school and community partnerships;
- classroom and school organisation and school culture (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2006b).

The DET emphasises the teacher and school-based nature of responsibilities for improving low SES outcomes through its PSP with a headlined quote from Rowe (2003), under its key PSP operational strategy of "professional learning":

> The key message to be gained from the research on educational effectiveness is that quality teachers and their professional learning do make a difference to student learning. (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2006b)

The program puts zero pressure on the bureaucracy to look to its major arms of policy—curriculum structure and content, curriculum support, learning materials development, selection and appointment strategies, research into low SES outcomes and determinants of same, and so on. As is so often the case, the quote from Rowe is used to reverse philosophical thinking and bureaucratic responsibility away from, "Well, if as the research shows there is such a strong association of depressed attainment and achievement outcomes for students from low SES backgrounds how can we as a responsible Department illuminate the SES-specific reasons there might be for the data" to "a student's SES doesn't matter if the teachers are doing a good job—we'll make the teachers better." The effect of this reversal in philosophic focus is to absolve the bureaucracy from examining all its major arms of policy from the point of view of low SES-related research—and subsequent differential responses to those different understandings, probably in most of the major arms of research, policy and resource delivery. One effect is to remove pressure on the bureaucracy to see the issues relating to SES as system-wide issues which require system-wide responses, maybe even a counter-hegemonic approach to policy development. Without this pressure the system can more easily see low SES as a small issue which can be addressed with a "clip-on" program, something minor when compared with the big-ticket items such as curriculum, staffing, appointments, and so on when intuitively one knows that matters of curriculum, staffing and appointments are central to the cause of low SES students.

That the Department has a compartmentalised "program" approach to addressing the needs of low SES students is further emphasised by the absence of:

- any listed policy relating to "low SES students," "poverty" or "disadvantage";
- a state equity strategy which includes a plan for low SES students;
- a separate plan, policy or procedure for the education of low SES students (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007).

Not that such policies or strategies should be needed, but to further emphasise the DET's blind spot to low SES as a factor, leave alone an important factor, in the overall responsibility for the experience and outcomes of its own overall performance and the group performance of low SES students, the Department has no policy nor any "procedure" associated with low SES students. On its extensive website, DET lists hundreds of its policies and procedures. Under "our policies" and "schools" and "access and equity," the DET lists policy headings for:

- Aboriginal education

- Disabilities

- Gender

- Gifted & talented

- Harassment & discrimination

- Homosexuality

- Learning difficulties

- Multicultural

- Racism

No policy exists for low SES students.

The lack of consciousness of low SES as a major factor to be addressed is apparent in major public documents produced by the DET. Its Annual Reports make many references to initiatives and plans taken for various "equity" groups, but apart from a mention of the amount of funds provided to the PSP there is nothing specifically reporting actions or highlights or future expectations for low SES students (see NSW Department of Education and Training, 2006a). This mind-set of the DET is similar to that of associated bodies such as the NSW Institute of Teachers (NSW IT) which, in its 2007 issue of "professional teaching standards" by the Professional Learning and Leadership Development Directorate of DET which, when outlining "Teachers Know Their Students and How They Learn" as a crucial part of teaching standards, identify a number of equity groupings against which certain teaching protocols must be measured. The groups identified are:

- indigenous

- non-English speaking background

- students with special education needs

- challenging behaviours.

Again, not one mention of low SES students! (NSW Institute of Teachers, n.d., p. 5)

The relevance of all this to the present is that while the NSW public school system publicly reports much data in its Statistical Compendium, in respect of SES it needs to be more specific and detailed. If it were, it is likely it would confirm even more powerfully, the strong relationship between socio-economic status and educational outcomes already evident in the available data from, for example, the NSW Department of Education and Training's publicly available data compendiums which allow us to compare a range of education indicators such as primary school and early high school literacy and numeracy outcomes, subject participation, retention rates (amongst others) against factors such as: geographic isolation, gender, Aboriginality, and PSP average (NSW Department of

Education and Training, 2000-2004, 2004b). The PSP, while being a program which targets concentrations of low SES students, only embraces a proportion of low SES students and does not distinguish between low SES students at differing points of the low SES continuum.

It is notable that high performing selective high schools comprise only a small minority of provision within the public schooling system. Most students attend comprehensive high schools provided by government to fulfil the legislated objective of compulsory education for all citizens. As a consequence, the public schooling system does the "heavy lifting" (Davy, 2005a) in the schooling sector, as it is the public system that has responsibility for the bulk of students:

- who carry no inherited social advantage and occupy no position of privilege;
- from low socio-economic communities; generational poor, working poor, underemployed;
- from Aboriginal and other indigenous communities;
- from Outback and other geographically isolated areas;
- recently migrated;
- with a physical or mental disability;
- rejected or expelled by church-based and private schools;
- regarded as behaviourally unmanageable;
- medically precluded from attending school on a regular basis;
- pregnant, or with babies and toddlers;
- with an array of personal circumstances which preclude attendance at school on a regular basis and necessitate "distance education."

This is not to say that some church-based and private schools do not have some interest in these categories of children. This is not the case. But it is the case that serving the needs of these disadvantaged students is not their core business. To enrol students from these categories requires special provision such as the offering of a scholarship, or the waiver of some or all fees, to overcome the basic requirement of paying a fee to a private school, or meeting the desirable faith-based objectives of church-based schools.

In summary, students from low SES communities are enrolled in disproportionate numbers in public schools as are other students suffering various forms of disadvantage. As a consequence, it is logical to conclude that the greater proportion of educationally disadvantaged students is to be found in public schools.

At this point, given the propensity of some sectionally interested people to undermine one system or the other, a short diversion may be appropriate. These tentative conclusions—students from low SES communities with lower levels of average attainment and achievement are enrolled in disproportionate numbers in public schools—even if they prove to be correct, do not imply that the public schooling system is a worse performer than the church-based and private schools. A conclusion such as that could only be reached from data that revealed better educational outcomes from comparable students throughout the schooling years. I have already noted that church-based schooling systems and private schools do not make such data available, and the Australian Government, to which church-based and private schools *do* provide data, aggregates the data so these comparisons cannot be made (McGaw, 2005, frames 40 & 41). Given the absence of this data, some observers might reach the conclusion that church-based and private schools have *much* to be concerned about when it comes to rates of educational achievement, learning outcomes, and equality of learning outcomes between identifiable groups of students, and might have their speculative views on this matter strengthened by the knowledge that, as will be discussed at greater length in a later chapter, where there *is* a smidgin of data, and where public schools and private schools have control over their enrolment policies, public schools persistently outperform their church-based and private counterparts, and their ex-students who later enrol at university do better in post-school university studies (Dobson & Skuja, 2005).

Returning to the matter of relative disadvantage and the schooling system with most responsibility for it, it is reasonable to draw the conclusion that the public schooling system, for whatever reason, is responsible for managing the bulk of the huge relative disadvantage evident within the bottom half of Australia's schooling provision.

Is it possible to be more precise about the extent of this responsibility? To estimate the size of this problem for the public schooling system is not easy. Not to make an attempt though would be to keep from sight, for even more decades, the central plight of many of our public schooling students. What follows is an educated assessment:
The following evidence should be considered together:
- Australia's bottom 50% of students is amongst the most relatively disadvantaged in OECD countries;
- Public schooling enrols a disproportionate number of low SES students and students with a range of disadvantages which correlate relatively highly with lower educational outcomes.

With the private schooling sector averaging relatively high SES, and the Catholic sector being partly gentrified, public schooling with its 70% enrolment of the schooling population is estimated by me to account for 90% of the 50% most disadvantaged students or, to put it another way, 45/50ths of the bottom half of Australia's schooling performers are estimated by me to be enrolled in public schools. This estimate is consistent with the view of the NSW Public Education Council (2005, pp. viii-ix). This personal estimate (of 90%) is based on:

- the knowledge that private schools are heavily enrolled with high SES students—so I have estimated a negligible proportion of low SES in this 12% of the market;
- while church-based schools enrol a wide range of SES students they are nevertheless significantly gentrified—so I have estimated 30% low SES to that 18% of the market. Three tenths of 18% equals 5.4% of the total schooling enrolments.

Because this exercise is an estimate it might be helpful to try to "cover" the likely inaccuracies of my calculation with a range of estimates. With this in mind, the lower edge of the range might be calculated in this way:

- private schools are heavily enrolled with high SES students but an assessment of 20% of the 12% of the market is allocated. Two tenths of 12% is 2.4% of the total schooling enrolments;
- church-based schools are allocated 40% low SES in its 18% of the market. Four tenths of 18% equals 7.2% of the total schooling enrolments.

At this lower end, adding 2.4 and 7.2 produces a total of 9.6% of low SES students estimated to be enrolled in the non-public schooling sectors.

From these calculations we might deduce that between 5.4% and 9.6% of low SES students enrol in non-public schools, leaving between 94.6% and 90.4% of low SES students enrolled in public schools. For the purpose of the following argument I will use the more conservative 90.4 figure rounded down to 90%.

With the knowledge that low SES correlates highly with poorer attainment and achievement performance, added to the knowledge that public schools enrol the bulk of other categories of students with lesser schooling outcomes (such as students with an intellectual disability, indigenous students, students with moderate to severe behaviour difficulties, recent immigrants) it should be safe to use the 90% figure as an indicator of the proportion of students from the bottom half of Australia's students found to be amongst the

worst OECD countries when it comes to "relative disadvantage" who are enrolled in public schools.

This should not be a source of shame. After all, it was to meet the needs of these students that the public schooling system was established in the first place. It is to these youngsters that Directors General and senior DET management owe their existence. The shame lies more in the failure of the public system to raise the outcomes of these 45/50ths to be much closer to the average educational outcomes of the top 50%.

To play a little further with these data, if 45% of the whole (that is, the 90% of the 50% of Australia's bottom students) is enrolled in 70% of the whole (the public schooling systems) then 45/70ths (9/14ths) of the public schooling system comprises students who are identified by the OECD as amongst the worst relatively educationally disadvantaged students in OECD countries! That is, approximately 64 % of the total public schooling enrolment falls within the OECD's 50% of Australian students who have been identified as amongst the most relatively disadvantaged in OECD countries.

This estimate can be presented diagrammatically (see Figure 1). A diagram could comprise a horizontal line depicting the top half of Australia's student performers above the line and the bottom half below the line with Australia's 70% public school enrolment distributed 25/45 above and below respectively, and the non-public schools' 30% total enrolment distributed 25/5 above and below the line respectively, we can get a good picture as to the relative load—the "heavy lift"—the public system is carrying, while at the same time delivering into the top half of Australia's performers the same number of students as the non-public sector.

Figure 1: Proportion of public and non-public school students enrolled in Australia's top and bottom halves of student performance

%	Public schools	Non-Public Schools

Australia's top half

100
95
90
85
80
75
70
65 — 25% (Public schools) — 25% (Non-Public Schools)
60
55
50 — 5% (Non-Public Schools)

Total = 30%

Australia's bottom half

45
40
35
30
25 — 45% (Public schools)
20
15
10
5
0

Total = 70%
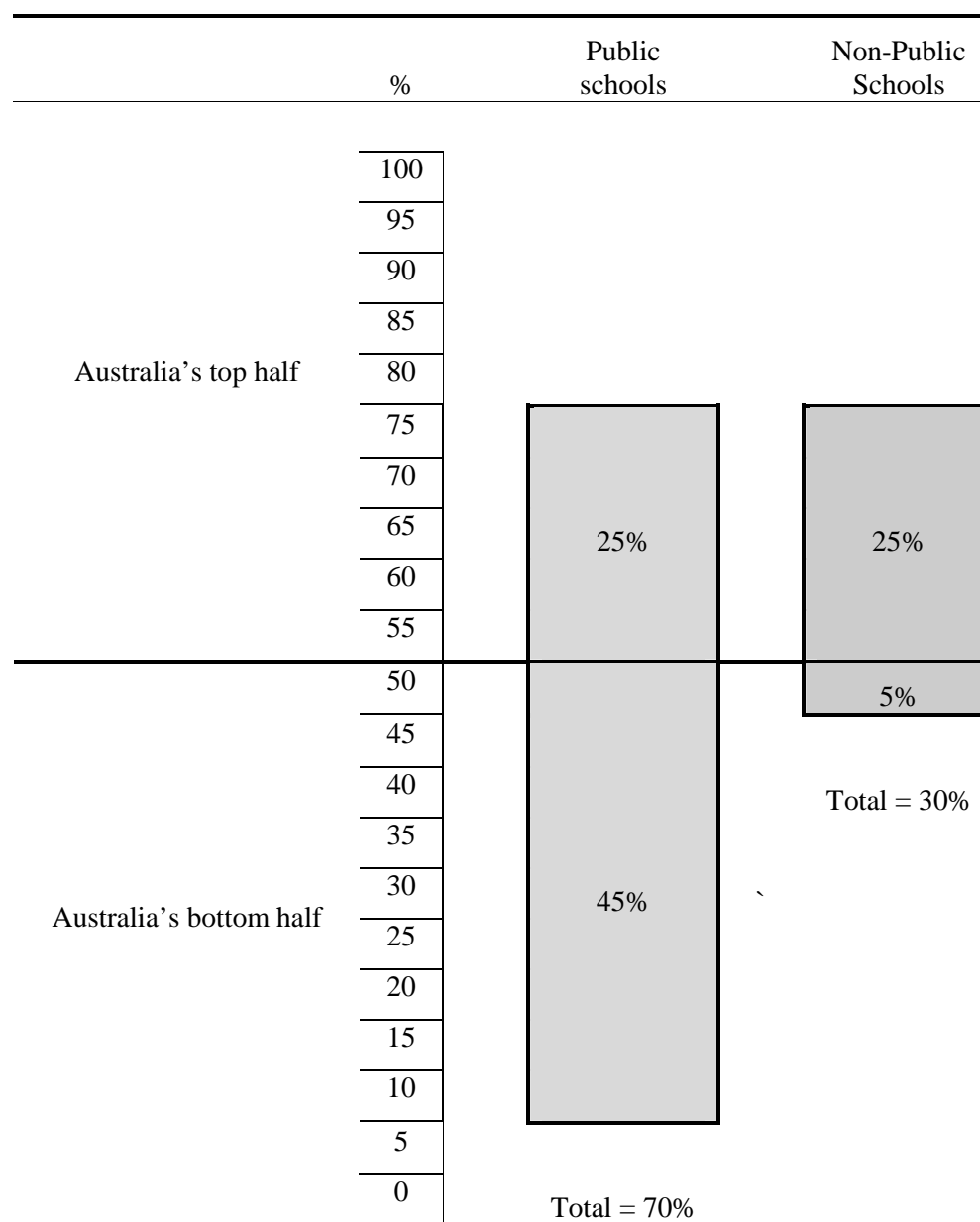
Despite the apparently encouraging *averaged and comparative* OECD data, Australian schooling provision is not healthy. This reality is not surprising. As statisticians are apt to advise, the average levels of performance of pupils in a country, while being "the measure most often used in international comparisons, and the one most often discussed in the political arena" are "the least useful measures in internal analyses, and can result in misleading conclusions" (Willms & Kerckhoff, 1995, p. 117).

In summary then, an examination of the full range of available data, including OECD data and within-Australia data, reveals a complex Australian schooling system which, using

averages, generally compares favourably with OECD countries but has serious weaknesses, two of which are of such central importance to the nature and purpose of education and affect such huge proportions of the schooling population, as to justify public scrutiny of the appropriateness of Australia's existing schooling structure, content and delivery. Those weaknesses are:

1. A student population which exhibits high levels of disengagement, boredom and/or alienation from schooling. This weakness is apparent across all sectors: public, church-based, private. It may be appropriate to look to teachers and teaching quality for answers to student boredom. It occurs to me that answers to student boredom (and maybe some teacher boredom) may be just as likely to be found in the way the curriculum is structured, and in its content. This matter is addressed more directly in Chapter Two.

2. Educational outcomes which are so poor for the *majority* of Australia's public schooling students as to rate them amongst the most relatively disadvantaged performers within OECD countries. This weakness, which challenges the *raison d'etre* of public schooling, is addressed more directly in Chapter Three, and raises an associated curriculum matter concerning the intrinsic value of what is taught to low SES and variously disadvantaged people.

Running parallel to these two concerns is a third, and highly political, phenomenon that threatens the very existence of public schooling. This matter is the subject of an entire separate section, Section Two, in which I address the established and accelerating trend of public indifference to the public system, and an associated loss of political support for public schools. In doing so, the matter of *curriculum* structure will again emerge as an important issue to be examined further.

Chapter Two: Success in Schooling—All is Well for the Vast Majority…or Is It?

Success at school is not a random occurrence (Australian Schools Commission, 1975; Karmel, 1973). Success takes a certain shape. In the first place, of the students who continue their studies beyond the compulsory years of schooling, LSAY reports that a string of studies

> have shown that students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds, those from private schools, high early school achievers and students from non-English speaking backgrounds are more likely to participate in the courses that are avenues to higher education and the professions. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to participate in courses that lead to vocational education and training or more often to entry into the labour market without any further formal education or training. (Fullarton & Ainley, 2000, p. 1)

Second, there are many students who do not remain at school beyond the compulsory years. In its 2006 Statistical Compendium the NSW DET, for example, reported retention rates (Yr 7—12) of 54% for students in its low-SES-based Priority Schools Program (29.5% for indigenous students) reminds us that 46% of low SES students (70.5% indigenous students) are missing from all end-of-schooling data (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2000-2004, 2004b), thus magnifying greatly the size of disadvantage already evident in end-of-school achievement data.

Third, throughout the schooling years success appears, generally, among identifiable groups of students. Different attainment and achievement outcomes associated with a variety of identifiable student groups have become, in the period since the early 1970s, the generators of public debate and concern, political agitation, political interest and, finally, especially developed policies, procedures and/or programs and projects. Since the Karmel Report of 1973 special programs have been established to improve relatively poor outcomes associated with: new immigrants with language needs, indigenous students, low SES students, students at risk, geographically isolated students, girls, boys, and students with a disability (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2000-2004, 2004b).

From data consistently provided by international, national and state-based studies, it is evident that an overwhelming influence cuts across all these categories. Successful students come disproportionately from:

1. Families with relatively high education levels or other indicators of SES. This factor is strong throughout OECD countries and substantially stronger in Australia

than the OECD average (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2006c, pp. 32-33; OECD, 2001a, p. 308, Appendix B1, Table 8.1; 2002a, 2003a, pp. 58-62, 2003c, p. 34; OECD, McKenzie, & Hirsch, 2002, pp. 40-42; UNICEF, 2002);

2. Schools with relatively high SES including: selective public schools which, unlike other public schools, have control over their enrolment intake and exclusion policies; high-fee church-based and private schools which, like selective public high schools, have control over their enrolment intake and exclusion policies (McGaw, 2005; OECD et al., 2002, pp. 50-52; Teese & Polesel, 2003, pp. 194-196).

Despite the clear and compelling evidence of strong correlations between high performance and high SES and low attainment and achievement outcomes for low SES students, there is little sign that the evidence linking SES to outcomes is being more closely examined for elements of cause and effect. For example, there is no curriculum study that I have encountered which is investigating the existence or not, of curriculum outcomes, content or structure which might be culturally or politically or psychologically attuned to high SES characteristics. Nor even a study of the characteristics of being high SES and how such students might more happily co-exist with current curriculum structures and content. Curriculum is only one area where these studies might be undertaken to give us better insights into high SES and high learning outcomes. It is odd that this is not happening already, given the strength and persistence of data linking high SES with high outcomes. After all, if we knew poor outcomes were associated with gender, or immigrant status, it would not be surprising if we directly researched the cause and effect of these correlations. In the case of new immigrants we might find there to be a lack of language understanding which we would then move to correct, or at a more political level of consciousness we might find throughout the entirety of our curriculum and its support materials, few images or little substance sympathetic to immigrant background(s) and new circumstances and we might move as an education system to meet these researched needs. In respect of gender, we might see the association of poor outcomes in some subjects (e.g. Maths and Science for girls) as being related to generations of expectations (highly political) of girls becoming generally subordinate figures in the adult world.

In respect of low SES students there appears not to be this (political) interest in the cause and effects of high SES students doing disproportionately well and low SES students doing disproportionately poorly. In fact, in my estimation, the emphasis from education bureaucracies is to silently deny that the high/low SES connection has any cause and effect relationship and, without researching or planning, to move to general educational matters

such as teacher performance, class sizes, school tone (and so on) which, it is asserted, will improve outcomes for all students. As outlined in Chapter One, the low SES program in NSW public schools outlines no role for the system and admits to no problem or even issue at system level and neglects to include any low SES policy or procedure in its otherwise replete set of policies and procedures. It is true that Education Policy, at least in the short term, cannot on its own affect the socio-economic status of students or their schools.

Maybe this is the underlying reason explaining why the influence of SES on educational outcomes is often downplayed or ignored or actively discounted. Some big and important education authorities are reluctant to accept the importance of the strong association between SES and educational outcomes and the raft of consequences which are likely to flow from such an acceptance, (NSW Department of School Education, 2005) choosing instead to shy away from the complex conceptual difficulties and the inevitable philosophic and political contestations likely to attend those difficulties, in favour of *generalising* the difficulties and responding to those generalities with non-SES specific considerations of matters which they believe they understand, and over which they believe they have greater influence such as: subject choice (McGaw, 1997), teaching approach and quality (T. Griffiths, Amosa, Ladwig, & Gore, 2007), class size, attitude to schooling, study habits, influence of disruptive students, discipline, school climate, teacher attitude, teacher training and re-training, expectations of schooling, expectations of students, public or church-based or private schooling, and so on.

Denial is a poor base for logical planning and, not surprisingly, the strategy of generalising ran, and runs, into conceptual difficulties. Thus it is that the education literature of recent decades is peppered with euphemistic references to students who are "less able" and/or "non-academically inclined" and/or "non-university oriented" when any research-based educator knows that these students are overwhelmingly low SES students (incorporating indigenous students) (Prest, 1992).

Of course, a generalised problem will get a generalised response, so public schools servicing relatively low SES communities, are now brimming with VET courses and a range of lesser academic courses designed to "meet the needs" of the "less able" students for whom it is "OK" to provide a series of less rigorous courses, steering them into training programs more practically oriented—a bit like modern-day courses for "hewers of wood and drawers of water." McGaw provides a devastating analysis of the effects of this policy within the NSW public schooling system between 1976 and 2000, establishing the disproportionate effects on low SES students in NSW, and concluding that:

- "the clear message is that expectations, and not only prior performance or capacity, determine course enrolments. Where students are encouraged to enrol in less demanding courses than are actually appropriate for them they are denied the challenge to intellectual development that can come from more demanding courses" (McGaw, 2006, slide 25)—a conclusion which resonates harmoniously with very recent research reported by Amosa, Ladwig, Griffiths, & Gore (2007).
- "the questions then become how much differentiation is necessary to accommodate real differences among students and how little could be coped with to ensure that all students are challenged to intellectual growth in their final years of schooling" (McGaw, 2006, slide 25)—a conclusion which invites a serious review of curriculum provision in this country, and, within that review, a focus on content which might be regarded as essential.
- "subject diversity in post-compulsory years can increase inequity through constrained offerings and marked differences in pathways" (McGaw, 2006, slide 26).

A generalised response doesn't require a more research-based investigation or action-research program designed to search out the *reasons* why low SES students appear to comprise an army of "dead-heads" who are less able, non-academically inclined and non-university oriented. With the less able "fixed up" with lesser courses, there is no problem.

But of course there is. Even if the lesser courses are societally-beneficial, the overwhelming concentration of low SES students in them is a matter of educational equity. That these courses do not lead, in general, to positions of power and influence within the political and economic life of the country is not of concern to me. That they are populated overwhelmingly by low SES students is a matter of importance, and in a democracy, a matter which, without remedy, eats away at the basis of democratic thinking and practice.

Generalising the specific causes of depressed learning outcomes for low SES students is a betrayal of the needs of these students. Simply applying a general remedy to something which may be low SES-specific, runs the risk of proving Rothstein's (2004) theory correct—that low SES students will *always* display poorer outcomes irrespective of the quality of curriculum, teaching, or resource levels applied. With the public school system originally designed to provide a guaranteed (compulsory) education to these very students (low SES) the betrayal is magnified by the refusal to engage on the matters of real concern addressed later in this dissertation.

Why would answers to depressed outcomes from low SES students be found with a perspective and a methodology which assumes students to be of one *general* category—students? Why would *general* educational responses be any more likely to work than general responses to differential outcomes between girls and boys, between migrants and non-migrants, between indigenous and non-indigenous, between city and remote students? All these listed differences are attacked with a combination of general *and specific* researching, projects, programs, policies and procedures which is not as evident when it comes to low SES students. Answers to the problem of low SES schooling outcomes are, prima facie, just as likely to be associated with students' low SES experience as some improvement designed to improve outcomes for all students.

It may be that some answers are easy to understand while others may be more complex and mixed up with political thinking. Examples of easy-to-understand specifically-low SES matters would include the disequilibrium generated in students by chronic morning hunger, or winter cold, or emotional disturbance, or lesser academic starting points, or absence of pre-schooling, or lack of family philosophic and material resources. A slightly more difficult concept would be that of differential staffing—a differential allocation of resources and class-size in recognition that the students (and the teacher) is facing a set of more complex and politically interwoven issues than those in higher SES schools. These are all relatively easy conceptual matters.

However, the issues may be much more complex, even political and, if political, even counter-intuitive to those who currently hold political and bureaucratic control. The issues may require an understanding of the *constructs* of SES disadvantage and its effects on families in general and on students in particular. It is probable that some, maybe many, of these issues will lie well outside the experience and empathy of many teachers and their managers and their employing authority. It may be that to get at the issues, data and analysis will need to be generated and some of it may well clash with long held philosophic and/or political beliefs of those in control. That is, the problem of poor outcomes for low SES students may be embedded in a range of management and industrial policies which flow from the current curriculum and its paradigm which holds two horrors for low SES students:

- the current curriculum and its paradigm is organised in a way which strips it of Life's meaning; it is boring; and it is a poor base for good pedagogy (for any student);
- the current curriculum's content has little of intrinsic value to low SES students. That is, no thought is given, by dominant and centralised curriculum managers, to

building a curriculum for all students which provides empowering outcomes, not only for the already empowered but specifically for the fatalistic and disempowered—low SES students who, by definition, experience a world of disempowerment. Included in the base referencing for this research might be the perspectives (if not the contexts) of Freire's (1974) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and the perspectives of feminist educators who saw the value of revealing, as the top priority, to all girls, "from the earliest years," a full range of adult roles in society and the educational pathways to achieving them (Curriculum Corporation, 1993).

I will return to these ideas later. In the meantime, we have a system in which less attention is given to these matters and more attention to issues such as: subject choice, teaching approach and quality (pedagogy), class size, attitude to schooling, study habits, influence of disruptive students, discipline, school climate, teacher attitude, teacher training and re-training, expectations of schooling, expectations of students, public or church-based or private schooling, and so on.

It is tempting for educators as individuals or en masse—as officers and advocates of education systems and bureaucracies and Ministries and teacher unions, or even as researchers—to advance the importance of these factors either as matters they understand well and advocate, or as persons with professional interest or, less moral, as a political defence of a school or a system. The entire policy debate is made more confused by the intense and unrelenting hostility associated with the organised Right and Left of Australian politics—and associated attacks on public school teachers as lazy and ineffective, and attacks on private schools as a source of privilege and lop-sided government funding. Whatever the reasons, there are many whose claims have the effect of turning policy considerations away from the effects of SES on educational outcomes. The research and reporting of the OECD reflects the areas of interest in recent years. Specifically, they include:

1. Quality of interactions between students and teachers, and students and students comprising:

   a) Teacher supportiveness

   b) Disciplinary climate

   c) Use of school resources

   d) Student-teacher relations (OECD, 2002a, pp. 315-330);

2. Teacher—related factors affecting school climate (pp. 315-330);

3. Teacher morale and commitment (pp. 315-330);

4. School autonomy (pp. 315-330);

5. Homework policies (pp. 315-330);

6. Student engagement:

   a) Sense of belonging

   b) School and lesson attendance (OECD, 2003b, 2003c);

7. Funding items such as: expenditure per student (pre-school, infants, primary, junior secondary, senior secondary, TAFE, university); expenditure as proportion of GDP; class size and pupil-teacher ratios (OECD, 2005);

8. Learner characteristics:

   a) Students' self motivation

   b) Students' self-related beliefs

   c) Learning styles: competitive and co-operative (OECD, 2003a, 2003b);

9. Effective teaching and quality teaching (Rowe, 2003).

The degree of influence that each researcher ascribes to the elements comprising the list above is not clear. Nevertheless, there appears to be widespread agreement that:

   a) High SES is the biggest positive influence, and low SES the strongest negative influence, on educational outcomes; and

   b) Attention to the issues raised above will lead to better outcomes for all students.

If this is the case, then how should governments respond? To point (b) above the answer is clear—systematically improve the processes outlined in the list above. Point (a) though, has become a matter of contention. In response to the high influence of SES on schooling outcomes, governments appear to have adopted a grander "choice" policy which results in:

1. Public school systems establishing more and more "selective" high schools and selective classes within non-selective schools in order to get more focussed concentrations of students with proven academic achievements, with fewer behaviour problems. The concentration of higher SES students in these schools and classes results in residual schools and classes with consequent concentrations of lower SES students;

2. Ministers of Education and political parties leaning increasingly toward a policy of privatising public schooling systems with its consequence of higher concentrations of low SES students in public and poorer church-based schools.

These policy trends fly in the face of OECD data and analysis which reveal that pursuit of these policies will further exacerbate the relative educational disadvantage experienced by Australia, already performing in the bottom half of OECD countries. That is, the bulk of the

public schooling system will fall further behind in terms of their already alarming level(s) of relative disadvantage.

Private schools, in any event, do no better than public schools when statistical attention takes account of student SES and school SES. That is, when the public and private systems' data are adjusted for the "SES" of higher proportions of low SES students (the "heavy lift" being in the public schooling sector) then private schools do no better than public schools. In fact, in many countries, including New Zealand, Germany, Mexico, Korea, United States, United Kingdom, Hungary, Sweden, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland , Switzerland, Italy, Japan, and Luxembourg, the public schools *outperform* their church-based and private counterparts following adjustment for both individual student and school SES (McGaw, 2005, frame 40).

The OECD does not report the performance of Australia's public and private schools because the data available to the Australian Government are not provided to OECD. McGaw, speaking of OECD countries, is unequivocal on the matter of socioeconomic effects:

> Once differences between the school systems in the social backgrounds of their students and the schools have been taken into account, there is no remaining significant overall superiority of non-government schooling in any [italics added] country. The observed superiority of non-government schools in the base data appears to be due to the students they enrol rather than what they do as schools [italics added] (McGaw, 2006, slide 31).

Unfortunately, the applicability to Australia of these data is not direct. Our ability to analyse these matters is made difficult by the same denial of public/private data which was evident in respect of student outcomes. The absence of comparable data also draws McGaw's unequivocal disapproval: "Whether this is the case in Australia is unknown since government and non-government schools in the Australian database is *suppressed* [italics added] before it is submitted for international analysis. That practice should be changed" (McGaw, 2006, slide 31). Just who is responsible for the suppression of these data is not clearly known.

Furthermore, increased levels of separation of schools and students by way of SES or educational performance (institutional differentiation) will effectively decrease the overall outcomes for an education system. Where there is a high degree of differentiation between schools along socio-economic lines, students with low SES do worse. This in turn means that some of the inequality of outcomes is associated with more than low SES of the

individual student, but is also associated with inequality of opportunity (OECD et al., 2002, p. 54) or with the fact that schools contribute to the production of educational inequality. In short, these policy trends represent:

- decisions to entrench existing social and economic inequalities, thus running directly counter to a philosophic commitment to "equality of educational opportunity" and a commitment to the more democratic objective to attain, over time, an "equality of outcomes" as outlined in the 1999 Adelaide Declaration of National Goals for Schooling;
- propagation of privilege;
- exacerbation of the relative educational disadvantage between the top and bottom halves of Australia's school students; and
- worse overall educational outcomes from the nation's education system.

In a country so consciously protective of its cultural claim to "a fair go" this is a devastating critique. Maybe the data which underpin conventional schooling policy formulation is capable of a different interpretation. If we read the data pattern familiar to schooling systems' management, are we likely to form the same picture of existing provision from that data, or are we likely to form a different picture? No matter what the answer to that question, would we respond in the same way to the data? Or, is the data capable of a different reading, and is it capable of leading us to a different set of solutions than those already adopted by schooling authorities? Could a different reading lead to a different line of research and policy development?

To be sure, for those familiar with the data, who hold a philosophic opposition to consciously propagated privilege, and who have a commitment to both better outcomes for all and, over time, equal educational outcomes between all groups of students, a search for another way is legitimate and urgent.

Looking at the Data Differently

There are some things which are clear: low SES is associated with lower educational outcomes; higher SES is linked to higher educational outcomes. Concentrations of low and high SES students exist in certain schools—higher SES in private and some church-based schools, lower SES in some church-based schools, and in public schools except selective schools—and these schools report outcomes accordingly.

As noted earlier, this general interpretation of data is contested by some (Rowe, 2003) despite the overwhelming presence of data suggesting strong and persistent correlations between low SES and educational outcomes (McGaw, 2005, frame 40).

The contestation, while legitimate, can become an effective block to progress on new fronts. It blunts the press for differential allocation of resources, welfare support of cold and hungry children, and serious research into matters of empowerment and curriculum outcomes with intrinsic value to variously disempowered students. It dampens political interest in the more contentious issues associated with the relatively disadvantaged, and deflects interest from a curriculum with intrinsic value for low SES students, particularly when the contestation comes from authoritative sources such as State departments, and research centres. It is also consistent with the political agenda of those who oppose government intervention in practices which produce or maintain inequalities.

Working in harmony with these contestations are parallel observations describing the system as healthy overall—that there is nothing structural or systemic to worry about. This line of thought would have us believe Australia's schooling system is, generally speaking, in good health and its students are happy with it—it just needs some continuing modifications from time to time to meet emerging changes in priorities. Again, this pose feeds public complacency and, if it hides major defects in the system, does the life chances of young Australians—maybe many of them—damage. If the lop-sided reportage is as a result of mistake or incompetence one could forgive. On the other hand, if the lopsidedness is the result of a desire to hide the size of the problem(s), or the lack of understanding or complexity of the problem, and/or failures in public or non-public schools then, the perpetrators of the lop-sidedness would be culpable.

An important case in point arises from the conclusions drawn by ACER (1998) following one of its studies within the influential series of Longitudinal Studies of Australian Youth (LSAY):

> Generally, the Quality of School Life surveys indicate that the majority of students have positive views of school. Ainley (1995) provide examples from both primary and secondary schools. For example, over 80% of secondary school students agreed with the statement, "My school is a place where the work I do is a good preparation for the future." Over 70% agreed with the statement that, "My school is a place where I am a success as a student." Among primary school students the level of positive agreement was even higher. So whatever the popular image of school environments, recent surveys of students using these batteries suggest that the overwhelming majority of students are happy [italics added] with their schools (ACER, 1998, pp. 1-2).

This conclusion of ACER is more than any old point of view. This is the ACER speaking! The Australian Council of Education Research—the pre-eminent researcher of educational issues—a permanent, government-resourced and ostensibly independent body. The ACER is trusted. It has respect. What it says is reported widely, and with credibility. This is not a biassed teachers' union or political party, or disaffected parent, or self-interested identity group.

The ACER's view appearing above differs markedly from a long line of research outcomes from a number of other highly respected sources spanning a lengthy period of time. ACER's claim that the overwhelming majority of students are happy with their schools, when put together with the widely publicised view that OECD data shows Australia's schools are performing well, produces a picture of a nation full of satisfied students happily engaging with their studies in schools which are performing well. This scenario is at odds with the weight of disaffection appearing in the media and, as we shall now see, at odds with a long line of evidence to the contrary.

In 1978 the Australian Government Commission of Enquiry into Poverty (Fitzgerald Enquiry) drew attention to students' perceptions of schooling's value which was described by students in terms of:

* preparation for job or trade	13%	
* academic qualifications	35%	
* basic learning and skills	23%	.......71%
- social development, getting on with others	0%	
- preparation for life and its problems	4%	
- personal development and understanding	3%	.........7%
> conformity to society, good manners	6%	
> school's reputation, good name, tradition	6%	
> obedience, conformity to school's authority	4%	.......16%
	Unsure 6%	
	TOTAL 100%	

Fitzgerald (1978) reported that students believed that schooling's heavy emphasis (71%) on *basics/academic/job* and lack of emphasis (7%) on *social/life/personal* should be substantially reconstructed with 56% believing emphasis should be given to curriculum which addresses *social/life/personal* and 34% of students wanting a continuing emphasis on *basics/academic/job* (R. T. Fitzgerald, 1978, pp. 46-47). These same students believed much of the secondary school curriculum to be irrelevant (R. T. Fitzgerald, 1978, pp. 54-55) and delivered with pedagogical practices which "turn off" students because of an over-

reliance on "this exclusively academic orientation" (R. T. Fitzgerald, 1978, p. 55). Clearly, these data, old as they are (1978) provide evidence of a disaffected army of students, strengthening the point made earlier that, even if the considered wisdom of the best educators in the land believe the schooling curriculum is adequate, amongst the student body a very considerable number have a different view. Interestingly, these data stimulate attention to another issue—that of curriculum. Fitzgerald's student subjects were interested in a *curriculum* change suggesting that the matter of curriculum adequacy, its structure and content, should be in the frame for examination and critique. Fitzgerald does raise this general matter although he falls short of suggesting remedies, and he does not challenge the curriculum paradigm, structured as it is around subject disciplines and with an absence of consideration of curriculum's intrinsic value to low SES students.

Not long after the Fitzgerald Enquiry in 1980, the Schools Commission's study *Schooling for 15& 16 Year Olds* reported a "general unease" (Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia], 1980, p. 1) students held for schooling. The Schools Commission comprised commissioners from across the sectors and consulted with, and at this time was held in high regard by, all sectors of the schooling system. Its research was undertaken with the approval of various schooling systems and its analysis was well known by schooling managements throughout Australia. The general unease felt by students was enough to stimulate the Schools Commission to address key curriculum matters. The Commission did not report a happy student workforce. They were uneasy, and so much so that the Commission felt bound to address some difficult curriculum questions. The Commission set out to establish what students "should get" from schooling (p. 5). The Commission's list comprised:

- an excitement about and the confidence to undertake a commitment to some activity which they want to continue to pursue;
- confidence in their power to influence events affecting their lives, whether at individual or societal level;
- skills and knowledge which qualify them to be eligible for what they consider to be appropriate paid employment, and/or to enter further education or training;
- knowledge that they can seek out information which interests them or which they need for particular purposes;
- a framework of organising ideas about the working of the physical and social world to which new inputs can be related;
- a sense of their own existence within a continuing culture with social and moral values which are open to reinterpretation;

- confidence that they have been given access to knowledge which helps them to make sense of the physical and social world and that reasonable attempts have been made to make that access a reality;
- the ability to question objectively new ideas and experiences and make judgements about their relevance to them; and
- the opportunity to become involved in activities they could not otherwise have come to know (Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia], 1980, p. 5).

With a "general unease" amongst students the Commission emphasised the need to "relate knowledge to life." The Commission's interest in curriculum led it to suggest examples of learning experiences which are wholistic and experiential, to be *assisted* by the subject disciplines but not *presented* as subject disciplines. Not surprisingly, the Commission's concern with the general unease of students led it to consider matters of curriculum. Despite these advanced insights the Commission did not conclude that the role and place of subject disciplines needed to be reviewed. The Commission implied that the curriculum was not doing the job properly but limited its suggested "variations" to:

- encouraging an experiential pedagogy to replace transmissional teaching strategies;
- de-emphasising the importance of credentials;
- acknowledging the importance of knowledge in practical events;
- building on the already "known" experiences and knowledge of students to provide insight and motivation for the move to the unknown elements of the subject disciplines;
- linking the real and experienced "social realities" of different "social groups" to the content and experiences taught from the school curriculum; and
- linking age-relevant experiences to the important events within "society and the world" (Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia], 1980, pp. 13-14).

Like Fitzgerald, the Commission responded to student disaffection with "macro" curriculum issues. The concerns of the Poverty Enquiry and the Schools Commission were not concerns for a small alteration here or there. Their concerns were generated by the perceived widespread disaffection students had for the curriculum—the sweep of curriculum's objectives. Both Commissions were concerned to match the needs and interests of young people to the curriculum they were legally bound to address each day.

From the point of view of this thesis it is interesting to note that the Commission, while itself stopping short of challenging the curriculum paradigm, threw to the Curriculum

Development Centre the responsibility of finding a "core of fundamental learnings" with nominated features. It did so, however, without challenging the dominance of the subject disciplines (Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia], 1980, p. 18).

In its chapter recommending an "adaptive" school, the Commission discusses more flexible arrangements of courses in schools (Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia], 1980, pp. 51-62), but there is an assumption that the greater flexibility will concern the arrangements and timetabling associated with the "disciplines" rather than challenge to the disciplines themselves.

Following this report by the Commission, interest in curriculum change was generated by a new politic. In 1987 the Commonwealth Schools Commission (CSC) again looked at secondary schooling but this time from the perspective of the national needs in the economy. The Finn Report and later the Mayer Report were concerned almost exclusively for the needs of the economy, a major national effort was made to devise a set of national curriculum frameworks and associated "outcomes," and a new fervour for Vocational Education and Training (VET) in schools became apparent. None of these major reports was generated by research into student happiness or satisfaction with schooling's content or outcomes.

The CSC report, *In the National Interest* (1987) went closest to challenging the basic curriculum paradigm. As I will argue, it called for a paradigm with two strands of curriculum: essential and elective. It proposed "development of frameworks for essential studies" for all Year 7 to Year 12 students. While it stopped short of challenging the subject disciplines explicitly, it did propose a "guiding principle" containing four components to "provide the content of the essential studies." The last of these components makes explicit reference to the need for cross-disciplinary "integrated" studies, thus implying the other three are components which are to be addressed within existing discipline structures. The four components listed are:

- concepts
- intellectual performance skills
- Australian Studies
- integrated studies (Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia], 1980, pp. 97-99).

Despite the unhappiness of large numbers of students with their curriculum experience, and despite the deep considerations and recommendations of the Schools Commission, the early

ideas of the Fitzgerald Enquiry and the Schools Commission were not pursued. These early thoughts pointed in the direction of curriculum critique, including a critique from the point of view of low SES communities, but they were pushed aside as a different political agenda—economic rationalism—swept Australia (Marginson, 1997).

 Subsequent development of national curriculum statements through the Curriculum and Assessment Committee (CURASS) of the Ministerial Council of Education, Employment, Training & Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) was undertaken with little regard to the views of the Commission and no explicit regard for equity considerations. The place of the subject disciplines was not challenged. To the contrary, they were strengthened by the mode of organisation. The development of curriculum statements and outcomes was undertaken *within* each discipline—with mathematics educators discussing the Maths curriculum with mathematicians and mathematics educators, science educators with scientists and science educators, historians with historians, and so on.

In addition, a number of national reports drew focus on to the economic needs of Australia and emphasised skills development and "competencies" which students needed to be taught if they were to be of value to employers and the economy (Finn, 1991; Mayer, 1992). The academic basis of the curriculum, and its organisation and presentation within boundaries of subject disciplines, was maintained. To this basic provision was added additional courses with greater vocational emphasis—generally aimed at the variously described "less able," the "non-university oriented," and the "non-academically inclined," each of them euphemisms for low SES and Aboriginal students.

The intervention of this new wave of politics with different and economic emphasis might help to explain the ACER's unfortunate interpretation of its own data, as this ACER interpretation masks many important matters otherwise revealed by the ACER data in its LSAY studies. In the first place, the ACER appears to take liberties when interpreting its own data. For example, there is a large leap in logic from data which has students reporting themselves as "successful" students (additional to the difficulties of understanding what might be meant when students, perhaps with quite low expectations of themselves, describes themselves as "successful") and students describing themselves, as the ACER summarises, as "happy" at school. A student with huge potential but little understanding of life's adult roles and rewards associated with each of them, is likely to regard her/his relatively low-to-modest schooling outcomes as "successful" in a way that another student with somewhat *less* potential but with a more comprehensive view of society, its infrastructure and its potential rewards, would not. The ACER summation simply does not

engage on the issue. The report of students regarding themselves as "successful"—the ACER "happy" thesis—does not stand up to analysis *generally*, and specifically leaves the plight of the relatively disadvantaged of Australia's low SES students unattended.

The ACER reports an "overwhelming majority" of 72% as "happy" as if this is a result to be celebrated, leaving the presumed unhappiness of the other 28% with no sympathy. It is doubtful if any concept of "majority" is helpful to this educational analysis. "72%" does not appear to be such an "overwhelming majority of students" that the 28% of students who knew, accepted and reported that they were not "successful students" should be ignored. This 28% is almost certainly a concentrate of low SES and Aboriginal students. And, in this ACER analysis, they are ignored.

One might be excused for taking the ACER interpretation for granted. Certainly media reporters, with the ACER report to hand, can be expected to thread the authoritative and highly respected ACER conclusion into their copy for subsequent publication and widespread consumption by the public. Why should reporters be expected to interrogate ACER data? How would they know what questions to ask? The same excusing might apply to a junior education bureaucrat, less so to an up-and-coming bureaucrat keen to please his/her senior officer, and none whatsoever to a senior officer with a preference for sniffing the wind for Ministers' priorities and spending strictures rather than providing rigorously researched and fearless advice.

This ACER report, like most ACER reports, is very authoritative when it comes to educational debate, and policy formulation. The *Quality of School Life* survey reported here is no less than a report on the working conditions of the education industry's core workers—Australia's students.

Students have no state or national unions, or even professional associations. Students rely totally on the adult population, organised into their various professions of researchers, teachers, bureaucrats, and so on, to represent their interests. Students are vulnerable. As a group they are unprotected in the world of politics and negotiation. Sub-groups, particularly disadvantaged sub-groups are even more vulnerable—totally unprotected from the politics and competence of adult organisations, their leaders, their political orientations, and their ego and management idiosyncrasies. The view of the ACER is important.

The *Quality of School Life* data set from which ACER (1998) draws its LSAY conclusion that the "overwhelming majority of students are happy with their schools" (p. 1-2) includes the following primary and secondary school student responses:

My school is a place where:

I am given the chance to do work that really interests me 62.5%

I feel happy 72.0%

I like learning 73.0%

I get enjoyment from being there 53.8%

I like to ask questions in class 59.6%

I like to do extra work 27.4%

I really like to go each day 35.3%

I enjoy what I do in class 59.7%

I get excited about the work we do 22.8%

I find that learning is a lot of fun 42.8%

I have a chance to do interesting work.. 60.5%

On these numbers, unless ACER uncritically accepts the 72% who report that they *feel* happy, how does ACER reach a conclusion that an "overwhelming" majority are happy with their *schools*? Especially as the same data set begs researchers to provide more analysis. For example, it may be true that 72% "feel happy" at school but this level of happiness is generated not because of, but despite, 64.7% of them not really liking to go to school, 46.2% of them not getting enjoyment from being there, 40.3% not enjoying what they do in class, 57.2% not finding learning to be a lot of fun, and so on.

In any event, several of the most important questions, at least from the point of view of educators interested in core concerns such as pedagogy, student motivation, and intention to learn, do not attract a overwhelming majority and some attract less than a **simple** majority!

This result hums in harmony with the OECD 2002 study of *School and Classroom Climate* (discussed below), which reported 60% of Australian students agreeing or strongly agreeing with: "My school is a place where I often feel bored" (OECD, 2002b, pp. 315, 323 & 330). It is tautological in education circles to say that a learning environment which is boring is hostile to learning—precisely the set of conditions that educators are seeking to avoid.

Successful learning depends on a number of important factors which can only begin to work if the learning environment is not dull, tedious, irrelevant, disconnected from matters of interest—boring. That this is so is behind generations of: teaching methodology exhorting teachers to begin each lesson with a "motivation" period in which the teacher dramatically presents, or contextualises something scheduled to be learned; large, interesting and colourful posters and pictures, or else tape recordings and/or videos and/or films introduced to lessons; teachers trawl magazines and other media for current issues which might provide relevance and interest to students' scheduled learning tasks, and so on. At a more researched level, the literature is replete with researchers and statutory bodies making claims for "student engagement" and "motivation."

Providing a learning environment which is not dull, tedious and irrelevant is the job of the providers of quality schools (bureaucrats and money-Ministers), the designers of interesting curriculum of relevance and intrinsic value—and curriculum support materials (curriculum boards and directorates), and the constructors of educational experiences (teachers). If these groups of relatively high-status, high salaried, highly responsible adults produce an end product which is dull, tedious, irrelevant, or disengaging to large proportions of students, then they have failed and the system needs to know about it so it can be fixed.

But here is the nation's pre-eminent education research organisation, the ACER, *the* part of the system which *can, and should,* raise the alarm and start the process of questioning, asserting that the "overwhelming majority of students are happy with their schools." According to the ACER, Australian citizens need not worry about their schooling system—everything is fine.

The use of an imprecise word to describe an important event is lazy, or, depending on other contextual words chosen for the report, even deceptive. One cannot help but think that ACER was in trouble with its own analysis, that ACER knew that a *simple* majority (of happy students) was not an acceptable benchmark, and that a "moderate majority" or a "bit more than a majority" might be inadequate descriptors too. ACER chose to use the word "overwhelming." This reveals the mind-set of the ACER authors at this time. They apparently wanted, for some reason, to give the citizens of Australia the impression that Australia's schools were doing well *despite* a much more complex and concerning message embedded in its *own* data set. ACER provided a lop-sided and seriously misleading picture of the attitude of Australia's school students. Independent quality researchers would not do this. The result smacks of interference of some kind—maybe hierarchical insistences, maybe political.

An objective scrutiny of the ACER data suggests Australia's schools are not doing well for *large minorities* of students on some questions, for *large majorities* on other questions, and *small minorities* on others. To put it bluntly, the 1998 ACER data reveals:

- 37.5% of Australia's students (approx 12 students in every class of 30) do not think school is where they are given the chance to do work that really interests them;

- 28% (9 students of 30) do not feel happy at school, and a whopping 46.2% (14 students of 30—an *overwhelming minority*, maybe?) do not get enjoyment from being at school;

- 27% (9 of 30) regard school as a place where they do not like learning, and a solid majority of 64.7% (20 of 30) are not prepared to say that school is where they like to go each day;

- 39.5% (12 of 30) say they do not have a chance to do interesting work, 40.3% (12 of 30) do not enjoy what they do in class, 57.2% (18 of 30) do not find learning to be a lot of fun, and 77.2% (24 of 30) do not get excited about the work they do.

The ACER authors' "mindset" is worrying. Here we have the ACER agreeing that student attitudes to key educational matters are important (why else would ACER undertake the research?) but ACER appears to be happy with, at best, a very mixed outcome indeed. The worry is that Australia's management and watchdog duo—school systems and some researchers—are satisfied with roughly half their enrolments being engaged and finding satisfaction in their daily work.

As already discussed in Chapter One, OECD reports Australia's average performance as amongst the best and this is given wide public circulation by system managers and the media, but OECD's data, analysed by UNICEF and revealing Australia to be amongst the worst OECD countries when it comes to relative disadvantage, is not circulated and not discussed. If ACER is happy with the results of student satisfaction which show very large proportions of students to be unsatisfied with important aspects of their work environment, then where is the motivation for the research and thinking that needs to be applied before better outcomes can be achieved for those who leave school early and those who perform in the worst half of Australia's student performers? A future item for research might be the extent to which students for whom school is dull, tedious, irrelevant and thus boring, appear in the bottom half of Australia's performers—amongst the most relatively disadvantaged in OECD countries. Another item of interest might be the extent to which dullness, tediousness and irrelevancy exist within pedagogical and teaching practices regarded as "quality."

The issues raised by these ACER data should not be allowed to be forgotten.

Fresher 2002 data (OECD, 2002b, pp. 315, 323 & 330) from OECD show 60% of Australian 15 year-old students agree, or strongly agree, with the statement, "My school is a place where I often feel bored." This result strongly reinforces the data from ACER but not the interpretation provided by ACER.

But, the manner in which OECD treats this data also reinforces my concern for those in the bottom half of Australia's performers. Although the OECD, unlike ACER, does not provide a lop-sided interpretation of its data, its assistance on this matter stops at the data itself. Analysis is non-existent. Intriguingly, and unlike OECD treatment of *all other* variables in the same report, the OECD displays no interest in what its own data might mean, or even what consequent questions it might pose. Student boredom is simply reported in tabulated form with an added paragraph which reports the average level of boredom across OECD countries (48%= OECD average, 60%=Australia) and then, in one more paragraph, picks out the elements of the study which show large majorities make friends easily at school (82%, Australia 89%), feel they belong (75%, Australia 85%), and that other students seem to like them (77%, Australia 92%).

These data provide the basis for a different interpretation of ACER's "happy" assertion. That is, most students are happy at school in OECD countries, and particularly in Australia (because they "belong," are liked, and make friends easily) but almost two-thirds of them are bored with schoolwork, with one-third of them so entirely disaffected they don't want to be at school. Even allowing for the approximate 10% of students who don't make friends easily, or are lonely, or feel awkward and out of place, we still have approximately 25% of students who are happy in every other way but don't want to be at school, and approximately 50% of students who are happy in every other way declaring they are often bored at school.

The OECD does not make the "happy" forgery made by ACER, but the OECD *does* highlight similar "feel-good" data. At this point both ACER and OECD are in alignment. Why? Is it a coincidence of disinterest, ambivalence, incompetence? Not likely—these are highly respected organisations with the best of researcher support. Maybe it reflects political interference.

Whatever the reasons, the effect is deceptive—and deception on a huge scale—of the entire citizenry, thus influencing the political context, and policy environment, in which schooling systems attempt to make decisions concerning school, teaching, and learning betterments.

In the light of the "happy" story from ACER and the feel-good story from the OECD it is not surprising that media reports provide the impression that everyone agrees that schooling is a good experience, such as that based on the OECD report and conveyed by the banner line "General Consensus: School is Cool" in Melbourne's major and respected newspaper, *The Age* (Cook, 2002). The unpalatable and much more important elements of the study remain unreported and the public and uninformed educators at all levels remain misdirected (Zyngier, 2004).

Why is it that OECD, like ACER on this matter, does not report, analyse and make recommendations concerning future action and policy? The lack of analysis is eerie.

An insight into later OECD thinking, tentative as it is, appears in the conclusions of a study which examined the relationship between student engagement and literacy skills (OECD, 2003c). OECD concludes that students with a low sense of belonging and relatively high sense of disaffection from school tend to have a *wide* range of socio-economic status and that this result suggests a different way of looking at schooling disaffection than conventionally undertaken. This report states that disaffection should not be simply thought of as an attitude that precedes and causes poor literacy skill development, "but rather as a disposition towards schooling that is *shared by youths from varying socio-economic backgrounds and with varying levels of literacy skills* [italics added]. These results indicate that poor literacy skill development is not the primary cause of disaffection" (p. 33).

So far so good—both high and low SES students are disaffected with schooling. Why might this be so? Could it be something substantial, such as that which is taught? The curriculum? Teaching style?

No. Not according to OECD which now trawls for alternative *possible* reasons for the disaffection of students across all levels of socio-economic status and academic performance, and weakly speculates: "It may be that youth feel disaffected from school for a host of other reasons, such as their talent in sports, their personal appearance, or their ability to make friends easily" (OECD, 2003c, p. 33).

Puzzled, it does not occur to the OECD that the curriculum or how it is taught, might be contributing factors. Neither ACER nor OECD identify concerns or propose a serious response to the students who are clearly unhappy with key features of the educational process. While OECD provides the data with an inert hand, ACER actively turns us *away* from the anguish of masses of unhappy students, while OECD muses about possible (and less plausible) reasons for disaffection.

In light of its puzzlement, OECD properly identifies the need for "further research" so as to better understand when disaffection becomes apparent in students, why the phenomenon occurs, and how it relates to academic outcomes from schooling.

This dissertation might be seen as part of that necessary research, or at least a preliminary urging for that research to be pursued, and argues that across-the-board student disaffection may, more likely, be related to across-the-board schooling issues such as a poorly designed curriculum paradigm which, with widespread reliance on transmissional pedagogy, leaves a mass of students disaffected, bored and wishing they were not at school, despite the satisfaction they generally get from making friends easily at school and fitting in well with their peers.

The 2002 data set from OECD (pp. 315, 323 & 330) is *particularly* helpful because the bracket of questions asked by OECD helps to separate issues of personal importance from those of central pedagogical concern. The data includes responses from students in OECD (and other) countries to a series of questions. In respect of Australia the data includes:
My school is a place where:

1. I feel like an outsider (or left out of things) 9%

2. I make friends easily 89%

3. I feel like I belong 85%

4. I feel awkward and out of place 11%

5. Other students seem to like me 92%

6. I feel lonely 8%

7. I do not want to go 34%

8. I often feel bored 60%

The first six of these eight questions are asking about a student's place in the school community. They are questions which go to the student's relationships, mainly with other students. Much of the context for the answer to these six questions is made up from the activities of the playground, school yard, sporting fields, areas of relaxation and student intercourse both in and out of the classroom. These questions do not go to the purposes of

schooling or to the processes of learning—to pedagogy and curriculum. And, on all these questions a high proportion of students report favourably. Although a concerning number (about 10%) are not happy, most of Australia's youngsters report that when they are at school they fit in with their peers and make friends easily.

However, the two questions which bear more directly on matters of the classroom are seriously worrying. More than a third of students surveyed (34%), do not want to be at school. And, a staggering 60% of Australia's students are "often" bored at school. And all this, *not* because they have poor relationships or are tangled up in fighting or loneliness, bullying, harassment, or because they feel psychologically estranged from the school.

Neither the data nor the OECD analysis goes further—but there remains a strong suggestion that although, for most students, school includes easily made friends within an accepting environment, the classroom is so boring so often that 34% do not want to attend school. It is possible there are other reasons. It would be nice to know. It would be nice to know that ACER and OECD were interested.

These data sets must give us pause.

Not only are our schooling systems half populated with students who are amongst the worst relatively disadvantaged in OECD countries, not only are they also approximately half-populated with students who think school is boring despite other welcoming qualities of the school, but the plight of both these halves (maybe they are the same students?) goes un-analysed by OECD and effectively hidden by the commentary of ACER.

Something is wrong with our schooling system. Something very *important* is wrong.

It is the practice of some management regimes, to provide sub-management freedom to pursue their competence. "Let the managers manage" is the relevant mantra. However, the freedom is illusory, or part illusory, because the top management extends the freedom *so long as* it is exercised within non-negotiable strictures. This reality has led some (Caldwell, 1997) to advocate a radically different approach to schooling with its key feature being self-managing schools liberated from the requirements of a centralised bureaucracy and free to pursue policies which most suits the school's clientele.

The policy of "letting the managers manage" can be successful depending on the appropriateness of the strictures decreed from above. If the constraints are strategically appropriate, managers with freedom to exercise their innovative skills can produce

wonderful results. However, if the strictures are strategically inappropriate then the policy tramlines can lead even the best of managers to the wrong destination.

In the education industry there are many good managers and teachers and bureaucrats, and interested and expert researchers. There are also some "givens" that act as tramlines. And amongst these givens are some that are so important that they provide the basic shape of the schooling system—the paradigm. Everything else, all modifications, all reforms, all improvements—everything important—must salute this basic shape.

Probably the most important "given" in the education industry is the division of knowledge into disciplines: Mathematics, Science, English, History, Geography, and so on. These divisions reach right back into the earliest years of schooling and provide shape for the rest of schooling and beyond. The division into disciplines has historical reason and purpose stretching back through the millennia to the ancient Greeks. These disciplines now shape our curriculum paradigm—across all schooling systems: public, church-based and private. Students attend classes designated by the discipline. Teachers, pre-service and in-service, are trained in disciplines. School structures are built to suit the arrangement of the curriculum into disciplines. Schools' executive structures reflect disciplines; teachers are grouped by disciplines, and so on. Pedagogical practices differ between the disciplines. Curriculum reforms, even those wishing to engage seriously with cross-disciplinary strategies, run across and must defer to the disciplines.

How might the curriculum paradigm be relevant to widespread student alienation, disengagement or boredom? Schooling takes up most of the day, most of the days. At the secondary school level it coincides with a definite consciousness about growing up, accumulating more and more responsibilities, morphing from child to adolescent, increasingly engaging as oneself (rather than as the parents' child) with the infrastructure of society. The way schools are organised for these maturing adolescents is extremely important to them, including those students already experiencing success. But, as the evidence suggests, many students, including a strong proportion from the already successful, find schooling to be boring and alienating for alarming periods of time. This is not surprising.

Curriculum structures, as legislated by the various state Boards of Studies, as set out in the national curriculum outcomes statements and as embedded in the Adelaide Declaration of Purposes of Schooling, separate what is to be learned—the interesting themes of life—into distinct disciplines. Students do not go to school to learn, with the assistance of the

disciplines, of the great themes of life. They attend classes arranged on the basis of vertically arranged, rapidly specialising knowledge disciplines. In Australia's public schools this situation is universally true, except with some experiments such as Queensland's New Basics (Lingard et al., 2001).

That this is the case is not unchallenged. Some private schools offer, in both primary and secondary years of schooling, the International Baccalaureate (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2005-2007) which comprises:

- **Primary Years Program** (ages 3-12) in which the curriculum framework consists of five elements: concepts, knowledge, skills, attitude, action. The knowledge component is developed through inquiries into six *cross-disciplinary themes* of global significance, supported and balanced by six subject areas of: Arts, Science & Technology, Personal & Social & Physical Education, Language, Social Studies, Mathematics. The themes are:
    - sharing the planet
    - who we are
    - where we are in place and time
    - how we express ourselves
    - how the world works
    - how we organise ourselves.

- **Middle Years Program** (ages 11-16) encompassing early puberty and mid-adolescence, is regarded as a particularly critical phase of personal and intellectual development requiring a program that helps students participate actively and responsibly in a changing and increasingly interrelated world. Learning how to learn and how to evaluate information critically is seen to be as important as learning facts and is designed to help students develop the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills necessary to   participate actively and responsibly in a changing world. The curriculum contains eight subject groups (Language A, Language B, Mathematics, Humanities, Technology, Arts, Sciences, Physical Education) which, importantly, students study *through* five areas of interaction:
    - approaches to learning
    - community and service
    - *homo faber—*processes and products of human creativity
    - environment

- health and social education.
- **Diploma Program** (ages 16-19) which prepares students for university and encourages them to:
  - ask challenging questions
  - learn how to learn
  - develop a strong sense of their own identity and culture
  - develop the ability to communicate with and understand people from other countries and cultures.

While students select subjects from groups (Language 1, Language 2, Arts, Experimental Sciences, Individuals and Societies, Mathematics & Computer Science) these are learned with reference to a compulsory "core" which is central to the philosophy of the Diploma Programme and comprises:

- extended essay
- theory of knowledge
- creativity, action, service.

The frustration many teachers feel, despite the discipline base of their training and future prospects, towards the organisation of curriculum into vertically arranged specialised disciplines is reflected in a number of important reports and analyses. Reid (2005, pp. 44-51) attacks the pedagogical efficacy of the disciplines. Vinson (2002a, p. x) reports (but does nothing further) that one of the three consistently advanced views put to the Public Education Inquiry which he led, from "many teachers and some parents," concerned an "over-emphasis on content at the expense of such features as integrating learning from different disciplinary strands." The "New Basics" and "Essential" projects of Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria attempt to introduce cross-disciplinary approaches to a more futures-oriented curriculum (Lingard et al., 2001).

Nevertheless, in general, Australian schools don't teach students about major topical and interesting matters with the help of the disciplines. They teach the disciplines. Even the futures-oriented Queensland New Basics (Lingard et al., 2001; The State of Queensland Department of Education, 2001) which states its intention to teach across the disciplines, describes its "core learnings" with persistent reference to the subject disciplines. Highly interesting themes of life are, generally speaking, subordinated and divided among the subject disciplines to be taught in fragments, separate from their meaningful context, and as part of a rapidly specialising hierarchy of pieces of disciplined knowledge. The discipline is

important. The theme of life lost. Only the excellent or more knowledgeable teacher, operating in optimum conditions, attempts to put the themes back together for teaching in an wholistic manner. Other schooling conditions discourage this pedagogic strategy, leaving the bulk of teachers and the overwhelming bulk of students' hostage to the *contextually* sterile teaching of the disciplines. As we shall see, it is often said that the subject disciplines do not lack relevance, that they rely on the way they are taught—the quality of teaching—a view which is immediately sympathetic to the curriculum status quo, which steers concern away from system-level responsibilities such as the structure and content of curriculum, and which ignores, or at least underestimates, the structural impediments of a curriculum divided into separate, rapidly-specializing, vertically-organised disciplines, taught separately from each other, by teachers trained and accommodated separate from each other.

Schools operate with management and industrial systems—day-to-day operational systems—constructed on, and shaped by, the disciplines, thus making it difficult even for the most insightful and resourceful educator to put the "bits" together as an interesting theme, leave alone any attempt to teach to a topical theme which arises suddenly in the international, national, regional or local contexts.

The organisation of schools, the curriculum, the education and training of teachers, and the compartmentalisation of their competences within the "silos" of their discipline, make it difficult for even excellent teachers to provide learning experiences which draw on the high interest themes of life. The way it is organised, the curriculum paradigm maximises a lack of relevance in the curriculum to matters of high interest to students including those who are the most successful at school. For the disempowered, it also guarantees next to no treatment of curriculum outcomes of intrinsic value to them, that is, the nature of disadvantage, its causes, the pathways out of disadvantage—matters of Freirian importance requiring further urgent research and analysis within the Australian context.

With the themes of life pulled apart, the resulting strips are organised into disciplines, and systems' recruiting, training, curriculum, method, and management systems solidify around them.

The resulting disciplines, themselves organised into "subjects," are internally arranged so the content appears vertically. It becomes rapidly specialist, raising yet further difficulties for those teachers who wish to put high interest themes back together using a multi-

disciplinary approach, and those who wish to treat themes repeatedly and at different levels of sophistication as opportunity arises throughout a student's maturing school life. Having separated out the disciplines and arranged them vertically into rapidly specialising subject syllabuses, most schools are then required to chop them into 40 minute pieces, or "periods"—a relatively arbitrary arrangement—not for any good pedagogical reasons. Each 40 minute piece is then arranged into a school timetable which comes to dominate the life of the school. How is this timetable conceived? What pedagogical considerations drive its formulation? None whatsoever.

From a pedagogical point of view—from the viewpoint of the students—all the 40 minute pieces may as well be thrown in the air, and the pattern of their fall called a school timetable. The result is an educationally counter-intuitive arrangement—chaotic. The timetable is organised to satisfy a wide range of personal and organisational realities. Pedagogical considerations are rare and do not influence the general shape of the timetable. The shape of the timetable is determined by the industrial realities of an industry organised along fracture lines called "disciplines."

With the timetable in place, often reported as a triumph by those with the unfortunate task of creating it, each 40 minute period is separated by (about) 5 minutes of movement throughout the high school involving hundreds of students and dozens of teachers. This time guarantees a break in any learning which may have been taking place, and is a time when most students are unsettled—a time when bullies, harassers and disrupters are given maximum opportunity to give effect to their dispositions, when the victims feel their malevolence, and the unscathed enter social intercourse which is reflected in data showing students "belong" and have friends.

Having run the oft-repeated daily 5-minute gauntlet of teenage life as they pass from one subject room to another, students generally enter a room kept featureless as an insurance against students "trashing" classwork, personal projects, matters of student pride and ownership. These rooms are often uninviting—like cells.

As a consequence, secondary schools, in general, do not provide classes with a "home" room in which they can display work, learn from each other, take pride in their group, and develop variously helpful feelings of common purpose and collegiality. Often these featureless spaces are supplied with "portable" (noisy) furniture on a smooth, lino-tiled (noisy) and hard (noisy) floor, though this is less true of better resourced schools.

There *are* differences between schools within systems and between systems. But the differences do not go to the core organising principles of curriculum, or the arrangements for its presentation. The paradigm is well known in almost all schools.

Successful students are as exposed to this paradigm as unsuccessful students. OECD concludes that "disaffection from school is not limited to a small minority of students—that virtually all schools need to deal with problems associated with disaffection" (OECD, 2003c, p. 26).

This is not to say that unsuccessful students don't experience negative feelings of disengagement more than others. They do. Teese and Polesel (2003) report on Queensland Year 10 students and the relatively high number of students with very good standards of English who say:

- rather than attend school they would prefer to be working (35% boys, 27% girls);
- school is a prison (23% boys, 17% girls),

as compared with the extraordinarily high number of students with poor standards of English who say:

- rather than attend school they would prefer to be working (67% boys, 61% girls);
- school is a prison (62% boys, 40% girls).

Many of these students translate their disaffection with school into personal action as soon as they reach post-compulsory schooling. The pattern is the same. A large percentage of Australian students leave school after Year 10 from the public and church-based and private sectors, with a bigger proportion of leavers coming from lower SES students in public schools (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2000-2004, 2004b).

According to Zyngier, a major study of middle schooling possibilities in Victoria produced data which shows "that 75% of Year 9 students find the curriculum boring and irrelevant" and even more extraordinarily "62% of Year 9 teachers think the lessons they teach are boring and irrelevant" (Zyngier, 2004, p. 8). We have already seen that OECD weakly speculates that the reason for youth feeling disaffected from schooling might be "their talent in sports, their personal appearance, or their ability to make friends easily." Analysis from within Australia appears to ignore the possibility that the curriculum required of Australia's students might be at least a possible source for concern, if not at the heart of the problem. For example, writing for the Australian Government's Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) in October 2005, Russell, Ainley and Frydenberg summarise

existing research material and assert that "engagement is influenced by factors such as socio-economic status, parental education and occupational status, ethnicity, student age and gender" and that "the school has no direct control over these factors, but can adapt its approaches to the needs of its particular students" (V. J. Russell, Ainley, & Frydenburg, 2005, p. 2). The authors then identify and concentrate on a range of factors over which schools do have influence. At no point do the authors identify system level factors, such as the structure and content of curriculum, which may have an effect on either student motivation (defined by the authors as "energy and direction") or engagement ("energy in action"). This oversight occurs despite the authors' identification as important, that student learning is "interesting and challenging and important"—all factors which, prima facie, are involved with curriculum structure and content for all students and, in the case of the bottom half of Australia's students may, depending on future research, be found to be so devoid of intrinsic value as to be a major cause of low motivation and engagement. The point is that these researchers of high status and influence do not identify this matter as a "factor" worth examining. These researchers, in the same summary digest reveal a narrow scope of thinking. They quote a Victorian study which shows students with high "motivation to learn" but low level of interest in their unstimulating classroom work" (V. J. Russell et al., 2005, p. 3) and then conclude that this data "points to the importance of the *school* [italics added] factors that affect student engagement". They make no mention of the possibility of system level factors, such as the structure and content of curriculum, affecting student motivation or engagement. This is perplexing particularly as the authors do discuss what it means to be bored, and that students require tasks which are interesting, challenging and important. The authors go so far as to state that students are a heterogeneous group, but this thinking simply leads them to consider differing classroom and school-level practices (see also M. Ainley, 2004). No consideration is given to system-level arms of policy. No consideration is given to a curriculum which is fashioned to meet the researched and intrinsic needs of different groups of students, while encouraging different and stimulating pedagogical practices within schools and classrooms (V. J. Russell et al., 2005, pp. 7-13). This oversight extends to the authors' advocacy of "issues for further investigation" (p. 15). The possibility of the system's curriculum structure and content is comprehensively ignored as a cause of problems with student motivation and engagement.

Whether the students are successful or not successful, and notwithstanding the widespread "happy" *claims* of ACER, there are high numbers of students who are clearly unhappy with their schooling experience.

Because Australian data which compares levels of boredom, disaffection and/or alienation in public, church-based and private schools does not exist (publicly), it is difficult to build an accurate picture of which schools experience most this developing picture of considerable student unhappiness—except insofar as it is known that higher proportions of high SES students are "successful" and they are disproportionately enrolled in public selective high schools, most private, and many church-based schools, as well as the previously quoted data from Teese and Polesel.

In any event, the array of data available is more than sufficient to raise serious concerns, across all schooling sectors, about the level of interest in schooling held by Australia's students. These data have been reported by researchers but, intriguingly, the responses from system managers have not included a critique of the curriculum paradigm or the way schooling is structured. This thesis is building a case for such an examination.

Chapter One identified a wide range of areas in which Australian schooling performs comparatively well, but also exposed a huge deficiency in the *public* schooling system, an equity concern of such magnitude as to justify questioning the basis of current provision in public schools.

Chapter Two has suggested that, amongst Australia's student population including many students who achieve success, there is widespread student disaffection with something other than their friends or their physical school. The disaffection is probably aimed at the curriculum and teachers and, as far as can be ascertained, exists in public, church-based and private schooling systems. While it is true that higher SES students are successful and able to endure their disaffection better, the problem remains very serious for all sectors. It is untenable to maintain an *education* system in which 34%, a large minority of Australia's students, do not want to attend school and 60% are often bored with school learning despite a number of contextually positive incentives to attend.

Chapter Three—Public Schools and the Least Successful

> Although…poor performance in school does not automatically follow from a disadvantaged socio-economic background, this still appears to be one of the most powerful factors influencing performance…and…represents a significant challenge for public policy which strives to provide learning opportunities for all students irrespective of their home backgrounds. (OECD, 2002a, p. 99)

In Chapters One and Two I investigated comparative data to establish major strengths and weaknesses of the Australian schooling system and to question the generally complacent views that Australia's schooling system is, on the whole, a good system and that students, on the whole, are happy with schooling.

While acknowledging Australia's relatively good performance, I have raised doubts about the efficacy of the narrowly subject-focussed benchmarks used for comparative purposes, identified student "boredom" as a major schooling issue which is not acknowledged by authoritative research organisations, and discussed UNICEF's largely unacknowledged analysis of Australia's location in the bottom half of OECD countries in terms of relative disadvantage.

With "relative disadvantage" defined as the difference in performance between the nation's top half of performers and the nation's bottom half, in this chapter I will identify the students who are the least successful and calculate an estimate of the "load" each group of students represents for a major schooling system—in this case the NSW public schooling system.

Concern for groups of students for whom education has been least empowering has been a matter of considerable educational and political interest for several decades. With the formation of the Interim Committee to the Australian Schools Commission in 1973 and the Schools Commission itself in 1975, the needs of "equity groups" became the subject of national triennial reviews and annual reports.

The groups singled out for this kind of attention have included:
1. Students from low SES communities;
2. Indigenous students;

3. Immigrant students, variously defined as English as Second Language (ESL), Language Background other than English (LBOTE), Non-English Speaking Background (NESB);

4. Geographically isolated students;

5. Students with a Physical or Intellectual Disability;

6. Girls, and more recently, boys.

The equity landscape is not as neat as the above list would suggest. Nor does it extend evenly across public and church-based and private schools. As already noted, some equity groups of students exist entirely, or almost entirely, in the public schooling system (Bonner & Caro, 2007). These categories of student include:

- students rejected and/or expelled by private and church-based schools;

- students with chronic and serious behaviour problems;

- students with medical conditions which preclude them from regular school attendance;

- pregnant students, or those with babies or toddlers; and

- students with personal circumstances which preclude them from attending school.

Interest has been shown in other broad groupings of students as data have drawn attention to differentials in learning performance. For instance, considerable political debate has ebbed and flowed as concerns have been expressed for students such as: primary school students requiring emphasis on basic skills development (Basic Learning in Primary Schools Program—BLIPS), secondary students requiring encouragement to stay at school (Participation and Equity Program—PEP), boys, gifted and talented students (GATS), and students at risk of educational underachievement (Students at Risk Program—STAR).

Of the major six equity groups listed above, students with a physical or intellectual disability are not included by education authorities in reportage of learning outcomes, probably reflecting a view that the reason for differential outcomes for a group identified because of disabilities was self explanatory. Almost all students with a disability are serviced within the public schooling system (Bonner & Caro, 2007).

Each of the other five equity groups has been associated with considerable analysis and political agitation. Again, with the exception of girls, these equity groups are disproportionately enrolled in the public schooling system. The construction of special programs for each group has become a national undertaking despite the Commonwealth's constitutional disinterest in schooling matters. The national government, fired by national

political interest, has used section 96 (special grants) of the Constitution to provide for these programs.

The needs associated with these equity groups are not universally agreed. Equity groups commonly claim they need special and more assistance and often claim their needs go unmet and their philosophic direction goes unheeded. Indeed, the *existence* of some of these equity groups and their attendant "special" funding program is a consequence of considerable political agitation and continuing political conflict. Advocates and groups have formed around each. Different equity groups appeal to different political parties more than others. The political pressure/identity groups associated with each "equity" group are sometimes fractured themselves. Equity groups are highly political.

Education authorities are not well-equipped to enter the political debate concerning equity groups. In the first place, they are not supposed to do so. They are supposed to be the apolitical administrative wing of the elected government. This is a quandary for departments with administrative responsibility for the performance of students whose performance is so poor that it is politicised. Understanding the socio-economic and political realities of identifiable groups within the community, being capable of empathy, and translating insights into equity-specific policy which does not detract from system-wide policy, requires a depth of particularly specific equity knowledge not often attained by the leaders of bureaucracies. Equity groups are complex.

For governments, "equity groups" represent the most expensive to fund, requiring expensive resource differentials from mainstream provision. Furthermore, the issues associated with "equity groups" are often particular to that group, with answers to problems sometimes/often requiring action (research, resourcing, analysis, processes) which is counter to philosophic and political beliefs held by government Ministers or their departments. Equity groups are more expensive.

The territory is highly contested but not without result at least with some "equity groups." In the years since the 1973 Karmel Report, waves of political engagements have ebbed and flowed across the educational landscape, each one attracting concerted public attention followed often by a government policy response, then some action.

Amongst them are some generally recognised success stories. In NSW, for example, governments have literally bought out an entire system of under-funded and under-qualified private and charity-run schools for "handicapped" and "spastic" children. They are now

incorporated, with a hefty and differential resource investment, into a large well-run, network of city and rural public schools for students requiring Special Education.

Governments have also made successful interventions in respect of immigrant (NESB, LBOTE, ESL) students and girls, with these two large categories of students no longer being an indicator of disadvantage but now being a general indicator of advantage!

These categories of "equity" students have attracted political support and government funding and, not surprisingly, public school bureaucracies have formulated a series of publicly disseminated policies, procedures and plans which record their interest, their strategies, their commitment, and their pride in areas such as: Special Education Plans, Multicultural Education Plans, English as Second Language Plans, Girls Education Plans. All this is good.

Less successful are equity groups such as indigenous students, low SES students, and geographically isolated students.

To be fair, Governments have provided country schools and particularly the smaller country schools with very significant additional levels of teaching and support staff with a number of additional incentives designed to staff these areas which most teachers regard as unfavourable places in which to be appointed—but there is no NSW plan. I know from management experience in this very area that from time-to-time a NSW Education Minister will call for a Rural Education Plan, commonly in the lead-up to an election, and the request will be dealt with by the employment of the Country Areas Program Manager (relatively junior "middle management" level) in an exercise which involves, over two to three frantic weeks, the collection of all the bits of Departmental activity/policy which (already) takes place in rural areas, and its subsequent and rapid re-packaging and presentation to the Parliament and electorate as a Rural Education Plan. There is no plan in the commonly understood meaning of the word "plan," just a quickly listed aggregation of general policies being implemented in rural areas under the heading of "rural." The closest the DET comes to a rural plan is the tiny (Commonwealth funded) Country Areas Program (CAP) which undertakes an innovative and remote-focussed support and educative role for CAP schools (in much the same way as the DSP was permitted to do before it was de-politicised to a uni-dimensional "literacy" program for a proportion of the socio-economically disadvantaged). Bureaucracies would do well to ask the CAP to oversight a series of well-formulated questions, the answers to which might form the basis of a genuine rural education plan. The plan should do more than address the easier-to-understand

resourcing issues and should confront some of the more important and difficult to resolve matters such as, for example, "How can teaching staff—with an accumulation of quality professional training *and* experience *and* genuine interest in and understanding of white and black rural history *as well as* a political commitment to work in the school while empathetically engaging in the mainstream of community's social life—be (a) identified and (b) attracted to country towns, without local communities being denigrated by the 'bribe' of early and favourable transfer out of their school and town?"

In respect of indigenous students, learning outcomes are a matter of continuing shame (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2000-2004, 2004b).

In respect of low SES students, learning outcomes are not much less shameful—they are seriously depressed for, depending on one's definition, a large minority or a small majority of the public schooling sector (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2000-2004, 2004b). There is no low SES plan. Never has been. Nor is one planned. Does this matter? Isn't it good that large and successful public interest has centred on the education of girls and boys, and on the needs of immigrant children?

I have already highlighted a problem with widespread learning disengagement and the relatively poor performance of Australia's bottom half of students (compared with OECD countries) which disproportionately resides in the public schooling system. In an effort to get a more detailed understanding of this policy terrain, where unequal political influences are brought to bear, it will be helpful to establish which students in that bottom half represent the greatest "load" to the system. That is, which of the equity groups hold down the overall performance of the system and by how much? This matter is important for two reasons. First, from a system management point of view, because system "load" information is important management information which should inform priorities for policy development, procedures, research and resource allocation; and second, from a teacher morale point of view, because the system's front line workers will be imbued with a sense of purpose and mission and satisfaction, to know they are part of a government-acknowledged mission and government-supported drive to lift the identified load. Many teachers are motivated by a desire to "make a difference."

To identify the relative "load" of different student groups, publicly available data from the NSW DET will be examined (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2000-2004, 2004b).

In respect of low SES, the DET limits its published data to an average of the learning outcomes for its (approximately) lowest 20% SES schools—originally named the Disadvantaged Schools Program (DSP) but re-badged by the DET as the Priority Schools Funding Program (PSFP). That is, it is not possible to compare the deciles *within* that 20% of schools, and there is no data to help understand low SES correlations for either individual students or schools in the SES continuum outside that 20%. Thus, while the supplied data is worthwhile, it does not reveal learning correlations either within or without the selected 20% of low SES schools. It represents a helpful but blunt instrument.

Some other data concerns students' language backgrounds. Three major categories are used: LBOTE is defined by DET to mean "Language Background Other Than English" while NESB1 is defined as "students who have lived in Australia for 4 years or less and never or only sometimes speak English at home" and NESBT is defined as "students who answered 'yes' to 'Does anyone use a language other than English at home?'"

For the purpose of this analysis, the term "deficit" will be used, not to suggest that equity groups bring a cultural deficit to the experience of learning, but to describe the difference in measured learning outcomes between cohort averages and equity group averages.

Because their measured learning outcomes may be poorer than the state average, each of the equity groups may be seen as representing a drag on the learning outcomes performance of the public schooling system. That is, if the attainment and achievement outcomes of the equity groups were increased to align with the state average, then the state average would increase appreciatively. I will call this drag on the system an "accumulated learning load" (ALL).

The data published by the NSW DET identifies the relative disadvantage experienced by each equity group but not the ALL experienced by the schooling system for each equity group. In other words, we are unable from the published data, to know which of the equity groups represent the greater accumulated learning load on the system. As a consequence, relative priorities within the system are less informed, and open more to ideological pressure, or organised political pressures, or even "fads" than they would be if there was a clear understanding of which identifiable group(s) of students needed most of the system's concentrated and well-researched attention.

Using available NSW public schools data, an ALL for each of a number of learning outcomes can be invented. In 2004, 744,229 primary and secondary students were enrolled

in NSW public schools (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004b, Table 2.7). Enrolment numbers in each of the equity groups were:

indigenous students..35,256

a proportion of low SES schools (PSFP) 146,815

geographically isolated students (CAP)..........................23,234

Language Backg'd other than English (LBOTE).......... 200,622[1]

female students...363,869

male students..380,360

To calculate an indicative ALL for each of these groups, it is assumed that each of the students in each of the categories will pass through each of the year-specific assessments, and that they would score similarly to the 2004 average score for that category. In the table which follows, the difference between the score for the equity group and the state average is shown to the left. For example, in the table below, addressing the ALL of indigenous students, the first line shows units of difference (D) of 4.8 which represents the difference between the NSW public schools' mean BST literacy score of 50.6 and the NSW public schools' mean BST literacy score for Aboriginal students of 45.8.

In each of the following tables the ALL for each equity group is calculated by multiplying the number of units difference (D) between the state average and the equity group average by the number of students in each equity group. The product of this calculation is shown on the right.

---

[1] DET provides only LBOTE enrolment data despite its provision of breakdown percentages for sub-groups of NESBI and NESBT.

Table 3.1: Calculation of the Accumulated Learning Load (ALL) for NSW indigenous students in public schools: 2004

D	No. of indigenous students = 35,256 (ALL = D x 35,256)	ALL
4.8	indigenous students: Year 3 literacy	169,228
5.0	indigenous students: Year 5 literacy	176,280
5.4	indigenous students: Year 3 numeracy	190,382
6.4	indigenous students: Year 5 numeracy	225,638
5.4	indigenous students: Year 6 computer skills	190,382
5.2	indigenous students: ELLA Year 7 reading	183,331
4.9	indigenous students: ELLA Year 7 writing	172,754
5.7	indigenous students: ELLA Year 7 language	200,959
5.6	indigenous students: ELLA Year 8 reading	197,433
5.0	indigenous students: ELLA Year 8 writing	176,280
5.9	indigenous students: ELLA Year 8 language	208,010
6.1	indigenous students: SNAP Year 7 numeracy	215,061
7.6	indigenous students: SNAP Year 7 number	267,945
4.8	indigenous students: SNAP Year 7 measurement	169,228
6.2	indigenous students: SNAP Year 7 space	218,587
6.5	indigenous students: SNAP Year 7 data	229,164
5.3	indigenous students: SNAP Year 7 problem solving	186,856
6.9	indigenous students: SNAP Year 8 numeracy	243,266
8.8	indigenous students: SNAP Year 8 number	310,252
5.9	indigenous students: SNAP Year 8 measurement	208,010
6.9	indigenous students: SNAP Year 8 space	243,266
7.1	indigenous students: SNAP Year 8 data	250,317
	TOTAL ALL units indigenous students	**4,632,629**

Difference = D. Accumulated Learning Load = ALL

Data from NSW Department of Education and Training. (2004). *Statistical Compendium—Annual Report 2004,* Tables 3.4, 3.5, 3.8, 3.10, 3.11, 3.14, and 3.15.

In respect of indigenous students who represent an **ALL of 4,632,629** and a per student load on the system of **131.4 units**, the DET identifies a **70.1% loss** to schooling (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004b, Table 3.16, apparent retention) between Years 7 and 12, or **24,714** out of 35, 256 indigenous students lost in a full K-12 enrolment cycle.

Low SES data supplied by the DET relates only to *schools*, reflecting the Department's decision not to report student data identified by SES. This means that while a school's SES score will be very accurate, each low SES school will contain some students with a relatively high SES thus blunting the edge of this data. In addition, the DET provides only averaged outcomes data for the PSFP/DSP schools it identifies as low SES thus frustrating any attempt to study the size of the difference between low SES schools and lower SES schools and yet lower SES schools. For example in 2004 PSFP school retention rates are reported to be 57.2%, a figure which presumably averages schools with retention rates rumoured to be as low as 30% or less and others with considerably better rates. Most

importantly it blocks attempts to research any direct and linear relationship between schools' (and students') attainment and achievement data, and SES—either within or without the arbitrary boundaries set by the DSP/PSFP. We only have the average score of all PSFP schools to work with. We are able to compare the average of the bottom 20% of SES schools (PSFP schools) with the average of the state as a whole, but we are unable to compare, for example, each of the state's bottom ten clusters of 5% SES, or the bottom five deciles of SES with state averages—or each school's SES with state averages. We are unable to deduce if, and where on graphed data, any relationship between SES and attainment and achievement might get more or less concentrated. This is disappointing for any researcher—but for me, who knows these data (from my work with the DET 1990-1995) exist within the NSW DET, it is particularly galling as it is very illuminating and very important data.

Moreover, why is it that when the DET reports on SES it reports on PSFP which services approximately 20% of the student population? Why 20%? The numbers of students in PSFP schools reflect an arbitrary, politically determined enrolment cut-off point devised by the Interim Committee to the Australian Schools Commission in 1973 for the forerunner of the re-named PSFP. The approx 20% figure was set so as to establish a program (the DSP) which, in its limited life, was intended to lead to SES-related policies on all arms of system schooling policies and, ultimately, result in the irrelevance of the DSP. The DSP was seen as an icebreaker, not the solution itself. It was a limited *program*.

At approximately 20% of the public school population enrolled in DSP/PSFP schools it is more than the 17% of the population identified by Fitzgerald as living below the "poverty line," but much less than the number of students living on, or a little above the poverty line, and much less than the 50% of relatively disadvantaged Australian students found by OECD to be amongst the most relatively disadvantaged in OECD countries. The 17% under the poverty line would be considerably higher for students in *public* schools as low SES students are relatively concentrated in the public schooling system. In any event, low SES depends on the definitions applied to it. If one looks at ABS statistics concerning those who possess wealth, the numbers who own the lion share of society's assets is a tiny proportion indeed. The schools included in the DSP/PSFP represent approximately 20% of the public schooling enrolments but, depending on definition, could quite easily be double (or more) than that number. This view is further encouraged and strengthened by the array of tabulated and graphed data for literacy and numeracy BST results in Years 3 and 6 in 1991 for the 56% of schools which were provided with an SES score as part of the DSP triennial survey at that time. As Manager of the Equity Programs Unit within the NSW

DET at that time, I managed both exercises—the detailed, extensive and accurate survey, and allocation of SES scores, to each of the 56% of the state's public schools surveyed; the extraction and matching of learning outcomes data with all those schools' (56% of the whole) SES scores and subsequent tabulating and graphing the results. (Copies of these graphs are held by me.) The pattern of performance against SES was similar in each case and almost a mirror image of a publicly available graph concerning completion rates and SES which shows a definite and heavy concentration of early school leavers in the bottom 50% of SES with a distinctly different pattern (almost linear and steep) beginning at the top of the fourth SES percentile (Department of Employment, Education, & Training, 1989a)[2]. For these reasons, it is my judgement that a fuller understanding of SES and learning outcomes might be achieved if, for low SES in the following table, a second column providing an indicative calculation which simply doubles the ALL for each item is included. It appears on the far right in the table below. The same data points are used as for the previous table concerning indigenous students.

---

[2] Derived from data provided by State Education Authorities and the ABS, definitions based on the DPTE document.

Table 3.2: Calculation of the Accumulated Learning Load (ALL) for low SES students in NSW (PSFP) public schools: 2004

D	No of low SES students = 146,815	(ALL = D x 146,815)	ALL x 2
2.6	low SES schools: Year 3 literacy	381,719	763,438
2.6	low SES schools: Year 5 literacy	381,719	763,438
2.9	low SES schools: Year 3 numeracy	425,763	851,526
3.2	low SES schools: Year 5 numeracy	469,808	939,616
2.5	low SES schools: Year 6 computer skills	367,037	734,074
3.7	low SES schools: ELLA Year 7 reading	543,215	1,086,430
3.1	low SES schools: ELLA Year 7 writing	455,126	910,252
3.8	low SES schools: ELLA Year 7 language	557,897	1,115,794
3.5	low SES schools: ELLA Year 8 reading	513,852	1,027,704
2.9	low SES schools: ELLA Year 8 writing	425,763	851,526
3.5	low SES schools: ELLA Year 8 language	513,852	1,027,704
4.2	low SES schools: SNAP Year 7 numeracy	616,623	1,233,246
5.0	low SES schools: SNAP Year 7 number	734,075	1,468,150
3.6	low SES schools: SNAP Year 7 measurement	528,534	1,057,068
4.2	low SES schools: SNAP Year 7 space	616,623	1,233,246
4.4	low SES schools: SNAP Year 7 data	645,986	1,291,972
3.8	low SES schools: SNAP Year 7 problem solving	557,897	1,115,794
4.1	low SES schools: SNAP Year 8 numeracy	601,941	1,203,882
5.0	low SES schools: SNAP Year 8 number	734,075	1,468,150
3.7	low SES schools: SNAP Year 8 measurement	543,215	1,086,430
4.2	low SES schools: SNAP Year 8 space	616,623	1,233,246
4.3	low SES schools: SNAP Year 8 data	631,304	1,262,608
	TOTAL ALL units low SES schools	**11,862,647**	**23,725,294**

Data from NSW Department of Education and Training. (2004). *Statistical Compendium—Annual Report 2004,* Tables 3.4, 3.5, 3.8, 3.10, 3.11, 3.14, and 3.15.

In respect of DSP/PSFP low SES students who represent an **ALL of 11,862,647** (23,725,294 if doubled) and a per student load on the system of **80.8 units**, the DET identifies a **42.8% loss** to schooling (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004b, Table 3.16, apparent retention) between Years 7 and 12, or **62,837 students** (125,673 if that figure is doubled) out of 146,815 DSP/PSFP low SES students lost in a full K-12 enrolment cycle.

In respect of geographically isolated students DET supplies data for students enrolled in categorised Country Areas Program (CAP) schools which are identified for their relative remoteness from central services. Apart from a small number of schools in the South East corner of NSW most CAP schools are to be found in the western and Outback half of the state.

Table 3.3: Calculation of the Accumulated Learning Load (ALL) for NSW geographically isolated students (Country Area Program schools): 2004

D	No of geog isol students = 23,234 (ALL = D x 23,234)	ALL
2.4	geog isolated schools: Year 3 literacy	55,761
2.0	geog isolated schools: Year 5 literacy	46,468
2.3	geog isolated schools: Year 3 numeracy	53,438
2.2	geog isolated schools: Year 5 numeracy	51,114
1.4	geog isolated schools: Year 6 computer skills	32,527
2.0	geog isolated schools: ELLA Year 7 reading	46,468
2.0	geog isolated schools: ELLA Year 7 writing	46,468
2.8	geog isolated schools: ELLA Year 7 language	65,055
1.3	geog isolated schools: ELLA Year 8 reading	30,204
1.7	geog isolated schools: ELLA Year 8 writing	39,497
2.1	geog isolated schools: ELLA Year 8 language	48,791
2.7	geog isolated schools: SNAP Year 7 numeracy	62,731
3.4	geog isolated schools: SNAP Year 7 number	78,995
2.3	geog isolated schools: SNAP Year 7 measurement	53,438
2.5	geog isolated schools: SNAP Year 7 space	58,085
2.8	geog isolated schools: SNAP Year 7 data	65,055
2.7	geog isolated schools: SNAP Year 7 problem solving	62,731
2.2	geog isolated schools: SNAP Year 8 numeracy	51,114
3.2	geog isolated schools: SNAP Year 8 number	74,348
2.2	geog isolated schools: SNAP Year 8 measurement	51,114
1.7	geog isolated schools: SNAP Year 8 space	39,497
2.0	geog isolated schools: SNAP Year 8 data	46,468
	TOTAL deficit units geographically isolated schools	**1,159,367**

Data from NSW Department of Education and Training. (2004). *Statistical Compendium—Annual Report 2004,* Tables 3.4, 3.5, 3.8, 3.10, 3.11, 3.14, and 3.15.

In respect of geographically isolated students who represent an **ALL of 1,159,367** and a per student load on the system of **49.9 units**, the DET identifies a **56.3% loss** to schooling (11) (apparent retention) between Years 7 and 12, or **13,080** geographically isolated students out of 23,234 geographically isolated students in a full K-12 enrolment cycle.

In respect of NESBT students (those who answered 'yes' to 'does anyone use a language other than English at home?'), DET does not identify their number. As a consequence, it is not possible to calculate the ALL in the same way. However, this does not represent a problem for the "ALL" exercise because NESBT students show an overall "surplus" to the system on all but a small number of measurements. That is, NESBT students, as a group, provide DET *not* with an accumulated learning load but with an average performance significantly *better* than the cohort average. Minus signs in the following table signify a *benefit* load—the opposite to an ALL.

Table 3.4: Calculation of the Accumulated Learning Load (ALL) for NESBT students in NSW public schools: 2004

D	No. of NESBT students: not declared by DET	ALL
-0.5	NESBT students: Year 3 literacy	benefit
-0.3	NESBT students: Year 5 literacy	benefit
-0.5	NESBT students: Year 3 numeracy	benefit
-1.2	NESBT students: Year 5 numeracy	benefit
0.1	NESBT students: Year 6 computer skills	a small ALL
0.3	NESBT students: ELLA Year 7 reading	a small ALL
-0.3	NESBT students: ELLA Year 7 writing	benefit
-0.7	NESBT students: ELLA Year 7 language	benefit
0.6	NESBT students: ELLA Year 8 reading	a small ALL
0.2	NESBT students: ELLA Year 8 writing	a small ALL
-0.3	NESBT students: ELLA Year 8 language	benefit
-1.5	NESBT students: SNAP Year 7 numeracy	benefit
-2.5	NESBT students: SNAP Year 7 number	benefit
-1.4	NESBT students: SNAP Year 7 measurement	benefit
-1.1	NESBT students: SNAP Year 7 space	benefit
-1.2	NESBT students: SNAP Year 7 data	benefit
-1.8	NESBT students: SNAP Year 7 problem solving	benefit
-1.0	NESBT students: SNAP Year 8 numeracy	benefit
-1.7	NESBT students: SNAP Year 8 number	benefit
-1.0	NESBT students: SNAP Year 8 measurement	benefit
-0.5	NESBT students: SNAP Year 8 space	benefit
-0.6	NESBT students: SNAP Year 8 data	benefit

Data from NSW Department of Education and Training. (2004). *Statistical Compendium—Annual Report 2004,* Tables 3.4, 3.5, 3.8, 3.10, 3.11, 3.14, and 3.15.

In respect of NESB1 students (those who have lived in Australia for 4 years or less and never or only sometimes speak English at home), DET again does not identify their number, and again it is not possible to calculate the ALL in the same way. Nevertheless, the pattern is interesting. In respect of Literacy outcomes, this student group, not surprisingly because of their status as recent immigrants, shows a significant ALL which, as the NESBT data indicate, is overcome in later years. In respect of Numeracy the pattern is different and, on several other items, shows a "benefit" for the system consistent with the strong benefit to the system shown by longer term immigrants identified by DET as NESBT.

Table 3.5: Calculation of the Accumulated Learning Load (ALL) for NESBI students in NSW public schools: 2004

D	No. of NESBI students: not declared by DET	ALL
1.2	NESB1 students: Year 3 literacy	a small ALL
2.5	NESB1 students: Year 5 literacy	a significant ALL
1.0	NESB1 students: Year 3 numeracy	a small ALL
0.6	NESB1 students: Year 5 numeracy	a small ALL
3.2	NESB1 students: Year 6 computer skills	a significant ALL
4.0	NESB1 students: ELLA Year 7 reading	a significant ALL
3.7	NESB1 students: ELLA Year 7 writing	a significant ALL
3.2	NESB1 students: ELLA Year 7 language	a significant ALL
4.6	NESB1 students: ELLA Year 8 reading	a significant ALL
4.2	NESB1 students: ELLA Year 8 writing	a significant ALL
4.0	NESB1 students: ELLA Year 8 language	a significant ALL
0.4	NESB1 students: SNAP Year 7 numeracy	a small ALL
-1.1	NESB1 students: SNAP Year 7 number	benefit
0.2	NESB1 students: SNAP Year 7 measurement	a small ALL
1.9	NESB1 students: SNAP Year 7 space	a small ALL
1.2	NESB1 students: SNAP Year 7 data	a small ALL
-0.2	NESB1 students: SNAP Year 7 problem solving	benefit
0.2	NESB1 students: SNAP Year 8 numeracy	a small ALL
-1.6	NESB1 students: SNAP Year 8 number	benefit
-0.5	NESB1 students: SNAP Year 8 measurement	benefit
2.7	NESB1 students: SNAP Year 8 space	a significant ALL
0.9	NESB1 students: SNAP Year 8 data	a small ALL

Data from NSW Department of Education and Training. (2004). *Statistical Compendium—Annual Report 2004,* Tables 3.4, 3.5, 3.8, 3.10, 3.11, 3.14, and 3.15.

The high retention rate of -42.4% for LBOTE students (represented by DET as NESBT + NESB1) reveals high retention rates—resulting in *85,063 students GAINED in a full K-12 cycle.*

In respect of the 364,601 female students in 2004, the ALL against a few elements is heavily outweighed by the "benefit" to the system:

Table 3.6: Calculation of the Accumulated Learning Load (ALL) for female students in NSW public schools: 2004

D	No of female students = 364,601	ALL = D x 364,601	
-0.8	female students: Year 3 literacy	- 291,680	Benefit
-1.0	female students: Year 5 literacy	- 364,601	Benefit
0.3	female students: Year 3 numeracy	109,380	a small ALL
0.4	female students: Year 5 numeracy	145,840	a small ALL
-0.6	female students: Year 6 computer skills	- 218,760	Benefit
-0.8	female students: ELLA Year 7 reading	- 291,680	Benefit
-1.3	female students: ELLA Year 7 writing	- 473,981	Benefit
-1.6	female students: ELLA Year 7 language	-583,361	Benefit
-1.1	female students: ELLA Year 8 reading	-401,061	Benefit
-1.5	female students: ELLA Year 8 writing	-546,901	Benefit
-1.8	female students: ELLA Year 8 language	-656,281	Benefit
0.1	female students: SNAP Year 7 numeracy	36,460	a small ALL
-0.2	female students: SNAP Year 7 number	-72,920	Benefit
1.0	female students: SNAP Year 7 measurement	364,601	a small ALL
0.1	female students: SNAP Year 7 space	36,460	a small ALL
-0.3	female students: SNAP Year 7 data	-109,380	Benefit
0.4	female students: SNAP Year 7 problem solving	145,840	a small ALL
0.1	female students: SNAP Year 8 numeracy	36,460	a small ALL
-0.2	female students: SNAP Year 8 number	-72,920	benefit
1.1	female students: SNAP Year 8 measurement	401,061	a small ALL
0	female students: SNAP Year 8 space	nil	
-0.3	female students: SNAP Year 8 data	-109,380	benefit
	TOTAL ALL units female students	**-2,916,804 =**	**overall benefit**

Data from NSW Department of Education and Training. (2004). *Statistical Compendium—Annual Report 2004,* Tables 3.4, 3.5, 3.8, 3.10, 3.11, 3.14, and 3.15.

In respect of female students the exercise reveals an overall benefit to the system of 2,916,804 units or 8.0 units per female student. In respect of female students' retention rates, the DET identifies a 28.5% **loss** to schooling (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004b, Table 3.16, apparent retention) between Years 7 and 12—or **103,911** female students out of 364,601 female students in a full K-12 enrolment cycle.

In respect of the 380,906 male students in 2004:

Table 3.7: Calculation of the Accumulated Learning Load (ALL) for male students in NSW public schools: 2004

D	No of male students = 380,906 (ALL = D x 380,906)	ALL
0.9	male students: Year 3 literacy	342,815
0.9	male students: Year 5 literacy	342,815
-0.3	male students: Year 3 numeracy	-114,271
-0.4	male students: Year 5 numeracy	-152,362
0.6	male students: Year 6 computer skills	228,543
0.9	male students: ELLA Year 7 reading	342,815
1.3	male students: ELLA Year 7 writing	495,177
1.5	male students: ELLA Year 7 language	571,359
0.9	male students: ELLA Year 8 reading	342,815
1.4	male students: ELLA Year 8 writing	533,268
1.7	male students: ELLA Year 8 language	647,540
-0.1	male students: SNAP Year 7 numeracy	-38,090
0.2	male students: SNAP Year 7 number	76,181
-0.9	male students: SNAP Year 7 measurement	-342,815
-0.1	male students: SNAP Year 7 space	-38,090
0.4	male students: SNAP Year 7 data	152,362
-0.4	male students: SNAP Year 7 problem solving	-152,362
-0.2	male students: SNAP Year 8 numeracy	-76,181
0.2	male students: SNAP Year 8 number	76,181
-1.0	male students: SNAP Year 8 measurement	-380,906
-0.1	male students: SNAP Year 8 space	-38,090
0.3	male students: SNAP Year 8 data	114,271
	TOTAL ALL units male students	**2,932,975**

Data from NSW Department of Education and Training. (2004). *Statistical Compendium—Annual Report 2004,* Tables 3.4, 3.5, 3.8, 3.10, 3.11, 3.14, and 3.15.

Male students are a weight on the NSW public system, not surprisingly, approximately equal to the "benefit" to the system of female students and the per student benefit of female students (benefit = 8.0) approximately balances the per student weight of male students (ALL = 7.7).

In respect of male students the exercise reveals an overall ALL to the system of **2,932,975** units or **7.7 units** per male student and the DET identifies a 36.6% **loss** to schooling (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004b, Table 3.16, apparent retention) between Years 7 and 12, or **139,411** male students out of 380,906 male students in a full K-12 enrolment cycle.

With these calculations tabulated it is now possible to sketch the equity groups which make the biggest contribution to depressing the overall educational outcomes of the NSW public schooling system. In the following table, I have presented the ALL, and the ALL per student, for each of the student groupings. I have then ranked them (A and B respectively)

and suggested that the ALL and the ranking (A) indicate the degree of urgency the *system* should attribute to this data if it wants to improve overall outcomes, as well as Australia's comparatively appalling equity performance—while the ALL and the ranking (B) indicate the degree of urgency which should be attributed to each individual student within each student grouping. The last column "students lost" reports of the number of students in each student grouping, who do not complete schooling's year 12.

Table 3.8: Degree of urgency the public school system should attribute to identified groups of students

	ALL	rank A	system	ALL/student	rank B	student	Students lost
Indigenous	4,632,629	2	very high	131.4	1	urgent	24,714
Low SES	**11,862,647 (23,725,294)**	**1**	**Urgent**	**80.8**	**2**	**very high**	**62,837 (125,673)**
Geog isolation	1,159,367	4	high	49.9	3	high	13,080
NESBT	benefit	6	nil	benefit	6	low	Gain
NESB1	benefit	7	nil	benefit	7	low	gain
Females	benefit	5	low	-8.0 (benefit)	5	moderate	103,911
Males	2,932,975	3	low	7.7	4	moderate	139,411

ALL = accumulated learning load
Rank A = the ranking of ALL scores
system = the degree of urgency the *system* should attribute, to improve overall outcomes and equity performance
ALL/student = accumulated learning load (ALL) score per student
Rank B = the ranking of ALL scores per student
student = the degree of importance to each *student* that the ALL/student factor represents

These tabulated calculations encourage some new analysis and support some new judgements.

The most startling element is the ALL ranking of the arbitrarily capped, DSP/PSFP-identified, low SES student group which, despite its much more conservative estimate of low SES student numbers, reveals nearly four times the "drag" on the system than that generated by boys' performance, and well over twice the drag generated by indigenous students' outcomes. It is my view, based on my experience with data available to me as a DET officer but not available publicly, that a more accurate picture of SES-relatedness can be achieved by using data from the bottom 40%-50% of the schooling population, particularly in the public schooling sector. When this is the basis of the comparisons, then the "drag" on the system is more like 8 times the drag from boys' performance and four times that generated by indigenous outcomes—certainly enough grounds for organisations such as ACER and the systems themselves, to undertake accurate assessments of their

ALL, and to use them in policy formulation while making them readily available to the public through the existing mechanism of the Statistical Compendium.

Moreover, it must be remembered that the ALL has been calculated from test data drawn from the primary and junior secondary years of schooling. While it provides a measure of "load" on the system, it does not measure the system's loss of students who fail to complete Years 11 and 12. When retention rates are scrutinised it is evident that low SES students comprise the bulk of the system's failure. This is not to say that other equity groups are not worthy of attention, or in the case of indigenous students, more intensely disadvantaged thus generating justification for closely focussed research and priority resourcing. But it *is* to say that low SES is a huge concern which should be addressed *and that without it being addressed successfully the entire public schooling system can be viewed as failing what has always been its basic clientele*.

This conclusion should not be surprising for two reasons:
- the public schooling system was set up to provide, as will be outlined in Section Two, for the mass of society, including those for whom schooling was not regarded as important, or for whom schooling was too expensive; and
- many reports, as outlined earlier in this Section, from within Australia and from international research organisations, has identified low SES as highly predictive for student performance.

What *is* surprising given these data, is the failure of NSW DET, or the Australian national education authorities, to develop, over the 35 years since the report of the Interim Committee to the Australian Schools Commission (Karmel, 1973), a comprehensive plan for the education of students from low SES communities.

What might the reason for this omission be?

To answer this question it is necessary to better understand both the political context of educational debate during that period and the mainstreams of educational contestation.

Political Context

From the end of World War II until the demise of the Soviet Union in the 1990s world politics was dominated by the Cold War and its associated ideological contest. Amongst the many symptoms of this contest was the tendency for people to be "pigeon-holed" according to their general political positions. Those who argued with an emphasis on the public sector

and for government intervention in the workings of society—the economy, health and hospitals, education, and so on—were (and continue to be) labelled as "Left" and those who emphasised the private sector, freedom from government intervention, and concern for the rights of the Individual were (and continue to be) labelled as "Right." The politics of the time had an edge of fear, loathing, panic and peril. One side tended to slander and demonise the other in an effort to achieve political advantage.

Consequences of these politics have spilled into, and been debated within, different sectors of social policy research, consideration and formulation. Those with a deep concern for the disadvantaged, and particularly for those with a socio-economic disadvantage, have been seen to be "pushing" an ideological (Marxist) barrow. This perception has been heightened by a number of factors including the propensity of equity-oriented advocates to use ideologically charged terms such as "working class kids" for low SES students, not to mention the actual reality that numbers of these advocates placed themselves on the political left. A knock-on consequence of this identification of concern for low SES students with "radical" left politics, has been a difficulty in getting authorities and funding agencies to declare an interest in even the simplest matters of educational concern such as, for example, policy to ensure hungry and cold children/students have adequate body warmth and blood sugar levels to be physically able to engage with schooling's cerebral demands.

Educational Contestation

Educational researchers and authorities are interested in what factors make schools effective. They have increasingly become interested in the factors which make schools more effective for some students than others. And, more recently, often in response to strong community and political agitation, they have become concerned to know how schools can be effective for identifiable groups of students including the advantaged (such as "gifted" and "talented" students, and the already academically proficient), the mentally and physically disabled students, and otherwise disadvantaged students (such as Aboriginal, low SES, immigrant, geographically isolated, in circumstances which preclude school attendance).

Rowe (2003) expresses surprise at the current "shakiness of our knowledge about educational effectiveness in terms of both experiences and outcomes of schooling" but doesn't allow this shakiness to deter him from asserting that what *"really matters"* (his emphasis) is teacher quality (p. 15). Rowe helpfully traces the development of our understandings of school effectiveness right up to our current "shaky" state-of-affairs. He

shows how it grew out of studies of educational effectiveness by those interested in equity including Coleman et al. (1966) and Jencks et al. (1972) and reports that their findings "were interpreted as casting serious doubts on the capacity of schools to make a difference relative to the influence of the socio-cultural and economic capital of home background" (p. 16). To counter this conclusion Rowe references many researchers whose work provides evidence which "attests to the effects of schooling on student learning outcomes" and which Rowe dubs the "optimistic account" of school effectiveness research which, in summary includes five factors:

- purposeful educational leadership;
- challenging teaching and high expectations of students;
- involvement of & consistency among teachers;
- a positive and orderly climate;
- frequent evaluation of student progress (p. 17).

Rowe is not greatly impressed by the optimistic account, claiming it is based on an "extremely fragile research base" (p. 17) and preferring to see future success for students and schools as more likely in studies which show between-class/teacher variance which, according to Rowe, can be explained in terms of "teacher quality and instructional effectiveness" (p. 18).

This matter needs to be examined in more detail because, as Amosa et al. (2007) summarise, Australia's several public schooling systems have invested large amounts of research and training resources and energy into this area believing, like Rowe (2003), that teacher quality and not socio-economic and cultural differences is "what really matters."

At one end of this contestation are researchers such as Rothstein (2004) who argues that schools "make a big difference in the level, if not the variation, of achievement" (p. 16). Rothstein's (2004) argument is that low SES "*must* (his emphasis) produce a big average achievement gap" (p. 16) and that good teaching to both low SES students and high SES students will produce better results in each group of student but that it will do little (on average) to close the gap in achievement levels between low SES and high SES students.

Standing against this argument are those who regard "teacher quality" as the key. Rowe (2003) declares that teacher quality is "what really matters." He is unequivocal about this. He dismisses "traditional" views and "prevailing" understandings as "dogmas" and separates out for special scorn, research concerning socio-cultural and socio-economic factors, describing these "traditional and prevailing" views as "products of methodological

and statistical artefact, amounting to little more than 'religious' adherence to moribund ideologies of biological and social determinism" (p. 15). While acknowledging some minor influence on "students' literary skills, general academic achievements, attitudes, behaviours and experiences of schooling" of "background and intake characteristics" he says that "*the magnitude of these effects pale into insignificance compared with class/teacher effects*" (Rowe's emphasis).

Intriguingly, this extremely influential Research Director of ACER's research program acknowledges the "shakiness of our knowledge about educational effectiveness in terms of both experiences and outcomes of schooling for students, teachers, parents and the wider community" while making the intimidating assertion teacher quality is what *"really matters"* (p. 15, Rowe's emphasis). My own view is that the shaky nature of the research may be an indication that the matter is complex. That "teacher quality" in a learning industry is important, even very important, appears to me to be a no-brainer. That different groups of students generate different schooling outcomes suggests that different forces are at work and that the definition of a "quality teacher" may depend on the teachers' understanding of cultural contexts, a commitment to social justice objectives, an empathic understanding of the forces of disempowerment and liberation, amongst other matters. It occurs to me that the effect of a high-quality teacher will be seriously discounted in a system which is clearly insensitive to matters of equity and encouragingly tolerant of reproduced power and privilege. It is also apparent that disdainful approaches to all but one area of "effectiveness" have the effect of denying the possibility of causes being lodged within system responsibility such as curriculum—structure and content.

In other words, the inconclusive ("shaky") nature of research into educational effectiveness may lead, as Rowe asserts, to the unshakeable view that it is teacher quality that really matters, but it may also be true that teaching quality is dependent on a range of other factors including: easy-to-understand factors (such as the quality of pre-service and in-service teacher training/education, children's state of hunger and cold, class size); difficult to understand factors (such as cultural understandings and culturally inclusive curriculum and curriculum materials); and intellectually challenging factors (such as pedagogically appropriate organisation material to be taught and learned, personal motivation to learn by those living the relentless effects of poverty and discrimination, curriculum with intrinsic value to disempowered peoples, and so on).

Research undertaken in NSW public schools throughout 2004-07 provides more illumination on this important issue. The study titled *Systematic Implications of Pedagogy*

and Achievement for NSW Public Schools (SIPA), funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the NSW DET as part of the ARC Linkage Program (2004-2007), provides a counterpoint to Rowe's argument.

According to the SIPA researchers (Gore, Ladwig, Griffiths, and Amosa, 2007) the SIPA study "has been tracking three cohorts of students, totalling around 3000 students, as they progress through four years of schooling between 2004 and 2007 in a diverse sample of schools from throughout the state of NSW, Australia. We have been able to document aspects of the quality of pedagogy received by these students using instruments associated with the NSW Quality Teaching model. These instruments guide the coding of classroom practice and assessment tasks on three dimensions of quality: the intellectual quality of students' learning experiences; the quality of the pedagogical environment for supporting student learning, and; the significance of learning experiences" (p. 2). Importantly, the study generated data which can be analysed against various characteristics of groups of students such as cultural, ethnic and SES backgrounds.

As a consequence, amongst their findings which are generally very supportive of the model of "quality teaching" they report that:

- "the quality of pedagogy is poorest for indigenous and low SES students, with little difference in the quality of pedagogy by sex or English language background" (J. Gore, Ladwig, Griffiths, & Amosa, 2007, p. 5) and "high quality pedagogy is most absent where it is most needed—in schools and classes with high levels of low SES and ATSI (indigenous) students" (T. Griffiths et al., 2007, p. 12);
- "better quality pedagogy is correlated with better student performances, including better performances for low SES and ATSI (indigenous) students" (J. Gore et al., 2007, p. 6);
- "prior achievement has an overwhelming influence on the quality of pedagogy students receive" (p. 7).

From their findings, the SIPA researchers propose a number of recommendations for future policy and action, all of which bear on their view of "quality teaching" and all of which reveal a deep concern for the pedagogical quality all students experience. Because their research produced evidence concerning several "equity" groups they were in a position to make recommendations which could, depending on future action, bear directly on variously disadvantaged students. The SIPA team observes:

- "The extent to which teacher dispositions relate to this social distribution of pedagogy highlights the role of teacher education programs in building deep understandings of disadvantage" (J. Gore et al., 2007, p. 6).
- "Teacher education needs to develop ways to more adequately address and affect teacher beliefs" (p. 7).
- "Substantive concerns with many teacher education programs" with some being "critical," such as: the teaching of social justice/sociology courses in either dogmatic or lukewarm ways that prevent serious engagement with the issues or in ways that fail to connect theoretical perspectives with the realities of schools and communities" (p. 9).

At this point the findings of the SIPA researchers appear to be pointing to the need, for indigenous and low SES students, to include matters dismissed by Rowe (2003)—matters such as "socio-cultural and socio-economic factors." That is, "quality teaching" involves a number of matters which may prove to be SES-specific or indigenous-specific.

The SIPA researchers' methodological perspective led them to investigate differences concerning identified groups of disadvantaged students. While it is true that the SIPA researchers investigate the matter of "quality teaching" it is also true that, because they gathered data which distinguished between various equity groups, they discovered patterns which led them to exhort educators to be more mindful of the *differences and political contexts* within which appropriate learning strategies are devised. It occurs to me that such a view might also prove to have considerable consequence for other arms of policy and action, such as *curriculum* and *teacher selection*. Certainly, the SIPA observations are capable of an interpretation that betterments in low SES and indigenous outcomes are, at least in an important part, *contingent* on matters of intrinsic interest and value to low SES and indigenous students!

Amosa et al. (2007, pp. 7-8) report data which establish, at least in respect of the use of quality teaching assessment tasks, that the use of high quality assessment tasks can decrease "traditional achievement gaps" for low SES students and, again, produces results which have the extraordinary effect "on student achievement (such) that the achievement gap is essentially nullified" (p. 11). At this point the Rowe thesis might be hopefully resurrected. Quality teaching is all that matters. However, the SIPA researchers emphasise their results apply only to the effects of high quality assessment tasks and not to the quality of classroom teaching for different student/equity groups. Nevertheless, the results reported

by Amosa et al. are extraordinarily encouraging and suggest that further research may find similar lessening of traditional achievement gaps if quality *teaching* strategies—not simply high quality assessment tasks—are expanded into all schools and all classes.

It should not be surprising to find that traditionally most-poorly taught students, if provided with a new and excellent pedagogical experience, will improve their performance more than the improvement generated by the new pedagogy for the traditionally better taught. Even Rothstein (2004) concedes this point. But, to "challenge popular misconceptions about what matters most" for low SES and indigenous students as Amosa et al. (2007, p. 2) do and to establish that "what really matters" is teacher quality as Rowe (2003) does, the researchers really need to provide further evidence (as Rowe called for) that quality teaching can close the achievement gap between the disadvantaged groups and cohort averages.

This is exactly what Amosa et al. provide. Here is data which establishes that, in respect of quality assessment tasks, low SES and indigenous students do as well as high SES and non-indigenous students. This is important data—data with an importance which cannot be over-estimated, particularly for public schooling systems which have a disproportionate number of low SES and indigenous students enrolled.

The results reported by Amosa et al., while clearly ground-breaking and exciting, raise several questions. If it is the case that high quality assessment tasks can close the gap in achievement outcomes or, with later research, that "quality teaching" can eradicate the achievement gap, then it surely follows that, in terms of educational outcomes, it doesn't matter that low SES students or indigenous students often present to classes with low blood-sugar levels, many are physically disequilibrious, class disruption is higher, absenteeism is higher, emotional disturbance is more prevalent, teacher turnover is higher, executive leadership is less experienced—and that pre-schooling deficits and large learning groups have no depressing effects on outcomes?

If this is the case, then from an educational point of view, it is truly a happy outcome, and some of the more humane concerns can shift from the concern of the Minister for Education to a Minister for charity and welfare and compassion. From the point-of-view of money-Ministers within governments it will prove to be a welcome result too, as resourcing issues associated with pupil-teacher ratios and specialist personnel, and politico-personnel matters such as selection of teaching and school leadership staff with an understanding of

and political empathy for the socio-economic and cultural realities of the schools to which they are appointed, can continue to be regarded as low priority or of no consequence at all.

For the agnostic, it will be confirming to see the SIPA results replicated. My own view is that the SIPA results are understandable only if the teaching/learning being measured is reliant on teaching staff who are sensitive to, and aware of, cultural and real-life conditions of students and their families and that this is critical to the success of the SIPA team's QT model. This is my understanding of the NSW Quality Teaching model, but the importance of these elements is not emphasised in the SIPA reports of 2007. Nevertheless, my understanding of the NSW Quality Teaching model following discussion with Professor Gore and Associate Professor Ladwig, is that it requires teachers to understand, and incorporate in the preparation of learning materials and teaching strategies, a number of community-specific considerations, that quality teaching is about curriculum and the significance of what is being taught, a good knowledge of students and their environment, student-teacher relationships, and more. It is not about a set of skills.

If these further insights into the SIPA research are correct, then it can be seen that the Rowe thesis is becoming further complicated—well beyond the huge implications and additional complications arising from the SIPA recommendations for Teacher Education referred to earlier—with matters of curriculum and its relationship to low SES and indigenous life realities, life chances, and life aspirations, now coming into focus as part of the developing concept of Quality Teaching.

While the SIPA research and analysis continues and we await the results, a number of important questions still remain for low SES and indigenous students. The sample of students studied by the SIPA team has been drawn from a system in which more than 60% of students are "often bored," 34% are so alienated they do not want to attend school despite their high levels of happiness with their friends and teachers, and hugely disproportionate numbers of low SES and indigenous students leave school even before end of Year 10. It is, of course, *probable* that higher quality pedagogical strategies will diminish the boredom and reluctance to attend school. Whether or not it has the capacity to eradicate these problems without addressing major system-level issues (such as curriculum) is another matter.

Before leaving the SIPA team's important study, there is a final observation worth making. The model of quality teaching employed (Quality Teaching dimensions and elements) (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2003) requires teachers to devise assessment

tasks and learning experiences consistent with elements of the model. The model is designed to be used by *teachers* in respect of *individual* students and groups of students. Because of the concern for context, the model contains elements which, if used properly by teachers, would require them to reconstruct curriculum to be *both* less compartmentalised into disciplines *and* particular to the socio-econo-cultural realities of the students. I make three points about this.

If the Ladwig-Gore model was applied to the *system*, such that curriculum authorities, curriculum bureaux, and learning materials production agencies, were required to address elements of the Ladwig-Gore Quality Teaching model: background knowledge, cultural knowledge, student direction, connectedness, deep understanding, *then:*

a) a great deal of systemic support would be required to assist teachers to understand these elements as they *reflect the realities* of low SES and indigenous life-styles and existence

b) concern for curriculum outcomes which directly address the disadvantaged life condition of low SES and indigenous students (curriculum outcome with intrinsic value) would become *system* concerns

c) the need for curriculum and support materials which deal with themes from real life (cross-disciplinary curriculum) would become more obvious (to the system) as teachers provide for students in the search for intellectual quality and significance.

It may be that the DET will find its way to devising a plan for the education of low SES students through its developing interest in the Quality Teaching model. If this is the case then that will be a good result. In 2008, that plan is yet to be devised despite the expired time since the first report of the Schools Commission (Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia], 1975) which sought to continue the provision of special funds for the disadvantaged along with *both* an admission that those funds would be insufficient to address inequitable outcomes for low SES students *and* an exhortation to governments to provide "a different order of magnitude" of General Recurrent and General Capital funding so that resource distribution could be made differentially to meet the identified and planned needs of low SES students (Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia], 1975, pp. 226-229, paras. 14.3-14.5, 14.8 & 14.9). The intention was to inculcate in each system a sense of responsibility to equity groups such that each arm of system policy was redesigned to make an explicitly low-SES response for low SES students, a specifically indigenous response for indigenous students, and so on (p. 229).

Such action would probably need a planned program of research, innovation, action-research, policy development on all arms of system policy. The reasons why a comprehensive plan for the education of low SES students has never been constructed is not the focus of this dissertation. However, the elements of such a plan, if it were to be developed, need to be identified.

Families from low SES communities experience many disadvantages. They live in an environment where disposable income is thin and community resources are few. Their circumstances generate different cultural contexts—some strong and admirable—others less admirable. As we know from Piaget, all children will learn to probe, understand and eventually "accommodate" their environment, no matter what that environment is. As a consequence, that which is learned by children from low SES communities differs considerably from higher SES children. In an industry which relies on moving students from the "known to the unknown" this should be a central matter for educators to acknowledge and should be of central importance to considerations of curriculum content and structure.

Some education systems have attempted to assist teachers to understand these matters. Encouraged by the Disadvantaged Schools Program, the NSW DET permitted classified DSP schools to develop curriculum which addressed social, political, organisational, technological and economic themes (SPOTE) from the earliest years, in the belief that low SES children were most likely to find interest and motivation in curriculum which addressed their perceived disadvantage. That is, a curriculum which was "meaningful, and relevant preparation for a later interest in work and learning" (Karmel, 1973, p. 94).

In similar vein, the South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services provided materials and in-service opportunities for teachers to better understand the realities of living in poverty and provided teachers with some political insights into how an educator might best connect with these students and move them to the "unknown" (South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services, 1994).

The DSP encouraged schools and systems to research and innovate. In addition to a strong interest in literacy and numeracy, a wide variety of matters were investigated. As just one of hundreds of examples, in NSW a group of a dozen principals undertook a 10 week in-service course, more than half of which was working as a low SES worker for eight hour shifts in jobs as varied as killing and butchering chickens in an Ingham's chicken factory, labouring, and so on.

But the initiatives of the DSP and the advocacy by the Schools Commission for a more comprehensive plan (1975 Report for the 1976-78 Triennium) involving more than a complementary program was resisted. The powerful arms of education policy were not integrated and brought to bear on the needs of low SES students, despite the Commissions intentions and expectations.

The need for comprehensive changes, in the interests of disadvantaged schools (as well as "mainstream and upmarket" schools) persists and, as Richard Teese so insistently points out, will require Australia to "stop isolating disadvantaged schools by abandoning the practices we employ to keep them isolated, which cut them off from the mainstream, which expose them to constant failure, to public slander, to low expectations. We should not keep taking their teachers and their most able students. We would have to fund them for durable improvement. We would need different initial teacher training, incentives to stay on, stable staffing and leadership, specialist support to address welfare and social needs so that educational funds are concentrated on educational activities" (Teese, 2006, p. 159). A comprehensive plan for the education of low SES students would need to address matters simple and complex, inexpensive and expensive, political and educational. It would be difficult and complex—and highly political.

The basis of such a plan was provided by a primer statement titled *National Strategy for Equity in Schooling*. It was produced by MCEETYA in 1994 and, according to the NSW Minister who was chairing MCEETYA at the time, it represented "a historic moment in the provision of school education in Australia" (p. 1) as it provided "a broad framework" for "concerted national action to reduce persistent educational disadvantage in Australia" (p. 2). The statement identified the equity "priority groups" to be:

- students with a disability;
- students at risk;
- low SES students;
- ATSI students;
- NESB students; and
- geographically isolated students.

The statement also identified "Priority Areas for Action" (p. 7-11), for each of the priority groups. The eight priority areas, with some explication from the statement, appear in italics below:

- *Curriculum:*
  - *Inclusivity: development of curriculum statements which are inclusive*

- *Intrinsic value: achievement of curriculum outcomes "that have intrinsic value and significance to the students and their communities"*
- *Explicit expectations and curriculum outcomes to be understood by students, parents and teachers*

- *Assessment:*
  - *To be directly related to explicit outcomes*
  - *To be available to, and inclusive of, all students in priority groups*

- *Teaching:*
  - *Special pre-service teacher education to be related directly to each priority group*
  - *Special in-service teacher education to be related directly to each priority group*

- *Staff Selection:*
  - *Recruitment and deployment processes to include expectations associated with each priority group*

- *Pedagogy:*
  - *Teaching and learning strategies are to be student-centred and supported by flexible timetabling and school structures*

- *School Environment:*
  - *Each school to have a documented whole-school approach to incorporate the needs and perspectives of students in each priority group*
  - *No violence, discrimination, harassment*

- *Resource Use:*
  - *Differential allocation of resources to meet additional identified needs*
  - *Early identification of, and intervention with priority groups*

- *Awareness and Commitment:*
  - *Planning—for each priority group*
  - *Reporting—for each priority group*
  - *Non-educational support services—access to them for priority groups.*

In NSW, in 1994, the Minister of Education and Youth Affairs (and also Chair of MCEETYA) called for a NSW State Equity Strategy which was duly drafted for her consideration. This draft plan was never published. It contained sections which attempted to integrate the responsibilities of the Board of Studies, TAFE, the Office of Youth Affairs and the Department of School Education. Although never published, this draft plan (NSW Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs, 1994) contained some excellent early planning, a

good deal of which acknowledges the need to research numbers of difficult issues. In the DET's section of the plan there are three "Key Result Areas":

- Dismantling Barriers;
- Successful Participation; and
- Successful Continuation and Provision for Lifelong Learning.

Each of the Key Result Areas comprises "actions" to be undertaken by the DET, and expected "outcomes" from each of those actions, with the Directorate responsible for each action and the date by which it was expected to be completed. The plan is too big to report fully here, but in respect of low SES students, some of its elements included:

- a commitment to "develop a plan for the education of students from backgrounds of low SES" (NSW Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs, 1994, p. 3);
- coordination of "government departments and non-government agencies to meet the needs of students in crisis because of hunger, cold, accommodation, counselling" (p. 3);
- targeting of resources to schools with relatively higher concentrations of low SES students (p. 3);
- pre-service teacher training to ensure "teachers have an understanding of the nature of disadvantage" (p. 5);
- early childhood education programs (p. 6);
- access to appropriate education transitional pathways (p. 6);
- pre-schooling (p. 7);
- incorporation of equity data into school and system planning (p. 7);
- implementation of a "plan of research to identify gaps in current understanding of the needs of students with equity needs" (p. 7);
- differential allocations of resources through staffing entitlements, regional flexible staffing allocations, schools' global budgets and specific focus programs (p. 8);
- staffing of (low SES) schools to contain "balanced groups of experienced and newly appointed teachers and executive staff" (p. 8);
- curriculum inclusivity (p. 9);
- curriculum which "effectively acknowledges and builds on the life experiences of (low SES) students" (p. 9);
- curriculum with "intrinsic value" to (low SES) students (p. 9); and
- curriculum—development of "multidisciplinary resources" to support a thematic approach to teaching across the Key Learning Areas" (p. 9).

This same draft contained important agendas for the Board of Studies, too, including "revise syllabuses and support materials" based on yet-to-be-completed statements of principle for the "education of students of low SES background" (Board of Studies section, p. 9).

At this point in history, both the national government and the NSW government were planning to move forward on the matter of Equity plans with a strong element geared to the needs of low SES students. It never happened. As indicated in Chapter 2, there is no NSW plan for the schooling of students from low SES communities and the DET appears to have abandoned all interest in low SES in its policies, procedures and priorities.

One of the greatest problems confronting low SES students, in my view, has been the Rowe's line of thinking. That is, despite systems of schooling, particularly public systems of schooling, being held back by the weight of low SES disaffection and learning outcomes, there is little planning centred on the particularities of low SES students. The Rowe thesis, that it is the quality of teaching that really matters, is widely used to bat away, even to professionally ridicule, those who advocate further research into the particularly SES issues associated with low SES students' persistently and hugely underwhelming achievements and attainments.

Rowe's uni-dimensional and de-politicised view of "the answer" and the track to that answer (teacher quality) is a lot more attractive than the conflicted debates, politics and complexity which can be expected to be associated with examining the education of low SES students and its association with matters of boredom, equity and public/non-public market of schools, curriculum and the way it is structured, and social cohesion.

The Rowe thesis, used by system managers because it fits more comfortably with their personal or political philosophies, or just because they believe it despite its "shakiness," has harmonised with the "happy" thesis from ACER and the widely absorbed "doing well" thesis spread by both the media and system departments. With the "happy" thesis of ACER in mind, and wide reportage of only the positive aspects of OECD reports (showing Australia's schooling system doing comparatively well when average student scores are compared with other countries' averages), it is not surprising that, informed by Rowe's arguments, politicians' and departmental "leaders" have pursued concerns for *general* improvements. However, an important corollary of this management strategy has been, based on the evidence outlined above, the diversion of interest and research within the major arms of schooling policy development *away* from matters which are of particular

importance to low SES students, and which may prove to be central to the improvement of outcomes for low SES students.

For example, in-service course after in-service course, decade after decade, has been funded for Principals and Executives throughout NSW on topics such as those comprising the "optimistic account" outlined above. Thousands of school leaders are gathered together, from high SES schools and low SES schools alike, to be up-dated on the latest research concerning all students. But, as we have seen, all students are not the same. Their experiences and performance are different. Very different. Persistently different.

It *may* be that Rowe's declaration that teacher quality is "what really matters" will prove to be significant. But this is a one-size-fits-all approach unless it is accepted that "teacher quality" may include teachers of low SES students having a deep and empathetic knowledge of the world that is known to low SES students, including an understanding of disadvantage, its causes, and the pathways from disempowerment to empowerment. With some investment of research it may prove to be the case that these elements are crucial to a definition of "quality teaching." If this proves to be the case, then "teacher quality" will require a number of specific policy developments relating particularly to low SES students, in areas as diverse as teacher selection and appointment, principles underlying teacher promotion, the Executive structure of schools in low SES communities, as well as a raft of considerations concerning curriculum, learning materials development, local contextual issues including political understandings of, and engagement with the community. All these matters of particular concern to low SES students might, depending on future research outcomes, well be seen to be contributors to teacher quality.

Further to this, if research into the areas listed above proved to be important to low SES students, and if educators were keen *not* to establish a separate curriculum and set of policies for low SES students, then there might be a strong case for challenging the hegemony of the current curriculum and supportive schooling structure—such as this dissertation is attempting—with a view to reconstructing structures and processes so they addressed the needs of *all* students rather than neglecting the needs of the already, and persistently, disadvantaged.

A good starting point for that exercise is to question the status quo on all major arms of management policy (such as staffing, funding, feeding, physical equilibrium, curriculum content, and so on) and to pose researchable questions, such as those articulated in the following (long) list.

Intrinsic Value—Counter Hegemony

Given that low SES students are the "heaviest lift" on the system, what advantage or disadvantage exists for low SES students (and communities) when system planning, school management, teacher-student relationships, and good pedagogy are addressed in an apolitical manner? What advantages or disadvantages are there for low SES students if they, their teachers, their schools' leaderships, their curriculum, and their expected schooling outcomes, are treated with a general strategy without first researching the particular needs of the group which generates the largest accumulated learning load on the system? Given that the status of being low SES is seen universally to be undesirable and, unlike being an Aboriginal or a girl or a migrant there is little or nothing to celebrate about being low SES, what might be of "*intrinsic*" value to low SES students? If intrinsic value to disempowered people is defined in terms of remedying the key determinants of low SES disadvantage, then what is it that is of intrinsic value? Once the elements of "intrinsic value" are discovered and agreed (such as, for example, understanding the constructs of disempowerment and understanding the pathways towards empowerment) is it the case that these elements are needed by *all* students? If so, can the curriculum (and associated staffing selection policies, teacher training, funding, etc.) be reconstructed so a new paradigm, or set of paradigms, applies to all students with an expectation that the gap (ALL) in social and schooling outcomes between low SES students and the general cohort will, over time, be systematically reduced without currently successful groups of students being held back or dragged down?

For systems to address these questions requires them to understand (a) that "equity" groups must not be supported with lone programs which operate as "clip-ons" in the margins of mainstream thinking and action, but should employ programs to undertake the research and innovative practices necessary to influence the implementation of all *major* arms of system policy development and action; (b) the essentially political nature of the curriculum in general, and the potential for conflict in any process involving empowered persons making decisions which will encourage currently disempowered people to become empowered. For this reason, I attempt to find a means by which these matters can be achieved using a new political process (outlined in Section Three) designed to achieve consensus around a set of principles, through social agreement.

Physical Equilibrium

Given that low SES students are the "heaviest lift" on the system, what if anything is required for low SES students to be *physically* prepared (hunger, cold, clothing, emotional disturbance, etc.) for learning before the day's lessons?

Access

Given that low SES students are the "heaviest lift" on the system, what *access issues* remain to be addressed? Pre-schooling? Tertiary entrance?

Differentials

Given that low SES students are the "heaviest lift" on the system, should there be guaranteed *differentials in class size* and learning groups such that low SES classes are provided (first) with an environment more consistent with optimum conditions for the development of good teacher-student relationships and quality teaching?

Specialist Resources

Given that low SES students are the "heaviest lift" on the system, what additional *specialist resources* such as counsellors, social workers, welfare coordinators, remedial and specialist personnel, are needed for students?

Teacher Training

Given that low SES students are the "heaviest lift" on the system, what different, or additional *pre-service and in-service* teacher training is required for those who teach low SES students?

Staff Selection

Given that low SES students are the "heaviest lift" on the system, what is the best *staff selection* strategy—Principal, executive, specialist and teaching staff—to bribe teachers with promises of favourable transfer out of the "unfavourable" locales (a provocative political position for Aboriginal, isolated and low SES communities), or something more politically empathetic, such as appointments made on the basis of proven interest in and empathy for, disempowered communities?

Schooling Structures

Given that low SES students are the "heaviest lift" on the system, is there an argument for smaller more-personalised schools, more integrated into the community and its core functions? Might this not be "paid" for with less violence, less crime in the community, less policing, less prisoners?

Curriculum—Inclusive

Given that low SES students are the "heaviest lift" on the system, is there a need to investigate that which represents an "inclusive" approach to low SES students, or is the state of poverty, ignorance and relative disempowerment devoid of characteristics which

can be celebrated in the way girls, boys, migrants, isolated and Aboriginal students have particular and specific "known" knowledge from which teachers can build bridges to the "unknown"?

Curriculum—Intrinsic Value

Given that low SES students are the "heaviest lift" on the system, what curriculum outcomes (current or prospective) might represent a genuine pathway out of poverty, relative ignorance and disempowerment? Is it a reasonable expectation that teachers and school leaders should understand the real life-conditions of low SES communities and students and be able to offer students a comprehensive understanding of:

- the nature of low SES disadvantage;
- the full range of post-school options (similar to the priority for action advocated by the National Plan for the Education of Girls (NBEET, 1986);
- pathways of education and training to those options;
- participation in those pathways?

Curriculum—Empowerment

Is the concept of "empowerment" to be found in essential literacy and numeracy (and remediation for those who fall behind) and an organisation of curriculum content into separated disciplines, or is literacy and numeracy to be found in *powerfully* relevant issues essential to the common good of all people including disempowered communities, such as:

- democratic understandings and practice;
- the world of work, wealth creation and distribution;
- individual and human rights, including religious and spiritual rights;
- technological development;
- environmental responsibility;
- cultural diversity;
- economic balance and goals;
- media and communication;
- creativity;
- family and community?

School Planning

Given that low SES students are the "heaviest lift" on the system, is there a need for different (additional?) content, and processes associated with developing school plans, vision statements, situational analyses, continuing programs and new initiatives, with future goals for schools and their low SES students?

None of these questions should be interpreted to imply that the five factors of the "optimistic approach," so widely pursued in NSW in recent decades, are not important. Of course "leadership" (to take the first factor) is important. But a leader who is excellently trained in general leadership skills (including the need to *collaborate* with all stakeholders to *identify* organisational goals followed by a process of internal organisation to *align* all organisational processes to achieve those goals) is nevertheless in real trouble if s/he is ignorant of the political starting points of the community, the life experience of the community, the paucity of options making up the community's perspective in counterpoint to fierce pride in their existence, resilience, sometimes solidarity—to speculate on just a few. Leadership without context is as devoid of understanding as anything else without context.

This is not a new experience for many teachers. Many a principal, executive teacher and teacher with a history of success and doting students has found themselves appointed to a "tough" school, with concentrations of low SES and/or immigrant students, only to find they did not have the *political* skills needed to deal with racial, religious, cultural and/or community contexts which provide meaning to much of what students do in and out of schools. Others with good records in culturally homogenous schools have found themselves relying on authoritarian teaching and disciplinary strategies quite different from their successful past, to get them through the day and to their next transfer opportunity.

Nor is my argument an attempt to dilute the importance of teacher quality. This matter seems to be self-evident—a "no-brainer." Of course the quality of the teacher is important—very important. After all, this is schooling where teachers teach. A poor teacher will teach poorly—a good one will teach well. My objective, too, is to have excellent teachers engaging with highly motivated students with high expectations for themselves and the Common Good. Who would argue with this? The trick is to establish just what *is* quality teaching so that we can pursue it to the benefit of all students. A definition of quality teaching may have universal value, but as the SIPA team have explained there will be sections of the definition (such as understanding the background of different categories of equity students) which require different understandings, and maybe different curriculum or curriculum support materials, teaching strategies, and so on.

Many of the elements of both the National Strategy (MCEETYA) and the draft NSW strategy, outlined earlier in this chapter, are similar. In the main they accord with my own thinking and experience. Sometimes problems are better understood if answers are proposed. In this case I propose to suggest the most important elements of a prospective

plan for the schooling of students from low SES communities. In what follows, I have ordered the elements so that they appear not along lines of cost, not in any order of importance, but in the order of the easiest to conceive to the most difficult to conceive. It might look something like this:

- **data**: collection of attainment and achievement (outcomes) data for continuing analysis concerning performance and interest and usefulness: absenteeism, retention, behaviour, engagement and boredom, literacy and numeracy, School Certificate and HSC subject interest and results, post-school destinations.

- **welfare**: provision of basic food and clothing. Associated issues of homelessness and acute emotional disturbance.

- **resources**: schools enrolling high concentrations of students who represent the "heavy lift" of education need more resources including lower class sizes, a strong mix of experienced and less experienced teachers, differential allocation of support and specialist staff as well as discretionary funds.

- **access**: including strategies for low SES students to access pre-schooling and tertiary education.

- **curriculum—inclusivity**: production of learning materials which are culturally attuned and based in a "known" environment to variously (dis)advantaged students.

- **political shift—equality of outcomes**: an understanding of the qualitative philosophic difference between a system committed to "equality of opportunity" and one committed to the attainment, over time, of an "equality of outcomes" between equity groups as finally accepted into the (Adelaide) National Goals for Schooling.

- **teacher training—pre-service**: initial training needs to be good quality and in harmony with the more complex matters outlined below.

- **teacher/executive/specialist teacher training—in-service**: in-service training needs to be tailored to suit the particular needs of teachers where they are appointed such as rural/Aboriginal, city/Aboriginal, rural/low SES non-Aboriginal and so on. It must be in harmony with the more complex matters outlined below.

- **teacher/executive appointments**: a refined system of teacher/executive recruitment designed to staff low SES schools with teachers who have an understanding of the politics of "equality of outcomes" and a commitment to under-educated and disempowered communities.

- **teacher—student relationships**: teacher attitude to low SES students, expectations of students, school structures which facilitate closer relationships,

identification of students with needs and at risk, "politicisation" of teachers to understand the more complex matters below.

- **curriculum—intrinsic value**: a curriculum which encourages low SES students to understand the nature of their disadvantage, understand the full range of post-school and adult options open to them, and clearly see the educational pathways to those options. A curriculum with intrinsic value to disempowered students might address explicitly the same themes a curriculum geared to the needs of the Common Good would address. In my view, Australians if given the opportunity might endorse societally important themes such as: democratic understandings and practice; the world of work; individual and human rights, including religious and spiritual; technological development; environmental responsibility; cultural diversity; economic balance and goals; media and communication; creativity; family and community.

- **school planning**: a process which integrates the contents of this plan with the material and philosophic resources of the school's staff and community, and manages its implementation throughout the school

Many of the elements of this plan are well known to education authorities and educators, but many are not implemented. Others are not well known—or disputed—and not implemented, while yet others are both known and implemented.

The simplest matter—data—is still disputed as the request from the University of Newcastle to the NSW DET has evidenced. When asked for data concerning SES scores of (unidentified) schools matched to learning attainments and achievements, the DET replied that the data was not available, would take officers too much time to extract from DET data banks, and the exercise had no value in any event (NSW Department of School Education, 2006). Further evidence of a loss of concern for the particular requirements of low SES students is to be found in important and ground-breaking official documentation from the DET's Professional Learning and Leadership Development Directorate and the NSW Institute of Teachers which has responded extraordinarily well to the needs of ATSI students, NESB students, students with Special Education needs, and students with challenging behaviours, but makes no mention of low SES students in the entirety of its Framework for Professional Teaching Standards (NSW Institute of Teachers, n.d., p. 6).

This neglect of an entire equity group, and the group I have established to be the greatest "load" on the public schooling system and the group for whom public schooling was first established, is unfortunately embraced by the MCEETYA and the Commonwealth which,

while supplying comprehensive data with informed analysis on other recognised equity groups of students (such as: male, female, indigenous, LBOTE, metropolitan, provincial, remote, very remote), has now leached almost all reference to low SES students from its reportage as evidenced by the *National Benchmark Results: Reading, Writing and Numeracy in Years 3, 5 and 7* (MCEETYA, 2005). In its report MCEETYA make reference to low SES students *only* as an example of how important it is to be able to establish correlations between the learning outcomes data and, in this case, socio-economic status (p. 4). Yet that is the first and last reference to low SES students in the entire report. No data relating to low SES students is collected or reported and no reference is made to the reason why no data has been collected or reported. The early reference in the text [by way of example] to low SES students, despite the total absence of any further reference to low SES students through the entirety of the report, suggests earlier drafts of the report *did* contain either data or references to data concerning low SES students but, for an undivulged reason, it was eliminated.

Slightly more difficult to understand (for educators) are matters such as the effects on students' ability to learn, of hunger and cold. Thousands of low SES students attend their first daily lessons with no food. Many are poorly clad. Some schools attempt, from school funds, to alleviate these problems by buying winter garments and keeping them at school each day and by negotiating with charities to provide a breakfast program, but this is not systematically provided or oversighted by the NSW public schooling system, and most of these students remain unsupported by under-resourced schools.

Probably the greatest attention has been paid to "resources" and "access" as a consequence of the political and industrial campaigns of the 1970s and 80s and, maybe, because these matters are easier to understand and respond to.

Matters of teacher training, in-service and appointments can only be undertaken appropriately following a system change of focus from "equality of opportunity" to "equality of outcomes, over time," as it is these teachers who will need most to be able to connect with low SES students and move them from the "known" to the "unknown."

Inexorably then we come to more complex matters of curriculum—a curriculum comprising learning outcomes with intrinsic value to low SES students. This matter is under-researched. Despite the exhortations of the CSC in 1973 and 1975 to pursue within low SES schools a more "relevant and meaningful curriculum," despite the Commission's observations about a more flexible arrangement of courses within schools, and despite the

Commission's later reference to the need to develop an essential curriculum, the debate has yet to get off the ground. New waves of policy have overtaken these objectives as Governments introduced new courses for the "non-academically inclined" and "non-University oriented"—euphemisms for students from under-educated and disempowered backgrounds. The non-academically inclined students who choose not to leave school, have now been provided in the senior years of schooling, with Vocational Education and Training (VET) and other lower status courses—a separate "working class" curriculum (Prest, 1992)[3].

This is not consistent with concern for an equality of outcomes between equity groups. The result entrenches social inequality.

From the weight of "accumulated learning load" generated by low SES students it suggests that any new approach to curriculum must be capable of supporting low SES students. The arguments are the same for the equity groups with the lesser ALL such as indigenous students who are more intensely disadvantaged and also come from under-educated communities with relatively high concentrations of disempowered people.

As with Chapters One and Two, but for different reasons, Chapter Three suggests that, when seeking to reconstruct the public schooling system, matters of curriculum relevance and structure will need to be primary.

The major research question examined in Section One has been, *"What are the bigger educational strengths and weaknesses of the public schooling system?"*

In answering this question it has become evident that:
1. a) Educational outcomes across a range of attainment and achievement indicators, in Australian schools generally, and NSW public schools specifically, compare favourably with those in similarly developed OECD countries.

    b) However, in comparison with the same OECD countries, using the same indicators, Australia is amongst the worst performers on a measure of relative

---

[3] S. U. Prest was a pseudonym I adopted as a device to have my views published after being warned by senior Departmental officers to "suppress" (S. U. Prest) these views because, if made public, they could detrimentally affect my employment within the NSW DET.

disadvantage. That is, Australia's bottom half of student performers compared with the top half, are more greatly disadvantaged than most OECD countries.

c) Although the private and church-based schooling sector carry some of these disadvantaged students, around 64% of the public schooling system comprises students from the bottom half of performers.

d) The bulk of the disadvantaged in NSW public schools, and the equity group which generates the overwhelmingly biggest "deficit load" for public schooling, comes from low SES students, reinforcing conclusions reached in extensive research studies by the OECD (TIMMS) and ACER (LSAY).

e) Matters of curriculum for low SES students have been raised by a series of educational reports and analyses. Rather than examine current curriculum content and structure for characteristics which exclude curriculum outcomes of intrinsic value to low SES students and which alienate or encourage disengagement, authorities have chosen to leave primary and junior secondary curriculum *structures* largely untouched while providing alternative and lower status curriculum routes for euphemistically described "non-university oriented" and non-academically inclined" students—a separate and lesser "working class" curriculum.

2. a) A large and majority proportion of Australia's students find schooling to be a boring experience despite their comfortable feelings of "belonging" to their peer group and making friends easily at school. A large minority would rather not be at school at all.

    b) This feeling of disengagement from the learning process is felt by students in private and church-based schools as well as public schools, although with a 64% enrolment of students in the lower half of Australian performers it is likely disengagement is more generally evident within public schools.

    c) Curriculum is not organised, nor are schools' timetables and organisational practices organised, on the basis of declared principles of good pedagogy. Curriculum appears to be structured independent of the interesting themes of life and school structures are often suited to the management of the curriculum paradigm and the need to move groups of students between the elements of that paradigm.

These two issues—inequity and disengagement—are strongly felt within the Australian schooling system. Given the relatively high proportion of indigenous and low SES enrolments in the public system, and the strong correlation between relatively poor access and outcomes for low SES students, it follows that these two issues are disproportionately experienced within public schooling systems. Both issues affect such a huge proportion of the public school sector's enrolments as to justify further research into the reasons and possible remedies. A preliminary analysis of both issues has exposed the current curriculum paradigm to criticism. This critique will be further developed in Section Four.

Section Two: What is Happening in the Schooling Market?

In Section One, international and national data were examined with a view to judging the quality of Australia's schools and to gain insights into the major concerns which arise from those data. With the advantage of illuminating international and national data, the educational landscape was shown to comprise two major features of concern to Australia's schools: widespread student boredom; gross inequities in learning outcomes.
In Section Two, I will address a third major feature on the schooling landscape—shifting political and public support for public and private schooling.

The section is arranged into two chapters with Chapter Four providing a dispassionate outline of the composition of an increasingly complex schooling market, followed by analysis of the data, and Chapter Five listing and discussing a range of consequential issues. In Chapter Four, I will present the facts which, taken together, *describe* the composition of the market: enrolment levels, school identification, enrolment trends, level of fees, stated missions from systems and schools. I will also document the *arguments* from interested parties, vested interests, and disinterested researchers, to reveal the nature of different explanations for the shift in public loyalty.

The section will conclude with an observation that several of the important issues which emerge from a study of the schooling market are related to the way curriculum is structured, and its content: access to sectarian studies; study of values; the general matter of "choice." Against an intense and often bitter political debate concerning public and private schooling, the analysis reveals considerable areas of common ground, leading me to the view that potential exists to attain widespread agreement concerning: the social purposes of schooling; agreed curriculum essentials; wide curriculum choice; religious freedom; and common values.

Chapter Four—The Schooling Market.

1. The Market—Expansion

In Australia over the past quarter century, there has been a persistent and significant movement of "market share" from public to church-based and private schools. Data from the NSW Department of Education and Training (C. Ryan, 2004) when graphed, reveal

School Attendance 1963 - 2003 by Sector
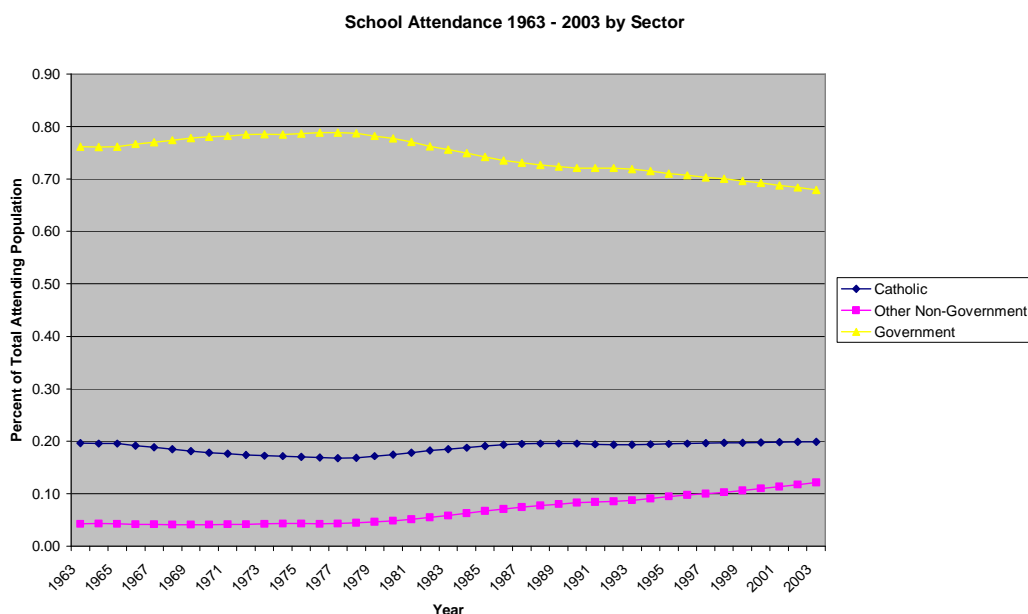
gradients which dip downwards for public schooling, gently upwards for Catholic systemic schools and steadily upwards for "other non-government" schools. Extrapolations suggest that, if the trends continue, within the next 20 years the public schooling system will reduce to below 60% and "other non-government" schools will replace Catholic schools as the second largest schooling provider, and in another 20 years the public school system in NSW will enrol less than 50% of the total student population. The most recently available national data from the ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2005, Table 4) are consistent with these NSW data showing 71% of primary and 62% of secondary students enrolled in public schools.

These trends are the result of deliberate public policy but are not universally supported with sections of the citizenry now alarmed at developments. Among recent examples of expressed concern about these trends is the work of Bonner and Caro, who see the movement as symptomatic of the "dismantling of public education" (Bonner & Caro, 2007).

Gross enrolment data such as those which generate the above graph are very useful but they do not tell the full story. Enrolment proportions, between the public and various private sectors are uneven in different geographic locations and at some levels of attainment. For example, some suburbs/regions within major capital cities such as the eastern suburbs of Sydney have a *minority* (40%) of students attending public schools (Burke, 2005).

A further indication of trends in population attitude and enrolment intentions is the proportion of families who enrol their children in non-public schools. This proportion is significantly higher than the proportion of students who are actually enrolled in non-government schools because some of the parents who enrol the 69% of students in public schools also enrol one or more of their children in a non-government school. According to the NSW Catholic Education Commission, this factor reduces to 66% the proportion of families who enrol their children only in public schools (Croke, 2006, Slide 5).

Although speculative in nature, an ACER study commissioned by the *Sydney Morning Herald* (Beavis, 2004) supports the view that an additional large number of parents (34% of those parents with children at public schools) would choose a private school over a public school in the hypothetical event that private school "fees were no more than for government schools."

It has not been possible to obtain comparative enrolment data for the years between 1880, when NSW enacted the Public Instruction Act which, amongst other matters denied any government funding for church-based and private schools, and the 1960s, when Catholic schools were closed in Goulburn, NSW, as a political act designed to stimulate a political remedy to this funding starvation of non-public schools. However, as detailed in Section Three, during this time period the schooling "market" was dominated by a public schooling system and a system of Catholic schools which together accounted for all but 3 to 4% of the nation's school enrolments (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001, Table C7.2).

With no government funding for non-public schools until Prime Minister Menzies' grants for libraries and science laboratories in the 1960s, with comparatively little funding between the 1960s and 1984 (Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia], 1984a), combined with a huge expansion of enrolments generated by the post-war "baby boom," the relative proportions in 1979 were as follows:
- the public schooling system in NSW reached its highest enrolment figure of 79%
- Catholic systemic schools accounted for 17%

- the "independent" sector was almost completely comprised of high-fee religious denominational schools with a few schools catering to a non-denominational and different educational philosophic clientele—4% of enrolments (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001, Table C7.2).

2. The Market—Changes in the Non-Growth Sectors: Public; Catholic Systemic

With changes in government funding policies over the past 35 years, the schooling market has become very different. In the first place, the public system has made some changes. For example, while retaining local primary public schools and most local comprehensive public high schools, NSW has expanded the number of selective high schools, introduced new schools with a nominated speciality such as "technology" or "sports" or "performing arts," senior colleges, and a group of inner-city Sydney schools with different specialities sited in several adjoining suburbs. Public schools are also putting more emphasis, internally, on organisational structures (such as streaming) which separate better-performing students from mainstream classes.

Some of these changes have been stimulated by the strength of the new market and the competition for "market share." Some of the changes represent a marketising of public schooling from within and have had a number of deleterious effects directly on disadvantaged schools (Teese & Polesel, 2003) and serve to "stratify" public schools within an already stratifying fuller market of non-public schools—a phenomenon the OECD points out to be ultimately self-defeating because the more proficient students do not benefit from this arrangement while the more disadvantaged produce lesser outcomes (Haahr, Nielsen, Hansen, & Jakobsen, 2005).

A logical and necessary consequence of these changes has been a significant leeching of the better educational performers from local comprehensive high schools with a follow-on effect of concentrating lesser performers in the local school—a significant handicap for local comprehensive public schools representing the overwhelming bulk of the system in an increasingly adversarial schooling market.

Although in 2007 Catholic systemic schools have a similar share of the enrolment market compared with 1979, the schools are very different. In 2007, almost all teachers and staff in Catholic and systemic schools are lay teachers, fully qualified and at least as well-salaried as their counterparts in public schools. Class sizes are now similar to those in public

schools and school building stock, while of variable age and quality is of similar quality to that of public schools.

In 1979 almost all teachers and staff in Catholic schools were nuns and brothers from religious orders. While many of them held unequalled passion for the teaching vocation and were excellent practitioners, they were unsalaried and included in the system's declaration of "contributed services" (Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia], 1984a; Karmel, 1973). Many were untrained as teachers. Class sizes were infamously high and building stock cramped and chronically under-maintained.

The original objective for funding Catholic systemic schools adopted by the Whitlam Government in 1973 was to increase resource levels in then-existing poor Catholic parochial schools to a level similar to that which existed in the public schooling system (Karmel, 1973, para. 2:12). This objective was permitted to expand beyond existing poor schools such that Catholic school systems also used their increasing amounts of public funds for new parochial schools, new buildings, staffing and management, all of which became part of the Catholic system. The increasing numbers of Catholic schools, sharing the funds generated by poor schools and designed to make poor schools wealthier, meant that the monies went to establish in part, more poor schools, thus tapping back into the reason for funding them in the first place. One result of this has been the extension of an increasingly better-resourced and increasingly attractive Catholic section of the schooling market into all geographic areas in which the public live.

An excellent "feel" for the way in which Catholic systemic schools have been established, maintained through the years of zero government funding, and then expanded into a system which in many ways parallels the public system of schools, can be gained from the story told by the Parramatta Diocese in outer western Sydney, NSW, of its own development.

> The Diocese of Parramatta is located in one of the fastest growing areas of New South Wales. The diocese is west of Sydney and reaches from Dundas Valley, west to Katoomba, south to Luddenham, and north to Richmond.
>
> There are 75 Catholic systemic schools in the diocese (54 primary and 21 secondary) with a total student population of around 41,600 students. There are also six congregational (independent Catholic) schools in the diocese. A new secondary college will be opened at Stanhope Gardens in 2007.
>
> Historical connections
> The Diocese of Parramatta has some of the oldest schools in Australia. St Patrick's at Parramatta and Parramatta Marist College both have links to the very first Catholic school in the colony, established by Fr John Terry in Hunter Street in

1820. St Matthew's at Windsor, established in 1835, still serves its community. It is the oldest existing Catholic school in Australia.

Early expansion
A growing population saw many schools open in the years before the Second World War. Built and staffed with absolutely no government financial assistance, the schools served Catholic communities in Blacktown, East Granville, Guildford, Katoomba and Castle Hill.

The 'Baby Boom' years
Australia's population grew rapidly in the 1950s and 60s. An ambitious school building program was successfully pursued to cater for new families in many developing areas, including Lalor Park, Seven Hills, Westmead and Kingswood.

Government support
Some financial relief came to Catholic schools in the 1960s with the funding of science and library facilities. However it was the 1970s that brought a new era of Commonwealth funding for all Australian schools, based on the principles of equality and diversity.
Many new schools opened in the decades that followed. These served numerous parishes, including Winston Hills, North Rocks, Kenthurst, Cranebrook and St Clair.

Our newest schools
Tremendous consolidation and growth continued through the 1990s and into the 21st century with new schools being opened at Marayong, Hassall Grove, Glenwood, Schofields, Castle Hill, Glenmore Park, Bligh Park and Kemps Creek. One of our newest primary schools is located at Stanhope Gardens with a new secondary college to open on the same site in 2007. (Catholic Education: Diocese of Parramatta, n.d.)

The expansion of the Catholic sector has also been strengthened by Australia's immigration policy which has seen substantial numbers of people from different ethnic groups arrive in Australia since the 1970s. These new immigration patterns reflect movements of people including many who seek to leave areas of persistent Middle Eastern conflict such as Lebanon, Armenia and Syria. Examples of these schools include Catholic secondary schools specifically established for girls from Lebanese families, Armenian children, and families from a Byzantine rite and Middle Eastern background. Their own statements of goals are outlined below:

- Our Lady of Lebanon College at Harris Park—describes itself as "an independent Maronite Catholic College established to cater for the educational needs of Maronite Catholic children of Lebanese background in the western suburbs of Sydney." In addition to conventional goals, the school "recognises the importance of the cultural background of its students and seeks to develop the students' understanding of how this Lebanese background can contribute positively to their role as members of modern Australian society." Enrolments are selective, based on

suitability and established academic performance (Our Lady of Lebanon College, 2001).

- St Gregory's Armenian School, Beaumont Hills—describes itself as one which is "committed to the education of every Armenian child without any social or economic constraint." It aims to "embrace the roots of Armenia's ancient culture including Armenian language and tradition. The mission statement says: "we will provide an environment where individuals are encouraged to learn and develop within an Armenian Christian community to achieve their potential" (St Gregory's Armenian School, n.d.).

- Holy Saviour School—describes itself as "a K-6 Melkite co-educational school in the Catholic system catering to Byzantine rite Catholics of Middle Eastern origins who are the descendants of the early Christians of Antioch (Syria)" and explains that "the head of The Melkite Greek Catholic Church is "Holy God the Son within the Holy Trinity/Our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ" and "the spiritual leader of The Melkite Greek Catholic Church is The Patriarch of Antioch. The Patriarchate of Antioch is centered in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan, Syria, and Turkey. The Patriarchate of Antioch spans the world" (Holy Saviour School, 2006).

The growth in the public schooling sector, as shown in the graph "School Attendance 1963-2003 by Sector," has been due to population expansion, and its relative shrinkage due to the expanding non-public schooling sector, despite continuing population expansion. The Catholic system's growth in school enrolments reflects its determination to move into new population centres and to cater especially for intra-sect and ethnic differences.

Interestingly, the Catholic sector has increasingly enrolled non-Catholic students, with recent estimates being as high as 20% non-Catholic enrolments in Catholic schools. This is a big change and has generated internal debate in the Catholic Church as to the advisability of enrolling such a large proportion of non-Catholics. As the graph reveals, Catholic enrolment proportions have remained relatively stable with no increase in proportionate share despite the 20% enrolment from non-Catholics.

3. The Market's Area of Diversification and Growth

In addition to changes in the public and Catholic systems of schools there have been changes in the independent sector of schools. It is in this area that greatest change has been

effected. The following data concerning non-public schools has been gained from the few schools which readily made their Prospectus available, and the many websites of non-public schools and their systems. In many cases the information was difficult to gather. Some non-public schools are reluctant to provide information concerning the array or size of fees and require proof of enrolment interest before doing so. Some systems are very open with their marketing information and proudly broadcast their vision, mission and philosophic bases. Others are much more difficult to find. I have chosen to place more emphasis on the information on websites because: they are public and as a consequence more readily accessible; the information is as fresh as possible.

Following the Schools Commission's admission in 1984 that it could not successfully address a plethora of issues relating to the establishment of new non-public schools (Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia], 1984a, paras. 3.53 to 3.54), the Hawke Government in 1986 placed a number of requirements on potential non-public school managements before they could open new schools—known as the New Schools Policy (NSP). One of the first changes the Howard Government introduced "was the abolition of the New Schools Policy (NSP). The abolition of the NSP removed Commonwealth minimum enrolment requirements and other funding restrictions placed on new non-government schools which had had the effect of constraining the growth in numbers of new schools in that sector" (Department of the Parliamentary Library, 2002, p. 1).

Since 1996 all major and many smaller and even tiny religious populations have taken advantage of significant government funding to pursue missionary and educational interests. As the graph "School Attendance 1963-2003 by Sector" reveals, 13% of student enrolments are now located in "independent" schools—with a strong upward trend. No longer is this sector simply comprised of independent schools, unless "independent" is defined as non-public. The fact that "independent" does not mean non-public is most obviously demonstrated by the existence of a number of "independent" Catholic schools in the "independent" sub-sector of non-public schools, running alongside the non-independent Catholic *systemic* schools. Independence is meant to mean separate from a controlling system.

In any event, the definition of "independence" being consequent on separation of decision-making influence from a more central organising entity is difficult to maintain because the "independent" sector contains a number of church-based school *systems* managed by initiating churches, to which Commonwealth funds are paid. The Anglican, Lutheran and Seventh Day Adventist systems are the main *systems* of "independent" schools but not the

only ones. Funding and reporting mechanisms of the Commonwealth Government (Australian Government Department of Education Science and Training, 2006) now make reference to five systems of schools within the "independent" sector: low-fee Anglican schools—growing at around 40% each year; Lutheran schools; Seventh Day Adventist schools; Christian schools (cross-denominational: Baptist, Church of Christ, Assembly of God); Ecumenical schools.

In addition to these *systems* of church-based schools, a large number of schools have strong links to church-based/religious management structures. They include three groups of Catholic schools:

- Representing religious orders in Australia since the first century of colonisation such as:
    1. Marist Brothers (e.g. St Joseph's)
    2. Christian Brothers (e.g. Holy Cross)
    3. Jesuits (e.g. St Ignatius)
- Representing more recent immigration patterns and reflecting ethnic differences such as:
    1. Maronite (Lebanese Catholics)
    2. Melkite (Syrian-Byzantine rites)
    3. Armenian
- Representing the Opus Dei sector: Parents for Education (PARED) was established in 1982 "as a personal initiative of parents and educators to operate schools." PARED has since founded a number of schools with a system of education which "was developed in Europe in the 1950s when parents were encouraged by Saint Josemaría Escrivá, Founder of Opus Dei, to exercise greater responsibility in the education of their children."(The PARED Foundation, n.d.). As the PARED website states, "PARED founded Tangara School for Girls in 1982. Since then several other campuses have been established throughout Sydney's metropolitan region: in Cherrybrook, Dural (Redfield College, 2006), Wahroonga (The PARED Foundation, n.d.), Belfield, Werrington and Orchard Hills. The latest addition, Wollemi College, opened its doors to families in Werrington in 2006" (The PARED Foundation, n.d.).

They also include a mix of schools affiliated with churches as various as: the Assemblies of God; Islam; Jewish (Doherty & Burke, 2003); Orthodox; Pentecostal; Presbyterian; Uniting Church. Yet other new schools whose management links are less clear include:

- Ananda Marga The River School is part of a network of hundreds of Neo-Humanist schools run by Ananda Marga throughout the world. In Australia Ananda Marga has schools in Lismore and Melbourne (Ananda Marga, 2007).

- Scientology—although no mention of the Church of Scientology is made on its website and its list of curriculum offerings is unexceptional, The Athena School has been reported widely (Burke, 2003b) as being a Scientology school. The school states its purpose as: "To educate each of the children so as to improve their survival in life, to make study seem desirable and to open the world of knowledge to them" (The Athena School, n.d.).

- Coptic Orthodox—these schools have "a developing network of related schools" which emphasise chosen themes such as, "A rich pharonic culture illustrated in the image of the 'Kartouche' and hieroglyphs, not forgetting the contrast of the gold sand and the life giving blue of the Nile. The beauty and tranquillity of Australia is vividly depicted in the flower of the Waratah. The scroll represents the school's focus on learning, while the glorious Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is the centrepiece of our lives as Christians." Schools in Sydney, NSW include: St Bishoy Coptic Orthodox College, Mt Druitt; St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College, Wattle Grove; St Mary & St Mina Coptic Orthodox College (Coptic Orthodox Church, 2005a).

- Assyrian—St Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School at Greenfield Park in Sydney's west "opened in January 2002 with 86 students. It is the only school in modern Assyrian history built outside the Middle East, where the religion dates to ancient Mesopotamia, now Iraq. It outlines the strength of its affiliation on its website, "St Hurmizd's Assyrian Primary School, is run by the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East" (Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East, 2006).

The schools included in all the categories above identify themselves strongly as religious or church-based. The Australian Council of Independent Schools Association which represents the owners of the 13% of Australian "independent" schools calculates 92% of those schools have a religious affiliation. Eight percent of that 13% includes a variety of small schools with different educational bases such as Steiner and Montessori schools, and a number of especially designed schools for Aboriginal communities established in the Northern Territory (Independent Schools Council of Australia, n.d.-a).

Enrolment proportions (Independent Schools Council of Australia, n.d.-a) are not even across states and territories, or across primary, junior and senior secondary divides. For example, in NSW in 2005 the sector enrolled 15% with the share having increased from 5.7% in 1986, to 8.1% in 1996 and to 11.2% in 2004. At the senior secondary level (Years 11 and 12) independent schools account for approximately 17% of enrolments.

A good summary of the market proportions within the independent sector (13% of the whole market) as it existed in Australia in 2002 is revealed in the following table:

Table 4.1 Enrolment of students in "independent" schools in Australia: 2002

AFFILIATION	STUDENTS	SCHOOLS	
Anglican	113,111	139	
Nondenominational	59,571	162	NB: often identified as "Christian"
Catholic: Roman	54,951	81	
Uniting Church in Australia	44,266	42	
Christian schools	38,421	130	
Lutheran	27,389	81	
Interdenominational	15,261	29	
Baptist	14,406	40	
Islamic	10,743	24	
Jewish	9,592	19	
Seventh Day Adventist	8,525	57	
Presbyterian	7,762	12	
Steiner	6,362	46	
Assemblies of God	5,728	16	
Pentecostal	4,863	18	
Orthodox, Greek	4,211	7	
Montessori	2,879	34	
Brethren	2,353	9	
Orthodox, Other	1,032	7	
Society of Friends	1,150	1	
Catholic, Other	1,032	5	
Churches of Christ	579	2	
Ananda Marga	139	2	
Scientology	60	1	
Hare Krishna	20	1	
Other religious affiliation	1,486	5	
Other*	11,762	82	
Total	**448,365**	**1,052**	

* Other: includes special schools, international schools, indigenous schools and community schools.

Source: Independent Schools Council of Australia. (n.d.). The role of religion in independent schools.

Within the context of independent schools accounting for 13% of total enrolments, and 94% of independent schools having a religious affiliation, only 6% of the independent schools meet other market niches such as:

- high-fee non-denominational and academically non-selective;
- high-fee non-denominational and academically selective;
- schools with a particular educational philosophic base e.g. Rudolph Steiner, Montessori, International Baccalaureate);
- schools in remote regions established for indigenous Australians.

To have an understanding of the "independent" sector of Australia's schooling system it is important to have a clear definition of "independent" as the current definition can be misleading if one believes most "independent" schools operate independently from affiliated and originating church organisations. It is not the case that "independent' schools are independent. 94% of them are church-based. Given the huge majority of the independent sector is church-based, an understanding of the extent to which these church-based schools are linked to their originating and affiliated church will help establish a fuller understanding of their *raison d'etre*.

4. Market Players—Purposes and Governance of Non-Government Schools

In the section above, the schooling market's composition has been described. In the following section I examine what each of the schools, or systems of schools, say about their mission and purposes with a view to establishing their perspectives in respect of concern for the Common Good and social purposes of schooling. That is, to understand the market better it will be beneficial to understand the intentions initiators and/or owners and/or governing bodies have for these schools.

To build a comprehensive picture of the purposes espoused by non-public schools, evidence has been sought from official documentation (prospectuses, schedules of fees, mission and vision statements, websites) associated with the various schooling systems and a large number of individual schools. The data concerning stated purposes and governance of non-government schools is arranged to describe schools which are: Catholic systemic, Catholic independent congregational), Anglican, Assembly of God, Islamic, Coptic Orthodox, Jewish, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Uniting, Ananda Marga, Scientology, and Assyrian.

Catholic Systemic

The "raison d'etre" of Catholic schools is outlined in Vatican documents. In a nutshell, these documents decree "evangelisation as the mission of the church" and "the school as part of the Church's mission." Catholic schools are means by which "the good news of salvation to all" can be learned, "new creatures in Christ through baptism" can be generated, and people can be "trained to live knowingly as children of God." The church establishes its "own schools" because the church "considers them as a privileged means of promoting the formation of the whole man [sic], since the world is a centre in which a specific concept of the world, of man, and of history is developed and conveyed" (Society of St Paul, 1983, pp. 12-13).

Beyond this specifically religious purpose, Catholic authorities exhibit a persistent concern for the entirety of the Catholic community as if the church adopts a responsibility for its "public" of Catholic people. Historical accounts of Catholic schooling (Dwyer, 1993; M. Ryan & Sungaila, 1995) identify four periods in Catholic schooling in Australia. In the first period between colonisation and the NSW Public Instruction Act of 1880, Catholic schools, largely government-funded, were established by Catholic authorities to serve the Irish poor and inspire them to high culture. In the second period when government funding was withdrawn from non-public schools, and up until the end of World War II (1880-1945), the Catholic hierarchy maintained its schooling system for the wider Catholic community only by drawing heavily on its low-cost religious orders to staff its schools. The third period (1945-mid 1960s) saw a huge influx of post-war immigrants (many from Catholic countries) swelling the already burgeoning 'baby-booming' Catholic community. Although the Catholic system already had obvious symptoms of funding-starvation, the drive to provide an accessible schooling system to its widespread Catholic community remained an objective of the Catholic Church. Since the 1960s and the provision of increasing volumes of government funds the objective has been easier to attain.

It would be naïve to believe the Catholic hierarchy ever held the objective of widespread public accessibility to its schools as being more important than its evangelisation objective. But the fact that the Catholic hierarchy *did* establish and maintain a widespread network of schools located and priced so that all Catholics including the lower socio-economic population could access it, sets it apart from all other denominations which, during the long period of refusal by government to provide "state aid" either didn't set up *systems* of schools, or didn't set up schools at all, or did set up schools but only in small numbers and then for the higher socio-economic end of the population.

Surrounding the Catholic system is a dynamic discourse concerning the system's purposes. There appears to be a widespread acceptance that the evangelisation objective as laid down by the Vatican is universal, and that Catholic schools in Australia and throughout the world operate according to a common set of norms and goals which derive from the teaching of Jesus Christ and the Christian tradition and which are reflected in certain key Church documents (Croke, 2005, pp. 5-6).

Beyond this broad mission the Catholic system seeks to educate students with a sense of responsibility for others, for justice. Concern for the "common good" and "community" and "social justice" are common themes. Quoting from an official Catholic publication, the Executive Officer of the NSW Catholic Education Commission encourages Catholic schools to:

> form human beings who will make human society more peaceful, fraternal, and communitarian. Today's world has tremendous problems: hunger, illiteracy and human exploitation; sharp contrasts in the standard of living of individuals and of countries; aggression and violence, a growing drug problem, legalisation of abortion, along with many other examples of the degradation of human life. All of this demands that Catholic educators develop in themselves, and cultivate in their students, a keen social awareness and a profound sense of civic and political responsibility. (Croke, 2005, p. 8)

These urgings, appearing in a description of "goals and nature of Catholic schools" (Croke, 2005, p. 6) solidly traverse the terrain of public concern.

Catholic Congregational: Catholic congregational schools, with higher fees, require a higher socio-economic intake, yet they tend to be less explicit about matters of "social justice" and the pursuit of the "common good." Not all of them eschew these political themes as can be seen from the five examples below:

- Kincoppal, Rose Bay—School of the Sacred Heart—goals emphasise, "Faith," "a deep respect for intellectual values," building a community *within the school* [italics added], as well as commitment to "a social awareness which impels action" and "encourages them to act against oppression and injustice" while seeking "a contribution to his/her peers, society and the world" (Kincoppal - Rose Bay, n.d.).

- St Joseph's College (Hunter's Hill)—relies more on themes drawn from the life of its founder (St) Marcellin Champagnat, founder of the Marist Brothers and a 19th century monk in France, to outline its mission or "traditions and spirit." These include encouragements to: simplicity, open-mindedness, trust in God and Mary His Mother, strength of character, family spirit including concern for "community"

and the "common good" *within the school*. During 2006, St Joseph's College website outlined its mission in the following terms: "we will fit easily into the traditions of the College if we work hard, think of others, show common sense, be helpful, develop a trust in God and a devotion to Mary, avoid boasting and never give up" (St Joseph's College, n.d.-a). The website has been updated and the mission now, in 2008, says:

The founder of the Marist Brothers, Saint Marcellin Champagnat's vision of mission was *'to make Jesus Christ known and loved.'* He saw education as the way to lead young people to the experience of personal faith and of their vocation as *'good Christians and virtuous citizens'*. St Joseph's College follows this same mission by helping young people, whatever their faith tradition and wherever they are in their spiritual search, to grow to become people of hope and personal integrity, with a deep sense of social responsibility to transform the world around them. It is in line with this philosophy that we:

- Develop their self esteem and inner capacity to give direction to their lives;
- Provide an education of body, mind and heart, appropriate to the age, personal talents and needs of each one and to the social context;
- Encourage them to care for others and for God's creation;
- Educate them to be agents of social change, for greater justice towards all citizens in their own society, and for more awareness of the interdependence of nations;
- Nurture their faith and commitment as disciples of Jesus and apostles to other youth;
- Awaken their critical consciousness and assist them to make choices based on Gospel values.

Based on: *In The Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat* (St Joseph's College, n.d.-b)

- Holy Cross College (Ryde)—provides a mission statement which again emphasises religious objectives and a strong concern for the individual's interests and potential. In respect of wider objectives concerning "community" and "common good," the college is less direct in its urgings "to lead by example, and thus demonstrate our commitment to Gospel values through justice, compassion, honesty and sensitivity to all" (Holy Cross College, n.d.).

- St Ignatius College, Riverview—provides a mission statement which emphasises Christian objectives and the encouragement of individual potential. While the mission statement says nothing of community or common good or social justice, it does urge "the pursuit of justice through genuine love of neighbour" and to develop "people for and with others" (St Ignatius College Riverview, 2006a).

- Maronite—e.g. Our Lady of Lebanon College—is a newer example of a Catholic congregational school which reflects more recent Lebanese (Catholic) immigration. The school describes itself as "an independent Maronite Catholic College

established to cater for the educational needs of Maronite Catholic children of Lebanese background in the western suburbs of Sydney." In addition to conventional goals, the school "recognises the importance of the cultural background of its students and seeks to develop the students' understanding of how this Lebanese background can contribute positively to their role as members of modern Australian society." Enrolments are selective, based on suitability and established academic performance (Our Lady of Lebanon College, 2001).

Anglican Network of Schools

Differing from the broader concerns of the Catholic system, both the schools within the Anglican *system* such as Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation schools (Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation, 2002) and an array of non-systemic Anglican schools brought together in the Anglican Schools Network (Australian Anglican Schools Network, n.d.-a) appear to be satisfied with a philosophic approach which focuses on the Christian faith and the fulfilment of each individual student's potential as the core concerns without reference to wider social and political responsibility. Wider concerns appear to be limited to "respect for others" while attention to "community" is addressed only within the context of the *school's* community.

The Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation states as its mission, "to establish and operate efficiently, strategically placed Anglican schools offering quality education, which are financially accessible to local communities and communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ to students, staff, parents and the wider community" (Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation, 2002). By 2003 the Anglican Schools Network included "all Anglican Schools throughout Australia" as "members of AASN, a network of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia (Australian Anglican Schools Network, n.d.-a). The "vision statement" includes no reference to matters of the common good or community or social justice or the wider social purposes of schooling. Its full statement declares that the, "Australian Anglican Schools Network, giving honour to God, putting God first and working within God's will, seeks to: provide a forum at the national level for Anglican schools to facilitate discussion on spiritual, moral and values related issues as they have bearing on education; be an effective network of General Synod of the Anglican Church; achieve recognition of Anglican schools as part of the mission of the Anglican Church; be a forward-looking, dynamic organisation aiming to develop a strong unity of purpose among Anglican Schools."

With a view to gauging how these general mission statements might be translated into more local environments I sought information from regional bodies and individual schools. Examples I was able to find include an extensive statement of ethos/goals by the Grafton Diocese of Anglican schools:

> To foster growth in character and faith and develop a set of values and skills, by teaching and example in a Christian setting, through the activities of College life; as a consequence the College staff attempt to stimulate in our students awareness and understanding of, and response to, our spiritual nature and Christian heritage; to provide a caring environment, a broad based education which emphasises development of literacy and numeracy skills and the striving for excellence so that each student may be encouraged to develop his or her maximum potential; to develop inquiring and flexible minds and an attitude to life which involves a sense of direction, a positive self concept, and the personal resources to lead a full life; to encourage and develop qualities of respect for others, self-discipline, self-motivation and commitment; to develop a system of pastoral care based on Christian beliefs and values involving all staff and students at every level of the College community; to provide a framework enabling a sense of community to pervade all aspects of College life, and allowing for the development of a community of students, staff and parents in positive collaboration; to foster a sense of a faith, community and to promote a safe environment where students explore their spirituality without fear or ridicule. (Emmanuel Anglican College, 2002a)

To obtain a broader view, across a wider geographic spread, I have examined vision and mission statements from a range of Anglican schools in the following examples:

- Ballina—K-12 Emmanuel Anglican College, Ballina was created as part of a network of Anglican Colleges comprising: Lindisfarne in the Tweed, The Cathedral School at Grafton, Bishop Druitt College in Coffs Harbour, St Columba Anglican School at Port Macquarie. It declares that it has "a strong Christian intent within the Anglican tradition" (Emmanuel Anglican College, 2002b).

- Camden—Macarthur Anglican School describes itself as "an independent Christian school which honours God in all that the school does while having a strong academic focus for children from pre-Kindergarten to the Higher School Certificate" (Macarthur Anglican School, 2006).

- Wagga Wagga—commencing in 1999 the Riverina Anglican College developed as part of the New Schools policy of the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn. The school describes itself as "co-educational providing a Christian education emphasising both academic excellence and growth in Christian values." Whilst parents of students at the College need not be Anglicans, they must be supportive of the College's Christian philosophy and principles (The Riverina Anglican College, 2004).

- Penrith—Penrith Anglican College, owned by the Sydney Anglican Schools' Group, is a "co-educational day school K-12 committed to academic excellence and growth in Christian values." Parents of students need not be Anglican but must be supportive of Christian philosophy and principles (Penrith Anglican College, n.d.).

- Dubbo—Macquarie Anglican Grammar School is "an independent K-12 coeducational school focussing on: a Christian education; a liberal academic program" (Macquarie Anglican Grammar School, 2006).

- Campbelltown—Broughton Anglican College is a "co-educational K-12 school which appoints only dedicated Christian staff who have a Christian world view of teaching and learning so the school can better develop an understanding of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ and the importance of serving God. The school's goal is to develop well-rounded young Christian people whose lives have purpose and direction, and who are prepared for the challenges they face in a changing and uncertain world" (Broughton Anglican College, n.d.).

Assembly of God

Within some Christian schools, a non-denominational ethos rules. While many schools were started by a church, be it Baptist, Church of Christ or Assembly of God, the labelling of schools is "deliberately vague" (Doherty & Burke, 2003). However, those which are readily identifiable such as Calvary Christian College, Townsville espouse an educational philosophy which differs little from the emphases already identified with Anglican schools. It seeks to provide a distinctively Christian education, to strengthen the family and help prepare students to meet the challenges of life. The school identifies the home as the ultimate source of a Christian Education but nevertheless provides a "total college program underpinned by a commitment to a Christian perspective, reinforced by a course in Biblical Studies and a personal development and pastoral care program designed to support parents in the upbringing of a new generation equipped to contribute effectively to the Australian community" (Calvary Christian College, n.d.). Each individual student's differences are acknowledged and subjects which can cater for them are provided, but no explicit attention is apparent concerning wider social concerns or each individual's responsibility for wider social concerns. Again, "community" and the "common good" are not part of the philosophic mix.

Islamic

The Islamic Council of NSW lists nine Islamic schools in NSW. They are all concerned with matters of Faith Islam and academic achievement and, probably as a reflection of current political realities which sees some Islamic extremists at the centre of political interest, all schools are explicit about the need for their students to be more than proficient in their academic and religious understandings, but to be good Australian citizens, too. Three publicly available examples are:

- Al Faisal College, Auburn—outlines its mission to be students' achievement of "Faith, Knowledge and Success" by providing a K-10 school which will: produce good citizens imbued with Islamic spiritual values and knowledge of the Holy Quran; achieve excellence in Quranic, Arabic Language and Islamic Culture and excellence in the Key Learning Areas (Al Faisal College, 2005).

- Arkan-Ul-Islam School (Arkana College Ltd)—The Egyptian Islamic Society of New South Wales Inc purchased the school premises (land and buildings) in 1986 with the aim of achieving Islamic educational goals harmoniously with the Australian community. As soon as Muslim students are enrolled, they are introduced to Islamic teaching and the teaching of Arabic language according to their level. The school is always searching for ways to improve the quality and the quantity of time available for Islamic and Arabic language lessons (Arkan-Ul-Islam School [Arkana College Ltd], n.d.). The philosophy of the school is "generally that children strive for excellence and equity. We aim to empower students with the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve their full potential" (Arkana College, n.d.).

- Noor Al Houda Islamic College—provides a conventional spread of curriculum options as well as Quran, Arabic and Islamic Studies. The school identifies as "an Australian Muslim school" established in 1995. It is the largest Islamic school in Sydney and, as a sign of the politics of the times, it has placed the following statement on its homepage, "The Staff, students and parent body of Noor Al Houda Islamic College strongly condemn all forms of terrorism and call on the Muslim community leaders to provide clear and unequivocal leadership in countering all forms of extremism. The College is dedicated to ensuring that its graduates are exemplary Australians who live by the highest standards of integrity in a harmonious manner with their fellow citizens" (Australian Council for Islamic Education Schools, n.d.-a).

Coptic Orthodox

The Coptic religion is based in Egypt and was founded at the time of the Eastern Roman Empire's influence in Egypt. It is a Christian religion. The Coptic Orthodox Education Board was established in Sydney "to undertake careful master planning of Coptic schools across Sydney—and to find ways the Colleges could work together for their mutual benefit. The Bishop of Sydney is soon to be its Chairman to get a greater level of cooperation between the Colleges and to look at forming the three Colleges into a 'system', similar to those of other Churches" (Coptic Orthodox Church, 2005b).

Each of the three schools has similar emphases, "faith-nurturing and development of Disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ" is the schools' focus, while providing "a holistic education which strives to enhance the spiritual, intellectual, social, cultural and physical potential of young people." St Bishoy College draws attention to "the rich pharonic culture" of the Church and "our Lord Jesus Christ as the centerpiece of students' lives as Christians." The schools are:

- St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College, Wattle Grove
- St Bishoy Coptic Orthodox College, Mt Druitt
- St Mary & St Mina Coptic Orthodox College (Coptic Orthodox Church, 2005b).

Jewish

The responsibility of the New South Wales Board of Jewish Education, otherwise known as Academy BJE, is "to provide Jewish education to children in state and private school systems; that is, outside of the Jewish day school system" (NSW Board of Jewish Education: Academy BJE, 2006a).

Jewish schools, like schools which evangelise other faiths, are strong advocates of educational excellence and the need to meet individual differences. Again like other faiths, with the exception of the Catholic systemic schools, they do not place concern for the social purposes of schooling, the common good and social justice in any prominent statement. Uniquely, Jewish schools place a unanimous emphasis on developing a love for Israel and celebrating their students' Jewish identity. This explicit concern is balanced in some schools with encouragement to develop a strong sense of community, and Australian identity and citizenship (NSW Board of Jewish Education: Academy BJE, 2006a). Four publicly accessible examples are:

- Mount Sinai College—the school aims to "develop the full potential of every child" and describes itself as "an orthodox Jewish day primary school which aims

to be active in ensuring Jewish continuity—for each child to develop a respect for his/her Jewish heritage and demonstrate a strong Jewish identity and a commitment to Medinat Yisrael." It has a specially defined curriculum described as "Jewish Education" comprising Jewish History, the Hebrew Language and Judaism with the aim of the children becoming, "proud and confident of being Jewish; enriched by the knowledge of Jewish Heritage and traditions; knowledgeable about, and loyal to Israel, the Jewish homeland; conversant with the Hebrew language, both classical and modern; familiar with Jewish laws, customs and history; able to apply their faith to everyday life; able to follow the service, participate and feel 'at home' in a synagogue on Shabbat, Weekdays and Festivals; prepared for a smooth transition into any Jewish High School in Australia" (Mount Sinai College, n.d.).

- Moriah College—provides "the highest standard of Jewish education" by fostering critical thought, cultural interests, tolerance, social responsibility and self-discipline. It also emphasises "knowledge of Jewish traditions, ethics and family values, a positive commitment to modern Judaism and a love for the State of Israel" (Moriah College, n.d.-b).

- Masada College—aims to enable students to achieve their full potential while teaching Modern Orthodox Jewish values and developing a love of Israel and a strong sense of community, Australian identity and citizenship (Masada College, 2006).

- Emanuel School—pre-school to Year 12. The school's stated objective is to "extend students to the best of their ability and to foster in each a love of learning, a strong sense of community and a pride in their Jewish heritage" (Emanuel School, 2004a).

Pentecostal

A number of schools designating themselves "Christian," (for example: Pacific Hills Christian School) have a Pentecostal base and are part of what they describe as "the Christian schooling movement." One such school is Pacific Hills Christian School at Dural, Sydney. Its vision is: "to provide a Christian educational community as a centre of teaching and learning excellence, founded on Biblically based beliefs, values and behaviour." Like other evangelising schools it outlines a heavily religious and God-centred mission which envelopes all aspects of school objectives. However, like the Catholic systemic schools and unlike most others, the school is very specific about values which address matters of social significance such as the common good and social justice. Values which the school lists as most important are: love, courage, truth, wisdom, excellence, peace, integrity, justice,

service, compassion, patience, faithfulness, commitment and perseverance (Pacific Hills Christian School, 2006).

Presbyterian

These concerns for wider social responsibility are, sometimes, reflected elsewhere. For example, Belgrave Heights Christian School emphasises the need for a Christian education, then outlines its fuller objectives for each student. These aims include matters such as "social justice" and "tolerance" amongst other important matters as listed in full below:

- high standards of morality
- self discipline
- social justice
- decision making
- leadership
- tolerance
- respect for others
- good manners (Belgrave Heights Christian School, 2006).

On the other hand, Presbyterian Ladies College PLC), while describing itself as "a school of the Presbyterian Church" which "welcomes all girls to a caring Christian environment which encourages the pursuit of excellence in all areas of life" makes no effort to envelope matters of social purpose, social justice, or the common good, being satisfied with its more limited encouragement of students to:

- develop a Christian faith, and
- achieve full potential in all arenas of endeavour (PLC Sydney, n.d.).

Uniting Church in NSW

Uniting Church Schools in NSW are listed as *Board of Education—Uniting Church Schools*. Despite this, they are categorised as "independent" (Board of Education, n.d.). Uniting Church schools are more likely to be explicit in their concern for wider social concerns such as: care for others, community, contribution to society, service, improving the world, environment. These schools include:

- Knox Grammar School—originally a Presbyterian school, it urges less for community, contribution and care, putting emphasis on the provision of a wide range of subjects to broaden the outlook of students as it seeks to emphasise the development of Christian character and leadership (Knox Grammar School, n.d.).
- Kinross Wolaroi School—is an amalgamation of Presbyterian and Methodist schools and describes itself as "an independent Uniting Church coeducational

school." Amongst the school's priorities are: academic rigour, Christian spirituality and ethos, appropriate pastoral care and discipline, valuing family and community (Kinross Wolaroi School, n.d.).

- Newington College—originally a Wesleyan Methodist school, now a school of the Uniting Church providing a liberal education to boys from all backgrounds, denominations and faiths. The stated vision is to develop young men who will contribute positively to society. The school's important values are based on Christianity and listed as: self-respect, care for others, service to the community (Newington College, n.d.-b).

- MLC School—similar background to Newington, this school for girls states its vision to be of a dynamic community of learners operating within a broader learning community and to develop lifelong learners who will improve our world (MLC School, n.d.).

- Pymble Ladies College—aims to meet individual potential in all aspects of girls' lives and for them to become happy and fulfilled adults who will contribute positively to the community. Emphasis is given to values of co-operation and team work, care for others and the environment, and to develop a personal faith in God (Pymble Ladies College, 2006a).

- Ravenswood School for Girls—a school of the Uniting Church dedicated to the best education of girls within a Christian community. Emphasis is given to values of: faithfulness, respect, integrity, optimism, excellence, creativity, caring, participation, community (Ravenswood School for Girls, 2004).

Ananda Marga

- The River School—is part of a network of hundreds of Neo-Humanist schools run by Ananda Marga throughout the world. In Australia Ananda Marga have schools in Lismore and Melbourne. Its aims are similar to many schools but includes emphases on: yoga and concentration techniques, becoming active and responsible members of society, promoting an awareness of ecology in its broadest sense: i.e. the realisation of the inter-relatedness of all things and the need to encourage respect and care for all living beings (Ananda Marga, 2007).

Among the hundreds of schools designated "independent" there are a few which are not systematised but, because they are part of an organised belief system, remain difficult to describe as "independent." Some, such as the two Ananda Marga schools mentioned above, are part of an international belief organisation. Others, such as the Scientology-related The Athena School outline their vision in a seemingly areligious manner viz: "The aim of

education is to raise the ability, the initiative and the cultural level and with all these the survival level of society" (The Athena School, n.d.). Yet others, representing only a small part of the population, are lone schools but nevertheless strongly religious such as the school which singularly services an ethnically Assyrian population. This school, the St Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School, aims to provide a "continuum of education rooted in a rich tradition of faith, family and community values while committing to academic excellence alongside a Christian faith-filled environment" (Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East, 2006).

However, the overwhelming picture of the "independent" sector is one of schools which are anything but independent. Most, such as the groups of schools outlined above, are clearly systems with direct management relationships with the hierarchy of the initiating church's management structure. Others (e.g. the Australian Anglican Schools Network, Uniting Church, Coptic Orthodox Church, Pentecostal) have their common roots and purposes reflected in highly organised "networking," quasi-systemic, and potentially systemic arrangements, while some groups of schools are not generally referred to as a system yet have clear links to a church base which is so strong they refer to *themselves* as a system (such as the Jewish day school system, for example) (NSW Board of Jewish Education: Academy BJE, 2006b). In the case of Islamic schools, an Australian Council for Islamic Education in Schools (ACIES) has been incorporated with the objective of "establishing a national Islamic Educational Network with centralised control, planning, assimilation of views and opinions for the provision of Education in Islamic Institutions of learning throughout Australia" (Australian Council for Islamic Education Schools, n.d.-c).

From the data outlined above it is clearly apparent that the initiators and owners of these schools have, in the main, an overwhelmingly evangelistic motive which drives the establishment of these schools. There is nothing ambiguous about this. The data is clear. These schools are church-based. They are initiated by churches. Evangelisation is the number one priority. These schools are established by churches to reinforce evangelistic teachings in the young. They are quite explicit about their over-riding concern to propagate the faith.

The lack of independence in the "independent" sector, and the emphasis on evangelism as the priority of these church-based schools, stands in stark relief to the political face presented by those who represent "independent" schools in the political turmoil which surrounds governments' school funding policies. Although many of these schools address

other matters with associated policies, none of the schools' vision, or mission, or philosophic statements mention matters of management such as those commonly associated with the political debate: discipline, uniforms, student behaviour, expulsion policies, and so on. No doubt some of the publicly aired matters do have association with the faith being evangelised—such as "values"—but in the main, the political debate does not include churches arguing their need to maintain and expand government funding so their church-based schools can better get on with the job of educating their young into the relevant faith, and competing with other religions for bigger proportions of the religious flock.

The matter of association between the respective managements of "independent" schools and their church base is addressed later in this Section. At this point it is sufficient to acknowledge that the "independent" schooling market, while becoming more complex in recent years, overwhelmingly comprises schools which are linked to a church base. Although the NCISA was writing for a different purpose, it has described the sector it represents thus:

> Most independent schools are founded in the Christian tradition and include schools affiliated with virtually all denominations including the Anglican, Assemblies of God, Baptist, Brethren, Catholic, Churches of Christ, Free Reformed, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Seventh Day Adventist and Uniting Church. As well, there are interdenominational schools and nondenominational Christian schools including parent-controlled Christian schools. Australia also has the only Quaker school in the southern hemisphere.
>
> The sector also includes schools founded in other religions, including 24 Islamic schools, 19 Jewish schools, 2 Ananda Marga schools, one Scientology school and one Hare Krishna school.
>
> Some schools sharing the same religious affiliation have formed systems, notably the Anglican schools, the Lutheran schools, and the Seventh Day Adventist schools.
>
> For many religious and ethno-religious groups, schools can be an important means to pass on religious and spiritual knowledge, and to teach and model ways of behaviour that are consistent with those beliefs (Independent Schools Council of Australia, n.d.-a).

5. The Market—Catering for the High End of Socio-Economic Status

The schooling market's shape is defined by more than faith-based boundaries. Entry to schools can also be defined by fee structures of those schools. What follows is an outline of that fee structure as it existed in 2006.

Public Schools:

The largest provider of schooling is the system of *public schooling*. Its legislative base requires schooling to be free although public schools commonly request "voluntary contributions" of around $100 per year for each student. Many students do not pay, without penalty, because a legislated role for public schooling is to provide, for all children no matter their background, a free and compulsory education until age 15.

Catholic Systemic Schools:

The next largest provider of schooling is the system of low-fee Catholic schools. In 2004 *Catholic systemic* schools raised an average of $1,323 (primary) and $2,982 (secondary) per student from "private income," the bulk of which came from school fees and contributions from families towards capital works (Brian Croke, personal communication, June 16, 2006).[4] This works out to be approximately $25 in primary and $57 in secondary schools per week per student, an amount of money which permits lower SES parents the opportunity to enrol their children at school with relatively small additional sacrifices.

Catholic and Anglican "Congregational" Schools:

The level of fees struck by public and Catholic systemic schools is very different from the longer established "congregational" schools. Non-systemic (congregational) Catholic schools established for high socio-economic families, such as St Ignatius (Riverview) College and St Joseph's College (Hunter's Hill) present a fee structure very similar to their traditional Anglican counterparts to be discussed shortly. A common fee structure for these schools, in 2006 when this was researched, would total approximately $35,000-$45,000 per annum per boarding student and $12,000-$16,000 less for non-boarding students. This approximate total includes:

- an enrolment fee approximating $4,000
- annual tuition fees of around $15,000
- annual boarding fees of around $12,000 to $16,000
- an expected capital works fee/contribution of some thousands of dollars
- other subject and event fees as required (St Ignatius College Riverview, 2006c).

Anglican Systemic Schools:

Anglican systemic schools such as the relatively new colleges at Ballina, Camden, Wagga Wagga, Penrith, Dubbo, and Campbelltown, in 2006 typically charge annual fees of between $4,000-$6,000 ($75-$120 per week) comprising:

---

[4] Brian Croke is the Chief Executive Officer, NSW Catholic Education Commission.

- enrolment fees of between $300 and $700
- capital works fee of $200
- library fee of $200
- tuition fees rising from approximately $3,000 p.a. in Kindergarten to $5,000 p.a. in Year 12.

Some "low-fee" Anglican schools charge less (e.g. St Peters Anglican Primary School—tuition fees of $900 p.a.) while others charge more (e.g. Blue Mountains Grammar School—$6,900 p.a. to $12,500 p.a.) (Australian Anglican Schools Network, n.d.-b).

Despite similarly strong links with the official church through its cross-Board membership and appointment practices, these systemic schools' fee structure differ markedly from other Anglican schools that have a tradition, stretching back to early colonial times, of servicing the educational needs of the socio-economic elite. These non-systemic Anglican schools, such as Abbotsleigh, Cranbrook, Barker, Kambala, SCEGGS Redlands and SCEGS (Shore) typically charge annual fees between $25,000 and $40,000 comprising:

- enrolment fees of approximately $3,000
- tuition fees rising from Kindergarten ($10,000 p.a.) to Year 12 ($20,000 p.a.)
- boarding fees rising from Kindergarten ($12,000 p.a.) to Year 12 ($14,000 p.a.) (Australian Anglican Schools Network, n.d.-b).

Lutheran Systemic Schools:

Lutheran schools are part of an Australia wide Lutheran schooling system which includes over 30 pre-school centres, 56 primary schools, 12 secondary schools and six Kindergarten to Year 12 schools educating over 30,000 students. Examples of major fees required for enrolment at these schools include:

- St Paul's College, Wodonga: tuition $6000; boarding $8000 (St Paul's College, 2006)
- Immanuel College, Buderim: tuition $4000; levy $1000 (Immanuel College, 2006).

Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Systemic Schools:

Tuition fees for Seventh Day Adventist systemic schools are set by the Greater Sydney Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The Sydney Adventist College charges tuition fees of $7500 per annum (around $145 per week) while SDA primary schools are approximately half this amount. Discounts are provided for church members (Seventh-day Adventist Schools Australia, 2006b).

Islamic Schools:

As already noted, an Australian Council for Islamic Education in Schools (ACIES) has been incorporated with the objective of "establishing a national Islamic Educational Network with centralised control, planning assimilation of views and opinions for the provision of Education in Islamic Institutions of learning throughout Australia" (Australian Council for Islamic Education Schools, n.d.-b). Arkana College Primary School has its tuition fees set at $2500 in 2006. Secondary schools such as Al Faisal College (Auburn), Arkan-Ul-Islam School and Noor Al Houda Islamic College are likely to have higher fees but repeated attempts to email and/or access websites have been unsuccessful.

Jewish Schools:

Jewish schools tend to set their fee structure towards the wealthier parents. Moriah College, including levies, sets its fees to range from $9,000 p.a. at Kindergarten to $17,000 p.a. at Year 12 (Moriah College, n.d.-a) while Masada College sets levies of $1,400 p.a. and tuition fees of $8,200 p.a. in Kindergarten rising to $16,500 in Year 12 (Masada College, 2006). Yeshiva Schools and Emanuel School do not have their fees listed on their otherwise comprehensive websites, or even in their prospectus (Emanuel School, 2004b; Yeshiva Schools, n.d.).

Uniting Church

The Uniting Church is associated with schools charging fees at the higher end. They include:

- Knox Grammar—over $3000 in starting fees, then tuition fees rising from $10,500 in Kindergarten to $17,200 in Year 12 and boarding fees of $16,000 (Knox Grammar School, n.d.).
- Newington College—over $3000 in starting fees, then tuition fees rising from $10,000 in Kindergarten to $19,000 in Year 12 and boarding fees of over $16,000 (Newington College, n.d.-a).
- MLC School—over $2000 in starting fees, then tuition fees rising from $9,500 in Kindergarten to over $16,500 in Year 12 (MLC School, n.d.).
- Pymble Ladies College—over $2000 in starting fees, then tuition fees rising from $9,750 in Kindergarten to over $16,400 in Year 12 (Pymble Ladies College, 2006b).

Ananda Marga

Fees are not included in information on the River School website (Ananda Marga, 2007).

Opus Dei

- Tangara School for Girls—fees for tuition are $6,200 p.a. in pre-school rising to $12,200 p.a. by Year 12 (Tangara School, 2005).

In this chapter I have: outlined the general trends in enrolment patterns between public, Catholic and independent schools; identified the public and Catholic systems as non-growth sectors; identified and described the growth area to be the "independent" sector; shown that "independent" schools are, overwhelmingly, not independent but governed by church-based systems and quasi-systems; established that church-based schools comprise 94% of the "independent" sector and that, overwhelmingly, their main and self-declared purpose for existence is the pursuit of evangelistic motives; established that a wide range of fees exist within non-public schools and that the Catholic system and the several church-based systems counted in the "independent" sector adopt a fee structure which is conceivably attainable by most people while a small part of the church-based "independent" sector sets fees clearly designed to attract only those from the wealthy section of society.

High levels of political interest remain attached to matters of government funding of public and non-public schools. Since the Menzies Government began small funding grants to non-public secondary schools, the Commonwealth's commitment to church-based and other private schools has risen from zero to "record funding of over $33 billion for Australia's schools, including $21 billion specifically for non-government schools" for the period 2005-2008" (Howard, 2005).

Within this financial and political context I have examined the nature of non-public schools and the schooling market. From the available data it can be seen that schooling provision has shifted markedly from two large systems (public, Catholic) and a small mix of high-fee congregational, non-denominational and designated philosophy "independent" schools, to a burgeoning market comprised:
- overwhelmingly of systems and quasi-systems of church-based schools with a relatively low-fee range between around $2000 to around $6,000 p.a.; and
- a continuing small number of high-fee (up to $40,000 p.a.) schools with a variety of selling points (non-denominational and/or academically selective and/or philosophically different schools) but, as implied by their high fees, a common and *exclusionary* "selection criteria"—high socio-economic status.

In the early 21ˢᵗ century, it is a very different schooling market from that of the 1970s. There are two dominant representations of this schooling market. The first distinguishes between "government" and "non-government" schools. The second recognises the two big systems of schooling which comprised all but a tiny portion of the market from 1880 until recent years (public; Catholic systemic), and adds a third category to catch the remainder (independent) leaving a three-way categorisation: public, Catholic, independent. Defining the market as a dichotomy between government and non-government schools is too blunt. While it may assist with understanding who *manages* the schools it does nothing to assist an understanding of relative funding responsibilities or curriculum requirements. Some would argue the dichotomous representation of the market is more a confusion than a helpful description because the designation "non-government" masks many differences amongst which is a deep difference of purpose between those schooling systems and quasi-systems which espouse concern for all their flock (socio-economically non-discriminatory) and set fees consistent with that claim, and those who set fees which are indisputably exclusionary on the basis of wealth.

The other common designation of sectors within the schooling market is: the public sector, the Catholic systemic sector, and an independent sector. This categorisation is now demonstrably inaccurate and confounding too as there are now *several* systems within the "independent" sector, with other systems either referred to or implied, and quasi-systems of schools affiliated with the same Church organised into common forums dealing with all aspects of teaching and learning in the networked schools. Many schools in the "independent" sector are no more independent of their initiating religious management church) than the public system is of the government. Most independent schools have a close relationship with their influential initiating church.

A different set of descriptors might be more accurate and therefore facilitate discourse concerning the schooling market.

Probably the most striking feature of the non-public schooling data is its overwhelmingly religious character. The Catholic system holds to its 'evangelisation' mission—and is consolidating its existence, quality, and reach to a large public. Several other denominational school systems have formed and are consolidating. Networks linked to religious management structures have been formed (such as the Anglican Schools Network) with other schools and groups of schools, to assist with organisational, professional and financial matters. And, as has been shown earlier, yet other groups of religious schools are in the process of forming systems. Evangelisation is at the heart of the purpose of the

initiators of these schools. Thus, given that 100% of Catholic systemic schools and 94% of the "independent" schools fall into this religious category, a more accurate way of defining this section of the non-public sector is to refer to it as "church-based." With the public system and the church-based schools identified, we need only to categorise the remaining 6% of the "independent" sector, which amounts to a mere 0.8% of the entire schooling system. The following discussion addresses this 0.8% of the schooling market.

Another set of descriptors might relate to the level of public accessibility—a particularly important matter where schools are receiving large amounts of public funds. Although it is assumed that where there is competition for enrolment places at schools, preference will be given to students from the designated faith, very few non-public schools explicitly exclude non-Catholics from Catholic schools, non-Anglicans from Anglican schools, non-Muslims from Islamic schools, and so on. On the contrary, the Catholic system is quick to point out that more than 20% of its enrolment declares itself not to be Catholic. It is not known whether the experience of the Catholic system is shared more widely throughout church-based schools. There is some evidence that certain Jewish and Islamic schools, and some of the more recent Middle Eastern-based Catholic schools are more focussed on loyalties to Israel or Arab entities than the extensive Catholic system of schools—and this is a concern which intersects with a discussion of "social cohesion" later in this chapter. It is also true that a few non-public schools declare themselves selective on the basis of academic achievement.

However, the most obvious and decisive discriminator of enrolments is the level of fees (starting fees, capital works fees, tuition fees, boarding fees). One either has it—or not. Public accessibility is much more likely to be governed by the level of fees, irrespective of the school's denomination. For example, Saint Ignatius College, Riverview identifies as "a Catholic school" with a consequent "mission to develop in its members the competence, conscience and compassion that will enable them to strive to fulfil their potential as men and women of faith" and, to achieve this end, "to foster a genuine spiritual life that embodies the joy, compassion and hope of an active Christian faith" (St Ignatius College Riverview, 2006b). St Ignatius College sets its fees to rise to $15,000 per annum for tuition fees and $12,000 for boarding fees in Year 12—a total of over $27,000 per annum—clearly out of reach of anyone but the financial elite and a far cry from Catholic systemic fees which are typically $1,300 (primary) and $3,000 (secondary) per year (Brian Croke, personal communication, June 16, 2006).

Low-fee and high fee schools have different clientele. With the exception of a few academically selective scholarship-holders,[5] high-fee schools are, and must be, exclusionary. They exclude those who cannot pay. They can only be populated by the relatively wealthy. They are clearly not geared for the wider public. If public means "people as a whole or people in general" (*The Australian Pocket Oxford*, 1976) then, unlike most systems and quasi systems of church-based schools, these schools have no element of "public" about their level of fees. By setting their fees high, they can determine the composition of the student population and (largely) the level of learning outcomes, both key elements in the competitive market. In their enrolment criteria alone, quite apart from the matter of public accessibility to their resources, these schools are "private," as in not public—not open to anyone who would like to attend.

In respect of low-fee schools, this is not the case. Low-fee Islamic schools may appeal more to Muslims than non-Muslims, and Catholic schools may appeal more to Catholics than non-Catholics, but they do not discern between relatively rich and relatively poor Muslims, or relatively rich and relatively poor Catholics. The same can be said of other relatively low-fee schools such as the more recently established low-fee Anglican, Lutheran, Seventh Day Adventist, and Uniting Church systems of low-fee schools.

In this sense, these schools share an aspect of "public" with the public schooling system. That is, if the family of a potential enrolment does not find the school's denominational designation and (absence of secular studies) to be repugnant, then there is little impediment to those members of the public enrolling their child in that denominational school. This situation is much the same as if the family of a potential enrolment in a public school does not find the school's secularism (absence of sectarian studies) to be repugnant, then there is little impediment to those members of the public enrolling their child in that public school. There is, of course, a difference. Fees are still charged in low-fee church-based schools and will provide a too-high level of financial hardship to some. On the other hand, in public schools, persistent encouragement of families to pay "voluntary contributions" is common. Although it is true that children cannot be expelled if they cannot pay their voluntary contributions in public schools, it is also true that low-fee church-based systems often waive their fees or simply ignore non-payment when families are unable to pay.

---

[5] Sydney Grammar School, for example, with tuition fees of $19,400 per annum and total Year 7-12 enrolments of 1100 students, offers 16 scholarships "some" of which are means-tested.

This is not to say there are not important differences, very important differences, between public schools on one hand, and low-fee and high-fee church-based and private schools on the other. But it *is* to say that low-fee church-based schools *approximate* an important characteristic of public schools in stark contrast to the socio-economically exclusionary character of some of the non-public market.

In respect of defining the market into categories, with this description of high-fee schools as "exclusionary" I have now almost completed my designations to be: public, church-based, exclusionary. To complete this classification it must be recognised that there is a small number of schools with cross-denominational approaches to religion, or establishment purposes designed by governments to serve particular indigenous peoples in remote areas. This last grouping of schools comprises such a small number of schools with such a wide variety of reasons for existence that I am inclined to call them "other."

Thus it is that my recommended categorisation, which I will follow from this point forward, is: public; church-based; exclusionary; other private.

With recent trends in the schooling market now described I will record the many and various explanations for the market trends, as proffered by the champions of different categories of schools.

Reasons Advanced for Enrolling Children in a Church-Based School

Why are more families enrolling their children in church-based schools? The answer to this question is heavily contested. The contestation is not limited to clear-headed researchers and analysis driven by objective data. Claims and counter-claims are made within a context of inflamed political fighting between opposed ideological warriors, competition for government funds, truths and untruths, winners and losers. As will be demonstrated, some participants use statistics and argument selectively in order to advance an ideological position rather than advance a more comprehensive understanding of the issue(s).

One group associated with the public schools movement is the NSW Teachers' Federation (NSWTF). It has been keen to point out that the movement of students is not uni-directional. The NSWTF in March, 2006, publicised the results of a survey (NSW Teachers Federation, 2006) of Principals of 138 high schools and 23 central schools who reported significant enrolments in their schools from students enrolled in private schools in 2005. In

total, in the fifth week of the school year, there were 2,595 ex-private school enrolments in these schools compared to 2,394 ex-private school students for the whole of 2005. According to the Federation, the reasons given by parents for the switch to the public system included: the breadth of curriculum available; better academic results and teacher quality; handling of discipline and bullying; and the costs of a private education.

This development reported by the NSWTF has yet to appear across a wider spectrum of researchers and runs counter to (a) the actual enrolment trends over recent decades and (b) ACER (Beavis, 2004) polling of parents of students currently enrolled in public schools, 34% of whom declare their desire to enrol their children in private schools if it was no more expensive a proposition than enrolling their children in the local public school.

An extensive search of the literature provides an interesting catch of reasons proffered by a wide variety of individuals and groups for the proportionate movement of enrolments to non-public schools. With the objective of laying bare all the various reasons offered as reasons for the proportionate change in market share, before providing an account of the 2004 research undertaken by ACER, I will report a range of views proffered by organisations with a direct interest in public and non-public schooling.

One such group of people comprises individual parents whose stories are not "researched" and are simply part of the anecdotal history. Despite being anecdotal, some of the stories are repeated so often and have become so entrenched in the public mind that they are worth addressing.

Some of these are parents who have made a considered determination to reverse their initial enrolment in public schools. That is, their later decision is not based on a religious commitment or a private school oriented ideological commitment. Amongst these parents are some who even acknowledge they owe their life success, at least in large part, to the public school system and that their children's access to church-based or private schooling "stands on the shoulders" of their parents' successful public schooling. These are parents who perceive the current public school system to lack one or more of a number of elements: appropriate anti-bullying strategies, teaching performance, learning outcomes, diagnosis of learning problems, and extra-curricula activities which induce better self-esteem. One such parent (Mendelssohn) writes in the *Griffith Review* (2006) of her view that the major problem lies with older and bureaucratically selected teachers who are incapable of the teaching energy, tailored care and innovative teaching practices which used to characterise public schools and which now only feature in private schools.

Mendelssohn's views are, just as thoughtfully, challenged by a number of thoughtful and not-so-thoughtful respondents, including a passionate school captain (and dux) of the school Mendelssohn quotes as her example. While some of the respondents attempt to explain, or even argue against, Mendelssohn's analysis of her negative experiences with public schooling, their protestations do nothing to change the end result—a negative experience with public schools which encourages a move, in Mendelssohn's case, to an "elite private" education for her daughter at SCEGGS (Mendelssohn, 2006).

The experience of Mendelssohn is by no means unique. It is only remarkable because it is documented, and documented in a thoughtful and logical fashion. People may legitimately debate her analysis of her experience and even choose not to generalise policy advocacy based on her recount, but both her experience and the consequences should be accepted as real and oft-repeated. The enemy of public schooling is Mendelssohn's experience with public schooling, not Mendelssohn herself, despite the countervailing truth of those who take her to task and quote other powerful anecdotes which support the "public" side of this great debate.

The Centre for Independent Studies (CIS) is a strong advocate of private schooling with a history of intervention in this political wrangle and as such is a good reference point for that side of the debate. The CIS describes itself as "Australasia's leading public policy research institute." Its ideological base is commitment to "the free market in an open society and other voluntary processes in providing many of the goods and services normally supplied by the compulsory methods of government." Its Board of twenty men and one woman is drawn from the upper echelons of business (The Centre for Independent Studies, n.d.).

The CIS asserts, as unqualified fact, a number of highly contested views about schooling, such as:

- private schools do not drain money from public schools;
- private schools spend less per student than public schools;
- private schools are not elitist;
- private schools achieve better results than public schools (Buckingham, 2000, p. 1).

The main schooling agenda for CIS is to privatise schooling—consistent with its commitment to a free market. The main concern of the CIS is with funding policy and the idea that "private school parents are forced to double-pay for their children's education,

less a small subsidy" meaning that parents of private school students pay for public schools through their taxes, and pay again directly to private schools for their own children's schooling with only a relatively small contribution (subsidy) from governments (Buckingham, 2000, p. 2).

Beyond this argument, the CIS holds some views less stridently. On the matter of "quality of education" CIS proffer, "the evidence strongly suggests that private schools offer their students something that goes beyond financial resources and the influence of family background. What this might be is still a matter for discussion and an important area for future research, including:

- the quality and dedication of teaching staff;
- autonomy of the principal; and
- variations in curriculum and instruction" (Buckingham, 2000, p. 2).

CIS is less hesitant when it strongly asserts other benefits of private schooling to include:

- superior learning outcomes from higher standards, driven by market competition for enrolments;
- better discipline; and
- better order or "ethos" providing a better environment for academic and extra-curricula work (Buckingham, 2000, p. 2).

In 1998 the National Council of Independent Schools' Associations (NCISA—later to become the Independent Schools Council of Australia—ISCA) which represents the political and management interests of the owners of many church-based and most private schools, commissioned Irving Saulwick and Associates to undertake a qualitative study of parental attitudes to education and independent schools (Saulwick & Associates, n.d.). This study, and its subsequent use within the political domain, is important as it represents the general view of the owners of schools affiliated with the ISCA: all the "independent" church-based systems (except the Catholic system) and quasi systems, and other private schools. Twelve groups of parents from a range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds were invited to discuss a range of issues including:

- what parents want from their child's education
- what makes for a good educational environment
- what parents like, and do not like, about the way their children are educated
- why parents choose independent schools

- should independent schools receive government funding (Saulwick & Associates, n.d.).

The participating parents were all drawn from schools affiliated with NCISA and, although initially described by NCISA to be "diverse in their socio-economic circumstances," were later described thus: "most, but not all, of the parents…lived in a middle-class culture…had imbibed its values…were products of the post-industrial society" and were "brought up in a time when personal fulfilment was paramount, when self-actualisation, self knowledge, self development were seen as desirable and attainable goals" (Saulwick & Associates, n.d.).

ISCA report the "main findings" to be that parents in independent schools expect their school to, "nurture their child with care, allow their child to develop as a well rounded human being, imbue their child with, and reinforce, the values and culture of the home, instil in their child self-discipline and respect for others, teach their child how to learn, and give their child enough skills and knowledge to allow them to build a future economically and socially" (Saulwick & Associates, n.d.).

These results are not very helpful. They are interesting insights into independent schools' parents' views although the survey methodology does not establish these results to be different from those which might be held by other parents, maybe non-middle class, at other schools, maybe Catholic-systemic or even public schools. They might easily reflect the views of any group of parents associated with any type of school. This observation will be important later in this dissertation, but in the meantime we can conclude that parents in independent schools believe that their decision to patronise church-based and private schools rather than public schools is being rewarded.

Other benefits of independent schooling according to parents surveyed and reported by ISCA, include:
- a "richness of personal fulfilment" comprising experiences such as, "following one's religious commitments, or growing within one's ethnic culture, or living in a non-urban environment" or "pursuing a passion" for chosen activities, and if this passion has a "high commercial value, then so much the better" (Saulwick & Associates, n.d., p. 3).
- "traditional notions of: economic security; economic achievement; social achievement" (p. 4)
- "discipline and core values" (p. 4).

ISCA concluded that the parents wanted an educational environment:

- where their children were encouraged to grow and develop as individuals and where their talents would be revealed and helped to flourish;
- where their children, particularly the gentle or timid ones, were safe and protected;
- where, if they were sent to a school whose religious values or ethnic culture was particularly important to them, these values or this culture was transmitted;
- which was not in conflict, but rather was consistent with, the culture and values of their home environment.

ISCA goes on to report that some, but not all, wanted an educational environment which:

- concentrated on the 'three Rs';
- emphasised the need for discipline, and imposed this when thought necessary;
- gave good instruction, so that good grades, particularly for tertiary entry, could be achieved;
- gave them a background which, if referred to, might give them an advantage when seeking employment or in other phases of post-school life (Saulwick & Associates, n.d., p. 4).

One doesn't have to be a supporter of either the Saulwick methodology or the conclusions that ISCA draws from the Saulwick study to acknowledge the importance of these data. The formulation and selection of questions surveyed, and the narrow cohort of people asked to participate are both lop-sided and unsurprising. After all, the ISCA represents "independent" schools in the bureaucratic and political arenas. The questions and narrow sample of survey participants is revealing of ISCA's political role. That ISCA uses the consequent analysis to undermine the public schooling system is consistent with its vested interest and again, not surprising. Nevertheless, it is folly to ignore the data. They are important because they provide a strong insight into the reasons why substantial numbers of people, mostly middle-class people, say they *prefer* to attend a church-based or private school or, if they had the means, they would choose a church-based or private school. In addition, the ISCA study has successfully gathered together many of the political arguments used at various times by a raft of organisations and politicians in the political turmoil surrounding government funding of schools.

It has not been possible to find a publicly available document from any of the traditional "champions" of public schooling such as the teachers' unions, or affiliates of the national peak council of public schools' parent organisations (ACSSO—Australian Council of State

Schools Organisations), or from those with legislated responsibility for public schooling (such as the NSW Department of Education and Training) which provides an explanation of the *reasons* for the consolidation of Catholic enrolments in Catholic systemic schools, the growth of non-Catholic enrolments in Catholic schools, and the very substantial growth in other church-based and private schools. These organisations typically publicise and campaign around matters of funding levels for public and private schools, consistent with 200 years of political fighting on this matter, but an analysis of the reasons people give for shifting allegiance, or an analysis of the broader societal context which may be shaping the shift, is missing. The central argument of the pro-public schools supporters, consistent over several decades, is against any "state aid" to non-government schools. They see the changes to funding policies as being at the heart of the enrolment shift. A most recent encapsulation of this position comes from the national public school teachers' union (Australian Education Union—AEU):

> The Commonwealth, both in the new programs and regulatory frameworks it has established, and in the manner in which these programs have been administered, has deliberately acted to facilitate the expansion of the Australian private school sector. By formally deregulating the sector, by setting in place a funding mechanism designed to provide additional financial support to private schools, and—just as crucially—by easing its own administrative controls and procedures, the Howard Government has pursued a policy designed to smooth the way for the establishment of new private schools and to enable enrolments in existing ones to grow (Nicholls, 2004).

The AEU does not advance a view concerning the reason(s) parents send their children to private schools except to point to funding policies of governments which "deregulate" the private sector and "facilitate" expansion. To find reasons which parents might have for making the personal decision to forego the local and free public school in favour of church-based and private schools, over and above the new funding policies which makes it more *possible* for parents to make a choice, one has to deduce from the teachers' unions position that, as a consequence of the AEU's claim of funding deprivation to public schools and parallel government largesse to church-based and private schools, more parents find the former unattractive and the latter increasingly attractive. However, even if these claims were substantiated, it leaves unanswered many of the arguments put forward by people like Mendelssohn, the CIS and ISCA such as: access to religious education; values; teacher quality, mix and stability; discipline; school community, or any consideration that all or some of these issues can be, and need to be, addressed within the public schooling sector.

On the contrary, the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO), the peak national organisation representing state and territory affiliates of public school parent organisations, reports as a success, the results of a 2006 Australian School of Government

Studies telephone poll of a random sample of 400 South Australians about their views on the teaching and practice of values in South Australian public schools. The results were described by ACSSO as "very positive" because, while 32% disagreed and 16% said "maybe" and 12% didn't know, 39% agreed that state schools teach values such as doing your best, being responsible, care and compassion. That ACCSO, an organisation representing a system accounting for about 70% of the public, can see 39% support as a success (when 32% disagreed), is counter-intuitive to say the least and may provide some insight into at least a part of the reason for loss of public and political support for public schooling (Australian Council of State Schools Organisations, 2006).

This is not to say that pro-public school organisations have not responded, angrily at times, to criticisms of public schools as they are variously published. For example, in January of 2004 when The Prime Minister declared public schools to be "too politically correct and too values-neutral" (Crabb, 2004) the teacher unions responded with declarations of values perceived by them to be encapsulated by a public school system (Guerrer & Leung, 2004). However, the response is just that—responsive—and is made as a reaction to criticisms made by others. The presentation of argument about the value of public schools in a comprehensive, persistent, persuasive and coherent manner, so typical of those who advocate for church-based and "independent" schools, is missing.

The very recent publication of Bonner and Caro's book *The Stupid Country* (2007) does something to balance this state of affairs. Bonner, as principal of a public school and Caro representing a pro-public schools interest group, Priority Public, "point out the flaws in the position of those who habitually run down public schools and teachers" (Goldstein, 2007).

A further explanation for enrolment shift might be found in the *raison d'etre* of the church-based school. Religious schools are established primarily to evangelise. This objective is made explicitly clear by the initiators of church-based schools. Sometimes, as with Jewish and Coptic schools, the religious objective is strongly interwoven into ethnic and historical themes but, overwhelmingly and not surprisingly, church-based schools are formed to consolidate the religion and expand the congregation. As my analysis of church-based schools' mission statements has established, this evangelisation objective is universally applicable.

Unlike the more partisan organisations quoted above, the ACER stands as an independent research organisation. It undertook a survey on behalf of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and

the report emanating from that research represents probably the most accurate attempt to establish why parents choose a public or private school (Beavis, 2004).

In this study of the reasons for parents selecting a private or public school, ACER provides an "overall conclusion" that the "one factor that stood out" is "the extent to which the school embraced traditional values to do with discipline, religious or moral values, the traditions of the school itself, and the requirements that a uniform be worn." ACER added that family SES "influenced the selection of a school, with higher socio-economic families more often selecting Independent schools" (Beavis, 2004, p. 7).

Unfortunately, the ACER's "one factor" appears to contain several factors. A more detailed scrutiny of the ACER's findings reveals, in its outline of its results, a persistent linkage between concepts of "religion" and "values" and "traditional values." This linkage is evident, for example, when reporting the "largest differences between those parents who would not send their child to a Private school and those who would was the frequency with which they referred to (amongst other reasons), "religious beliefs/values or morals (commonly given as a reason for changing to a Private school, but rarely given as a reason for not changing)." In respect of this item, ACER draws the conclusion, "This last finding suggests that if Private education was more affordable, the drift away from Government schools would continue." When reporting "aspects of schools that were important to parents in the selection of a Public or Private school" the ACER nominates (amongst other aspects), "the religious or moral values of the school (for selection of a Catholic or Independent school compared with a Government school)" (Beavis, 2004, p. 6).

The ACER does not say what proportion of parents moving their children to non-public schools do so because of religion or religion-related reasons. Nor does it define "traditional values" or attempt to establish the degree to which "traditional values" are associated with or even generated by, religious objectives and/or themes. It occurs to me that if further more detailed research was undertaken then it would not be surprising to find a close relationship between parents' conception of "morals" and "values" and "religion" and the adjective "traditional" that is often used to describe them.

Before mounting an argument based on this observation it might be helpful to list the fuller findings of the ACER study. It found that a number of family background factors influence the choice of school, such as: political persuasion, occupational status, family educational levels, family income, family SES. When asked the most common reasons for changing from public to private schools, the most common responses related to discipline, better

teachers and education, smaller classes and individual attention. The largest differences between people who would and would not send their child to a private school were better teachers and better education in private schools, religious beliefs/values and morals. When asked to nominate the aspects of schooling which were important to parents when selecting a school, parents nominated discipline, range of subjects available, religious or moral values of the school, the location of the school, school traditions, uniform, a cluster of traditional values, social and cultural familiarity or security. Finally, ACER states that, "it was found that the strongest effect on the selection of a Private school was the importance of traditional values. This effect was strong" (Beavis, 2004, p. 6).

Getting a clear understanding of what is meant by "traditional values" is difficult. The term is sometimes used on its own and sometimes linked to "religion" or "values" or "religious values" or "morality"—all of which, arguably, are inextricably linked to each other. It is evident from the ACER research that the matter of religion-related and religion-generated themes is important at least to a significant number of parents with their children enrolled in church-based schools, and to parents who would send their children to a church-based school if it cost no more than a public school. It is worth noting that, to the extent that this is an influential reason, it accords with the explicitly most important reason proffered by the owners of church-based schools for their existence—evangelism.

This line of thinking takes me back to my earlier observation that "a further explanation for enrolment shift might be found in the *raison d'etre* of the church-based school." It is not surprising to me that a substantial proportion of parents who enrol their children in a church-based school might be seeking an education which includes church-based messages—opportunities to practice, and learn the teachings of the religion of that particular family. Prior to government funding to church-based schools, the number of these schools was minimal for two possible reasons. The first is the obvious reason that the costs of establishing and running a non-subsidised school were high, too high unless the owners could charge high levels of fees, or unless the owners could supply free labour (unpaid teachers) as was the case with the Catholic system of schools until the 1970s.

The second reason is less obvious and, in my view, the most powerful—the cohesive power of political legitimacy. When a mature political democracy such as Australia takes a decision through its accepted organs and processes, there is a high degree of legitimacy for that decision from both those who supported *and* most who opposed that decision. Even amongst those who opposed the decision vehemently, and continue to oppose the decision after it is taken, there is a high level of acceptance of the *processes* which led to that

decision. In the case of schooling, between 1880 and the 1960s political decisions denied public funds to non-public schools with a consequent result that many families subordinated their preference for a sectarian education to support for a public schooling system. It was "right" to do so. It was "wrong" to insist on identity separateness and a sectarian school.

To be part of the widespread participation in a public system was to be part of a common implicit commitment to a unifying experience where all children, no matter their religious background, were given opportunity to develop their individual potential for the good of the country. Self-interest and religious particularity could be expressed either within the limited amount of time put aside for sectarian religious instruction in public schools, or else in out-of-school time. This general scenario represented a relatively widespread political acceptance, if not a political agreement. Of course, it was not so widespread as to be complete. The Catholic system stood outside this scenario but, even then, many Catholics eschewed the Catholic schooling system and enrolled in public schools despite urgent and persistent exhortations from senior clergy not to do so.

Nevertheless, it is my hypothesis that this scenario—one of a relatively widespread and "cultural" acceptance of subordinating "identity" schooling to that of a more unifying schooling experience with perceived benefits for the national good, social cohesion and community building—held sway (Apple, 2001; Reid, 1998). However, when government funding was, through the mechanism of democratically elected governments, released to non-public schools, Catholic and exclusionary alike, this public culture changed. It was no longer politically or culturally "wrong" to pursue one's identity separateness and sectarian education. With increasing government funding it became evident that it was "right" to pursue these aims. The already imperfect "consensus" came under pressure. As Catholic and exclusionary schools became better resourced, it was clear that other "identities" would miss out unless they too broke with the old culture. It wasn't long before non-Catholic churches entered—some quite reluctantly—the schooling market and, with the cultural bond to social comprehensiveness broken politically, many citizens who would have otherwise stuck to public schooling swung their allegiance to what I am calling identity schooling—a reference consistent with views presented in Section Three concerning identity politics.

In short, if the polity determines that a particular national strategy is appropriate, then many people who would otherwise not support the strategy *do* support it and harmonise their behaviour to the perceived common good. If the polity weakens or nullifies the original

171

strategy then it is not surprising that citizens, including "good" citizens, will pursue objectives which are less community-oriented and more individually focussed.

If one sect and/or ethnic group is able to establish well-funded and no-boundaries schools with evangelisation missions, why would other sects feel any ethical requirement to eschew government assistance and voluntarily vacate the evangelical field? And why would individuals and their families deny themselves the opportunity to pursue, by enrolling in non-public schools, their own sectarian interests when it had been clearly established that others were already benefiting, legitimately, from public subsidies large enough to make their schools viable?

This last explanation, in my view, might account for a substantial proportion of the new church-based schools.

It doesn't account for all the new experience, for example, within the Catholic school sector. Catholic systemic schools report a substantial minority of their enrolment coming from parents who have only a relatively weak attachment to the faith, or none at all, and the NSW Catholic Education Commission reports that 20% of enrolments in Catholic schools declare a non-Catholic religious affiliation while another 20% declare no religious affiliation at all (Pell, 2006). This is intriguing indeed. For these families, not only do they believe the public schooling system is failing them, but the preferred (non-public) school's badge—its *raison d'etre*—is irrelevant, or is less relevant. This school has something other than the sectarian teachings and environment to recommend it. Indeed, the benefits of this school, to these families, might accrue *despite* its evangelism and, for others, *in addition* to its evangelism.

This line of thought leads to yet another, and contested, area which may also provide some explanation for the shift in enrolment share—values. Much of the debate concerning values is shrill and combative. For instance, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reports, under the heading "Giving Children What Parents Can't—Values" that "the stampede of non-believers into the religious-based education sector has turned schools into new churches" (Burke, 2003a). This approach is evidenced by The John Mark Ministries, a cross-denominational ministry to pastors, ex-pastors, church leaders and their spouses (John Mark Ministries, 2007) claim that "religious schools are soaking up students—and funding—as parents push for values-added private education." Phillip Heath as President of the Australian Anglican Schools was reported as saying that parents are flocking to religious education for a package which includes a moral and ethical educational

framework, while Brendan Nelson as Commonwealth Minister for Education was reported at the time, to say that parents are looking for a "trifecta: identity, discipline, values" and that religious schools provide same (Lovat, quoted in Doherty, Burke, & Morris, 2003). Prime Minister Howard believed parents are "frustrated with the lack of traditional values in public schools" and that public schooling is "too politically correct and too values-neutral" (Crabb, 2004).

Professor Terry Lovat is reported as saying "the shift to religious schools dates from the 1920s when values-based education in public schools was replaced by a strong secularism." Lovat believes that a large part of the reason for the more recent "heavy drift to private schooling, more crucial than any funding issue…are the values being pursued by religious schools" whether the values "are sometimes very positive" or "in other cases very one-sided and possibly even based on prejudice and religious bigotry" (Lovat, quoted in Doherty et al., 2003).

This is probably a good point on which to conclude this chapter. It ends as it started, with reference to the highly contested nature of the debate, and participants who sometimes reveal their vested interests. The chapter has provided a description of the major views held by the major players, concerning the reasons many parents hold for preferring church-based and private schooling. These data raise several important issues which will now be discussed in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five: Emerging Issues with Significance for the Future of Public Schooling

In Chapter Four, I described the schooling market, its composition, its areas of expansion, the motives of the owners, and the motives of parents. In this chapter I will identify and analyse a number of issues which arise from the data in the previous chapter. The issues identified and to be discussed in turn below, are:

- sectarian studies and church-based schools
- defining "independence"
- privilege
- the "private-ness" of church-based schools
- the "public-ness" of public schools
- values
- learning outcomes—public versus private
- choice
- social cohesion
- other.

Issue: Sectarian Studies in Church-Based Schools

Probably the most striking feature of the "explosion" of new independent schools in Australia is its overwhelming concern for religious maintenance and evangelisation. While church-based schools also emphasise their educational strengths and peculiarities, the originating *reason* and the continuing *priority* is explicitly made clear: these schools are there to progress the work of the religious denomination and the word of God or Allah or other omnipotent figures. While this objective is sometimes less explicit with some church-based schools which are outside systems or quasi systems and networks and, in the case of some independent *non*-church schools, not true at all, the imposingly dominant feature of Australia's non-government schooling system is its church base. The 33% of Australia's students who attend non-government schools are comprised of 20% enrolled in Catholic systemic schools, almost 12% enrolled in church-based "independent" schools, and a little over 1% in *non*-church-based independent schools.

From these data, we can conclude:

- church-based schools overwhelmingly comprise the non-public schooling market; and

- concern for religious objectives underpins the creation and maintenance of church-based schools.

Aside from the description of the bulk of the schooling market that it provides, this conclusion is interesting for two reasons. First, it has a different emphasis from the array of reasons proffered by interest groups to explain the move of market share from public to private—reasons outlined in Chapter Four. Second, it is counter-intuitive and paradoxical in Australian society. The Australian Bureau of Statistics summarises:

> The proportion of all Australians stating an affiliation to some type of religion remained relatively stable from 1933 until 1971, at slightly less than 90%. This proportion dropped to 80% in 1976, then slowly declined to 73% in 2001. This gradual fall occurred against a backdrop of change in social values and attitudes, particularly since the late 1960s, and an increased secularisation of society in the last three decades of the 20th century. It was accompanied by a rising tendency among all Australians to state that they did not affiliate with any religion— particularly evident since the 1970s (7% in 1971 and 16% in 2001). (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004a)

According to ABS census data, Australia has become increasingly secular with diminishing attendances at church and weakening religious identification. This paradox is important and is discussed further below.

Issue: The Meaning of "Independence"

Within the context of Australian discourse on schools, "independence" has come to mean unconnected from both the public and Catholic *systems* of schools. Those who represent the independent sector see "independence" as a key quality—a selling point for gaining enrolment share of the market. The ISCA, for example, claims that "a wide range of diversity is apparent amongst independent schools" which extends a wide range of choice to families because independence "allows each school the freedom to decide for itself the nature of its ethos, delivery of curriculum and its educational philosophy and provision" (Independent Schools Council of Australia, n.d.-b, p. 5).

A three-component description of Australia's schooling provision has become the norm. Government schools comprise one sector. Non-government schools, divided into two sub-sections provide the other two sectors. The sub-sections are commonly described as "Catholic systemic" and "independent."

In the case of "Catholic systemic" the designation is observably accurate and not misleading, however in the case of "independent" the designation is not clear at all. One could legitimately conclude that such a designation is to be ascribed when a school is not

part of a system, a conclusion given exemplary force given the existence of Catholic schools in both the "systemic" and "independent" designations. The phenomenon that makes one Catholic school "systemic" and the other "independent" is the separation of the latter from the system.

By this understanding, and given earlier descriptions of a large number of schooling systems within the "independent" sector, a very large portion of so-called "independent" schools might more accurately be described as "systemic" and not at all independent. The clearest common feature of the overwhelming majority of "independent" schools is similar to the most defining feature of the Catholic systemic schools, namely these schools are church-based.

Another way of understanding "independence" is to rely more on a commonly accepted dictionary meaning. *The Macquarie Dictionary* defines independence to mean "freedom of influence by others." By this definition, very few of Australia's independent schools—which comprise 13% of the total market—could be accurately described as "independent" as 94% of the so-called independent schools are religiously affiliated in some way, many by way of governing religious systems and others through networks of religious and educational policies and support. All systems exert influence over their schools. The ISCA for example, refers to Lutheran systemic schools requiring church approval for the establishment of new schools, a national Lutheran staffing policy and centrally determined distribution of funds, amongst other features of systemic arrangements. As the ISCA summarises, "The degree of accountability to founding organisations such as churches, varies from school to school but in most cases forms another aspect of responsibility that most independent schools are required to manage" (Independent Schools Council of Australia, n.d.-b, p. 6). Again, the common feature among the overwhelming bulk of "independent" schools is not their independence, but their continuing relationship with their church base.

Yet another way used by some to define "independence" within the schooling sector is to focus on schools' management structures. The Independent Schools Council of Australia does this, asserting "the crucial factor that best defines most independent schools is that each school is an individual organisational entity, managed entirely by a board of governors or management committee" (Independent Schools Council of Australia, n.d.-b, p. 5). There are two weaknesses with this definition. In the first place most schools, irrespective of designation, are managed by a management committee. In public schools the management committee is called a School Executive and is presided over by the Principal and advised

by a School Council comprising a mix of school staff and community members. Each school also implements common policies devised by the system. In Catholic systemic schools, management of the schools rests with a similar structure. In both systems, schools meet the early definitional requirement of the ISCA.

However, the ISCA appears to anticipate this weakness in its definition, moving rapidly to shore it up in the next sentence, "In contrast, each government school in Australia is part of a system ultimately responsible to the government education authority in which the school is located. Likewise, Catholic systemic schools are governed within systems that are integrated with the Catholic Church" (Independent Schools Council of Australia, n.d.-b, p. 5). To give meaning to its definition of independence the ISCA relies on a contrast with the practices in *systems*! At this point the definition is not so much about the nature of boards and management committees but about the differences between "independent" schools (as seen by the ISCA) and their *systemic* counterparts. With the definition now cast as a contrast with the systems, the position of the ISCA becomes untenable given the existence of numerous systems and quasi-systems within the sector the ISCA wishes to define as "independent."

Propagation of this logical difficulty is not contained to the ISCA. An example of the problem is evident in Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia which describes a number of schools thus "Belgrave Heights Christian School is an "independent Christian school owned by the Presbyterian Church" (Belgrave Heights Christian School, 2006).

This is not to say that all non-government non-Catholic systemic schools are not independent. A small percentage is relatively independent of both government influence and church influence. The terms of enrolment are between the parent and the school without the influence of a government or church or other initiating or governing organisation. These schools might be seen as independent although the word "independent" has other difficulties relating to their "dependency" on government funding. They might be more accurately described as private schools. All non-government schools are "private" if a definition paralleling "private enterprise" is applied to schools. That is, by this definition a school would be regarded as private if it were not state-owned. But the use of one word to define a relatively complex section of the market is to use a blunt instrument indeed.

In summary, given the data and the claims made for their schools by the governing bodies outlined in Chapter Four, rather than categorising non-government schools as "Catholic systemic" and "independent," it may be more accurate and useful, at this point of the

analysis, to describe the non-government sector as comprising church-based schools (systems, quasi systems and networks) and private schools.

Issue: Exclusionary Schools—Privilege

Unlike public schools which do not require compulsory tuition fees or enrolment or capital works charges, all church-based and private schools charge a range of fees, most commonly fees associated with processing enrolments, capital works contributions, tuition, and boarding.

The vast majority of church-based schools set fees at a level which, depending on levels of within-family sacrifice, are attainable by most families with working parents. In 2006 when this research was undertaken, schools in the various religious systems and quasi systems reported total fees and costs in the range of $2,000-$6,000 for the year. That is, the *financial* entry requirement is set at a level which could not be seen as discriminating against one strata or other of society. This is not to say that these schools are not able to screen out or rid themselves of students regarded as discipline problems or poor influences, or that they cannot encourage students and families who might be considered to be good academic, sporting or financial influences for the school, but it *is* to say these schools are able to present themselves as working within the commonly held view of "socially comprehensive." These schools may favour a student of a particular religious sect, at a particular level of academic accomplishment, or with a particular sporting prowess, but they would not exclude students on the basis of their socio-economic status.

A small minority of schools—some of the private schools—do not behave in this manner. These schools are typically not members of church-based *systems* and quasi systems. They may be congregationally "badged" as Catholic, for example but they are not part of systems. As has been outlined in Chapter Four, these schools charge tuition fees of close to $20,000 per child per annum and, with boarding and other fee costs, can total up to $45,000 per child per annum. The only softening of this sharp societal edge comes in some private schools which provide a few scholarships, although even these are normally provided to already-proven highest academic achievers.

Schools with fees set at these levels are selling something quite different from the rest. They are, self-evidently, socio-economically *exclusionary*. Only children of the already wealthy may attend. They *cannot* be socially comprehensive.

For an insight into the benefits of such schooling, in addition to the formal curriculum and extra-curricula and sporting activities commonly associated with a school, we can draw on the research of the NCISA (quoted earlier) which reports some of their surveyed parents choosing a private school because it gave their children "an advantage when seeking employment or in other phases of post-school life" (Saulwick & Associates, n.d., p. 4) and it provides their children with opportunity "to meet the 'right' people so that their path into the future would be made easier" (p. 9). Even the most dispassionate observer must see this as privilege, or maybe the more dispassionate the observer the clearer is this privilege.

Privilege is often seen as an extra dollop of pleasure. For most parents, a privilege accorded children is their right to watch television at certain times, to eat certain sweets, to hang-out with friends under certain circumstances, to play MP3s and PS 2s, to enter certain adult areas, to undertake certain out-of-norm events. For those engaged in analysing public and non-public schooling, privilege is mostly described as access to equipment and facilities rarely associated with public or Catholic systemic schools, such as: large and splendidly manicured gardens and lawns, spacious and environmentally pleasant grounds and surrounds, extensive playing fields and spectator accommodation, state-of-the-art facilities and courts for sporting events such as tennis, basketball, hockey, fencing, rowing, heated swimming pools and gymnasiums, and so on.

But these are colloquial meanings given to "privilege."

There are much less trivial consequences of encouraging, or assisting, or even permitting, privilege to exist and reproduce itself, or be reproduced with government encouragement and sustenance. Not surprisingly, privilege is associated with power—economic and political power—and as such should be a matter of central concern for those who have an attachment to ideals of democracy—*liberté, egalité and fraternité*. A system of democracy depends for much of its credibility on its internal processes—of guaranteeing an equality of opportunity so that all citizens have equal rights.

Privilege carries immunity or a right which others do not have. By definition, where a strata of privileged citizens exist they render the rest of society second-class citizens. The privileged have opportunities and experiences and access to power or rights which the rest do not have. *The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary* extends the definition as an "advantage or favour that falls to few."

It is acknowledged that this issue is, and will be, politically volatile. But that is not a reason for avoiding it. The objective data shows widely different levels of fees in non-public schools. These fees are set with deliberation. Part of the decision to set up "low-fee" schools by churches is a concern to reach out to the denominational flock, to include as many as possible, and by this means to extend the reach of evangelisation to all who enter them. Part of the decision to set high fees in high-fee private schools is to service the requirements of the socio-economic elite—a device which excludes those without means, and provides privileges of experience, circumstance and future opportunities for those who have the means, family wealth.

Frank Moorhouse, a prominent and award-winning Australian author, writes of "a sense of entitlement, the fundamental spiritual value that all elite private schools teach without having to utter a word—a sense of superiority and privilege" and he puzzles, "I can't see that we can go on pretending that this is a decent society which streams children according to socio-economic factors. I do not see that it is to the advantage or wellbeing of the society" (Moorhouse, 2004b).

While all schools are a tool for transmitting culture and knowledge to the next generation of workers, leaders, managers and owners of enterprises, the high-fee schools are, additionally and self-evidently, a tool for generational transmission of privilege. This circumstance, in a democracy committed to equality of opportunity, is anathematic. *Axiomatically*, where this formal and institutionalised engine of privilege exists there can be no equality of opportunity, and *democracy exists only in name* as its leaders and economic shapers are, with nepotistic advantage, disproportionately drawn from the families of existing leaders and economic shapers.

Privilege, and of even greater concern, government *sanctioned and encouraged* privilege, is more than an unmanageable tangle of ethics and philosophy within our ostensibly democratic national moral fibre. It is also *inefficient*. Moorhouse again makes this point eloquently:

> Opposition to privilege is a fundamental for an effective and vital economy. Simply put, privilege screws things up. Privilege is bad for the market economy because it ultimately means that incompetent people get the jobs, incompetent people get the contracts and the wrong people get to allocate financial and other resources and manage the resources.

> That's what's wrong with corruption, also. It is not about 'morals': it's bad for the workings of the economy and society. Incompetents become doctors and engineers and generals. The bridges fall down; the penicillin is diluted; we lose the battle. Businesses go broke, shareholders lose their money.

> Educational privilege, favouritism, nepotism mean that it is likely that a dumb
> person will get the job over a smarter person. Corruption and privilege are a tax on
> the rest of the economy. (Moorhouse, 2004a)

With this in mind, the issue of "independent" definition is recalled. It was suggested earlier that the non-public sector, instead of being categorised into "Catholic systemic" and "independent" schools might be more accurately described as "church-based" and "private." In the light of this further discussion it might be more accurate to break "private" into two sub-groups, the first to comprise high-fee "exclusionary" private schools, and "other" to be the small array of schools which serve a particular purpose (such as the recently established indigenous schools in remote areas of the Northern Territory). The designations for non-public schools would thus become: church based; private-exclusionary; private-other.

This re-categorisation of non-public schools, in addition to conveying a more accurate description of the sector, facilitates the following discussion concerning the "public-ness" of public schools and the "private-ness" of church-based schools and, in Sections Three and Four, a discussion which "measures" each of the "public," "church-based" and "exclusionary" schools against a number of principles extracted from a study of political theory.

Issue: How Private are Church-Based Schools?

It has already been noted that most non-public schools are church-based and that most of these have been, and are being, organised into systems or quasi systems with strong links to the denominational hierarchy which established them. These schools are typically low-fee with an explicitly stated evangelisation purpose. With considerable funding from Commonwealth and state/territory governments in recent decades, these systems have expanded their reach to follow population growth centres. They are not "boutique" schools serving a small and localised niche market. None of them imposes qualifications of race, colour, or even religion, although preference may be given to children from the denomination in question. They are systems of schools, largely publicly funded, largely publicly accessible, serving large sections of the public across Australia. In these ways they have important similarities to public schools.

A study of systems of church-based schools' Vision and Mission Statements reveals a universal interest, expressed with varying levels of explicitness, in matters of the wider community, social justice and the common good as demonstrated in Chapter Four.

In some ways, these systems' objectives, particularly but not only in the Catholic sector, are *more* explicitly linked than public schools to public good—concerns beyond the attainment of individual potential and personal needs to concerns for general *political* objectives.

One can read, for example, the NSW Department of Education and Training's "Strategic Directions 2002—2004" and get an impression of an organisation strongly committed to better and more equal educational practices and outcomes without gaining any insights as to the type of society the Department's existence supports (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004a, pp. 1-3). When public school management outlines its *raison d'etre* for public schools, it is more likely to include references to literacy and numeracy and citizenship and educational quality. Its de-politicised "vision" stands in stark contrast, for example, to the National Catholic Education Commission which urges its schools to ensure students understand and have commitment to matters such as: "Reconciliation," "confronting national challenges" and "demanding greater social equity" (National Catholic Education Commission, n.d.-a, p. 1) and "taking an international perspective on human development based on cooperation and collaboration, not competition," "giving priority to activities involving active community service and issues of social justice," "emphasising the common good," "a socially just Australian society," and "providing a perspective which extends beyond national and temporal borders" (pp. 3-4). In this sense, the Catholic system exhibits a more explicit concern for the common good—the public—than does the public schooling system's management, an unpalatable truth for those who regard the *existence* of the public system as a representation of a style of egalitarian polity, and a core matter to be addressed when seeking to reconstruct schooling in Section Four.

This phenomenon—publicness—is worth a serious look as it may hold a clue to a way forward for Australia's schooling system. I have, in Chapter Four, established that most of Australia's non-public schools continue to exist, or have been created, because of recent changes to public funding policies. They are organised into systems which reach to where the public reside, charge fees which permit accessibility to most of the public, many do not exclude enrolments on the basis of race, nationality or even religion and, consistent with their religious bases, albeit with varying levels of explicitness, espouse a concern for the common good and matters of social justice.

In respect of the system of Catholic schools, the literature is replete with references to similarities between it and the system of public schools (Caldwell, 1997; Caldwell & Hayward, 1998; Marginson, 1998). With the development of non-Catholic church-based

systems of schools being so recent and a work-under-construction it is not surprising that similar parallels have yet to be made with them but it is possible that these similarities will be repeated. The extra-curricula message carried by these schools can be, arguably, consistent with a concern for the common good, for social progress for everyone, and not a concern "poisoned," as Moorhouse (2004b) puts it, by privilege and social status.

The potential of this phenomenon—the "publicness" of many non-public schools—for a future system of Australian schooling, will be explored in Section Four.

None of this argument is to say that some, or any, private schools are public. They are not. Even low-fee schools screen out some students because of socio-economic factors. That is, for some people, a fee of $2000 per year is a never-attainable fortune and, unless the church-based school waives or discounts the fee, enrolment at any school requiring a fee is impossible. In this sense, the school is clearly not public. For some others who *could* pay, the fee would represent a sacrifice too high when a free public school is available in any event. For these people too, the school may not be welcoming. Furthermore, a person who objects to schooling within an environment where sectarian studies are expected, and the environment is unrelentingly denominational, these schools are not an option. Again, these schools are not public. Self-evidently, schools run by non-public agencies are not publicly owned and controlled.

Nevertheless, low-fee schools are, on any measure of public accessibility, more "public" than high-fee schools. They are more accessible to families with lower socio-economic status, and they are more accessible geographically. And, these are the schools in which more than 90% of the non-public enrolment is located.

These features will be important when assessing, in Section Four, the feasibility of reconstructing a schooling system for the Australian public.

Issue: How Public are Public Schools?

Ever since the Education Acts of the late 19th century, supporters of public schools have referred to their schools' openness. It is claimed, as a major defining descriptor of public schooling, that public schools are socially comprehensive and open to all. To enrol in a public school one doesn't have to subscribe to a particular religion, come from a particular ethnic background, pay tuition fees, or subscribe to a building fund. Public schools do not discriminate. Unlike church-based and other private schools, public schools are open to every child no matter what the child's geographic circumstances or socio-economic, racial

and religious background. Public schools are described as inviting and welcoming places to *all* children. Indeed, it is this description of public schooling which taps into a vast reservoir of underlying liberal-democratic ideology with objectives such as "equality of opportunity"—egalitarian values on which many believe the Australian identity rests. Given the movement of parents and schools away from public schools, an analysis of these claims might be beneficial.

Church-based schools comprise the overwhelming proportion of the non-public sector, and they declare their mission to be evangelical in character. Many parents who send, or who would send, their children to a non-public school, cite religion and values and morality amongst their most important reasons for doing so.

In 1880 the NSW Education Act legislated provision for up to an hour's sectarian teachings *per day* in NSW public schools. In 2008, the provision is for an average of up to an hour per week (NSW Department of Education and Training, n.d., para. 3. A. 5). Official curriculum offerings to students, and the staffing of schools, provide no support for this element of legislation. Typically, primary and secondary schools timetable a small amount of time per week (usually 30-40 minutes) for visiting clergy to take "Scripture" (special religious education). This timetabled period is not funded by the DET. It provides no staff for this period and no resources. In October 2006 the NSW Minister of Education reported that the DET:

> does not collect statistics on the provision of, or student attendance at, scripture periods (special religious education classes); students not attending scripture are able to engage in private study, homework, reading or other activities that assist learning, but not timetabled lessons or other scheduled school activities; it is not possible for schools to provide alternative subjects in time set aside for special religious education. Only approved religious persuasions can operate lessons during this time. (Hansard, 2006)

My own extensive experience of visiting and observing schools tells me that it is common for the "scripture" period to be seen, particularly by secondary schools, as a period they would rather not have and, if the low attendance of religious teachers is a measure to go by, a similar view is probably held by visiting clergy. It is common during this time for the student population to be unusually restless and noisy, sometimes with a good deal of confusion as students move to one religion or the other in often disorganized ways. Large classes and little school support for discipline problems make the job of many visiting religious personnel very difficult and in many cases impossible and forbiddingly unpleasant. It is common for many "scripture" classes to go unstaffed.

The fact that many students are directionless during this period has led some supporters of public schools to move yet further away from providing sectarian courses—not to attend to the issue of making sectarian teachings more accessible and pleasant for those who wish to attend, but to draw on the dysfunctional nature of the allocated "scripture" period to advocate different and non-religious lessons (in ethics) to replace the scripture lessons. A Member of the NSW Legislative Council drew to the attention of the NSW Government some of the characteristics of "scripture." She said:

> For years thousands of students in public schools have been sitting idle one hour a week because they do not want to attend scripture classes. Those students sit idle because of a government requirement that schools do not offer alternative timetabled lessons during the allocated hour for scripture each week" (Rhiannon, 2006, Item 55 of 56).

Rhiannon identifies the purposeless existence of students who do not attend the sectarian lessons, a set of circumstances which further exacerbates the unsatisfactory nature of the schooling period.

For the other students—those who do attend scripture—the experience is often not good. Typically, large numbers of children are "taken" by the visiting clergy in impossible circumstances, often including an unsympathetic school administration and teaching staff, with the school's discipline regime left untriggered. In many schools, the experience is most unpleasant for clergy and children. In general, public schools are not a welcoming place for those wishing to provide the sectarian teachings the NSW legislation permits.

Further, public schools do not provide for sectarian teachings in their official curriculum offerings. Students may study a comparative religion subject, but they are unable to study their own religion. Catholics cannot study Catholicism, Muslims cannot study Islam, and so on.

In summary, except for a small weekly period, under-utilized, often unsupported by school discipline systems and often non-existent, there is no opportunity for the religiously inclined to learn and practice their religion even with outside church assistance. Learning about one's own religion is banned from the official curriculum of the school.

Australia's interpretation of a "secular" education permits official courses such as a comparative study of religions but forbids the deeper, specialized and separate study of one's own religion. A student *may* be able to attend a scripture lesson once per week as long as the clergy will attend, and there is no competing sporting carnival, holiday,

professional development day, or other special event. However, a student cannot attend a school course which teaches a specific or their own religion. This is not permitted in the compulsory years of schooling, not in the non-compulsory years of schooling, not in the compulsory curriculum, not in the elective curriculum.

In contrast to the ban on sectarian teaching in Australia's public schools, Australia has a proud history of establishing, maintaining and defending a liberal democracy including a central commitment to individual freedoms. Among these freedoms is the freedom to hold, learn and practice one's own religion. "Freedom of religion!" has been a motivating theme in Australia's involvement in two World Wars and, arguably, throughout the Cold War and the wars in Korea and Vietnam. As a consequence of these wars, and countless political debates within the polity, Australia stoutly defends the right of everyone to learn and practice their own religion.

And so it is, in Australia, that the public may enjoy the full range of public freedoms in all public places except public schools where they are banned from learning and practicing their religion in all official courses and all streams of courses including "elective" streams in the later years of schooling.

With current policies which outlaw sectarian study in public schools, a large minority of Australian citizens who believe it to be an essential of Life, a necessary religious commitment, or just an important daily experience, are defined as non-participants in public schools. For them, public schools are hostile to their needs.

To put it another way, in respect of public schooling, Australia defines the "public" to exclude those who believe it to be a necessary daily requirement of Life to learn and practice their religion at school. As far as public schooling is concerned, under current practice there are two sets of citizens with only one of them qualifying as members of the public—those who are happy, or prepared to accept, that all sectarian teachings occur outside the school. One cannot be both "public" *and* a person with religious beliefs so strong that they extend to triggering a liberal right within a public school—the right to learn and practice one's own religion. If you are strongly religious, insistent that your child exercise the right to religious freedom each day at school, you are, by definition, not part of the public when it comes to public schooling.

This appears to me to be an untenable position in a society where the practice of one's religion is universally regarded as one of the public's most fundamental rights. In the same

way that it is not an option for some of the public to enrol in a school where sectarian studies are required teaching and the environment is unrelentingly denominational, so too is it not an option for some of the public to enrol at a school where sectarian studies are banned and the environment unrelentingly areligious or irreligious. There would be nothing unusual about this point except that the practice of one's religion is universally regarded as one of the public's most fundamental rights.

From this, one can deduce that Australia's public schooling system is only "public" if one's freedom to learn about and practice one's sectarian beliefs and heritage is defined as "non-public," at least within the context of schooling.

Simply hanging a sign on a school fence announcing that the school is "public" and that it welcomes everyone no matter their religion, then prohibiting the learning of that religion even in an elective section of the curriculum, is a bit like saying a public bar is open and welcoming to everyone no matter what they drink but then refusing to serve a particular brand of beer—their favourite brand of beer. Under these conditions many of the drinkers will move to a more accommodating pub and, over time, develop a separate culture, and sporting teams, and attitudes, in a process which is not all socially unifying and tolerant.

Here is a fundamental paradox which results in the separation of a large proportion of religiously inclined people who are nevertheless strongly motivated by a concern for the Common Good, from those in public schooling with similar overall societal concerns and values.

Not to allow those members of the public who wish their children to learn or practice their religion in a public school, is to employ an exclusionary definition of "public," inconsistent with the principles of liberal democracy. To point to the unhappy, unresourced and unofficial content of the weekly period of "scripture" as a satisfactory means of delivering sectarian studies to that portion of the public who see it as an integral part of their *being* is, on the face of it, disingenuous. The act of hanging a welcoming "public" sign on the fence, *declaring* the school to be public and thus welcoming of everybody no matter their religion but then *prohibiting* the teaching of one's religion even in an elective section of the curriculum, is disingenuous.

There's not much that's public about a public school to members of the public who are refused the right to have a public right (freedom of religion) addressed within the school's official provision. To say that religion is a "private" matter to be learned and practiced

privately, is an invitation to many people to do just that—to eschew the public system and its unique strategic position for advancing the Common Good in favour of private sectionalism, and separateness, with all the potential long-term societal risks associated with that.

At the level of "real politik," for those with greater interest in political practicalities than political principle and ethics, a disingenuous defence of public schooling's hostility to religious freedom presses "good" religious people (those with a commitment to "community" and the "Common Good") toward an alliance with "bad" religious people (those in pursuit of privilege and/or societal separatism). Being disingenuous also hides the flawed "product" public schools claim to be. It is, as lies tend to be, self-destructive. This is not an argument for compulsory sectarian studies, but it is an argument for access to sectarian studies where families and students so choose.

This matter is addressed directly in Section Four.

Issue: Values

As noted previously, the teaching of values—or not—is oft quoted as a reason parents give for not enrolling their children in a public school. None of the sources of data accessed for this dissertation had quantified the apparent or claimed level of influence that this issue has with parents, but those supporting the case for church-based, exclusionary and other private schools persistently claim "values" as an important reason for the enrolment trend away from public schools. The Prime Minister represented this position in 2004 when he said, "People are looking increasingly to send their kids to independent schools for a combination of reasons. For some of them, it's to do with the values-driven thing; they feel that government schools have become too politically correct and too values-neutral" (Crabb, 2004). On the defensive, supporters of public schools retort that public schools stand for, and teach, the most important values. The Chair of the NSW Public Education Council, for example, said in response that public schools were at the "heart of egalitarianism" and different from "marketplace values" sponsored by private schools (Doherty, 2003).

The public "debate" is highly political and fought with ideological intensity on both sides. For example, the Prime Minister's view extended to a belief that the enrolment shift to private schools was driven by the public system's failure to promote "mainstream" Australian values. His Education Minister went on to say that "there is a growing trend that is discernible to parents that too many government schools are either value-free or are

hostile or apathetic to Australian heritage and values" and that "parents, a great many of them, are worried by a trend within some government schools away from the values that they want imparted to their children" (Clark, 2006, pp. 107-108). The most striking feature of the debate, apart from the highly emotive tone to much of it, is the apparent reluctance of proponents on both sides to actually specify the values regarded as necessary and so important in parental decisions. This feature leads some to claim the appeal to "values" is simply a disingenuous use of a "code" for those with privilege to maintain the privilege. Often all private schools are treated the same in this respect (Simons, 2006).

Some mock the claims of private schools, as Moorhouse does when writing of "elite" private schools: "Others say these schools give the child 'spiritual values', or ethics and morality—such as those shown by some of the leaders of OneTel and HIH Insurance Group, such as those shown by conservative Christians who teach that gays are a human out-group who can't be bishops and that women can't preach or be bishops—those sorts of spiritual values" (Moorhouse, 2004b). Others point to relatively poor Australian attendances at church services and claim religious schools are not true to their claimed values base in any event, and that they have failed in their primary aim of "fostering religious belief" and have, instead, with "increasing government-funded privilege" become bastions of "class and caste" with "scarcely much to do with religion anymore" (D. Fitzgerald, 2006).

Unlike Moorhouse, the NCISA claim to base their analysis on professionally surveyed data. NCISA commissioned Irving Saulwick and Associates (n.d.) to undertake a serious survey to elicit "what parents want from their children's education in independent schools." Amongst the most important matters these parents are reported (without elaboration) to want, are schools which "imbue their child with, and reinforce, the values and culture of the home" (p. 3). This conclusion is hardly surprising. It *would* be surprising if parents wanted schools to imbue and reinforce values antipathetic to the values of the home.

The NCISA survey's summary doesn't shed light on *what* the values from the homes might be. This matter is left open, undefined. Thus it might be, for example, that the values of the surveyed "mostly middle class" parents who "had imbibed middle-class values" are the values to which Moorhouse alludes. Nothing in the NCISA survey contradicts the Moorhouse slur. Moorhouse might even find comfort from the full text of the NCISA summary which reports independent schools' parental emphasis to be with the personal and individual (personal fulfilment, self-actualisation, self-knowledge) with *nothing* registering the concerns of parents for the national interest, social or environmental health, political

imperatives, social justice, honesty, integrity, wider community concerns—the common good.

Having summarised the results of their survey, the NCISA provides a "discussion" which, in the main, is a disaggregated listing of reasons parents of independent school children gave for choosing "independent" schooling. In my investigations of the available documentation, much the same treatment of "values" is apparent. Again, many references are made to the importance of values, particularly "core values," which are now seen to be lacking in society. But again, there is no attempt to define or list what these values might be.

An analysis of the NCISA text elicits individual parental references to "discipline," "religious beliefs," "perpetuating ethnic or religious cultures," "leadership," "self-discipline," "morals," "respect for teachers," "self-control," "obedience," and a desire for their children to "be happy"—but no listing of values, objects or qualities desirable as a means or an end in themselves. Even in the section devoted to "developing a set of values" there is no attempt to define a value, or to identify a value, or to list a number of valued values (Saulwick & Associates, n.d., p. 3).

Given the political importance of the alleged dearth of values in the public schooling system and the attraction of the alleged values-laden "independent" schooling sector, it is not a little disconcerting to have studied the claims of the NCISA without, at the end, understanding the type of matter being discussed (definition) or the actual matters themselves (a listing of values).

In 2004 the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training produced and distributed a "Values for Australian Schooling" poster as part of the Values Good Practice Schools Project. The poster identified the following key values:

- **Care and Compassion** —care for self and others
- **Doing Your Best**—seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable; try hard; pursue excellence
- **Fair Go**—pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society
- **Freedom**—enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others
- **Honesty and Trustworthiness**—be honest, sincere and seek the truth

- **Integrity**—act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct; ensure consistency between words and deeds
- **Respect**—treat others with consideration and regard; respect another person's point of view
- **Responsibility**—be accountable for one's own actions; resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways; contribute to society and to civic life; take care of the environment
- **Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion**—be aware of others and their cultures; accept diversity within a democratic society; being included and including others (Australian Government Department of Education Science and Training, 2004).

The Values Project run by the Commonwealth Government in collaboration with school systems' managements, state/territory governments and academics is very different from the narrow NCISA survey parental base. In this list of values *are* to be found the values propounded so often, and in most cases very prominently, by *systems* of church-based schools and, as we shall see, by the *systems* of public schooling.

That the system of Catholic schools subscribes to these values is clear from a myriad of sources, not least of which are influential documents which use these values to urge societal action to achieve social justice and the common good (National Catholic Education Commission, n.d.-a, pp. 1-4), urge the formation of human beings who will make human society more peaceful, fraternal, and communitarian (Croke, 2005) and inform analysis of contemporary events such as the appeal of Fundamentalism in religion and politics (National Catholic Education Commission, n.d.-b). It is worth observing that these "values" are acutely political and are commonly discussed within the realms of philosophers and political theorists and, of course, represent some of the sharpest "cutting edges" within contemporary politics. It might also be observed, relevant to later considerations in this thesis that these matters are: overwhelmingly concerned for general welfare—the common good; and, are highly topical and contested and, therefore, probably more interesting to students.

Other systems of church-based schools are also keen to identify "values" as important. In the case of the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation each school identifies itself as a school committed to the teaching of "Christian values." The values are not specified in any of the formal documentation, but inference is strong towards the contents of the Ten Commandments. A number of schools involved in the Anglican Schools Network actually

list some values such as St Andrew's Cathedral School's appeal "to build a more tolerant School community and ultimately a society where integrity, compassion and mutual respect are honoured and implemented" (St Andrews Cathedral School, n.d.). Others of these schools, such as Abbotsleigh, do not list desired values but emphasise the teachings of Jesus and living as a Christian and "enabling students to be an independent, constructive and compassionate world citizen with a will to serve others" (Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation, 2002). On the other hand, schools such as high-fee Cranbrook School and SCEGGS Redlands publish extensive Mission and other statements containing strong emphasis on the individual but with *no* reference to wider social concerns or values (Cranbrook School, 2006; SCEGGS Redlands, n.d.).

In the case of the Australian Council for Islam Education Schools (ACIES) there is, again, no identification of particular values but there is strong advocacy for matters which *require* values which appeal to the common good: peace and understanding; model citizenry; building a prosperous, harmonious and safe society in Australia; respecting the rights of others and to understand the different backgrounds and religions; rights of neighbours; and so on (Australian Council for Islamic Education Schools, n.d.-a).

Seventh Day Adventist schools have an explicit commitment to Christian values without specifying them and, similar to the Catholic and Islamic systems, SDA schools teach students, "to accept the concept of service as a principle of life; to be sensitive to the needs of people; and to become contributing members in their home, church, and society" and more expansively and politically, to develop in students an "understanding of our multi-cultural diversity and historical heritage, and a working knowledge of governmental processes, while affirming a belief in the dignity and worth of others and a responsibility for one's local, national, and global environments" (Seventh-day Adventist Schools Australia, 2006a).

The Lutheran Schools system is clear about the importance of values. Although its Mission statement is devoid of references to the national interest, the wider community, or the common good, its concern for Christian values is clear with the following values listed and published as the first thing to be viewed when visiting the Lutheran Schools system website:

* love   * justice   * compassion   * forgiveness   * courage
* service   * humility   * hope   * quality   * appreciation
(Lutheran Education Australia, n.d.).

In NSW, the public schooling system is just as clear about its "core values" which, according to the NSW Government, "represent the aspirations and beliefs of the Australian community as a whole, including its concern for equity, excellence and the promotion of a caring, civil and just society" (Refshauge, 2004, p. 3). Interestingly, and consistent with this thesis, the NSW Government states that these values, "are common to a range of secular and religious world-views and are found in most cultures." The values nominated are:

- integrity—being consistently honest and trustworthy
- excellence—striving for the highest personal achievement in all aspects of schooling and individual and community action, work and life-long learning
- respect—having regard for yourself and others, lawful and just authority and diversity within Australian society and accepting the right of others to hold different or opposing views
- responsibility—being accountable for your individual and community's actions towards yourself, others and the environment
- cooperation—working together to achieve common goals, providing support to others and engaging in peaceful resolution of conflict
- participation—being a proactive and productive individual and group member, having pride in and contributing to the social and economic wealth of the community and the nation
- care—concern for the wellbeing of yourself and others, demonstrating empathy and acting with compassion
- fairness—being committed to the principles of social justice and opposing prejudice, dishonesty and injustice
- democracy—accepting and promoting the rights, freedoms and responsibilities of being an Australian citizen (Refshauge, 2004, p. 3).

In my scrutiny of the many and various commitments to "values" actually made explicit by schooling systems, it would appear that there are few differences in what are regarded as appropriate values. In addition to the values listed in the Commonwealth's Values Project, public schools, the Catholic systemic and some other church-based schools make a clearer declaration of intent and focus on matters to do with the common good—matters of political concern such as social justice, the national interest, environmental concerns, and resolution of conflicts—than is evident in exclusionary private schools. There are a large number of church-based schools which, unsurprisingly, hold to "Christian values" but, in the absence of their identification and/or elaboration, it is not possible to ascertain how

much is rhetoric and how much is genuine commitment. There is no evidence that these schools are not committed to "Christian values." Just what those schools believe to be those values is less clear.

Some private exclusionary schools make no reference to much at all except the fulfilment of the individual's potential, thus leaving us to believe what organisations such as the ISCA claim *for* them and providing us with little to unsettle Moorhouse's (2004a; 2004b) charge that exclusionary schools inculcate values of superiority, arrogance, privilege and elitism.

Examination of the data concerning values has not provided any decisive insight into the claims made for "values" education in the movement of market share towards church-based schools. And yet, the move is inescapably obvious and the weight of anecdotal evidence, albeit awash in a tumultuous political engagement of claim and counter claim, is heavy. While the ideological drive and/or the self-interest of many of the advocates need to be exposed and discarded, the claims cannot be dismissed.

As noted earlier, the schools where the bulk of enrolment increases have occurred are church-based schools. The most important motivation for these has been the denomination's wish to evangelise. As a consequence churches carry, along with their message of supernatural miracles, a raft of important lessons—lessons which are often claimed by Christians to be "Christian" but which are laid claim to by a variety of other religions, those with little religious conviction, and those with no religion at all. The values which appear in the lists published by both the Commonwealth DEST and the NSW DET are integral to the values espoused by the Catholic system and some other systems. Despite the heat in the political contest, they are values held widely, if not universally, amongst people of goodwill and with concern for the common good.

Independent of the claims of the central participants and the tumult of funding battles, Professor Terry Lovat has researched this matter. Lovat's commentary is driven more by research than political ideology, self or vested interest. He says, "the shift to religious schools dates from the 1920s when values-based education in public schools was replaced by a strong secularism" (Doherty et al., 2003) and he implies that, although public education was initially conceived of as a comprehensive educator, including around issues of religion and morality, in the early decades following the public instruction acts that established public education in the colonies (later states), "it seemed that public educators moved away deliberately from their charter around religious and moral education, preferring to leave this to the church" (Lovat & Schofield, 2004, p. 6). For Lovat, this

amounted to a shedding not merely of a dispensable artefact of education but of an essential feature of all effective learning (Lovat, 2007).

Drawing on history, Lovat (n.d.) concludes that "values education goes to the heart of where education began, as a public good designed to make a difference, either as a supplement to what was offered at home or to make up for what was missing at home." He points to early Islamic and Christian education traditions of providing education to redress social inequities. In Australia this tradition was carried forward he says, by Mary MacKillop's Catholic systemic schools which preceded the public system and catered for poor students. When public systems were established in the late 19th century they reflected educational values which, while acknowledging "the standard goals of literacy and numeracy" were capable of

> assuring personal morality for each individual and a suitable citizenry for the soon-to-be new nation…the NSW Public Instruction Act of 1880 (cf. NSW, 1912) stressed the need for students to be inculcated into the values of their society, including understanding the role that those values had played in forming their society's legal codes and social ethics, as well as learning to conform to those values in the form of good citizenry. The notion, therefore, that public education is part of a deep and ancient heritage around values neutrality is mistaken and in need of serious revision. The evidence suggests that public education's initial conception was of being the complete educator, not only of young people's minds but of their inner characters as well. (Lovat, n.d.)

Lovat concludes that this "initial conception" has been largely lost within public schools because educational administrators have, over many decades, emphasised the teaching of factual knowledge and the designated content and processes of syllabi without reference to the affective domain. Concerned about the loss of public support and the health of public schools, Lovat draws on the developing experience of a large research-based initiative of the NSW DET to improve pedagogy in classrooms the (Quality Teaching Project) and advocates an integration of "values education" into new processes of "deep learning" across all disciplines being established as a central educational requirement in the name of Quality Teaching.

Lovat's claims should be taken seriously by Governments and Departments of public schooling because, while it is true that the reasons for a shifting proportion of enrolments from public to private is furiously contested, it is just as clear the issue of "values" is at least an important part of the reason and, at most, when linked to the matter of religion, the most important reason. It is not as clear that the area is well-researched. Lovat's views intersect with those of Professor Alan Reid who, as part of his strategy for devising a meaningful national curriculum, constructs a list of nine "capabilities" which he wants

teachers to use to impregnate all the material involved in teaching and learning engagement. One of his capabilities focuses on "values and ethics" (Reid, 2005).

A better understanding of the influence of "values" or lack of values on parental decisions to place their child at a public or private school might be found not in the uni-dimensional study of "values," but in the interrelationships between issues such as "values," "discipline," "care and safety," "respect" and a range of associated matters which, when taken together, add up to more comprehensive concerns such as "school tone" and "quality of student-teacher relationships" and "expectations held of students."

For example, if we studied the issue of school *discipline* and its associated issue of student *behaviour*, we might find students' and their families' knowledge of, and attitudes to, the DEST list (Australian Government Department of Education Science and Training, 2004) of values (Care and Compassion, Doing Your Best, Fair Go, Freedom, Honesty and Trustworthiness, Integrity, Respect, Responsibility, Understanding, Tolerance, and Inclusion) to be of central interest and importance. If this were the case, then better student behaviour and school discipline might be achieved in schools which successfully taught the listed values. Alternatively, it might be powerfully argued that in schools where there are few discipline problems (such as schools which have control over enrolment and exclusion policies), the listed values are less often challenged and more present, more often visible, and more influential throughout the school as they (the values) are permitted, unchallenged, to permeate the school's relationships between student and student, and between student and teacher, thus providing a better learning environment than that provided by a school where the pre-requisite state of discipline didn't first exist. If this were the case, then *any school which had control over its enrolment policies* such that it could refuse enrolment to students with a behavioural difficulty, or was able to persuade an existing student with a disruptive or organisationally difficult behaviour problem to dis-enrol, or could simply dis-enrol at will, would be a school in an extremely *advantaged* position.

Schools which have these advantaging enrolment powers include all church-based, exclusionary and other private schools as well as the relatively small number of selective public schools. Schools which do not have these powers will, to the extent that school discipline, student behaviour, and the associated display of values which are carried in social settings where behaviour and discipline is chronically challenging, be seriously disadvantaged. This effect will be more powerfully felt as the schooling sector is "marketised" and the advantages of the *protected* side of the industry (church-based, exclusionary, other private schools and selective public schools) are allowed to overwhelm

the section of the market which is compelled to enrol all students including the many poorly behaved students.

By this argument, both "sides" may be correct—that they are strongly committed to agreed and transparent lists of values—but that one set of schools is able to address the matter summarily while the other set of schools is overwhelmed by the problems. One side's advantage becomes the other side's accumulating disadvantage. The advantaged schools in a market environment will overwhelm the disadvantaged.

Within the context of this thesis, the logical but as-yet-to-be-researched linkage between "values" and "school discipline" and poor "behaviour" and the sum of these linkages to the matter of enrolment "market share" is acutely relevant, particularly as: poorer student behaviour correlates with poorer learning outcomes which correlates with lower SES and, as a consequence, is highly relevant to the matter of UNICEF's "relative disadvantage" discussed in Section One; the level and frequency of "boredom" experienced by students and discussed in Section One might have some interesting connections with teaching which, because of the circumstances, is devoid of Lovat's high-interest values teaching within the DET's Quality Teaching (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2003) drive for "deep learning."

As acknowledged above, values will be apparent or be allowed to become apparent, because of internal school processes and management policies—a "hidden" curriculum to students. The capacity of schools to teach values will be affected by a myriad of matters. Values education is a matter of curriculum—both syllabus and hidden.

The centrality of curriculum—its content and structure—persistently emerges in the discussion of matters relevant to this thesis and will be examined in greater focus at a later point. The issue of "values" is no different. Prima facie, there is not one value listed by DEST or the NSW DET which cannot be taught without reference to each of the disciplines—a pedagogical consideration more consistent with the discussion of "boredom" in Section One. These values are integral to every major event in human history. They are relevant and meaningful. Their presentation, discovery, de-construction, analysis and consequent re-synthesising, represents high-interest learning material—a core feature in an industry so reliant on student engagement. For every value there is its opposite and its various shades and hues, and all of them have played out in Humanity's "great debates" and are present in contemporary conundrums. Each has a point of intersection with learning disciplines—and possibly all the disciplines.

Given that some families, according to the 2004 Prime Minister and ISCA, maybe many families, are eschewing the public schooling system because of a perceived absence of values, and given there appears to be no objection from any quarter to the teaching of a set of *agreed* values in schools, and given the potential which values education provides for linking other central concerns such as ("boredom" and "deep learning"), it would seem logical that any future reconstruction of public schooling, including the development of a *social agreement* to underpin a new curriculum paradigm, should give direct attention to Lovat's concern to incorporate the teaching of values *throughout* the schools' curriculum—both syllabus and hidden. These concerns of Lovat's are in harmony with Reid's (2005) advocacy of "ethics and values" to be included in his proposed set of "capabilities" and to be taught *not* as a discipline or separate subject but to be taught as essential themes and concepts in their own right, but with the *help* of skills and knowledge from the subject disciplines (p. 55). This matter is of central importance and is discussed in detail in Section Four.

The absence of quantified data, and the propensity of opposing advocates to refrain from identifying the values which the other side is alleged to be neglecting, makes judgements on the competing claims very difficult. However, it is not difficult to determine from the available literature that:

- church-based schools present themselves to the "market" as strongly religious and caring and values-laden schools in ways public schools do not—and that this is found to be attractive by *many* parents of prospective enrolments, not for reasons of social power and privilege but for reasons of religion, care and safety and decency and students' peaceful intercourse;
- church-based, exclusionary and other private schools are, in ways not open to all but a small number of public schools, permitted to: "cherry pick" from enrolment applications, discourage and ultimately screen out enrolments judged to be less acceptable, encourage enrolments from quarters regarded as potentially advantageous.

If public schooling is to be more attractive to more parents, both matters will need to be addressed, the first through curriculum reform and the second through structural reform—both matters which will rely on the attainment of political *agreement* across the sectors.

Issue: Public Schools Perform Worse than Private Schools

Claims made by the Centre for Independent Studies (CIS) that "private schools achieve better results than public schools" (Buckingham, 2000) are countered by an array of organisations including state and national public school teachers' unions, the Australian

Council of State School Organisations and its affiliates such as the NSW Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations and, more recently, the NSW Public Education Council (now defunct) and the NSW Public Education Enquiry (Vinson Report).

Amongst these latter organisations there are those who point to persistently superior results in the NSW Higher School Certificate attained by a category of public schools which have similar controls to church-based and private schools over their enrolment intakes—selective high schools—a situation acknowledged but given no weight by CIS (Buckingham, 2000, p. 4), and ex-public school University students who do better on average in their first year at University than their church-based and exclusionary private school counterparts (Dobson & Skuja, 2005). These organisations, despite the refusal of non-public schools to divulge their learning outcomes in a similarly open fashion to that which is required of public systems, acknowledge lesser *average* outcomes in the public school system but point out that the comparative exercise is methodologically invalid as the schools being compared are not "like" schools—not comparable—that the exercise is like comparing apples and oranges. They explain the differences in results with reference to the "heavier lift" (Davy, 2005a) that is, by law, required of public schooling.

That is, the public schooling system must (and to a degree, the Catholic system chooses to), in all but its selective schools, cater for *all* students including disproportionate numbers of students who are known to produce lesser results, such as students with:

- with a moderate to serious intellectual disability;
- with a history of disruptive behaviour and seriously disadvantaged students;
- with relatively poorly educated families;
- from low socio-economic communities;
- from indigenous communities;
- from geographically isolated or remote circumstances;
- recently migrated and with little knowledge of the English language;

and students unable to attend school on a regular basis because of:

- serious behaviour difficulties;
- ongoing illness;
- pregnancy or early parenthood;
- a variety of traumatic life experiences e.g. arising from car/plane/bike/tractor/ family/etc. accidents;
- personal circumstances arising from abusive experiences such as: rape, violence, bullying, sexual abuse and/or harassment, and so on.

Arguments in favour of non-public schools which concern retention rates to Year 12, higher rates of entry to University, and lower rates of unemployment are met with counter arguments which draw on a raft of disadvantages which do not affect higher SES public and non-public schools (Teese, 2006, pp. 156-157) and the socio-economic differences of the different student groupings.

Recent OECD data reinforces the view that, after adjustments are made for the differences in socio-economic status of both students and their schools, there is *no* difference in performance between public and church-based or private schools. Professor Barry McGaw, now Director of the University of Melbourne's new Melbourne Education Research Institute and the immediate past Director for Education in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) based in Paris, and a past Executive Director of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), speaking of OECD countries, is unequivocal on this point:

> Once differences between the school systems in the social backgrounds of their students and the schools have been taken into account, there is no remaining significant overall superiority of non-government schooling in *any* [italics added] country. The observed superiority of non-government schools in the base data appears to be due to the students they enrol *rather than what they do as schools* [italics added]). Whether this is the case in Australia is unknown since the information distinguishing government and non-government schools in the Australia database is *suppressed* [italics added] before it is submitted for international analysis. That practice should be changed. (McGaw, 2006, slide 31)

From this point, with the arguments of the protagonists neutralised, proponents of public schooling have a launch-pad for arguments advancing the *national* interest. In the first place, there is an interest in achieving higher learning outcomes for all students and thus an aggregate increase in the nation's educational outcomes by lessening the number of students enrolled at schools which separate students on the basis of academic achievement or socio-economic status which, in the Australian context, draws attention to selective public schools and private schools which select on the basis of academic achievement and/or socio-economic status.

The Danish Technology Institute, reporting to the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture following a comprehensive analysis of all the international (OECD) data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in

Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), summarises its analysis in this regard, linking internal school groupings with SES advantage:

> In other words, the data from PISA suggests that the more and the earlier students are divided into separate groups according to their academic performance, the more the students' socio-economic background matters for their academic performance. Educational systems' ability to adjust for the socio-economic background of students and provide all students with equal opportunities of learning thus appears to diminish as tracking systems and institutional differentiation become more important in education systems (Haahr et al., 2005, p. 174).

Moreover, conscious of governments' consideration of "privatising" schooling provision in OECD countries, the same report poses the question: "Is increased privatization of primary and lower secondary education a relevant policy option in the quest for higher quality in educational outcomes?" and suggests in response, "The analysis of data from PISA 2003 suggests that this is not the case." The report goes on to conclude:

> To the extent that policy makers consider increased privatization of school systems as a policy option for improved quality and efficiency in primary and secondary education, the data from PISA suggests that this option should be approached cautiously. Across countries, there is inconclusive evidence that private schools provide better education than public schools. (Haahr et al., 2005, pp. 172-173)

Unfortunately, the Danish analysis did not include data from Australia as the comparative performance data of Australian public and private schools has, as bemoaned by McGaw, been "suppressed." Nevertheless, the OECD data is otherwise comprehensive and the subsequent analysis authoritative—enough perhaps to raise doubts in Australia about increasing institutional differentiation and privatisation, and to encourage further research into these and important associated questions raised in this dissertation.

The use of authentic data to deal with CIS claims concerning achievement and performance is one thing. However, it is a different matter when it comes to explaining away *perceptions* held *of* the market entities (schools) *by* the market players (parents and students). In this respect, the matters listed by the CIS require further serious attention. One way of dealing with the CIS claims of weaknesses in the public schooling system is to seek higher levels of funding. In this respect, the various teachers' unions have beaten a well-worn track.

By this argument, if pupils are not "reaching their potential" in the public system then it is a matter of under-funding, too-high class sizes, relatively poor teacher in-service opportunities, lack of salary and other incentives to staff schools regarded as disadvantaged, difficult, and disproportionately populated by "non-academically inclined" or "non-university oriented" students—euphemisms for groups of low SES and indigenous students. If "discipline" is a problem then, by this argument, that is because class sizes are

too large, there is a paucity of specialist teachers and school counsellors, and schools are not permitted to rid themselves of difficult students in the same way church-based and private schools shed difficult and under-achieving students. A more "responsible attitude to school work" is often seen as something which comes with levels of educational and socio-economic status attained by parents and, with disadvantaged students, better levels of funding are needed to compensate students who have a "starting line" for learning well behind children born into better educated and better resourced families. Better levels of funding are necessary for public schools to be better able to provide sporting, boarding, performing arts, spiritual and community facilities approximating those held by many church-based and private schools. Less teacher mobility and thus, more "stability" will come for both teachers and students when more teachers teach, and more students learn, in better conditions with better acknowledgement for their excellent work in society's most difficult circumstances.

With all these improvements, public schools, it is said, will more closely approximate the screened conditions of church-based and private schools and teachers, and will be more likely to be capable of higher levels of "responsiveness to the needs of individual students" and cater better for the "social, cultural and spiritual needs of students." The public school teacher unions and other supporters of public schools may, or may not, be correct with these arguments for more resources, but it is not clear that the issue is of great relevance to the relative performance of public and private schooling in any event, because there has been no pressure on church-based and private schools to undertake programs of testing and outcomes reporting such as there have been on public schools.

One point reported by the NCISA, following their survey of independent schools' parents, was the apparent ambivalence significant numbers of parents had towards academic achievement, preferring to place emphasis on the inculcation of religious content and associated values, in a disciplined, safe and caring setting. This may be fortuitous because learning outcomes data from non-public schools for all but the top 10% of achievers in the last year of schooling (HSC) is unavailable in NSW. On the other hand, the public schooling system publicly provides a plethora of attainment and achievement data, including literacy and numeracy scores for boys, girls, indigenous, geographically isolated, low SES and NESB students at each of Years 5, 6, 7 and 8, as well as comprehensive data concerning students' subject choice and outcomes for School Certificate and Higher School Certificate, and each school's "value added-ness" is calculated with the calculations becoming part of each school's official review and improvement program.

This detailed accounting of school performance is not the case with church-based, exclusionary and other private schools which make no attempt to report such data into the public domain where its worth can be evaluated. As a consequence of this absent data, non-public schools' relative worth, and their systems' relative worth as educational institutions is not open to scrutiny. Claims can be made on their behalf by organisations such as the CIS and NCISA without fear of contradiction. Analysts of the claims are reduced to accessing only largely absent data.

This absence of data is a recurring difficulty. The absence of data which can reveal the learning outcomes "worth" of church-based, exclusionary and other private schools sits as a dark hole side-by-side with the previously mentioned "suppressed" Australian data (McGaw, 2006) which leaves Australian private schooling unconsidered against international data.

Without this data, the public is unable to assess if non-public schools do well, or poorly, with the relatively advantaged student stock, in the favourable behaviour-controlled enrolment/expulsion environment, in the protected operational circumstances that they enjoy. The public is unable to tell if non-public schools, like public schools, have a lengthy "tail" of relatively poor performers despite their very considerable starting and operational advantages. Nor is the public able to tell if these non-public schools have added value to their relatively advantaged students at the same rate, or better, or worse, than public schools add value to their students. And yet again, the public is unable to tell how well, or not, non-public schools are able to address the needs of students from identifiable equity groups.

Issue: Social Cohesion.

In a discussion of "social cohesion," the meaning of the word "community" is important. The Macquarie Dictionary defines the word to mean "a social group whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and have a cultural and historical heritage" (*The Macquarie Concise Dictionary*, 1988, p. 185). The concept contains two key elements: a shared geography; a shared social existence. When one refers to "the community," one would normally be discussing the shared characteristics, whether negative or positive, of people living within a designated area. By this meaning it would be sensible to speak of local communities, although the idea of a sense of community, referring to all the people within an area, might also apply to regional communities and even national communities. The concept is a *unifying* concept. When one talks of community one is speaking of matters which affect all people within that geographic area. That is not to overstate the meaning. It does not mean that all people within a community are unified and harmonious. A

community may be wrought with internal stresses, but it is nevertheless a community in that it shares social experiences because of its common geography. This dictionary-based view of "community" is the definition I bring to this analysis.

There are other (widely accepted) uses of the word community. World leaders are often heard to speak of the "international community" comprising the political elite of many nations. Others refer optimistically to a sense of community, where community is meant to be a good in itself. If one is seeking a unity of purpose in which the common good is the objective, one might be said to be fostering a sense of community. Many identity groups refer to their separate identity participants as *their* community. There is nothing wrong with these different definitions, but for this discussion of "social cohesion" it is imperative that the different meanings are established at the outset.

When a public school is established, it is badged as "public." It is not socially selective. It doesn't favour one ethnic group, or religious flock, or socio-economic grouping over another. It is genuinely open to the community. That is not to say the local public school doesn't reflect the ethnic, religious or socio-economic demography already existing in its local community—it does, and will continue to do so while other public policies (FEANTSA, n.d.) such as housing, migration, health and town planning fail to address the matter of "social cohesion." But it is to say that public schools do not badge themselves to compete for a particular part of the ethnic, religious or socio-economic "market."

In short, public schools encourage all locals—the community—to attend the local school no matter what their ethnicity, religion or socio-economic status. The resulting mix of children engages, together, in all the day to day affairs of the school. In every minute of every day, week in, week out, year after year, from the earliest years of schooling to the final years, the children from the local community play together, learn together, and engage together in comprehensive social intercourse. The children's parents, even parents with a personally unrewarding schooling history, are encouraged to attend meetings together, make decisions together, support learning programs together and, in the decision-making forums, to consider the schools' priorities together. The experience is not always pleasant because communities contain within them various differences and conflicts as well as commonalities and friendships. The point is, all these positives and negatives intersect with the local community school. Bringing local children and their parents together is what local public schools *do* (Kaestle, 1983). Irrespective of the teaching and learning taking place in the school, the process of building understandings, tolerances, acceptances, friendships, loyalties and enthusiasms within and between the various elements of local communities,

and resolving conflicts, occurs because the public school is both "public" and "local." Its existence as a community focus, a community resource, a catalyst for community activity and community accord, is a contributor to social cohesiveness. The school owned by the community—the public school—is not an identity organisation, it does not seek to organise the local community into separate ethnic, religious, socio-economic or political groups. It accepts peoples' separate identities: ethnic, religious, socio-economic or political backgrounds and proceeds to educate their children *together*, facilitate play *together*, and resolve differences/conflicts within the community *together*.

The matter of "social cohesion" is more than a social matter. Gradstein and Justman (2002) state that "a general emphasis on the instrumental role of education in transmitting knowledge downplays its effect on growth through its role as a socialising force" and list three "economic benefits" arising from education operating as a social force:

> Education reduces the cost of enforcing desirable social norms; Education lessens the potential for redistributional conflict among distinct social groups; Education reduces transaction costs by shrinking the "social distance" between individuals in the economy. (p. 1192)

A school that contains the children of its local community is able to address the concerns of that local community. When children from different ethnic, religious or socio-economic backgrounds engage in aggressive behaviour or give voice to racist views, religious intolerance, or chauvinist attitudes and behaviour, the matters can be placed within an appropriate schooling, discipline and curriculum context and be addressed immediately or as the situation warrants. In a local public school, matters of local community unity—social cohesion—are matters of everyday school and learning management. As a consequence, public schools have a major role to play as a builder of the dictionary-defined "community." It is a site where children of all ethnicities and religions and SES can mix together, in all the learning activities of the school, as well as extra curricular activities organised for the children. The school is a centre of local endeavour, community focus, and sometimes a base for the expression of local political or social concerns. The public school's community is the local community.

And yet, unlike the Catholic, exclusionary and other private schools, the management of public schooling, including the central management (Head Office) of NSW public schooling, rarely gives voice to the issue of "community."

A study of the Mission Statements and objectives of Catholic and "independent" schools reveals a strong concern for building a *school* community. Here the word "community" is

used differently to the dictionary definition. These schools are concerned for the welfare of their students and appreciate the benefits which may accrue to those students from the development of a sense of community *in that school*. Most non-public schools give prominence to their determination to build a strong school community—meaning that they see the benefits in the stakeholders of the school having common purpose, being united in their efforts for the school and its students, presenting a proud existence to the world outside the school.

These schools are not established to educate a *local* community. They educate *part* of the local community—an identity portion of the community—but, by self-declared religious definition or imposed socio-economic exclusion, these schools sift and winnow the local community into separately badged identity schools. There is no escaping this reality.

In this sense, the non-public school's drive to establish a community is a drive to establish an *artificial* community to emulate many of the benefits the public school has with its local and natural community. The non-public school must *engineer* a community and of course, given the social narrowness of its participants, the contrived community will reflect that narrowness. In the dictionary meaning of the word, it is no "community" at all. In fact, the meaning of "community" is different in the two types of schools. In respect of public schools, "community" is used to accord with the dictionary definition—a social group whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and have a cultural and historical heritage—whereas in respect of non-public schools "community" is more appropriately used to mean: similar character; identity; as in a "community of interests." In Australia, non-public schools are established to compete with public schools, but they are not set up with the intention of competing with public schools for a *representative* slice of the local community. They do not compete directly for the allegiance of the local community, or even a representative slice of local communities. The competition is lop-sided, even illusory. That is, one set of schools, the public schools, are required to take all-comers no matter what educational benefit or deficit that might entail, no matter what behavioural problems might be involved, and irrespective of social, cultural and economic background. The other set of schools "compete" only for the section of the community they desire with "desire" being defined by settings in the fee structure, religious affiliation, behavioural history, and it is folk-lore that some exclusionary schools with an eye to their reputation will favour the enrolments of already proficient students. Non-public schools are set up with definite "badges" designed to appeal, at least in the first instance, to the particular ethnic, religious or socio-economic portion of the public "market." A particularly extreme example of this was to be found in a car bumper sticker I recorded in 2003, based

on the John West tinned tuna advertisement with the punch-line "What makes John West the best are the fish we *reject.*" The sticker was designed to promote an exclusionary school in the Bathurst (NSW) district in 2003. The sticker read: WHAT MAKES ST XXXXXXX THE BEST ARE THE CHILDREN WE REJECT!!

As a consequence, while non-public schools are well placed to build a sense of community *within* the school they are less able to act as a unifying player in the building of the local community, and they are less able to deal with the matters of a local community—social cohesion—as they arise, except in a theoretical sense or insofar as they affect the portion of the community attending the non-public school.

This is not to say church-based schools cannot be interested in, or *concerned for*, a local community, or many local communities. They can, and many do, as evidenced by the data in earlier chapters. Some have such a strong and explicit concern for the common good and social justice it has led me to regard these schools as different to "private" or exclusionary schools and to acknowledge a certain degree of "public-ness," but this does not detract from the inescapable feature that, being specifically badged to appeal to a slice of the market, non-public schools have a sifting and separating effect on communities—a structural starting point before they can begin any process of wider community concern. On the other hand, public schools are structurally unifying features of communities—a starting point from which they can strengthen or, with poor leadership and direction, weaken local communities.

A further feature of non-public schools as revealed by the data in Chapters Four and Five is that they are all "badged" so that they appeal to *portions* of the public with sharply particular *identities*. Exclusionary schools appeal directly to families of high SES. Denominationally specific church-based schools appeal, in the main, to students from that denomination, and so on. As "identity" schools are made more accessible to families through government attitude and funding policies, more and more students of the same identity are collecting together in schools carrying their identity's badge. As we have seen, approximately 30% and 1% of the non-public student population is gathered together (respectively) in church-based and exclusionary schools.

The collection of large sections of the public—society—into separate identity groupings for the entirety of their schooling life cannot be done without pulling out of the local community the children and parents of the various component identity groups. This process may help to build *sections* of a community, such as the denominational school supporting

the development of the denominational section of the community, and the socio-economically exclusionary school developing the socio-economically privileged section of the community, but it cannot have the *unifying* power that a community-inclusive school can have in the building of a community's concern, purpose and harmony. As the phenomenon of identity schools increases, the ability of children to mix across identities and to learn and play and mature and grow into adults who have had that socially diverse engagement must decrease.

Separating children from each other along ethnic, religious and socio-economic lines is a concern serious enough with its inescapable increase in cross-ethnic, cross-religious and cross-SES ignorance. A further concern arises from the heightened self-interest and political power which inevitably accompanies identity politics. With the diminution of the public schooling system, even its abolition as advocated by some powerful ideologues, one might expect a future in which the identity groups vie with each other for political favour (as was the case from 1788 to 1880) once the necessity to politically combine to defeat the public schooling system has been completed.

Australia's *relative* domestic peacefulness is a product of the immediate past. A big part of that past has been, until recently, a schooling system which was dominated by a huge public schooling system and a large Catholic low-fee, socially conscious schooling system which many see as being as public as it is private, running side by side with a small number of schools for the socio-economically privileged. Australia's future can be expected to be influenced by its new schooling structure with its encouragement of social separation. What does the future hold for a future Australia now that it has determined to filter its children and adolescents in increasing numbers through a marketised system? How will lower levels of understanding, friendship and integration between those with ethnic, religious, and socio-economic differences play out in Australian politics, in its streets and suburbs, and on its playing fields?

Some of these concerns will be addressed in Section Three.

The issue of "social cohesion" is a serious one for any democracy but for Australia with its overwhelmingly multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural immigrant composition it is of central political concern. In July 2002 the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) addressed the matter in a submission concerning "cultural diversity and social cohesion" to the Australian Multicultural Foundation. Much of its submission was aimed at countering anti-religious arguments which are not part of this thesis—arguments that

religion is antithetical to democracy. The NCEC argues that religious teachings often carry with them concern for the common good. I do not argue with this. NCEC argues the well trodden and accepted (by me, an atheist) path of liberal freedoms to be exercised freely in a democracy, including learning and practicing one's religion (National Catholic Education Commission, 2000).

In respect of this thesis, such arguments are not required because this thesis gives *primacy* to these liberties and seeks to restructure schooling so that, amongst a raft of other important matters, pursuit of one's religion can be effected within a new system of schooling for the public, and that this might be done with such effect that those who currently choose a church-based school because of religion and associated values, might find agreement with the wider polity on a new system appropriately restructured, and a new curriculum paradigm capable of satisfying these wider requirements while at the same time addressing the central political matter of "social cohesion."

The anxieties associated with the phenomenon of social separateness for the entirety of children's schooling lives—the physical separation of Australia's children and youth along ethnic, religious and socio-economic edges—is not addressed in the Catholic submission. The submission asserts that religious schools "make a particular contribution, as they actively promote diversity and respect (not just tolerance) of others and working for social justice as a religious imperative" (National Catholic Education Commission, 2000, p. 5). One can accept this assertion—that many/most religious schools teach *about* social cohesion, and about elements which might advance the cause of social cohesion—while pointing out that the submission does nothing to answer the view that the division of the community's children into separately badged schools for the entirety of their schooling and developmental years is socially divisive and presents those with a genuine concern for social cohesion, including the many religious citizenry, with a significant structural impediment. This is a major issue.

A lesser issue, but nevertheless one of great significance, is the matter of commitment to the objective of social cohesion and trust that this objective will be observed. It cannot be assumed that all ethnic, religious and socio-economically based schools will place due emphasis on matters of social cohesion. From the already quoted statements of vision, mission, aims and objectives declared by non-public schools it is evident that many church-based school systems are making efforts to address this matter. Others do not. Some give emphasis to an understanding of a foreign country and its association with a religion. This is a matter open to political interpretation and daily judgements about appropriate

responses. While it is accepted from the data in earlier chapters that many church-based schools have a concern for the common good, this is not universally declared. Religion and associated values may certainly be a force for good and there is much evidence for this. But there is also evidence to the contrary.

For example, some religions alter curriculum provision—in the case of the Brethren to exclude girls from technology and science subjects with a concomitant skewing to household skills such as sewing and cooking. Others have an explicitly subordinate role marked out for girls and women. Yet others advocate physical removal from children of other religions because they are regarded, as unclean. Others regard their God as the only God and anyone who doesn't believe as an "unbeliever" and entitled to less of Life's rewards and more of Life's punishments.

This is not an argument against religion because of its imperfections. But it does serve to show that where people of different religions are separated as a matter of public policy, then rather than differences (imperfections) being ameliorated by the immediacy of on-site discussion, friendships and intellectual negotiation (which can more readily, but not necessarily, happen in public schools), identity politics is more likely to triumph leaving children-to-adults entrenched in unchallenged and ignorant beliefs or biased and prejudicial attitudes—fuel for social unrest, and not the prerequisites of social cohesion.

In November 2003 the Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA) produced a response to a series of quotes from some prominent supporters of public schools (L. Wilson, 2003). The paper posed the issue well, quoting a Professor, a Director General of public schooling and an ex-President of a public school teacher union as claiming that,

> "broadly speaking, individual private schools represent a certain section of the population with similar characteristics" and that "publics don't just happen, they are made…turning a group of individuals with a host of differences into a civic entity we call a 'public'" and that "private schools…are good at confirming and strengthening already existing cultural, class, religious and social identities" and that "public schools are the only universally accessible institutions available to…lay down the foundation for future reserves of trust across classes, religions, suburbs and cultures." (p. 2)

Instead of addressing the issue raised by the public school advocates, the ISCA: attacks the language used by the proponents; expresses alarm that "social cohesion" is being considered as part of a future funding regime; makes claims about impure publicness of public schools; and runs some arguments supporting private schools (pp. 3-6). The closest the ISCA comes to addressing the issue of separately schooling different identity groups is

a quote from a pro-private schools author, Brian Crittenden, who attempts to address the point directly but comes up with an argument which literally accepts that, for children in non-public schools to experience collaboration with other "sub-groups" of children, they must rely on out-of-school contexts:

> While tolerance and co-operation among sub-groups are important virtues in a pluralist society, mixing at school is not the only effective way in which they can be acquired. Given an 'open' pluralist society, there are various other contexts in which children of diverse backgrounds can gain experience in collaborating with one another. (L. Wilson, 2003, p. 5)

On examination the quote serves to strengthen my point about social cohesion as it implies that it is "other contexts" that will need to be relied upon for cross-ethnic and cross-religious experiences because the experiences are not available as a consequence of enrolment at the school.

The pro-independent school sector's weak response to the "social cohesion" challenge is starkly evident in the Independent Schools Council of Australia's website article *The Role of Religions in Independent Schools* in which "social cohesion" is seen as promoted by: the teaching of values; community service projects such as fundraising for charities and specific school-based projects; forging links with other institutions such as schools for children with a disability; and student participation in environmental projects, exchange programs, social welfare organisations, and so on. Under the heading *Promotion of Social Cohesion* the ISCA writes:

> Far from being socially divisive, religious schools develop and encourage in their students those very qualities that are the foundations of social cohesion in any society—love of others, which encompasses care and kindness, compassion, patience, understanding, respect, responsibility, truthfulness and obedience.
>
> These values are integrated in the general ethos of the schools, and demonstrated through the social justice and community service projects that are a feature of the curriculum or co-curricular activities in most schools.
>
> The social justice and community service projects within independent schools are extremely diverse and numerous, and include fundraising activities for established charities or specific school-based projects.
>
> Many independent schools have forged links with other institutions in their communities and provide both fundraising and more targeted forms of assistance. For example, several boys' schools have "buddied up" with special schools for students with disabilities and match an on-going fundraising commitment with the provision of a shared weekend camp for the students of these special schools. (Independent Schools Council of Australia, n.d.-a, pp. 17-18)

One can be approving of the attempts by "many" of these schools to provide some "projects" and other experiences with students from other social groupings, as outlined by

ISCA, while pointing out that the experiences so gained must be qualitatively and quantitatively different from those of students who mix every day, and provide zero response to the description of public schools as structurally unifying in ways which non-public schools, because of their separateness, cannot be.

Furthermore, according to the report of the survey undertaken by Irving Saulwick and Associates for the NCISA (ISCA), a number of ISCA parents want schooling which will, for their children, "give them an advantage when seeking employment or in other phases of post-school life" (Saulwick & Associates, n.d., p. 4), and provide opportunities "to meet the 'right' people so that their path into the future would be made easier" (p. 9). As against this self-confessed quest for privilege from some parents, the absence of *any* registered concern for social cohesion in the survey of independent schools parents, either in the ISCA's summary *or* in the array of individual parent responses, is a matter of considerable concern for one of two reasons: either parents in independent schools are totally devoid of any understanding of, or care for, social cohesion; or else Saulwick and Associates were not briefed by NCISA to survey parents on this question.

From the data and the public discourse, it is clear that the larger church-based systems do have a clear commitment to social justice and the common good. The separateness of church-based schools from the workings of the local community represents a conundrum for many parents, students, staff and teachers of these schools and particularly for those whose religion and/or values and/or training) *requires* them to be concerned for the wider community. Later in this dissertation, I propose a means by which these community-motivated citizens might work together with similarly minded people connected with the public system, in a newly constructed system of schooling for the public.

The matter of "social cohesion" is a serious problem internationally and must be addressed by those of goodwill and foresight.

The OECD knows this. In 2004, OECD convened an OECD Education Ministers' Forum on Education and Social Cohesion. Amongst the issues it considered were the two forms of social capital which help build societies. McGaw reports in his Powerpoint presentation:

> At least two forms of social capital can be usefully distinguished:
> - bonding social capital: ties with a given social or ethnic group
> - bridging social capital: ties between groups. (McGaw, 2006, slide 29)

McGaw then explains his anxiety and, in the explanation, provides more evidence of how the out-of-school project-based argument of the ISCA has little substance:

It is often claimed that many of the experiences that used to be shared by young people growing up are no longer available. Various clubs and other social organisations of which young people, and sometimes their families, were members have either substantially declined or disappeared altogether.

In this context, it is then often said that school is the one common experience building shared understandings. In fact, it is schooling, not school, that is the common experience. Schools frequently divide on the basis of gender, faith, social background, wealth, geography and so on. Schools are, therefore, well placed to build bonding social capital within their constituencies but the important question is whether they can build bridging social capital.

From an Australian perspective, we can note that our schools clearly divide each cohort of students on all of the dimensions just mentioned. We need to ask whether their practices reinforce the divisions or whether they work in any way effectively to bridge them. Given the growth of the non-government sector, we need specifically to consider whether that development, in the name of choice and, with government funding, in the name of fiscal fairness, has positive or negative effects on education outcomes and on bridging social capital and, ultimately, social cohesion." (McGaw, 2006, slide 30)

In the absence of clearly researched answers to his exhortation to consider this matter McGaw offers a proposal for "co-location" of different types of schools so that children can mix, at least somewhat (McGaw, 2006, slides 34, 35).

I am convinced by the data that McGaw's anxiety is well placed, but I believe his remedy to be less considered and weaker than his description of the problem. Rather than simply placing schools with different leadership structures and different social purposes on the same site, I examine the feasibility of constructing a citizen-wide social agreement around the political purposes of schooling, to be followed by a reconstructed curriculum paradigm consistent with that agreement and, in light of this development and a continuing social agreement, to construct a new, cohesive and unifying Australian schooling provision. It is anticipated that many/most church-based educators, parents and students would welcome such a development because of their deep commitment to more than the rights of the individual—extending their concern for the common good. This is an important point for those concerned to structure a system of schooling the public in a manner which satisfies individual rights and freedoms while weaving in strong concerns for social cohesion.

For some other schools, concern for "social cohesion" will be simply incompatible with their other purposes. For schools which foster existing power relationships and privilege, or schools motivated by a desire to separate children from children on the basis of faith or ethnic background, or schools wanting to establish educational regimes and curriculum practices which provide only lop-sided life choices to students—the issue of "social

cohesion" is not a serious concern except insofar as the matter represents a threat to their separateness. But to the overwhelming number of church-based schools who have more than their legitimate interest in evangelising and fulfilling the potential of each individual— schools with a concern for wider social objectives such as social harmony, peace and understanding, cooperation and the common good—an alternative schooling structure which satisfies all three aspects (evangelism, the individual, common good) might be worth investigating in Section Four.

Issue: Choice

The rhetoric of choice is a dominant rhetoric.

The pursuit of choice is supported by all substantial political parties in Australia.

The exercise of choice in Australia has been largely limited to a "debate" about the rights of parents to choose a school they think is appropriate for their children. Choice is seen as the capability to select from a number of different types of schools. No attention appears to be given to other possibilities such as the provision of choice within schools—the most obvious being the official sanction of sectarian studies within the elective curriculum.

From the students' point of view, choice begins to appear in the curriculum towards the end of the compulsory years of schooling, and becomes fully available in the non-compulsory two years of schooling. There is little talk amongst educators of extending the availability of choice deep into the primary and even infants and pre-schooling years—despite the obvious point that many students might enjoy the experience of learning deeply within areas of age-appropriate and/or expressed interest.

My point is that choice has been narrowly defined by the political debate surrounding schooling which, as previously established, has been dominated by funding considerations.

If parents want to exercise choice they do not have many options but to enrol their child in a church-based or exclusionary school. However, choice can be extended in different ways. To encourage religious sectors, as well as the wealthy, to establish separate schools for their already badged and separationist communities is one way of providing choice. Another way to do this is to embrace a concept of a local community school for the public, and provide *curriculum* streams which cater for choice, including religious choice, from the earliest years.

The argument concerning "choice"—the limitations (or not) of choice for those who do not have the means to purchase it, the narrowly individualistic values it can carry (or not) with it, and the restrictions (or not) that one person's choice may have on another person's choice—is too big a matter to be comprehensively addressed in this dissertation. In this segment I simply wish to point out that "choice" may be better able to be distributed through schools as a matter of curriculum content.

The new curriculum paradigm I am proposing will provide for (a) a layer of choice for all students and (b) a layer of compulsory "essential" studies for all students.

The new paradigm will accept that citizens will want to maximize their choices to fit their own individual desires. But it equally accepts that there will always be a limit to the acceptable effects of this individuality as the exercise of choice comes up against challenges, and finally battles with rampant choice. Our society is replete with such examples: a myriad road rules, ethical and moral principles and teachings, voluminous legislation and regulation, caring and parenting and policing.

Even the big picture helps provide example. In the ideological battle for economic and social structure throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, centrally controlled "command" economies attached to centrally propagated sketches of the Common Good have been eschewed as completely as have laissez-faire economies attached to dog-eat-dog views of society been eschewed. Political debate in democracies is more about the relative balance between the public and private sectors of the economy, not whether or not there should be just one or the other. Choice, the pursuit of individual preferences, incentive and reward is widely accepted as a basic political and social requirement—just as limitations on choice, limitations on individual preference, limitations on incentive and reward, are seen to be in the common interest. In fact, the common good is often spoken of in terms of limitations on expressions of individual freedoms.

The provision of unfettered choice is seen by some as a guarantee of democratic rights, but by others it is simply seen as a market provision which guarantees the free play of powerful choices with less powerful choices, with the market inexorably over-seeing a triumph of powerful over the less powerful. In the schooling sector, unfettered choice has included encouragement of exclusionary schools. In this thesis I ask the question, "Do we think society should, or must, provide a full range of choice even if this choice includes matters over which there will be significant differences such as the right to choose schooling

designed to advantage certain sects, or nationality, or strata—matters such as privilege, exploitation, societal separation, apartheid, and so on?"

In short, the citizenry accepts the appropriateness of choice and compulsion. The central point of the political process often spins around the point at which these two matters clash, and the content of the political process at that point is all about determining the most appropriate point, given the existing set of circumstances, to draw the line between choice and compulsion.

Applying this thinking to the schooling industry churns up a few possibilities.

Why is curriculum *all* compulsory until early secondary school? Isn't the exercise of choice a personally empowering learning experience for younger children? Why must choice, for infants and primary-aged children be limited to the choice of crayon, or reading book? Is it the case that young children are not interested in the large matters of life such as: elections and the workings of a participatory democracy; interpersonal relationships; the myriad ways power is generated, accrued and exercised; the health of the environment; technologies and their development; wealth generation and distribution, amongst a myriad other topics to do with growing up and understanding the world and its infrastructure. And, why is it that learning and practicing one's religion is permitted as a guaranteed political right and liberty in every public place except public schools? Is it because it impinges on the liberties of others? If it poses no threat to others, then why do we ban it?

Why, if you wish to give effect to your religious choice, must you go to a non-public school?

My view is that public schooling is relatively barren of choice for two reasons: the curriculum paradigm doesn't provide a good balance between choice and compulsion until Years 11 and 12, with a "taster" and superficial curriculum choice introduced in Years 7 and 8, and broadened somewhat in Years 9 and 10; the opportunity to choose to officially study one's religion is denied.

Society is full of negotiated common good versus individual or public versus private legislation, regulation, and ethical controls. I propose a different schooling model—a schooling system which contains curriculum, from the earliest to the latest years, which is presented as an Essential stream of curriculum generated by a previously determined social

agreement around political principles, and an Elective stream of curriculum generated by student and parent interest and demand.

In short, I will argue for a negotiated settlement which moves the curriculum boundary between choice and into a better balance, from the earliest to the later years. I will propose a two-stream paradigm, each stream holding from pre-school to Year 12. One stream will comprise only elective curriculum, taken up in the main, by traditional subjects which students wish to pursue in depth and detail as they pursue their preferred specializations. However, this stream is open to other subjects too such as a variety of sectarian studies. The other stream will be regarded as essential for all students from pre-school to Year 12. This stream will be generated, not from subject disciplines (although the disciplines can be employed to add meaning and insight to essential studies), but from themes generated by a social agreement concerning a number of desired features in our future society—political principles which represent society-wide considered and educated opinion on matters of greatest concern, import and desired future.

To be a supporter of "choice" need not mean opposition to a concern for the common good. Being an advocate for the common good need not mean opposition to choice. The political challenge is to find the point where the exercise of choice detracts seriously from the pursuit of the common good.

As human history progresses, this point will change and therefore require a dynamic political process to review and change the point of balance. This broader matter will be addressed in Section Three. In a democracy, this political process will be both easy and difficult: easy, because we know the decisions must not be left to powerful individuals, cliques or factions, we know the involvement of the wide community is required to attain social agreement, political legitimacy, and a social contract; difficult, because the processes of democracy take time and come with negative as well as positive features of the political process.

My interest is in a new paradigm.

It might be the case that human beings are not *either* pro-market and choice *or* pro-common good and compulsion. It may be that humanity is programmed to appreciate *two* important streams of endeavour simultaneously:

a. that which is essential for the pursuit of the common good—concern for community, social cohesion, equal opportunity (requiring a relatively sophisticated set of political processes to achieve); and,

b. unfettered choice beyond the boundaries of the essentials.

If this was the case, then the challenge for political philosophers would be to discover political structures and political processes which engage the wide community in the construction of socially agreed "essentials" beyond which everything is chosen. In the case of schooling, a set of "essential" social purposes could easily become the basis of the nation's schooling objectives and could be used to generate a new curriculum paradigm with every child in every year from K-12:

- required to engage with essential learning, and
- required to engage in learning chosen by students and their families.

Other Issues

A discussion of the schooling market can easily get lop-sided. I am not able to examine all the factors which might add up to a decision by a family to enrol a child in a non-public school. As a consequence, there has been a concentration on key features of non-public schools and the expanding market involving non-public schools.

However, it should be acknowledged that there is a serious discourse concerning the health of public schools. In NSW alone, voluminous critiques of the public school system have been recently published by the NSW Public Education Council (2005) and the *Inquiry into the Provision of Public Education in NSW* (Vinson, 2002a, 2002b).

The NSW Public Education Council makes recommendations concerning: adequate resource levels; appropriate teacher development and appointments; good future planning; improving technologies in use; supporting early childhood provision; promoting local public schools as a focus of community activities; a review of high school curriculum (NSW Public Education Council, 2005).

The earlier *Inquiry into the Provision of Public Education in NSW* (Vinson, 2002a) made a series of recommendations which get closer to the fundamental problems experienced by public schools. While addressing a wide array of matters the Inquiry accepted the need for an approach to curriculum which starts with a wider vision than current subject contents suggest, and recommended a comprehensive review of curriculum to achieve an outcome similar to that which led Queensland to identify four key challenges: increase intellectual

engagement and relevance across Years 1-10; improve curriculum integration and focus in the middle-school years; conceptualise and develop clear pathways from secondary school into changing workforces and tertiary study; engage with relevant futures scenarios and technologies (p. 69-71).

In its second report, the Inquiry examined the structure of public schooling in NSW and made recommendations which bear directly on the "marketisation" of the public schooling system from within and some of the disadvantages schools in low SES communities must carry. The Inquiry recommends that NSW should: address the needs of the most able students within local comprehensive public schools; not create more opportunity classes or selective high schools, and should halve the number of *fully* selective high schools by providing 50% of selective schools' enrolment from the local community; halve the number of opportunity classes; create no more specialist schools; create no further senior colleges unless that can be done without damaging enrolment patterns for other comprehensive high schools (Vinson, 2002b, pp. 56-60). The Inquiry's recommendations are interesting as, irrespective of one's support for them in principle, one cannot help but ponder on the possible encouragement to parents to enrol more students in private schools if these recommendations are implemented as a good number of these policies were adopted by governments in order to make the public school system more attractive to those who were looking for various advantages from different schooling provisions.

The Inquiry also addressed the matter of school discipline, a matter oft quoted as a reason for families enrolling children in non-public schools. The Inquiry accepted there are considerable problems with discipline and made a number of recommendations to alleviate these problems. It suggested extra specialist staff and professional development of teachers, school counsellors, and mental health liaison officers.

However the most interesting aspect of Vinson's treatment of the "discipline" issue is his linking of discipline with curriculum:

> Indiscipline needs to be considered within an educational framework that gives priority to learning and teaching, and includes a balance of reactive and proactive strategies to create and maintain a system of order within schools—proactive strategies which anticipate patterns of behaviour and seek to prevent, minimise and resolve acts of indiscipline. (Vinson, 2002b, pp. 27-41)

The matters raised by the Inquiry go some way to highlighting the difficulties faced by public schooling. Professor Richard Teese, probably Australia's most prominent researcher of educational disadvantage, its causes and schooling systems' attempts to address it, believes a raft of key and pervading policies act not to work against disadvantage but to

entrench and magnify it. Teese (2006) argues that the positive contribution that schools with high concentrations of low SES students (Catholic systemic and public) make to Australia's comparatively good (on average) OECD performance is *despite* policies which work against low SES schools (p. 154-158), such as:

- transfer policies and high turnover tolerances which regularly and frequently remove the most important resource of all—experienced, and often the best teachers;
- enrolment policies which encourage best students to move to other schools: selective, specialist and non-public schools;
- application of resource betterments equally across systems (e.g. class size reductions) when this means disproportionate benefits to non-disadvantaged schools;
- contraction in study opportunities as low SES schools are unable, with existing resources, to offer higher level courses to those who want them.

Teese outlines an improvement "in levels of enrolment in subjects of high cognitive demand, such as chemistry, in mainstream government and Catholic schools" and goes on to list a number of reasons for this success, such as they have not operated under the same conditions as disadvantaged schools. Their pupil-mix has been broader; they have retained their teachers or attracted them from disadvantaged schools; they enjoy greater flexibility of resources and are able to focus on an academic curriculum, controlling access through selective admissions or promotions. The teachers in mainstream government, upmarket and Catholic schools have more experience and are more academically oriented and networked. It is the teachers from mainstream and upmarket schools who sit on curriculum and assessment committees, not generally the teachers from disadvantaged schools" (Teese, 2006, p. 156).

Teese's observations are relevant to more than the matter of "relative disadvantage" discussed earlier. The matters to which Teese refers have been exacerbated by the more recent "marketisation" of schooling both within the public system and without.

Issue: A Paradox

As I have illustrated, the overwhelming increase in non-public enrolments has been in church-based schools. This has happened at a time when Australia's population is becoming more and more secular. Church attendances, already at low levels, have continued to fall since the 1960s. To add to this, the proportion of the population who

identify as holding religious beliefs has also diminished. The intensity with which the religious belief is held has diminished markedly (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004b). Catholic schools are no longer staffed by nuns and brothers and the seminaries are relatively empty. The only exception to this general trend appears to be expanding flocks of "born again" Pentecostal religious groups as evidenced by the growth in their related schools.

Within this secularising polity, successive governments on both sides of Australian politics have extended ever increasing incentives to families to leave secular public schools in favour of mostly denominational church-based schools. The original intent of the Whitlam government, in response to immense pressure from the Catholic electorate, was to rescue the Catholic school system which, as we have seen, has a good deal of "public-ness" in its reach and in its concern for wider social and political concerns for all Australians. In the establishment of funding principles and political argument for the Catholic sector, the way was opened for other denominations which have taken, and continue to take, advantage of the opportunity now presented by government ideology and funding support.

So, why does a population with diminishing religious conviction increasingly send its children to church-based schools?

The answer seems to be in layers, albeit unquantified layers. There are significant numbers of parents in each of the following categories:

- **religion**: those for whom the *right* to learn and practice their religion, at school, is important and who, given the public system's hostility to this right, are prepared to enrol in a church-based school <u>irrespective of fees</u>;
- **religion**: those for whom the *right* to learn and practice their religion at school is, and has always been, important, but the <u>cost</u> of church-based schooling has, until recently, outweighed the public system's hostility to this right;
- **religion**: those for whom a *desire* to learn and practice religion at school is, and always has been, important but the quality of accommodation, teaching and learning conditions in church-based schools (until recent funding changes) have outweighed their desire, even in the face of public schooling's hostility to their religious needs;
- **religion**: those for whom a *desire* to learn and practice religion at school is, and always has been, important but commitment to (past) widely accepted popular principles embodied in the public schooling system outweighed their desire, even in the face of public schooling's hostility to their religious needs;

- **values**: those for whom it is important to have religion-associated values visible throughout the workings of the school;
- **discipline**: those who regard discipline as better managed in non-public schools;
- **safe and caring environment**: those who regard non-private schools as safer and more caring institutions;
- **quality of teacher-student relationships**: those who believe non-public schools are able to develop closer relationships with students.

It may be that religion is not the only consideration, but it is clear that religious teachings consistent with the family's denomination, as a part of their children's daily schooling, is seen to be a continuing and major reason and, as has been argued earlier, not divorced from other matters such as values.

Tentative Summary Conclusion

In the Introduction it was observed that neither in Australia nor in other OECD countries is there an agreement concerning the social purposes of schooling or a curriculum paradigm which might be best at delivering an agreed social outcome. It was also observed that, even with an assumed core of subject disciplines (literacy, numeracy and science) there exist no agreed standards linked to desired social outcomes, only negotiated benchmarks within subject areas which provide a benchmark for comparing achievements within those subject areas. The absence of these agreements sits uncomfortably with the 1915 view of John Dewey that "*the conception of education as a social process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society we have in mind.*" I noted that both these prior questions—the shape and content of a social agreement and the shape and content of a curriculum generated by or consistent with it—are political questions requiring political processes to reach political answers.

In Section One I identified two major deficiencies with the public schooling system:

1. Failure to empower the bottom half of Australia's students;
2. A teaching and learning environment found to be unacceptable by many students including 60% (probably more for public schools, given the low SES concentration in public schools) of Year 9 students who often find school boring and 34% (probably more for public schools) who do not want to be at school.

At the end of Section One, I argued that these two deficiencies were so central to the purposes of a schooling system that either of them, alone, would warrant a review of the structure of Australian schooling.

Throughout the processes of my research to this point, the matter of curriculum has been an unanticipated recurring issue: devising a set of benchmarks linked to agreed social outcomes will require a vast review of curriculum and probably many changes, maybe even a paradigm shift; better schooling outcomes for low SES students, I have argued, are probably linked to the construction of curriculum objectives and processes which have an intrinsic value to disempowered peoples; replacing a boring educational environment with an engaging, interesting and motivating environment has, prima facie, strong implications for both the shape and content of curriculum for all students and a likely intersection with the issue of "intrinsic value" for the disempowered.

In Section Two I have described an expanding schooling market. A study of enrolment patterns, the purposes of schooling as defined by school owners and managers, and fee structures, has revealed a church-based, exclusionary and private schooling system which is increasingly organizing Australia's children into ethnic, religious and favoured socio-economic groupings.

In respect of the overwhelming majority of non-public schools—church-based schools—a paradox is evident. A secularizing society is increasingly sending its children to church-based schools. The answer to the paradox, from the data, is not immediately resolvable although the continuing interest of religious people in religious schools is self-evident and the attraction of insistently taught and all-pervasive values of decency, concern for others and the common good to people who put high value on these values is also clearly part of the answer. The two are often linked—religion and traditional values. The teaching of religion is, in the context of schooling, clearly a curriculum matter, as is the incorporation of values education.

I have demonstrated that there is a largely shared belief among the owners of schooling systems concerning the values regarded as important. The prognosis for a possible future agreement is therefore not pessimistic, at this point.

A number of issues have been generated by the exploration to date. They have been listed and in a preliminary way, discussed. Amongst the issues is a concern for accessibility to sectarian studies as a student right, and the issue of "values," with both issues being central *curriculum* matters, in addition to issues which heavily influence families' decisions to enrol students in church-based schools. The potential for connection between the teaching of values throughout a curriculum and the opportunity for generating high interest in students as part of "deep learning" has also been introduced.

The issues raised in this chapter will become pertinent again and further discussed in Section Three and some will become central to our considerations in Section Four as I explore the possibilities of a reconstructed system of schooling for the public, with across-society agreement and legitimacy.

But first, we must ask the question, "With the public system so deficient in two major areas (relative disadvantage; boredom) and with political and public support receding so substantially, is there a continuing need for a public system of schooling at all?

Section Three: Why Have a Public Schooling System at All?

If the public schooling system is losing public and political support (Section Two) and, in any event, is responsible for large and persistent inequities as well as boring a substantial number of students most of the time (Section One), is there a compelling reason, or reasons, for persisting with a public schooling system?

The answer to this question lies as much in the domain of political "science" as it does in the domain of education policy.

In Chapter Six of this section I therefore examine the historical events which led to the formation of a public schooling system and the continued applicability of the historical reasons for establishing it. This exercise exposes the reasons for the complex composition of Australian schooling described in Section Two.

In Chapter Seven I explore the world of political philosophy with two objectives. First, Dewey's view that "the conception of education as a social process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society we have in mind" requires me, as a person wanting to re-create a schooling system, to lay bare my "kind of society." This is the realm of political theorists. Not to do as Dewey exhorts us to do, is either to attempt a renovation, or radical restructure, of the schooling system with no clear purpose in sight or else to proceed to restructure the system with political stealth—to structure the schooling system with a clear but undeclared political objective which may or may not be acceptable to the wider polity if it were declared, debated and determined. As we shall see in Section Four, a large number of revered Australian educational thinkers have seen the logic of Dewey's assertion, have re-stated it themselves in different ways, but in the absence of a politically agreed statement of desired societal shape have, as outlined in Section Four, either dismissed the matter as too hard (Karmel, 1981) to achieve or else they have proceeded in the absence of a statement of political objective despite its acknowledged necessity (Blackburn, 1981). This section argues a case for a particular type of political system which I judge to be consistent with Australia's political history and current expressions of political will and which I believe would be endorsed by Australia's polity if given the chance. In doing so, I declare the political position I have adopted as I move into Section Four to propose a reconstructed system of schooling for the public.

Second, partly as a consequence of the political position I reach, but mainly for practical reasons, I study contemporary political thinking to find insights into *how* a restructured schooling system for the public might be achieved. That is, moving from the current structure with all its structural and entrenched political complexities to a new and *agreed* structure will require a mighty effort and a different political *method.* In Chapter Seven I "discover" contemporary political thinking which can greatly assist in this endeavour.

Chapter Six: Evolution—Australia's Public Schooling System

With European settlement and expanding European sovereignty over Aboriginal lands and social structures, NSW schooling developed with a mixture of characteristics—some reflective of the new and raw realities of a convict and military colony, others mirroring political, religious and class realities of the colonizing country, England.

From the beginning of white settlement, the children of well-to-do government officials and officers of the NSW Corps were educated privately, first with governesses and tutors, or by returning home to England for attendance at a private academy or Public School ("public" in the sense they were open to all who could afford their high fees), later by enrolling in private colonial academies, and as early as the 1830s (Austin, 1961) by enrolling in high fee colonial private schools modelled on the English Public Schools.

Children of the developing middle class of traders, merchants and farmers found their aspirations increasingly met with the formation, as early as 1800, of private schools in both Parramatta and Sydney and later throughout the colonies (Barcan, 1980). The schooling of children from the lower classes was provided with considerable assistance from church, philanthropic, and English and colonial governments.

Schooling was, until the emergence of an infant public schooling system in 1848, dominated by schools established by churches to meet the mixed needs of the church (primarily evangelical and moral) and government objectives (religious, moral and economic). In NSW in 1848 the public system emerged out of a relentless, half-century long and ferocious political battle between colonial governors, the Church of England and the Methodist, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches. The development of a publicly funded public system of schooling did little to cool the political temperature. To the contrary, it merely added to the churches' competition for public funding another layer of debate, this time attributing godlessness and secularism to some of those advocating a system of public schools.

Different parts of the developing schooling system in NSW came under the newly-established jurisdictions of Victoria in 1851 and Queensland in 1859. Western Australia had been a separate colony since 1825; South Australia was established as a separate entity in 1834 and Tasmania in 1842 (Project Gutenberg of Australia, 2006).

Within each of these states, and against a background of the British Education Act of 1870 which established public schooling in Britain (Haralambos & Holborn, n.d.), the political struggle concerning church-based and public schools within NSW came to a head at different times, although the outcome was similar. Between 1872 (Victoria) and 1880 (NSW) all states enacted legislation which removed public funding from non-public schools and ultimately led to free, compulsory and secular public schooling systems in the now separate colonies.

Private schools supporting the aspirations of the upper and middle classes continued to exist and flourish although there was a reduction in their number for a little time in the late 19th century.

From 1880, with all available public monies now directed to public schools and with public schooling systems now required to service all areas populated by even small numbers of children, the public schooling systems expanded rapidly. While denominational high-fee schools for the children of the wealthy continued to thrive, the children of lower socio-economic status were now generally provided for and, consistent with the political momentum of the time, many children from the middle class also attended public schools. However, for evangelical reasons, the Roman Catholic Church adopted a different strategy to that of the Protestant churches, determining to maintain its separate system of low-fee parochial schools, thus completing a full structure of church-based and private schooling in parallel with the public system of schooling. That is, by the end of the 19th century, after a hundred years of unrelenting and bitter religio-political wrangling, the basic structure we have in the 21st century was established:

- public schools: free, compulsory and secular;
- high-fee, mostly church-based schools for the well-to-do; and
- low-fee, and relatively low-fee, systems of church-based private schools.

The structure emerged from a long period of political combat. It was never proposed as a "vision" for the nation, or a state. It was not the product of cross-sector political negotiation and agreement. It does not represent a social agreement involving the major parties, leave alone the elements of the public which sit behind each of the school-owning parties. Public schools had a victory but not a victory by way of agreement. Although the Education Acts throughout the Australian colonies during the 1870s *politically determined* a resolution of the 100 year old, sectarian fuelled dispute (for public funding and separate identity), it did so by weight of electoral numbers. A large minority—much of the Catholic population—

felt defeated and unjustly treated as their schooling system had public funding withdrawn, and the new public schools were established on a non-sectarian basis. Their rights, as many of them saw it, to learn and practice their religion at a school without having to pay for both their own school and a separate public system of schools had been denied them. The political determination was no socially agreed settlement.

Hence, with a view to understanding why Australia's complex contemporary schooling system is so structured this section examines the political events which led to its mix of public, church-based and private schools.

Early Schooling in the White Settlement of NSW (1788-1826)

England used Australia as a place to transport convicts. The population in the early decades of white settlement in Australia was overwhelmingly lower class—convicts, unwilling settlers and soldiers—with a small controlling class of public servants and a developing class of landed gentry. The experience from which school providers would draw, in designing and developing schools for this colony, was not local and Aboriginal, not local and tailor-made, but English.

In late 18th century England, the provision of schooling was not a job for government. Where children of the lower classes received any education at all, it was provided through a system of "monitors," who were already tutored children, simultaneously lecturing hundreds of rowed children, funded through the efforts of philanthropists and the official "established" church—the Church of England. The schooling of children from the middle and upper classes was provided either by way of private tuition within the house, manor or castle, or else in small "academies" and private schools funded with the fees paid by the well-to-do.

By the fourth year of settlement, the European population of NSW, spread over three sites, Sydney, Norfolk Island, Parramatta, was 3120 of which 246 were children. Early schools were held in huts and tents. The first church building in Sydney was finished in 1793 and was used during the week as a school. Although Governor Phillip decreed that each new town would have 1000 acres set aside for funding a church and a school, land generated incomes were so low that each school depended on government grants and fees (Barcan, 1980).

The stated reason(s) for the establishment of these schools is less clear. Historians commonly refer to high levels of crime, violence, drunkenness and theft. Within this

context, and possibly as a consequence of high levels of prostitution, concubinage and low levels of family life, large numbers of abandoned and neglected children roamed the streets of the settlement, thus providing administrators with a strong reason for developing a schooling system (Hogan, 1987; see also Austin, 1961; Barcan, 1980; Cleverley, 1971; Ely, 1978).

Early schools then, were established primarily to address the social and moral problems of the poor, were run by the Church of England, and were government funded. Thus, it can be said that the authorities of the day had a social purpose for schooling in mind—to construct a decent society—although this social purpose was envisioned not following a serious exercise of consulting the community but in the benevolent minds of the governing and church (of England) elite. The social purpose was not linked to any political goals. The social purpose, such as it was, became less important than battle for control, first from the Church of England, and later from other emboldened denominations.

During the administrations of Governors Phillip and Hunter the number of schools increased and the sponsors widened to include the Congregational and Methodist Churches. Like England where the State took little responsibility for the education of the population at large, the churches adopted the role of public educator but, unlike England, the developing State saw the urgent need to fund and assist church-based schools. A public role was being undertaken by churches with a private (evangelical) motive. Barcan (1980) summarises this period, "The distinction between private, Church and State schools was still much blurred" (p. 12).

Governor King, in 1800, instituted a device he had first used on Norfolk Island. He constructed a pool of designated funds (the Orphan School Fund) to support schooling by imposing an import duty on goods. With these funds he opened the Female Orphan School in 1801—a genuine publicly funded church-run school with a public and evangelic intention—the foundation of religion and morality. This fund became a funding source for many schools established with government approval in later years including Catholic schools. Schools which received these public funds were run by churches and often received assistance from the London Missionary Society (Barcan, 1980).

But this is not the full picture. Middle and upper-class children, since the beginning of settlement, had been shipped home to England for education, or else privately tutored. By 1806, with the rise of an upper-class as government and military personnel increased, and a middle class of traders, merchants and a few farmers, "private-venture elementary schools"

and "more advanced private schools" had been set up to enrol their children (Barcan, 1980, p. 15). These schools were regarded as "private" as their enrolments were not open to all who could pay the fee. The matter of social class and associated separatism and a "sense of discrimination" were entrenched from the very beginning of white settlement. Exclusivity was well established by the early 1800s as "respectable" parents sought "segregated schooling so that their sons and daughters would not have to sit alongside the child of a working convict in a public school" (Cleverley, 1971, p. 117) and, with entrenched "vested interests and privilege" continued without competition until the first directly-controlled public schools were established in 1848 (Linz, 1938, p. 78), unchallenged until the newly developed system of public schooling removed its public funding in 1880, unfettered for 80 years until the 1960s when public funding was re-introduced and ramped upwards since then with funding encouragement from Australia's state, territory and federal governments. Barcan acknowledges the social separation through schooling, although he describes the phenomenon differently, seeing the establishment of publicly funded church-based schools as a partnership of Church and State to provide schooling "for children of the lower classes" while "parents in the middle or higher social ranks were expected to attend to the education of their children for themselves" (Barcan & O'Flaherty, 1995, p. xv).

Early schooling reflected the class system of England and the dominance of the Church of England.

After 1810, Governor Macquarie encouraged the expansion of government-assisted schools to develop basic literacy skills, religious instruction and training in domestic and industrial skills for children whose parents could not afford an education for their children and for children with no parents at all. These schools were called Charity Schools and emulated the English system of Church of England-based charity schools providing elementary and religious instruction, free, to the poor. Macquarie reasoned that because there were so few philanthropists in NSW, and the problem of uncontrolled and ignorant children was so acute, his administration would need to provide necessary funding (Barcan, 1980, pp. 19-20).

By halfway through Macquarie's term as Governor "most of the educational institutions of contemporary England had been established in the colony…elementary, Sunday, evening, private-venture, boarding schools as well as domestic schooling undertaken by governesses, tutors and/or mothers (Barcan, 1980).

With the colony becoming more and more complex and (illegally) widely scattered, with anxieties generated by the war between England and Bonaparte's France, and with the Orphan School Fund looking very healthy, Macquarie was pleased to move concerns for schooling provision away from his Office (the government) to the Church of England which, as the only officially "established" church in England, then took responsibility for introducing a system advocated by the (English) National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church (of England). This new "National" system was to use the catechism from the Church of England. Strengthening this push for an Anglican monopoly of the schooling system was the 1823 Bigge Report which supported the continuing dominance of the Church of England, a strong link between schooling and religious instruction, and a greater focus on vocational skills which would help the lower classes support the developing needs of "an aristocracy of landowners" (Barcan, 1980, p. 26).

Behind this push for expanded education provision was an expressed social purpose. On this occasion it came not from a single man in authority, but the (above-quoted) commissioned Bigge Report which gained the attention of at least those with authority— not a democratically intentioned, constructed or debated document by any means, but a report which nevertheless addressed the matter of social purpose.

However, the matter of power over the provision of education to the colony's children, already a contested matter between the churches, and a matter of interest to the government authority, was not to be resolved by imposing a Church of England monopoly. The religious base of the colony had become more complex and even more combative, and before this new system could attain British approval and therefore begin, and in response to increasing denominational unrest and agitation within the colony itself, Governor Brisbane extended the aid of the State to include Catholic schools, Methodist Sunday schools, and Presbyterian schools. The Church of England's ongoing monopoly, backed by the Bigge report, fell apart.

By the end of Macquarie's time there were many church-run schools (they were called "public") assisted by government finances. Their social purposes were overwhelmingly religious and moral although the vocational skills of the lower classes were becoming of greater interest.

As for private schools for the middle and upper classes, they were, by this time, well and truly established. Barcan summarises, "In the same period the number and variety of higher

schools, catering for the middle and upper classes, increased. Most of these private schools were independent of both Church and State. Small private schools, commercial academies, a few grammar schools, and private girls' schools now existed" (Barcan, 1980, p. 23).

At this point of the historical outline, it is worth pausing to note that, not surprisingly given the huge tasks facing colonial administrators, neither the colonising power England, nor its Governors in Australia, or indeed the providers of early colonial schools, saw the need to construct any *colony-wide policy* concerning the social purposes of schooling, the extent to which schooling was required throughout the colonies, principles which should underlie curriculum provision, or a systemic structure (public, or church-based, or private, or a favoured mix). Nor did the authorities see the need to draw the population into political *processes* which might develop a well-informed public debate leading to such policies. This is not to say schools were formed willy-nilly for no purpose at all. The churches were clear about their evangelisation objective, with the Church of England seeking to establish a monopoly over school accessibility, and the Roman Catholic hierarchy and later Methodists and Presbyterians, increasingly determined to serve their own flocks. There is no doubt, too, that the authorities were challenged by matters of public morality and behaviour, and that the labour in the colony needed to be better skilled in the basics. And it appears to be true that those who provided the schools did so with other motives in parallel, such as compassion and concern for the welfare of children (see Austin, 1961; Barcan, 1980; Cleverley, 1971; Ely, 1978).

A summary of the first 30 years might comprise four major observations. First, it produced no system of public schools as we would define it today. There were schools referred to at the time as "public." They were an attempt to provide for the non-elite general public. They were church-run with government and philanthropic funds. The separate and exclusive aspirations of the developing middle and upper classes were catered for with an expanding number of private denominational schools. Education was more likely to be seen along lines of class and religion, with matters of class and privilege requiring a qualitatively different content and location of schooling, and matters of religion requiring separate schools to administer the differently defined evangelising.

Second, in respect of the curriculum and its association with the social purposes of schooling, education of the public became a government concern during this period, particularly as public morality and public order were major problems for the colony and education of children in matters of literacy, numeracy, religion and morality was seen by the more progressive authorities as providing some relief.

Third, the matter of social cohesion was a real problem with religious differences keenly felt and expressed. Social division was in the process of being maintained (class) and heightened (religious). Little public concern is evident for the construction of social cohesion. The objective of the churches was either to establish dominance (Church of England) or else to establish a right to exist alongside the Church of England.

Fourth, the processes of government were not set to establish a cross-society agreement concerning public policy. The politics of the era, both in England and Australia, involved challenging "the conception of government as the special prerogative of a divinely restricted group" and replacing it with the new "liberal attitude that the State represented an aggregate of individuals of equal worth" (Linz, 1938, p. 78) but this move towards democratic thinking and practice stopped well short of the deliberative politics aimed at reaching social agreement that I will outline in Chapter Eight. Quite contrary to a search for agreement, the overwhelming characteristic of this time was an increasingly shrill sectarian struggle for evangelic strength which, in the schooling sector, saw the combatants vying for public funding. Hogan summarises this period as a time of "sectional interest, competition for privilege, and a potential for sectarian violence" (Hogan, 1987, p. 78).

To this point, although there was significant unifying thought and compassion, from governors and leading citizens, concerning the vocational training needed by the colonies and the moral circumstances of a peculiarly convict-based community, schooling provision was *fractured and fracturing*, not unified by policy objectives or any socially agreed religious or social goals.

Church and School Lands Corporation (1826-33)

In 1824, the soon-to-be-appointed Archdeacon of the Church of England in NSW, Thomas Hobbes Scott, was asked by the Colonial Secretary to provide a plan for the development of the *church and education* in NSW. The two went together. Scott's report recommended, similarly to contemporary practice in Canada and in the recently formed United States of America, that the colony be divided into counties with 10% of the land being granted to the Church of England which was to use the land to raise funds for subsequent provision of churches and schools, all of which were to be Church of England (Barcan, 1980). A Board of Trustees comprising Church of England clergy and colonial officials was to administer this system which was to comprise:

- a primary school near the Church in each parish– with separate boys' and girls' sections—to be built so that children might learn "the common Rudiments of Reading, Writing and the Four simple Rules of Arithmetic" (Barcan, 1980, pp. 27-

28) before moving on to another area of training for Agriculture or a trade. Although open to all children it was expected families would pay a fee for the service; and

- a post-primary school in each county to cater for the middle classes, to be established for a relatively small number of fee paying students (similar to the English academies). Its curriculum would be more traditional and take in Latin, Greek, and Literature (Barcan, 1980).

Here was a plan which would permit many more children access to an elementary schooling, and a small number of wealthier students to higher schooling. It was not a plan for all children as parents of even elementary school pupils had to pay a fee, but it would have extended access to elementary schooling to many more children. The plan included an attempt to establish Church of England hegemony over all schools, supported by the public purse—a provision which attracted the most attention and eventually overwhelmed it and rendered it defunct. It was a plan not devoid of social purpose, but it lacked a serious attempt to match societal needs with schooling outcomes, and it was the product of lone planning rather than an attempt to secure social consideration and widespread agreement. Nevertheless, it was a plan (see Austin, 1961; Barcan, 1980; Cleverley, 1971; Ely, 1978).

However, by the time Scott reached Sydney in May 1825 other religious denominations had organised fierce resistance to the planned monopoly such that Scott's plans were modified. There was also resistance in the colony to the Church being granted such large tracts of land.

Nevertheless, the Church and Schools Lands Corporation (CASLC) was formed in 1826 (State Records of NSW, n.d.-a). Its first grants were not made until 1829 and, even then, the lands were underdeveloped and not so productive that they could generate the income first envisaged. As a consequence, the State made financial grants to keep the schools going and the Corporation was told in 1829 that it would be abolished (Austin, 1961, p. 31).

Following the dissolution of CASLC all lands owned by it reverted to the Crown. Their subsequent disposition provides a clue to the most pressing political concerns of the time as the objective was to "maintain and promote Religion and the Education of Youth" (State Records of NSW, n.d.-b, p. 5).

The establishment of the CASLC was an attempt to get a permanent funding source (government) for church-based schools (Church of England). However, it came to nothing

because of Catholic, Presbyterian and Methodist resistance to a planned Church of England monopoly.

In this period, the sectarian needs of the different churches swamped any thoughts of: a unified structure for schooling provision; curriculum linked to social purpose; social cohesion; or social agreement.

Denominational Schools (1833-1848)

Official records of the mid-1800s reflect a deep colonial division on religio-political themes (see Austin, 1961; Barcan, 1980; Cleverley, 1971; Ely, 1978; Hogan, 1987) not dissimilar from major aspects of the "State Aid" debate which flared again in Goulburn, NSW in 1962 when Catholic Bishops closed local Catholic schools for a week in a successful attempt to persuade politicians that closure of Catholic schools which were threatened with financial extinction would swamp public schools and as a consequence governments should re-open government coffers which, by 1962, had been closed to all Church and private schools in NSW for 82 years.

The religious divisions of the mid-1800s were exacerbated by patterns of appropriation of government schooling assistance between the various denominations. This scramble for funds, unlike contemporary times, did not involve a contest with public schools as they did not yet exist. The contest was only between the denominations, or Church-based schools, which received all the government assistance available. This religio-political contest, motivated more by evangelisation missions and consequent funding imperatives, swamped the political debates of the day concerning the type and extent of education required by, and provided for, the new colonies.

In 1834, Church of England schools had received a total of 5,736 pounds in appropriations from the CASLC while only 800 pounds were appropriated to Roman Catholic schools, and nothing at all to Presbyterian Church schools. The pattern of disbursements was a matter of acute concern in the 1830s, and a matter to be fought out in the public and political arena.

In an 1833 letter to Lord Stanley, the Secretary of the Colonies, Governor Bourke sought to establish a system of government supported, church-run but *non-denominational* schools. Bourke was explicitly opposed to the establishment of denominational schools as he believed such a system would result in inefficiencies and divisions arising from what he described as a "multiplicity of small rival schools" (Austin, 1961, pp. 32-33). Instead of several competing schools with different denominational badges competing in each

community, Bourke saw one "public" school, larger and efficient, supported with public funds enrolling all local children of all denominations and servicing their religious needs from a common Christian curriculum. Each school would be run by a different church denomination (State Records of NSW, 1833).

Opposition to Bourke's proposal from the respective churches, all of whom wished to maintain their separate evangelisation objectives, was strong and led to its postponement. This was an important event in the development of public schooling. Here was an attempt by government to bring all religious entities together under the one roof, at least during elementary schooling years, so that an objective could be met. The objective was one of efficiency to be attained by eliminating wasteful expenditure on a multiplicity of schools serving the one population area. The driving force was not one of seeking social cohesion, though this clearly could have been a result if the proposal had gone ahead.

Instead, the NSW Church Act of 1836 permitted an allocation of one government pound for every private pound raised to build a church, provided that an amount of not less than 300 pounds was raised privately, and not more than 1000 pounds would be provided by the government. Bourke applied the terms of this Act to schools, thus providing a system of "half and half" schools which became known as the "denominational system." That is, this funding mechanism resulted in the State financing church-based schools along denominational lines in the effort to provide a system of schooling for a wider public than those who could pay for private academies and tutelage (NSW State Archives, 1848-1866).

While this system resolved the incendiary political problem of inequitable funding between denominations, it did nothing for the construction of an efficient schooling system suited to the needs of NSW. In fact, it encouraged a new uneconomic problem which the new colony could not afford. That is, each Church now felt obliged, in each colonial community, to establish not only its own Church but also its own denominational school (NSW State Archives, 1848-1866).

The attempts of Governors and key public figures to establish a structure for "public" schooling—government funded church-run schools, either denominational or non-denominational—was frustrated at every turn by the relentless competition between the churches as they pursued their sectarian interests.

From the enactment of the Church Act of 1836 there were two types of school in NSW: government assisted church schools (CASLC) established prior to 1836 that continued; and

new "half and half" denominational schools that were established. By 1841, 43 schools (32 Anglican, 11 Roman Catholic) were CASLC schools and 46 schools were "half and half" (NSW State Archives, 1848-1866, p. 15).

Despite the existence of these 89 church-based government funded schools with their total enrolment of 12,500 children, another 13,000 children attended *no school at all*. With few funds in the colonial Treasury, and obvious increased expenditures associated with funding schools as denomination after denomination duplicated school establishment in community after community, the NSW Legislative Council urged Bourke's successor Gipps, and his successor Governor Fitzroy, to be rid of the bitter and dominating religious struggle for profile (Austin, 1961) and its associated ad hoc denominational system of schooling provision, and to establish "national" schools for all.

Bourke, Gipps and Fitzroy had all been keen on a system such as the "Irish National" system which provided for all sects to be treated equally and thus receive public funds, and that each of these sects would run schools which brought "together children of all sects for a general, literary education which, while Christian in spirit, was non-denominational; facilities were provided for the separate religious instruction of the children of each sect" (Austin, 1961, p. 33).

Again the churches refused to cooperate, slowed the political processes, and succeeded in maintaining the now-established system of "publicly-funded" church schools (CASLC and half-and-half). The debate of this period was not centred on the desired social purposes of schooling. There was no appeal to grand principle, to freedom: *liberté, egalité and fraternité*—not even to colonial economic concerns (Rusden, 1853). The political struggle of the 1830s-1840s was conducted almost entirely with reference to religious rights and funding/appropriation mechanisms, not dissimilar to contemporary political wrestling concerning the same matter (Grose, n.d., p. 39).

In this period, the political debate concerning schooling was dominated by the attempts by government to replace publicly funded church-run denominational schools by publicly funded church-run non-denominational schools and, later, publicly funded "national" non-denominational but nevertheless religious schools. Each proposal by government was overwhelmed by the interests of the churches (Denominational School Board, 1862) thus permitting the continued inefficient expansion of publicly funded denominational schools. A summary of the second 30 year period of the colony again yields four major observations. First, still no system of public schools was established. Publicly funded

church-run denominational schools continued to open, but no plan was devised to provide schooling to meet the needs of the population in general, or to any pre-determined social purposes for schooling. Access to schooling was poor, ad hoc and inefficient. Meanwhile, paralleling their different aspirations, the middle and upper classes were provided for with an unabated growth of high-fee denominational schools. Second, matters of curriculum and its association with the social purposes of schooling were swamped in the public debate by an overwhelming interest in sectarian versus secular approaches to schooling provision. Third, the matter of social cohesion did not gain any prominence in the public debate which, by now, was including serious attention to "national," or public, schools. The concept of public schools was supported with arguments concerning "efficiency"—a means by which one school might be provided in Australian towns which, otherwise, were establishing with government funds, several separate and costly denominational schools. Although "efficiency" was the rallying cry, there were muted voices which articulated the benefits to society which should accrue if the children of the various combatants went to school together and thus engaged in much social, sporting and learning intercourse. However, all these proposals for national schools were, at this time, defeated by the churches.

Fourth, with the demise of proposals for National schools, the public debate was moving *away* from the possibility of a new tool in political negotiation—a social agreement. And finally, it was clearly the case that the purpose of the churches' fight to retain denominational schools was primarily a fight for the right to run their own schools consistent with their denominational doctrines—a similar view to the evangelisation mission so explicitly nominated by modern-day churches for the establishment of their systems of schools.

To this point, although there had been significant unifying thought and compassion, from governors and leading citizens, concerning the vocational training needed of the colonies and the moral circumstances of a peculiarly convict-based community, schooling provision was fractured and fracturing, not unified by policy objectives or any socially agreed religious or social goals.

Public School System Emerges…In Parallel (1848-1866)

The religio-political scrabble of the first half of the 19th century had delivered no efficient system of schooling to NSW. The needs of the colony, as seen by a lengthening line of Governors and appointed officials and researchers, could be met with a system of publicly accessible elementary schools. However, this simple vision continued to be torn apart by

the interests of competing churches. The resulting "system" was shapeless and expensive. An impasse had been reached—an impasse which could not be resolved, but which history was to strategically outflank with the creation of a second system to run in parallel with the established religious denominational "system."

To this end, in 1848, Governor Fitzroy established two boards:

- the General Education Board (which later became the Board of National Education-BNE) the object of which was to introduce a system of non-denominational "national" schools, to regulate these schools, and to inspect their physical circumstances and teaching strategies. National schools gained their name from a system of Irish national schools which were characteristically publicly funded, publicly administered, Christian but non-denominational.
- the Denominational School Board (DSB) which administered the conduct and inspection of schools of the different denominations: Church of England, Presbyterian, Methodist, Roman Catholic (NSW State Archives, 1848-1866).

The purpose of the DSB was to regulate "the conduct and inspection of schools of the different denominations, appointment and remuneration of school masters, the system and extent or degree of education to be taught in the schools, and the terms on which the children of paupers will be admitted—in fact, all that relates to the fiscal and temporal part of education" (Denominational School Board, 1862, p. 3). The DSB established four separate administrative units: reflecting the four different denominations. Each denomination received a part of a grant from the NSW Parliament (30 000 pounds in 1862) proportionate to their population, as well as a proportion of funds collected from the Church and Land Grants (936 pounds in 1862) (Denominational School Board, 1862).

Using this mechanism, the DSB was responsible for purchase of school documents, books and apparatus, furniture, salaries, inspection, teacher training, building and maintenance, travel of teachers. However, with the exception of the allocation of government funds each denomination held de facto power in all respects including the appointment and termination of inspectors and teachers.

While the DSB already had, at its onset, 89 operational publicly funded schools, the Board of National Education (BNE) was starting from nothing. It was responsible for all aspects of creating a totally new public system. It was faced with the daunting task of garnering support from local communities without soliciting their support. That is, the legislation permitted the BNE to speak publicly only if requested by a community.

The key feature of a national school was the welcoming of all children irrespective of their sect. Each child was to be "instructed in those portions of religious faith held in common by all Christians" (S. H. Smith & Spaull, 1925, p. 89) and sectarian instruction could also be provided by clergy from a particular sect. These schools were "greeted by the partisans of denominational education with the most determined and unreasoning opposition. Men whose characters stood high were denounced as atheists and the system itself was described as godless and infidel" (p. 89).

By 1851 (when the state of Victoria was formed from the part of NSW south of the Murray River), 22 "national" schools had been established and 19 applications had been received from other communities. These applications followed exhausting organisational efforts and five epic travels by George Rusden, the only agent of the General Education Board, who visited on request, communities between: Sydney, Albury, Melbourne, Portland, Hunter Valley, New England, Moreton Bay, and Bathurst. All these visits were undertaken on horseback!! (Austin, 1961; see also NSW State Archives, 1848-1866).

Rusden was permitted to *attempt* to convene community meetings, display Board materials, speak (only) if requested, and support the community (only) *if* it asked for a school. He was not permitted to criticise other schools or their proponents (Austin, 1961).

Despite the lack of power and the lack of personnel to "sell" the new public system, "national" schools resonated with many in the population (Austin, 1961). The *dual* system which developed under this arrangement between 1848 and 1866 would prove to be "deplorable" (p. 56)—expensive and ineffective—but it would also be the vehicle for establishing the pre-cursor of the public schooling system.

Absent from the plethora of responsibilities given the Board of National Education was any reference to the socio-political purposes of "national" schools. Presumably, schooling's worth was taken for granted. It was something which was either present or it wasn't—one didn't need to discuss its nature or its shape or its purposes, one needed only to decide who was responsible for certain management matters and where the funding was coming from. Its explicit responsibilities were for: model schools, property, books, appointment of teachers, inspection, dismissal, minimum wages, and furniture. Of particular interest was the provision for Special Religious Instruction which was:
- provided to children whose parents requested it;
- taught by approved religious teachers from the four denominations;

- held in separate rooms;
- held for one day per week, a provision which became in 1853, one hour per day (Board of National Education, 1848-1852).

The main objective of the "national" system was to provide access to schooling for children of all denominations in rural and city areas. To this extent, the emerging system of public schooling had a social purpose—to service the needs of rural populations and those sections of the urban population not enrolled in church-based and private schools. The underlying issue of government aid to church-based and private schools was always referred to in official documentation as matters of *economics* and *inefficient* competition. An examination of the literature of the 19th century, and the political debates of that time, reveals a tumultuous religio-political context (Turner, 1972) which stands in stark contrast to the bland official documents. The Anglican-Irish Catholic division within the colonies ran deep, fracturing many towns and organizations on many issues of public concern, including aid to church-based and private schools (Hogan, 1987).

With the emerging dual system came rivalry. A public system had been begun, but it added another complication to the political tumult. In 1854, the NSW Legislative Council, in response to public rivalry between the two Boards and their proponents, established the Select Committee on Education to report on "the state of education and the condition of the schools generally" (Relton, 1962, p. 138).

The resulting report found an indefensibly poor state of education in both National and Denominational schools. Linz (1938) quotes the report, "We are reluctantly compelled to report that few schools are worthy of the name" (p. 45). The report drew attention to schools with inappropriate buildings, others poorly sited, in disrepair, many devoid of outbuildings, staffed with teachers who were described as unfit, incompetent, used only as child-minders, deceptive and with children who attended poorly and displayed "a deplorable state of ignorance" (Linz, 1938, p. 46; see also Austin, 1963, pp. 164-165).

Denominational schools were also roundly criticised for poor religious instruction while National schools, ironically, were found to be doing better in this area. The Select Committee made a number of recommendations aimed at establishing and standardising higher standards of instruction, inspection and management and, as a prelude to public schooling to be introduced 33 years later, the Select Committee recommended compulsory education for at least one year (Austin, 1963).

During this period, private schools continued to expand with middle and upper class enrolments. Most attention, however, was firmly on the historic wrestle between would-be public providers. During this period, for the first time, emerged a real public challenger to the "public" church-run schools. The earlier spurned idea of non-denominationalism now had a vehicle—the national school.

The structure was metamorphosing—while publicly funded church-run denominational schools were maintained, they now had an increasingly popular competitor.

The Public Schools Act and the Public Instruction Act in NSW (1866-1880)

Following the report of the Select Committee, and despite attacks on the system of (public) National schools as "infidel and godless" by the Denominational Schools Board, public opinion appeared to swing behind the idea of a single controlling authority and a strong system of National Schools.

In 1866, Henry Parkes critiqued the dual system and described it as: expensive; inferior quality; divisive; and as having an inadequate reach for many students in both city and rural areas (Austin, 1961, p. 119).

Parkes was keen to widen the 1848-1866 experience with National Schools, to make it a general provision. The Public Schools Act of 1866 did not do that, but it did:
- abolish the Board of National Education and the Denominational Board
- establish a Council of Education with responsibility for:
    a) government grants to schools;
    b) establishment and maintenance of public schools where 25 enrolments were assured;
    c) aid to certified Denominational schools (more than 30 enrolments from the same creed);
    d) standard instruction in both public and church schools;
    e) standard regulation and inspection in both public and church schools;
    f) ensuring daily religious instruction in public schools, no regulation on religion in church schools;
    g) every teacher, in both systems, to be employed by the State; and
    h) central appointment of all School Boards.

The new Council of Education was chaired by the first President, Henry Parkes MLA, and proceeded to:

- establish new schools;
- draw up a suitable curriculum;
- arrange for teacher training;
- issue certificates to Denominational Schools;
- close unsuitable schools; and
- administer a number of bureaux including: pupil-teacher system; training; inspection; provisional schools; half-time schools.

The new structure and policy had its most acute effect when funds to establish *new schools* were sought by the Churches. The Public School Act of 1866 gave power and money to the Council of Education to open new public schools while the same power was denied to the Church bodies running denominational schools.

Throughout the 1870s and 1880s an increasingly incendiary political climate existed as the system of public schooling gained favour. In 1867 a Catholic Education Association was formed to provide funds for Catholic schools. The Roman Catholic Church, with Bishop Polding at the vanguard, launched attack after attack on the inequitable dealings of the Public Schools Act of 1866 and its resulting Council of Education.

The ferocity of the campaign waged by the Catholic hierarchy was not modified. The unity of purpose exhibited by the different denominational churches in the late 20th century was not evident 100 years earlier. The Protestant churches took a lower profile with an increasing number of their hierarchy and most of the flock supporting a non-denominational schooling system (Austin, 1961). Despite, and maybe partly because of, the intensity of the Roman Catholic campaign of the 1870s and 1880s, public opinion swung away from their cause (Hogan, 1987).

During this period of time (1872 to 1880), a number of attempts were made to advance the cause of public schools and to secularise the schooling system. Not all the resistance came from the Catholic sector. Henry Parkes, for example, later to be known as the "father" of public education, in 1872 opposed a Bill put forward by Mr Forster to amend the Public Schools Act of 1866 to expand secular schooling and to remove State Aid from denominational church schools. Parkes argued a line from which he would resile in 1879. Given the current debate in Australia, Parkes' expressed views of the time are well worth

quoting because he accurately predicted that removal of public funding from Catholic schools would result in many Catholics obeying the dictates from Rome and determining to withhold their children from public schools, sending them instead to schools which they would provide for themselves. In turn, Parkes thought, again accurately, that this would generate in the Catholic population, "the idea of a sense of injustice, which would go far to attract the sympathy, and rally around them the liberal of all classes, and we should have growing up in our midst a real cause of discontent and disaffection with the Government of the country" (S. H. Smith & Spaull, 1925, p. 154).

Parkes argued that abolishing public funding and closing church-run denominational schools would force the disaffected to pay for their own schools while still paying taxation to support public schools. Parkes was prescient: this injustice would lead to a continuing and worsening of the religio-political struggle for public funding.

In 1874, a Baptist minister, William Greenwood, formed the Public Schools League which sought to make education: free, compulsory, secular, national.

Greenwood's arguments ultimately held sway, but not before a decade of opposition from Henry Parkes. Greenwood sought to close denominational schools, and hammered these themes:

- 25,000 children, about half those of school age were not attending any school in 1874 and the Public Schools Act was powerless to remedy the problem;
- sectarian rivalry prevented the establishment of public schools in areas where they were really needed;
- the existence of schools of different denominations perpetuated national dissention (S. H. Smith & Spaull, 1925, p. 155).

Parkes opposed Greenwood and his moves to close government funded denominational schools, again arguing that those who insisted on their own religious school would have to pay for their school *and* the public schools. Parkes argued this was unfair and ultimately, he foretold, societal divisions would reopen—an argument which, given the experience of history, has proved insightful. Like many of the participants in this heated political controversy of the times, Parkes did acknowledge other issues—important issues which despite his political stature, similar to all earlier eras, became largely lost in the political heat of sectarian and funding rivalries. Like Greenwood, he was concerned for what he saw as the "national" issues of: the national social and economic interest—expressed narrowly

as a need for a literate and numerate population across NSW; social cohesion—involving schools in which children of all denominations mixed and learned to live together; religious freedom—eventually reflected in his 1880 legislation which sought to encourage all denominational churches to pursue evangelisation goals *within* public schools for large periods of time each day (up to an hour/day) (S. H. Smith & Spaull, 1925).

The public "debate" throughout these decades was anything but genial. Although, as noted above, some of the participants appealed to greater social principle, the public "noise" and visible engagement was overwhelmingly between those who sought to have schools established along non-denominational lines and those who sought to establish and maintain publicly funded schools run by evangelically motivated churches.

Austin (1961) identifies one central argument with three "reinforcing" arguments for public schooling in the public debate of this era. The central argument concerned "efficiency"—a system of schooling which reached to all sections of the city and rural population without wastefully duplicating services and associated costs. This argument was in accord with the fresh and strong ideology of Liberalism driving public debate in England at the time, ideology which, "while not anti-religious, was hostile to the claims of the Churches, and opposed the intervention of any authoritarian institutionalism between the State and the individual. The Churches were entitled to tolerance and respect as long as they did not attempt to disturb this social relationship, and by the 1870s there was little doubt in the liberal mind that it was the State, and not the Church, which should assume the responsibility for education" (p. 170). The three reinforcing arguments concerned:

- **police**: it was thought by increasing numbers of people that the rampant crime in the colony could be dissipated when widespread ignorance was replaced with an elementary education for all;
- **democracy**: increasingly, the advocates of public education drew links between an educated political base and the decisions made by politicians representing that base;
- **national prosperity**: new technologies were seen, by increasing numbers, to require a better educational base for those who operated them, and others who needed to understand them (Austin, 1961).

According to Austin (1961), in 1875, G.R. Dibbs proposed an amendment in the NSW Parliament similar to the defeated Forster amendment of 1872 which had sought to expand secular schooling and to remove State Aid from denominational church schools. Again,

Parkes opposed it, and again the amendment failed, this time on a vote of 21 to 7. In 1878, Greenwood yet again moved an amendment seeking free, compulsory education and the withdrawal of government assistance (State Aid) from denominational schools. With Parkes organising the opposition, it yet again failed.

Despite these failures in Parliament, the mood of the public was shifting. It had become clear the dual schooling system had major flaws, was not geographically equitable, and was socially divisive, competitive and un-economic. A public mood for free and compulsory schooling was on the increase and many of the citizenry were exasperated with relentless Church-fuelled denominational hostility.

Henry Parkes, a strong supporter of public schooling and the dominant politician in NSW who controlled the bulk of votes in the Parliament, was about to have his decade long resistance to the abolition of public funding of church-based and private schools, tested and broken. This was to happen in a newly complex political environment which included *all* of the newly established States of Victoria (1872), Queensland and South Australia (1875) having already enacted legislation which precluded sectarian studies in their schools and removed public funding from church-based and private schools.

In June 1879, the Roman Catholic Bishops of the Colony held a well publicized meeting in Sydney. It was to unleash a series of "Catholic versus the rest" events (Hogan, 1987, p. 93) which would lead to a changing, and hardening, of Henry Parkes' political pose.

Under the presidency of Archbishop Vaughan, the 1879 meeting issued a *Joint Pastoral Wishing* instructing Catholics not to send their children to public schools. Smith and Spaull (1925) and Hogan (1987) quote the letter as referring to the new public schools:

> We condemn them, first, because they contravene the first principles of the Christian religion, and secondly, because they are seed plots of future immorality, infidelity, and lawlessness, being calculated to debase the standard of human excellence and to corrupt the political, social and individual lives of future citizens.

This *Pastoral* was followed by a series of five others from Archbishop Vaughan throughout 1879. The virulence of the Roman Catholic attack on public schooling, whether designed to halt the march of public opinion supporting public schools or designed to urge Catholics into continued support for the soon-to-be non-funded parochial system, had the eventual effect of exasperating Parkes who, as a consequence (S. H. Smith & Spaull, 1925), determined to introduce the Public Instruction Act which contained important elements to which he had been previously opposed.

According to Smith and Spaull (1925), the attack on public schools and particularly some of the personal references "were particularly annoying to Parkes who had been the chief obstacle to the withdrawal of State Aid to Denominational Schools for years, and who had set aside personal convictions in his desire—to use his own words—'not to needlessly irritate a large section of the community'" (p. 170).

The Public Instruction Act of 1880, for which Henry Parkes has been given much of the credit, legislated:

- free, compulsory and secular education;
- withdrawal of all State Aid to denominational schools; and
- all church schools to be outside the control, maintenance or assistance of the public system;
- sectarian studies *could* be undertaken in public schools for an *hour per school day* and could be run by church-based authorities (See Public Instruction Act in D. C. Griffiths, 1957).

The speed of development of the "free, compulsory and secular" public schooling system in Australia was not uniform in all the States. Barcan (1980, p. 151) provides a useful summary which tabulates the legislative timelines, showing in which year the key elements of Australia's public schooling system were introduced. These elements, shown in the following table are: free education, compulsory attendance, secular curriculum and instruction, ministerial (government) control.

Table 6.1: Dates of legislation for four key elements of public schooling

	Free	Compulsory	Secular	Ministerial Control
Victoria	1872	1872	1872	1872
New South Wales	1906	1880	1880-82	1880
South Australia	1892	1875	1852	1878
Tasmania	1908	1868	1854	1885
Queensland	1870	1900	1875-80	1875
Western Australia	1901	1871	1895	1894

Not all the important differences are revealed in Barcan's table. In NSW, for example, unlike other States, "secular" was to be interpreted loosely. Contrary to the opinion of many, NSW public schools were encouraged by the 1880 legislation to undertake *an hour per day* of sectarian studies to be provided by specialist personnel from the appropriate denomination/sect.

The public instruction acts of the colonies were, overwhelmingly, the result of several decades of church-based denominational conflict which came in several waves:

- from 1788 to 1833, when schools open to public access were thought best, by the hierarchy of the Church of England and official authorities, if they were run by a Church of England monopoly funded from publicly provided Land Grants. This attempt failed in the face of hostile opposition from other denominations.

- from 1834 to 1848, when a number of proposals for the establishment of a system of non-denominational schools, run by the churches and funded from the public purse, were subject to intense political resistance from the churches. This opposition finally frustrated all moves towards such a system.

- from 1848 to 1866, when two systems run by separate Boards (denominational and "national" or non-denominational) existed side-by-side. While competition between the churches continued unabated, a new political issue was current—separation of Church and State. Far from cooling, the politics of funding church-based schools generated even more heat and continued to dominate the public agenda concerning schooling. As with previous periods, the inefficiency and cost of competing denominations was a parallel concern. Austin (1961) summarises the times well, "Against the determination of the Churches to retain their traditional control of education, there can be seen developing a secular point of view which eventually suborns sufficient of the Churches to allow the liberal politicians to carry the day with their educational measures…Henry Parkes demonstrated to the public that only in a unified, State system of education could a solution to the colony's education problems be found" (p. 109).

- 1866 to 1880, a period in which the new system of public schools expanded with the population while the existing church-based schools were constrained in their attempts to expand with the growing population. This was a period of expanding public schools and yet heightened religio-political strife as one side of politics argued to extend the public system in a way that would restrict sectarian learnings at school while the other side argued that their rights were being trampled on.

With the Education Acts of the late 19th century many thought the political strife would be ended—that a "settlement" had been reached. But, because the Catholic hierarchy and the wealthy stood outside the "settlement" there was no settlement at all. Certainly, an 80 year period of consolidation, expansion and extension of the *public* schooling system followed, but Henry Parkes' early judgements were to eventually prove correct as the disaffected Catholic system eventually formed political alliance with more high-fee private schools

from other denominations in the latter half of the 20th century and mounted a political fightback with spectacular success.

Common to all these times, and separate from the 19th century political wrestle for control of provision of schooling to the general population, was the availability and accessibility of private schools for the well-to-do and upper classes. This phenomenon is generally under-analysed in the written histories—a real and important omission given the "settlement" of 1880 did not include either the Catholic system or the array of other church-based private schools. Hogan (1987), for example, in his Chapter "The Education Question Resolved" finds it unnecessary to mention private schools, choosing to limit his analysis to the struggle for control of *public* schooling.

The existence and parallel operation of private schools is briefly acknowledged by Austin (1961) and further by Barcan (1980) in his "Eight Phases of Education" and "Five Traditions in Education" in which he describes, "Middle and upper-class education" being served by "corporate collegiate schools, mostly with denominational affiliations" (pp. 403-407) and traces the role they played in changing the focus of curriculum and providing an early link-step between elementary schooling and universities during the first half of the 20th century. Barcan makes no mention of these schools when outlining the construction of the schooling system within the context of a political drive for democracy, equality of opportunity, and equality of outcomes. And while Barcan refers to economic, social, political, ideological and educational forces which shaped educational changes he makes no reference to how the "corporate collegial schools" contributed to, or detracted from, or reflected these times, differently (pp. 409-410). Cleverley (1971) gives due weight to these schools in his account of early colonial life:

> Largely irrespective of quality, the luxury of bought education was preferred by those with money above a government-subsidised public schooling supervised by a clergyman. It was not that parents objected to turning the colonial treasury to their personal advantage, but rather that many preferred exclusiveness for its own sake. (p. 127)

While it is understandable that the major historians of Australia's schooling system have focussed on the development of the public schooling system leading up to the 19th century Education Acts, the political alliance of the late 20th century comprising the Catholic schooling system and the array of exclusionary and church-based private schools illustrates the importance of the continuing and apparently uncritical existence of church-based and private schools other than the much-analysed Catholic system. At the beginning of the 21st century, approximately 11% of Australia's schooling system comprises these schools and,

as previously revealed, approximately 94% of these schools are church-based. The roots of the current school market stretch back to the earliest days of the colony.

The dominant element in the political debate leading up to the Education Acts was Church control and public funding of schooling. When the Education Bill was introduced into the NSW Legislative Assembly in Committee on 5 November, 1879 the key players in the coming debate squared off.[6] No reference to grand principle, to the national good, to curriculum requirements, to a need for social cohesion, none of these matters rated a mention. With Parkes introducing the Bill descriptively without argument, speeches which followed centred almost entirely on the concerns of funding church-based schools and the proposal to introduce up to one hour of sectarian teaching in public schools every day. Although neglecting all other matters, a concern for a political "settlement" was evident and, in the case of Mr Stuart, he was concerned to:

> warn the House and hon. Members of all shades of opinion that if there were to be a satisfactory settlement it must be by taking a thoroughly statesmanlike view of the question. Because in all legislation upon important matters, upon matters where great diversity in opinion existed or where there were two or more sections of the community who held views diametrically opposed to each other, a settlement upon the basis of the views of one and ignoring the views of the other was never a settlement that was likely to be of a permanent character. Although the views of one party might triumph for the moment, if the views of a large proportion of the community were ignored, we need not flatter ourselves that we were thereby disposing finally of the question. We were rather forcing it to a quicker solution— and a solution of a more dangerous character, because no large portion of the community would stand for any length of time a system which they conceived to be one that ignored their rights and interests. (Stuart, 1879)

An excellent overview of the weight of emphasis put in the parliamentary debates over the next six months can be gained from the exchange between the first participants on 5 November: Mssrs Buchanan, Jacob, Stuart and Dr Bowker ("Report of debate on Public Instruction Bill in NSW Legislative Assembly," 1879) in which the parameters for debate are entirely set with reference to the debate concerning religion, religious schools and the place of religion in a "secular" schooling system. Mr Day in his speech of 4 December picked his way through each of the provisions of the Bill without once making reference to matters of social concern, economic concern, political concern, social cohesion and religious harmony or quality of schooling outcomes (Day, 1879). The overwhelming impression from a study of the available speeches is one of great concern for these religion-connected matters to the detriment of other matters of national and social concern.

---

[6] See various speeches concerning the Public Instruction Bill in the NSW Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council, as recorded in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on November 6, December 5 and 12, 1879, February 6, 12, 13 and 26, March 12 and 18, 1880.

Of course the six months of debate was not entirely barren of analysis and contribution from those with wider ranging perspectives. Some important references were made, over the course of the Bill passing through both Houses between November 1879 and March 1880, to matters such as: education being an "equaliser of men" as it "placed the moral young man of industrious habits on an equality with the rich man's son" (Macintosh, 1879), the provision of an education for the lower classes to suit their life of manual labour, "the habit of manual labour must be acquired by lads in the lower ranks" (Bowker, 1879); lawful and better behaved citizenry, "far less crime—nothing suppresses crime so much as education" (Lucas, 1880); a wider spread of literate and numerate people for broadly economic reasons; a more unified society freer from sectarian-based hostility and division; a better informed democracy (Parkes, 1880). However, these matters were swamped by the most evident interest in matters associated with sectarian conflict. A study of the Parliamentary speeches leaves the strong impression that even those amongst the protagonists of the Public Instruction Bill who did have a concern for the economic and social well-being of the colony—the bigger picture—the matters associated with church-based "denominational" schools and the proposals for teaching religion in public schools were of such intense political interest that wider issues were, as far as the debate was concerned, irrelevant. The move for efficiency was an influential component, but the force for change came from a developing mood for liberal secularism throughout the English-speaking world, and it was that force which dominated proceedings. The public debate did not unify all the major players. The "settlement" was not one based on general agreement on the matters of greatest social, economic and political importance facing the colonies.

The settlement was not a happy settlement. Amongst the voices in the debate, I cannot detect:

- advocacy of a public process, involving the public in the development of social purposes for schooling;
- advocacy of political principles on which matters of schooling provision and structure, management of systems, curriculum provision and structure could be based; or
- attempts to identify priority national (colonial) issues of economic, technological, environmental, democratic, social and spiritual concern for use as a generator of structural and curriculum consequences for the schooling system.

Thus, the end of the 18th century and all of the 19th century saw the establishment of a system of public and church-based schooling which reflected a religio-political victory for

secularists, an uncomfortable acceptance by many Protestants, and defeat for many Catholics—not a wonderfully unifying basis for any future development of schooling within Australia. Paralleling these systems was a small but strong market-oriented private schooling system for middle and upper class children whose parents desired more exclusive educational and social experiences.

20th Century

If the 19th century was concerned with providing the mass citizenry with an elementary schooling then the 20th century was concerned with extending a secondary education to all. As has been noted, the children of well-to-do and upper classes in Australia had always been well catered for with fee-paying private schools, some being very exclusionary with very high fees. This reality continued unabated throughout the next 80 years to the 1960s, despite the absence of State Aid to church-based and private schools. In the decades following withdrawal of public funds from private and church-based schools, the numbers of non-public schools decreased markedly as did the quantum of enrolments. While the smaller non-denominational schools took the heaviest hit, larger and private, "corporate colleges, many of which were associated with particular Churches, did quite well. Indeed, new colleges were founded, often by a church taking over an existing private school. In particular, Roman Catholic schools increased" (Barcan, 1980, p. 231).

Indeed, during this time the Catholic system, relying heavily on "contributed services" in the form of largely free teaching and staff labour provided by religious Nuns and Brothers, was able to establish and maintain a parallel schooling system which extended to wherever Catholic populations were to be found, including population growth areas. This fact was to become of huge importance in the renewed political struggle for State Aid (1950s-2000s) as Catholic authorities were able to successfully argue that their large schooling system provided a widely available "public" schooling and, in the face of hugely increased "baby boomer" population following World War Two and the evaporation of wageless religious personnel, required significant public funding to carry on their public purpose. This decisive political push from the Catholic sector was consciously joined with the more exclusively positioned Protestant schools, forming a political alliance (Hogan, 1987) which now delivers public funds to all church-based and private schools.

While the first decade of the 20th century was full of reform for public schooling (teacher quality, remuneration, examinations, introduction of practical [utilitarian] subjects such as commercial and technical, and handwork and home science), the dominant change in both structure and curriculum came with the provision of increasing numbers of secondary

schools which provided, at first, a link between elementary education and university education for children whose parents chose to, or had to, rely on the public schooling system. Barcan (1980) summarises:

> By 1914 the new education structure was virtually complete in all states. It had two dominant features. One was the educational ladder. This opened up access to secondary and higher education through a new examination system, through the abolition or reduction of fees in State schools, and through scholarships. Children of academic ability from poor families could now achieve an extended education. The new system provided greater democracy, greater equality of opportunity, in education. Its importance was qualified by the fact that, in a pioneering society, demand for higher education was not very strong.
>
> The second dominant feature was the prevalence of the humanist-realist curriculum. This was well established in the primary school. At the post-primary level, different types of schools provided a variety of courses which usually included humanist studies in English literature, history, and modern or ancient languages, and such realist or utilitarian studies as science, mathematics, geography, and technical subjects. The objectives of this education included transmission of the cultural heritage, the development of citizenship and character-building, and the inculcation of the Australian variant of 'western' values and ethics. Religious inculcation was mainly through Church schools though the Christian ethic was also fostered in the infant and primary classes of State schools. (p. 240)

In short, the religio-political warfare of the 19th century saw a triumph, but by no means a rout, of public schooling and its democratising values over church-based evangelising schools, and private schools servicing the more exclusionary preferences of the upper classes. The three schooling sub-systems were now established in parallel (Ely, 1978) and would experience similar government changes to schooling provision and curriculum provision throughout the 20th century, until the matter of public funding of church-based and private schools became a "live" and very heated issue again in the 1960s leading to the reintroduction of public funding for church-based and private schools, and the establishment of the Commonwealth Schools Commission in 1975 in an attempt by the Commonwealth Government to achieve a funding regime which might satisfy *both* public *and* church-based and private school authorities.

Over the next decade and a half, the Schools Commission played an important part in extending funding to non-public schools and, in the process, brought itself into conflict with many of the powerful interests representing public schools. In the event, the Commonwealth Schools Commission imploded over the matter of public funding of public, church-based and private schools when, in 1984, the Commission recommended (Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia], 1984a, pp. 67-73) further very substantial increases of funding to church-based and private schools, affirmed the right of

church-based schools to use public funds to open new schools in new population areas with little regard for the public schooling provision and/or the continuing poverty of existing church-based schools, and permitted huge proportions of public funds to simply fill the funding hole left by the disappearance of unpaid religious personnel who had largely kept the unfunded Catholic system afloat with voluntary labour since 1880.

The Commission's 1984 Report was written and released within a supercharged political environment which spanned the four year period from immediately prior to the 1983 election when Labor was elected. The intensity of the political conflict was reminiscent of that which existed during the 19th century when schooling policy was dominated by the issue of public funding of church-based and private schools, only this time the boot was on the other foot—it was public schools that were sent reeling.

The Commission's 1984 report and generous recommendations for funding increases to non-public schools split the Commission as the two representatives nominated by public school parents (Joan Brown) and public school teachers (Van Davy) broke ranks with the Commission's majority and submitted minority reports (Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia], 1984a, pp. 115-131) which argued that the primary concern of governments should be to public schools, and that increasing amounts of public funding to non-government schools was fuelling the demise of public schools. Representation from public schools on the Commission was, by this time, down to 50% and, with the casting vote in the hands of its powerful Chair (Peter Tannock) who had been drawn from (and, on retirement from the Commission, returned to) the Catholic schooling community, the voting power of those nominated from public schooling interests was less than 50%—a matter of considerable anxiety to organisations representing public schools. Indeed, the Australian Teachers' Federation President (1984) charged it with being biased (Garcia, 1984) towards church-based and private schools, and referred to it as "The Private Schools Commission." Tannock was one of three full-time Commissioners who were joined regularly by another nine part-timers to make up the full Commission.

The Commission was split in two directions. First, the public schools teachers' union representing Australia's public school teachers, and the public schools parent organisation representing Australia's public schools' parents stood (as they saw it) against the anti-public school stance of the Commission. Second, the Commissioners with public school interests and responsibilities divided, with two senior representatives of State departments of public schooling and a fulltime Commissioner appointed because of her public school connections (Lyndsay Connors), voting with the Commission's majority. The Commission

never recovered from this split. The Commission was abolished in 1988 after a short 15 years of existence, with Connors publicly blaming Davy and Brown for its division and demise (Lyndsay Connors, 1988) and Davy returning fire with an account of Connors' "crucial alliance" with the "main architects of the majority report (Peter Tannock who now heads the Western Australian Catholic Education Commission, and Jim McMorrow now a senior officer of the National Catholic Education Commission)" who "needed the support of the central political figure appointed from the government-school sector in order to make the plan stick enough to gain government approval" (Davy, 1988). Davy argued that it was that historic turn-around which made the majority report possible, leading to a huge loss of support for the Commission from the public schooling sector, and thus, "The Commission was doomed the moment the majority report was made public" (Davy, 1988). It is interesting to note my general perspective in 1988 when, looking back at the recent abolition of the Schools Commission, I wrote:

> Finally, I will not pine for the Schools Commission. It had two major flaws.
>
> First, its role was never connected to the pursuit of national social and economic objectives. Its attention was directed towards the resource needs of schools, not the needs of the nation and the common good. Thus the issue of State Aid dominated the agenda, rather than being a sub-item consequential to the resolution of curriculum policies linking national education objectives to national social and economic policy.
>
> Second, the commission would always need reconstructing as soon as the forces for social unity and democracy insisted on the 'primary obligation to government schools' as strongly as the forces for social separatism and exclusiveness had insisted on the 'prior right of parents'. The Schools Commission set the scene for this medieval dog-fight, unhappily diverting many of us away from the focus of our life's work. (Davy, 1988)

In many respects, the core of my thesis was set twenty years ago.

In any event, the Schools Commission's role was picked up by the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Education (DEET) which, because the Commission had become the major funding agent for church-based and private schools, found its main job to be the maintenance and oversight of the by-now huge funding of Australia's church-based and private schools.

Since the demise of the Commission in 1988 the role of the Ministerial Council of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), a regular forum for State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers with their senior bureaucrats, has become important as a means of discussing and progressing reform, including schooling reform.

Connected with MCEETYA there have been a number of reports and changes to curriculum. The Finn Report (Finn, 1991) and the Mayer Report (Mayer, 1992) were concerned with work-related competencies throughout the curriculum. The Curriculum and Assessment committee (CURASS) of MCEETYA oversighted a large review of Key Learning Areas (KLAs) comprising, in the main, traditional subject disciplines, in an attempt to provide nationally similar curriculum statements with expected curriculum outcomes made explicit along with appropriate assessment strategies. Marginson's (MCEETYA, 1989) analysis of the Commonwealth's various late 20th century interventions into schooling policy outlines government attempts to align schooling outcomes, within all sub-systems, with political objectives.

Government attempts to align schooling outcomes more directly with the needs of the economy has resulted in a number of vocationally oriented courses which, in the main, are populated with students in senior years of schooling who are not planning to attend University—mostly low SES students. The changes have not markedly changed traditional pathways to University studies or the core of subjects offered at Australia's schools.

Indeed, MCEETYA has been keen to enshrine the traditional subject disciplines, within the groupings of subjects which make up the KLAs. The most obvious expression of this has been the two "declarations" of national goals for schooling, the first being at Hobart in 1989 entitled *The Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia* (MCEETYA, 1999) and the second, which superseded the Hobart Declaration in 1999, being titled: *The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century*. The latter document refers to itself, in its Preamble, as "common and agreed national goals" (MCEETYA, 1999).

I have referred to, and will continue to refer to, a need for a set of socially agreed social purposes for schooling. It might be argued that the Hobart and Adelaide Declarations might represent such a set of social purposes. My view is that these declarations are an early step in the right direction, but they lack important elements. A set of social purposes for schooling should, in my view, have a number of essential characteristics. The social purposes should:

1. Identify the key features of a desired future society.
2. Be the outcome of a process which produces widespread agreement across the nation's citizenry.

With a set of social purposes established and agreed, educators would then be in a strong position to address consequential matters, such as:

1. A curriculum structure which can best advance the social purposes;
2. Curriculum content which might best advance the social purposes—and associated standards;
3. A schooling structure which might best advance the social purposes;
4. Appropriate pedagogical strategies to support the identified curriculum;
5. Strategies to improve areas of weakness; and
6. A plethora of management matters.

Each of the points outlined above can be described a little further without being too prescriptive.

In respect of identifying "the key features of a desired future society" I mean to include all major features, stated in general political terms. For example, the Australian citizenry might be insistent that their preferred society guarantees them certain freedoms, maybe those generally regarded as "liberal" freedoms or human rights as outlined in UN declarations. There may be reference to a particular type of political system, a preferred view of an economy, a general environmental pose, a view about the common good, and so on.

A process which broadly involves citizens in the development of a set of social purposes of schooling is more likely to result in those purposes, and consequential curriculum, being well understood and strongly supported by parents and the wider citizenry—a process of deliberative democracy addressed more fully in Chapter Eight. Over time, these features will change in importance and description and will therefore require regular review, maybe every decade, so that the social purposes are both freshly conceived and constantly in accord with the wishes of Australia's citizenry.

Under these circumstances, curriculum specialists and learning materials developers will be in a better position to make judgements concerning the relative applicability of different curriculum structures to the goal of achieving the social purposes of schooling. For example, an appropriate matter for consideration would be the relative merits of a curriculum organised into subject disciplines and the relative merits of thematic, multi-disciplinary approaches.

Neither the Hobart nor the Adelaide Declarations addresses these "essential characteristics" for a set of social purposes for schooling. There are references in the 1999 Preamble to an "educated, just and open" society and a statement that "the achievement of the national goals for schooling will assist young people to contribute to Australia's social, cultural and economic development in local and global contexts. Their achievement will also assist

young people to develop a disposition towards learning throughout their lives so that they can exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens of Australia." However, there is no attempt to identify what the major elements of Australia's "social, cultural and economic development" should be. These matters are left unattended. The three national goals which follow are, as a consequence, not focussed or linked to any pre-stated social goals for schooling.

The Hobart Declaration produced an array of goals almost entirely consisting of desired educational outcomes for individual students, or goals designed to equip students with a facility to respond to future, unidentified social, cultural and economic developments, and it does little to link the purposes of schooling to the major elements of a desired future society—nor does it attempt to ground itself in any public process of collaboration or even consultation.

The 1998 Adelaide Declaration supersedes the Hobart Declaration and is the existing political statement concerning national goals of schooling. The three national goals, in their entirety are:

1. Schooling should develop fully the talents and capacities of all students. In particular, when students leave schools they should:
1.1 have the capacity for, and skills in, analysis and problem solving and the ability to communicate ideas and information, to plan and organise activities and to collaborate with others;
1.2 have qualities of self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, and a commitment to personal excellence as a basis for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members;
1.3 have the capacity to exercise judgement and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and the capacity to make sense of their world, to think about how things got to be the way they are, to make rational and informed decisions about their own lives and to accept responsibility for their own actions;
1.4 be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life;
1.5 have employment related skills and an understanding of the work environment, career options and pathways as a foundation for, and positive attitudes towards, vocational education and training, further education, employment and life-long learning;
1.6 be confident, creative and productive users of new technologies, particularly information and communication technologies, and understand the impact of those technologies on society;
1.7 have an understanding of, and concern for, stewardship of the natural environment, and the knowledge and skills to contribute to ecologically sustainable development;
1.8 have the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to establish and maintain a healthy lifestyle, and for the creative and satisfying use of leisure time.

2. In terms of curriculum, students should have:

2.1 attained high standards of knowledge, skills and understanding through a comprehensive and balanced curriculum in the compulsory years of schooling encompassing the agreed eight key learning areas:

> the arts;
> English;
> health and physical education;
> languages other than English;
> mathematics;
> science;
> studies of society and environment;
> technology; and the interrelationships between them.

2.2 attained the skills of numeracy and English literacy; such that, every student should be numerate, able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level;

2.3 participated in programs of vocational learning during the compulsory years and have had access to vocational education and training programs as part of their senior secondary studies;

2.4 participated in programs and activities which foster and develop enterprise skills, including those skills which will allow them maximum flexibility and adaptability in the future.

3. Schooling should be socially just, so that:

3.1 students' outcomes from schooling are free from the effects of negative forms of discrimination based on sex, language, culture and ethnicity, religion or disability; and of differences arising from students' socio-economic background or geographic location;

3.2 the learning outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students improve and, over time, match those of other students;

3.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have equitable access to, and opportunities in, schooling so that their learning outcomes improve and, over time, match those of other students;

3.4 all students understand and acknowledge the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to Australian society and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians;

3.5 all students understand and acknowledge the value of cultural and linguistic diversity, and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, such diversity in the Australian community and internationally;

3.6 all students have access to the high quality education necessary to enable the completion of school education to Year12 or its vocational equivalent and that provides clear and recognised pathways to employment and further education and training. (MCEETYA, 1999)

In respect of my two essential characteristics, these "common and agreed" goals have a number of weaknesses:

1. They do not identify the key features of a desired future society—they are not social goals, or social purposes, of schooling. One can glean from references in the Preamble and a few of the goals, that the authors do have some social objectives, but they are unlisted; not presented as *the* social goals and thus do not form a collection which,

together, might describe a preferred society; and the few references to social objectives contained in the three goals become mixed up with elements which I would describe as "educational goals" rather than "social purposes." The "national goals for schools" might better be described as national *educational* goals for schools. For example, those outlined in 1.1 to 1.8 are clearly important goals of schooling but do not provide a description of the social purposes of schooling. By way of illustration, it is not hard to imagine most, if not all, of goals 1.1 to 1.8 being part of a totalitarian society's schooling objectives (although the goal concerning "morality, ethics and social justice" would, as it was in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany and continues to be in some parts of the world such as fundamentalist Islamic states, be defined differently). The closest the three goals come to identifying social purposes for schooling is where they:

    a.   refer, in 1.4, to an assumed appropriate but undefined "Australian system of government and civic life";

    b.   make a clear statement of social goal, in 1.7, concerning "ecological sustainable development";

    c.   recommend, in 3.1 to 3.6, a clear statement of social goal, that schooling outcomes are more equitable and contribute to a multicultural society.

In defence of the Adelaide Declaration, it is described as a set of "national goals for schooling" and, unless one was consciously thinking of making a distinction between the social purposes of an industry (that is, the role the industry plays in the construction of a particular type of society) and industry-specific outcomes which support those social purposes, then one wouldn't make a distinction and one might simply title them, as MCEETYA did, "national goals for schooling." If, on the other hand, MCEETYA had been conscious of the distinction it may have been more likely to title them "national education goals." My point is, the Adelaide Declaration does not claim to contain a set of social purposes for schooling and does not contain a set of social purposes. They are a set of national goals which, probably because *there is no prior set of social purposes for schooling,* contain some disjointed references to matters which might be regarded as good candidates for a set of social purposes for schooling. As a consequence, the task of setting national educational goals for schooling has taken place without the assistance of an earlier and agreed political direction. It is not surprising therefore, that a set of national goals for schooling exhibits a number of assumptions held by the authors about the social purposes of schooling.

2.   They are not the outcome of a process which produces widespread agreement across the nation's citizenry. MCEETYA declared that the goals were "agreed upon by State, Territory and Commonwealth Education Ministers at a meeting of MCEETYA" in

April of 1999. In an earlier media release the Chair of MCEETYA, Malcolm Buckby (1999), when announcing the Ministers had reached an agreement, included reference to a process which led to its formulation. He said, "The joint declaration includes input from a wide range of stakeholders including the Australian Council of State School Organisations, the Australian Education Union, all state and federal catholic school organisations and independent schools" (MCEETYA, 1999).

There is, of course, a wide gap between "input" and "agreement." Nevertheless, given that "the Australian Council of State School Organisations, the Australian Education Union, state and federal Catholic school organisations and independent schools" have been relatively uncritical of the 1999 Declaration it might be assumed that there is a good deal of acceptance of the National Goals among those organisations. Do we, as MCEETYA does, then call these national goals "common and agreed"? I do not think so because they have been formulated by a process involving only those with responsibilities in the schooling sector—a set of circumstances which may, arguably, be appropriate for setting educational objectives, but too narrow and too shallow for the purposes of setting social purposes for schooling.

By "narrow," I mean that the only organisations involved in "input" and "agreement" were organisations which operate day-to-day within the industry. Such a process excludes other organisations within the polity, civil society and economy and, as a consequence, those organisations contributed nothing to the decision making process—not even an "input." The method of decision-making employed in the construction of the Adelaide Declaration was exceptionally narrow, and certainly cannot be represented as an across-society agreement. The organisations consulted were those with a controlling interest in the current system. Prima facie, we might be excused for thinking they have some vested interest in the status quo. Although this might be a harsh judgement if it were to be acted upon, it might be a prudent assumption in considering an open process of collaboration with all the stakeholders in the Australian schooling system.

By "shallow," I mean that both the "input" and the "agreement" occurred with reference to the elite within a handful of management and special interest bodies. The Ministers at the MCEETYA table had consulted with their senior bureaucrats before reaching agreement, and the peak councils representing interest groups may have referred the matter to an Executive meeting or two, but beyond a bureaucratic handling of the matter there was little "input" or agreement. The Adelaide Declaration was not the product of a widely proclaimed public process comprising successive waves of public consultation on: major

draft issues; draft themes; draft elements; and draft recommendations. There is no "social" agreement, just a bureaucratic agreement. There was no engagement of the public in an identification of that which should be either "common" or "agreed." As a consequence, the resulting document has little political weight or carrying power, has created little public debate even in retrospect, and has done nothing obvious to shape consequential issues. The individuals consulted were from the elite within the bureaucracies of management and peak councils of interest groups. Again, one might be excused for being prudent and advocating a starting point which assumes that there may be an element of vested interest, and a bias towards the status quo, within such an elite.

This being the case, it would be more accurate to say the Adelaide Declaration is a statement of national educational goals reached after consultation with the managements of schools and peak interest groups. The declaration remains an important landmark in Australia's educational history—but it does not represent a set of social purposes for Australia's schooling, and it does not represent a socially agreed set of social purposes. This is not to say that MCEETYA makes false claims for the Declarations. But the argument does anticipate those who might say that there does exist a set of social purposes for schooling by making reference to the two Declarations.

The Adelaide Declaration makes a number of further determinations which bear on this thesis. It reaches closure on the structure of curriculum in schools. In Goal No. 2 it explicitly endorses the status quo in the organisation of subject disciplines into existing KLAs. It does no more than provide cover for the subject-disciplines already structured and offered by state and territory governments. Goals No. 1 and 3 are to be actioned through the subject disciplines (Goal No. 2). This should be, as I have argued, an open and important matter in respect of: student boredom; the relatively poor performance of low SES students; reasons for some of the larger enrolments in church-based schools.

While I hold serious concerns for Goal No. 2, its purpose is clear—it defines the scope and organisation of curriculum throughout Australia's schools. Similarly, the purpose of Goal No. 3 is reasonably clear—to address matters of inequity. However, the genesis of Goal No. 1 is unclear and unsupported. It comprises a number of worthwhile foci, but missing is an argument for the inclusion of each of its elements, or their genesis, or their context. Each of the sub-goals 1.1 to 1.8 does not need an explanation in a set of educational goals, but the inclusion of 1.7 is clearly of a different order and is an (welcome) advocacy of a social purpose—ecologically sustainable development (of society). If it were a set of social purposes then 1.7 might sit comfortably within, but then the rest of 1.1 to 1.8 might not.

None of the three goals is used to generate curriculum content. That is, it is not anywhere explained that each of the goals, and the listed sub-goals, are to be used by curriculum specialists to devise new curriculum content and/or themes either within subject disciplines or across-discipline, which address those goals.

Finally, of interest to this thesis is the relative absence of concern, within the three goals, for the Common Good. In Goal No. 3 there is a welcome concern for more equitable outcomes for currently disadvantaged groups of students and, of course, that can be seen as an aspect of concern for the Common Good. It might also be argued that, taken together, the three goals seek to get *everyone* doing well and that that outcome is consistent with the Common Good. It might even be argued that a number of the sub-goals *imply* a commitment to the Common Good (e.g. 1.6 and 1.7). And these points would be fair enough, but even so, the three goals are explicitly concerned for the "capacities" and "skills" and "qualities" and "confidence" and "understandings"—of each individual student—stated in Goal No. 1, to be actioned through Goal No. 2, and to be achieved more or less equally in Goal No. 3. While there is nothing wrong with a strong interest in the individual student, in the absence of explicitly stated concern for the "Common Good" or "community" it might be regarded as a lop-sided declaration, even if it is simply a declaration of national education goals and not a set of social purposes for schooling.

The development of the National Goals represents an important historic milestone. On the positive side, here is evidence that the nation is interested in some form of national cohesion in its schooling system, and that key leaders within each of the schooling jurisdictions are interested in finding agreement. The bottom line here is that the Adelaide Declaration moves in the direction of apparent agreement on schooling's purposes but they: do not go close to what could truly be called social agreement; thus they have little weight; and, even if they carried more weight, they are unlikely to make a difference in addressing the key problems of student boredom, relative disadvantage, and the drift to non-public schools.

Another major initiative in 1994-95 (led by the influential Director General from NSW, Dr Ken Boston, who had in previous years headed up the South Australian and Victorian public schooling systems) engaged a large number of senior education experts from within all state/territory bureaucracies in a collaborative exercise aimed at producing a set of agreed national curriculum outcomes. The initiative was overseen using the Curriculum and Assessment (CURASS) committee of the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) and aimed to construct a common set of

"national outcomes" within each of eight key learning areas (the arts; English; health and physical education; languages other than English; mathematics; science; studies of society and environment; technology) and the subjects which comprise them, and, as a consequence, to emerge with a type of national curriculum. This two year exercise involved bureaucrats and educators from all states in reviewing each of the traditional subject syllabuses.

Because of difficult state-commonwealth politics the exercise was not successful nationally as the biggest State (NSW) determined not to go along with it. However, it would be churlish to be too critical of this exercise as the positive aspects of the endeavour were pioneering and directed towards a national perspective. Unfortunately, the processes were divorced from public input and unlinked to publicly expressed national priorities. Like the considerations relating to the Hobart and Adelaide Declarations, the exercise was not designed to respond to sets of data which identified student concerns (such as, for example, widespread student boredom), or where educational success is most difficult to attain (such as students from low SES communities). While a small army of curriculum experts were efficiently organised into teams to critically analyse each of the separate KLAs and subject silos, the independent and separated nature of subjects as well as their internal vertical organisation of rapidly specialised content, was left unchallenged.

It is worth observing at this point, that the late 20th and early 21st century tasks of successfully undertaking complex intellectual exercises incorporating the entire "big picture" of schooling philosophy and provision (such as envisioning a set of schooling purposes or a national curriculum) is made more difficult by the complex structure of the Australian schooling system, each element of which has an associated set of politically energetic interest organisations with a long history of hostility toward each other—a legacy of the 1880 "settlement." The observation is pertinent to the question, do we need a system of public schooling as, it is clear from the repeated endeavours to influence the schooling curriculum, to establish national goals for schooling, and more recently to develop a national curriculum, and from the relative silence of advocates of de-regulating and de-subsidising schooling, that there is strong and widespread support for a system of schooling the public. That is, it is fair to say that there appears to be a cross-societal acceptance that the public needs to be educated for its own good and for the good of the economy amongst other social reasons.

More recently, and concurrent with a number of accusations concerning the failure of the public schooling system to provide appropriate teaching in "Australian values," the

Commonwealth Government in 2002 funded a committee representative of different schooling sub-systems. It produced the "National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools" (Australian Government Department of Education Science and Training, 2005), an initiative which, while being set in a bureaucratic process aimed at reaching *agreement*, became swept up in competing public allegations and counter allegations which inflamed already heated charges and counter-charges concerning public, church-based and private schools. The Australian Prime Minister and his Ministers took a prominent and provocative role in this political engagement (Haywood, 2004).

While there are powerful figures, such as the Prime Minister of the day, who see advantage in political division on this matter (of "values" in schooling), there are others who point to other imperatives. Barcan (undated, circa 2002), for example, having flayed various groups, particularly left-leaning groups, for the wrong philosophic setting, lists as one of his three "necessary conditions" for the appropriate education of students, the existence between "school & home, social institutions, local community, peer group, church, media" of a "harmony over citizenship purposes" (p. 15).

This is an important observation. Unfortunately Barcan (undated, circa 2002) does not develop this "necessary" condition further, preferring to allude to a period "in the first half of the 20th century" when education for citizenship was reasonably effective because "considerable harmony" existed "between the social ideologies fostered in many churches and that sought in educational institutions" (p. 15). But his identification of this "harmony" as an essential prerequisite to success is important for several reasons. Pertinent to my thesis, it suggests that a "harmony" is conceivable. Secondly, being "harmonious," it suggests a peaceful process leading to its achievement. Thirdly, because the objective is nothing less than a society-wide harmony concerning good citizenship, a society-wide political process until harmony is achieved is implied. In Barcan's view it is "necessary" to agree on "a 'model of man', an ideal of the type of good citizen" (p. 16).

Not consistent with these implications, the Australian Prime Minister, Mr Howard announced in 2004 a "values" package which makes Commonwealth funding for public, church-based and private schools provisional on States' and Territories' willingness to adhere to policies "that will underpin the Australian Government's national priorities, shaping our schools over the next decade. The national priorities include: compulsory physical exercise for students, making schools safe places to be, compulsory flag-raising and flagpoles, standard school starting ages, standard testing, better reporting to parents, and making values a "core" part of schooling.

The national priorities outlined by the Prime Minister appear to have a direct relationship to current issues prominent in the media at the time and potentially appealing to the electorate. Child obesity, school-related assaults, adversarial interpretations of "multiculturalism, interpretations of national security and national interest as they might relate to Australian "values" of mateship, were added to patriotic matters of honour for the flag, as well as longer term issues of reporting to parents, and so on. The identified priorities had little relationship to the Adelaide Declaration. They were not a response to learning outcomes data sets. They were not selected following any public input, leave alone an extensive attempt to tap a well-educated public's opinion. They had no relationship to any Government-identified set of social purposes for the nation, leave alone a set of political objectives formulated as a consequence of widespread public input.

Barcan's appeal to a unity of purpose, a highly political "citizenship purpose," is more than interesting to me. It suggests the need for a process by which a "unity of purpose" might be achieved—a matter taken up in the next chapter. That this view emanates from an eminent academic who has identified himself strongly with right-wing politics, and that it sits easily with a general view outlined in this thesis, is an indicator that people with very different political stances nevertheless hold similar views on a number of fundamental matters. This is a good start for those wishing to prove that common ground can be reached about social purposes of schooling—a conclusion which itself bears on the question of whether or not there should be a public schooling system in Australia.

Barcan argues that there has been a diminishing of official attachment to teaching of "citizenship" from the mid-1800s to mid 1900s when official sanction was strong, through to a present but half-hearted attachment between 1950 and 1967, to finally a "crisis" in 1967-74 when, according to Barcan (undated, circa 2002), the power of teachers and their unions over the curriculum grew and undermined the Departments of Education such that the old values were replaced with new values which emphasised "egalitarianism and a new relativism" (pp. 9-10).

Although Barcan does not explicitly define what he sees to be an appropriate education for "active citizenship" he does outline a definition provided, in 1988, to the Senate's Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, to wit:

- an understanding of how government works;
- an appreciation of the role of community groups and non-government organisations; and

- motivation to be more active citizens.

One deduces that he sees citizenship more widely than this definition as he variously makes reference to "ethical" and "civic" attitudes, "moral values," and "building character," without actually specifying what they might be.

Barcan also draws attention to Rousseau's view that there are two opposing forms of education: one communal and public, the other individual and domestic. In Australia, he sees a progressive move away from the first towards the second. He points the finger of suspicion at "progressive" educators and neo-Marxists who, he says, successfully persuaded the schooling systems to embrace a curriculum "relativism" in which values and historical events were not taught but investigated and left to each *individual*.

These are important observations indeed, resonating as they do with contemporary views, often expressed by politically *liberal* commentators concerned about damage (or disharmony) over the past three decades produced by a perceived over-reliance on the particulars of economic rationalism (deregulation of the market, creation of markets where none exist, little government intervention in the economy) and its underlying commitment to values of "competition" and "individualism" to the detriment of commitments to collective endeavour, "community" and the Common Good.

It is not hard to be sympathetic to Barcan's underlying argument that concern for community appears to have thinned, and that it should be strengthened. It may be that this strengthening of community can only be achieved with a return to the church sponsored ideologies so valued by Barcan, but this strategy appears to hold little promise in a secularising world. In looking for other alternatives which might work successfully, it must occur to some thinkers that, if we strip away the rhetoric of the Left versus Right "blame-game," we might discover a wide acreage of social goals and values with which an overwhelming number of people from the Left, Right and Centre will *agree*. That is, if, as Barcan advocates, we begin with the goal of describing "the ideal of a type of good citizen" or, as advocated here, a set of political principles which represent a desired social purpose, then we may be surprised at how much unity of purpose exists amongst the overwhelming majority of Human Beings irrespective of their Left or Right starting points.

Instead of approaching each political matter from an ideologically reinforced and adversarial position, or a perception of what the "adversary" believes (conflict) it may be more productive to reach social agreement, periodically, on the priorities most everyone

wishes to achieve, agree that these are priorities, while permitting matters of continuing disagreement to be pursued through normal political activity and freedoms.

An agenda, for example, associated with the Common Good (which might include large tracts of unfettered freedom to pursue Individual Good, so long as it is "agreed") should find lots of common ground between those like Barcan who strongly advocate concern for the citizenry and community, and those from the Left who voice similar concerns for the commonweal. Of course, there will still be differences about *how* government should achieve these social purposes. Barcan will remain implacably opposed to those who wish to force, within an authoritarian regime, any agreed agenda for the Common Good. And so be it. On the other hand, with social agreement over such a large acreage of political priority, we may discover new ways of moving towards those goals without large market-generated differences between the privileged and the disempowered.

If this is the case, then it becomes a matter of political *process* as to how this potential for collaborative deliberation and agreement can transform an education landscape, pocked with the relentless battles of history, into a purposeful political agreement. This search for common cause is soon to be outlined in Section Four.

In the meantime, the Commonwealth Government of 2006, and the new Commonwealth Government elected in November 2007, have floated anew, the idea of a national curriculum. The proposal is still being discussed, but early reports do not indicate a concern, from either major party, with many of the matters raised in this dissertation. Yet, here is an opportunity to examine the fundamentals of schooling provision across Australia. Here is an opportunity to *comprehensively* respond to the data concerning: low SES, student boredom, exclusion of religious observance and learnings in public schools, values and the good Australian citizen, social cohesion. With a deeply intelligent approach, the goal of a national curriculum could carry with it answers to all the major structural problems bedevilling Australia's fractured system of schooling. It could, with some imagination, provide the prerequisites for replacing the fractured system with a more socially and educationally cohesive system. Curriculum is, prima facie and not surprisingly, a common thread across all the matters identified as priority issues in this and earlier sections.

 However, this possibility exists within the context of the political hurley-burley of an election year (2007). None of the major parties propose to engage the public meaningfully in a widespread process of deliberation, data provision, and intellectually engaging media

treatment of core educational issues. As we shall see in Chapter Seven, a liberal democracy which relies on elections for the expression of public opinion is a narrowly defined democracy and open to many distortions, deceits and manipulation. If Australia wishes to adequately address the major problems so clearly apparent in the data, then it needs to find a different way to approach them—different from the public processes which have emphasised difference and conflict throughout Australia's post-1788 history—processes to be identified in Chapter Seven.

In 2008, the basis for determining the shape of Australian schooling remains ad hoc and consistent with Barcan's 1980 view that, "For most of its history Australian education has lacked both an informed public opinion and a developed educational theory. Opinion about education has been characteristically opinion about the religious, political or economic implications of schooling…and that the history, philosophy and sociology of education" have been neglected (pp. 22-23). Connell (1964), analysing Australia's curriculum in 1966 is in accord, "We have largely retained the traditional subjects, modifying the subject matter from time to time without thoroughly re-thinking the content in principle, and drawing the implications for it of our general movement into a democratic mass society" (p. 70).

Since 1980 and 1966, many new policies have been pursued by governments, but the foundations of Australia's complex schooling system have not been reviewed, nor has the basic curriculum structure. Current politics surrounding the funding of schools has many similarities with the political heat of the 19th century as successive Australian Governments follow an ideological commitment to small government and schooling marketisation. While Australians have lost most of their religious antagonism to one religion or the other, current funding policies are raising concerns (e.g. McGaw, 2006; OECD, 2005) about social cohesion.

In the case of socio-economic privilege, since soon after 1788 there have been schools established to cater for the powerful and wealthy. Most historians acknowledge this phenomenon without analysing its effects on the great educo-political movements within Australia's political democracy: towards equality of opportunity; towards a secular society and the separation of Church and State. That is, it is difficult to find educators, educational researchers, education policy makers or education historians who discuss the relationships between, on the one hand, the existence of wonderfully resourced and lavishly appointed schools which because of their fee structure exclude all but the most wealthy and, on the other hand, democratic ideals and processes; or the objective of equality of opportunity in

all the walks of life (within schooling, access to higher education, to high status vocational streams, to networks of favouritism). Other historians, although similarly non-analytical on this point, declare their hand. Ely, for example, states that "private and religious schools always catered for those who aspired to protect their children from contagion by children of the humbler classes" (Ely, 2003, p. 57) and Cleverly (1971) writes:

> The founding fathers of NSW were notorious for their fine sense of discrimination in matters of social class. By the early 1800s a number of small private academies had opened to meet the demands of such socially conscious parents who wanted an exclusive education for their children, (pp. 117-118)

and concludes that:

> largely irrespective of quality, the luxury of a bought education was preferred by those with money above a government subsidised public schooling supervised by a clergyman—many parents preferred exclusiveness for its own sake. In 1829, Archdeacon Scott attempted to establish a public grammar school but because the good man refused in conscience to exclude a child from those benefits, because the parents were humble or immoral, the upper classes objected to send their Children to this School! Yet the same upper classes, he protested, did not hesitate to send their sons to small private academies kept by teachers of the most worthless character. (p. 127)

Contrary to the OECD's current emphasis on the importance of social cohesion as a goal of mass schooling (OECD, 2005), the matter of social cohesion continues to be regarded with much less emphasis than the fight over funding levels and proportions. This may be because Australian public figures often make claims about Australia being the best example in the world of a tolerant society—a successful multi-cultural society where racism and intolerance is relatively absent. As more examples of social unrest are reported in the media (e.g. ethnic-based violence at Soccer and Rugby League games, Anglo-Arabic extreme violence at Cronulla Beach on Australia Day 2006, "riots" involving Aborigines at Redfern and Wilcannia), this sanguine view of Australia's social peacefulness is being put under pressure. Paralleling these images of social conflict, the 80-year long dominance of the (socially unifying) public schooling system is being dismantled raising a real anxiety in my mind about the potential for major social conflict to develop in parallel with a burgeoning market of schools which play for different sections of a "market." In a twist of history, the other large and partly "public" system of low-fee Catholic schools is also facing a dividing "market" of other denominational mosque-based and church-based schools with similar effects on its system of dropping enrolments (which have required an increase in non-Catholic enrolments—a move which is causing internal soul-searching as Bishop Pell questions whether Catholic schools should lose their Catholic character with large increases in non-Catholic enrolments).

What do these matters of concern mean for the continuation of a public schooling system? We already know from the interest expressed by the OECD that governments are indeed generally concerned about engendering and maintaining social cohesion. At this point of the dissertation the matter is a serious concern to be more directly addressed in Section Four.

Conflict continues to contextualise political decisions which shape the schooling systems. No end is in sight. The social fabric of Australia is more varied than the four churches (Church of England, Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian) that were the major players in the first century of sectarian strife and, with the addition of significant Buddhist, Ananda Marga, large Islamic and Jewish populations, the move towards church-based schools since the 1960s raises the issue of social cohesion once again. Furthermore, the political conflict, in 2008, is no less ideological than in the 19th century. The difference however is the difference between religion, and religion and economics. In 2008, the prevailing philosophy is one of economic rationalism and globalisation. Neo-conservative thinking seeks to have the role of government and the public sector diminished. A shrinking public system and a bourgeoning private system, incorporating both church-based schools and more exclusionary private schools, is consistent with this ideological standpoint. If the future existence of the public schooling system is not in jeopardy, then its nature and responsibility is up for grabs. As outlined early in Chapter Eight, the recommendations of George Fane, while not declared or implemented by recent Australian governments, have had their pre-requisite conditions well advanced.

Chapter Six has served to establish three major points: first, that a public system of schooling grew out of the inefficiencies associated with a government funded church-based system of schooling; second, a smaller but nevertheless large, church-based low-fee system of schooling with an element of "publicness" attached to it provided for most of the non-public schooling sector; third, most of the growth in non-public schools is taking place in church-based schooling, most of which are low-fee and systemic. These three points, combined, suggest there is no diminution in demand from the public for a good education, and nor is there any lessening of demand from governments to have an educated public. Put together, these elements strongly suggest a continuing need for a schooling system to educate the public, but no conclusive argument as to how this should be delivered— through public or private means.

However, some further insights have been gained. The matter of social cohesion has been raised and anxiety registered. A number of attempts at achieving cross-sectoral agreement

on important policy matters such as the two Declarations, the Values Project, and national curriculum initiatives, have been noted.

In addition to these matters of relevance to the question first posed at the beginning of this chapter, I have demonstrated that the current shape of Australia's schooling is a product of a truly combative politic which has resulted in a fractured system of schooling with no vestige of social agreement underlying either its structure or the ideals to which the curriculum is structured. Australia's schooling history, in a negative manner, teaches us that high levels of adversarial politicking is probably responsible, at least in part, for the existence of a schooling system which:

- is amongst the best in OECD countries if we examine only the top half of student performers which, generally, derive from middle to high SES families;
- is amongst the worst in OECD countries if we examine the bottom half of student performers which, generally, derive from low SES students including indigenous students;
- has a dismayingly large majority of students—amongst the highest in OECD countries—who report being "often bored" in both public schools and church-based and exclusionary schools;
- contains both "selective" public schools, and enrolment-controlled church-based and exclusionary schools, which do well by their (generally) middle to high SES students;
- contains public schooling sub-systems and low-fee church-based sub-systems which, generally, fail their low SES and indigenous populations;
- contains public schools which remain the only public place where the right to learn and practice one's religion is denied;
- is divided into state and territory jurisdictions, making for considerable duplication in resources, differences in content and processes, and militating against national perspectives including the setting of socially agreed social purposes for schooling; and
- in recent years has been increasingly divided between public schools, church-based schools and exclusionary schools, with the latter schools divided along lines of race, religion and/or socio-economic status.

Most of these items have a curriculum consequence and will be directly addressed in Section Four.

Before our attention is drawn to these matters again, however, I propose to examine political philosophy with a view to identifying a method—a different method—of decision making which might have the potential to replace Australia's over-reliance on adversarial politics with a process of thoughtful collaboration and public involvement, such that the basis of schooling in Australia might be agreed amongst its citizens and, using a word from Barcan, harmonious.

Chapter Seven: Political Theory and Philosophy

> A theory of instruction is a political theory in the proper sense that it derives from consensus concerning the distribution of power within the society—who will be educated to fulfil what roles? In the very same sense pedagogical theory must surely derive from a conception of economics, for where there is division of labour within the society and exchange of goods and services for wealth and prestige, then how people are educated and in what number and with what constraints on the use of resources are all relevant issues. The psychologist or educator who formulates pedagogical theory without regard to the political, economic and social setting of the educational process courts triviality and merits being ignored in the community of the classroom. (Bruner, 1968, p. 69)

Before addressing issues of political theory and philosophy as they relate to education and Bruner's viewpoint quoted above, I want to quickly review the main points of the argument thus far:

1. While Australia's schooling outcomes on average compare well with OECD countries, the gap in outcomes between the top half and bottom half of schooling performers is bigger than most OECD countries, a large percentage of students are often bored with schoolwork, and the public system is losing a significant proportion of its "market share" to the non-public sector thus heightening concerns about further increases in relative disadvantage, and raising concerns about social cohesion.

2. The Australian schooling system is divided by state and territory jurisdictions, complicated with a strong Commonwealth influence, and further divided between public, church-based, exclusionary and other private schools.

3. There never has been agreement about social purposes for schooling in Australia.

4. Public debate and government decisions concerning the schooling sector have, and continue to have, funding concerns at their core, rather than debates about purpose.

5. Neither the political will, nor the political processes, have been in place to achieve social agreement about the purposes of schooling in Australia.

Relevance of Political Theory

I turn to political theory and philosophy in a search for social purpose which might underpin a future schooling system, and/or suggest the need for a future public schooling system.

Why appeal to political theory and philosophy? The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the shape of an education system capable of providing an education appropriate to the times—that addresses existing schooling problems, that strengthens society's

considered and preferred political processes, that contributes powerfully to an understanding of and consequent action to deal with priority issues facing Human Beings globally, regionally, locally and personally. The shape of this system, and the processes used to identify its desired features and its construction, depend heavily on the *type* of society it is needed to support and maintain. This point is not self-evident, and no more self-evident to educators who may be deeply knowledgeable and wonderfully competent in matters concerning how students learn but who may be less concerned for the politics of what people do and/or should learn. On this point Dewey (1915/1966) was unequivocal when he wrote, "The conception of education as a social process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society we have in mind" (p. 97).

The political connection is this: depending on the shape and processes of the desired society, an "appropriate" schooling system will look different. For example, a schooling system to match the political objectives of modern day libertarians, many conservatives and many neo-liberals, all of whom have an abhorrence of extensive government responsibilities and enterprise, might look very similar to that proposed by George Fane (1984) including his recommendations for:

- the complete privatisation of all education institutions, that is, the abolition of public pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, and tertiary institutions;
- compulsory schooling be limited to the first six years of formal education, that is, to the end of primary school;
- compulsory schooling be financed by a system of publicly-funded "vouchers";
- a further two years of *optional* schooling be publicly funded using a system of vouchers, that is, to the end of Year 8; and
- beyond Year 8, abolition of all regulations, taxes and subsidies for any form of schooling.

Fane and his associates provided political and economic argument in support of these recommendations but conceded that no government, even if ideologically supportive of the recommendations, would have the courage to implement them, at least in the short term. Fane acknowledged that different economic objectives and political theories generate different schooling systems and the political vectors representing each ideology produce a direction for policy not completely consistent with the wishes of the government of the day. As a consequence, Fane advocated adoption of lesser policies than his recommendations, so long as they represented an increment towards his objectives. With each step, Fane argued it would be easier for subsequent governments to see the force of his recommendations and

to implement them fully. Fane's arguments parallel similar views held widely among economic rationalists and political conservatives (Friedman, 2005).

At the other end of the continuum, are thinkers like Hattersley (2004) whose defined "good society" has no place for church-based, private exclusionary, or public selective schools, arguing that government's role is to protect and increase the total sum of liberty, that liberty and equality are indivisible, the greatest cause of inequality is poverty, and schools which are organised on the basis of a form of socio-economic selectivity are antithetical to the objectives of the "good society" (p. 14-15, see also Galbraith, 1996).

A less extreme example which assumes a similar social objective to Hattersley is contained in the advocacy of the Centre on National Education Policy (CNEP) (1996) in Washington, D.C. The CNEP, arguing the superior potential of public schools over private schools, seeks to have six benchmark objectives for schooling adopted, with associated questions, such as:

1. **Effective Preparation for Life, Work and Citizenship**
   Will the proposed reform produce an education of the quality needed to effectively prepare young people:
   a) to lead fulfilling and contributing lives;
   b) to be productively employed;
   c) to be responsible citizens in a democratic society?
2. **Social Cohesion and Shared Culture**
   Will the proposed reform promote a cohesive American society by bringing together children from diverse backgrounds and encouraging them to get along? Will it help to form a shared American culture and to transmit democratic values?
3. **Universal Access and Free Cost**
   Will the proposed reform guarantee a public education that is universally accessible to all children within the governing jurisdiction and is free of charge to parents and students?
4. **Equity and Non-Discrimination**
   Will the proposed reform provide the same quality of education for poor children as for non-poor children? Will it treat all children justly and without discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, disability, religious affiliation, or economic status?
5. **Public Accountability and Responsiveness**
   Will the proposed reform ensure that education supported with public dollars remains accountable to taxpayers and the public authorities that represent them? Will the reform be responsive to the needs of local communities and afford citizens a voice in the governance of their schools?
6. **Religious Neutrality**
   Will the proposed reform provide a public education that is religiously neutral and respectful of religious freedom? (Center on National Education Policy, 1996).

Such questions as those raised by the NCEP provide an interesting mix of political questions of the kind required when social agreement around a set of social purposes for schooling is being sought and debated.

Dewey's writings reveal him as a thinker less interested in defining and restricting areas of government responsibility and more interested in the essential processes of democracy and the role of the public in those processes. Dewey (1915/1966) argued that democratic societies are more interested than other societies in providing a deliberate and systematic education to all citizens for two reasons:

- governments resting on popular suffrage require a knowledgeable suffrage; and
- democracy is more than a form of government, but is primarily a mode of associated living, a conjoint communicated experience with consequent breaking down of nationalistic, class and race barriers (p. 87).

According to Dewey (1915/1966) and his adherence to democratic principles:

- a "good" society is one committed to equitable outcomes—one which "ensures participation in its good of all its members on equal terms"—and is able to continually modify its institutions through a process of engaging the citizenry. This requires all citizens to have an educated interest in social relationships and control, and to exhibit behaviours which secure social changes without introducing disorder (p. 99).
- to avoid educating some as slaves and some as masters, society needs a large number of shared values, undertakings and experiences. Citizens must not be separated into privileged and subject classes as this leads to evils for both the slaves and the superior class (p. 84).
- isolation and exclusiveness of a gang or clique brings its anti-social spirit into relief, and this is to be found wherever one group has interests "of its own" which shut it out from full interaction with other groups. Separateness such as this reveals its main purpose is the protection of what it has got, instead of reorganization and progress through wider relationships. Isolation makes for rigidity and formal institutionalizing of life, for static and selfish ideals within the group.
- a society to which stratification into separate classes would be fatal (democracy) must see to it that intellectual opportunities are accessible to all on equable and easy terms (p. 86).

Unlike Fane in 1984, Dewey in the early 20th century made the case for continuing and strengthening commitments to public schooling in order to maintain and strengthen his desired political structures and informed political processes. Political theories of different kinds will generate different models of schooling provision. Different philosophic underpinnings will generate schools with different dominant value systems. What Dewey sees as privilege, institutionalized selfishness and peril to democracy is seen by Fane as expression of individual freedoms which should be politically guaranteed and seen as a right and individual choice.

Australia has not developed a national view concerning this matter despite a number of Australian education thinkers such as Karmel (1981) and Blackburn (1981) who, although not united in their view about the feasibility of the task, have a clear belief that a schooling system's shape should be strongly influenced by an understanding of a desired society. A similar, but unfulfilled reach into the political domain is evident in a number of other important projects such as each of the recent "essential" curriculum projects discussed in Chapter Eight, which sought to develop a "futures-oriented" curriculum. The task is difficult and, it is my contention, impossible with our current mix of combative history and adversarial politics. We need a new political process which can help us span the gap between Karmel's and Blackburn's expressed (1981) wishes for agreed social purposes and their frustration at its absence.

Because I am seeking a social agreement with stronger political legitimacy than might result from a proposal emanating only from me, I now turn to political philosophy in an exercise designed to discover and establish:

- the political settings from which I make my proposal (important for the reader to make judgements about my argument); and
- a political process which might achieve a socially agreed set of social purposes for schooling.

Once that task has been successfully completed, and in the interests of describing a fuller set of possibilities for future reform, I will mount an argument concerning curriculum and schooling structures using a surrogate socially-agreed set of social purposes of schooling.

Political Thinking from Which We Can Draw

As I have argued above, the task of proposing a new schooling system brings with it an inescapable pre-requisite—identification of a defensible political theory. But the way forward is not clear. And, in any event, who am I to undertake such a task? This is the realm of the Great Thinkers: Cleisthenes, Pericles, Plato, Aristotle, Polybius, and a thousand dark years later Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Harrington, Franklin, Jefferson, Paine, De Toqueville, Robespierre, Bentham, Mill and Greene, Lincoln, Hegel, Marx, Engels, Bakunin, Lenin, and in a more diminished way: Mao, Castro, Guevara and even Hitler.

More recently, since the writings of Rawls in 1970, and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, there has been a further outbreak of theoretical thinking from variously fractured liberals, libertarians, conservatives, republicans, communitarians, socialists, deliberative democrats, associative democrats, along with other lesser schools of thought. Thus, the task of analysing and selecting a preferred theory is daunting. Nevertheless, it is necessary.

Political thinkers can be, and are, described differently by different authors. The following sketches of groups of political theorists are drawn from Kymlicka (2002) and Ball and Dagger (1995).

Two thousand five hundred years ago, in the city state of Athens, a series of political steps were taken to transform a violent and relatively lawless state of affairs. It began in the 6th century BC with kingly Draco(nian) laws. It progressed to a Solonian constitution which overturned the monarchy in favour of an oligarchy informed by lower assemblies of citizens, to a **direct participative democracy** introduced by Cleisthenes and strengthened by Pericles.

Participation, a crucial element in some of the following theories, in *direct* democracy was expected from all citizens[7] who met frequently, several thousand strong, at the Pnyx on Phillopean Hill just a kilometre south of the Acropolis. The direct democracy of Pericles ensured all citizens (slaves and women were not defined as such), including the poorest, were equal participants in all decisions concerning the government of Athens, the conduct of its public business, even the conduct of its foreign policy and wars. Participation remains an important ingredient in the constructions of democratic thinkers.

---

[7] Citizenship excluded: women, slaves, non-Athenians—about 70% of the population.

The processes of Athenian democracy, despite claims made by Pericles in his famous Funeral Oration to the Athenian fallen in the Peloponnesian Wars, did not extend to a guarantee of legislated or commonly agreed individual liberties and freedoms for citizens. The known circumstances of Socrates' trial and subsequent execution establish the lack of guaranteed protection of individual liberties such as freedom of speech, claimed later by liberals.

In later Athenian life, then again in the early Roman Empire, and yet again a thousand years later in the enlightening city-state of Florence, an Aristotelian view of *republicanism* supported the conduct of government.

Like Plato (2003), Aristotle (2002) thought ill of democratic theory. With an educated public and Dewey's analysis two thousand years away, Aristotle was wary of the ignorant masses and their decisions. While Aristotle preferred democracy to forms of tyranny and monarchy, he favoured his explicitly defined "polity" comprising a system of (a) lower assemblies for the common citizens, advising (b) a higher forum of aristocrats, informing (c) a small educated elite as the ultimate ruling authority. This basic structure has been played out with variations at key points in Human history: in Ancient Rome, in Renaissance Florence, and in the United States of America and France following their late 18th century revolutions.

Although republicanism did not allow for direct democracy it did *require* participation of the defined citizenry in matters of politics and, indeed, political participation was seen as the highest human virtue to which all citizens aspired.

Modern day republicans in developed democracies, are more likely to concede that, with the development of guaranteed personal freedoms and individual rights, the private life of citizens has become well protected—even insulated—from public life and, with the development of immeasurably more pleasant private and personal circumstances, a commitment to political participation is less automatic. Despite this, today's civic *republicans* argue it is *necessary* for citizens to participate in the political process if civil liberties are to be extended to those who are yet to enjoy their protection (locally and globally), and if civil liberties and the democratic structures which nurture them are to be defended from the advances of other political theories, and if social policy is to be advanced (Kymlicka, 2002). Like *direct* democrats, republicans place a premium value on public participation in the political process.

With Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651) came the first acknowledgement of the individual as a free unit with liberties to trade for the protection of the state. Locke's 1688 writings legitimised a form of religious tolerance[8] (1688/2002a) and provided philosophic reinforcement to Hobbes' view that individuals have some power to trade liberty. He became the philosophic pioneer of an individual's right to rebel against the government of the day if traded liberty failed to buy successful government protection of life and property (Locke, 1688/2002b), a treatise consistent with later writings of Thomas Paine (1776/2004) and revolutions in 1776 America (*Declaration of Independence*, 1776/1916) and 1789 France (National Assembly of France, 1789).

Liberal, and more recently ***neo-liberal*** philosophers have taken this concept of "individual" and developed a range of theories that accept self-interest as each person's motivation. The role of government is seen as proper only when limited to the provision of the protections Locke had defined. By this view, government is required only to legislate, and police, a number of basic liberties so individuals, provided with equal liberties at birth, can go about their daily business of trading and competing with each other, with the assistance of an unfettered market, for individual and social benefits. The guaranteed freedoms of liberalism are equal between individuals:

- freedom of speech
- freedom of religion
- freedom of assembly
- protection of life
- protection of property.

With the unfolding of history, a number of practices acceptable to early liberals (slavery, discrimination by race and gender and religion) have been outlawed. That is, basic liberal freedoms are now being, or intended to be by declarations of the United Nations, extended equally to all Human Beings.

Although the effects of competition—the market—are acknowledged by liberals to be unequal, this is believed to be the logical and permissible consequence of individuals exercising their freedoms in different ways.

Jeremy Bentham (A. Smith, 1993) too, endorsed the idea that people act from self-interest, but was uneasy with some of the effects of the Industrial Revolution of his time (1748-1832). He defined self-interest to mean that individuals are motivated by the pursuit of their

---

[8] Locke's tolerance excluded Catholics and atheists, to suit the politics of his time.

own happiness (utility) and the best people to know what will make them happy are the individuals themselves. Bentham therefore sought only a small role for government and accepted Adam Smith's advocacy of a laissez-faire market economy, free from government intervention (A. Smith, 1993). On the other hand, as all individuals are in pursuit of their own happiness and government has the potential to obstruct, he thought it only fair all individuals should be consulted (and allowed to vote) by government. The role of government then became a pursuit of "the greatest happiness for the greatest number."

As a fellow *utilitarian*, John Stuart Mill also advocated voting rights and he included women in his eligible electorate. While Mill endorsed Bentham's concern for small government and the guarantee of individual liberties, he was concerned at the effects universal suffrage might have on these liberties (Mill, 1998). He supported government being representative and responsible to the people, but wanted to ensure the resulting government-by-majority would not infringe the individual liberties of the minority. His worry was the "tyranny of the majority" so he proposed the "harm" principle—the only purpose for which power can be properly exercised by government over any member of a civilised community, against that person's will, is to prevent harm to others.

T.H. Green began a new and strong branch of the liberal tradition—that of *welfare liberalism.* Green held to traditional liberal support for individual freedoms, the right to make choices, to compete with each other for social and personal rewards, and to invest in the free market—but he was concerned at some of the effects of open competition and the obvious (and consequent) inequalities and considerable human misery evident in 19th century industrialised countries. Green supported liberalism's insistence that government ensure the removal of obstacles to the pursuit of happiness—until now defined in terms of government abstention from interference in the business of individuals. Green proposed an extension of government responsibility to help remove what he saw to be the "barriers" which precluded many people from social and economic participation: widespread and grinding poverty; public ill-health; ignorance in the absence of public education; and public prejudices. Not to remove these decisive barriers to individual liberty, to Green's way of thinking, was/is to be illiberal.

Green's argument was the forerunner to public schools and public hospitals, welfare to the socially and physically disabled, and basic conditions for industrial workers in 19th century mines and factories.

Liberals and (neo-liberals) see the taxes required for Green's program as an infringement on the liberty of those who successfully exercise their rights competitively and in the free market—a theft of their property. Green's response to this charge opens up an important branch in liberalism. Green asserts that these taxes contribute to the "common good" and that such contribution not only adds freedom to those who receive its benefits (removal of barriers) but also to those who *pay* the taxes. These taxes and reforms, for Green, establish liberty and cannot therefore be seen as infringements of liberal freedoms.

More than a century later, and in advanced economies, the competition between neo-liberal and welfare liberal theories (supported by Keynesian economics) (Keynes, 1936/1997) remains dominant, as those who support small government wrestle politically with those who seek to strengthen and extend what many see as the basic liberal freedoms and rights, such as John Rawls who, in the 1970s, took the liberal quest further. Rawls (1971). argued that it is impossible to conceive a society in which there is equal liberty and equal opportunity for all people, if there are huge disparities of wealth and power in that society. The Rawlsian remedy to this problem, without moving from basic liberal principles emphasising the freedoms of individuals (rather than Marxist principles, for example), is:

- equal basic liberties for all; and
- equality of opportunity brought about by permitting inequalities only when those inequalities benefit most the variously disadvantaged.

The Rawlsian vision takes the liberal theoretical development its next stage by replacing the welfare state which, after all, is responding to the *effects* of Keynesian economic liberalism, with a concept of a never-ending strategy to increase participation in *political* and bureaucratic structures (Rawls, 1996, p. 144)[9] of those working consciously to benefit the most needy, with an expectation that the gap between the "haves" and the "have nots" will progressively decrease over time. Rawls calls this ***political liberalism***.

Not long after Rawls advanced his liberal theory, Robert Nozick (1974), a ***libertarian,*** revived earlier liberal and neo-liberal thinking with strong and influential advocacy of the "protective state." Using the original liberal device of imagining each individual in its "natural" state, he supposed they would all want protection but not from a (tyrannical) government. Thus, there would be some who would want to "buy" protection which, if government stayed out of the play, would be provided by an entrepreneurial individual. Many would buy such protection—numbers would provide this protection—but with the

---

[9] That is, not concerned with non-political areas of human experience such as the realms of religion, philosophy, morality.

natural play of the free market, providers of protection would be bought out systematically over time, eventually leaving a *monopoly* as the single provider of protection. This company—this provider of protection—would *be the state*! And the state would have only one job to do: protection.

Often linked to liberationists are those committed to **conservatism**, which as a political philosophy is based on a view of Humans as deeply and innately flawed, a greedy and self-aggrandising species, which, when advocating change for the benefit of others, is simply "rationalising" self-interest. To the conservative theorist, good government is concerned with maintaining processes and laws that have *proven* safe and protective of individual liberties in the past, and conservatives see attempts to rapidly change societies for the better as foolish and dangerous. For the conservative, government should impose restraints on individuals and maintain current values through schools, churches and families. Any changes in society should be introduced carefully and slowly.

Like the early liberals, Edmund Burke regarded people as individuals with rights and freedoms but unlike the liberals he saw government not as an evil or threatening phenomenon but as a necessary device to provide humans with rules to regulate their innate desires which tended toward dishonesty. He rejected Locke's view that individuals could *release* from a social contract. He regarded government as *necessary* and people's loyal commitment to it as necessary. He also saw customs as necessary which required embedding through constant institutional conservatism: schools, churches, family. In Burke's view, individuals are free to pursue their own goals but if these goals threaten social order then freedom should be restricted.

The application of the Burkeian view to a contemporary example involving an imaginary terrorist cell working within Australia with dire intentions might have a "conservative" government feeling justified in abolishing basic liberties in the belief that this action would help protect the state—its stability and order—from the threat to order, terrorists. This stands differently to a position more likely to be taken by a liberal who might argue that the maintenance of liberal freedom and rights, particularly when faced with threats from a competing ideology, will win supporters from the terrorists because the attraction of liberty and rights outweighs the attraction(s) of the alternative.

With the evaporation of Marxism-Leninism as a theoretical competitor, and maybe stimulated by the 1970s regenerative thinking of John Rawls, a number of philosophers have conjured theories to explain, and advance the cause of, variously disadvantaged

communities. Not communities in the normal meaning of the word—a local, geographically based community of interest—but communities (or sets) of similarly affected peoples such as indigenous peoples, immigrants, refugees, disabled people, religious denominations.

These theorists propose **communitarian** solutions to the problems of these "communities." A major feature of communitarians' theory is the objective of states legislating to enshrine values, principles, practices, customs of the particular community in question—rather than legislating for the tastes of a public consensus or even majority, or legislating for common rights and liberties which might be in conflict or restrictive of the said community's customs and practices.

Communitarianism can be both conservative (in that it protects current group customs and law from the influence of other theories) and radical (in that it could impose on the society at large, customs and law not consistent with more accepted theory and practice).

Another branch of communitarians has an eye for *both* the claims of distinct self-interested "community" groups *and* protection of individual rights and liberties. Kymlicka (2002) describes these as "forward-looking communitarians" whose stated objective is to find more potent methods of building understanding, respect and common concerns to balance the more powerful expression of racial, religious and multi-cultural diversity.

The outline of political theories above serves three further purposes relevant to this dissertation:

1. It outlines, over the past four centuries, a progression towards more democratically conceived societies, albeit unevenly progressed and not without considerable resistance;
2. It helps to place in an exposed context, the motives of those who seek to establish political entities such as a reconstructed public schooling system; and
3. It identifies a persistent interest by political theorists in both political and economic structures.

The first of these is an important directional marker which needs to be acknowledged and respected. The second will be helpful in Section Four. The third point needs to be expanded here because the outlined theories, to this point, do not identify, describe, and analyse the importance of a third arena of political theory and citizen activity—***civil society***.

Civil society is variously described as sitting between society's political and economic structures. It comprises the plethora of community, identity, sporting, religious, ethical, industrial (amongst many other) groups to which the citizenry belong and in which much of the citizenry play out their identities, including individual good *and* common good interests. Civil society involves all citizens, and for a large proportion of the population it is the location of much of their experience with the political system. Civil society interacts with both the economic and political structures and often feeds its interests, urges and demands into the political system. Many citizens learn and practice their political processes within civil society.

Considering Political "Process"

Some contemporary theorists (J. L. Cohen & Arato, 1992, p. viii), dismissive of Leftish restrictions on personal freedoms (Individual Good) and Rightish intolerance of quests for equality (Common Good) and desirous of a liberal-democracy which better addresses *both* freedoms *and* equality, see civil society as the "primary locus for the potential expansion of democracy under 'really existing' liberal-democratic regimes" (p. ix) and the best basis for citizenries to provide strong opposition to authoritarian regimes.

All the political theories outlined earlier make rational proposals concerning the shape and limits of government, and argue an underlying philosophy, while this further clutch of political philosophers make earnest efforts to propose a political *process* which, if adopted, might better galvanise political systems to identify societal issues of priority, and address and resolve them with increased political legitimacy and social satisfaction. These process thinkers all assume the continued existence, at least in the beginning stages of their processes, of existing *liberal democratic* structures and a guaranteed commitment to basic liberal rights and freedoms. From this point of view they are a branch of political liberals, but because their *processes* seek to engage people from throughout the political, social and economic realms, they *allow* for solutions which might (depending on the outcome of decisions) be regarded as communitarian or republican or liberal or conservative, and so on.

This is a point of central importance to this dissertation, because it is assumed that future societies will continue to contain many different competing views concerning: family, foreign policy, environment, sex, mixes of public and private enterprise, public and private care and responsibility, public and private rights in many and varied industry markets, and so on. To the list of traditional matters addressed by political theorists is a further list of more recent considerations with global significance requiring international consideration and international agreement and cooperation:

- environmental issues, some of which seriously imperil the globe and the Human species;

- weaponry which threatens the very existence of nations, and in some minds, planet Earth itself;

- the prospect of a prolonged international religion-based war and the consequences for intellectual freedom and enlightenment;

- high levels of international concern at huge inequalities in individual freedoms in many developing countries, and continuing and serious inequalities in liberal democracies;

- increasingly educated populations in Africa, South America and Asia expressing concerns at their relative poverty, underdevelopment, overpopulation and absence of individual rights and liberties; and

- a global communications network, publicly accessible, which transmits instantaneously, mixes of political, social, religious and economic successes, aspirations and miseries.

The importance of this further list lies in the need for *international* collaboration, cooperation, negotiation and agreement for each of the remedies to the problems posed. Here is another huge layer of complexity. If schooling of the broad citizenry is essential for a *nation*-state (such as Galbraith's "good society" and Dewey's democracy) then what type of schooling provision, both quantitative and qualitative, is required to support (and in Galbraith's argument, make "essential"), the intelligently educated and democratic determination of remedies to the above list of pressing *international* concerns?

This is an important question particularly as most of the matters on the international list are included *not* because they are new issues but because they are newly international in character—requiring international responses.

The current state of play is not optimistic. According to Roger Dale (1999), nation states respond to globalisation in two, economic-based ways: competition, and governance without government through the powerful device of organisations set up to foster capitalistic economic cooperation and development such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

By this account, and with international organisations with a broader brief such as the United Nations and its branches relatively starved of funds and powers, matters of human rights and social justice, poverty, environmental imperatives, peaceful co-existence, have no powerful champion, no competitive motive for improvement, no shaping "governance without government."

How are these observations relevant to schooling? Dale (2000) "sees the changing nature of the world capitalist economy as the driving force of globalisation and seeks to establish its effects on educational systems" (p. 428). Dale calls this a Globally Structured Agenda for Education (GSAE) and it stands differently from the view preferred by Meyer, Boli, Thomas, & Ramirez (1997) who see a very considerable similarity between countries in schooling curriculums and organisational structures. Dale sees the "driver" as the imperatives of the global economy which requires nation states, if they are to participate effectively in this economy, to undertake certain (and common) educational strategies. Meyer et al. see the commonalities among countries' schooling systems as more culturally driven than economic. They explain this phenomenon with reference to developing nation states emulating the globally dominant culture (currently American). They copy the system and its content. Neither Dale nor Meyer et al. illuminate the way to a global system which supports the intelligent and democratic consideration of urgently pressing policy issues from a perspective which is not first and foremost, both economic and capitalist.

Thus, drawing on Galbraith's (1996) view of the "decisive" role of education I argue the need for an education system which responds to international issues by not only *supporting* their democratic consideration but, even more importantly, by making their democratic consideration *essential*.

All these matters need global attention and participation, comprehensive planning, and globally binding decisions. To address them successfully, Humanity needs an adequate *process*. To simply declare in favour of one 'ism" or another runs the risk of extending timelines needed for the resolution of conflicts as all other "isms" not favoured by the choice immediately find voice in ideological opposition to the declared and favoured ism. Australian schooling policy has a long and unsatisfying history of adversarial politics. The strategy (of declaring for one favoured ism) would be self-defeating for this dissertation because at the point of declaration, any chance of a widely accepted politically-legitimate social agreement must be lost to the imperatives of interest politics.

I accept that there will always be competing political views and, as a consequence there will always be an element of adversarial politics. However, I do not accept our differences, particularly on important society-shaping matters, are by any means all-encompassingly adversarial. I think it more likely that, given a different set of political processes designed to identify common ground (while accepting differences), our culture might be pleasantly surprised to find, and want to accommodate, the vast scope of agreed values and societal objectives.

This will be easier in societies with an established political order with widespread political legitimacy. In Australia, that order is commonly understood to be a democracy. The political literature has pointed to different types of democracy. I am interested in these different types of democracy.

Within any type of democracy there will be different viewpoints held by different people. People are often organised politically, around different ideologies which, despite their differences, have large amounts of commonality. For example, Australian conservatives are likely to be as equally committed to principles such as honesty and integrity as would a liberal or social democrat. Thus, an alternative strategy to different groups lining up against each other periodically in a competition for overall political power, and a strategy with a better chance of getting politically legitimised decisions in addition to the electoral process, might be to find a process by which:

- commonly held *views* can be identified, isolated, and publicly nurtured—and enacted. These *views* might be categorised as either "common good" or "individual good." For example, it may be a common view that environmental sustainability is a good objective (Common Good) and it may be a common view that despite the many different views of religion, that religious freedom is a good objective (Individual Good);

- differing views can be winnowed to separate those which are:

    - agreed to be consistent with the common good—and thus attract public resourcing and public protection—and enactment. For example, a religion or political party seeking to persuade a greater following; and

    - not agreed to be consistent with the common good—and thus continue to be the subject of political debate throughout the polity and civil society. For example, a religion or political party seeking to force people to follow or submit.

As a consequence of this thinking I am persuaded to investigate the possibilities of a political *process* which requires: consideration of divergent points of view, different ideas, different ideologies; progression to a form of social consensus or social agreement, thus providing the pre-requisite for qualitative change (in this case to schooling and curriculum paradigms).

The content of the social agreement is seen to be *separate* from the process. The resultant political content will not exactly reflect the political ideology of any of the participants. It may lean one way or the other. It may be a political mix. It may be a political "hold" or moratorium sought by one group in order to get an acceptable concession from another participating group. Whatever it is, the resulting content will become the operating platform for the official body, in this case the managements of schooling systems. While the resulting content is the implementation agenda of the authorities, and gains widespread political support from the involvement and agreement to the set of social purposes, it doesn't stop the interest groups, or managements, from continuing to advance their non-agreed ideas within the political market (but not to destabilise the agreed goals). In this way, the agreement's content is a *product* of the process, not of ideology or bureaucratic dominance or political triumph! This sketchy outline will be further investigated later in the following paragraphs.

The history of Western Civilisation has seen a progressive move away from monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy, dictatorship, and military junta towards forms of democracy. It has not been a straight road, and it remains varied and even heavily contested. Monarchies continue to exist, some heavily restrained by a constitutional democracy. Dictators have, and continue to exist, with some (such as Hitler) being democratically elected by the general populace. Sublimely democratic constitutions such as that devised for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1930 have been mocked by unfolding experience. Constitutional travesties (such as the rights of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba) have sullied the behaviour of nations otherwise highly regarded for a type of democratic system.

Like most things, "democracy" can be variously defined and, depending on the definition used, a different schooling system might be implied. Cohen and Arato (1992) provide a collection of meanings that have been applied to "democracy":
1. A system of rule by the poor and disadvantaged;
2. A form of government in which the people rule themselves directly and continuously, without the need for professional politicians or public officials;

3. A society based on equal opportunity and individual merit, rather than hierarchy and privilege;

4. A system of welfare and redistribution aimed at narrowing social inequalities;

5. A system of decision-making based on the principle of majority rule;

6. A system of rule that secures the rights and interests of minorities by placing checks upon power of the majority;

7. A means of filling public offices through a competitive struggle for the popular vote; and

8. A system of government that serves the interests of the people regardless of their participation in political life.

Given that the type of schooling system will depend on the type of society that creates it and which it subsequently supports, and given that political processes will determine who in society will make the determination, it is important to understand differently defined democracies and the major players within the polity. Cohen and Arato (1992) provide a useful summary of contemporary debates between advocates of *elite* and *participatory* democracy as elaborated below.

Unlike authors such as Galbraith (1996) who see the main problem (with democracy) being the quantitative voting dominance of "the favoured, the affluent and the rich" over "the socially and economically deprived" (p. 138)— a quantitative dominance which ensures the qualitative concerns of the former are addressed to the exclusion of the qualitative concerns of the latter, and thus the main barrier to the attainment of a "true democracy" and "the good society," Cohen and Arato move away from an over-reliance on elections to a deep concern for extra-electoral *political processes* within contemporary democracies.

Cohen and Arato (1992) quote Schumpeter's 1942 claim that "the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide via a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (p. 5) and then point out that such a democracy does nothing to remove the gap between rulers and the ruled but simply selects a periodic process of elections to select the ruled. Power is common to both democratic and non-democratic countries. The difference is in the way power is acquired. This "elite" model of democracy is satisfied if: a set of core rights is respected; regularly contested elections involving universal suffrage are conducted; transfer of power is accepted by elite factions (parties); decisions are accepted by the citizenry. The electorate does not set the political agenda or make political decisions…it simply adjudicates between those of the elite bidding for power. This role falls to the elite's factions (political parties) which "aggregate interests and decide which are to become politically salient…and select

issues and structure public opinion" (p. 5). By this definition Cohen and Arato describe voters as consumers who simply choose from the array of "entrepreneurs offering alternative packages or personnel." Citizens must accept that the role of making decisions is not theirs.

The elite model of democracy, according to Cohen and Arato (1992), extols apathy, civil privatism, and the necessity to shield the political system from unrealistic demands (as defined by the elite) from the citizenry. Those with a passion for participatory democracy see the elite model as antithetical to democracy as it has dropped democratic ideals such as: self-determination, participation, political equality, discursive processes of decision-making, and the influence of autonomous public opinion on political decision-making. "Moreover, by restricting the concept of democracy to a method of leader selection and to procedures regulating the competition and policy making of elites, this model sacrifices the very principles of democratic legitimacy on which it is nevertheless parasitic. It loses all criteria for distinguishing between formalistic ritual, systematic distortion, choreographed consent, manipulated public opinion, and the real thing" (p. 7).

Standing against an elite democracy are those who insist that active *participation* in ruling and being ruled, and in the shaping of public opinion, is closer to the real idea of democracy. Such a formulation allows for the creation of a democratic political culture among the citizenry through which citizens are more likely to "conceive of civic virtue, tolerate diversity, temper fundamentalism and egoism, become able and willing to compromise" (J. L. Cohen & Arato, 1992, p. 7). Decisions made through the participation of the citizenry are likely to have greater credibility and legitimacy and, as a consequence, be more successfully pursued.

Cohen and Arato (1992) are critical of participatory democrats because they tend to provide universal institutional answers with the effect of "dedifferentiating" society in a way not acceptable to the diversely constituted citizenry. This analysis leaves the way open for Cohen and Arato to propose a theory involving the enhancement of political activity within "civil society" and a continuing dialogue between that civil society and the political structure. Using this device of citizen participation it is thought that existing elite and semi-elite models will become more democratised and that existing authoritarian regimes might be confronted and ultimately destroyed (e.g. Poland).

Rights-Oriented Liberals and Communitarians both challenge aspects of the "elite" model but their greatest argument is with each other. In a nutshell, rights-oriented liberals seek to

enshrine certain liberal freedoms and individual rights such that they cannot be assaulted, and must be protected, by government. To the extent that these freedoms are enshrined, the elite's ability to affect them is circumscribed. Communitarians seek to have more of the culture and mores of their "community" enter the processes and content of government and seek to have their "community" influential on government. To the extent this political pressure is successful, the power of the "elite" is again circumscribed.

But the greatest difference between the liberals and the communitarians is the emphasis liberals give to individuals and their rights while communitarians seek to emphasise the primacy of the "community's" values, experiences, aspirations. Here is the basis for a clash which looks similar to the dichotomy between Individual Good and Common Good identified earlier in this Chapter. If communitarians have their way they might well legislate their community mores—what they see as the Common Good—to affect all the citizenry including those who have different mores.

There are those communitarians who define the community as the *whole*, not a separate community of religious denomination, or ethnic background, or geographic locale, or some other limiting definition. For these communitarians, the "proper basis of moral theory is *the* community and its good, not the individual and his/ her rights. Indeed, individuals have rights to the degree to which these flow from the common good" (J. L. Cohen & Arato, 1992, p. 9).

Anna Yeatman (1998) assists by distinguishing between liberal contractualists who emphasise "the freedom of those who already have the capacities to forcefully present themselves as individuals" and social contractualists with their emphasis "on the equality of individualised persons" which itself requires an extension of "the status of individualised personhood to all, regardless of differences in: ability, marital status, race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion" (p. 227-228). Despite Yeatman's attempt to extend contractual legitimacy to communitarians, the differences between liberals and communitarians are, apparently, unresolvable and require another theory, thus permitting Cohen and Arato to point to civil society and deliberative processes as a means of reaching agreement and a way forward even for those with seemingly unresolvable points of view.

The forms of democracy and associated contemporary political debates give cause for pause. What type of democracy are we interested in? And why is this important? Well, to repeat Dewey (1915/1966), "the conception of education as a social process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society we have in mind" (p. 97). It

occurs to me Dewey went not far enough, that the *content* definition of "the kind of society we have in mind" will depend heavily on whom "we" are, as well as the *process* "we" are encouraged to undertake. If "we" is a narrowly defined portion of the citizenry then "we" will produce a different result. Dewey, the thinker committed to democracy, would, I suspect, be defining "we" as the full citizenry. And, with their commitment to equality of opportunity, one might guess that the now-oft quoted Karmel and Blackburn would be similarly inclined. If it is "we the public" then a political process is suggested which encourages maximum *participation* in the political process—a process which extends beyond Galbraith's reliance on elections.

Deliberative Processes

In *A Theory of Justice* John Rawls (1971) acknowledges utilitarianism's historical value to majorities oppressed by an elite minority. Under these circumstances the development of liberalism is logical and has been helpful. However, the problems in developed societies are now different and, in the main, relate to the repressions of minorities by majorities. He says that in modern liberal democracies the majority has achieved its basic civil and political freedoms and, as a consequence, utilitarianism does not contain the insights necessary to address remaining injustices. Despite this difficulty with utilitarianism, Rawls is not well impressed with some other categories of thinker such as communitarians, civic republicans, feminists, multiculturalists and Marxists because he sees them as "intuitionists" with a jumble of ideas, anecdotally anti-liberal, with no cohesive theory or way forward. He describes them as unhelpful in practical matters and their insights as merely intuitive. As a consequence Rawls designs a device against which he wants to measure the "good" of modern society. His device has two aspects, or principles. The first is the guaranteed right of every citizen to the liberal freedoms and individual rights. The second is an insistence that inequality is only justifiable where the inequality is working to favour the relatively disadvantaged.

In his response to *A Theory of Justice* (Rawls, 1971), Jurgen Habermas (1996) outlines a set of processes he believes to be essential if the concerns felt by individuals and groups of individuals are to be addressed with consequent widespread satisfaction. Habermas proposes a **_deliberative democracy_** which, because of its anticipated widespread participation of the populace, can generate widespread satisfaction with, and legitimacy for, its decisions. Habermas sees as a necessary component of this society, an active *civil* society comprising a plethora of self-motivated and self-interested individuals and organisations fervently engaged with their interests, and in the process learning the skills of organisation, political behaviour and democracy. This civil society, seething with ideas and

activity, exists between the political structure and the economy. Civil society has a relationship with the political structure and the economy. It relates to both. It can influence, and does influence, the considerations of the political structure. Ideas, contributions and demands formulated in civil society can be "sluiced" into the polity. An active and healthy civil society will comprise a large proportion of the populace engaged with their particular interest but learning the skills of democracy and relationships with the polity and economy. For civil society to be the driving force in a deliberative democracy Habermas requires:

- the media to adopt a new role of genuinely internalising responsibility for informing the population of issues and important-to-society emerging views, *irrespective* of their profitability and sensationalism;
- the political (including government bureaucracy) and economic wings of society, to openly provide data into the public domain to guarantee that civil society is a continually informed centre of public discourse; and
- the state to facilitate discourse on important matters, particularly if the matters are to be discussed more widely than an originating self-interested group. Facilitation can be effected in many ways including support for forums, publications, and a variety of encouragement for individuals and associations to participate.

With the above requirements satisfied, and government attuned to a role of accepting that matters should be subjected to appropriate discourse within civil society (i.e. publicly considered matters being "sluiced" into the political structure), then effective and legitimate government can be attained, says Habermas (1996). This is a view of the potential polity which stands in contrast to current practice(s). Polls show the populace very sceptical of the motives of politicians, bureaucrats, media moguls and union officials. Experience with political manipulation of data, facts and experiences appears vastly different from the optimistic view of government and media required by Habermas. Nevertheless, forms of democracy appeared unlikely before the revolutions in England, France and America, and there were times when many matters which are now taken for granted were much contended and the subject of civil strife and warfare. The Habermasian view is worth closer scrutiny.

Habermas (1996) has a different starting point from the liberal stable of philosophers. He sees society as gaining its legitimacy not from a social contract involving Humans conceding certain rights in return for protection of life and property, but from a process of political engagement, discourse, participation and finally, agreement. He sits between the liberals and the civic republicans.

As Habermas (1996) outlines the problem, "Liberals emphasise the impersonal rule of law and the protection of individual freedoms. Democratic process is constrained by, and in the service of, personal rights which guarantee freedom to individuals to pursue their own goals and happiness" (p. xxiv). Civic republicans such as Plato, Aristotle and Rousseau, by contrast, give pride of place to the democratic process as a collective deliberation that leads citizens to reach agreement on the Common Good. Human freedom is, at its greatest, not in the pursuit of private preferences but in self-governance through political participation. For the liberal, political legitimacy comes from protection of individual liberty—human rights, whereas, for civic republicans, political legitimacy is generated by "popular sovereignty" (p. xxv). Habermas develops a "proceduralist concept of democracy" in which he sees politics involving "more than the minimalist government of liberalism rule (of law + the market economy) and less than the "collective action of a homogenous political society" (p.xxx). He outlines society-wide deliberative processes involving formally institutionalised deliberation moving to decision. Government and bureaucracy are part of this process, not separately working to their own agendas, but transparently open with data and argument, and facilitative of important public forums, dialogue with associations and interest groups and social movements. He is explicit about the "various conditions under which the public sphere can fulfil its democratic function," including:

- the establishment of means by which broad social concerns can receive formal consideration within the political system (p. xxxii);
- establishing and maintaining channels of communication linking the public sphere to a robust civil society in which citizens first perceive and identify social issues (p. 320);
- the existence of a large range of informal associations which, while currently on the periphery of decision-making, need to have their concerns and insights sluiced) funnelled into the political machine as a matter of course (p. 358); and
- a responsible mass media—consciously providing a communications structure linking civil society's network of organisations, and capable of:
    - identifying issues;
    - ordering them into themes;
    - proposing possible solutions; and
    - providing pressure such that the issues are dealt with via parliamentary means.

In short, the media's responsibility is to
- report fully;
- lay out the set agenda;

- provide extensive platforms for data provision and debate;
- provide a mechanism for holding officialdom to account;
- provide a mechanism for engaging the citizens in the debate;
- resist all attempts to undermine media impartiality; and
- hold a deep respect for the citizenry. (Habermas, 1996, p. 378)

In summary, Habermas sketches a deliberative democracy powered by a constantly facilitated, data fed, opportunity provided, debating, civil society! It stands in contrast to an "elite" model of democracy with which many in contemporary liberal-democracies would identify. Importantly for this dissertation, it turns away from adversarial political strategies and points the way to a process which might draw otherwise conflicted sections of society into a meaningful deliberative engagement leading to widespread satisfaction, and even a social agreement around the social purposes of schooling.

Habermas' view does not come without limits. The matter of entrenched and vested interests is a very real concern, particularly as there are theorists such as Cohen and Rogers (1995) who advance the view that an egalitarian democracy can only be achieved by means of a "deliberate politics of secondary associations" (pp. 33 & 44). This school of thought seeks a democracy which comprises six elements which Cohen and Rogers list (popular sovereignty, political equality [a la Rawls], distributive fairness, civic consciousness, economic performance, competent government [pp. 35]) before expanding on their meaning (64-69).

Cohen and Rogers (1992) believe such a democracy can be achieved within the current state apparatus, with three major changes to political behaviour:
- to eliminate lop-sided representational interest, government must promote the organised representation of presently excluded, non-existent or weak, associations of interest;
- to stop associations undermining popular sovereignty by pursuing their particular self-interest, associations must be educated to be "other regarding"; and
- to replace government incompetence, or add to competence in certain areas, associations should increasingly take responsibility (away from government) of certain management roles, including management of entire projects. That is, a more direct and formal governance role for associations within the role of government (pp. 36-45).

I acknowledge that Cohen and Rogers emphasise that their thinking is exploratory and unfinished, an attempt at a strategy rather than an alternative theory. However, despite their caveats, their aspirations appear too optimistic as they seek to include associations in governance as parties which can neutralise their self-interest in the interests of the Common Good, including entrusting these associations to undertake responsibility for management of entire projects for which they have a greater understanding and empathy than a private company or government department. In respect of the latter point, I am persuaded that an association, such as a nurses union or a church organisation, might manage better than a Health Department or a Drug and Alcohol Authority, projects which provide respectively: personal, welfare and even professional support for nurses; succour and rehabilitation for addicts. That is, it may be that associations can perform excellent governance of projects which fall within the unchallenged scope of the associations' self interest.

However, it is a big and overly optimistic leap to have confidence in the potential of self-interested associations (to stay with earlier examples—such as unions and churches) to approach wider societal issues in anything but a self-interested manner. To think a public sector nurses union might approach a public discussion concerning the privatisation of hospitals with equanimity, is, at best, counter-intuitive and, at worst, incredible. To think a church might approach a public discussion about the benefits of secular approaches to living one's life, education and science might lead one to similar doubts. Under these circumstances one might expect associations to be as self-interested as their reason for existence.

Further to this, associations are often thought of as living entities with thoughts, such as embodied in the openings," The church believes…" and "The union says…" when, in fact, associations are complex organisations comprising many individuals, competing ideas and groups, factions both obvious and secret, decision-making processes both obvious and covert, and so on. What is presented as an association's view is the product of a decision-making process, sometimes open, well-informed, competent, democratic (within its narrow constituency) and fair to all, at other times, exclusionary, relatively ignorant, incompetent, bureaucratic and unfairly manipulative, and at other times, at some point in between. It is not uncommon to find unionists and congregationists who have many and strong differences of opinion than those expressed by their union or church.

At a less general level of observation, it is worth remembering that apart from associations' obvious desire to focus on their aims and objectives, there are several powerful systems at work which are designed to make the association disciplined and focussed on its own

narrow aims. Internal promotion of association officers is one such system. That is, if an aspirant to an association position of influence wished to advocate for the Common Good when such advocacy ran counter to the self-interest of the association, the aspirant's internal rivals would have potent ammunition within the internal promotion system of the association.

This point is taken up by Gutman (2003). She begins with the view that "identity groups are ethically suspect when they elevate group identity over considerations of justice" (p. 17). But she doesn't dismiss identity groups altogether. Far from it. She regards any push to abolish them as "tyrannical." In her quest to give "middle politics" (civil society) a real role in the polity, she acknowledges the importance to different groups of their need to identify together for personal reasons but then argues that their worth in the political arena needs to be measured against some designated criteria. If the groups meet the criteria then they are worthwhile contributors to middle politics. If not, then they fail the test and should be treated with suspicion. Gutman's measurement is precise. She identifies her benchmark to contain three elements:

- civic equality—in the distribution of public goods;
- individual rights and liberties;
- equal opportunity.

By this measure, Gutman says she can apportion approbation, or not. For example, the murderously racist Ku Klux Klan is seen by Gutman to be a "bad" interest group because it clearly doesn't meet the benchmark, the Boy Scouts when open only to boys was seen to be partly good (because it distributes a public good) and partly bad (because it excluded girls and homosexual boys), and the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) is adjudged to be good because it met all the benchmark criteria.

Gutman's defence of associations is helpful in that she clearly differentiates the good from the bad, and she offers some tangible measurements to help in this regard. With this device she is able to encourage associations of interested people to take their place within the political activity of civil society, while at the same time providing a means by which their credentials can be judged when it comes to their attempted influence in political forums and machinery of government. This insight is helpful, but it is her earlier work with Thompson (Gutman & Thompson, 1997) which provides most helpful insights into how a democracy, operating within huge modern day populations, might better trend towards the ideal of participatory democracy experienced by all Athenian citizens at the Pnyx on Phillopean Hill.

To put it simply, much of what Cohen and Arato (1992) identified as characteristics of "elite" democracy applies in today's democracy. Much of what we, in modern developed societies, understand as "democracy" is, at best, weakly democratic. "The people"—much lauded in speeches by great democrats such as Jefferson and Lincoln—are rarely consulted. Elections comprise a mix of policies and strategies. Some policies are left vague. Some strategies are designed to confound or hide meanings and consequences. Many elected governments proceed with policies not part of the election. Even modern day polling of the people's opinions, while mostly technically accurate, tap respondents' *existing* ideas rather than opinions determined after a preliminary and adequate period of data input, discussion and debate, identification of strong and weak points, consequent revision before adoption or polling. While different circumstances surround different polls, in general, opinion polls do what they claim to do—poll opinion—but much of what is polled is uninformed and relatively ignorant. Cohen and Arato's description of elite democracy and its to-date ineffective alternative—participatory democracy—have already been outlined.

Gutman and Thompson (1997) apply a similar analysis to existing liberal-democratic practices when they write, "In the practice of our democratic politics, communicating by sound bite, competing by character assassination, and resolving political conflicts through self-seeking bargaining, too often substitute for deliberation on the merits of controversial issues" (p. 12). Belief that contemporary Australian democracy is enriched by an unfettered array of non-government organisations which can, and do, present "dissenting opinions" and require governments to "justify their decisions" is challenged by Maddison and Hamilton (2007) who claim that the Australian Government:

> has been progressively dismantling the democratic processes that create the capacity for public debate and accommodate dissenting opinion. The tactics used to silence critics are diverse, including withdrawal of government funding, threats to destroy the financial viability of dissenting organisations, appointments of party functionaries or friends to key positions, strict interpretation of laws governing release of information, and the targeting of individuals. (p. 30)

According to Maddison and Hamilton (2007), the prime target of these repressive anti-democratic strategies have been "organisations which disagree with the Federal Government's views and values," the spokespeople for whom have been publicly depicted not as people "with a vast store of knowledge of disadvantage and marginalisation" but as "professional stirrers who are not really interested in the welfare they claim to represent, but want only to feather their own nests, keeping their salaries and building their power bases" (p. 30). The organisations referred to by Maddison and Hamilton include such Australian NGOs as Red Cross, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Oxfam, and the Australian Conservation Foundation.

Like Habermas, Gutman and Thompson (1997) define their "deliberative democracy," arguing that "conventional conceptions of democracy do not meet the challenge of moral disagreement as well as does deliberative democracy" (p. 7). They seek to engage the populace in political decision-making. They refer to a very considerable body of literature supporting "deliberative" processes within a democracy but observe that these thinkers "stop at the point where deliberation itself begins" (Gutman & Thompson, 1997, p. 1). That is, they are appreciative of the theoretical advocacy of deliberation politics while noting that the theorising provides no further views on its operations and feasibility. Consequently they proceed to focus on the *properties* of deliberation including "the conditions and content necessary to determine to what extent adequate deliberation is taking place in democratic politics" (p. 7).

Gutman and Thompson outline six principles which comprise "deliberative democracy," the first three being *conditions* for deliberation, the last three being *content* of deliberation. The separation of "conditions" and "content" will disappear, they say, with the process of interaction (Maddison & Hamilton, 2007, p. 12).

The conditions for "deliberation" are listed as:
- *reciprocity*: meaning mutual respect for shared views and an attempt to reach a mutually acceptable result. The result may not be mutually advantageous or universally justifiable, but it will be mutually acceptable. The result will not be achieved by means of self-motivated bargaining or impartial demonstration, but by deliberation involving interested parties;
- *publicity*: decisions and their supporting arguments must be open to public debate. Matters at issue, and their determinations, cannot be reciprocal if they are secret. Like Kant and Bentham enunciated, public confidence is generated by "openness" in government and decision-making processes; and
- *accountability*: the justification of decisions and acceptance of consequences—taking responsibility.

The conditions of deliberation (reciprocity, publicity, accountability) give citizens and officials some guidance in making political decisions but they leave much moral disagreement unresolved. Consequently, Gutman and Thompson (1997), extracting strengths from utilitarianism and drawing from Rawls' second principle, propose three elements to the "content" of deliberation. The content for "deliberation" is listed as:
- *basic liberty*: any act which is exercised in the interests of an individual, and which is not in conflict with the Common Good;

- *basic opportunity*: everyone must have a chance to successfully input into the deliberations which requires government to adopt responsibility for much of the deliberative process, including providing resources necessary to galvanise the public to participate; and
- *fair opportunity*: opportunities to succeed must be distributed in a non-discriminatory way so that everyone can be in a position to compete for high status positions and resources.

Fearon (1998) agrees that "deliberative democracy" is concerned with the engagement of people in a political process (rather than an *internal* deliberation with oneself). He therefore likens public "deliberation" to a discussion between people. He asks the question, "What good reasons might a group of people have for discussing matters before making some collective decision, rather than simply voting on the issue or using some other decision rule that does not involve discussion? In other words, what is the point or value of discussing things before making political decisions?" (p. 44). Fearon supplies six answers. He says that discussion:

- reveals "private information" such as: intensity of preference; probability of success; motives (p. 45).
- lessens or overcomes limited and fallible imaginations and calculating abilities because there is a good chance that "pooled capabilities" and discussion can "clarify the likely consequences of different policies and suggest entirely new ideas through brainstorming" (p. 49); as assisting with the identification/revelation of conflicts of interest; seeing issues from the point of view of others.
- forces or encourages "a particular mode of justifying demands or claims" (p. 52) such that selfish motives are less likely to be offered, not because the motives are not there, but because (a) participants in a public discussion rarely give manifestly self-interested justifications, (b) participating in a public discussion before making a choice that affects all is not, intuitively, a means of attaining a purely selfish result, but implies, at least, an acknowledgement of the common good.
- renders "the ultimate choice legitimate in the eyes of the group" (p. 55) because the more participants in the decision, the more likely are people to abide or support the result. More consensus means more agreement which leads to more people believing the decision to be correct; more consensus, achieved within a "fair procedure" permits those whose ideas were not adopted to be more contented with the outcome than they would have been without the discussion because their ideas had been heard and considered.

- improves "the moral or intellectual qualities of the participants" (p. 58) because discussion has good effects on people—a type of exercise in civic virtues : eloquence, rhetorical skill, empathy, courtesy, imagination, reasoning ability, educating themselves on a wide range of important-to-living-and-governance topics.

- is a means of "doing the 'right thing,' independent of any consequences of discussion" (p. 60). That is, discussion, and deliberation, is the "morally right thing to do."

My study of political theories has left me judging that the Australian people are likely, given the chance, to choose a democratic system with liberal freedoms. Again, my judgement is, that of all the different *types* of democratic systems, given the chance, Australians would opt for forms of participatory or consultative democracy. Fearon is explicit about the benefits of democratic deliberation and provides much of the reason for my adoption of the processes of deliberative democracy in Section Four.

To this point, in answer to the question posed at the beginning of this Section, "Is there a compelling reason for continuing with a public schooling system?" I have managed only to answer, "More than ever, there is a compelling reason for continuing with a schooling system for the public." The next step is to establish some fundamentals which might provide some basic shape to this system, and to take me closer to a full answer of the original question.

I have already concluded that there exists no social agreement concerning the social purposes of schooling, and I have suggested that there should be. This matter is addressed at length in Section Four. With the need for a set of socially constructed social purposes for schooling in the back of my mind, I propose to discuss "values" and "democracy" in a further search for elements which might shape a future system of schooling the public. According to the *Macquarie Dictionary* "values" are "qualities desirable as a means or as an end in themselves" while the Pocket Oxford declares them to be "one's principles or standards, one's judgement of what is valuable or important in life." No author, no participant in the public debate concerning schooling, decries "values." No-one argues that schools shouldn't reflect them. Many want to argue that it is *they* that have values, and give effect to values, best.

So, what do values look like? And, how might they help shape a future system of schooling the public?

Values, Virtues, Right and Wrong

Because values are judgements it is difficult to be authoritative about which are the good ones and which are the bad ones. Therefore I propose to cast widely to collect a full range of values—both historic and contemporary—before categorising them as the basis for an argument.

Hugh Mackay (2004), in his book *Right and Wrong—How to Decide for Yourself* lists a number of virtues variously identified by a number of history's leading figures. From Aristotle (384-322 BC), supported by Marcus Aurelius (121-180 AD), Helen Keller (1880-1968) and Immanuel Kant 1724-1804), he lists:

- reason
- sense of purpose
- participation in the world
- experiencing love and friendship.

From scholastic philosophy and Christianity he lists the "cardinal" virtues of:

- justice
- prudence
- temperance
- fortitude
- faith
- hope
- charity.

From David Hume (1711-1776) he lists:

- benevolence
- justice
- fidelity
- politeness
- modesty
- decency
- discretion
- industry
- frugality
- strength of mind
- cheerfulness
- courage.

From Andre Compte-Sponville he lists:

- politeness
- fidelity
- prudence
- temperance
- courage
- justice
- generosity
- compassion
- mercy
- gratitude
- humility
- simplicity
- tolerance
- purity
- gentleness
- good faith
- humour
- love.

To these listings of Mackay's we could add the values identified for Australian schools by the Australian Government's Values Project (2005). They are:

- care and compassion
- doing your best
- fair go
- freedom
- honesty and trustworthiness
- integrity
- respect
- responsibility
- understanding, tolerance and inclusion.

It may be that some philosophers would want to modify this list somewhat, but the collection is a large collection and appears not to be biased in any way. For the purposes of this dissertation, the detail is not as important as the possibilities of categorising the items into those which tend to benefit people *generally*, and those which more directly tend to

benefit *individuals*. Such a categorisation is relevant to consideration of the "Common Good" and "Individual Good" which is relevant to my discussion of schooling for the public and the individuals who comprise the public.

Throughout this dissertation I have frequently referred to the "Common Good," by which is meant a sense of the general welfare, in contrast to what is merely personal or parochial good (Hostetler, 2003, p. 350). Using this definition, it is possible to create, in the coming pages, a sub-list of virtues which clearly support community or the "Common Good," and another sub-list which support "Individual Good."

Given that some of the virtues listed will support *both* the "Common Good" and "Individual Good," the two sub-lists will become three sub-lists which, when taken together represent "GOOD." In order that comparisons might be made, another list "NO GOOD," placed side-by-side with the first list (comprising its three sub-lists), poses the anti-thesis of the first list. The two lists— "good" and "no good"—then might look something like this:

GOOD			NO GOOD
COMMON GOOD	BOTH	INDIVIDUAL GOOD	
	Reason		Unreasoned
	Sense of purpose		Purposeless
	Participation		Non-participation
Justice			Injustice
	Prudence		Imprudence
	Temperance		Intemperance
	Fortitude		Weakness
	Faith		Faithless
	Hope		Hopeless
Charity			Greed
Benevolence			Selfishness
		Discretion	Indiscretion
		Industry	Laziness
		Frugality	Wastefulness
Politeness			Rudeness
		Cheerfulness	Grumpiness
Modesty			Immodesty
Decency			Indecency
	Courage		Cowardice
		Strength of Mind	Frippery
Generosity			Meanness
Care and Compassion			Cruelty
Mercy			Ruthlessness
Gratitude			Ingratitude
Humility			Arrogance
	Simplicity		Excess
Tolerance			Intolerance
	Purity		Impure
	Gentleness		Roughness
Good faith			Deceitful
	Love		Hate
Kindness			Cruelty
	Courage		Cowardice
Faithfulness			Unfaithfulness
Fairness			Unfairness
		Doing Your Best	Laziness
	Honesty		Dishonesty
	Trustworthy		Untrustworthy
Fair Go			Injustice
		Freedom	Servitude
Integrity			Unethical
Respect			Disrespect
Responsibility			Irresponsibility
Understanding, tolerance + inclusion			Intolerance/hostility

With this done, what do we make of it all?

If a new system is to be constructed to replace the currently fractured, politically contested and highly inequitable schooling system, then we would want it to produce outcomes that are widely accepted as good/virtuous. To put it another way, it would be wrong, by any measure of virtue, to establish a new schooling system which, either by its structure or by its content, deliberately or inadvertently, was supportive of: unfairness, dishonesty,

hatefulness, intolerance/hostility, disrespect, arrogance, ingratitude, injustice, selfishness, greed, to choose just a few from the above "NO GOOD" list.

From this view, that a new schooling system must not be constructed to reflect or reproduce a list of "NO GOODS" or "wrongs," it follows that it *should* support that which is regarded as "right"— a future list of virtues (Hostetler, 2003, pp. 360-361). Not necessarily the list as recorded above, as that list is not the *agreed product* of a meaningful public engagement—a political deliberation—and, as a consequence, lacks political legitimacy. That list is constructed here, and referred to, only to provide example for the argument. A list which might actually have a public effect when being used will need to have widespread public support, thus requiring an effective form of public participation and agreement. It needs to be socially determined and socially agreed.

From the categorisation outlined above, it can be graphically and persuasively established that there are virtues for the Common Good and virtues for Individual Good, even if there might be debate about which is which, and that these "goods" have their antitheses, the "no goods."

A socially determined set of social purposes for schooling, themselves informed by a general prior view of that which is "good" is, in my view, an excellent and considered first step. Furthermore, the categorisation of "Common Good" and "Individual Good" suggests another consideration. The resultant schooling system will still be lop-sided if only one set of the "goods" is satisfied. To those who believe all the good values should be pursued, it will make sense for future schools to be constructed such that the "good" they give effect to, is a balanced "good"—not overly skewed towards Common Good (to the detriment of Individual Good) nor skewed towards Individual Good (to the detriment of the Common Good). A new system which is consciously constructed to serve the needs of both individuals and the wider public, must ensure that due weight is given to virtues which support both the Common Good and Individual Good. It would be wrong to establish schools which are lop-sided—supporting only one category or the other—as to do so would be to neglect an entire category of virtues.

To present the problem from a more historical orientation, if one looks at the virtues listed, it is difficult to conceive of a happy world bereft of the virtues listed under "Common Good." It is similarly difficult to think of a world bereft of the virtues listed under "Individual Good."

A schooling system for the public which emphasises the "Common Good" but denies important elements of "Individual Good" will be eschewed by significant numbers of citizens who, in the absence of a proper balance and in the presence of an encouraging individualistic ideology and legitimising political climate, give priority to achieving their "Individual Good."

Under this logic, a church-based schooling system which provides for religious choice (Individual Good) and, in the provision, separates the community along religious and ethnic boundaries for the entirety of the schooling experience (P-12), will be resented and resisted by those with concern for social cohesion and the Common Good.

Similarly, a public schooling system which provides a mix of comprehensive and specialised schooling for all students no matter what their socio-economic or personal circumstances (Common Good) but, in the provision, denies the strongly religiously-inclined the opportunity, properly resourced and stoutly defended, to learn of and practice their religion in a public school, will be resented and resisted by those with concern for hard-won liberal freedoms and Individual Good. This same point might be similarly made, in greater detail in another research, in respect of cultural practices(s)—both in the "positive" sense of indigenous knowledges not being lost, but also in a "negative" sense of cultural practices (indigenous and others) that are, for example, harmful to girls and women.

This dichotomy between Individual and Common Goods has provided much of the fuel for sectarian "religious rights" conflict in Australia throughout the 19th century and, with leverage off the resiliently separate Catholic system, the re-appearance in the late 20th and early 21st centuries of large numbers of denominationally defined church-based schools. The dichotomy was resolved, in the late 19th century, in favour of the Common Good, with a politically favoured secular public school system. But the "settlement"—a political victory of one side over another—was lop-sided, denying as it did, the Individual "good" of those with stronger religious beliefs. The "settlement" was illusory. Eighty years later in the late 20th century, with the emergence of a new and dominant ideology encouraging of a different lop-sidedness towards Individual Good—neo-conservatism's insistence on minimal government intervention in any social process, and a reliance on the society-shaping forces of a free market—a new political "settlement" was forged involving both major political parties. This time, the prevailing pressure is not to replace sectarian divisions with the Common Good of social cohesion (using a schooling system common to all), but to encourage individuals to pursue their individual choice by selecting a church-

based school which aligns most suitably with their Individual Good, or an exclusionary school which is not about religious freedom but the Individual Good of personal gain.

This new "settlement," while reversing victors and vanquished, is no less contested than the first "settlement" because it celebrates dominance of Individual Good over Common Good rather than resolving, or attempting to resolve, the aforementioned dichotomy, and neglects any political process designed to reach agreement on socio-political fundamentals and their subsequent application to the process of shaping an appropriate education system for Australia. The boot is on the other foot, to be sure. Last century's loser is this century's winner—and travelling triumphant, in parallel and unscathed by this conflict, continues a system of exclusionary schools. Australia's schooling system, true to its entire post-1788 history, is again being shaped within the context of strongly fuelled adversarial politics.

An examination of the categories of virtues, and their opposites, serves as a reminder that there are a number of anti-values which should be avoided, and categories of values which, depending on the strength of one's concern for either, or both, the Common Good and Individual Good, provides some early clues to the fundamentals of a new system. It suggests a system of schooling which provides support for virtues of *both* the Common Good *and* virtues of Individual Good for all children. That is, it would not be good enough to construct one set of schools which provided for Individual Good and another set of schools to provide for Common Good. To advocate this would be to advance the view that it is "right" to support a number of schools known to be neglectful of one sub-set of "right" values thus opening the way for these schools to neglect other "right" values presumably to the advantage of their antithesis—"wrong" values. Given these considerations, and assuming that most citizens believe "fairness" to be a worthwhile virtue, it seems appropriate to propose that any future system of schooling should comprise only schools which pursue for all students, a balanced mix of Common Good and Individual Good objectives. The nature of this balance might well flow from a curriculum structure and a schooling structure to be generated from a future socially agreed set of social purposes for schooling.

It may be that the dual list of virtues (Individual Good/Common Good) can best be achieved in separate systems of public, church-based and private schools or, alternatively, it may be the case they can be better addressed inside one system which mandates teachings for, and provides an environment conducive to, achieving the Common Good while similarly mandating time, comprehensive freedom, and resources to teach for Individual Good.

Of course, it would be essential that no schools seek to advance "wrong" values, as this would raise a matter of (im)morality.

In the event a set of socially determined and agreed values was constructed it would provide a politically legitimised (and powerful) standard against which current schooling systems could be measured, and a future system be constructed. It would differ from the measurements constructed, as I have presented, by Rawls and Gutman in that the measurement would have political credibility. Rawls proposed, theoretically, a device for measuring worth of events. His measure contained two principles. The first was to guarantee liberal freedoms (Individual Good) and the second was to tolerate inequities only when they were working in favour of the disadvantaged (Common Good). Gutman proposed, theoretically, a benchmark with three elements: civic equality (Common Good), individual rights and liberties (Individual Good), and equal opportunity (Common Good).

To buttress the reader's interest at this point of the dissertation, it may be worth speculating about the potential application of these categories of "rights" and "wrongs." It might be, for example, that their application to existing categories of schools could reveal:

  a) a duplicitous public system masquerading as open to all when it is unwelcoming to a large section of the public because of its denial of established religious rights;

  b) a self-serving and socially divisive church-based system masquerading as a bastion of values and morality when its very existence maximises community fracturing, socio-religious separation and ignorance, and the preconditions for social conflict and, like the public system, is unwelcoming to children from families with strong allegiances to other religions; and

  c) a disingenuous sub-system of exclusionary schools masquerading as a fulfilment of parental choice when its existence actively promotes the generational passage of privilege from the elite and wealthy to the elite and wealthy, and subordinates all others to a second class category of citizen—and is therefore actively anti-democratic.

In respect of a potential new system of schooling, the logic suggests that all schools should provide for Individual Rights (thus invoking the earlier discussion concerning "choice") and the Common Good.

This short discussion of virtues has not led to a conclusion that public schools are necessary, or that church-based schools are necessary. It has not reached closure on this issue. It has however, *supported a case for educating the public with schools which support*

both the Common Good and Individual Good, and it has further accentuated the absence of a socially agreed set of schooling purposes which help identify and incorporate "Common Good" and "Individual Good" virtues.

The case is building. The elements so far:

- it is becoming more, not less, pressing for the public, generally, to be well-educated;
- contemporary theorists are suggesting a process by which social agreements can be reached—a process which might be employed in the exercise of constructing an appropriate schooling system to serve that public and in the determination of its status as a public schooling system, or a non-public system, or a mix of both; or something different; and
- the shape of a new system should have due regard to values which include concern for both the Common Good and Individual Good, and which deny anti-values such as those listed above as "No Good."

The Democratic Goal: A Well-Educated Public, not a Privileged Elite

In 1915, John Dewey made a strong case for an educated public in a political system which relies on regular expressions of public will. I would argue that Dewey's position is even stronger now, given the 20th century spread of "democratic" regimes, and the large number of nations currently introducing democratic practices. Dewey's arguments are made even more urgent by a raft of new issues confronting today's "globalised" world—issues which include concerns for the survival of the Human species in a life-supporting environment.

Dewey wrote in support of a liberal democracy. Since Dewey's writings, that liberal democratic model has become the subject of much criticism from within the ranks of both liberals and democrats. With the individual rights and freedoms of the majority now attended to, liberalism is seen by many to be lacking the power necessary to attend to the complaints of injustice emerging from minorities. Nor has liberalism, to this point, been able to deal with new, urgent and global problems. In response to this critique of liberalism, "deliberative" democrats such as Habermas (1996), Gutman and Thompson (1997), and Fearon (1998) propose some contextual requirements, and a process, which, it is argued, will enjoin peoples with different views to be respectful of each other's point of view, tolerant of difference, compromising within the acts of decision-making, while dealing with pressing social issues more successfully. Deliberationists, like traditional republicans, are

keen for maximum numbers of citizens to be involved in these acts, as the resulting decisions have greater political legitimacy, and therefore greater effects on social coherence, if the stakeholders feel they have been properly and meaningfully engaged in an equal and powerful process of negotiation.

When preparing his thesis in *Ideology and Utopia*, immediately after World War II, with the replacement of the liberal-democratic Weimar Republic by the Nazi Third Reich still fresh in his experience, Karl Manheim (1946) observed that when the State becomes more and more influential in the shaping of societal processes, it is more and more important for the public to be well-educated generally. Looking back at "modern times" immediately after the war he opines the "monstrous" effects of inadequate societal *thinking* processes and concludes, "The significance of social knowledge grows proportionately with the increasing necessity of regulatory intervention in the social process" (p. 1) an observation from a different era which nevertheless provides an insight to the consequences of a lesser commitment to a widely educated citizenry.

Dewey's life spanned many historical events including the American Civil War, two World Wars, the early parts of the Cold War, and the Great Depression. At his 80th birthday celebration he gave an address entitled "Creative Democracy—the Task Before Us" (Edman, 1955, p. 308) in which he made reference to the "founding fathers" of American democracy and their high ideals. He then referred to a decline of democratic engagement in America. He spoke of a crisis and argued that democracy was not a phenomenon which existed on its own, that it needed to be maintained vigorously, repaired and renovated, that it was a political organism requiring great care and engagement. Without the benefit of current thinking from deliberationists, he exhorted people to "live" democracy in their everyday life, thus exhibiting and practising

> possession and continual use of certain attitudes, forming personal character and determining desire and purpose in all the relations of life.

Dewey went on to argue,

> Democracy as a personal, an individual way of life, involves nothing fundamentally new. But when applied it puts a new practical meaning in old ideas. Put into effect it signifies that powerful present enemies of democracy can be successfully met *only by the creation of personal attitudes in individual human beings* [italics added]; that we must get over our tendency to think that its defence can be found in any external means whatever, whether military or civil, if they are separated from individual attitudes so deep-seated as to constitute personal character. (Edman, 1955, p. 310)

Under the circumstances outlined by deliberationists, a widely and deeply educated public, in all matters concerned with the processes of societal decision-making as well as the content themes with which the political process is dealing, is clearly beneficial, and may even be essential to the success of the deliberationists' cause. This suggests a *coherent* system of schooling engaging all the public to ensure widespread social knowledge and to enhance the basis of participation. The schooling model suggested by the discussion needs to be coherent—it could not tolerate the unevenness in access and outcomes associated with George Fane's restricted and market model. It would need to be capable of servicing all students despite their geographic location and socio-economic circumstances.

My analysis of the literature on political theory has identified a number of themes which might be, and which I believe a public process would agree to be, reflected in this coherent system:

First, people must be treated as both individuals and as social beings.

Human Beings are a gregarious species—a social animal. Much of our psychological, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being is bound up with how we socialise, or are able to socialise, with others. This side of Humanity is explicitly recognised in the writings of republicans, some conservatives, communitarians, associative democrats, deliberative process and citizenship theorists—and liberals when they are defending charges made of them by those seeking to serve the "common good."

That humans are also individuals, with individually different potentials, characteristics and needs is also self-evident. Both threads of this first theme are important—individual and social.

In respect of the *individual* there is a remarkable commonality of thought amongst liberal, conservative, republican, associative and deliberative democrats. Even more radical liberals such as Rawls lay down, as their first tenet, the equal rights of all individuals to the basic liberal freedoms: speech, religion, association and equality before the law and in the market. Rawls' permissible inequalities are to occur only in the distribution of resources and positions—and only then if to the advantage of the relatively disadvantaged.

In respect of the social thread to this theme, every theoretical camp makes claim to its importance. Liberalism defends itself with reference to the "social," republicans' social and political activity intertwine and this activity is central to them, conservatives claim to

protect the stable and unifying aspects of society, while associative and deliberative democrats want to strengthen it and communitarians appeal to it as their raison d'etre.

Our education system needs, as a consequence, to ensure the population's need is satisfied for both matters of Individual Good and matters of the Common Good. This theme intersects with the issue of "choice" and has serious curriculum consequences.

Second, politics—the management of power between people—has purpose.

Politics is about power with purpose. Political theorists, as outlined in earlier paragraphs, outline their theories concerning the best way to achieve certain individual and social goals. In democracies, elections provide the citizenry with an opportunity to assess the relative purposes and effectiveness of competing politicians and parties. Businesses have business plans with specific goals. Organisations within civil society are established with purpose.

And yet, the social purposes of schooling, as articulated by the owners of Australia's schools, are difficult to find, and a social agreement around social purposes doesn't exist. It was not until the Hobart Declaration of 1989 that any attempt was made to achieve some coherence in Australian schooling and, as I have argued, that document and its 1999 Adelaide successor, were seriously flawed if they were to be regarded as statements of social purposes for schooling.

There is no agreed social purpose(s) and, without it, it is hard to envisage an agreed national curriculum with its shape and content generated by considerations of Common and Individual Good.

Our schooling system should have social purpose.

Third, all citizens should be recipients of the benefits of the political system.

That is to say, for those who ascribe to a fundamentally democratic system, no person or set of people should be favoured by the structure of the political system or, by extension, the schooling system which supports it. In the 21st century, to have a Periclean democracy for all but slaves and women would not be a democracy at all! To exclude Aborigines and African-Americans from basic democratic rights in Australia and USA was similarly wrong in the 20th century and the views of various groups now seeking to be heard politically need to be addressed. Like all other of these themes, this is not a view held by all people. But it is a view that I believe is now held by an overwhelming majority of the citizenry and,

given a deliberative social process, might well be a view held by an ever widening proportion of the citizenry.

The goal of equal benefits from the political system, to be achieved, will require different outcomes from our schooling system such that those who are currently disempowered have better opportunities, as well as schooling content with intrinsic value which addresses the causes of their disempowerment and provides pathways out of it.

Our schooling system should reflect our desire to ensure all students are recipients of the benefits of the political system.

This theme has implications for the nature of the social purposes of schooling, subsequent curriculum, and the structure of schooling.

Fourth, all people, if they are not to be discriminated against, are to be equal political units.

All people, no matter their race, religion, geographic location or socio-economic status, must be treated with equal value. They may have shared (group) interests or they may have strongly held individual interests—or a mix of both.

This theme, particularly in an industry which endeavours to move students from their "known world" to the "unknown," is of great relevance and has implications for the exercise of "choice." For a politically consistent, or coherent, education system this has a general consequence—a need to ensure that each individual has considerable freedom from compulsion so that individual rights (including freedom to learn and practice one's religion) and interests can be pursued intensively, with depth and vigour. This theme also has serious implications for curriculum structure.

Fifth, high levels of citizen participation in political processes are desirable.

If democratic practices are to be pursued, extended and deepened in current liberal democracies, and introduced and consolidated elsewhere, then high levels of participation by the citizenry, throughout civil society and ultimately within the polity, are highly desirable—leading to high levels of political legitimacy and accompanying social cohesion.

Liberals' "freedom" is one of undertaking life's many responsibilities without running into barriers established by government. For republicans, freedom has more to do with having the right to participate and be influential in their own governance. Deliberative democrats

similarly seek high levels of participation. Liberals make the claim that it is not possible to get high levels of political participation because citizens' life circumstances are so much better than they used to be and they feel no compulsion, nor moral requirement, to participate—a claim more embraced by Galbraith's (1996) "favoured, affluent and rich" than relatively disadvantaged minorities within the same polities, or disempowered and disenfranchised peoples—minorities and majorities—living under more authoritarian regimes.

In any event, the observation that citizens refuse to participate doesn't make participation less desirable and, for a schooling system, an ignorant or apathetic public is exactly the type of challenge for which schooling is designed. A new schooling system, consciously attending to matters raised in the preceding themes, is likely to contribute to political consciousness, and participation skill levels can be expected to rise. Furthermore, if the political system and supportive instrumentalities (such as the education system, media and public associations) reinforce higher participative expectations as envisaged by key political thinkers, then political participation can be expected to increase substantially.

For some, the barrier to present political participation is a feeling that they cannot have an influence, that no matter what they do or say, the political process will roll on regardless. For these people, all that is required is a political system which itself is modified in such a way that citizens feel they can be influential, that time spent is not wasted. Deliberative theorists such as Habermas and Gutman and, with a different twist, Cohen and Rogers, provide some excellent insights into this matter as we have seen earlier. Thus, high levels of participation requires high levels of education for the general citizenry, which, in turn, suggests the need for a coherent system, including curriculum for all students which addresses these matters, for schooling the public at large.

Sixth, there needs to be present, in the political process, numbers of contending political theories.

A "good" society will contain a vibrant public sphere where many conflicting views can be expressed and where the political context will include freedom of speech and association, will outlaw authoritarian regimes and closed and/or corrupt political and bureaucratic practices, while ensuring the pre-conditions for debate—a public discourse rather than lop-sided decision-making.

Why—as part of a political theory—should we have many theories? Because theories carry with them rational thought, high levels of philosophic and political analysis, understanding

(contested, often) of history and human experience which can be valuable in the pursuit of new answers to new problems—current answers to current problems.

In any event, numbers of competing political theories are likely always to exist. Unlike Chantal (2004) who regards the attempt to reach social consensus as unrealistic, undemocratic and repressive, Rawls proposes that a political process leading to his desired "overlapping consensus" be preceded with a "constitutional consensus" in which the competing factions *agree* to a political process which, it is hoped, will lead to a social agreement—his overlapping consensus. Other deliberationists such as Gutman (1997, 2003), Habermas (1996), Cohen and Rogers (1995), and Cohen and Arato (1992), accept the benefits of variously competing ideas while recognising the *necessity* to resolve many of them, and investigate means by which this might be achieved.

What is the curriculum consequence of this sixth theme? For the presence of competing theories to be important, it is just as important that the political participants (all citizens) have an educated "working" knowledge of them so that they are better able to participate in the seething activities of civil society and provide thoughtful influence into the political system. Curriculum has a highly political relevance to this goal of an informed citizenry, as it contains the potential to address, directly through the formal curriculum and informally through the "hidden" curriculum, both the content of differing points-of-view and the processes that should be used to consider them and negotiate workable agreements and settlements between them. The curriculum's structure and content is relevant, even crucial to this public engagement and deliberation. In Section Four I will argue that these high interest, high relevance themes must not be restricted to the last years of schooling when approximately 50% of public school students and a disproportionate number of low SES students have *left* school, in boredom and relative failure. It will be argued that these matters are capable of introduction to *all* students and, from the earliest years, can become progressively more sophisticated, and that for relatively *disempowered* students such as those from low SES families and communities, these considerations comprise a good deal of the knowledge and understandings which are an essential prerequisite for good retention rates, improved schooling outcomes, entry to higher education and, ultimately, replacement of social disadvantage and disempowerment with socio-political knowledge, engagement and personal empowerment.

Seventh, concern for social cohesion must be consistently addressed.

The antitheses of social cohesion are: social separateness; divisions of privilege and relative disadvantage; across-religion ignorance and conflict; outbreaks of violence, death and loss

of property. In a democracy, public policy can arrest or accelerate tendencies towards social discomfort and unrest. As a consequence, public policy must always address this matter.

Schooling isn't the only policy area which can address matters of social cohesion. Housing policy (FEANTSA, n.d.), with its potential to produce different mixes of population, is also important, as is the availability of transport to access important cultural centres (e.g. churches, mosques, temples). But schooling policy is a crucial area of public policy because of its capacity to influence generational cohorts through the means of the formal curriculum, the informal curriculum, and mixes of students working and playing together through their entire childhood and adolescence as a consequence of their common enrolment.

For those concerned with the political stability of a nation state, or indeed, international relations, this matter might be regarded as the single most important of the seven themes.

Returning to the question of whether there is need for a continuing public schooling system, I have argued that together, these seven themes have strong consequences for a cohesive system of schooling for the public. They do more than strongly reinforce the earlier conclusion that society needs "a coherent system of schooling engaging all the public." Taken together, they suggest some more shape to this coherent system of schooling. They suggest that schools should address both Individual Good and Common Good themes, thus begging the question as to how the Common Good is identified, defined and translated into pedagogically appropriate curriculum—a question addressed in Section Four, and a process about which deliberationists have something appropriate to say. They suggest all students are as politically important as the others, and that privilege should not be part of the system. And they suggest that many different points of view are important to the system, not just one, or a few narrowly interpreted views of the world.

The weight of principles, while not directly addressing the matter of ownership and control of schools, suggests, at least, an ecumenical character to schooling provision—an approach that is well separated from any particular political ideology or religion or privileged position, and again, a process about which deliberationists have something appropriate to say. And the principles suggest schooling be undertaken for social purposes agreed throughout society—purposes which address both Individual Good and Common Good.

At this point, having searched Australia's schooling history for direction, and political theory for an appropriate political context and strategy, and prior to describing the shape of

a "cohesive" system of schooling the public, it will be valuable to briefly outline a number of different restructuring solutions proposed in recent years by prominent researchers and educationists because this thesis is not the first to propose a "restructuring" of schooling. That is, the proposal emerging from this thesis will be more easily understood when viewed in the context of other major proposals currently within the public domain.

Future options

Eight options, with the name of the key proponent, are outlined below:

Option One: George Fane—abolish public schools, and compulsory schooling beyond Year 6 (age 12):

A paper commissioned by the Australian Government and authored in 1984 by an academic from the Australian National University (ANU), George Fane, included recommendations for:

- the *complete* privatisation of all educational institutions. That is, the abolition of public pre-schools, public primary and secondary schools, and public tertiary institutions;
- compulsory education to be *limited* to the first six years of formal education—until the end of primary school;
- all *compulsory* education to be financed by a system of vouchers;
- a further two years of *optional* education to be funded using a system of vouchers—to the end of Year 8; and
- beyond Year 8, abolition of all regulations, taxes, vouchers, and subsidies for schools. (Fane, 1984, p. 111)

Fane acknowledged his recommendations would be difficult for governments, in a democracy, to implement quickly but was optimistic about the prospects of future governments systematically implementing policies which prepared the ground and introduced his vision part by part. The Director of the Centre of Policy Studies observed that the Fane Report "should serve as a useful focal point in the debate…of education policy in Australia" (Fane, 1984, Preface).

It is unlikely that George Fane would be unhappy with the progress of his agenda in Australia over the ensuing two decades.

Option Two: Milton Friedman—privatise with vouchers:

Unlike Fane, Friedman appears to accept the existence of a public system of schooling, but only in full competition with an unregulated schooling market, and funded only by a system of vouchers, one for each child, held by the parents who choose at which school they will "spend" their voucher by enrolling their child in that school. Friedman is American but his advocacy is not restricted to the United States. He draws from his favoured version of economic strategy and applies his economic principles to the provision of schooling. His views are different from Fane's views and a little less terminal for the public schools than Fane's. Although Friedman appears to assume a continuing public school system, it is not clear that his policies would actually lead to such a result. In fact, the heading of his paper quoted below is *"Public Schools— Make Them Private"* which suggests an end point with no public schools. Friedman's view is encapsulated below:

> Our elementary and secondary educational system needs to be radically restructured. Such a reconstruction can be achieved only by privatizing a major segment of the educational system-i.e., by enabling a private, for-profit industry to develop that will provide a wide variety of learning opportunities and offer effective competition to public schools. The most feasible way to bring about such a transfer from government to private enterprise is to enact in each state a voucher system that enables parents to choose freely the schools their children attend. The voucher must be universal, available to all parents, and large enough to cover the costs of a high-quality education. No conditions should be attached to vouchers that interfere with the freedom of private enterprises to experiment, to explore, and to innovate. (Friedman, 1995, p. 1)

Friedman has become a self-confessed campaigner for a system of privatising vouchers—an "activist for major reform in the organisation of schooling" (Friedman, 2005, p. A16), a campaign consistent with his more general political views as revealed in his testimony to a committee of the Texas legislature:

> Our schooling is deteriorating because it is a socialist enterprise. Except possibly for the military, education is the largest socialist enterprise in the United States. There are a few loopholes: private schools to which parents can send their children if they can afford to pay or, in the case of parochial schools, if they have certain religious views. However, ninety percent of all kids are in government schools. And that socialist institution performs the same as most other socialist institutions. There are some general features of a socialist enterprise, whether it's the Post Office, schools, or the war on drugs. The enterprise is inefficient, expensive, very advantageous to a small group of people, and harmful to a lot of people. That was true of socialism in Russia, it was true of socialism in Poland, and it's true of socialism in the United States (Americans United for Separation of Church and State, 1995).

In Australia, The Centre for Independent Studies (CIS) which is consistently critical of public schools (Buckingham, 2000), and an advocate of privatisation in general and school vouchers in particular, advances the Friedman ideology in its article entitled *"A Private*

Education for All.” To the CIS, the Friedman vouchers are a means for entirely replacing public schooling. In this scenario there is no room for a system of public schooling or any means of resisting the market's propensity to enable wealth and privilege to accumulate to a relatively small number of beings who, being in a privileged and powerful position are able to ensure privilege is replicated, reproduced in the system of schooling—with a concomitant loss of opportunity and equity within the rest of society.

Option Three: Professor Brian Caldwell—declare all non-public schools that receive public funds as "public":

Successfully maintaining public schools as singularly secular, centrally managed and totally reliant on public funding is, according to some analysts, not desirable or possible into the future. According to Caldwell, a prominent author and Australian academic in the field of education, a basic alternative public schooling model might have features such as:

- all current non-government schools which receive public funds should be designated "public" schools;
- all non-government schools' owners will maintain their ownership and management controls;
- any public school "whose communities and staff have the commitment and capacity" can change from being a public school to a non-public school;
- all public schools are to be funded with a mix of public funds and private funds to be raised by the school from parents (fees) and corporations (sponsorships/donations);
- all public schools are to be self-managed including local selection and promotion of staff; and
- as a consequence, only a tiny central bureaucracy will be necessary (Caldwell, 1997, pp. 366-367; Caldwell & Hayward, 1998, pp. 137-138, 145-157).

The Caldwell solution would spell the end of public schooling as we know it. Many thousands of Australian schools would be publicly funded but "privately" managed. As we have seen in earlier chapters, "private" has different meanings with most "private" schools being directly connected and subordinate to key church directives and mission and vision statements. Churches make no secret of their primary mission—evangelism. The exclusionary denominational schools are both less strident about their missionary role and their commitment to concerns for the common good and social justice and, as evidenced by their explicitly exclusionary enrolment policies are devoted to engendering and replicating

privilege. While Caldwell is prepared to envision a new system of schools managed by the current managers of non-public schools, he fails to:

- provide any insights as to how this new system will address the major issues confronting Australia's students—deeply entrenched inequity and widespread student boredom;

- reveal how it will address the political imperative of "social cohesion"—a matter of large and increasing concern within the OECD and its member states; and

- suggest how the new system will have greater socio-political support than the current system with its continuing historic levels of conflict and disputation.

Option Four: Professor Marginson—declare as "public" all schools that sign up to an agreed set of egalitarian values:

Acknowledging the advanced stage of "marketisation" within the public system and the wider private market, Professor Marginson (1998) sees the Catholic school system in two states as having more features of a public system than the public system itself. Marginson asserts that "the claim that state sector education is *ipso facto* more democratic has become deeply problematic because of shifts in the character of government itself, and because of the marketisation of government education systems, which has rendered them more corporatist and competitive than previously" (p. 69). Marginson wants to defend the public schooling system but he wants to redefine it in a way which permits public owners of schools and private owners of schools to both qualify as "public" so long as their schools sign up to a wad of agreed values which require that these schools: "contribute to open and democratic social relations; are tolerant and inclusive; respect difference; and are associated with egalitarian practices in which the mode of learning is solidaristic rather than competitive, and the education of one is advanced by the education of all to the highest possible level of achievement" (p. 69).

The processes required to reach Marginson's agreement are not clear. However, the proposal, not surprisingly given the history of Catholic commitment to matters of social justice (Hogan, 1993, pp. 135-146), is friendly to the Catholic system of schools and appears to be more of a pragmatic settlement with non-exclusionary non-public schools to the detriment of exclusionary schools, than a new drive for publicness, educational equity and social justice. The proposal is different from the Caldwell proposal which insists it is strongly in favour of public schooling but effectively removes public schooling's major features with little guaranteed commitment to equity, social justice and the common good. Marginson's (1998) proposal, while narrowly focussed on funding patterns which he

acknowledges have been "forced on us" (p. 70) attempts to forge a political unity with the politically powerful Catholic system in an attempt to put a brake on privatising influences which he describes as "highly destructive of public education" (p. 75).

Marginson's suggestions are short on detail and process and do not address the large deficiencies in the schooling system(s), but they have the positive feature of attempting to find common ground and common purpose among those involved with schooling who have a concern for more than the desires of individuals. It is not clear how Marginson invents his set of nominated values, whether they are capable of being the product of a socially collaborative political process, whether church-based schools would be motivated enough to relinquish their current strong and separate non-government entity, or capable of "policing" once the new system of schooling was established.

Nor does the Marginson scenario make a strong contribution to the urgent political matter of social cohesion as it accepts the continuing enrolment of large sections of Australia's citizenry in "identity" schools.

In any event, it is improbable that Marginson offers the churches enough motivation. He offers them better and continued public funding if they sign up to his values. He doesn't offer them a political means to help construct those values. Thus they must take him, or the government which takes up his proposal, on *trust* because there is little political strength attaching to the proposal itself. This weak state-of-affairs would be different if the decision was the product of a society-wide and participative process, as it is much harder to put a political decision into reverse when the agreement is all-pervasive, reaching deep into civil society and the base of the electorate. Similar to Caldwell and, as I have demonstrated in Section Three, consistent with 200 years of political preoccupation and battle over funding policies, the Marginson proposal grows out of a concern for the school funding debate not from an analysis of the large areas of weak learning outcomes from Australian schools and the reasons for it, not from a concern for an appropriate schooling system geared to support the key features of a socially-agreed desired future society, not because of an explicit concern for a "socially coherent" society.

Option Five: Louise Watson/Michael Furtado—public funding in return for public responsibilities:
Watson (2007) accepts the continuing existence of separate public and church-based schools but moves to dull the "identity" of these separately owned schools. She says, "One system of funding public and private schools together would be to offer public funding in

return for public responsibilities" (p.146). She defines the public responsibilities in terms of an open enrolment policy. Funding of private schools would be contingent on this. She suggests:

> This would mean that (full) public funding would only be offered to private schools who agreed to implement a public enrolment policy—i.e.: to accept all students living within a particular locality. They would however be permitted to give preference (within agreed limits) to families of particular religious or ethnic affiliations, such as Catholics or Armenians. These schools would not be permitted to charge fees… (p.146)

Watson is quick to note that her suggestion is "likely to be resisted by private schools…because the power to select students is a key advantage appreciated by private schools, and one which they would be reluctant to relinquish for an obligation to become more socially inclusive" (p.146).

Furtado (2007) argues that it is no longer appropriate to see the Australian citizenry as a public. He describes a modern Australia as comprising a number of publics and, "because there are so many 'publics' the common good becomes the lived expression of several public goods and the task of the polity is to preside over conditions that will bring the common good to fruition while respecting the diversity of forms of public education within one common, equal and fully funded school system" (p.134).

As a consequence of this argument, Furtado (2007) sees no difficulty with the nation's student population gathering together in an array of schools which reflect those different publics, so long as those schools "promote the common good" (p.133)—an argument I have attempted to address explicitly.

In any event, Furtado (2007) advocates an integrated system of schools such that existing public, church-based, and exclusionary schools are all regarded and funded as public schools "thus providing the public with a choice that does not depend on its capacity to pay fees" (p.134). He mentions a number of important "accountabilities" for these schools, similar to Watson, which, if implemented would make exclusionary and church-based schools much more like public schools, matters such as "equal opportunity, access and inclusion, being intended as no different to those of state schools" (p. 135).

Option Six: Professor Barry McGaw—Co-Location:
Barry McGaw, OECD's foundation Director for Education (2002-2005) and currently Director, Melbourne Education Research Institute at the University of Melbourne, notes that Australia's schooling system is becoming more and more "differentiated." He

discusses this phenomenon, arguing that OECD countries are concerned for both quality and equity for good social as well as economic reasons. He shows, from OECD data, that differentiated schools do no better for the educationally proficient but do hold back the less proficient, thus producing a lower overall outcome for the nation. He reveals his anxiety about widespread differentiation of schools and its negative consequences for "social cohesion." McGaw (2006) sketches his bigger societal picture thus:

> It is often claimed that many of the experiences that used to be shared by young people growing up are no longer available. Various clubs and other social organisations of which young people, and sometimes their families, were members have either substantially declined or disappeared altogether. In this context, it is then often said that school is the one common experience building shared understandings. In fact, it is schooling, not school, that is the common experience. Schools frequently divide on the basis of gender, faith, social background, wealth, geography and so on. Schools are, therefore, well placed to build bonding social capital within their constituencies but the important question is whether they can build bridging social capital. From an Australian perspective, we can note that our schools clearly divide each cohort of students on all of the dimensions just mentioned. We need to ask whether their practices reinforce the divisions or whether they work in any way effectively to bridge them. Given the growth of the non-government sector, we need specifically to consider whether that development, in the name of choice and, with government funding, in the name of fiscal fairness, has positive or negative effects on education outcomes and on bridging social capital and, ultimately, social cohesion. (p. 30)

On its website, The Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre emphasises this part of McGaw's contribution with a summary:

> The need to improve the quality of education is well accepted across OECD and other countries as they seek to strengthen their human capital to underpin their modern, knowledge economies. Improved equity is also important for this purpose, since the demand for high-level skills is widespread and the opportunities for the low-skilled are diminishing.

> Improved equity in education is also important for social cohesion. There are countries in which the education system seems primarily to reproduce existing social arrangements, conferring privilege where it already exists and denying it where it does not. Even in countries where the diagnosis might be less extreme, the capacity of schooling to build social cohesion is often diminished by the way in which schools separate individuals and groups (The Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre, 2006).

In respect of greater differentiation between schools, and the problem McGaw sees that development holding for social cohesion, he adopts two poses. First, he accepts that, despite anxieties concerning its actual benefits/disadvantages "the differentiation of the Australian system is now well established." Second, he asks, "Can we organise schools which are differentiated and collaborating?"(McGaw, 2006, slide 34).

Being the positively constructive academic that he is, McGaw then offers, albeit without confidence, a hesitant answer to his own question:

> Co-location of government and non-government schools is one strategy. An example from the late 1980s in South Australia, is Golden Grove where there are three secondary schools, on one site: government, Catholic and joint Anglican/Uniting Church. They share a library, senior science facilities and home economics and manual arts facilities. They offer different specialist courses, including in Languages Other Than English which they timetable at the same time. Students can move between schools for their courses and have a wider range of choice than any one school could provide. Funds change hands but the net flows are not large. There is one choir and one annual musical production for the three schools together. There is now growing experience with this kind of co-location but not much systematic evidence about its impact on social capital or, indeed, social cohesion. (McGaw, 2006, slide 34)

McGaw appears to be motivated by something different than the historic problem of funding schools to which Caldwell, Watson, Furtado and Marginson are responding. McGaw has analysed the learning outcomes and knows that differentiated schools are a problem for systems. But they are entrenched, particularly between public and private with their obvious and considerable differences in socio-economic status which he knows to be the most significant indicator of educational outcomes. He is also confronted by a wrangled system of public/private and state/territory/commonwealth responsibilities which appears to be concretised, and he says so. So, with good motive but now leaving his data-fed realm, he proposes a bringing together of different schools on to the same site.

"Co-location" of different types of schools is an interesting proposal. It doesn't deal with differentiation, at least in the short term. It doesn't deal with Australia's appallingly high level of "relative disadvantage" revealed so powerfully by UNICEF and it doesn't deal with widespread student boredom and the need to examine the curriculum. It doesn't deal with exclusionary privilege. It is nevertheless an interesting and socially progressive proposition. It is interesting to note that the example McGaw cites—co-location of public, Catholic and Anglican/Uniting—is a co-location of three low-fee systemic schools, all of them exhibiting an element of "publicness" prior to co-location. It is also significant I think, that the academic most qualified to understand cross-country and cross sectoral schooling data—learning outcomes—is driven to highlight a matter of such social and political importance. McGaw attempts to address the problem few people recognise, leave alone try to fix, the threat of more and more social division as groups of our children and their families are increasingly separated from each other for the entirety of their developmental years.

Option Seven: Australian Education Union—strengthen public schools while requiring non-public schools to better serve students across the spectrum of proficiency, social class, disability, and so on:

The Australian Education Union speaks on behalf of all teacher unions with members in public schools. It has been an outspoken critic of any public funds being made available to non-public schools. The AEU's wish is to strengthen the public system with good planning and adequate funding assistance, while simultaneously requiring the church-based, exclusionary and other private schools to do more of the "heavy lifting"—to become more socially comprehensive and more accountable. In these arguments, at a time of "privatisation/marketisation," such a requirement might make the resulting competition a little fairer (Martin, 2002).

In addition, the AEU (Martin, 2002) is concerned about funding patterns which are less about per capita funds and more about addressing educational needs, "Distributing public money disproportionately to those with the greatest need and making private schools more subservient to a public policy of equitable outcomes for all social groups must become the schooling priority. Private schools must agree to abide by policies that ensure they serve a wider public interest, or forgo public funding and become genuinely private (Martin, 2002)."

The AEU argues that Caldwell's proposals "are based on making some public schools able to compete with private schools" (Martin, 2002) and that this approach is wrong. In the view of the AEU this is nothing more than "creating havens of selectivity and exclusiveness within the public system so that the already advantaged can pursue the inter-generational transfer of this advantage without paying for it" (Martin, 2003). The AEU's general position is encapsulated in its Victorian Branch statement:

> Free, secular and universally accessible public education has directly shaped Australia's past and present. Accepting all students regardless of cultural, religious, racial or economic background, geographical location or special needs, public education remains the key to a vibrant, socially-cohesive, multicultural, democratic Australia. (AEU Victorian Branch, 2007)

The AEU is less interested in proposing a strategy for resolving the fractured nature of Australia's schooling than it is in defending the existence and quality of public schooling.

Option Eight: Davy—cohesive schools:
We need a new form to follow a new function, a new structure to deliver a new purpose.

The purposes will address grand concerns—the health of planet Earth, global survival, global peace, globally shared prosperity as well as the health of each Individual, personal satisfaction, individual rights and liberties. To achieve the purposes we will require new tools: a social agreement, a new curriculum paradigm, a new schooling structure. Schooling is a complex venture. That which is to be taught is much contested—highly political. Ownership of most non-public schools is associated with more than providing education, it includes the missions of churches, synagogues, temples and mosques. Motives for the provision of schooling stretch along a continuum from the most public-minded to the defence of privilege. Schooling systems are divided by state and territory political boundaries as well as socio-economic and religious identity politics. Across these complex realities we are subjected to competing educational theories, competing political strategies, competing views about curriculum organisation and content, and competing views about the best manner of teaching. Schooling is a complex venture.

A complex venture, if "broken," may require more than a uni-dimensional response. Putting a patch on a venture with major deficiencies will never fix the problem(s) and will often veil the problem superficially while the problem grows worse.

In my re-visioning of schooling, I have attempted to scan across the entire Australian schooling system to identify the worst deficiencies and the source of greatest dissatisfaction, look for common threads, analyse the complex mix of symptoms, and only then to propose a new structure. The major matters found to require response include:

- **boredom**: large majorities of "often bored" students and large minorities of students who would rather not be at school, despite school being a friendly and inviting place to be, populate Australian schools;
- **inequality**: Australia is amongst the worst OECD performers when it comes to "relative disadvantage"—the bottom half of Australian students are further removed from the level of educational outcomes of the top half than in most OECD countries; and
- **drift away from public schools**: there has been a significant loss of public and political support for public schooling.

From an examination of these three matters, a common thread has emerged—***curriculum***. Thus far, in identifying curriculum as a critical issue, I have noted that:

- Australia has no social agreement concerning the social purposes of schooling—relying impotently on a politically weak and internally flawed bureaucratically negotiated Adelaide Declaration of Schooling Goals;

- Australia has not considered, nor is it considering, the formulation of a curriculum designed to support and carry forward a prior determined set of social purposes for schooling—that is, purposes aimed at both the Common Good and Individual Good;

- Far from challenging the current curriculum paradigm and content, the Adelaide Declaration of Schooling Goals endorses and entrenches the current subject disciplines;

- Australia does not have learning outcomes benchmarks linked to desired social characteristics—we rely entirely on *comparative* data within subject disciplines; and

- "Social cohesion" has emerged as a major concern within OECD and international circles.

In my view, all these matters require attention *simultaneously*! If not addressed together, a preferred resolution for one may neutralise a resolution for another or, more likely, absorb resources and time to the detriment of the others being addressed. Also, problems have a tendency to be inter-related, even causal. Thus, there are good reasons for looking at the system from the start. The fundamental purposes of schooling is not a bad starting point.

As a consequence, this dissertation covers a lot of ground, much of it to follow. Before outlining the detail of my proposal I will list its skeletal components. The proposal advocates:

- a set of identified political and deliberative *processes* aimed at achieving a set of political *principles* that can function as a Foundation of Agreed Principles (FOAP) representing the major characteristics of a preferred future society;

- use of the FOAP to generate an "essential" curriculum for all students in all schools, including the currently disempowered, from the earliest to the latest years of schooling—a curriculum to address matters of the Common Good to community, nation, planet Earth;

- formulation of a cohesive curriculum paradigm by placing, parallel to the "essential" curriculum, an equally strong "elective" curriculum, a curriculum to address matters of Individual Good: self, vocation, empowerment, religion, including sectarian learnings; and

- through the new paradigm, the generation of trust and satisfaction amongst the different identity religions/groups, to establish the preconditions for directly addressing the largest national issue—social cohesion. At this (future) point, it will be more possible to negotiate a cohesive system of schooling for the public. This system or the schools which comprise it, would employ trained leadership, teaching, specialist, and administrative personnel no matter what their religion or social background. The physical features of cohesive schools would, most likely, respond to cultural and religious differences and, in respect of religion, include one or more of: a small chapel, synagogue, mosque and/or temple for those who wished to practice, as well as learn, their own religion as part of their schooling.

To this point I have begun building the case for each of these points. In Section Four I propose detail which is critical to taking these musings of a PhD candidate to tangible and operational strategies for a new future.

The Vehicle: A Coherent System of Schooling for the Public

It would be comforting if the data and analysis suggested a decisive answer to the question "is a public system of schooling necessary?" But, although they strongly suggest a cohesive and "ecumenical" schooling system with a comprehensive reach to all the citizenry, on their own, they do not.

What other evidence can provide guidance? Leaving aside considerations of political theory for the while and returning to the earlier discussion of "virtues" might provide some more insights on this question.

The first task would be to identify, before ratifying and promulgating, these Common Good and Individual Good objectives. How is this to be done? We need a process. Reference to the list of "No Good" values suggests it would be wrong to adopt a process which was "unjust" or "selfish" or "intolerant" (amongst many others). In turn, this suggests a process which does not exclude some categories of citizen. In turn again, it suggests a process which encourages participation (non-exclusion) of the citizenry.

This thinking intersects with political theory, particularly "deliberative" theory which prefers participative democratic processes, and has the effect of dismissing any authoritarian processes, exclusionary processes, and manipulative processes. While it does not adjudicate on matters of conservative, libertarian, socialist or liberal political *content*, it does lead to some strong shaping consequences for schooling systems, such as:

- schools which are exclusionary lie outside "Good" values. Thus, contemporary public schools which ban the freedom to learn and practice one's own religion would need to be restructured. Private schools which exclude other socio-economic and religious groupings would need to be restructured; and
- maximum participation by the citizenry, unless it is to be ignorant and unskilled participation, requires widespread education of the citizenry. That is, a healthy society requires a public with good levels of education generally including knowledge and skills serving the Common Good and Individual Good.

Again, these conclusions fall short of concluding that a public schooling system is required, but it again emphasises the need to establish a *coherent* system of schooling, with certain identified characteristics, to educate the public. It draws attention to major *political* weaknesses attached to public schools (repression of a liberal freedom), church-based schools (antithesis of social coherence), and exclusionary schools (reproduction of power and privilege) which, together, comprise the fractured structure of Australia's schooling system.

To this point, it has been argued that a cohesive schooling system with certain characteristics has been suggested by the data.

During the course of the examination of political theories, "measuring" tools constructed by Rawls and Gutman were identified. Their application to Australia's schooling system provides further argument for changing the current system.

John Rawls, as already discussed, sought to construct a polity which guaranteed traditional liberal freedoms as the priority while permitting political inequalities only where they worked to the advantage of the disadvantaged. Rawls specified these principles deliberately, as a response, as he saw it, to the failure of other liberal theorists to provide a measure of the success of their theories. In particular, Rawls was responding to the critique of liberalism which would have it that liberalism works well for majorities repressed by minorities (monarchs, dictators, oligarchies, etc.) but loses its effectiveness when majorities are relatively well-catered for and they administer unjust behaviours to "minorities" such as women, indigenous peoples, blacks, immigrants, low SES, and so on.

If applied to the existing schooling system, Rawls' measuring "tool" would have a devastating effect. In the first place, public schools would clearly not meet the terms of the priority principle as it is the case that public schools are public places where the liberal

freedom to learn and practice one's own religion is discouraged. The outcomes of systems being so dramatically inequitable would bring the practices of all systems into focus and, given the OECD's data which suggests that separation of systems exacerbates inequalities, the entire fractured system would be under scrutiny. Exclusionary schools would have extreme difficulty with the second principle permitting inequality only where it advantages the disadvantaged.

While this brief analysis falls short of recommending a schooling system run by the public, it does serve to reinforce the view that the current system is lacking in important political ways and deserves serious review.

Like Rawls, Gutman (Gutman & Thompson, 1997) is keen to advance the debate beyond generalities and seeks to give some precision to her thinking—an attempt to draft a set of goals which, together, comprise a standard against which society can measure the worth of associations and identity groups. As outlined earlier, she applies her benchmarks to the Ku Klux Klan and to the Boy Scouts as examples. Schooling systems are also associations, and in the case of church-based schools and some exclusionary schools, also approximate identity groups. To repeat, Gutman identifies her benchmark to contain three elements:

- civic equality—in the distribution of public goods
- individual rights and liberties
- equal opportunity.

How would public schools measure against Gutman's benchmark? As we have seen, public schooling distributes the public good widely and, arguably, with equal opportunity if one defines this as meaning the provision of access to a common curriculum regime and similar staffing and resource levels. The dismal performance of low SES students including indigenous students, and widespread student boredom are matters which bear more on matters of "quality" and "equality of outcomes"—matters to be addressed in Section Four. But as far as Gutman's second criterion, the public schooling system is a mix and, given that it is a public place legislatively hostile to the practice and learning of a particular religion by members of a particular denomination or sect, leaves it vulnerable to the charge that it forbids a commonly accepted liberal freedom. Given that one's own religion is banned except for a small period of often unwelcoming, poorly supported, often unsupervised-by-the-school, amateur, visiting cleric's teachings, public schools are unlikely to perform strongly when it comes to defending "individual rights and liberties"?

How will exclusionary schools measure against Gutman's benchmark? Prima facie, these schools will have great difficulty measuring up on matters of civic equality and equal opportunity? The public good is distributed narrowly and selectively and in a manner which reproduces social and economic empowerment to the exclusion of others. Equal opportunity may be offered to those within the school's "community" but is clearly denied those unable to find the resources to enrol. And, as we have seen, according to some of the parents they choose these schools *because* they are exclusionary.

And finally, how will church-based systems of schools, with their element of "publicness" (earlier described), measure up against Gutman's benchmark? Here, the argument might be less crisp as churches are forced, on the one hand, to concede they prefer those who meet denominational definitions and financial pre-requisites and exclude students with higher resource needs and behavioural care, but argue strongly (on the other hand) that if they had adequate resources they would be willing to lift enrolment restrictions on students with high resource needs and stop offloading students with behavioural difficulties and address their needs themselves. This is tantamount to conceding a relatively low score on Gutman's first and third criteria while arguing that these schools have the same *objective* as Gutman but are frustrated from pursuing same because of a shortfall of necessary funds. These school systems would likely argue they fulfil Gutman's second criterion in a relatively strong fashion, although this might be a fertile ground for further research because, although it is clear church-based schools provide an opportunity for students to pursue their liberal freedom and civil right to learn of and practice their religion in a manner denied them by public schools, it is not clear that denominational schools are, or would be, inclined to encourage the sectarian teachings of another sect(s) within their teaching regime and school environment. That is, attempts by non-public schools to reveal themselves as socially comprehensive have yet to include recruitment campaigns and invitations from a Jewish or Islamic or Catholic or Seventh Day Adventist school system (for example) to *other* religions to learn of and practice their *alternative* religion in the Jewish or Islamic or Catholic or Seventh Day Adventist school.

Nor is it clear that the quest for "individual rights and liberties" is advanced by the practices of some religious denominations which require boys and girls to undertake different curriculum streams (e.g. excluding girls from some designated areas of learning), or to require the separation of one religious grouping of students from another on the grounds that one is inferior, or less deserving, or dirtier, or to use the sectarian base of a church-based school to advance the cause of a political entity, religious hostility, violence, or any other socially damaging behaviour.

This speculative measure of the different categories of schools against Gutman's criteria, while not producing a definitive result, does provide an *example* of how useful such a tool can be. By Gutman's criteria, all existing systems of schooling in Australia should be viewed, as far as their political worth to a cohesive society is concerned, with suspicion.

A measuring tool such as Gutman's, constructed independently with widespread public participation and consequent political legitimacy (something not attendant on either the Rawls or Gutman measures), would provide a means of measuring systems against agreed principles without the entrenched warfare which characterises oppositional politics and the history of Australian schooling. As with the use of the Rawls and Gutman tools, *all* systems might come up with serious deficiencies thus frustrating the allegations and/or claims of supporters of the competing systems seeking dominance and "market share" and suggesting an alternative strategy—something akin to Rawls' (1996) "overlapping consensus" (pp. 144) or Gutman's (Gutman & Thompson, 1997) deliberative processes—to engage the public as a whole in a search for a restructured schooling system which addresses the deficiencies.

The conclusion to this section then, is not to identify a public schooling system as necessary, or to identify a church-based system as necessary, or to identify a private schooling system as necessary. It is concluded that, as never before, it is urgent and necessary that the public at large be well-educated and that that education should have essential components which support the Common Good while providing guaranteed freedoms, from the earliest years, to undertake learnings which support Individual Good.

Identifying the Nature of the New, Coherent System of Schooling

The matter of whether a future system should be "public" or "private" or a mix of both is a separate philosophic matter although in the Australian world of *real politik* it will likely be primary. On the matter of philosophy, it is difficult to imagine a system for educating the public being administered by the Catholic Church, or Jewish or Islamic or other denomination, whereas it is easier to envisage some form of ecumenical entity, or a public entity, with widespread political legitimacy, comprising all religious and political colours, administering an openly accountable and regularly reviewed (by public stakeholders) system of schools with socially agreed social purposes. Closure on this matter is reached by a number of contemporary authors whose research into historic motives and contemporary needs (in the USA) lead them to endorse the need for a new commitment to pursuance of the Common Good and *thus* the need for a public schooling system as the vehicle (Comer, 2004; Fuhrman & Lazerson, 2005).

This dissertation affirms the former conclusion but does not agree that the latter conclusion necessarily follows. The case has been made for a strengthened system of educating the public generally, in matters of common concern and matters of individual need, and within a coherent system of schooling. However, although the vehicle for this schooling has had enough shaping characteristics described to eliminate: public schools which deny accepted liberal freedoms; totally-privatised schooling models such as those advocated by Fane; or a schooling system shaped by the market (Dimond, 2005), the argument that only a public schooling system can deliver socially agreed objectives has yet to be made.

On the matter of *real politik* it is the job of Section Four to describe a new schooling paradigm—structure and curriculum—which might meet the needs of Australia's children, including the currently successful and the currently unsuccessful, while attending to the political weaknesses identified above. As the history of Australian schooling has revealed, the logic of a particular paradigm can be swept aside by political combat and factional realities. Recent attempts, with the Commonwealth Schools Commission (1973-1989) and its objective of attaining cross-sectoral consensus, serve only to underline how difficult consensus politics can be, even leading some academics to conclude "differing constituencies have differing aims with respect to education, and so consensus with respect to policy is impossible" (Dudley & Vidovich, 1995, pp. 97-98). Leaving aside the claim of "impossibility," it is nevertheless not the role of this dissertation to invite such a time-consuming battle—the issues confronting Humanity are too big and time too short—by advocating a particular public or church-based or private ownership of schools, but to outline principles and processes with a view to persuading all stakeholders to make, together, a systematic (political) journey through the stages of:

- examination and analysis of the existing schooling structure, similar to that outlined in this dissertation; and
- acceptance of the problems arising from that analysis to undertake deliberative *processes* with the *objective* of reaching agreement.

In Section Four a number of further steps which address the nature of that agreement will be advocated:

- construction of a social agreement comprising a set of political principles which, together, represent the key features of a preferred future society;
- use of the social agreement to generate an "essential" component within a national curriculum (P-12); and

- enshrinement of "choice," including sectarian studies, in an "elective" component within a national curriculum (P-12).

Only then, after widespread agreement has been reached on the central, and most political component of a schooling system—the curriculum—should there be an examination of the existing schooling structure(s) with a view to re-negotiating a cohesive schooling system for Australia's public.

This last paragraph represents more than a planned modus operandi for Section Four. It represents a declaration of the underlying political settings drawn from the research in this Section Three and now to be applied to the remainder of this dissertation. Namely, a politics that produces a well-informed, collaborative, process of public participatory democracy involving all stakeholders and the entire public. It stands in stark contrast to ideological and religious battles of the past and present, and the now-traditional adversarial combat assumed by Friedman and his associates from the Right. It also stands in contrast to Left strategies including those which would have the national public schools' teachers' union shouldering responsibility for "co-ordinating the defence of public education" (Reid, 1998, p. 110)—a strategy full of flaws including:

- a continued reliance on the same adversarial politics which has led to the current fractured and unfocussed system;
- an unfair reliance on a "champion" whose wider societal motives necessarily become entangled with the rough politics of the narrower agenda of "teacher salaries and working conditions";
- rejection of harder-to-organise collective politics with its greater possibilities of wider political legitimacy;
- alienation from the discussion of many other important stakeholders and organisations of influence within civil society, commerce and the polity, for whom the education of the public should be a most important matter;
- nomination as the "vanguard" for public schooling of an organisationally weak confederation sapped of its potential strength by state-based organisations which persistently refrain from ceding necessary organisational and executive powers to the national body;
- acceptance of a lesser role in the strategy for those: associated with parent organisations; with long-term knowledge and wider perspective (such as some academics, politicians); associated with issue-based movements (such as those grown from the struggles of indigenous peoples, migrants, geographically isolated and low SES communities); and so on.

Using a deliberative political methodology, none of the self-interested participants are required to belligerently react to propositions advocated by those who hold other viewpoints or, to put it more bluntly, those seen to be the traditional enemy. The process would empower individuals and relatively weak identity groups in the participative process vis-à-vis the organised and often overwhelmingly self-interested identity groups and associations so effectively addressed by Gutman and Thompson (1997). Instead of relying on the outcome of an "education" battle between political parties, or the teachers' unions, or parent organisations, or groups of privilege, or churches, taken up by partisan editors in a partisan press, the "deliberative" processes outlined by Gutman and Thompson, applied to the territory covered by this dissertation, would allow all interested citizens to:

- help the public identify the major elements they would expect to see in an excellent future society;
- endorse the use of these areas of agreement as principles to be contained in a social agreement; and
- permit curriculum designers to use the social agreement to directly generate nationally agreed "essential" curricula structures which, along with "elective" curricula structures comprise a new curriculum paradigm.

Consequent on this development—a nationally agreed curriculum paradigm addressing (P-12) "essential" themes generated by a socially agreed set of political objectives—a different religio-political context is possible. In this new context it will be possible to better, and more directly, address the matter of social cohesion. It may, under these conditions, be possible to envisage a *real politik* re-negotiation of the schooling system's structure which provides for the public, such that it is a coherent *system* serving the goal of *social* coherence.

It is my intention that this chapter makes a contribution to political theory by applying contemporary understandings of "deliberative democracy" to education (schooling) and, in the process, points out the central role education should play in those debates.
In Section Four, I investigate the necessary elements, as suggested by the data in Sections One and Two, which should comprise a new and coherent schooling system.

Section Four

Chapter Eight: Social Purposes and Curriculum

The task is set—construct a coherent system of schooling for the public.

I have been impressed with a number of themes emerging from the thinking of many of the political and educational theorists referred to earlier in this thesis. Dewey's argument linking the nature of a schooling system to a prior view of a preferred society gives purpose to the exercise while making it so much more daunting a task—too daunting for Karmel (1981) and never satisfactorily addressed in Australia.

My approach to the task of constructing a new and coherent system of schooling for the public comprises five phases to be played out against a continuous background of government supported (but not government directed) discussion and debate throughout Australia's citizenry:

1. a lengthy and thorough preliminary, national public discussion concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the Australian schooling system—to be supported by governments, media, and organisations within the economy and civil society;

2. development of a set of socially determined, socially agreed, social purposes for schooling;

3. the use of those social purposes to generate a curriculum stream to be regarded as "essential" for all Australian students (P-12) and which, simultaneously addresses major identified concerns such as I have identified: low SES students' outcomes; widespread student boredom;

4. the use of those social purposes to permit and provide for wide-ranging choice for parents and students within a curriculum stream to be regarded as "elective" for all Australian students and, thus, the formulation of a new curriculum paradigm consisting of two parallel layers which, together, provide directly for both the Common Good and Individual Good; and

5. the emergence, (over time, and from within this newly created environment of agreement, trust and satisfaction) of a new political possibility—the creation of a cohesive system of schooling which draws citizens and their children together in common purpose *and* common freedoms while simultaneously providing an

environment which weakens tendencies towards societal separation and directly strengthens social cohesion.

Each phase is dependent on an earlier phase. Thus it is that this thesis must now focus attention on matters of social purpose and curriculum.

For the reasons outlined by Dewey, I feel bound to be explicit about the social, and therefore highly political, purpose(s) of this new and coherent system of schooling. That is, I feel it necessary to declare the major features of a future society which a new system of education might be designed to support.

From the outset, it should be noted that I am not attempting to *guess* what a future society might look like so that I can then propose a schooling system which might support that society. Nor do I want to impose a pre-determined view of mine, or to manipulate political processes to achieve my view of a future society. Nor am I fatalistic about what a future society might look like. So long as facilitative processes are possible, then Humanity can shape its future deliberatively—with conscious thought, deliberative politics and appropriate planning. Humanity can shape its future in other ways too: with lop-sided reliance on one sector such as the economy with its powerful motives, shaping power and consequences; with combative politics such has characterised Australian schooling policy; or in a laissez faire or neglectful manner.

Given the perils currently facing the planet and its species, the inhumane differences in wealth and poverty, and the incidence of international conflict, there are benefits to be gained by Humanity using its shaping power consciously and democratically, not using adversarial politics or international force, but with the use of an increasingly sophisticated form of (deliberative) democracy in general, and one of its key mechanisms—social agreement—in particular.

The social agreement, in its first and general stage, should be a set of crisply stated political principles which, when provided to specialists within different industries, can be used to generate within-industry policies that are both appropriate to the industry *and* true to the set of principles. The purposes will provide a principled statement describing, in general terms, the preferred shape of a future society. They are unlikely to be cast in industry-specific terms—in this case, terms specific to schooling. In the schooling sector, it will be the job of curriculum designers and schooling management to convert the set of principles into, for example, curriculum structures, curriculum content, and appropriate pedagogical strategies.

With this explanation, the set of principles might be seen as a shaping instrument, or a *foundation* on which a wide range of industries, maybe all industries, might be expected to align their industry objectives and within-industry processes. I will therefore refer to the set of principles as a "foundation."

Because I am proposing that this foundation of principles be determined within a deliberative political process, resulting in a *social agreement* with wide political legitimacy, I will refer to it as a foundation of agreed principles. Thus, for the remainder of this dissertation I will refer to this set of prospective principles as a Foundation of Agreed Principles (FOAP).

The areas to be addressed by the FOAP should not be determined by me or any more deified thinker. Nor should the FOAP be determined by authoritarian, bureaucratic, or oligarchic means no matter how much consultation and agreement might exist within and between state, territory, public and non-public authorities, bureaucracies and oligarchies. The areas of agreement, and the extent of agreement, should be the result of an extensive and comprehensive process of public collaboration and engagement with the characteristics outlined by deliberative democrats in Section Three: easily accessible and transparent data, sufficient time, widespread public participation, and the (subordinate) cooperation of government and the media—a deliberative and democratic process with a resulting document with high political legitimacy.

In the absence of an existing FOAP it is difficult to say what the public might determine, but I can point to several examples which assist us to understand the nature, if not the specific content, of a socially agreed FOAP. First, it would not look like the 1999 Adelaide Declaration of National Goals for Schooling for reasons already outlined in Chapter Seven. Second, it could look like the set of values selected in the DEST (2005) Values Project: care and compassion; doing your best; fair go; freedom; honesty and trustworthiness; integrity; respect; responsibility; understanding, tolerance and inclusion. Third, given that the FOAP will be concerned for the "big picture" it is more likely to address macro and highly-political issues such as:
- preferred environmental outcomes;
- social justice;
- a preferred type of political system and processes for Australia;
- a preferred type of economic system for Australia;
- preferred characteristics of Australian society;

- guaranteed "liberal" rights of individuals in Australia;

- guaranteed human rights;

- preferred conditions for family and community and groups within communities; and

- preferred international relations.

The FOAP need not be extensive or detailed, because they are no more than directional guidelines designed to steer those with industry-specific responsibilities towards a common set of societal objectives.

Fourth, a small number of volunteer teachers from each of 11 inner-city secondary schools were asked in 1989 to clear their mind of all preconceived ideas (as much as possible) and envisage a "good" future society and its preferred characteristics and to then state a curriculum consequence (C. Ryan & Davy, 1989). The group of 30+ teachers formulated the following set of curriculum objectives which mix schooling goals together with bigger social concepts. They thought curriculum should:

- be relevant and promote intellectual, social, aesthetic, moral, emotional and physical development;

- prepare students for an active life in a democratic society with an awareness and understanding of the factors which influence the structure and future development of that society;

- provide an understanding of the nature of production of wealth, and distribution of wealth within a framework of national and global awareness;

- promote an understanding of, responsible attitude to, and active participation in, the economic, technological and social development of society (state, nation and world) and promote an understanding of the impact of this development on the environment;

- prepare all students to help build a society which is multicultural; considers discrimination as unacceptable; and respects the fundamental rights of the individual; and

- provide an understanding for all students of how social, technological, and political institutions act upon, and shape the experience of, individuals and groups.

The FOAP constructed by these teachers in 1989 would, no doubt, be modified by them 19 years later, pointing to a need for curriculum development, even curriculum development at

the macro level, to be a dynamic public process—to be reviewed by the public, and re-prioritised regularly—say every 5 years.

Fifth, it may be desirable to formulate a less complex set of principles which comprise only essential structural features of a society. Such a FOAP might include:

- democratic understandings, practice, skills and participation;
- the liberal freedoms—individual and human rights;
- social justice and the Common Good;
- a technologically advanced economy; and
- generational enhancement of the global environment.

Sixth, in his speech to the Sydney Institute in April, 2008, entitled "Australia 2020—Setting our Nation's Sights for the Future" the Prime Minister of Australia lists his government's "vision for Australia's future." His 10 commitments, when taken together, might be seen as an appropriate FOAP. His commitments are:

1. A secure Australia;
2. A robust economy;
3. Opportunity for all Australians;
4. A creative Australia;
5. A fair go for all Australians: education, health and rules which govern workplaces;
6. Protection for the family;
7. Concept of community—common core values;
8. Social solidarity;
9. Global environmental protection;
10. Basic human rights (Rudd, 2008a).

Seventh, we are not without clues about the scope of a social agreement that the Australian people might be expected to construct and endorse. In my view, a set of *ideals*, or social objectives (a FOAP) with which the Australian public would identify and which it would likely support, would look something like:

1. To establish and maintain a participatory democracy, with high levels of democratic understanding and practice throughout the citizenry;
2. To ensure a global and local environment conducive to the health of Humans and other species;
3. To construct and maintain a technologically advanced economy in which commercial accounting includes assessments of environmental and other appropriate costs;

4. To ensure all adult roles holding status and power comprise, over time, proportionate numbers of people from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds;
5. To encourage societal cooperation and a concern for the Common Good;
6. To guarantee liberal freedoms to all citizens as a commitment to Individual Good;
7. To guarantee human rights to all citizens as a commitment to Individual Good;
8. To provide for cultural diversity; and
9. To encourage creativity and responsible innovation.

It is likely that the above FOAP does not represent, exactly, the FOAP that would emerge from a nationwide and deep engagement of the citizenry around its desired future society. There are elements contained in the nine I have proposed which have not been discussed in this research and for which there is not space or time, but which are important priorities for me and, as such, would form part of the argument I would take to any national deliberation. I would expect the citizenry as a whole to expose weaknesses in my FOAP and change it accordingly.

Each of these examples of a FOAP could be given more specificity and therefore provide more *specific direction* to specialist curriculum developers, if each plank of the FOAP was broken down into a number of component parts. For example, if the deliberative political processes which lead to the adoption of a socially agreed FOAP result in a view that most, if not all, Humans' endeavours have both a Common Good and Individual Good component to it, then each item within the FOAP might be broken down into smaller and more powerfully focussed sub-items. For example, point 3 in the above example of a FOAP, addresses "a technologically advanced economy." It may be that that item might be separated into 6 sub-elements in the following way:

Technologically Advanced Economy

which technologies will be developed	Individual Good
	Common Good
ownership of technologies	Individual Good
	Common Good
regulating technology	Individual Good
	Common Good

The FOAP examples outlined above are illustrations of sets of political principles around which a social consensus might be achieved, and which might have a powerfully shaping effect, as will be sketched later in this Section, on macro-curriculum planning and provision.

With the FOAP constructed, it should become the powerful generator of the first of two layers of a new curriculum paradigm. This layer would be regarded as "essential" for *all* children, in *all* schools, in *all* schooling years (P-12). It may comprise (approximately) half the time of each schooling week. Themes will be derived from the FOAP and taught and learned at increasing levels of complexity and practical application in the various years of schooling. The essential curriculum will *not* be divided into subject disciplines although, because of the anticipated high-interest quality of the FOAP-related curriculum (because it will be addressing, directly, the major elements of a preferred future society) it will provide fertile ground for higher levels of student engagement and higher levels of outcomes which are crucial, or pre-requisite to the confidence and/or competence required for success within the more esoterically specialised subject disciplines which will be located in the "elective" curriculum layer.

The second layer of curriculum will be "elective." The elective curriculum will, again, apply to *all* students in *all* schools and *all* schooling years (P-12). Although studies in this layer will be permitted by the FOAP, they will not be generated by the FOAP. It will be generated by student and parent interest and *choice*. While some matters of individual interest and Individual Good will be addressed within the FOAP-generated "essential" curriculum (because they are agreed such as individual liberal rights, or because they are incidentally of interest), matters of Individual Good which *cannot* be agreed as essential will be available in the elective curriculum from the earliest years of schooling. Parents and students will have (within the boundaries provided by the law of the land) power to choose their preferred subject disciplines, specialisations, sectarian studies, vocational and other studies.

Just how a FOAP might be used to generate an essential curriculum is speculatively sketched later, but this is a matter which needs to be addressed by future researchers, political thinkers and educators.

To give some context for what follows here, it can be assumed that any FOAP would be handed to specialist curriculum developers (operating within a transparent and collaborative public deliberation) who *could* use the FOAP in a variety of ways, the *most obvious* being to place the FOAP with expert teachers and thinkers from *current* disciplines with the task being that each discipline produces a series of themes, with associated detailed content and processes, which directly address the elements of the FOAP and (associated contextual matter), and *only* the elements of the FOAP.

It could be expected that such an exercise would generate considerable amounts of FOAP-related (and, at this point, discipline organised) curriculum which, following a *further* exercise uniting teachers and educators from *all* disciplines, would result in the elimination of overlap between the disciplines—and the formulation (by collapsing together) of high-interest, high-relevance *themes* (no longer subjects) which might be *supported* by all the disciplines depending on judgements made by school-based teachers.

These themes within the "essential" curriculum, many of which would be re-visited annually as students pass through their schooling, would need to be benchmarked for *depth* so that student engagement, and re-engagement, can be age-appropriate. The identification of the depth of each theme to be taught in each year of schooling would require the development of a measuring device—a job requiring further research and development but which, at its most simple, might be related to *relatively objective* benchmarks such as levels of understanding which would allow a young adult at exit-Year 12 to *meaningfully enter a discussion about serious issues addressed repeatedly, over time, in the major news sections of the daily media*. Working backwards from this point, the skills, understandings, and experiences required to achieve this Year 12 benchmark could readily be listed and described, with each preceding year being allocated a number of learning tasks, skills and knowledge which must be achieved or else not meet the standard.

An alternative method is used by Matters and Masters (2007) and involves the use of the term "essentialness" which refers "to the status of content areas within subjects as measured by the extent to which a sample of the community considers that these content areas (subject matter and skills) should be mandatory learnings" (for students who have chosen to take the subject) (p. 37). This construction will produce a qualitatively different result because the public is not being asked to identify that which is essential for all citizens (the common good) but instead, is being asked to identify that which is essential for citizens to know after they have determined which subjects they will study and which subjects they will not study. The latter question assumes that numbers of subject specialities are not essential for either the Common Good, or Individual Good.

What appears above is the basic structure of a different curriculum regime, driven in large part by a set of social purposes which I have called a FOAP. This perspective is radically different from conventional practice and would not be regarded as possible by many education thinkers. However, the gap between the thinking outlined above and the thinking evident in recent reports, and negotiated Declarations and Papers, has narrowed over the past 30 years as I shall now demonstrate.

Social Purposes—30 Years of Thinking

Twenty eight years ago in 1980, ACER (Karmel, 1981) conducted an "invitational conference" chaired by Professor Peter Karmel. The conference was designed to focus the attention of 95 of Australia's most influential education administrators, researchers, thinkers and stakeholders "on the interaction between economic, demographic, political, and social change and the education system" (pp. 279). In his summation at the conclusion of this two day conference, Karmel wrote of the "purposes" of education:

> Education as we know it has many goals and plays many roles. Consensus on the goals of education can be achieved only if the goals are generalised to the point of trivialisation; otherwise there is argument, if not about the goals themselves, at least about the weights that should be attached to the various goals, many of which compete with each other. (Karmel, 1981, p. 272)

With this declaration of impotence, Karmel determined not to identify "purposes of education" or "goals of education" but he went on to identify two "points" which, following the input and debate within the two day conference, he regarded as relevant to "the purposes of education." The first point comprised two characteristics of schools:

a. "Education is a preparation for human activity"—a deliberately general reference to "the preparatory aspects of education"; and

b. "Education is a life experience"—a reference to the large proportion of a child's life which is spent at school (Karmel, 1981, p. 272).

The second point, drawing on Boyer's contribution (Karmel, 1981, pp. 231-238), acknowledged the close relationship between the "nature of society and the nature of education" with schools and curriculum "reflecting the social and technological relationships within society" and, in the opposite direction, "society itself moderated by the nature of education" (pp. 272-273).

The latter part of Boyer's contribution implies a society-shaping power attached to schooling which could have been given more weight by Karmel and, had he done so, may have led to a much less fatalistic view of the role an identified social purpose could (and in my view, should) have in the shaping of Australia's schooling system and curriculum. One can gain a strong sense of Peter Karmel's view of the relationship between education and changes in the wider society from his view that:

> The process of examining the interaction between education and changes in the wider society can be viewed as comprising four inter-related stages:
> - a consideration of the traditional role of education in society
> - an identification of the types of changes which society is likely to experience
> - an examination of the likely impact of social change upon education

- a reconsideration of the form and function of education in the light of change in society.

As can be seen, Karmel sees education as reactive to the shape of society. In Karmel's first point, education plays a traditional role. It passes on to succeeding generations the good things of the present and past. In Karmel's second, third and fourth points, education's form and function might appropriately be changed so that it better fits the changes in society. Education is not seen to be formative—only reactive.

However, Karmel was by no means alone in his views. The authors of the four conference background papers convey similar views. Professor Crittenden's paper (1981) analysed key changes to schooling, general theory, the particulars of the influential Wyndham Report in NSW (Wyndham, 1957) and Review of Secondary Education in Tasmania (Education Department of Tasmania, 1977), curriculum theory, and a series of important themes (equality, extent of schooling, locus of authority and diversity) without seeking to establish, or advocate the formulation of, a set of social purposes for schooling. Professor Aitken (1981) sketched many benefits which have accrued to society arising from betterments in educational provision without identifying or proposing a set of social purposes for schooling. Sir Bruce Williams (1981) identified a number of economic and social changes being wrought and likely to eventuate in Australia and made some educational predictions without listing a set of preferred social objectives. Jean Blackburn (1981) revealed her frustration with the conundrum of requiring a set of agreed social purposes, but having none.

To Blackburn, education needs do more than respond to a future shape of society. Indeed, Blackburn believed, like me, that "education" should "express positions about the kind of society we want to be" and to then respond appropriately. In her background paper to the 1980 conference, Blackburn (1981) posed the problem thus:

> What changes should be made in the content and structures of Australian education to acknowledge and, more importantly, to interact with social changes which have occurred and which seem likely to affect us in the coming period? No attack on this question is likely to meet with universal acceptance. The selection of significant changes in the society is itself controversial. What is involved for education is even more so, since it *must* express positions about *the kind of society we want to be*, [italics added] about the role of education in that society, and about the nature of education itself. (pp. 231-238)

Like Karmel, Blackburn (1981) identified the difficulty of gaining consensus around the social purposes of schooling, but unlike Karmel she asserted the "obligation" of the wise education thinker to outline "what might be better directions than those which one believes

are likely to eventuate" (pp. 231-238). However, as different from Karmel as she may have been, in the absence of a consensus or social agreement on the social purposes of schooling, she also was reduced to guesswork, openly revealing her assumption that the then-current structures would likely prevail into the immediate future and that the future was more likely to hold "skirmishes on many fronts rather than final conflicts or plausible appeals to common interests (para.1.7, pp. 231-238). In a declaration of *her* social purpose for schooling, and in the absence of a consensus, Blackburn then admitted she had no "neat map of desirable changes in Australian education" and, in that absence, she proceeded to outline a number of matters of particular importance to *her* (paras. 2.1 to 2.25, pp. 231-238).

Both of these wonderful Australian educators—Karmel and Blackburn—allowed themselves, in 1980, to be stripped of a compass which, explicitly in Blackburn's case, is seen to be as much a pre-requisite for sensible education planning as was seen by Dewey. This is not to say that Karmel's or Blackburn's advocacy of various educational reforms were not influenced, in an undeclared manner, by their particular political view of a future worthwhile society—no doubt they were—but it *is* to say they were unable to appeal to a foundation of explicitly *agreed* principles on which they could base their subsequent advocacy.

I have chosen to start this discussion with reference to the 1980 conference because of its focus on "the interaction between economic, demographic, political, and social change and the education system"—a brief which might be conducive to a discussion of the social purposes of schooling—and because of its rare collection of educational thinkers with vast status. But I could have just as easily started with some contemporary thinkers. Karmel and Blackburn are among the best known and respected educators in the country. Less known but more contemporary writers such as Riel Miller of OECD's International Futures Programme approach the issue differently but with much the same effect. Looking to the future, Riel Miller (2003) outlines "five general roles for schools: custodial, behavioural, cognitive, screening and socialisation" (p. 11). From Miller's definition of these roles, one can deduce a sense of Miller's preferred society. It has its children safely at school during the day. Children are well-trained behaviourally and exposed to a range of basics and unspecified specialities. They are "filtered" for their socio-economic future, and they are knowledgeable about competing ideas such as "competition" and "equality" and unspecified attitudes to citizenship and civic life (Miller, 2003).

Miller's intent is to construct a series of scenarios for future schools. He acknowledges the need to consider the social purposes of schooling by identifying, first, his five general roles for schools. But, similarly to other reviews, reports and thinkers, he does not:

a. identify what the major shaping elements of the future society should be, or even will be;

b. construct, or propose construction of, a process by which a set of social purposes can be determined.

Despite this, Miller sets forth his description of future scenarios, each one assuming a different type of society. His description of his future schooling scenarios makes reference to elements of accompanying societies, thus making a link between the two, but Miller's project is to describe several scenarios, not to propose a reconstructed schooling system, and certainly not to engage the public in a formulation of social purposes designed to drive and shape one half of schooling provision.

Alternatively, I could have leant on overseas experience, though the result would be not much different as exemplified by Aldrich and White (Aldrich, 2006) when they wrote of a "curriculum for the nation" (USA), the statutory basis for which they thought was "lacking a clear vision of what the parts, individually and collectively, are designed to achieve" (p. 129) and in which the "broad aims" of schooling and the "ten subjects" which carry the content of schooling were unrelated English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Foreign Language, Art, Physical Education, Technology, Music). Aldrich is quick to identify, as any logical thinker must, the necessity to have a direct relationship between schooling's objectives and the curriculum's organisation and opines

> the very limited value of making lists of general curriculum aims which have neither internal coherence, nor any specific connection with curricular content and delivery; the superiority of liberal democracy over of other forms of government; the nature of a democratic political role in the determination of curricula aims and of the curricular; the need to avoid sectionalism, and so on. (p. 130)

Aldrich emphasises this point, "Not only should the list of aims precede the list of subjects, the very concept of a curriculum which is essentially presented as a list of subjects should be called into question" (p. 139). I support these sentiments as far as they go. But Aldrich does what (we will see) others do too—he emphasises the importance of aims which have political intent, but does not identify or expand on them. Nor does he outline a method by which the aims might be devised, although he does give an outline of the immensity of the task (as he sees it), and the need for a "new partnership" including "the media" (Aldrich, 2006).

A search through the *key* education reports and reviews of the past 30 years reveals a similar pattern of thinking concerning the social purposes of schooling and how they might be aligned with schooling's curriculum and management practices.

In chronological order I propose to briefly summarise the most important of those education reports, particularly noting if, and how, social purposes of schooling are addressed. Their contribution will be measured against a benchmark of requirements which emerge from my earlier analysis of the social purposes for schooling.

A set of social purposes for schooling might be regarded as satisfactory if it fulfils the following requirements. It should:

- outline the key features of a preferred society;
- have widespread citizen understanding and support; and
- have sufficient specificity to directly shape subsequent curriculum and management decisions.

Interim Committee to the Australian Schools Commission, 1973

This report heralded major changes in: the funding levels for Australia's schools, governments' attitudes to private schooling, a range of educational concerns including equality of outcomes and opportunity for identified disadvantaged groups of students. This was all done with no mention of the social purposes of schooling in the Terms of Reference (Australian Schools Commission, 1973, para. 1.1) although the ensuing report does, importantly, acknowledge that in the longer term "consideration of the purposes and values of Australian education is of greater importance than any short-term accretion of resources" (para. 1.7). However, the chapter devoted to "values and perspectives" (para. 2.1 to 2.25) restricts its scan of concern to matters of: devolution, equality, diversity, public and private, community involvement, special purposes of schooling, and recurrent education—not an unimportant agenda but nevertheless matters of a different order to those concerned for the shape and nature of society, its economy, and its citizens' rights and responsibilities to the wider good. The Interim Committee outlines no strategy to identify key features of a preferred society, to gain widespread citizen understanding and support, or to develop consequential curriculum and management practices.

Schools Commission: Report for the Triennium, 1976-78

The Schools Commission was established with the Schools Commission Act of 1973 which set out the Commission's functions to address matters of: funding, primary obligation to public schooling, the right of parents to exercise choice in the schooling of their children, needs of handicapped and variously disadvantaged children, diversity and innovation,

talented students, stimulating public interest in education, and economic use of resources (Australian Schools Commission, 1975). The functions of the Commission did not include any reference to social purposes of schooling, leave alone any link between such purposes and the social, political and economic objectives of the country. It would appear that the Commission was designed to address two issues: the matter of equitable outcomes from schooling for the variously disadvantaged; and, the old political problem, now re-emerging after 80 years dormancy, of funding for politically empowered church-based and private schools as well as the pressing needs of public schooling. As with the volatile debates of the 1800s, concern for the social purposes of schooling, although present and evident in writings of the period, was overwhelmed with the real politik of funding battles.

To reach its recommendations, the Schools Commission *did* expand its thinking beyond its legislated functions. Its considerations were contextualised within concerns for nominated "values" (Australian Schools Commission, 1975, p. 4, para. 1.5) such as: devolution of responsibility; equality; diversity; community participation, and so on. But the Commissioners, like leading individual thinkers of the time, were futuristic only in their attempts to *respond* to "social changes" (p. 4, para.. 1.5) and "emerging trends" (p. 11, para. 2.19). The report dealt (magnificently) with matters of funding and equity, then turned its attention to further matters not specified in its legislation, including curriculum matters but, again, the Commission's sights were on concerns to fit curriculum choices to student aptitudes rather than a "big picture" view of linking curriculum outcomes to stated social purposes for schooling.

Schools Commission, 1984

In 1984 the Commission published two major reports. Neither had anything to say about the social purposes of schooling. The first, entitled *Funding Australia's Schools* (Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia], 1984a) was entirely concerned with the political wrangle over funding of church-based, private and public schools. Not surprisingly, and with historic consistency, it gained the bulk of media and public attention. The second report entitled *Resource Standards for Australia's Schools* (Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia], 1984b) addressed the matter of resource needs, levels and costings. Neither report dealt with social purposes of schooling.

Quality of Education in Australia: Report of the Review Committee, 1985

In 1985 the Commonwealth Government sidestepped the Schools Commission and asked a panel of five prominent and influential people (Professor Peter Karmel—Chair, Hugh Hudson—Chair of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, Peter Kirby—

Chair, Victorian TAFE Board, Professor Barry McGaw, Helen Williams—Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education and Youth Affairs) to "examine the effectiveness of Commonwealth involvement in primary and secondary education with a view to assisting the Government to develop clear, more efficient strategies" (Kirby, 1985, p. iii).

The Terms of Reference centred on improvement of education standards as they related to: primary school communications, literacy and numeracy; secondary schooling's relationship with employment and tertiary education; international competitiveness; the relative disadvantage of girls and other disadvantaged groups (Kirby, 1985, pp. 204-205). It does give some attention to economic and social changes and makes some predictions. It acknowledges the need to have the schooling system provide workers with appropriate skill and knowledge mixes for these predicted environments (pp. 52-66). In a separate chapter entitled *Desirable Outcomes* the review interestingly distances itself from an "excessively utilitarian" interpretation of the Terms of Reference and then proceeds, under the heading of "purposes of schooling," to acknowledge that schooling authorities have identified a broad scope of purposes for schooling. However, the review bemoans the general nature of them and repeats Karmel's (1980) claim that there is unlikely to be consensus "at any but the highest level of generality about the goals, aims and purposes" of schooling (pp. 68-69). Interestingly, the Review does describe, at least in part, the problem which this thesis is addressing, that is, the need for agreed social purposes. However, the Review, having described the problem—clearly a problem of fundamental importance—makes no further reference to it. The problem the Review bemoans is stated as:

> There are no ready agreements on the content of the curriculum, the manner in which schools should go about their tasks and the ways in which their success should be measured. Further, statements of goals tend to be all inclusive, with little sense of priority or differentiation among items in terms of the relative weight which should be attached to them…Realistically, schools cannot be expected to pursue successfully a broad range of sometimes internally inconsistent objectives. Neither can they be expected to achieve satisfactorily an increasing range of objectives nor to encompass a steadily expanding curriculum. (p 69, para. 5.4)

The Review does not attempt to formulate an alternative statement of that which *is* socially, politically and economically desirable—a set of social purposes.

In the National Interest, 1987

In 1987, the Schools Commission determined to "assess the environment in which secondary education is now operating, including the youth policy environment" and "to take stock of what has been achieved in secondary education, to set new goals and targets and to make recommendations about a continuing Commonwealth contribution to the

achievement of national goals in secondary education" (Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia], 1987, p. v). The Commission undertook a comprehensive examination of the plethora of education reports and reviews of the time. It then scanned across a wide range of economic, social and individual concerns while discussing "guiding principles for the development of secondary education" (p. 93). Finally, following a discussion concerning the movement to diversify secondary curriculum, the Commission decided to move for a more unified curriculum, proposing that, "the development of frameworks for essential studies through Years 7 to 12 is a task of national importance in which collaborative action between education systems and authorities is essential" (p. 99). This was a brave position for the Commission to take. The Commission acknowledged the time it would take and the difficulties associated with it. While emphasising that the outcome of such a project would be determined by the project and its participants, the Commission felt its responsibility to provide an insight to its thinking and proposed the main shape of the "essential studies" to comprise:

- **Concepts**—drawn from "the main areas of knowledge" rather than listing subjects to be studied;
- **Intellectual and performance skills**—socially developed modes of acting and enquiry—getting work done, to produce or perform;
- **Australian Studies**—support for Australian democracy by ensuring a common basis for discourse; and
- **Integrated Studies**—making cross-discipline connections between otherwise disconnected concepts and ideas.

While the Commission literally invented the idea of *an essential and national curriculum* it did not link its essential nature to a set of social purposes for schooling, and certainly did not advocate a process by which Australia's citizenry could be engaged in the formulation of these social purposes, and their subsequent use to generate and legitimise a national and essential curriculum.

Strengthening Australia's Schools: A Consideration of the Focus and Content of Schooling, 1988

With the Commonwealth Schools Commission teetering before being abolished and replaced by the more bureaucratically-controlled National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET), the Commonwealth Minister for Employment, Education and Training invited the States and Territories to join with the Commonwealth in a cooperative endeavour to "strengthen the capacity of our schools to meet the challenges they face" (Dawkins, 1988, p. 3) and, as a "first step" to achieve "a shared commitment of

governments, administrators, teachers, students, parents, business and the community more generally to agreed national goals" (p. 3).

This call to action owed some of its perspective to *In the National Interest* and argued for a "common curriculum framework" based on a pre-determined "clear statement of the fundamental purposes of our schools, their objectives and priorities" which themselves should recognise "that schools are responsible for:

  a. preparing young people for fulfilling personal lives and active membership of the community;
  b. preparing all students to take their place in a skilled and adaptable workforce in which further education and training throughout their working lives will become the norm; and
  c. playing their part in overcoming disadvantage and achieving fairness in our society" (Dawkins, 1988, p. 4).

However, except for a general outline of some social and economic characteristics assumed by the Minister, the statement from the Minister did no more to make explicit what the social purposes of schooling might be than did any earlier official document. The statement exhorts education authorities to use "a clear statement of the fundamental purposes of our schools" as the basis of a "common curriculum framework" but provides no description, even in general terms, of the type of desired society to which the fundamental purposes of schools should be linked. Nor does the Minister suggest a method by which agreement can be reached. Furthermore, with no social purpose identified or advocated, the Minister leads the future project he is foreshadowing *away* from the identification of big-picture fundamentals towards an examination of "content in major subject areas." The scene is set for what follows—a review of all subject disciplines by subject specialists from *within* the parameters of each discipline.

An alternative way to operate would have been to identify key characteristics of a desired society, followed by a curriculum restructuring exercise designed to align school curriculum structure, content and associated teaching practice to the achievement of a citizenry well-placed to pursue those characteristics.

Committee of Review of NSW Schools—Carrick Report, 1989

In 1989, the NSW Government received a report from the Committee of Review of NSW Schools. The Committee had been given such wide-ranging terms of reference that it described its task as "the most comprehensive of its kind in the State's history" (Committee

of Review of NSW Schools, 1989, p. 1). The Committee undertook a comprehensive strategy involving submissions from the public, a discussion paper, further submissions, public hearings, public meetings, interstate visits, meetings with interested parties and individuals, and visits to schools in the city and country. In a special chapter devoted to the "nature of education" and in a sub-section specifically entitled "purposes of schooling" (p. 37), the Committee presents an overwhelmingly individualistic view of the purposes of schooling. Almost the entirety of the Committee's interest is taken up with developing the individual potential of students.

While it acknowledges that society and its economy will change and students should be educated to be able to cope with these changes, the Committee makes no attempt to define the major features of a society which a schooling system should support. The exceptions to this are the Committee's identification of two matters which it sees worthy of "promotion"—cultural cohesiveness and democratic principles (Committee of Review of NSW Schools, 1989, p. 41). But even here, the Committee makes no attempt to link these matters to the processes of generating or developing curriculum. The Committee's report leaves the structure of curriculum and the method of choosing its content, largely untouched. Although it considered views supporting a "core curriculum based on essential learning experiences," it chose to leave the feasibility of that idea to the Board of Studies while it recommended a "core curriculum defined in terms of the traditional subjects" (pp. 162-163).

Thus, the Carrick Review did little of any consequence to identify social purposes of schooling, or to link curriculum outcomes with an idea of social purposes of schooling.

School-Centred Education—Management Review NSW—Scott Report, 1990

The next big report concerning NSW schools was the 1990 Scott Report entitled *School Centred Education: Building a More Responsive State School System*. While the terms of reference were overwhelmingly concerned with management issues, the Review was asked to look at these issues "in terms of their efficiency and effectiveness in achieving their purposes and government goals" (Scott, 1990, p. 3). This provision led the Review to consult widely.

In harmony with my own observations, the Review found that "an interesting feature of the 1880 Act and all subsequent Acts is that no comprehensive definition of the purpose of education is given on which structure and practice are to be based. The decision as to what should constitute the 'best' education has in large part been left to the Department" (Scott,

1990, p. 54). With this observation, the Review identifies a huge discontinuity between the political sphere (where social purposes of schooling might be expected to be formulated) and the education sphere (where politically stated social purposes might be translated into curriculum and teaching strategies).

With no *politically* established social purposes for public schooling it is not surprising that all major Departmental attempts to state a set of purposes for schools were, and are, almost entirely *de-politicised*, socially and economically *reactive*, and formulated in terms of *individuals* and their potential. The report does not attempt the overwhelmingly political task of identifying the major features of a desired society—a future Common Good— before attempting to match it with an appropriate schooling structure and content.

Young People's Participation in Post-compulsory Education and Training—Finn Report, 1991

The Finn Report was able to make a series of recommendations concerning the inclusion of required and measurable "competencies" for all students within a mix of post-compulsory "general and vocational" education (Finn, 1991, p. xi). The report made no effort to discuss the social purposes of schooling except to emphasise the original and vocation-related reason for the Finn Report—and to acknowledge the existence of the Hobart Declaration of National Goals for Schooling.

Putting General Education to Work: Key Competencies—Mayer Report, 1992

The Mayer Report of 1992 was not, as far as setting social purposes of schooling was concerned, much different from the Finn Report. Despite the "agreement" reached within the Australian Education Council (AEC) on the content of the Hobart Declaration, the "agreed national goals" appeared to have no shaping influence on either the current provision of curriculum in schools, or on the recommendations arising from the Finn and Mayer reports. Certainly, the Mayer Report directly supports a social purpose of schooling. The social purpose being addressed is young peoples' need "to be able to participate effectively in the emerging forms of work and work organisation" (Mayer, 1992, Foreword). The social purpose being addressed is not one of a set of purposes representing a wholistic approach to schooling in Australia. Nor has it been drawn from a process of engagement with the public. As a consequence, it represents a narrow response to a narrowly defined need within schooling.

Five to Fifteen: Reviewing the Compulsory Years of Schooling—NBEET, 1993

The desirability of establishing schooling as "a rather more coherent sector of education" was flagged by the National Board of Employment, Education, and Training (NBEET) School Council's Chair, Ms Ann Morrow in her Preface to the 1993 report: *Five to Fifteen: Reviewing the Compulsory Years of Schooling*. The report acknowledged a large array of important and relevant developments and thinking of the time including: seven Schools Council reports and papers (National Board of Employment, Education, & Training, 1993); interstate drafting of the National Statements on curriculum and their Profiles following the 1989 Hobart Declaration on the purposes of schooling; inclusion and validating of the Finn and Mayer competencies. Despite the scope of its considerations the report did not identify a set of social purposes for schooling.

Importantly, the report mentioned, but did not address, schools' concentration on "subject matter of the curriculum rather than on the developmental needs of students" and raised pedagogical difficulties associated with the organisation of curriculum into separated subject disciplines (National Board of Employment et al., 1993, p. 15). Despite this clarity of insight the report proceeded to make many recommendations, all predicated on an unaltered subject curriculum paradigm. The social purposes of schooling and how they might relate to the needs of the country were not mentioned.

The New Basics Research Report, Queensland, 2004

The New Basics Project in Queensland, is extremely encouraging. The idea underlying this significant change from traditional curriculum thinking and organisation addresses, directly, the subject organisation identified by Morrow as such a difficulty to good pedagogy. The report on the New Basics puts it well:

> The KLA curriculum is organised into 8 areas, which are based on composite fields of knowledge, each with its own content and context. The New Basics idea organises a futures-oriented curriculum into four categories, each of which has an explicit orientation towards researching, understanding, and coming to grips with newly emerging economic, social and cultural conditions." (Queensland Government Department of Education and the Arts, 2007, p. 3)

and again,

> the 'new basics' themselves are the basics of the schooling our students need for a future that is already upon us; new economies, new workplaces, new technologies, new student identities, diverse communities, and complex cultures. The new basics are the educational outcomes—traditional and new, academic and social—needed by students and communities served by schools. (p. 2)

With this significant departure from curriculum orthodoxy explained, I embarked on the logical exercise of searching for a description of the principles from which the "futures-oriented curriculum" was to be generated, and from which the implied social purposes of schooling (new economies, workplaces, technologies, student identities, diverse communities and complex cultures) were derived.

The closest I came to finding such an explanation was in a separate "technical report" which reveals a number of premises on which New Basics is built, one of which is "The Futures Premise." It is explained as "the imperatives for futures-oriented education" or a "curriculum design and pedagogic intervention" based on "a debate over those knowledges, skills and identities valued and required by society, economies and cultures" (Queensland Government Department of Education and the Arts, 2000, p. 7). The report outlines certain anticipated movements in the (globalised) economy and a conclusion is reached that future-oriented skills and knowledge are needed because:

1. The economy will require of all school leavers:
    - "entry-level literacy competence with print and electronic media";
    - "critical thinking and self-analytic skills for coping with complex community changes and uncertainty in jobs markets, economies and workplaces"; and
    - "educability for retraining across the lifespan through a range of media" (p. 10).

2. New technologies will require of all school leavers
    - "new skills and knowledges for dealing constructively with rapid community change";
    - "new forms of cultural and social identity";
    - "the blending and reshaping of cultural traditions";
    - "exercising new rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation"; and
    - "communication across diversity and difference of culture, gender and background" (p. 11).

3. Designing of social futures helping students to:
    - "build secure and productive identities";
    - "chart and plan life pathways through uncertain and complex times, across new and old institutions and media"; and
    - "learn to live together in diverse communities" (p. 12).

Reid (2005) describes the Queensland New Basics Project as an "exciting and brave attempt" (p. 69) to challenge the disciplines by re-organising the content of the curriculum into four cross-disciplinary learning areas. Reid's praise should be acknowledged and reinforced.

But the Queensland initiative is important for another reason—it attempts to replace decontextualised subject disciplines with highly relevant futures-oriented themes. That is, it attempts to link schooling to a *guessed*-at-future. Although this approach dodges the deliberatively democratic and shaping process of:

    a. reaching a social agreement on the social purposes of schooling, and

    b. identifying features of a *preferred future* society—it is nevertheless an excellent advance over previous curriculum structures because of its capacity to excite the interest of students, and to be efficient (in the sense that what is to be learned will have a high likelihood of being used).

However, in my view, there are several elements to a "downside." First, the social purposes of the New Basics schooling system are to be found in *guesses* at what the economy and/or society might be. These guesses will be fairly accurate as they are based on what is *already* given, the already emerging "future." The social purposes are, in this respect, short-term. Second, the social purposes do not represent an attempt to build a more deliberate, socially determined future. They do not relate to a *desired shape* for a future society except for the political content the authors have managed to incidentally incorporate into the structure. Being based on a future which is *already* shaped and emerging, the social purposes are largely fatalistic. Third, the social purposes do not reflect a political process involving the public. They have been determined using a form of consultation involving only representatives of bureaucracies and some workers from within the industry. As they are not the product of a society-wide deliberation, they will not have great political legitimacy. Fourth, it is difficult to determine just how the futures-oriented curriculum areas have been used to generate, or influence the generation of, the schooling curriculum—if at all.

Nevertheless, and fortunately, the New Basics project proceeded. It scrutinised schooling problems as reported from across Australia and internationally and concluded, accurately I think, that "current attempts at reform cannot begin to address the complexity of the problems. They do not focus on the Futures Premise" (Queensland Government Department of Education and the Arts, 2000, p. 34).

The literature base underpinning the New Basics project revealed that, even with a common approach to the issue of "futures," there are many ways of approaching curriculum construction. The report noted:

> Many countries and educational authorities are struggling with the curriculum question in new economic, cultural and social conditions. Many are attempting to develop futures-oriented categories. Sweden has undertaken a basic values project stressing democratic values. The Canadian province of Ontario has developed new curriculum categories, including multiliteracies. Singapore has undertaken a radical simplification of its curriculum stressing critical thinking. Chattanoga [*sic*] has developed a futures orientation using categories of time and space. Many developing countries have applied variations on the UNESCO categories. (Queensland Government Department of Education and the Arts, 2000, p. 35)

At this point Queensland's New Basics project declares itself a "reconceptualist strategy" which,

> instead of trying to describe everything that students need to know, begins from three key knowledge questions:
> - what are the characteristics of students who are ideally prepared for future economies, cultures and society?
> - what are the everyday life worlds that they will have to live in, interact with and transform?
> - what are the valuable practices that they will have to 'do' in the worlds of work, civic participation, leisure, and mass media? (Queensland Government Department of Education and the Arts, 2000, p. 37)

The report gives no indication as to how these three knowledge questions were devised.

To "reconceptualise" a curriculum paradigm (and its attendant schooling system) is, I think, a good strategy. But for reasons of logic, and legitimacy, it might be *just* as desirable to have a strong reason for doing so. Queensland *does* proffer its reason—so "students are ideally prepared for future economies, cultures and society"—but there is no attempt to identify (or to establish a process which can identify), what a *preferred* future economy, culture(s) or society might be! The result is a series of *guessed* futures, flecked with undeclared bureaucratic, and/or teacher-determined values and politics.

None of this is to say that the Queensland New Basics is not valuable. It is. It represents an excellent pedagogical approach. It does that which educators should do *after* the political work in education is done—after the social purposes of schooling have been determined, after the wider citizenry have been engaged with and agreed on, in a broad legitimising political process, the social purposes of schooling. It advocates, as a "broad principle underlying the (curriculum) framework," knowledge categories "that have an explicit orientation towards researching, understanding and coming to grips with new economic,

cultural and social conditions" (Queensland Government Department of Education and the Arts, 2000, p. 37). Here are the educators doing what educators do well—seeing the need for students to "research" and "understand" major issues.

Many teachers will take these requirements for research and understanding and add a social perspective which *may* be the same as a curriculum which was more explicitly derived from a set of socially agreed purposes for schooling, although just what those purposes are, is nothing more than guesswork given their continuing absence. But some teachers will not. Also, different subject teachers will have different views about the social purposes of schooling and, given the absence of agreement and direction, will establish their own.

When this concern relates to more than individual teachers—to different school leaderships, different school systems and sub-systems, different religiously-based schools, different schools for the already powerfully privileged and socio-economically elite—the risk of lop-sided approaches to matters of the Common Good, or even of approaches detrimental to the Common Good, should be taken seriously indeed.

What is needed is a pre-requisite and prior political process to identify key social purposes of Australia's schooling system so that the *expressed* will can be reflected in a (coherent) essential curriculum.

Before leaving the New Basics initiative it is worth pointing out that its understandably (because a government department can hardly be expected to provide the politics that a government is unprepared to provide) de-politicised view of the future is not only largely shapeless, but is overly individualistic to the detriment of the commonweal—the Common Good. This becomes particularly evident in the summary of "four clusters and families of practices that are essential for survival in the worlds that students will live and work in" which are listed by the New Basics project as the organising elements for the curriculum, thus:

- **Life pathways and social futures**: Who am I and where am I going?
- **Multiliteracies and communications media**: How do I make sense of, and communicate with, the world?
- **Active citizenship**: What are my rights and responsibilities in communities, cultures, and economies?
- **Environments and technologies**: How do I describe, analyse and shape the world around me? (Queensland Government Department of Education and the Arts, 2000, p. 38).

While I am supportive of the Queensland development, Reid is critical of this formulation because the resulting curriculum retains its interest in designating particular knowledge content while Reid prefers to be explicit only about "capabilities," leaving teachers completely free to determine which content is most suitable as a vehicle for teaching and learning those "capabilities" (Reid, 2005, p. 59)—a view addressed more directly later in this chapter.

Essential Learnings: Tasmania, South Australia, Northern Territory, Victoria, 2000+

Over the last few years Tasmania, South Australia and the Northern Territory have introduced variations of "essential learnings" to their curriculum structures. They have their differences. The reasons behind their development include concerns for: the capacity of schooling curriculum to continually absorb additional requirements made of it; a lack of depth in learning; the continuing relevance of subject disciplines; and continuing attempts to fit developing areas of knowledge and skills into traditional subjects within Key Learning Area (KLA) frameworks.

The South Australian and Northern Territory Essential Learnings are organised around a set of concepts, but, as Reid points out (critically) these learnings are incorporated into the existing curriculum paradigm of KLAs. In South Australia there are five broad essential learnings:

1. Futures
2. Identity
3. Interdependence
4. Thinking
5. Communication (Department of Education, South Australia, n.d.)

Each of these areas is then broken down into different 'aspects.' "Futures" for example, incorporates—understanding pattern and connections within systems; understanding world views when analysing future challenges; building scenarios of preferred futures; demonstrating lifelong learning. The essential learnings, and their aspects, are designed to be integrated into the key learning area outcomes and adapted to the different stages of schooling (early years, primary years, middle years, senior years).

In the Northern Territory the essential learnings are divided into four 'domains':

1. "The inner learner—who am I and where am I going?"
2. "The creative learner—what is possible?"
3. "The collaborative learner—how do I connect with and relate to others?"

4. "The constructive learner—how can I make a useful difference?" (Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training, n.d., p. 18).

Each of these domains has between three and six 'culminating outcomes' and a series of 'developmental indicators' for each of the NT curriculum bands and growth points. They underpin the KLAs.

An important difference between South Australia and the Northern Territory, on the one hand, and Tasmania and Queensland on the other, concerns the relationship between the traditional KLAs and the new "essentials." In Tasmania the statement of essential learnings identifies five broad curriculum categories and a series of 'key elements' for each category:

1. "Thinking—inquiry, reflective thinking";
2. "Communicating—being literate, being numerate, being information literate, being arts literate";
3. "Personal futures—building and maintaining identity and relationships, maintaining wellbeing, being ethical, creating and pursuing goals";
4. "Social responsibility—building social capital, valuing diversity, acting democratically, understanding the past and creating preferred futures"; and
5. "World futures—investigating the natural and constructed world, understanding systems, designing and evaluating technological solutions, creating sustainable futures" (Department of Education, Tasmania, 2003, p. 3).

For each key element within each essential learning category there are five standards, illustrative examples of performance and performance guidelines. The essential learnings become the new curriculum organisers taking over from the KLAs. That is, learning is organised around the five broad curriculum categories of Thinking, Communicating, Personal Futures, Social Responsibility, and World Futures—a big shift away from the organisation of curriculum material into subject disciplines such as Mathematics, Science, English, History, Geography, Arts, and so on. This is a strong move away from traditional organising patterns—stronger than Queensland which, at this point, runs its New Basics in a small minority of its schools and, in any event, asks teachers to make a decision whether to teach within the existing KLAs or to incorporate a multi-disciplined approach to the teaching of New Basics.

But, for these four "essential" curriculum projects, what of social purposes? One can *infer* a number of social purposes for schooling from the various Essential Learnings projects. Like the Queensland goals, they are overwhelmingly "education" (thinking, communicating, social responsibility, investigating, understanding, designing and evaluating) and not at all "political" (political system, economic system, social justice,

individual and Human rights, Common Good) in their perspective. Tasmania, like Queensland, even insists on a futures perspective and exhorts teachers to teach, and students to learn, of "preferred futures" yet no attempt (except for a reference to "acting democratically") is made to provide an image, or list of characteristics, of that "preferred future."

Like projects before them, each of these projects has a thoughtful set of schooling objectives cast overwhelmingly in non-political terms. Absent from each of these projects is a thoughtful (and agreed) set of shaping social purposes—statements which, when taken together, sketch the major shaping elements of a preferred society, and which, when provided to curriculum architects, could be used as generators of "essential" curriculum content (from within all subjects and their disciplines).

In my view, this is a serious omission from each of the wonderfully ice-breaking projects concerning "essential" curriculum and New Basics. All projects are concerned with developing their students' potential to react/respond appropriately within a future economic and social environment. But none attempts to define what that future might be.

The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century, 1999

The 1999 Adelaide Declaration (MCEETYA, 1999), like its earlier counterpart, the Hobart Declaration, has been appraised in Chapter Seven where I reached a number of conclusions which are relevant here. In summary, I concluded that the goals contained in each declaration:

- do not identify the key features of a desired future society—they are not social goals, or social purposes, of schooling;
- are not the outcome of a process which produces widespread agreement across the nation's citizenry;
- are not used to generate curriculum content; and
- exhibit a relative absence of concern for the Common Good.

As a consequence, it would be more accurate to say that, while the goals move in the direction of apparent agreement on schooling's purposes, they do not go close to what could truly be called a social agreement, thus they have little political weight/influence. The Adelaide Declaration is a statement of national educational goals reached after consultation with the managements of schools and peak interest groups. The declaration remains an important landmark in Australia's educational history—but it does not represent a set of

social purposes for Australia's schooling, and it does not represent a socially agreed set of social purposes.

What Schools for the Future?—OECD, 2001

In 1996, a Paris conference of OECD decision-makers—Ministers of Education—asked the OECD to research and report on a series of "alternative visions of the 'school of tomorrow'" (OECD, 2001b, p. 3). To meet the request, the OECD undertook a major consultative and research exercise involving an extensive series of international seminars involving Ministers and senior personnel from schooling systems, and research events. From this project emerged the 2001 OECD Report, *What Schools for the Future?* The report is organised into four chapters:

1. The wider environment of schooling: deep trends and driving forces
2. Schooling developments and issues
3. Scenarios for the future of schooling
4. Overview: policy goals, tensions, questions.

A search of the report and its supporting papers reveals a strong concern for "goals" and "purposes" of schooling, but no agreement about what they are. The report, like many Australian reports and educationists, emphasises the importance of declared social purposes but, again like its predecessors, makes no attempt to identify and adopt a set of goals on which it can then base its various scenarios! In fact, it excuses itself from this task, throwing responsibility for producing a "blueprint for the school of the future" onto "the different countries, regions and communities with decision-making responsibility for schools" (p. 106-107), such as Australia or, more accurately, the many Australian states and territories and school systems and quasi-systems within them (OECD, 2001b).

Having dodged the issue of social purposes, it then insists that the *first* question which needs to be "addressed in moving into the future" (by the nation states and schooling system managers) relates to the:

> Cultural and Political Environment: Public attitudes, the degree of consensus or conflict over goals, (dis)satisfaction with schools, and the level of recognition and esteem in which they and teachers are held, will all be critical in shaping the future of schooling. Should this environment be viewed largely as a given and beyond the reach of education policy? Or instead, should it be treated as an important target of policy strategies, with a view to setting in train virtuous circles on matters that are beyond the reach of regulation and administration? (OECD, 2001b, p. 107)

The OECD received little assistance on this matter from the supporting papers (to the Report) with much of the research shaped around issues (see 1-12 below) I would describe

as schooling objectives, as they are overwhelmingly education-specific (1 to 5, 8,12) or beg the question (6, 7, 9-11):

1. Impart sound knowledge and skills;
2. Develop a good self-confidence;
3. Develop the capacity to work in teams;
4. Encourage curiosity and initiative;
5. Awaken interest for further learning;
6. Provide training in taking positions on ethical issues;
7. Education of equal value;
8. Support to pupils with special needs;
9. Work for equality between the sexes;
10. Educate for the labour market;
11. To convey society's basic values; and
12. Prepare for higher education (OECD, 2001b, p. 180).

Given that the report does not address the very matter it says is critical it is not surprising that the Report admits "forward thinking of this kind has been relatively little developed in education compared with other policy sectors," and that the Chair of the 2000 Rotterdam Conference "Schooling for Tomorrow" concluded that forward thinking approaches in education are "woefully under-developed" (OECD, 2001b, p. 77). These are not throw-away lines from unengaged and irrelevant thinkers. Here we have OECD leadership, in an exquisitely relevant environment, outlining their belief that "forward thinking" in respect of linking social purposes to the societal sector, in this case schooling, falls well behind other sectors and is woefully undeveloped.

The Australian experience, evidenced by the reports analysed in this chapter, supports these two observations—a crucial point for this dissertation. As with the Essential Learning projects in four states, schooling planners throughout the OECD appear to be focussed overwhelmingly on matters on which they most probably feel competent and confident such as the aforementioned categories of: thinking, communicating, social responsibility, investigating, understanding, designing and evaluating and not at all concerned for the particulars of a future society for which they have less competence or confidence such as the aforementioned categories of: the political system, the economic system, the global environment, social justice, individual and Human rights, the Common Good.

Again, this is a serious omission from the OECD strategy and, in the absence of a clearly revealed set of social purposes which define the general shape and characteristics of a future society, the task of constructing a schooling system to support the creation and maintenance of that future society is reduced, at best, to educated guess work, and at worst, to manipulative self-seeking and separationist tendencies which will emerge in the work of some (maybe many) teachers, some (maybe many) schools, and some (maybe many) systems of schools, able to operate without reference to the elements of a future preferred society. Nevertheless, the omission didn't stop the OECD pressing on and ultimately, formulating several scenarios for schooling which it said "underlines that there is not one pathway into the future but many," an effective confession that the different scenarios support different types of society.

The scenarios chosen by the OECD (2001b) are:
1. Status Quo Extrapolated:
   a) Robust bureaucratic school systems
   b) Extending the market model
2. Re-schooling:
   a. Schools as core social centres
   b. Schools as focussed learning organisations
3. De-schooling:
   a. Learner networks and the network society
   b. Teacher exodus—the "meltdown."

Much of the more-detailed descriptions of the scenarios *assume* certain social purposes with which I would agree, but again, because there are no political principles articulated, and because there is no social agreement, or even a process by which social agreement may be reached, none of the scenarios has any generalised political weight behind it. The value of the exercise is doubtful.

However, the OECD (2001b) sees value in putting forward these different scenarios because doing so stimulates consideration of the strategic choices to be confronted and the principle dimensions of change. Given that the OECD sees the responsibility for "confronting" these "strategic choices" lying squarely with "the different countries, regions and communities with decision-making responsibility for schools" such as Australia, the political work of determining what sort of society we would like our system of schooling to help create and maintain, seen as a prerequisite by OECD, must now be regarded as a prior and "critical" issue for schooling policy makers in Australia.

It is affirming to know the OECD thinks, as I do, that this matter is of critical importance, but there is no point in waiting for a lead from OECD as they simply toss the problem to Australia and other nation states.

However, on this matter there is not much action in Australia. I have already run through many key education reports and projects of recent times without finding a satisfactory handling of the matter of "social purposes of schooling" and an appropriate political process of establishing those purposes. Like Karmel and those who followed, the OECD stresses the importance of formulating social purposes, but then dodges the issue entirely, hand-passing this prior issue to the nation states. What a problem! Karmel says this "critical" issue is too hard. OECD says it is Karmel's (our) responsibility.

Back in our nation states, what should we do with this conundrum? We seem to have a consensus, at least at a bureaucratic level, that the matter is both an important prerequisite and unachievable.

In view of this hands-in-the-air approach to system development it is not surprising that schooling systems are shaped by internal logics (ideologies, religions, personalities, internal politics, quest for advantage and/or privilege) rather than wider concerns for the shape of the globe's and nation's future, and the advancement of the twins: Common Good and Individual Good.

It may prove to be correct, that there are too many differences of fundamental importance within Australia's citizenry to reach agreement concerning the social purposes of schooling, in which case the projects which are "futures oriented" but accepting of a laissez-faire approach to the *politics* of schooling are the right way for education policy-makers to think. But there is evidence that Australians have a number of strong and commonly held political views such as a commitment to democracy, liberal freedoms, multicultural acceptance, amongst others—maybe more than we give ourselves credit for. The challenge is to find a political *method* with enough *legitimacy* for the resulting agreement to hold. The best on offer appears to be a "deliberative democratic" approach with a promise of regular and widespread review—more on this later.

Inquiry into the Provision of Public Education in NSW—Vinson Report, 2002

This report was released in three stages. The first Report did not discuss social purposes. It did report three categories of view expressed to the Inquiry (Vinson, 2002a). The first,

privileges respect for the rights and views of fellow humans, appreciating differences among people, collaboration and teamwork, membership of a shared community and an understanding of democratic principles. It amounts to a communitarian priority rather than an emphasis upon individual achievement. It stresses the role of schools in helping to integrate Australian society by fostering understanding and tolerance between people of different backgrounds and potentials. This same perspective emphasises the importance of developing a sense of citizenship and social generosity in young people. (pp. ix-x)

The second attaches primacy to students acquiring skills in researching issues, weighing data and critically evaluating arguments as a foundation for life-long learning and the third focuses on the mastery of content assessed in ways that match externally devised calibrations of presumed "academic excellence"—instrumental excellence.

At no point does Vinson attempt to adjudicate this matter by declaring his own view of the social purposes of schooling, or a means by which such an agreement might be achieved.

The first report did look approvingly at developments within Queensland's New Basics (Vinson, 2002a), but even then it did not identify social purposes.

The second report discussed "values," though more particularly as they are relevant to the matter of social cohesion, and the report made some interesting distinctions between values which serve the Common Good and those which serve more individualistic purposes, but no discussion concerning the social purposes of schooling (Vinson, 2002b).

Vinson's third report makes no comment about the social purposes of schooling beyond a discussion of the "social and economic benefits" of investing early in education and thus overcoming larger and greater costs associated with larger numbers of incarcerated citizens, and people with various social costs (such as mental illness) (Vinson, 2002c, pp. 159-161).

ACER & DEST: Rethinking National Curriculum Collaboration: Towards an Australian Curriculum—Professor Alan Reid 2005

Professor Alan Reid's (2005) thoughtful recommendations concerning an "Australian" curriculum are free of the old-paradigm thinking which shapes almost all the proposals outlined above. Like the "essential" curriculum projects, Reid seeks to break the narrowing effect of discipline-based curriculum thinking and advocates a *politically* influenced process, similar to the process of a deliberative democracy, designed to identify a series of agreed "capabilities" which the deliberators believe to be essential for all children. With these capabilities identified by the deliberators, Reid sees the teachers' job to be: selection

of content which is most readily able to assist students to understand and acquire those capabilities; practice of good pedagogy to assist the process of learning. Reid's analysis has a number of laudable elements not least of which is his view that "the expert-driven model of curriculum development is anathema to the concept of a democratic curriculum" (Reid, 2005, p. 54).

Serious problems remain however. First, Reid's (2005) capabilities are not social purposes of schooling. They are:

    a. Knowledge work

    b. Innovation and design

    c. Productive social relationships

    d. Active participation

    e. Intercultural understandings

    f. Interdependence and sustainability

    g. Understanding self

    h. Ethics and values

    i. Communication and multiliteracies. (p. 55)

Even granting him the huge benefits which should accrue from a process of deliberative democracy (including amendment to his surrogate list of capabilities), his "capabilities" are not formulated to support a preferred polity and a preferred citizenry, a point he admits in his insistence that his central message is "thought about in curriculum terms" (Reid, 2005, p. 66). Reid breaks with the curriculum paradigm, and he uses a democratic procedure to do so—in terms of my criteria, both excellent and necessary advances—but he does not declare a preferred society or determine a set of social purposes to provide political guidance for his national curriculum. To do so, Reid would need a much more *political* perspective to be operative.

Reid reports a widespread understanding among educators that traditional approaches to curriculum provision are flawed and he acknowledges "there is not yet a well theorised alternative" (Reid, 2005, p. 60). He makes considerable headway in thinking through a satisfactory alternative, but he does not allow himself to ask and answer the *prior* question, "What are the major features of a desired Australian society which could and should be supported by a system of schooling for Australia's public?"

Reid is not apolitical. A good deal of his political concerns appear in some of his *descriptions* of his "capabilities" probably because he is forced to use political language to give colour to his technical headings. For example, it is overwhelmingly technical (to an educator) to talk of teaching children a "capability" of "ethics and values" (Reid, 2005, p. 55) but it is overwhelmingly political to describe, as Reid does, that the capability be taught in terms of "social justice." Similarly, it is technical to suggest teaching a capability of "active participation" and highly political to describe that capability, as Reid does, in terms of the major descriptors of a very particular type of social organisation—a deliberative democracy (p. 55). The Third Reich was imbued with "ethics and values" and lots of "active participation" but not the ethics and values of "social justice" or the active participation required within a "deliberative democracy."

Despite his efforts to avoid doing so, he appears to have fallen into the trap he describes so well—that of thinking of the curriculum in educationally "technical" terms to the detriment of wider and, ultimately, more important concerns for society's shape—its polity, economy, civil society, environment, rights and responsibilities—society's quest for the Common Good and Individual Good.

Like other authors, Reid's recommendations, particularly his "capabilities" contain a strong flavour of the sort of society we can *deduce* he desires. In addition to a number of capabilities which might be regarded, in his language, as "technical," he does include desired capabilities of active participation in a democracy, intercultural understandings and social justice, all of which are strongly society-shaping elements. However, like other educators who advocate certain curriculum changes, his politics is to be deduced from his technical elements rather than being declared openly as a significant and prior commitment before being permitted, by social agreement, to be a *driver* of the function and form of his new curriculum.

Second, Reid's (2005) capabilities are attended by a number of descriptors which he calls "key aspects." They are presented in full below:

- Knowledge work—for example, accessing information, conceptualising, analysing, applying.
- Producing—including, inquiry, problem posing and problem solving, understanding approaches to thinking, making decisions, justifying conclusions, reflective and critical thinking, understanding different perspectives, ethical reasoning, visualising consequences, scepticism, discernment.

- Innovation and design—for example, curiosity, flexibility, confidence, risk-taking, imagination, responding and adapting to change, enterprise, valuing originality, initiative, understanding context, self-managing, thinking laterally, recognising opportunity, self-motivation, thinking laterally, planning, using design and engineering technologies.

- Productive social relationships—for example, collaboration, teamwork, trust, building social capital, listening, conflict resolution, developing and maintaining friendships.

- Active participation—for example, participating in civil society and the public sphere (lobbying, communicating, questioning, acting democratically, critiquing), understanding rights and obligations, acting in multiple citizenship domains (local, national, global).

- Intercultural understandings—for example, understanding, respecting and valuing diversity, multilingualism.

- Interdependence and sustainability—for example, understanding the inter-connectedness of the natural and constructed world (i.e., environmental, social, political, cultural etc), creating sustainable futures, social and cultural pasts and futures, scientific literacy, understanding systems, building and sustaining environments.

- Understanding self—for example, understanding the social, physical and emotional self, maintaining social, physical and emotional well being, personal past and futures, self-esteem, identities (e.g., cultural, community, family, gender), relationship between the personal and the interpersonal.

- Ethics and values—for example, empathy, integrity, compassion, equity, social justice, responsibility, resilience, connectedness, diversity, honesty, tolerance.

- Communication and multiliteracies—for example, literacies (i.e. understanding and using different forms of representation and communication, e.g. literacy and new literacies, visual literacy, technological literacy, information literacy), numeracy (e.g. numerical and spatial concepts), intercultural communication. (p. 55)

Reid's capabilities gain their direction from the politics of their descriptors—the key aspects. But they need not. It is not hard to conceive a child, or adult citizen, who has learned well to be "innovative" and yet to use that capability to repress and deny much of what Reid outlines as other desirable "key aspects" of his capabilities. Similarly, a good student of "knowledge work" might work extremely well in a militarised society. The general point here is that, to have a capability doesn't necessarily mean that that capability

will be used for the Common Good or socially agreed Individual Good. The Reid "capabilities" only get their politics from the explanation given to them by Reid who is a self-confessed "deliberative democrat." If we forget Reid's definitions, or if we allow an authoritarian or libertarian or conservative or liberal or socialist or communist or elite democrat or participative democrat their definition, then the capabilities can be used for any social purpose—good or evil. Nazi Germany's empowered elite had, arguably, attained many of these listed capabilities and, at one time or another, even advocated some of the more idealistic of them. This observation provides all the more reason to be "up front" about the politics of curriculum, and to seek a social agreement about the type of society the Australian citizenry wants, and convert those desires into a set of regularly reviewed (by the citizenry) political principles (FOAP) which can be used to *generate* a curriculum paradigm which meets the Common Good and a socially agreed commitment to forms of Individual Good.

Third, Reid's deliberative democracy requires further work. His insistence that a list of capabilities should be developed through ongoing "public and professional participation and dialogue" (Reid, 2005, p. 54) and "deep and ongoing discussion and debate" engaging "the profession and the broader community" is welcome (p. 67). But it needs to be guaranteed *beyond* his advocacy of an Australian Government sponsored "initial broad-ranging discussion about the nature and type of capabilities" (p. 67). It is worrying too that his recommendations appear to severely dilute his desire to include the public, and exclude all but the "professionals" with his statement that "It is crucial that an Australian curriculum is not developed and imposed by a small group of policy makers, but rather emerges from a wide ranging curriculum conversation in the *professional* [italics added] community" (p. 62).

There is no doubt about Reid's sincerity concerning his advocacy of the elements of a deliberative democracy but, unlike this dissertation, he does not describe its main features. Without an elaboration of broader collaborative processes it would be naïve to expect the "professional community," comprising key personnel from research, major interest group and school systems' bureaucracies, most of which currently have strong control over policy and management or a vested interest in maintaining key elements of the status quo, to spontaneously understand, or even consciously set out to acquire, the necessary complex understandings and processes comprising deliberative democracy. After all, it requires an array of new and counter-intuitive skills and attitudes, such as those discussed in Section Three, to establish, encourage and liberate from bureaucratic control, a process of data-fed public participation and deliberation likely to result in recommendations for change, some

of which will threaten the status quo and the structure and positions which go with the status quo.

In my view, it is just as important as getting the curriculum thinking correct, to get the political processes clear, unequivocal and agreed. Reid's advocacy of an Australian Government sponsored consultation is a good one, but it needs to be more comprehensive, more pervasive, throughout civil society. It needs to be made explicit that the public are the stakeholders and that *all* stakeholders must be engaged in *collaboration* (not variously discounted forms of "consultation") concerning the choice and endorsement, review and replacement, of the organisation's objectives—in this case, schooling's social purposes.

Fourth, Reid's strategy addresses the matter of "student boredom" better than the issue of "social purposes." Not that this should be surprising. Reid is an educator, steeped in the language and processes of education. Dumping the primacy of disciplines, and teaching to "capabilities" is a radical idea which can be argued in an apolitical manner, relying heavily on the language of educators. Senior schooling bureaucrats are more likely to listen to and follow an apolitical argument. However, the development of a set of social purposes for schooling is a highly political move—both in process and content—and, can only be argued clearly and unambiguously in a political context. Consideration of the social purposes of schooling cannot be free of politics. Educators can pretend, educators can be forced, or led, to list schoolings' goals, objectives, social purposes in an apolitical way, but to the extent that they do this there will be a loss of clarity as well as a denial of the political legitimacy that can accrue as a consequence of openly declared, socially determined, social purposes of schooling.

ACER and DEST: Year 12 Curriculum Content and Achievement Standards, 2007

In early 2007, the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) released a report written by Gabrielle Matters and Geoff Masters from the ACER, the purposes (Matters et al., 2007) of which were to:

1. Examine and describe curricula/syllabuses for each of five Year 12 subjects (including options) including their content and standards;
2. Identify and describe the nature and extent of the involvement of university discipline specialists in the development of content, curriculum and assessment criteria;
3. Identify any correlation between the level of the options available in the subjects in question and the Tertiary Education Rank (TER), or equivalent, score awarded;

4. Analyse the distinctions among English (including Literature), Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and Australian History offerings in terms of content, curriculum and standards; analyse the range of options available within each subject, and quantify the uptake of various options; and

5. Consider/collect views on desirable curriculum content in English (including Literature), Maths, Physics, Chemistry, and Australian History, and evaluate existing content in these five subjects. (pp. 4-5)

The task set for Matters and Masters was not to ask "what is essential learning?" for all students in a preferred future society. As the five purposes above reveal, they were asked to focus only on five nominated subjects. For Matters and Masters, under the heading of "Curriculum content: What is essential?" the question became "for those students who choose to take these five subjects, or any one, or any mix of them until the end of schooling's Year 12, what is essential?"

The two questions are qualitatively different. The first permits a response from all facets of Human learning and endeavour including a wide range of Arts, Languages, Economics, Geography, other Social Sciences and, just as importantly, permits the option of an entirely multi-disciplinary thematic approach to the answer. *This* question will elicit an answer which is *political*, not purely educational. The answer will not presume a continuation of the current curriculum paradigm and the political resolutions which shape it. To the contrary, the question assumes no curriculum status quo. The question directly challenges the status quo by assuming its irrelevance.

The second question—the question Matters and Masters were set to answer—assumes the current organisation of specialised subject disciplines, separate from each other. It locks the respondents into a narrow, already determined, rigid, reference. It says nothing about the essential, or even desired coverage of the subjects themselves, or any portion of the subjects themselves except for those students who choose to study them, this being an important consideration given that all of these subjects are not studied by students who do not attend the senior years of schooling and most of them are not compulsory for those students who do enrol in the senior years. For those who are interested in establishing curriculum content that should be regarded as essential learnings for all Australians the question is unhelpful. For those who wish to gain insights into the content of an "essential" curriculum consistent with a preferred future, the question is irrelevant.

Furthermore, the purpose behind the task set for Matters and Masters appears to be confused. On the one hand Matters and Masters clearly state their "brief"—to establish what is regarded as essential in the five nominated subjects. On the other hand, Chapter One of their report—*Background and Scope*—explains that the Australian Government is seeking to attain a "national consistency" in curriculum content and standards and that part of that quest it to "identify essential learnings that prepare students for an Australian and global society" (Matters et al., 2007, p. 2). Later in Chapter One it is explained that Matters' and Masters' research task emanated from an earlier ACER report, entitled *An Australian Certificate of Education: Exploring a Way Forward* (The ACE Report) released by the Minister for Education, Science and Training in May 2006. The ACE Report was commissioned by the Australian Government as preparation for an Australia-wide Certificate of Education. According to Matters and Masters, "the ACE Report contains six recommendations. The first recommendation is that 'curriculum essentials' be identified—*initially* [italics added] in some nominated mathematics, English, science and social science/humanities subjects—to ensure that all Australian students have opportunities to engage with the fundamental knowledge, principles and ideas that make up those subjects" (p. 4). As Matters and Masters report, this recommendation led to their study.

There are a number of issues raised by this contextual background. First, it lends weight to the suspicion that, far from the Matters and Masters study being a study of that which should be essential for those students undertaking the five nominated subjects, their study was/is part of a bigger agenda. Second, if the bigger agenda is what is really at play here, then the Matters and Masters study went ahead without a number of prior questions being asked and answered, such as "what is it that essential curriculum is essential for?" In my view, this question requires a more political answer such as, "to ensure an Australian economy which is technologically advanced within a political democracy," and so on. Third, the wording of the first ACE recommendation identifies "all" Australian students as requiring "fundamental knowledge, principles and ideas" and yet does not address a range of consequent issues such as: how Australian students who do not attend the senior years of schooling are to gain the fundamentals; and any link between that which is "fundamental." I argue that the meaning of "fundamental" is to be found in the social purposes of schooling. The Matters and Masters study does not address this fundamental of fundamental issues and, as a consequence of its narrow base and assumptions, proceeds to move research not towards, but away from, such considerations.

In summary then, the contextual background supplied by Matters and Masters implies that their project was envisioned, in fact, as a first part of a fuller well-intentioned but poorly-

conceived exercise designed to identify a full range of essential learnings. Furthermore, the choice of the five subjects examined by Matters and Masters implies a hierarchy of importance between the various subject silos—these five subjects are more important than the others. There is no discussion about this, except the fleeting mention that it is an "initial" project—it has been determined before the Matters and Masters study commenced. With no public debate there is no opportunity to answer big questions asked, for example, by the Director General of Education in NSW in 1992:

- is a basic level of economic literacy essential for all young people?
- what Economics should be regarded as essential?
- how do these economic essentials relate back to matters of:
    o Australia's historical, geographical and political context;
    o major global issues such as competing environmental, technological and social priorities; and
    o understanding the world of work, its importance and its requirements?

These questions were being posed by the Director General at a Conference of Economics teachers (Boston, 1992). Similar questions could just have easily, pointedly and urgently been asked at other subject-specific conferences, about: the other sciences such as Biology; the several Arts; Geography and other "social sciences"; Languages; and a wide range of other subject-disciplines commonly offered to the euphemistically called 'university-oriented' students such as Philosophy, Psychology, Political Science, History and Philosophy of Mathematics or Science, and so on.

More pertinently, and as I have argued, the questions are better asked if they are not ensnared within existing subject disciplines.

Thus, the substance of the Matters and Masters project is not significant to the content of this thesis which seeks to establish a set of socially agreed social purposes for schooling before employing that agreement to generate an essential curriculum and, in the process, construct a new curriculum paradigm which is more likely to address major schooling deficiencies such as poor outcomes for low SES students and widespread student boredom, and the fundamentally important political issue of social cohesion.

The Matters and Masters project is of immense relevance in one way. It provides insights into the "big picture" thinking and paradigm framework of the top contemporary

educational researchers as they lead the ACER and DEST into the task of establishing the basis for a "national" curriculum!

National curriculum—Liberal/National Policy 2006 and Labor Party Policy, 2007

A strong push for a "national" approach to curriculum came from the Liberal-National Parties Coalition Government. The former Commonwealth Minister, Julie Bishop, saw the policy as necessary because it would: "raise standards," ensure curriculum is more "consistent" across state and territory borders, and "make curriculum more accountable" (Bishop, 2006). Nowhere in her defence of the policy is there an appeal to a "big picture" future society and a need to envision it, or to construct a schooling system and/or its curriculum to meet it. To the contrary, she praises a contemporary but narrow attempt *within* one of the subject disciplines (the Australian History Summit) to "develop a model curriculum." In the same interview she reveals her planned modus operandi as an overwhelmingly research and bureau based exercise in which the Commonwealth will "find the very best practice that each State has to offer, the very best curriculum that each State has to offer, and pool it to then produce a nationally consistent approach, a model curriculum."

The Australian Labor Party, in 2007, released its new policy *New Directions for Our Schools: Establishing a National Curriculum to Improve Our Children's Educational Outcomes* (Rudd & Smith, 2007). Like the Liberal-National Coalition, this policy identifies the reasons for constructing a national curriculum as: "lifting the standards of all students across our nation," and "relocation" of students across state and territory borders. Neither party addresses the OECD data which shows the weakness in Australian schooling outcomes being with the lower half of student performers, or that these students are overwhelmingly low SES—or that a huge majority of students are bored with their curriculum. The link between a national curriculum and higher outcomes is made but not supported with either evidence or argument. The link is not even stated as a causal logic. It is simply an assertion.

Like their political rivals, the ALP wants to select from the States to "ensure the best of each State system is available nationally." Both parties appear to believe that the means to higher outcomes already exist and that it is just a matter of pooling the best of each State/Territory. The curriculum paradigm is unquestioned—the curriculum paradigm is safe from scrutiny and change.

The ALP policy also contains the same methodological confusions as, on the one hand, it seeks to paint the "big picture" with its appeal to a "clear and explicit agreement about the essentials all young Australians should know and what they should be able to do" but, on the other, immediately closing off this possibility by mirroring the modus operandi of their political rivals with a focus on the core areas of maths, the sciences, English and history. Again, the exercise is to be contained to specialists from within each of the specialities!

To undertake this entire exercise the ALP proposes, not unlike the former Government, to appoint a national bureau to undertake the task. It will undertake "collaborative discussion and partnership with the States." Neither of the two major parties discusses the need for a process involving the wider public as a collaborative participant. The exercise is envisaged as an overwhelmingly bureaucratic event.

Nor does either party seek to outline what the social purposes of a national curriculum might be, except in terms of hoped-for better learning outcomes and more consistency across borders. There is little nation-building perspective in here.

And, as with other contemporary researchers and commentators, the ALP (like the Coalition) makes reference to the importance of economic and social matters, and even briefly acknowledges the importance of cross-disciplinary understandings to a future economy and citizenry, but is unable to provide any insight into how this might be achieved aside from relying entirely on the current curriculum paradigm. The ALP policy is almost entirely devoted to an analysis of within-discipline data. Its thinking is summarised by the statement, "A national curriculum should be developed in each of the key disciplines" (Rudd & Smith, 2007, p. 18).

In the early 21st century a good deal of political energy has been expended around the concept of a national curriculum for all schools. As noted above, the issue became part of the political contest for government in the 2007 Federal Elections. Both major political parties committed to developing a nationally consistent curriculum. Neither party outlined a set of social purposes which might be served by an Australian curriculum.

Although both parties wrote of consultation and agreement between the States, Territories and the Commonwealth, and both sought to establish a national curriculum board to develop national curriculum, neither party acknowledged the importance of, nor outlined a process which might lead to, a set of *social* purposes which might reflect the future aspirations of Australia's citizenry.

The objectives of the "national curriculum" do not address the big issues facing Australian schooling (low SES, boredom, social cohesion), are not obviously connected to the National Goals for Schooling, have no underlying and legitimating social agreement, are not social purposes of schooling, at all.

Federalist Paper 2—The Future of Schooling in Australia: Revised Edition, September, 2007

In 2006 the Council for the Australian Federation, comprising the political leaders of the States and Territories decided to review the *Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* and to produce a new *Statement on the Future of Schooling in Australia*. This paper has a number of excellent features.

It shows strong influence of both McGaw's analysis of OECD data (which reveals Australia's relatively good performance on average and relatively poor performance on measures of "equity"), and Reid's thinking including reference to his "capabilities." Furthermore, it includes, in its list of challenges, reference to "social cohesion," maybe as a result again of McGaw's concern for this matter. It also lists a number of "challenges" which, treated in a different manner, might be re-conceived as "social purposes" of schooling, those "challenges" specifically relating to: economic considerations including technologies; an information-rich world; the environment; social cohesion; equality of opportunity; and spiritual, moral, cultural and physical development of young people (First Ministers, Council for the Australian Federation, 2007, pp. 16-17).

In other words, the Federalist Paper 2 collects together a good deal of the pre-requisite thinking required for a re-conceptualisation of Australian schooling's structure and curriculum offerings. However, the collection of thoughts, it appears to me, are not *integrated* and, as a consequence, are used to produce a list of areas requiring "action" but are not used to conceptualise how the items might relate to each other and how those relationships might have consequences for the basis of schooling provision and its curriculum structure. A new *strategy* does not emerge from the Federalist Paper 2. In truth, a largely untouched reliance on "literacy and numeracy" and current subject disciplines remains the underlying and unchallenged strategy.

The Paper generally follows the logic of this thesis. As with Section One of this thesis, it employs OECD data to examine and report across the performance of Australia's schooling system (First Ministers, Council for the Australian Federation, 2007, p. 9), followed by a statement of "challenges" (pp. 16-17) which are similar in some important respects to my

"social purposes for schooling," followed by a number of action areas, the most significant being in the area of curriculum which, the paper says, should achieve "three important objectives for students": a "solid foundation in skills and knowledge"; "deep knowledge and skills"; and "general capabilities" similar to those sought by Reid (2005).

While the paper, in my view, represents another step forward in positive national thinking on schooling, it exhibits a number of internal inconsistencies and other deficiencies. First, despite laudatory reference to the Hobart and Adelaide Declarations there is no evidence of a relationship between the contents of the Declarations and subsequent desired outcomes. Second, there are no social purposes for schooling. While the "challenges" are excellent improvements on earlier reports (because, both individually and together, they sketch what could arguably be interpreted as a shape of a desired future for Australia and, in that respect, are similar in content to my surrogate FOAP, a FOAP which could emerge with important political legitimacy from a citizen-wide process of deliberative democracy) there is no evident relationship between the "challenges" identified and the shape and content of the curriculum. It is assumed that the current curriculum paradigm with additions for technical and civics courses, will address the stated challenges. Third, curriculum objectives are confused in the Paper as they have a number of layers with no evident connection: the "challenges"; the "three important objectives"; and the subject disciplines organised into their KLAs. Fourth, while "equity" objectives are acknowledged there is, yet again, no evident strategy to address these goals and, in respect of every action item, no connection made between the area of action and the equity goal thus reinforcing the separation of "equity" thinking from the mainstream arms of schooling policy and, in my view, dooming to failure the equity objective and thus, the bottom half of Australia's student population. Reference to socio-economic status is made only in a muted way conducive to continued neglect of this matter by major schooling authorities. Fifth, the matter of widespread student boredom, despite its widespread occurrence and intensity, along with its *prima facie* association with that which is offered as learning content and a learning experience, is ignored—not mentioned at all—treated as irrelevant to considerations of future action. Sixth, the "commitment to students" (First Ministers, Council for the Australian Federation, 2007, p. 26), promises a grand "solid foundation in skills and knowledge" but interprets this undertaking as a "focus on literacy and numeracy" and on the "key subject disciplines as students move through secondary school" (p. 26) an undertaking which does nothing to challenge current provision or perspective and, in my view, entrenches a curriculum with no researched or planned "intrinsic value" to low SES and other disadvantaged students. Seventh, the "challenges" are not the product of a citizen-wide process of consultation and engagement. Eighth, future consultation on the

Paper and its progress will again be between the management elites of schooling systems and their representative organisations.

Despite its use of key researchers (e.g. McGaw and Lamb, First Ministers, Council for the Australian Federation, 2007, p. 9) in its preparation, the "new statement" is disappointing.

In relation to my criteria for success, its strengths are to be found in:

- its strategy of standing back from Australia and assessing the national "big picture" especially in relation to its comparative international performance(s);
- an accurate assessment that Australia has a major, relative to OECD countries, equity problem;
- an accurate assessment that Australia can do better generally (aside from the equity issue);
- incorporating some curriculum objectives similar to Reid's "capabilities";
- acknowledgement of a number of important issues with exhortations to address: accountability; improved indigenous outcomes; parent and community participation; quality of teaching; school leadership; early childhood; school retention; and
- its acknowledgment of the need for a national curriculum.

The statement's weaknesses include:

- it fails to report highly-relevant data such as those which establish high levels of boredom-at-school amongst Australia's students who are otherwise happy with their teachers, peers and school environment;
- while McGaw's analysis concerning low SES students is clear and unequivocal in Chapter Two (First Ministers, Council for the Australian Federation, 2007, pp. 12-13, 17) the Paper does nothing apparent to *respond* to this powerful data, beyond its inclusion as one of the "challenges" (p. 17) and the listing of "indigenous" students as a "priority" item (p. 23). Low SES is simply not taken up, despite McGaw's earlier data and analysis. Even in the later "commitments" there is a philosophic backwards step from the Adelaide Declaration's advocacy, over time, of an equality of schooling outcomes for students of low SES and other disadvantaged backgrounds to a much lesser responsibility of governments to "equality of opportunity" and "a chance to succeed." Nowhere in the explication of curriculum, or a national curriculum, or the development of principles, or standards, or the commitments to students and parents, is there reference to low

SES students. The linkages between these major arms of policy and the biggest indicator of depressed learning outcomes is simply not made in the Paper's future policy and action Chapters.

- there is no attempt to use the excellent set of identified "aspirations" of democracy, equality, economic prosperity, information-rich world, environment, social cohesion, and citizenship—arguably a good surrogate set of social purposes of schooling (in the absence of a socially determined and socially agreed set)—to shape a new national curriculum; and

- at its core it entrenches the status quo. The Paper endorses the use of current subject disciplines with the addition of three "cross disciplinary twenty-first century learning areas of: technology (including ICT and design); civics and citizenship; business (p. 28). That the status quo concerning curriculum structure will continue, apparently free from considerations of national "social purposes" of schooling, is nowhere more evident than in the Paper's "Action Plan" for "Working Towards a National Curriculum" (p. 31) which outlines a process by which the representatives of States and Territories and "relevant organisations, including representatives of the Catholic and Independent school sectors" will "develop nationally consistent curricula (Action 1) that will "set core content and achievement standards that are expected of students at the end of their schooling and at key junctures during their schooling, *starting with English, mathematics and science."* [italics added] (p. 31)

The Federalist Paper 2, while collecting together most of the most important data and national needs, has three major strategic weaknesses. First, it relies on agreement amongst elite representatives for the formulation of its major parameters, rather than engaging the wider citizenry in a process designed to achieve a social agreement on the social purposes of schooling. As a consequence, the product of the national "collaboration" will barely touch the consciousness of the populace and have less weight in shaping future developments—a weakness which heightens the likelihood of reforms being restricted by the vested interests involved in maintaining existing schooling and curriculum structures (including school and system managements, teacher unions, and professional associations). Second, although the listed "challenges" could be regarded as a surrogate set of "social purposes" to which school structures, curriculum and management structures might be *aligned*, they are not. The "challenges" listed are not employed to generate, or suggest the possibility of generating, new schooling structures, curriculum structures or management processes. Third, the data which identifies room for better overall Australian average

schooling performance, the urgent need for more equal schooling outcomes, and the need to be anxious about "social cohesion" (excluding data concerning widespread student boredom which is not thought to be relevant) are *collected* together but not, evidently, *considered* together with a view to investigating an overall policy response which might address them all simultaneously and, as a consequence, the paradigms of schooling and curriculum provision are left unchallenged.

From the available research, reports, Declarations, and Papers from the last 30 years there is evidence of some movement from Karmel's summation to the invitational conference of 95 influential educators that he chaired in 1980, in which he stated, "Consensus on the goals of education can be achieved only if the goals are generalised to the point of trivialisation" (Karmel, 1981, p. 272) to the Federalist Paper's list of six "challenges" for schooling as they relate to: economic considerations including technologies; an information-rich world; the environment; social cohesion; equality of opportunity; spiritual, moral, cultural and physical development of young people.

It appears, from the analyses outlined in this chapter, that Australia's education policy makers over the past 30-odd years have known of the importance of political principles which shape or should shape schooling systems, but have chosen not to identify and use them because they thought it impossible to reach a consensus or because the task was too difficult within the context of the task they had to perform. There is no exception to this summary.

Despite the frequent acknowledgement of the advisability, need, or crucial nature of formulating social purposes for schooling, all major reports, research papers, and policy statements fail to do so. There are some references to social goals woven into the supportive thinking of researchers, particularly when the task before them is a review of curriculum. This is not surprising because curriculum has purpose. The several State and Territory projects which attempt to describe a "futures-oriented" curriculum come closest to articulating social purposes for schooling with their identification of emerging (current) realities or guessed-at futures, but they fall well short of identifying the elements of a *preferred* future society which a schooling system could be designed to propagate and support. The projects are reduced to chasing guessed-at futures or already in-the-present "emerging" futures, with little public consultation and little political legitimacy.

To begin curriculum review with a declaration of social purposes is very different from beginning a review with a continuing commitment to the current curriculum paradigm. If the yet-to-be-declared social purposes of schooling are to be given effect, then processes of implementation need to be aligned to *them*, not aligned to predetermined organisation of knowledge into relatively separate subject disciplines. There *are* projects which challenge the hegemony of the subject-disciplines, notably the "essential" projects of Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory, and more recently the Australian Capital Territory, as well as Reid's 2005 paper. These are important challengers to one of the most powerful features of the current schooling system, as they problematize one of the most serious barriers to good pedagogy and student interest—the low-relevance of learning in subject disciplines stripped of their interdisciplinary life context and meanings.

With the political work of identifying social purposes of schooling left undone by the polity, it is not surprising that politically-shy educators speak of education—their education industry—as if it were an entity in itself, existing separately and unconnected to the polity, economy and civil society, and something which exists as a valued entity providing "good" for those who are successful within it and which, from time to time, is tweaked a little to respond to emerging economic and/or social matters such as work-related skills, driver education, civics education, sex education, and so on. This entity is overwhelmingly comprised of traditional subject-based disciplines. According to Federalist Paper 2, governments are aiming for a "near universal completion of Year 12 or equivalent" (First Ministers, Council for the Australian Federation, 2007, p. 26) and these students are expected to gain a good grounding in the skills and knowledge required to meet the six nominated "challenges" by attending classes in Maths, Science, English and so on. That this goal cannot be successful is further evident because of the voluntary nature of most of the subjects in mid to upper secondary schooling, such that many students—even those who remain at school—never undertake studies in economics, or logic, or social structures, or legal basics, or political processes, or community concerns, or individual rights, or human rights, or environmental concerns, and so on—and in the primary curriculum the overwhelming emphasis is on literacy and numeracy without these skills and understandings being contextualised by any set of publicly-identified and socially-agreed social purposes such as those outlined in my surrogate FOAP or in the Federalist Paper 2 "challenges."

On the occasions that educators and schooling authorities make reference to the social purposes of schooling, they do not speak of clear-cut political goals such as:

- developing, expanding and maintaining a participatory democracy;

- developing a technologically advanced and mixed economy;

- expectations that all citizens will engage in productive work;

- ensuring a physically healthy planet;

- developing and maintaining local, regional and national sustainable environments;

- ensuring national wealth is distributed without excessive gaps developing between the rich and privileged, and the dispossessed and disempowered;

- building international cooperation and friendship; and

- guaranteeing (all) individual and human rights as determined by the United Nations.

They are more likely to be advocating:
- access for all;

- extending equity beyond primary to secondary and tertiary levels;

- establishing outcome standards in traditional subject disciplines;

- increasing outcomes in literacy and numeracy;

- attaining "consistency" across state and territory borders; and

- provision of new curriculum content to satisfy a perceived contemporary need.

Education is not seen as a shaping tool for a pre-envisaged, and agreed, future society with certain specified essentials, while providing simultaneously for other areas of guaranteed freedoms.

Those who write of schooling's social purposes appear to be clear about matters of the *past*; education's role in all this is strong. It carries the "traditions" forward with each generation of school children. But in respect of the *future* it is fatalistic or reactive. From this perspective, the job of schooling constructors is limited to an educated guess as to what the future might look like, rather than the future that Australian citizens would actually prefer. The best developments we have, in the "essential" and New Basics projects, are attempts to mould a schooling system to *fit* that guess rather than building a curriculum and schooling structure best designed to *create*, or help create, a preferred future. Or, just as often maybe, education management, attempting to be apolitical when formulating curriculum strategies, are forced by the absence of politically determined and declared social purposes, to veil their societal preferences in (sometimes) disingenuous arguments about preferred educational policies. A charge of disingenuousness could not be laid against John Dewey as his political vision was declared in advance of his educational advocacy, whereas the

charge might be laid against a number of the Australian reports addressed above. The evidence suggests that Australian thinking is moving towards a more open declaration of political goals. The work of McGaw, Reid and the Federalist Paper 2 certainly supports this view, with McGaw openly concerned for both social justice and social cohesion, Reid weaving clear concerns for social justice, democracy and sustainable environment into his capabilities and their key elements, and the Federalist Paper 2 embracing a good deal of McGaw's and Reid's thinking and listing six "challenges" for the Australian schooling system, some of which provide some potential for shaping curriculum and schooling structures.

Despite these developments, Australia still has no set of social purposes for schooling. It has no plans for deriving a set of social purposes for schooling. It has no plan to use a set of (any) principles to review existing schooling or curriculum structures.

Social Purposes—A Possibility for the Future

Before I can propose a newly constructed system of schooling for Australia's public, I must address the same problem which confronted Blackburn and Karmel in 1980. I am far less qualified than either of those historic giants to do so. But what if they had the wrong approach? Maybe they resorted to education-speak (that which Reid describes as a "technical" approach) when an appeal to the political might be more productive?

It is not hard to understand why learned people, full of insight, competence and goodwill— such as Blackburn and Karmel—would baulk at the idea of being overtly political. After all, they were *educators*. Not that they were educators without politics, but their job was as educators. The job of setting the political parameters, of gaining a politically legitimating base for the schooling system, was not with them, but with the legislators. Sure it was (and is) that educators could, and should, enter the process of determining the political parameters of a schooling system, but setting the political parameters for a schooling system was not, and is not, the job of educators. Further, the politics of Australian education had been, and continued to be at the time they wrote, tumultuous and hostile. Karmel thought it impossible to achieve consensus. This was an assumption. He provided no evidence for it. He, like many others, simply believed the matter to be a self-evident truth. Given the context, he may have been correct.

Yet there is abundant evidence that Humans often make huge efforts to reach agreement and to systematise processes which lead to agreement. It is true that success is not universal as our news media reveal to us daily—many examples of international, national, regional

and local differences, violence, rape, murder, pillage and unspeakable atrocities. As apparent as these conflicts are, they happen *despite* the development of political and ethical systems designed to reach, or attempt to reach, societal agreements on a wide range of matters ranging from the provision of "stop" signs for traffic safety, to the control and management of international wars and climate change.

What if we held a *different* assumption? What if we assumed that, *given certain circumstances we can control* (timelines for deliberation, data to feed deliberation, universal opportunity to participate meaningfully in the deliberation, rigorous processes to encourage deliberation), that consensus *could* be reached, at least on many central matters of concern to Humanity, and that, once reached, this consensus could become the shaping force, for example, of a schooling system? By consensus, I mean much more than a majority—I mean overwhelming accord and acceptance. This might produce a completely different way of thinking about the *content*, and even the *shape* of a schooling system.

Nor do we have reason for dark pessimism. After all, despite my criticisms of the methodology and perspective of many of the reports analysed above, some of them *have* utilised processes designed (successfully) to obtain agreement, at least from within disparate bureaucracies and political jurisdictions. The two Declarations of National Goals for Schooling, the national curriculum statements and profiling exercise, the outcomes of the Finn and Mayer reports, the project concerning "values" in Australia's schools, the general "push" towards a "national" curriculum, and the negotiations concerning Federalist Paper 2, are all imperfect indicators of a move toward a social agreement of a diluted kind—a bureaucratic consensus *on behalf* of the elected representatives who govern *on behalf* of the electorate who, in this case, have not been consulted. Reid's latest advocacy for socially agreed "capabilities" takes this political process to a higher level of democratic collaboration with the citizenry expressing its educated views.

If we assumed it was possible to achieve a social agreement on the social purposes of schooling, then how might they be defined? This is where the major *conceptual* challenge lies. Philosophers, political theorists and educators see schooling as the means by which society:

- carries forward its traditions and preferred values;
- seeks to develop the potential of each student; and
- prepares young people for a guessed-at future, particularly economic future.

In each of these three categories, there is a myriad of sub-categories and within each category there are elements that are widely held, others not so widely supported, others with little support at all.

How can society make sense of these waves, even tsunamis, of different types of knowledge and skills and attitudes? One way is to rely on traditional subject disciplines to address these matters. In Australia, in 2008, in eight different states and territories, a number of subject disciplines are required of students to a certain age, and then a wider range of subjects is offered to more senior students. What is chosen for students to learn is established not by the polity, but by a group of subject specialists who seek to identify what all students should know *if* the students choose that subject, as well as another amount of subject matter to be offered to students who want to specialise in the field.

By relying on traditional subject disciplines, the politics of determining social purposes for schooling is largely removed from the political arena, away from the public, even away from cross-subject curriculum thinkers. Sometimes there is an interruption from an economically-generated political interest such as (Mayer and Finn) or an ideologically-generated interest (such as the Australian Values Project) but the curriculum paradigm remains generally untouched. Determining the social purposes of schooling in this manner is not to "determine" social purpose(s) at all—and produces a politically directionless context within which schooling policies are formulated—not surprisingly, surrounded by public conflict and sectional hostility. An overall consequence of such an ad hoc approach is relentless conflict surrounding every proposed change within the Australian schooling "system" and its many sub-systems.

Another way that society can make sense of these tsunamis, rather than relying on subject disciplines is to approach the matter of "social purpose" in an entirely different manner—to *declare its political nature*—by placing the matter squarely in the public arena, engaging the polity in a rigorous process of democratic deliberation (say, every 5 or 10 years), and seeking a social agreement (FOAP) concerning these social purposes, after which the agreement can be used as a "tool" to shape other policy arenas such as curriculum development. This possibility has already been flagged and will be taken further later.

Parallel to this process of deliberative formulation of a FOAP is a need to acknowledge that the contents of the resulting curriculum will contain that which is for the Common Good and that which is for Individual Good.

Why do we need to acknowledge this? Because our goal is to reconstruct a schooling system which is neither laissez-faire and ad hoc, *nor* trapped in an ideological straightjacket—a system which meets the need for both the Common Good (as determined by democratic deliberation—not by Left or Right dogma and formulae) and Individual Good (as determined by individual families and students—within the meaning of guaranteed human rights and liberal civil liberties).

Amongst the major components of society, as written of by political philosophers, are: the polity, or political structure; the economy, comprising the production and distribution of all goods and services; civil society, comprising a plethora of identity and interest groups. From history, we can deduce that matters of major political, economic and civil import have included:

- a struggle for the rights of the individual over the State;
- separation of Church and State;
- the growth of democracy;
- a shifting proportion of public and private ownership within the (mixed) economy;
- a movement towards equality of social outcomes for identifiable groups of relatively disempowered peoples; and
- movements of people, both within and outside democracies, seeking government commitment to the Common Good.

Much of the traditional and contemporary conflict within societies, as well as between societies, is related to the different importance people place on the primacy of Individual Rights over the Common Good—or vice versa. These conflicts play out within the elements outlined above—the polity, the economy, and sometimes throughout civil society.

This categorisation—Common Good and Individual Good—is not new to political thinkers, or to the public. In fact, it really does no more than replicate much of the experience that otherwise pervades our existence and everyday life. It is all around us. We are comfortable with a world which *requires* citizens to undertake certain responsibilities, such as work and taxes, so long as people are *not required* to share their resources equally between the deserving and the less-deserving. That is, while we are insistent that certain essentials (the Common Good) should be provided from common resources (taxes and legislation), we are just as insistent that there be a guarantee that individual incentive—ambition—be encouraged within our thinking and behaviour. We believe, or accept, that wealth generation and wealth distribution has public and private components, that a mixed

economy, with public and private components are desirable and that private-public mixes of health, hospital, schooling, and housing systems are desirable.

This rough justice, the focus of timeless political ebb and flow, appears throughout our liberal democracies. It even pervades our existing schooling system which, although the categorisation is not exclusive, provides a large body of compulsory curriculum (Common Good—particularly in the primary and junior secondary schools) and a further body of "elective" curriculum (Individual Good—particularly in the senior years of schooling) when students are regarded as having the maturity to exercise sensible choices in their curriculum studies. In this curriculum paradigm however, the "choice" or Individual Good component, so crucial to the empowerment of all children and particularly those from disempowered socio-economic contexts, is weak in the primary and junior secondary years, while the Common Good component, with its potential for high-interest and high relevance, evaporates in the middle to senior years of schooling. In none of the levels of schooling is the Common Good component derived from political concepts such as a set of political principles believed to be essential for the construction of a preferred future society.

The matter of providing a curriculum which satisfies students' and their families' Individual Good, from the earliest to the latest years of schooling is relatively easy to envisage. Providing choice to (senior) students has been a matter of considerable experience within the recent past and, as I shall argue further, could be extended to all students in all schooling years for approximately half of the schooling experience. The more difficult task of conceptualising a required, or "essential" curriculum, for the other half of the curriculum structure, is made easier if we are first able to construct an agreed FOAP which can then be used to generate the essential curriculum which serves, for the most part, the Common Good.

In summary, I am saying that social purposes of schooling should be:
- determined transparently (not transmitted through education jargon);
- constructed using a democratically deliberative political process;
- socially agreed; and
- categorised as Common Good and Individual Good.

Individual Good can be readily catered for within the elective layer, while Common Good social purposes could then be used to generate an "essential" curriculum for all students from the earliest to the latest years of schooling.

Just what the FOAP might contain will depend on the proposed democratic deliberation which should precede it and be integral to its formulation. However, we are not without clues about what might be contained within a politically set FOAP, although we do need to agree, firstly, about the *scope* of the FOAP. For example, Reid and Thomson (2003) discuss the "publicness" of the curriculum, emphasise the necessity of having social purposes for schooling, but fail to declare what those purposes might be, or how they might be determined. They do argue for "making democratic publics" by incorporating pedagogy they call a "deliberative curriculum" (xxii-xxiv). One can deduce their social purpose to be a deliberative democracy, certainly consistent with this dissertation, but falling well short of the scope of FOAP envisaged by me.

It stands to reason that the way decisions are made in a society affects all other decisions, and who makes them. The style of decision-making therefore earns the place of primary importance in the exercise of defining a set of social purposes for schooling. It might be first listed, at the head of the FOAP. But the way decisions are made is not the end of the social purposes of schooling. The social purposes are likely to be seen, by the public, to range across all the major features of a society. I think it essential that these social purposes be both extensive and a matter for public collaboration and determination. They need to be extensive enough to sketch a Big Picture, at least the scaffolding of a preferred society, so that the curriculum it generates is itself extensive and supportive of the FOAP. Taking into account all the political and educational literature examined to this point, and acknowledging that what follows is simply my estimate of what I believe Australia's citizenry would regard as essential features of a preferred future society, a FOAP might look something like:

1. To establish and maintain a participatory democracy, with high levels of democratic understanding and practice throughout the citizenry;
2. To ensure a global and local environment conducive to the health of living things;
3. To encourage and maintain a technologically advanced economy, with a high level of self-sufficiency and environmental harmony;
4. To ensure all adult roles holding status and power comprise, over time, people from all identifiable groups and socio-economic backgrounds;
5. To encourage societal cooperation and a concern for the Common Good;
6. To guarantee liberal freedoms to all citizens;
7. To guarantee human rights to all citizens;
8. To provide for cultural diversity; and
9. To encourage creativity and responsible innovation.

A FOAP such as that sketched above might include a tenth element including specific values held to be of central importance by the citizenry. Given acknowledgement that education's purposes include transmission of honoured values from one to the next generation, and with all schooling systems and their key support organisations emphasising the importance of Values Education, it is important that it should be considered not as an afterthought—a "clip-on" subject—but as something worthy of deep infusion throughout the curriculum.

Lovat presents the view that, for Values Education to be integrated into mainstream curriculum "the closest links between it and "the world of teachers and schools" need to be found (Lovat, 2005, p. 2). He notes that in this world there has been a diversification of the school population such that now "systems have to find the point of relevance for education of students across a vast array of academic and cultural starting-points" and that this new environment is more conducive to systems, particularly public systems, accepting that "moral formation" is part of the role of teachers.

When Lovat writes of "relevance" he is making a point about values—a point I shall return to. In my view, it could be just as sensibly made about curriculum relevance to disempowered students from indigenous and low SES backgrounds and help illuminate the matter of curriculum outcomes with "intrinsic value" for those groups of students, or it could be made with reference to a curriculum paradigm which appears to be complicit in the boredom of many of Australia's students no matter what their socio-economic background.

The question of relevance is front and centre in this dissertation. The current reliance on subject-disciplines as the basis for organising material to be learned—that is, *relevant* material to be learned—is being challenged here. Currently, Australia's schooling system is, and will continue to be (according to Federalist Paper 2), arranging matter to be learned into separated and vertically organised subject disciplines, a form of organisation which strips subject topics from their life context, and their (often) cross-disciplinary meaning. This curriculum structure has an immediate consequence for teachers—even for the best of teachers—as the art of *connecting* different topics from different subjects has first to tumble through the systems' deliberate and conscious act of *disconnection*! The best of teachers attempt this connection. The organisation of curriculum means that even for the best of teachers, it is rarely possible. In respect of "values education" it may be better to conceive of it not as another "clip-on" subject, timetabled alongside the many parallel universes of Driver Education, Personal Development, TAFE "taster" courses, myriad VET courses, as

well as Maths, Science, English, History, Geography, Languages, Arts, Technologies, Computer Skills, and on and on, but as a series of attitudes and moralities which should be learned in every theme throughout a more relevant curriculum, and particularly in that part of the curriculum which is deemed to be common, required, compulsory and essential, and not just in the infant and early years of schooling but throughout the entirety of schooling.

Moreover, the use of a FOAP (reviewed regularly as part of the political process) to generate an essential curriculum will *guarantee* themes of high interest and high relevance because these themes will be addressing the construction of the "real world"—that is the nature of the FOAP. Teachers' artistry—the act of "connection"—will not have to contend with the artificial barrier to knowledge, interest and learning excitement that is produced by stripping curriculum of its context and life relevance. For these reasons it is worth considering "values" as part of the FOAP. It may be that some of these values are already incorporated into an existing element of the nine elements listed above (such as in phrases like "participatory democracy" and "self-sufficiency" and "societal co-operation") but, because of the widespread commitment in public and private schools to values education, I will draw from the values identified for Australian schools by the Australian Government's Values Project (Australian Government Department of Education Science and Training, 2005). Thus, we could add a 10th point to my previously outlined nine point FOAP. It would read:

10. To transmit throughout society values such as: care and compassion, doing your best, fair go, freedom, honesty and trustworthiness, integrity, respect, responsibility, understanding, tolerance and inclusion.

Here above, is a 10-element surrogate FOAP which could become a major shaping factor in the development of curriculum and, in particular, the half of the curriculum to be regarded as "essential" for the Common Good.

Reid's proposed capabilities are less political, and thus less politically-shaping. Nevertheless, they draw on educational discourses which are in harmony with most of the elements of the surrogate FOAP outlined above and might make up the second side of a matrix comprising: (a) the 10 elements (let's say) of the FOAP, and (b) Reid's nine capabilities of:

1. Knowledge work
2. Innovation and design
3. Productive social relationships

4. Active Participation

5. Intercultural understandings

6. Interdependence and sustainability

7. Understanding self

8. Ethics and values

9. Communication and multiliteracies.

With Reid's nine surrogate "capabilities" shown in the vertical columns, and the ten elements of my surrogate FOAP in the horizontal rows, we can see (below) a matrix of squares for which each panel of curriculum reviewers (to be outlined later in this Chapter) would be required to give due regard when identifying FOAP-generated essential learnings.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Participatory democracy									
Environment—global and local									
Economy—technologically advanced									
Adult roles: over time-equality of outcomes									
Common Good—societal cooperation									
Liberal freedoms—guaranteed									
Human rights—guaranteed									
Cultural diversity									
Creativity—responsible innovation									
Preferred values									

The matrix above would simply be used to ensure themes, for example, on "participatory democracy," gave due regard to each of the Reid capabilities.

The Process of Constructing an Essential Curriculum Using the FOAP

The Australian schooling system has serious deficiencies associated with: its fractured nature, the performance of its bottom half of students particularly those from low SES backgrounds, and widespread student boredom and reluctance to attend school. In addition, with students of similar backgrounds increasingly collected into differently badged church-based schools, the matter of "social cohesion" has become a concern to be addressed.

Faced with these issues, school system managers might be tempted to treat each as a separate item and devise a specific response to each, and they might even prioritise them and seek to remedy one matter first before turning attention to the next. It may be that the nature of these problems has been regarded as so immense that they cannot be addressed. After all, the prospect of engineering a coherent Australian schooling system from the current multi-divided system of States, territories, public, church-based, exclusionary, and other private schools does appear to be daunting.

No less daunting is the raft of issues relating to the performance of low SES students including indigenous students. Appropriate responses for these students will require more than extra resources and better teaching. It will also require, at its simplest level, better coordination of food, health, accommodation and clothing services and support and, at its more difficult-to-conceive end, it will require entry to the forbidden world of politics to gain insights into the "known" world of daily existence, survival, skill, culture, aspirations and possibilities of those who come from relentlessly disempowered circumstances, followed by appropriate curriculum responses which provide for schooling outcomes with "intrinsic value." While major public schooling authorities have failed to take up the matter of low SES seriously, they now have an increasing interest in across-the-board policies such as improving the quality of teaching and the quality of school leadership.

Should we accept that the classroom is a boring place for students? Is it just a fact of life that, while school is a friendly and welcoming place for students to socialise with their friends, the classroom is a place so boring that 34% do not want to be at school at all, and that 60% report being often bored? Even if this was an appropriate environment for excellent teaching and successful learning, it is hardly a desirable context for our sons and daughters to endure.

The highly political issue of "social cohesion," an issue huge on the agenda of European and the OECD countries, has now moved from the Australian political battlefield involving supporters of public and private schools, into official documentation—first with McGaw's anxious references and now into the Federalist Paper 2, as one of its six "challenges."

Maybe it is the daunting quality of all four of these major issues that should make policy makers pause, and ask whether there might be a better way of dealing with them than working down a prioritised list. Maybe they "hang together." Maybe a solution for one, if the concerns for others are not taken into account, will adversely affect the others. Or, maybe a solution for one will prove to be a barrier for other solutions.

That is, the size of the four problems suggests a management approach which reviews the "big picture" and seeks a solution to all the problems *simultaneously*! The analysis within this dissertation has suggested that each of the first three issues raise matters of curriculum. I have suggested that the matter of social cohesion can be better addressed once the first three are resolved—thus producing a new political environment in which it will be more possible to conceive of a solution. I have further suggested that to renovate or replace the current curriculum paradigm, there is a necessary prior step—the social formulation of a set

of social purposes for schooling. In the absence of such a socially agreed set of social purposes I constructed a surrogate which I called a FOAP.

So, what is the way forward from here? While seeking to construct something new and radical, we must, for reasons of pragmatism, acknowledge some realities one of which is that most educators think in terms of, and are organised in terms of, subject faculties. The edges between them are sharply defined. This is especially so in secondary schools.

Employers provide working conditions, status and promotion based on, and within, subject specialities. Employees, through their teacher unions and industrial courts, have industrial agreements which assume subject specialities in secondary schools. Teachers' professional Associations are organised along subject lines. Many teachers are trained only in their subject speciality, and students' school life is timetabled and organised around these subject divides. Even in primary schools, teachers are regularly relieved from classroom teaching so that specialised subject teaching can be taken by another teacher.
The curriculum paradigm I am proposing looks very different. It therefore confronts established practices, traditional views of what is right and proper, teachers "comfort zone," bureaucrats existence, among other vested interests.

Moving from a subject based curriculum paradigm to a two layered structure comprising an "essential" and an "elective" layer will therefore require staging—step by step. The matter of an "elective" layer will be addressed in a later section, but in respect of the "essential" layer, and following the adoption of a real social agreement, there must be a bridging step. That is, we need to find a bridge between the current powerful realities shaped by the subject disciplines, and the objective of a new cross-disciplinary FOAP-related *essential* curriculum.

The process I propose is:
First step: the appropriate authority would convene panels of teachers, parents, students, and expert curriculum developers, *all within subject* disciplines—and for all the disciplines. These would become subject discipline panels for Maths, Science, English, History, and so on.

Second step: each subject-discipline panel would be provided with the now-socially-agreed FOAP to be studied, discussed and understood thoroughly—as much time as is necessary to achieve a thorough understanding would be taken.

***Third step*:** each subject-discipline panel would be required, with reference to the now-socially-agreed FOAP, to accept that what is to be regarded as "essential" has depth as well as breadth. For example, a Mathematics panel might believe that competence in "measurement" is an essential learning (breadth) but might believe that competence with an engineer's logarithmic ruler is not essential while competence with a regular 30 centimetre rule is essential (depth). This matter of "depth" of understanding within areas, or themes, will be defined simply at this early stage, to mean understandings without which *any* citizen might be regarded as relatively ignorant, unable to participate in a meaningful discussion of everyday events, and effectively disempowered on a matter of societal import. These events cover a huge range of human behaviour and ceaselessly appear in the daily media. The matter of depth will need to be studied, discussed and understood thoroughly—as much time as is necessary to achieve a thorough understanding would be taken.

Fourth step: panel members would be then asked to clear their minds, not of content, but of current rules: syllabus requirements and programming and teaching methodologies. This process, too, will take effort and time.

Fifth step: with these pre-requisites completed, each panel would be asked to:
- accept that the following exercise is *solely* concerning an essential curriculum, with curriculum outcomes relating to end-of-Year 12 students—remembering that students who wish to specialise will have ample opportunity to do so as all subject disciplines will also be available as electives;
- understand and accept that the question being answered by their efforts will be, "What, with reference *only* to the FOAP and *only* within my special subject discipline, is essential for *all* prospective ex-Year 12 citizens?" The question is not, "What, for students who choose my subject discipline, is essential?"
- learn, understand and practise the use of each element of the FOAP to generate subject-specific themes, sub-themes, bits of themes.

Sixth step: each panel would then look *only* to each of the elements of the FOAP, and with reference *only* to their subject discipline, nominate topics and content which, in the panel's opinion, fall within the definition of "essential." Each panel can be expected to produce voluminous amounts of topics—skills and understandings—within each element of the FOAP, but with the depth necessary to provide that which is essential for all young Australians.

Seventh step: at this point, the task of the subject-based panels will be finished. New panels, *re-configured* so they become genuinely cross-disciplinary, and each panel reflecting an element of the FOAP, would be formed. All disciplines should be fully and powerfully represented on each of these panels. Each panel would again consider, discuss, and understand the conceptual requirements of steps 2, 3, 4 and 5 above.

Eighth step: each of the new panels, focussed on an element of the FOAP and cross-disciplinary in composition, would be asked to examine the curriculum material considered "essential" by each of the (now defunct) subject discipline panels, cull out the repetitive, and *re-construct the curriculum into cross-disciplinary themes*. At this point, the subject-discipline basis of the (essential) curriculum would have disappeared in favour of cross-disciplinary, FOAP-generated themes and specified outcomes.

Ninth step: because earlier steps are designed to establish that which should be learned by *all* students as they exit Year 12, the task now is to *stage* those outcomes into age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate skills, knowledge and experiences, from the earliest schooling years until Year 12. This step involves working backwards from the exit-Year 12 outcomes identified in earlier steps and will see many, maybe most, of the themes being taught each year, at increasing levels of complexity and world-relevance, as students move through their developmental stages.

Tenth step: because the "essential" curriculum runs in parallel with the "elective" layer of specialist subjects, and because the outcomes from the essential curriculum will underpin a good deal of what is learned in specialist electives, the new curriculum outcomes identified in earlier steps will need to be "mapped" against the outcomes of specialist syllabi. This step should reveal that a good deal of specialised content will be learned as part and parcel of teaching many cross-disciplinary themes. The subject-discipline accomplishments attained by each student in the cross-discipline curriculum should be mapped so that teachers in subject disciplines can steer a non-repetitive course for their elective students.

With this explanation I have completed the *conceptualisation* of an essential curriculum, and how it might be constructed. However, it needs be reiterated that the details of the FOAP must be determined not by this thesis but by a deliberatively democratic process—as outlined in Chapter Seven, summarised by Gutman and Thompson (1997) and explicated by Fearon (1998)—with the potential to engage the citizenry in its making, and to hold their loyalty and support during its (let's say) decade of implementation.

How Does this Construction of Curriculum Address the Four Major Problems with Education?

In earlier sections we saw major problems in the Australian schooling system to include:

1. Low levels of performance from low SES students;

2. High levels of student boredom with schooling;

3. Movement of large proportions of enrolments to church-based schools; and

4. Potential social disharmony as communities increasingly divide along ethnic, religious and socio-economic fault-lines.

Low Levels of Performance from Low SES Students

As already outlined, a plan for the education of students from low SES backgrounds should have many facets, some of which are easier to envisage than others. A re-constructed curriculum is one of the more difficult and under-examined areas. It is not being proposed that low SES students who, as a group, have relatively poor outcomes and access in senior years of schooling, should be fitted out with a separate curriculum. Although not declared, this is the current situation where VET courses, and diluted and less rigorous subjects are provided for the euphemistically labelled "non-academically-inclined" and "non-university oriented" students, the overwhelming bulk of whom we know to be indigenous and otherwise low SES.

To the contrary, the new proposed paradigm would see *all* students required to enrol in the essential layer of studies—in *all* years of schooling—with individual interests and aspirations catered for explicitly in the specialist elective curriculum.

Because of its high relevance, and because of its pedagogically appropriate treatment of whole-of-life concepts within themes, rather than siloed subject disciplines, this compulsory curriculum is likely to be:

- of considerable intrinsic value to disempowered low SES students, and their communities, because it will persistently address themes that *shape* society and which consistently appear in topical events, news and analysis. As such, it will be addressing concepts of empowerment and, for those living a disempowered life, this represents intrinsic value, explicitly evident, not currently existing in the compulsory curriculum. The essential curriculum, generated from political principles designed to shape society will provide low SES students many more points of interest and life-relevance, and will provide teachers with ample

opportunities to persistently relate elements of the FOAP-generated curriculum to the life-realities of low SES students.

In an industry which relies on taking students from the "known to the unknown," just what *is* known by indigenous and other low SES students comprises a huge acreage of moot and contested points, many of which will require systems and teachers to be more *politically* engaged with oppressed students in "unveiling the world of oppression" by studying the "consciousness" of both oppressors and the oppressed— "their behaviour, their view of the world, and their ethics" (Freire, 1974, pp. 34-35, 39-40). A FOAP-generated curriculum is better placed to deal, immediately and relevantly, with these themes as it is generated by principles which are more directly relevant to the generation and distribution of power within the polity, economy, and civil society. It is evident here that there is a great need for more research into this area, particularly into matters of empowering pedagogy (e.g. Shor, 1992).

- of more interest to all students no matter what their SES, for similar reasons to those listed above but, because low SES students are less able to succeed at school while absorbing high levels of boredom, they are likely to be disproportionately benefited by a new curriculum paradigm dealing in high-relevance, high-interest and highly-empowering concepts and experiences.

- a better outcomes "base" (more relevant, more empowering, more educative) from which low SES students will develop interest in the *other* half of the curriculum paradigm (specialist electives) which will lead them into their life's professional or personal speciality. That is, the greater success in the "essentials" should result in higher interest in, and success within, subject specialities provided by schools within the "elective" curriculum.

- much more open to system-initiated drives for improvements in the quality of teaching because pedagogical strategies which exhort teachers to teach students with cross-curriculum techniques designed to achieve greater relevance, will not immediately come up against the almost-insurmountable barrier of a curriculum paradigm which militates against such cross-curriculum and thematic approaches.

In short, it is speculated that the proposed change to the curriculum paradigm represents a pedagogically sound, *counter-hegemonic construct* which will advantage *all* students as it replaces huge amounts of disassembled knowledge with life-relevant themes *but*, because it deals explicitly with FOAP-generated matters of empowerment it will disproportionately

empower the currently disempowered—low SES children who have demonstrably less everyday social and family contact with the powerful processes and infrastructure of the economy, civil society, and the political structure and its powerful infrastructure.

Of course, this is not all that must be done for low SES children. Earlier in this thesis I outlined a series of low SES policy matters requiring attention. I arranged them along a conceptually easy-to-difficult continuum. Curriculum considerations responding to the needs of low SES students sit at the hard-to-conceptualise end of the continuum. It is at this end of the continuum where schooling researchers and political entities should be insisting on a mountain of carefully sequenced research designed to address Australia's biggest educational problem—the plight of low SES students. That is not to argue that more resources, better coordination of services, and public availability of schooling data arranged against SES measures, are not important. They are. But it is to say that the matter of curriculum is important and, if the results beginning to emerge from the NSW DET and University of Newcastle's Quality Teaching research are an indicator, as I believe the data suggest, then the matter of curriculum relevance to low SES students intersects in crucial ways with the evidence-driven specification of "quality teaching" (Amosa et al., 2007).

These are conceptually difficult matters. It is, after all, easy to understand that low SES kids who are hungry, cold, and/or emotionally mangled by the realities of their daily lives, will not be excited by the prospect of classroom work—no matter how relevant to their life futures. It is not much more difficult to understand that students who come from families with relatively less philosophic and physical resources require proportionately lower pupil-teacher ratios, more specialist personnel, differential funding for mainstream resources. It *does* take a little more political understanding to see connections between staff transfer and promotional policies and community relations—and even more to see the pure politics associated with the integration of a school, and its expectations, with an indigenous community (or other low SES community) and its surrounding political structures.

But probably the *most* difficult conceptual matter is to see past these issues, past the simplistic and uni-dimensional exhortations to teach more and better "literacy and numeracy" to kids who are already alienated, to the matters raised by Freire—the intrinsic interest of empowerment to the disempowered. And, in a liberal democracy, to do this without establishing a reproductively disempowering curriculum for the euphemistically described "non-academic" students, *and* without committing an historical and self-defeating blunder—that of establishing a separate "working class" curriculum with its inherent socially reproductive consequences.

An essential curriculum, completely consistent with a multi-disciplinary and thematic pedagogy, addressing society-shaping themes with high political legitimacy, provides the basis for low SES schooling success. This should be the case, not *just* because of the intrinsic value to be found in the newly counter-hegemonic "essential" curriculum, but *also* because success in the essential curriculum should provide a *better base* from which low SES students can perform when opting into the "elective" (and differently empowering) side of the curriculum paradigm. Success should breed success. The outcomes should be disproportionately successful for low SES students.

High Levels of Student Boredom with Schooling

The literature on "boredom" is extensive only if one ignores the word "boredom" and focuses more on matters which have been, and continue to be, researched extensively—motivation and engagement. Within the meaning of "motivation" is a sub-set of matters referred to as "interest."

Motivation and Engagement:

In October, 2005, the Australian Government released an issue of its *Schooling Issues Digest* (V. J. Russell et al., 2005) which summarised research findings dealing with "student motivation and engagement" (p. 1). The authors report the following definitions:

- Motivation—is about energy and direction, the reasons for behaviour, why we do what we do; and
- Engagement—describes energy in action, the connection between person and activity:

         i) behavioural

         ii) emotional

         iii) cognitive (p. 2).

The authors also list the "indicators of engagement" found throughout the literature as: school attendance; enjoyment of school; sense of connectedness; participation in school activities; student, school and classroom learning goals; self-efficacy for learning; expectation of success; attentiveness; learning practices such as time spent reading, interest in and valuing of reading, reading diversity, reading strategies (V. J. Russell et al., 2005, p. 2).

What is immediately apparent from this list is that, despite the central feature of schooling being that which is to be learned—the curriculum—none of the "indicators of engagement" draw attention to the nature of the curriculum, its structure or its content. Russell et al.

(2005) further identify "factors influencing engagement" (p. 2). They acknowledge two clusters of factors, one of which lies outside the control of the school, the other being school controlled.

In the first category, Russell et al. (2005) make no reference to legislated and regulated *system* requirements concerning that which must be learned—curriculum structure and content! They report that out-of-school factors include: SES, parental education and occupational status, ethnicity, student age and gender. Nothing about curriculum! If the matter of curriculum is seen to be within the control of the school, then the existence of legislation and boards of study provide testimony to that error.

The second category—school controlled—is divided into three sections:
- The Task Matters—students will engage with tasks that "matter" to them because the tasks are found to be: interesting; challenging; important.
- The Context Matters—and comprises the quality of: teacher-student relationships; pedagogy; classroom climate; behaviour; peer group; decision making; achievement goals; expectations of success.
- Key Factors at the School Level—include: school leadership; teacher learning; the school culture; parent involvement; organising schools for learning (V. J. Russell et al., 2005, p. 2).

From these three categories we can see that the curriculum's structure and its content are a given. None of the sub-categories draw attention to concerns for the curriculum's structure or content despite the clear link between curriculum structure, content and "tasks that matter" and whether they are "interesting" and/or "challenging" and/or "important" and thus, as a flow-on, influential in the development of productive and respectful "teacher-student relationships" (how many students respect teachers who, through their teenage eyes, "can't teach" or are "boring" or whose "lessons" contain a wad of notes unrelated to what they see as interesting, challenging or important?).

Given the centrality of curriculum to these "tasks" and "context," it is surprising to find matters of curriculum structure and content entirely absent from the list of engagement "indicators" which Russell et al. (2005) report following their comprehensive trawl through the literature concerning the influence of "engagement on learning and achievement" (p. 2). It might be argued that some of the indicators listed *assume* a consideration of curriculum matters—that one of the indicators (enjoyment of school) can only be reported if the

researched individual(s) gives appropriately important consideration to that which is central to schooling—the nature of the curriculum. But, the small amount of research which addresses this matter indicates otherwise.

Earlier in this dissertation I examined the OECD data which show that the students were surveyed on their relative boredom *and* their school attendance, sense of connectedness and enjoyment of school. Far from providing succour to those who believe curriculum settings are about right, the results showed that *despite* high levels of good relationships with teachers, high levels of friendship, high levels of feeling good about belonging to the school, a huge number of students were "often bored" at school.

One must ask the question, "If boredom at school is not created by a lack of teacher-student or student-student relationships, and it is not created by feeling bad about school or a feeling of alienation from school, then what possible cause might remain?" That the answer to this question might exclude *any* consideration of the slumber-inducing or anger-inducing or alienating effects of the curriculum, beggars belief. But this is what we face.

The OECD report which carries this data does not analyse the data, or speculate on reasons for the findings, or suggest any follow up research to clarify possible meaning and causes. Like the review of literature by Russell et al. (2005), curriculum is an area of silence—presumably because educational researchers have been led to believe that there is a thing called "curriculum" which has a certain self-evidently appropriate shape which needs no examination. Problems with schooling apparently lie with the teachers, the students, the parents and particularly parents of low performing or "disadvantaged" students. In the case of the industrially minded, the problem lies mainly with resources and their unavailability. The curriculum elephant in the room is unseen!

I have already commented on the surprisingly different response to this set of data which OECD researchers provide. While all other sets of OECD data attract a considered and worthwhile analysis including sometimes, the identification of continuing gaps in knowledge which need further research, the OECD data concerning bored students is accompanied by zero analysis and zero exhortation for further research. To OECD it is, apparently, not relevant to important policy considerations!

The point becomes even more acute when one learns (from V. J. Russell et al., 2005) that many inappropriately treat "motivation" and "engagement" as the same. They report that "students can be motivated but disengaged" and cite a Victorian study (J. Russell, Mackay,

& Jane, 2003) which reported students with high motivation to learn but "only a low level of interest in their classroom work" (V. J. Russell et al., 2005, p. 3). This result takes the OECD data a step further. With the OECD data showing students happy to be with teachers and friends in a school of which they felt an integral part but "often bored at school," it is possible (though not plausible) to think the boredom of students comes from within—maybe a lack of desire to learn, or a desire not to attend to that which teachers are trying to get students to engage with. But the Victorian result narrows the problem down further—the problem lies not with the students (who are highly motivated *to learn*) but with the "classroom work" which is boring!

This leaves three possibilities—either the teachers are presenting interesting material in boring ways, or else the material is boring, or else the material is so poorly structured that teachers cannot present it in anything but boring ways.

Now it might be that teachers do not know how to teach and are boring (and especially incompetent and boring in low SES communities), and it might be possible that the accumulated knowledge of Humankind is boring (especially for students in low SES communities), but it is, prima facie, more likely to be the case that teachers are, on average, very good at their job and not boring or uncaring, and that the experience and aspirations of Humankind represent matters of very high interest indeed. It is more likely then, that the structure of the curriculum might be pedagogically hostile, and its content less directly related to matters of interest and importance.

Interest:

The issue of "interest," defined as a sub-set of "motivation," has also attracted a good deal of research, much of which is discussed by Hidi, Renninger and Krapp (2004) who conclude that "research on interest is positioned to make a significant contribution to understanding the functional relations among motivation, learning and emotions" (p. 105) and in the meantime we have collectively learned from the accumulated research, that:

- interest is content specific
- interest evolves in the interaction of the person and his or her environment
- interest is both a cognitive and an affective variable (p. 105).

The relevance of these conclusions to students who find schooling boring might be found in the plethora of reasons raised in the literature—such as the level of affection and respect in

student-teacher relationships, school tone, and so on—or it might be found elsewhere, such as curriculum content which currently:

- provides little of intrinsic value to indigenous and otherwise low SES students (where the bulk of Australia's learning outcomes are depressed *vis-à-vis* OECD data);

- is organised only into subject-disciplines, stripped of its cross-disciplinary, thematic interest and Life-relevance;

- because of these deficiencies, is less likely to require interaction of the student and his/her environment; and

- because of a lesser intrinsic value, and less interaction, it is less likely that curriculum interest is going to extend into the emotional commitments characteristic of the affective domain.

That the research on interest, motivation, and engagement, provides little discussion of the more political side to curriculum concerns me. That is, curriculum appears to be a "given" to these researchers. It seems to be their job, not to challenge aspects of the curriculum itself—its content and structural arrangements—but only to research how students might better relate to whatever the curriculum is.

Newmann, Wehlage and Lamborn (1992) take the discussion probably as far as an educational researcher can do. When answering the question, "How can academic work *itself* [italics added] be designed so as to maximise student engagement?" they refer to the crucial benefits of "authentic work" defined in terms of tasks which

> are considered meaningful, valuable, significant, and worthy of one's effort, in contrast to those considered nonsensical, useless, contrived, trivial, and therefore unworthy of effort…work that entails extrinsic rewards, meets intrinsic interests, offers students a sense of ownership, is connected to the real world beyond school, and involves some fun is more authentic and more likely to engage students. (p. 23)

But, what is required here, particularly as we now know from OECD data that the major outcomes deficiency lies with indigenous and low SES students, is a politico-sociological understanding to be applied to these findings. For example, while it is likely that all students, no matter their cultural or socio-economic background, will have common interests, it is just as likely that students from along the Grinding Poverty—Privileged Opulence continuum will find very different things to be more "meaningful, valuable, significant, and worthy of one's effort." A curriculum with "intrinsic" value for disempowered peoples does not need to be a different curriculum than for everyone else, but it does need to address matters of intrinsic worth to all students.

The FOAP-driven Essential Curriculum does this. It does not establish a separate "working class" or "indigenous" curriculum. But it will generate themes which, although having Mathematical, Language, Scientific, Geographical, Historical, Artistic, and Technological aspects to them, address clearly defined social purposes, all of which also require political and sociological perspectives.

This approach of mine to "interest" and "engagement" accepts the current body of research, yet is vastly different from the expectation that teachers should conjure, each and every lesson, a "meaningful, valuable, significant, and worthy" contemporary experience or event through which an otherwise unrelated chunk of knowledge (curriculum) can be related. Many teachers attempt to do this. Some succeed a lot of the time with great ingenuity and intense work. But many do not and cannot. To undertake this strategy all the time is impossible. Why? Because the major working material for teachers—the curriculum—is both structured as a barrier to this pedagogy and depoliticised so it can have no intrinsic value to those who need individual and social empowerment the most. This unreal expectation of "quality" teachers either leaves the teacher teaching unrelated sections of knowledge to many bored and disaffected students, or else requires the teacher to do the (mostly) impossible—find (cross-curriculum) events/examples which give context and a wholist meaning to the syllabus item being taught. Either way, because of the siloed nature of the curriculum, the teachers' unrealistic struggle fails, thus resulting in too many "nonsensical, useless, contrived, trivial" learning experiences. These realities lead to an army of teachers teaching low-interest and low relevance material to turned-off kids.

Systems:
Russell et al. (2005) list a number of school-level matters which "school leaders" can attend to in the effort to increase student engagement. In this section of their report, curriculum is mentioned but not in any detail. School leaders, according to their analysis, need to develop school organisational features which provide a "school curriculum that is broad, including practical and vocational studies at the secondary level, offering choice and flexibility for individuals, designed with student input, having content connected to the world outside the school, and encouragement for in-depth, meaningful learning rather than shallow, superficial coverage" (p. 11).

Here, at the death, is an inkling that the curriculum might be a problem but, despite this insight, the concern for curriculum is restricted to offering a "broad" curriculum with certain features. The effort is not seen to be the responsibility of the schooling system or schooling authorities but is to be engineered by the *school* (!)

The literature concerning student engagement does much to suggest better ways for teachers to perform. Student failure is the fault of teachers and school leadership. So strong is the view that student outcomes rely on teachers' skills, some governments even want to penalise teachers with lesser salaries for lesser results despite the evidence that the curriculum and its structure might be heavily implicated in poor student outcomes wherever they are evident and especially within low SES and indigenous communities, and in dampened outcomes even for those students currently performing best in the system. The curriculum paradigm being proposed in this dissertation does not assume this curriculum orthodoxy. The new curriculum structure will have two distinct halves. The first will be a FOAP generated essential curriculum and the second will be specialist elective studies.

Specialist Elective Studies

Specialist elective studies, it is proposed, will comprise around 50% of curriculum time and it will run parallel to the "essential" curriculum from the earliest to the latest years of schooling. While the essential curriculum is designed to meet concerns for the Common Good and national objectives, the specialist elective curriculum is designed to meet the more specific requirements of individuals: vocation, interest, religion, specialisation. It is envisaged that the elective curriculum will overwhelmingly comprise traditional subject disciplines, sectarian studies, and some tertiary level and/or vocational studies.

The concept of specialist elective studies will be new to infant and primary students and to their parents. To the extent that parents and students choose to exercise their choice consistent with their own interests, it should be axiomatic that there will be increases in the levels of high-interest and empowering curriculum experiences and outcomes, although the impact of this at primary level may be less dramatic because primary schools have traditionally placed more emphasis on thematic teaching—good pedagogy if the themes are interesting. The FOAP-generated curriculum will provide an assured relevance to these themes.

In secondary schools, the dramatic changes will come in the early junior secondary—Years 7 and 8—where it is folk-lore amongst teachers that students are commonly "put to sleep" by the curriculum and/or its accompanying pedagogy. Students at this level of schooling will benefit directly from a double benefit of:

a) high interest—driven by half the curriculum open to personally interesting and empowering choice—the specialist elective curriculum; and

b) high interest—driven by a FOAP-generated curriculum addressing matters of persistently key relevance to the community.

In the middle and senior secondary school, specialist electives will continue to allow students to spend large amounts of their time at school specialising in education programs consistent with their future social and economic aspirations. It is in this, say, 40%-60% of the curriculum that much of the present specialised curriculum will reappear (albeit in a reviewed and renovated form). Some students will wish to "load up" with Mathematics and Science. Others will prefer to emphasise the Arts and Humanities, while yet others will seek to undertake a mixture of specialist sciences and specialist humanities.

It is not envisaged that specialist elective studies will be a totally free choice for students, although this is an option. The curriculum package adopted by each student should be subject to a form of negotiation between the school and teacher on the one hand, and the parents and student on the other. In this way, a variety of considerations can be addressed including: personal and short-term desires, students' level of interest, the interests and belief systems of the family, the interests of the nation, and the interests of the socio-economic or ethnic grouping from which the student originates.

It is unlikely that the Specialist Elective curriculum will hold too many surprises. Teachers are, in the main, extremely well-versed in the selection, resourcing, and teaching of specialist material. Many of the Specialist Electives will be traditional subject disciplines. Other specialist studies might be structured in ways designed to catch the interest of prospective students who traditionally eschewed particular specialist studies (by leaving school or being forced by earlier "failure" to choose less rigorous, less empowering streams of curriculum).

Others might be school-constructed courses which, in the judgment of teachers in consultation with the student, parent and teacher population, might result in the continued participation at school (including participation in the 40%-60% Essential Curriculum) of the very large numbers of students who would otherwise opt for narrowly conceived vocational training, underskilled under-employment, or unemployment.

Given the large number of young people who currently fall into this category (particularly indigenous and low SES students remaining at school)—and the additional large number who attend school but struggle unsuccessfully—it is likely that this area of curriculum would continue to see a good deal of activity, but numbers of students should diminish over

time, in favour of the subject disciplines, especially within the new context of a society-strengthening, personally empowering Essential Curriculum for all students to Year 12.

No student shall negotiate a curriculum package which does not include the Essential Curriculum. All students shall negotiate specialist electives, some of which may be located in different institutions (e.g. TAFE) and settings.

In summary, the extension of Specialist Elective studies into primary and all junior secondary years is likely to result in increases in the levels of student interest and empowerment in school, while at the same time providing parents and students with a guaranteed and school-supported opportunity to learn and practice their chosen religion.

FOAP-Generated Essential Curriculum
The new Essential Curriculum component of the new paradigm will draw on all the disciplines to teach FOAP-generated themes. The themes will address, from the earliest to the latest years of schooling, at different levels of complexity and experience, in different social, economic and cultural contexts, all the matters a deliberative democracy has deemed to be most important in a future society—matters such as democracy and power, technology and wealth, social justice and distribution, local and global environment, individual and human rights, ethics and values, a range of capabilities, Individual and Common Good.

An additional, but difficult to quantify benefit will arise from the vanguard alignment of schooling purposes with client (citizen) approval—a fundamental principle embedded in modern quality management processes. As the matters identified in the FOAP will have widespread political legitimacy as a consequence of public engagement and approval, the schools will likely have strong citizen support expressed in many ways, including an alignment of parental intentions with schooling objectives. The essential curriculum is likely to be highly relevant—and supported!

Because the curriculum themes will be life-oriented and not deconstructed to fit into separated subject "silos" they will not have the insuperable barrier to relevance currently blighting schooling's curriculum. The "contextualizing" task of teachers will be easier. Teachers will not have to, before each and every lesson, struggle to find a topical event to which they can contrive relevance for student motivation. Interest and motivation will be located in the theme itself.

This analysis differs markedly from conventional thinking. This analysis links boredom and the current manner in which curriculum is organized and presented. It is not to say that there are not other factors which influence outcomes. But it *is* to say that curriculum organization is a major factor.

If, for example, a non-curriculum variable such as good pedagogy was applied to both a strong and weak curriculum paradigm, one would expect increases in outcomes on *both* paradigms. But if the weak curriculum paradigm was made stronger as I have defined it, and had good pedagogy applied to it, then we might expect an additional increase in outcomes, bigger than the first. Benefits from policy-initiatives which are non-curriculum related do not mean that curriculum matters are not a flaw in the system, and may even be the major flaw. It is not an argument for neglecting scrutiny of the curriculum paradigm, and it cannot be an argument until research, which can only be done with the will to change curriculum, establishes that curriculum structure and content are *less* important to student outcomes than non-curriculum matters. This connection has not been made, and yet many claims are made for the benefits of one line of reform over another.

For example, it is of great interest, but should not obliterate interest in curriculum review, to know that increased student outcomes can be attained with better *system* understandings of "cultural conditions" such as those listed by Newmann and Wehlage (1996): primary concern for the intellectual quality of student learning; commitment to maintain high expectations for all students, regardless of individual differences; support for innovation, debate, inquiry, and seeking new professional knowledge; ethos of caring, sharing, and mutual help among staff, and between staff and students, based on respect, trust, and shared power relations among staff, and with better *system* understandings of "structural conditions" such as those listed by Newmann and Wehlage: sustained time for instruction, planning, staff development, and student advising; interdependent work structures for staff, especially teaching teams and committees for school-wide decision-making; school autonomy from regulatory restraints; and small size for school and instructional units (p. 289).

It is surely an oversight, even in 1996, that Newmann and Wehlage's comprehensive list of matters over which *systems* have responsibility and power, and which can affect student outcomes, does not include the obvious matters of curriculum content and structure.

The matter should be more obvious to researchers now that the OECD has released data showing huge levels of student boredom throughout OECD countries, with Australia amongst the worst. Not to place curriculum matters, front and centre, has the effect of drawing attention away from the very matter which is, arguably, at the centre of them all. For example, it is hard to see how a system's "primary concern for the intellectual quality of student learning" or "commitment to maintain high expectations for all students" can be anything but a vacuous declaration if 60% of students are bored with the curriculum and no researched curriculum response is made to this data, and roughly 50% of all Australian students are amongst the most "relatively disadvantaged" in OECD countries, yet no researched curriculum response is made to this data.

The continuing failure of "systems" to address this matter means continuing and inevitable student alienation from meaning and relevance. With a concretized and siloed curriculum structure comes a raft of consequential experiences such as: poor student attitudes, poor behaviour, and poor student-teacher relationships—all of which then attract huge amounts of "wasted" school time (teaching time) and resources (money). In turn, this cycle produces more "waste" in: loss of staff (and student?) morale and efficiency, and increased political and industrial activity. And to what effect?

All of these responses are either (a) reactions to the *symptoms* (behaviour, attitude, student welfare) or (b) ways open to teachers to get *at* the symptoms (class size, release time)—against a continuing conflicted background of adversarial politics with one group of teachers (in public schools) being persistently slandered for being less caring than the other group(s) of teachers (in private schools).

Failure to seek reform on the most basic of schooling matters—curriculum—feeds into Australia's conflicted funding history, and makes more difficult a potential resolution of differences, and the creation of a genuinely uniting national curriculum, and thus a new context within which it might be possible to envisage a cohesive system of schooling for Australia's public.

Movement of Large Proportions of Enrolments to Church-Based Schools

The new curriculum structure I am proposing has two layers, from the earliest to the latest years of schooling: a layer of essential studies; a layer of specialist electives. The layer of specialist elective studies provides a new experience for infant, primary and early secondary students. Having the power to *choose* in the new paradigm has two immediately obvious benefits:

a) *high-interest*: shaped by the power of personal choice. That is, removal of some of the high levels of student boredom by providing opportunity in (about) half the curriculum, to pursue subjects/themes/experiences with high-interest life, vocational and personal interest themes relating to the full range of adult roles; and

b) *religious freedom*: removal of an historic wrong. That is, a new provision which supports parents who exercise their public right to have their child learn and practice the religion of their choice in a system of schooling established for the public. The new curriculum structure permits parents to exercise this choice. It maintains the right of other parents not to undertake sectarian religious studies.

Most non-public schools are church-based. With the establishment of hundreds of new non-public schools over the last two decades, this characteristic has become more and more evident. And, from the research outlined in Section Two, it is established that the clear and primary reason for the existence of church-based schools is the desire to evangelise.

A change in curriculum structure will not change this. However, a reconstruction of curriculum will produce a number of follow-on effects including the disappearance of a number of reasons that some, maybe many, strongly religiously inclined citizens have for enrolling their child at a non-public school.

It should be remembered, acknowledged and emphasised, that there are many citizens associated with church-based schools and communities who have a deep and abiding concern for the Common Good which extends well beyond the interests of their religious denomination—strongly held concerns for international, national, regional and local processes which serve to support world peace, coexistence and friendship, a globally healthy environment, thoughtful wealth generation, equitable wealth distribution, guaranteed individual and human rights, and an international decision-making mechanism sensitive to the expressed wishes of the world's masses. There is no reason to believe there are fewer parents, students or teachers in low-fee church-based schools for whom these issues are important than is the case for parents, students and teachers from public schools. Indeed, at least a proportion of families associated with church-based schools find the *source* of their intense concern for the Common Good in their religious beliefs.

For these families, and for less intensely sectarian families, as each barrier to their rights is removed, and as each perceived flaw in public schools is remedied, their concern for the Common Good—never lost, but channelled into socially separating schools—will emerge as the tide of perceived negatives recedes. Amongst the denied rights and schooling flaws that a new curriculum paradigm will remedy, over time, are:

1. Religious freedom—every school in the new coherent system of schooling for the public, from the earliest to the latest years, will have a two-streamed curriculum structure, one stream of which guarantees the right of children and parents to learn and practice the religion of their choice as a significant part of their schooling. As it is part of the official curriculum it will be supported financially—properly resourced with religious teachers *and appropriate sites* for religious practice. Those who wish to practice and learn their religion can do so—no need to travel further and pay more for this right. This will be an important change for some, maybe many.

2. Common Good—curriculum which is generated from an appropriately lengthy and rigorous process of public deliberation, and then required of all students from the earliest to the latest schooling years, will be a curriculum with explicit concern for the young generation's attitude to matters of the Common Good. For those who emphasise values associated with the pursuit of the Common Good—and these are strongly found within the Ten Commandments preached by Christian churches and similarly found in other religions—the requirement for a layer of studies for all students in all years of schooling, generated by a socially constructed concern for the Common Good, may prove very attractive indeed. The idea that these values will be infused into the everyday, everyweek, everyyear engagement of all students in educational experiences with all themes, as inferred by the incorporation of values and ethics in both my FOAP and Reid's capabilities, will engender approval and confidence in some families. This concern for community is likely to please some, maybe many, parents who currently believe these concerns are not addressed adequately within the public schooling system.

3. Community—with increasing numbers of local students attending their local school, and a broader variety of families engaged in the school's activities, extra-curricular events, traditions and wider community connections, the greater will become the sense of community and the role of the school in building that community. For some, maybe many, in the church-based schools, to be a community-oriented citizen beyond the lesser boundaries of those already committed to a particular faith, will be an attraction. It may be that a major consequence is a positive effect on the local school generated by the presence and work of people with much *church-based experience* with those in poverty, general charity work, and specific youth-oriented programs.

4. Social Cohesion—the anxiety generated by the logic of separating children for their first 18 years along religious, ethnic and/or SES boundaries will be relieved for some, maybe many, by a curriculum paradigm which rests so heavily on a preliminary (and regular) public deliberation and social agreement. The logic of a united diversity—with children from all backgrounds rubbing shoulders in work and play—where ethnic, religious and other riches are *enjoyed* and shared and where ethnic, religious and other problems are *addressed* collaboratively and educationally, within a community environment, has the potential to become encultured within a community, growing a rich multicultural unity, and breeding pride in this social outcome.

5. Behaviour and discipline—a change in the curriculum paradigm will not, of itself, persuade non-public schools to stop the practice of shedding their students with behaviour problems. However, it is likely that a more connected curriculum will reduce the incidence of behaviour problems and make the local school a more acceptable choice for those who currently eschew the local public school. To the extent that the new curriculum paradigm makes all schools more interesting and important places to be, student and teacher morale should increase, learning time and learning success should increase, with concomitant increases in learning outcomes, expectations, pride and aspirations—along with significant reductions in behavioural and attitudinal problems—all of which goes to the issue of school climate or "tone."

6. Values—with the socially determined FOAP so strongly concerned for an all-pervading values education, and so instrumental in generating much of the school curriculum, the values which schools transmit will be:
   a. politically powerful as they will be legitimised by the formative process and socially agreed; and
   b. transparently visible. With this major matter resolved, at least politically, schools should be well placed to seriously engage students with the themes and experiences which carry and transmit these values. With this new set of circumstances some, maybe many, parents will be less likely to look for a private schooling.

7. Learning Outcomes—it is anticipated that the new paradigm will be a precursor of increases in learning outcomes:

a. for all student groups in all school systems—thus making all schools more attractive;

b. disproportionately for indigenous, and otherwise low SES students—thus making public schools, and to a lesser extent Catholic systemic schools, more successful and therefore more attractive generally; and

c. associated with matters considered by the citizenry at large to be the most desirable societal principles, such as a greater concern for matters of consequence for all people—environment, community welfare, youth support, social harmony, amongst many others.

Under these circumstances it could be expected that the large "drift" to church-based schools might be arrested in favour of increased proportions of enrolment in a cohesive schooling system reconstructed to explicitly educate the public for both the Common Good and Individual Good.

The assessment of the effects of a new and national curriculum paradigm is optimistic. It relies on major curriculum reform. It does not rely on the views of entrenched bureaucracies, or even the elite representing the peak councils of schooling systems and their supporters and detractors. Is it unrealistically optimistic?

Terri Seddon (2001) is concerned about what she sees as a trend *away* from a unifying "national curriculum." She acknowledges the historically "powerful constitutive force" of curriculum within Australian society and culture, but notes several forces which work against a unified and unifying curriculum. She sees the states and territories as scuttling attempts in the 1990s to construct a "national" curriculum and sees more recent funding policies which strengthen a "market" within schooling (private schooling and quasi-private projects within public schools) as a means by which "identity" curriculum has now been established and consolidated. As a consequence, Seddon is profoundly pessimistic about the chances of achieving a "national curriculum" based on widespread agreement, because:

> the older notion of 'national curriculum' as a common statutory provision and entitlement for all citizens is eroded because even to imagine something common that would uniformly serve so many groups with their differently articulated needs, desires and identities seems difficult. Simultaneously, the purpose, role and responsibilities of 'public education', realised as systems of state schools oriented towards universalistic educational provision is problematised. In the educational marketplace, 'public education' cannot speak to all identities because it co-exists with other providers offering different and often more sharply targeted, curriculum commodities. In this context, 'public education' is most commonly positioned as speaking to those who cannot choose alternative educational offerings because they

cannot pay for them, despite continuing middle-class counter-representations that assert the universality and cultural inclusiveness of public education. (p. 325)

Seddon's pessimism for a national curriculum cascades into the political domain with her observation that:

> The possibility of national curriculum now seems more remote than ever, while the proliferation of sub-national identity curricula appears to define our probable future. The importance of this shift does not simply lie in the short-term politics of curriculum. Rather, its critical significance centres on the way learning is being re-regulated and re-orchestrated in relation to different social groups and the implications this has for their capacity, and for 'our' capacity as a citizen-community, to appropriate and deploy powerful knowledge for the public good in the long term." (pp. 326-327)

This thesis proposes a different way of generating and organising curriculum. Seddon has a clear concern for the Common Good and is dismayed at current curriculum trends. Her observations are convincing and her analysis, at least insofar as she sees both the "old" curriculum fracturing generated by state/territory boundaries, and the "new" curriculum fracturing generated by expanding "identity" brands and numbers of church-based schools, is similarly persuasive. She apparently sees these two themes (Common Good; Identity Curriculum) as irreconcilable—that they cannot co-exist. Here is an appeal for a cohesive system of schooling, but a pessimistic view of its attainability. Unfortunately, this pessimism provides little direction for future reform. However, from Seddon's apparent conundrum a new paradigm is conceivable—one which serves both the Common Good *and* many of the needs of "identity" groups (and individuals).

It is worth remembering at this point, the discussion of identity politics undertaken by Gutman (2003) and especially her view that identity groups can be a force for liberty and social justice, or they can be relatively benign politically, or they can be a force for instability and social conflict. Her "benchmark" of worth included three tests concerning groups' intention to advance:

- civic equality—in the distribution of public goods;
- individual rights and liberties; and
- equal opportunity.

In Gutman's view it is not that identity groups do, and will continue to, exist that is a problem, or even that they seek to influence the polity. It is the *purposes* they wish to pursue which gives them negative or positive value. Identity groups which develop a sense of non-exclusive community, social justice and the Common Good such (as the Police Youth Clubs, Australian Council of Social Services) can be assessed to be good identity groups, while groups which divide and engender suspicion and social disharmony (such as the Ku Klux Klan) are bad identity groups.

From this point of view, the argument has gone full circle—we are back to the centrality of "social purposes" of schooling and my view of the need to devise a process which has general credibility and furnishes an end-product with a strong political legitimacy, and use the product (FOAP) to generate an Essential Curriculum for all children in all years of schooling, while allowing for full freedom in curriculum (including sectarian studies and practice) in a second layer of Specialist Elective Curriculum for all children in all years of schooling.

It is entirely possible to envisage a coherent system of schooling for the public in which *both* the Common Good *and* the needs of "identity groups" are addressed in the curriculum and, with developing trust and acceptance, in the same school, on the same site. The method of getting there requires a radically different approach to educational policy making in this country, but with time, open data, cooperation from the media and bureaucracies, the first and prerequisite of these two daunting challenges—reconstructing the curriculum— can be attempted and probably achieved.

Potential Social Disharmony as Communities Divide Along Ethnic, Religious and Socio-Economic Fault-Lines

A new curriculum paradigm will not necessarily, and certainly not immediately, change the landscape of schooling's public/private provision. However, it *is* a radical educational change in prospect—and it relies on a new and radical political process. It is designed to provide radically different solutions to the problems experienced by:

- many/most students in all schools—boredom
- relative disadvantage—amongst the worst in OECD countries.

In so doing, it produces a curriculum paradigm which allows an historical injustice to be righted—to learn and practice one's religion—within the specialist elective curriculum, from the earliest to the latest years of schooling.

In prospect, it is another radical change, made the more so as it would be exercised within a coherent schooling system for the public, and thus attract the necessary funds for the preparation of materials, teaching personnel, and where appropriate, capital works for especially designated and designed religious areas such as small chapels and their counterparts.

These radical restructures of the curriculum will not occur overnight. Nor will they be sponsored by those with a vested interest in the status quo. It is not likely that the

management apexes of schooling systems, teacher unions and parent organisations which have hammered each other for 120 years will spontaneously see benefit in seeking a social agreement on which a coherent system can be built.

Some, maybe many, will be able to conceptualise the changes, want to participate in the politics and intellectualism of a deliberatively democratic societal process, and subordinate self-interest to the politics of the Common Good. Others, maybe many, will not quickly understand the arguments for the new Big Picture, but will be prepared to engage and reach agreement. Yet others, maybe many, will have enough vested interests in the status quo to resist such a move. Some of these latter people will confect arguments to malign the proposal.

It should be understood too, that of the status quo defenders, there will be some, maybe many, who will have their hands firmly on the levers of power as well as direct access to all the machinery required to exercise power, not just within their schooling system, government department, churches, unions and interest groups, but also within the machinery of the State and civil society. It might be expected, for example, that some, maybe many, of the legal, medical, architectural, engineering, large landholders, large company owners and executive (and so on), alumni of exclusionary schools will resist the view that some, maybe many, of them have gained a schooling privilege leading to life-long empowerment and relative privilege not consistent with a society committed to democratic ideals and practice.

As against this negative view is the urgently felt need of some, maybe many, to replace the adversarial and conflict-laden history of Australian schooling policy, and the fractured existence of Australian schooling, with a different and unifying process aimed at achieving a desired future.

It will take time.

First will come the ideas. This dissertation is a contribution to this early process. It adds to the discussion already evident in the earlier pushes for "national goals for schooling" and "national curriculum profiles" and various searches for "essential" studies and talk of a "national" curriculum. It also adds, at several points, a political dimension—political views about curriculum outcomes with intrinsic value for disempowered people, inconsistencies between political concepts of democracy and deliberate public policy which encourages and reproduces privilege, inconsistencies between political principles of liberal rights and

the denial of religious freedoms in public schools, political incompatibility between the objective of social cohesion and public policy which encourages systematic separation of Australia's children throughout the entirety of their developmental years. It also adds a detailed proposal for a political process by which a social agreement concerning a set of curriculum-generating principles might be achieved.

Second, these ideas need to be understood and largely accepted throughout civil society and the polity—that a different political process is required—not adversarial and conflict laden, but across-the-citizenry and collaborative in all aspects—a process of deliberative democracy which itself will require much public discussion and a declaration of political will and commitment from Australia's national government. This process is not inconceivable. Reid (2005) advocates a political process consistent with this view, and the April 2008 "Australia 2020 Summit" comprising a thousand of Australia's chosen thinkers is similarly consistent (albeit superficially so) with this view.

Third, there will need to be an event which focuses the public and general polity's "mind." Ideally it will be a peaceful and thoughtful event which begins the political process of engaging on these matters, maybe a national conference cum workshop comprising participants much broader than the traditional curriculum conference (such as is proposed by Reid), or meetings of the political and bureaucratic elite (such as that advocated by the Council for the Australian Federation). Less than ideally, but possibly, will be a catastrophic (maybe related to the public's until-recent ignorance, despite the availability of two decades of data, analysis and warnings in respect of global warming) or violent event or series of events (which dramatically focuses the public's attention on highly political matters such as disintegrating social cohesion and the need for a strategy for healing a torn society).

This last comment will be taken by some, maybe many, as a statement from an extremist—a person who needs to invoke wild images in order to get attention to his argument. Because I have lived in this era, I understand the reluctance of Australians to invoke images of violence and ethnic/religious hostilities but, inside Australia, we live in very peaceful times when compared with other times in our history. Despite Australia's experience with racist policies and practices (Aborigines, Chinese, White Australia, "blackbirding") within its relatively recent past, living Australians have been the beneficiaries of a number of generations of pro-tolerance politics and, it must be said, the existence of a parallel and all-pervasive system of public schooling which is now being proportionately dismantled. There

is no reason to expect that, with changed public policies, Australia cannot reap a different and sour harvest. Thus, it is relevant to seek insights from other experiences.

Tawil and Harley (2004) report that:

a) "the observation that educational content, structure and delivery systems may, in themselves, be catalysts of violent conflict is now an explicit concern of the international community within the framework of the Education for All goals";

b) a 2000 study prepared for UNESCO recognised that "an education system that reinforces social fissures can represent a dangerous source of conflict"; and

c) a "major concern in post-conflict situations is to avoid replication of educational structures that may have contributed to conflict" (p. 5).

As already noted, Australia is a different country from Cambodia, Colombia, Palestine, Sierra Leone, Guatemala, Northern Ireland, Bosnia/Herzegovina, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Rwanda and Mozambique—the countries which were the subject of research underlying the UNESCO observations above.

However, it is just as true that, until recently, schooling in Australia was dominated by seemingly all-pervasive public schooling systems and a smaller but parallel low-fee Catholic system. In recent times this situation has changed markedly with an "explosion" of additional church-based schools, many of them being culturally, or ethnically, specific. As outlined in Section Two, Australia's schooling system has been recently marketised, largely to the benefit of churches which make no secret of their main motive—evangelisation. It is now commonplace in Australia for churches to establish small and barely-viable schools with an intention to grow the schools into large organisations.

Australian schooling now comprises clearly defined layers of socio-economically exclusionary schools (church-based, cross-denominational, or largely secular) and church-based schools (some of which exhibit distinctive ethnic and language differences as well as religious separation). These schooling divides quite often reflect historic religio-cultural hostilities such as those between Islam-Arab and Jews/Israeli, Catholics and Protestants. Others reflect a religious requirement for some religious denominations to keep their children separate from the polluting effects of mixing with children from other religions.

The UNESCO considerations (Tawil & Harley, 2004) point to the efforts in strife-torn countries to re-gain some social equilibrium by looking to ensure a common curriculum for all students—a curriculum containing clear emphasis on political matters of great (and

cohesive) consequence to the country. UNESCO sees this "common" curriculum as providing some cohesive influence—an observation thoroughly endorsed by me.

The matter of curriculum reform is something we can envisage. We may see it as a long way off, a lengthy process requiring a build-up of trust between the warring parties and a new and lengthy political process of engaging in collaboration with the public to determine a FOAP. But, despite the acknowledged speed-bumps, the road is before us.

The idea of reconstructing low-fee church-based schools together with public schools, with a parallel abolition of counter-democratic exclusionary schools (which should happen irrespective of what follows below), into a *cohesive system of schooling for the public*, is harder to conceive—even as a long-term political possibility, unless a relatively pragmatic, Marginson-style acceptance of church-based schools, with a sign-up to certain public values, into the public system is undertaken.

To this point, no compelling argument for the primacy of public schooling has been made by me. It is easily conceivable that the public could devise a FOAP which generated an "essential" curriculum which a central Board would require of all schools: public, church-based and cross-denominational. And it is relatively easy to conceive low SES and indigenous students doing better with this new curriculum paradigm in public and church-based schools. The issue of "choice" will, for some and maybe many, be satisfactorily addressed with an elective curriculum which stretches from the earliest to the latest years of schooling and which, amongst a plethora of other options, provides for sectarian learnings and practice. Of the issues emerging from the scrutiny of exclusionary and church-based schools in Section Two, the one big matter remaining is that of "social cohesion."

The matters of greatest concern in the public-private "debate" are not, in my view, the much focussed issues of funding levels, (or proportions of funding), or the issues of better and more caring teachers, or better uniforms, better behaviour, better values or better discipline. The issue of major concern is one which affects us all—directly. It is the political matter of social cohesion and, as a consequence, demands more direct analysis and further understanding to that already mentioned in earlier discussion.

What is the machinery of social cohesion? Social cohesion is about bringing people of different persuasions together, in various ways. Policies which generate within-society friendships, understandings, appreciation, empathy, compassion—they generate a peacefulness in which people of different backgrounds and aspirations can live in harmony.

Forces which operate against social cohesion are those which separate people in ways which obstruct the development of friendships, understandings, appreciation, empathy, and compassion.

It might be appropriate to think of public policies which draw people from different backgrounds and aspirations into common cause or common endeavour or common experience as socially cohesive, and public policies which separate people so they cannot share common cause or common endeavour or common experience as socially divisive. This is not to say that healthy people in a healthy society will not want to behave separately from time-to-time, but it is to say that separatist policy which prevents people from sharing common cause or common endeavour or common experience, could be regarded as socially divisive.

Often the two ideas—shared existence, separate existence—are seen as mutually exclusive. But why so? It may be appropriate for some public policies to encourage sites for *dual* purposes: shared existence *and* separate existence. Areas of public policy where this might be applicable include: housing, health and hospitals, universities, schools, and probably others.

This overwhelmingly political issue was addressed, arising from the data, in Section Two. That analysis is worth summarising here within the context of a proposal for a new and coherent schooling system for the public.

In Australia, when a local school is established it is badged as "public." It is not badged to compete for a particular part of the ethnic, religious or socio-economic "market." The resulting mix of children engages, together, in all the day to day affairs of the school. Bringing local children and their parents together is what local schools *do*. At present, this role is open only to public schools because, at present, only public schools serve a local community. My study of the mission statements and objectives of Catholic and "independent" schools revealed a strong concern for building a *school* community, but they are not established to serve a *local* community. As a consequence, while non-public schools are well placed to build a sense of community within their school, they are unable to act as a central player in the building of the local community, and they are unable to deal with the matters of a local community—social cohesion—as they arise, except in a general or philosophical sense, or insofar as they affect the "community" at the non-public school.

I have observed earlier that this is an unfortunate state of affairs, particularly as non-public schools are replete with citizens who have strong attachment to concerns for community and the Common Good but, because of their separateness, are denied an everyday opportunity to give effect to their wider concerns. Citizens with common cause—an over-riding concern for the health of the Common Good and community—are politically (and organisationally) separated by their loyalty to different schooling systems, one of them local and community based, the other non-local and school-community focussed.

Within this context I have emphasised that "choice" can be effected in more ways than requiring a plethora of separating schools, that genuine and properly resourced choice can be provided to achieve a range of Human requirements only one of which is freedom to pursue one's religion, by means of a new curriculum structure. To do this though, the local school which is now designated "public" must change from a definition of "public" which excludes a welcome for the strongly religious, and become a school which serves the needs of, and educates the public.

I am not drawn to restructuring options which simply assume the continuation of many of the worst political (and educational) features of public and church-based schools. Some of the options described earlier are relatively simplistic attempts to attain a political accommodation which provide funding benefits for one side or the other. Others are alarmed responses to the increasingly apparent inequities in funding patterns. On the other hand McGaw draws from schooling outcomes data, sees the growing danger of social separateness in the schools and proposes "co-location" of different schools as a possible answer, and Reid sees a link between a national curriculum, a consensus around a set of curriculum "capabilities" and some new possibilities for the "public-private debate" emerging from that process. The thinking of these two researchers is contained within the Federalist Paper No. 2. However, their separately conceived, and separately written perspectives and data need to be, in my view, drawn together with some further and substantial deliberation. This thesis assists in that regard.

For some school owners—those with the purpose of protecting existing power relationships and privilege, or the purpose of placing Australia's children into separate faith-based and ethnic compounds, or the purpose of providing educational regimes and curriculum practices which provide only lop-sided life choices to students—the issue of "social cohesion" is not a serious concern except insofar as the issue, if not de-fused or befuddled in the citizenry's mind, represents a threat to their separateness.

But the overwhelming number of citizens associated with church-based schools and who have strong commitments to both their religion and wider social objectives such as social harmony, peace and understanding, cooperation and the common good—an alternative schooling structure which satisfies both these commitments (the individual, common good) might be worth constructing.

Future Challenge

In this dissertation I have made a case for the construction of a cohesive system of schools which can serve the public.

I have viewed exclusionary schools as a form of entrenched and anti-democratic privilege—not consistent with a concern for the Common Good—and thus, not candidates for inclusion in a cohesive system of schools serving the public.

Because public schools are exclusionary to that very significant part of the community which wishes to exercise its right to learn and practice preferred religions at school, they are not the all-inclusive welcoming places many of their proponents make them out to be and, as a consequence, not candidates for inclusion in a cohesive system of schools serving the public.

Just as important, schools which are formed to create their own selected community are axiomatically non-community. They may even be anti-community when "community" is taken to mean not a community of interest, but a locale which includes everyone irrespective of their differences in race, colour, creed, socio-economic status, and so on. This argument strongly infers church-based schools are not candidates for inclusion in a cohesive system of schools serving the public.

For a cohesive system of schooling for the public we need a new type of school. This school must:
- be non-exclusionary in its enrolment policies;
- provide for the Common Good consistent with the general citizenry's view of preferred content and values;
- provide extensive choice of subjects for all students to pursue their individual rights and interests, including their sectarian beliefs; and
- contain adequate amounts of counter-hegemonic curriculum to provide all students, including disempowered students, with:

- empowering understandings of disadvantage, disempowerment, disenfranchisement;
- an understanding of the full range of adult options open to all students irrespective of gender, socio-economic background, race, religion; and
- clarity about the educational pathways to their preferred adult options.

There will be several major organisational and industrial consequences flowing from a new schooling system for Australia's public, based on these premises. This thesis cannot address them all. However, one of them, maybe the hottest political item, will relate to this new system's treatment of religion and so I shall address this matter briefly here. Students, in all years of schooling, who come from families with strong religious attachment, will exercise their right to engage with sectarian studies in the elective curriculum stream. Part of that engagement will require participation in various faith-based events and ritual, both in-class and out-of-class, some of which will be best expressed in a faith-based structure, such as a purpose-built chapel and/or its counterpart.

In such a school, teachers could teach in both layers including, for example, a Catholic nun with a university degree in Science and appropriate teacher training would be an entirely appropriate teacher of: Catholicism to Catholic students, specialist elective Science to all students and, probably with a little extra training to suit the new curriculum design (as with all teachers), matters of democratic understandings and practice in the Essential Curriculum. Likewise, an atheist with a Science degree would teach specialist elective Science and matters of democratic understandings and practice in the Essential Curriculum. Both the Catholic nun and the atheist would be expected to show, at all times, respect for other people's religiosity and otherwise engage fully in the collective activities of the school and its staff.

In the world of *real politik*, a school such as that described in previous paragraphs, is not immediately possible. Two hundred years of denominational combat will not be replaced with overnight spontaneity. Its prerequisite is agreement and trust.

The road to trust begins with a return to a particular fundamental. What are the social purposes of schooling? With a little help from History and Humanity's desire for peace, harmony and prosperity, it is possible to conceive a social process aimed at achieving a social agreement around a set of political principles which serve the common good. This set of principles can then be used to generate an essential curriculum to support the creation and maintenance of the major and preferred features of a future society. Because the

essential curriculum addresses matters of the Common Good, and Humans have as strong a need to satisfy *personal* goals, we need to invent a curriculum paradigm which comprises two parallel layers from the earliest to the latest schooling years—Common Good, Individual Good. In turn, this paradigm permits a number of the worst educational problems confronting Australia to be addressed directly: poor outcomes for low SES and indigenous students; widespread boredom amongst students; social cohesion.

At this point, with a new curriculum paradigm addressing major educational weaknesses apparent in the current system and providing for religious freedom, a new political context will exist. It will emerge from a lengthy period in which society-wide deliberation and social consensus has been formulated. This new, less adversarial and more trusting political context is fertile ground for a cohesive schooling system for the Australian public—an Australian schooling system!

The only remaining question is, "Who should run this new and cohesive system?" Should it be run by an array of public schooling managers who currently run a system which has left the clientele for which it was established—low SES students—languishing with relatively poor achievement and attainment outcomes? Do we ask the Boards and Commissions of Catholic, Anglican, Jewish, Islamic, Lutheran, or other religions to run this system of Australian schools?

The new and coherent system of schooling that I have here outlined rests on an open, deliberative and collaborative process for its formulation. Its maintenance and future political health should rest on management structures and processes with similar qualities. This suggests an ecumenical quality, further enriched with interest and responsibility from a wider slice of the economy, civil society and the polity. From this we might deduce that the system should be viewed not as a "public" system which assumes a non-public rival, but as the "Australian" system of schooling where the distinctive feature is that Australian citizens created its agreed political basis, and its dual stream of curriculum supporting both the Common Good and Individual Good.

Such a system should have a wise mix of wise people serving in its key management structures. Its executive board would have a mission very different from the impossible task set for the Commonwealth Schools Commission—to find agreement on school funding for the separate and historically warring school sectors. This board's mission would be to manage a coherent system of Australian schools. With only "Australian" schools to manage, it might be appropriately called the Australian Schools Commission.

Epilogue

A final draft of this thesis was completed in December, 2007. Since that time, two importantly relevant events have taken place. One of these was the April 2008, Australia 2020 conference and the other was the publication in 2007 of a report by the NSW Public Education Alliance.

In April, 2008 the newly elected Australian Government held a "summit" of 1002 Australians selected on the basis of their perceived capacity to provide the Government with "new ideas" relevant to the health of the nation in 2020 and which may, with further research and government backing, be implemented in the national interest. The summit's internal processes were divided into 10 working groups of 100 participants, each with a different area of government responsibility as its topic.

The actual purpose(s) of this summit appeared to metamorphose during the approach to the summit, and during the summit itself. The summit was originally seen as an opportunity for government to gather previously unknown ideas from Australia's elite thinkers—the "best and brightest minds"—while at a later point it was portrayed as a more democratic move to build political consensus and formulate recommendations to government. The new Prime Minister of Australia may have contributed to this metamorphosis. In his speech to the Progressive Governance Conference in London on 4 April, 2008 entitled "Hard Heads, Soft Hearts: A Future Reform Agenda for the New Australian Government" he emphasised the collection of ideas as his purpose:

> I want to say to you today that the new Australian Government which I lead is well and truly open for business when it comes to the ideas debate. No-one has a monopoly of wisdom in this domain.
>
> That's why in mid-April I will convene an Australia 2020 Summit.
>
> The Summit brings to the national capital our best and brightest minds in search of the best ideas for the country in ten key areas.
>
> I have appointed a non-government panel of ten leading Australians to in turn select a thousand of our brightest and best—100 per challenge area—to spend a weekend speaking to government rather than government speaking at them.
>
> So in this spirit, if any of you at this conference have policy ideas, proposals or submissions you would like us to consider, then the invitation is real: send them to my office.
>
> We will respond in time to all of them.

I say again, when it comes to ideas and innovation, Australia is now very much open for business. (Rudd, 2008b)

In his speech to the Sydney Institute on 16 April, 2008, three days before the Australia 2020 Summit and entitled "Australia 2020—Setting our Nation's Sights for the Future" Rudd reveals a greater concern for the processes of government decision making. Of particular interest to this thesis is his attachment, at least in the rudiments, to the processes of a deliberative democracy. He says,

the kind of nation we are in 2020 will be only what we plan for, and what we build together. And that, in large part, is why in a few days' time we are convening the national 2020 Summit:
to unleash the national imagination from beyond the ranks of politics and the public service, and
to help fashion a national consensus around a common vision
for the nation, with common goals to aim for within that vision.
We can either drift into the future or we can take hold of the future with our own hands—to shape the future, to seize the day. (Rudd, 2008a)

Later in the same speech Rudd says:

If we therefore genuinely engage society, and not merely the state—in other words, Australian people and not just Australian governments—then we will begin to also identify a new way of doing business for the nation.

The Australia 2020 Summit is an important part of this process—recognising that government does not have all the wisdom, and recognising that our political opponents also have a contribution to make. This is why we welcome contributions to the Summit from across the political spectrum. (Rudd, 2008a)

Rudd's stated goal of "a national consensus around a common vision for the nation, with common goals to aim for within that vision" is similar to that being proposed by me in the area of public policy concerning schooling. At this point Rudd is speaking as if he is a deliberative democrat.

Like this thesis, the Prime Minister also feels it necessary to establish the values he sees as important and shaping. He says:

The new Australian Government is committed to building a modern, competitive Australia capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st century—to secure the nation's future as well as a future for working families.

Our agenda for achieving this is shaped by the core values for which we stand.

Values of security. Of liberty. Of opportunity. Of creativity. Values also of equity. Of family. Of community. Of solidarity. Of sustainability. And an underlying fundamental value of an irreducible human dignity.

These values very much shape the Government's vision for Australia's future. (Rudd, 2008a)

And, again not unlike that which is advocated by this thesis, Rudd nominates a series of elements which, together, provide a sketch of his preferred future for the nation—his "vision for Australia's future." Together these elements could comprise another example of a possible FOAP to be added to the examples outlined in Chapter Eight. Rudd lists them as "commitments" to:

- a *secure Australia*—strong at home and fully engaged abroad through what I have described elsewhere as a creative middle power diplomacy.
- *to building a robust economy*—through a combination of responsible economic management and a program to enhance Australia's global economic competitiveness.
- *to opportunity for all Australians, not just for some*—through a vision for Australia to develop the best educated, best trained, best skilled workforce in the world.
- *to a creative Australia* where imagination and creativity drive our efforts in the arts, sciences and the development of a pervasive national culture of innovation and enterprise.
- *to the advancement of a fair go for all* Australians through education, health and the rules that govern workplaces.
- *to the protection of the family* by advancing family friendly workplaces and better work-life balance.
- *to the concept of community*—not as a collection of disconnected individuals but as a place where people are bound by common core values and a common sense of responsibility to one another.
- *to a principle of social solidarity* that extends beyond private philanthropy to a public responsibility to protect the most vulnerable through a humane safety net for all Australians.
- *to the protection of the global commons that is the planet itself.*
- *to fundamental human dignity*, through a judicial system that provides for the proper protection of the basic human rights of all. (Rudd, 2008a)

The Prime Minister appears to be serious about these political processes. He acknowledges the newness of his approach and anticipates opposition when he says:

> For many years it has been unfashionable to talk of a vision for the nation's future.
>
> In fact, some have argued that framing such a vision is ideologically unsustainable because nations simply evolve as a consequence of the market forces that shape them.
>
> I disagree because I believe a small country occupying a vast continent in a region as wildly disparate as our own has no option other than to plan for its future.
>
> As it is written elsewhere, "without a vision, the people perish."
>
> I believe that as a nation we need to come together around clear, long-term goals for the Australia of 2020 and beyond. (Rudd, 2008a)

"Coming together around clear, long-term goals" for Australia is the objective of my Foundation of Agreed Principles. Once formulated, it can become a powerful contributor to schoolings shape and outcomes—and to social cohesion. This thesis relies on a political

process which goes well beyond forms, even good forms, of consultation between government and specialist sections of the public. It seeks, consistent with the literature concerning "deliberative democracy," to engage the entire Australian public—across areas of economic and political activity and extending deep into civil society—in a national conversation which moves through several phases of consideration: the need for such a deliberation, identification of agreed elements of a preferred future, the formulation of an agreed set of social purposes. The phases must be government supported but not government controlled. It must be comprehensively data-fed by a compliant and open bureaucracy and a supportive media without being bureaucratically manipulated or media controlled. The process must be widely accessible and widely engaged. For many, such a proposal is inconceivable.

In some respects the Australia 2020 Summit of April 2008 exhibited a number of features consistent with the processes of "deliberative democracy."

It was initiated and supported by a government which was seeking to find a "new way to govern."

This new way to govern included emphasis on the value of the thinking and wisdom of a public wider than the polity and its bureaucracy.

"Stimulus papers" containing much relevant data and some preliminary analysis were provided to the wider public as well as directly to the 1002 participants through the media, and through the internet, several few weeks before the "summit."

Regionally-based meetings in which more local participation could be effected were quickly organised (by the ruling Labor Party) in some regional centres (for example: Newcastle and Erina in NSW) and schools across the country integrated the lead up to the 2020 "Summit" into their curriculum with hundreds of them holding student meetings to discuss ideas to be forwarded to the "summit" itself. In addition, a specialist Youth forum with selected thinkers was held, and the Prime Minister delivered many preliminary speeches at various venues and gatherings to outline his reasons for the "summit." Given the experience of this relatively rapidly organized and new experience, it is now not as difficult to imagine, in a national exercise explicitly aimed at reaching social agreement, a more extensive timeline, an expansion of the types of meetings, a further localization of citizen engagement, an extension of government support, an educated media supportive of the process—a political process extending throughout civil society.

These features all fall within the concept of "deliberative democracy" and, despite a number of discounting features, help to establish that the processes of deliberative democracy are not a vacuous and merely theoretical plaything, but a serious possibility for a government wanting to undertake a serious collaboration with its citizenry. The original concept of a 2020 conference comprising the nations "best and brightest" was an interesting mix of explicitly elitist and democratic thinking. Elitist in the sense that 1000 selected thinkers were to be consulted. Democratic in the sense that a wider range of people, outside the electoral cycle, were to be consulted—even more so when regional meetings and school-based fora were added to the concept.

The Australia 2020 Summit also served to provide an indication that the Australian people are not averse to a process involving consultation with the citizenry on matters concerning the national good. It appears, from media reports and polling of public opinion, that a wider consultation by government with Australia's citizenry is popular.

The requirements of deliberative democracy are more easily conceivable given the experience of the Australia 2020 Summit. It is now easier to envisage a phased process, maybe extending over two or more years, in which Australia's difficulties with its schooling system are widely discussed, followed by a public deliberation concerning the advisability of preparing a socially agreed set of social purposes which reflect a desired future society, followed by a process of identifying that set of social purpose. It is now easier to envisage a process which engages the public in local—maybe in quite small local units of the public—in these considerations. And the process of government and the media providing data and support is now a matter of experience.

In November, 2007 a report commissioned by the NSW Public Education Alliance and entitled *Making Federalism Work For Schools: Due process, transparency, informed consent* (L. Connors, 2007) was published. The Alliance comprises key organisations in Australia's most populated state representing public schooling: the Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW, the NSW Primary Principals Association, the Public Schools Principals Forum, the NSW Secondary Principals' Council and the NSW Teachers Federation. The report, written by Lyndsay Connors, carried a number of important papers written by authors of relevance to this thesis, among them: Alan Reid, Bruce Wilson, Brian Caldwell, Michael Furtado.

While Connors (2007) states that there is no "overall crisis in schooling" (p.84) she identifies "key priorities" to be:

- the Commonwealth Government's "major function in education is now the public funding of private schools" (p. 82);
- considerations of a national role in curriculum formulation, and assessment and reporting regimes are taking place "without due regard to the costs and benefits in terms of students' learning; and in the absence of proper concern about the level of resources" required (p. 83);
- in respect of "poor participation and under-achievement in schooling" Australia's "first priority" is the maintenance of "an adequate overall supply of highly educated teachers" (p. 83); and
- the quality of school buildings and infrastructure.

In response to these priorities Connors (2007) proposes a "Framework for Proposed Complementary Legislation" (p. 99) between the governments of the states, territories and the Commonwealth with an "overarching purpose" of establishing "a vehicle for achieving a genuine national effort to provide the highest possible quality of schooling for the nation's children and young people" (p. 99). She seeks a "national agreement" between these governments (in consultation "with relevant groups and authorities" [p. 101]) on a "common set of principles" to guide all governments "in their policies and programs" and she provides examples of these principles which include commitments to:
- "future of Australia" objectives such as "equality of opportunity, economic prosperity, knowledge in an information-rich world, environmental challenges, social cohesion and global citizenship" (p. 99);
- to students such that they have access to resources, services and educational opportunities (p. 99);
- to parents such that "they can have confidence in the quality of schooling for their children and access to the information they need to support their children's schooling" (p. 99);
- to the development and delivery of high quality curriculum standards in the key areas of learning, for all students (p. 99);
- to provide all schools and students with access to quality teaching, through coordinated strategies for teacher education, recruitment, professional development and recognition (p. 99);
- to collaborative federalism (p. 99).

The Framework (L. Connors, 2007) goes on to list a plethora of political "advice," "development and management" functions, "action plans and implementation strategies,"

"design and maintenance of data," monitoring of operational areas such as resources, funding, participation, attainments and outcomes…and so on (see p. 101-102). These functions, it is proposed, "would require a structure and a clear set of processes" (p. 102). The structure would comprise a Ministerial Council of state, territory and Commonwealth Ministers for School Education and be responsible for a National Board of Schooling, a Commission responsible for teaching and learning in schools, and another Commission responsible for funding government and non-government schools.

The Connors (2007) conclusion—its "framework" for complementary legislation—while providing some aspiration for greater levels of coordination across boundaries, assumes the continued existence of one of the two major barriers to a cohesive system of schooling, separate state and territory schooling systems. Far from reducing political complexity, the proposal inserts another layer of politicised bureaucracy. As such, its implementation would maintain one of the two most fracturing forces in Australian schooling. The framework appears to be a bid to get the states and territories, with a commitment to the "the primary obligation" of governments to "high quality public education" (p. 103) back into the funding "game"—into the Commonwealth arena where more national funds are available and where, as the "priorities" suggest, the "major function in education is now the public funding of private schools" (p. 82). The report does not discuss the reason(s) for increasing enrolments in non-public schooling, or question the nature of the public service provided by public schools. As a consequence, it draws no attention to the other divisions in Australia's fractured schooling system—public, church-based, exclusionary divisions—beyond the view that church-based and exclusionary schools receive unfair levels of government, particularly Commonwealth Government, support.

In respect of the need for increased schooling outcomes across Australia's schooling system, and in particular for the bottom half of Australia's student population, mostly low SES and indigenous students, whose outcomes place Australia amongst the worst OECD countries when it comes to "relative disadvantage," the report (L. Connors, 2007) provides no discussion, apparently assuming the "nation's first priority" (p. 83) of "high quality teaching" as the appropriate key response to this matter.

No mention is made of student boredom. No mention, beyond inclusion of the phrase "social cohesion" in a string of other "future of Australia" descriptors, is made to the matter of greatest social significance—social cohesion.

Despite a final salutation to "the full and informed consent of the Australian people" (p. 104) the political processes associated with the Framework are described as inter-governmental with consultation involving "relevant groups and authorities" with a warning against "reliance on public opinion."

The report carries a paper from Bruce Wilson (2007) who, after many years working at senior level on national curriculum-related projects opens his paper with, "Curriculum in Australia is a dog's breakfast." Connors' report undertakes a substantial discussion of curriculum and, in particular, the context within which considerations of a national curriculum are taking place. The report discusses contributions by a number of authors and, consistent with its assumption of continuing separate state systems, remains equivocal as to "whether curriculum responsibility continues to reside with individual states or is shared nationally in the future" (p. 51), but, like the *Federalist Paper 2—The Future of Schooling in Australia: Revised Edition—September 2007* discussed in Chapter Eight, it is unequivocally attached to the view that "the approach to curriculum content" be "grounded in the relevant disciplines," the latter conclusion reached as a riposte to those who seek to "impose a once-and-for-all 'fixed' curriculum for schools across all jurisdictions" (p. 51) and in the absence of discussion of alternative curriculum structures (such as that proposed by me in this thesis).

One of the papers attached to the Connors report is written by Professor Alan Reid (2007) who outlines his advocacy of a national curriculum in the same terms, including his nominated "capabilities," discussed earlier in Chapter Eight (Reid, 2005). However, in this 2007 paper he discusses a concept with some similarities to my own thinking. He sees a curriculum structure "relating to all years of schooling" (p. 139) with two "aspects":

> One aspect of an official curriculum might be the development of those capabilities identified from a continuing *national* [italics in original] conversation, albeit ongoing, unfinished and tentative. But there would need to be another part of the curriculum—that is, the vehicles through which the capabilities are developed. These are traditionally known as subjects, Learning Areas or disciplines. (p. 138)

Reid's (2007) thinking has not led him to a two-tiered curriculum structure such as I have proposed, but it has led him to advocate:

a) a national *conversation* [italics added] (p. 138) using the processes of a deliberative democracy, aimed at;

b) identifying "broader philosophic considerations such as the contribution of school curriculum to nation building" rather than "technical" considerations (p. 137).

c) the identification, using these widely participative political processes, to identify a number of "capabilities" representing the needs of the nation (p. 138).

Reid (2007) would have these capabilities taught through the disciplines, the structure and content of which—the "curriculum autonomy of the states/territories"—would, like the Connors scheme, remain with the states and territories (p. 139).

In addition to the increase in the "publicness" of the curriculum, a feature which I argue will provide a high degree of political legitimacy to the finished product, Reid (2007) envisages that the process "might advance the public-private debate" (p. 140). He writes, "In my view, what has been missing from the public-private debate, with its inevitable preoccupation with funding, has been robust dialogue about the role of all schools in pursuing public purposes via the formal and informal curriculum" (p. 140)—a belief for which I have provided considerable research, analysis, and argument in this thesis.

Reid reaches a different conclusion than I. He advocates "an education commons, a public space in which there is diversity and choice of schools, but where all schools receiving public funds are required to operate according to a charter comprising a number of public principles. His proposal is probably closer to the real politik. Nevertheless, in this dissertation I have provided an analysis, much of it centred on curriculum, from the perspectives of disempowered peoples with poor schooling outcomes, of bored students, of religious freedoms denied, of the perils of disintegrating social cohesion, and of wider imperatives concerning of the Common Good. It has led me to propose a diversity and choice in curriculum provision in all schooling years in Australian schools, paralleled equally by an "essential" curriculum generated by a set of socially agreed, set of social purposes reflecting a preferred future society.

References

ACER. (1998). *Attitudes to school life: Their influences and their effects on achievement and leaving school*. Camberwell: Australian Council for Educational Research.

AEU Victorian Branch. (2007, March). Public education: Australia's future. *Schools Bulletin*.

Ainley, J., Graetz, M., Long, M., & Batten, M. (1995). *Socioeconomic status and school education*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Ainley, M. (2004). *What do we know about student motivation and engagement?* Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education

Aitken, D. (1981). Australian society in change – A sociological and political perspective In P. H. Karmel (Ed.), *Education, change and society* (pp. 36-50). Radford House, Victoria: ACER.

Al Faisal College. (2005). Al Faisal College: About us. Retrieved June 30, 2006, from http://www.alfaisalcollege.com/aboutus.aspx

Aldrich, R. (2006). *Lessons from history of education*. New York: Routledge.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State. (1995). Radical advice: Milton Friedman and private school vouchers. Retrieved August 4, 2006, from http://www.au.org/site/DocServer/MiltonFriedman.pdf?docID=156

Amosa, W., Ladwig, J., Griffiths, T., & Gore, J. (2007). *Equity effects of Quality Teaching: Closing the gap.* Paper presented at the 2007 Annual Conference of the Australian Association of Research in Education, Fremantle.

Ananda Marga. (2007). Ananda Marga: Global services. Retrieved January 8, 2008, from http://www.amriverschool.org.au/index1.php?mp_id=23&PHPSESSID=d6629da7c f281e733739a8488172d004

Apple, M. W. (2001). *Educating the "right" way: Markets, standards, God, and inequality*. New York and London: Routledge/Falmer.

Arkan-Ul-Islam School [Arkana College Ltd]. (n.d.). Arkana College Primary School. Retrieved June 30, 2006, from http://www.arkana.nsw.edu.au/

Arkana College. (n.d.). *Prospectus - Arkana College - Primary School*. Kingsgrove, NSW.

Attenborough: Climate is changing. (2006, May 24). *BBC News*.

Austin, A. G. (1961). *Australian education, 1788-1900: Church, state and public education in colonial Australia*. Melbourne: Pitman.

Austin, A. G. (1963). *Select documents in Australian education, 1788-1900*. Melbourne: Pitman.

Australian Anglican Schools Network. (n.d.-a). Australian Anglican Schools network. Retrieved July 10, 2006, from http://www.aasn.edu.au/new_south_wales.cfm

Australian Anglican Schools Network. (n.d.-b). Australian Anglican Schools network. Retrieved June 21, 2006, from http://www.aasn.edu.au/new_south_wales.cfm

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2001). Year Book Australia 2001. Retrieved 31 August, 2007, from http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/0

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2004a). Australian social trends, 2004. Retrieved November, 20, 2007, from http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/)

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2004b). Australian social trends, 2004. 4102.0: Trends in Religious Affiliation. Retrieved November, 27, 2007, from http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/1020492cfcd63696ca2568a1002477b5

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2005). CAT. NO. 4221.0: Schools, Australia, 2005. Table 4. Fulltime students. from http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/E45AAC95A0376D9FCA 25711D00225E39/$File/42210_table4_2005.xls

Australian Council for Islamic Education Schools. (n.d.-a). Australian Council for Islamic Education Schools. Retrieved September 4, 2007, from http://acies-au.org/

Australian Council for Islamic Education Schools. (n.d.-b). Australian Council for Islamic Education Schools.   Retrieved September 3, 2007, from http://acies-au.org/

Australian Council for Islamic Education Schools. (n.d.-c). Australian Council for Islamic Education Schools.   Retrieved June 25, 2007, from http://acies-au.org/

Australian Council of State Schools Organisations. (2006). Public education voice. Retrieved July 17, 2006, from http://www.acsso.org.au/pev17.htm#Feature

Australian Government Department of Education Science and Training. (2004). *The values we share*. Retrieved July 28, 2006. from http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/verve/_resources/values_values_we_share_poster.pdf.

Australian Government Department of Education Science and Training. (2005). *National framework for Values Education in Australian schools*. from http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/verve/_resources/Framework_PDF_version_for_the_web.pdf.

Australian Government Department of Education Science and Training. (2006). Funding and reporting mechanisms.   Retrieved June 10, 2006, from http://schoolgrg.dest.gov.au/Help/SESInfo/Allschoolsforpress-release.pdf.

The Australian Pocket Oxford. (1976). Oxford University Press.

Australian Schools Commission. (1973). *Report of the interim committee for the Australian Schools Commission: Schools in Australia*. Canberra: Australian Schools Commission.

Australian Schools Commission. (1975). *Report for the triennium 1976-78*. Canberra: Australian Schools Commission.

Ball, T., & Dagger, R. (1995). *Political ideologies and the democratic ideal*. New York: Harper and Collins.

Barcan, A. (1980). *A history of Australian education*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Barcan, A. (undated, circa 2002). Citizenship as an educational aim In *Educational Policy Unit Study Paper No. 23*. Melbourne: Institute of Public Affairs.

Barcan, A., & O'Flaherty, P. (1995). *Family, education and society*. Burwood, NSW: Academy Press.

Beavis, A. (2004). Why parents choose public or private schools. *Research Development*(12).

Belgrave Heights Christian School. (2006). Belgrave Heights Christian School.   Retrieved July 4, 2006, from http://www.bhcs.vic.edu.au/

Benhabib, S. (2006). *Another cosmopolitanism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Berliner, D., C., & Biddle, B., J. (1998). The lamentable alliance between the media and school critics. *School Administrator, 55*(8), 12.

Bishop, J. (2006). National curriculum push criticism 'misguided' [Electronic Version]. *Insiders*. Retrieved October 10, 2006 from http://www.abc.net.au/insiders/content/2006/s1758091.htm.

Blackburn, J. (1981). Changing educational emphases for the 1980s In P. H. Karmel (Ed.), *Education, change and society* (pp. 81-99). Radford House, Victoria: ACER.

Board of Education. (n.d.). Uniting Church schools.   Retrieved July 7, 2006, from http://nsw.uca.org.au/boe/education/schools.htm

Board of National Education. (1848-1852). *Regulations:1848 I, 1. 1852, D, 2. 1852, D, 17*. Sydney: NSW State Archives.

Bonner, C., & Caro, J. (2007). *The stupid country: How Australia is dismantling its public education system*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.

Boston, K. (1992). *Opening address.* Paper presented at the National Conference of Economics Teachers, Sydney.

Bowker, D. (1879, December 12). Report of committee discussion on Public Instruction Bill in NSW Legislative Assembly. *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Broughton Anglican College. (n.d.). Broughton Anglican College: Mission & philosophy. Retrieved June 30, 2006, from

http://www.broughton.nsw.edu.au/prospectus.php?pagename=prospectus&sectionid=missionphilosophy&pg=2

Bruner, J. (1968, May 18). Culture, politics and pedagogy. *Saturday Review*.

Buckby, M. (1999). National goals for schooling in the 21st century. *Media Release*.

Buckingham, J. (2000). The truth about private schools in Australia. *Issue Analysis*(13).

Burke, K. (2003a, June 23). Giving children what parents can't - values. *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Burke, K. (2003b, June 26). Scientology class suits shy Hindu. *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Burke, K. (2005, September 17). Public schools losing battle in inner suburbs. *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Caldwell, B. J. (1997). The future of public education: A policy framework for lasting reform. *Educational Management and Administration, 25*(4), 366-367.

Caldwell, B. J., & Hayward, D. K. (1998). *The future of schools: Lessons from the reform of public education*. London: Falmer Press, London.

Calvary Christian College. (n.d.). Calvary Christian College: Educational philosophy. Retrieved July 10, 2006, from http://www.calvaryaog.org.au/school/philosophy.asp

Catholic Education: Diocese of Parramatta. (n.d.). Our story. Retrieved January 7, 2008, from http://www.parra.catholic.edu.au/Our-System/Profile/Our-Story/

Center on National Education Policy. (1996). *Changing schools, enduring principles*. Washington, DC: Center on National Education Policy.

Chantal, M. (2004). Pluralism, dissensus and democratic citizenship. In F. Inglis (Ed.), *Education and the good society* (pp. 42-53). New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Clark, A. (2006). Flying the flag for mainstream Australia [Electronic Version]. *Griffith Review*, 107-108.

Cleverley, J. F. (1971). *The first generation – School and society in early Australia*. Sydney: Sydney University Press.

Cohen, J., & Rogers, J. (1995). *Associations and democracy*. London: Verso.

Cohen, J. L., & Arato, A. (1992). *Civil society and political theory*. Cambridge, Mass: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

Comer, J. P. (2004). *Leave no child behind: Preparing today's youth for tomorrow's world*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Committee of Review of NSW Schools. (1989). *Report of the committee of review of NSW schools*. Sydney: NSW Government.

Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia]. (1975). *Report for the Triennium 1976 – 78*. Canberra: Commonwealth Schools Commission.

Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia]. (1980). *Schooling for 15 and 16 year-olds*. Canberra: Commonwealth Schools Commission.

Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia]. (1984a). *Funding Australia's schools*. Canberra: Commonwealth Schools Commission.

Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia]. (1984b). *Resource standards for Australia's schools*. Canberra: Commonwealth Schools Commission.

Commonwealth Schools Commission [Australia]. (1987). *In the national interest: Secondary education and youth policy in Australia*. Canberra: Commonwealth Schools Commission.

Connell, W. F. (1964). Primary and secondary education. In R. W. T. Cowan (Ed.), *Education for Australians: A symposium*. Melbourne: Cheshire.

Connors, L. (1988, May 3). Schools commission was fated to become a political albatross. *Canberra Times*.

Connors, L. (2007). Making federalism work for schools: Due process, transparency, informed consent [Electronic Version] from http://www.nswtf.org.au/media/latest_2007/files/20070517_federalism.pdf.

Cook, M. (2002). General consensus: School is cool. *The Age (Education)*.

Coptic Orthodox Church. (2005a). Coptic schools. Retrieved June 30, 2006, from http://www.coptic.org.au/modules/coptic_schools/

Coptic Orthodox Church. (2005b). Coptic schools. Retrieved July 7, 2006, from
http://www.coptic.org.au/modules/coptic_schools/

Crabb, A. (2004, January 20). PM queries values of state schools. *The Age*.

Cranbrook School. (2006). Cranbrook School: About us. Retrieved July 28, 2006, from
http://www.cranbrook.nsw.edu.au/aboutus/index.cfm

Crittenden, B. (1981). Theoretical assumptions in the recent development of Australian
education. In P. H. Karmel (Ed.), *Education, change and society* (pp. 3-35).
Radford House, Victoria: ACER.

Croke, B. (2005). *Understanding Catholic schools: In one easy lesson*. Sydney: NSW
Catholic Education Commission.

Croke, B. (2006). *Sustaining quality schools: A Catholic school perspective.* Paper
presented at the Conference of Government School Principals.

Curriculum Corporation. (1993). *National action plan for the education of girls*. Canberra:
Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace
Relations.

Dale, R. (1999). Specifying globalisation effects on national policy: A focus on the
mechanisms. *Journal of Education Policy, 14*(1), 1-17.

Dale, R. (2000). Globalization and education: Demonstrating a "common world educational
culture" or locating a "globally structured educational agenda"? *Educational
Theory, 50*(4), 427-448.

Davy, V. (1988, June 8). The political albatross. *Canberra Times*.

Davy, V. (1991). Private compendium of data. Targeted Programs Unit of the NSW
Department of School Education.

Davy, V. (1993). Plan for the education of students from communities with low socio-
economic status.

Davy, V. (2005a). Occasional address. Unpublished Graduation Ceremony Address.
University of Newcastle.

Davy, V. (2005b). Unpublished letter from Van Davy to NSW Minister of Education.

Dawkins, J. S. (1988). *Strengthening Australia's schools: A consideration of the focus and
content of schooling*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Day, M. (1879, December 5). Report of second reading debate on Public Instruction Bill in
NSW Legislative Assembly. *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Declaration of Independence. (1776/1916). Library of Congress.

Denominational School Board. (1862). *Annual report - 1862*. Sydney: NSW State
Archives.

Department of Education South Australia. (n.d.). *The detailed essential learnings*.

Department of Education Tasmania. (2003). *Essential learnings: Introduction to the
outcomes and standards*.

Department of Employment, Education, & Training. (1989a). *Estimated Year 12
completion rate: Australia 1989*. Canberra: Department of Education, Employment
and Training.

Department of Employment, Education, & Training. (1989b). Graph of estimated Year 12
completion rate

Department of the Parliamentary Library. (2002). *Commonwealth funding for schools since
1996*. Retrieved November 19, 2007. from
http://www.aph.gov.au/Library/Pubs/rn/2001-02/02rn48.pdf.

Dewey, J. (1915/1966). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of
education*. London: Macmillan.

Dimond, P. (2005). School choice and the democratic ideal of free common schools. In S.
Fuhrman & M. Lazerson (Eds.), *The public schools*. Oxford: Oxford University
Press.

Dobson, I. R., & Skuja, E. (2005). Secondary schooling, tertiary entry ranks and university
performance. *People and Place, 13*(1).

Doherty, L. (2003, June 25). Public core defends its own values. *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Doherty, L., & Burke, K. (2003, June 24). Catholic numbers rise, but with many tribes and tongues. *Sydney Morning Herald.*

Doherty, L., Burke, K., & Morris, L. (2003). Why parents prize education's fourth R - religion. Retrieved July 12, 2006, from http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/1691.htm

Dryzek, J. (2002). *Deliberative democracy and beyond: Liberals, critics, contestations.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dudley, J., & Vidovich, L. (1995). *The politics of education – Commonwealth schools policy 1973-1995.* Camberwell, Vic: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Dwyer, B. (1993). *Catholic schools: Creating a new culture.* Newtown, N.S.W., Brunswick, Vic.: David Lovell Publishing.

Edman, I. (1955). *John Dewey: His contribution to the American tradition.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill.

Education Department of Tasmania. (1977). *Secondary education in Tasmania: A review for the Education Department by the Committee on Secondary Education.* Hobart: Education Department of Tasmania.

Ely, J. (1978). *Reality and rhetoric – An alternative history of Australian education.* Sydney: Alternative Publishing Coop.

Ely, J. (2003). The centralisation of a public system of education in colonial NSW: The fate of two ideas transmitted from imperial core to colonial periphery. *History of Education Review, 32*(2), 46-65.

Emanuel School. (2004a). About Emanuel. Retrieved July 8, 2006, from http://www.emanuelschool.nsw.edu.au/Templates/About_philosophy.htm

Emanuel School. (2004b). Enrolment - Prospectus. Retrieved July 8, 2006, from http://www.emanuelschool.nsw.edu.au/Templates/Enrolment_prospectus.htm

Emmanuel Anglican College. (2002a). Ethos of Anglican Colleges for the Diocese of Grafton. Retrieved July 10, 2006, from http://www.emmanuelcollege.nsw.edu.au/about_EAC.htm#ethos

Emmanuel Anglican College. (2002b). Ethos of Anglican Colleges for the Diocese of Grafton. Retrieved June 30, 2006, from http://www.emmanuelcollege.nsw.edu.au/about_EAC.htm

Fane, G. (1984). *Education policy in Australia. Discussion Papers No 85/08.* Canberra: Office of Economic Planning Advisory Council.

FEANTSA. (n.d.). Policy statement: The role of social housing for social cohesion. Retrieved April 3, 2007, from http://www.feantsa.org/files/POLICY%20STATEMENTS%202005/social_cohesion_final_revised.doc

Fearon, J. D. (1998). Deliberation as discussion. In J. Elster (Ed.), *Deliberative democracy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Finn, T. B. (1991). *Young people's participation in post-compulsory education and training: Report to the Australian Education Council Review Committee.* Canberra: Australian Education Council Review Committee.

First Ministers Council for the Australian Federation. (2007). *Federalist paper no 2: The future of schooling in Australia.* Melbourne: Department of Premier & Cabinet.

Fitzgerald, D. (2006, January 25). More money, less faith at private schools. *Sydney Morning Herald.*

Fitzgerald, R. T. (1978). *Outcomes of schooling: Aspects of success and failure.* Canberra: Australia Government Publishing Service.

Flannery, T. F. (2006). *We are the weather makers: The story of global warming.* Melbourne: Text Publishing.

Freire, P. (1974). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: Seabury Press.

Friedman, M. (1995). Public schools: Make them private [Electronic Version]. *Cato Institute - Briefing Paper no. 23.* Retrieved July 25, 2006 from http://www.cato.org/pubs/briefs/bp-023.html.

Friedman, M. (2005, June 9). Free to choose. *The Wall Street Journal.*

Fuhrman, S., & Lazerson, M. (2005). *The public schools.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fullarton, S., & Ainley, J. (2000). *Subject choice by students in Year 12 in Australian secondary schools*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Furtado, M. (2007). Public education in new times: Possible futures for Commonwealth-State relations in sustaining and improving Australia's schools. Accompanying paper to: Making federalism work for schools: Due process, transparency, informed consent [Electronic Version] from http://www.nswtf.org.au/media/latest_2007/files/20070517_federalism.pdf.

Galbraith, J. K. (1996). *The good society: The humane agenda*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Garcia, L. M. (1984, February 17). School commissioners accused of bias. *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Goldstein, M. (2007). This is not a drill, stupid [Electronic Version]. *ON LINE Opinion – Australia's eJournal of social and political debate*. Retrieved November 20, 2007 from http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=5504).

Gore, A. (2006). *An inconvenient truth: The planetary emergence of global warming and what we can do about it*. London: Bloomsbury.

Gore, J., Ladwig, J., Griffiths, T., & Amosa, W. (2007). *Data-driven guidelines for high quality teacher education*. Paper presented at the 2007 Annual Conference of the Australian Association of Research in Education.

Gradstein, M., & Justman, M. (2002). Education, social cohesion, and economic growth. *The American Economic Review, 92*(4).

Griffiths, D. C. (1957). *Documents on the establishment of education in NSW 1789-1880*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Griffiths, T., Amosa, W., Ladwig, J., & Gore, J. (2007). *Equity and pedagogy: Familiar patterns and QT based possibilities*. Paper presented at the 2007 Annual Conference of the Australian Association of Research in Education.

Grose, K. (n.d.). *The origins in NSW of the Board of National Education and the Denominational School Board in 1848*. Sydney: NSW State Archives.

Guerrer, O., & Leung, C. (2004). Private, public schools hit out at PM's 'values' claim. *The Age*.

Gutman, A. (2003). The good, the bad, and the ugly in identity politics. In A. Gutman (Ed.), *Identity in democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gutman, A., & Thompson, D. F. (1997). *Democracy and disagreement*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Haahr, J. H., Nielsen, T. K., Hansen, M. E., & Jakobsen, S. T. (2005). *Explaining student performance: Evidence from the international PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS surveys*: Danish Technological Institute.

Habermas, J. (1996). *Between facts and norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hansard, N. (2006). *Questions and answers: Paper No. 24*: Legislative Council, Parliament of NSW.

Haralambos, & Holborn. (n.d.). *Sociology: Themes and perspectives*. Retrieved February 26, 2007, from http://www.educ.utas.edu.au/users/pthrosse/Ed4-99/HaraHolborn.htm.

Hattersley, R. (2004). Education and the good society. In F. Inglis (Ed.), *Education and the good society*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Haywood, B. (2004, February 9). Putting a price on values. *The Age*.

Hidi, S., Renninger, A, & Krapp, A. (2004). Interests, a motivational variable that combines affective and cognitive functioning. In D. Y. Dai & R. J. Sternberg (Eds.), *Motivation, emotion, and cognition: Integrative perspectives on intellectual functioning and development*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Hogan, M. (1987). *The sectarian strand: Religion in Australian history*. Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin Books.

Hogan, M. (1993). *Australian Catholics: The social justice tradition*. Melbourne: Collins Dove.

Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East. (2006). St Hurmizd's Assyrian Primary School.   Retrieved November 19, 2007, from http://www.assyrianchurch.com.au/primaryschool.htm

Holy Cross College. (n.d.). Mission statement.   Retrieved June 26, 2006, from www.holycrosscollege.org/collegeinfo/mission.html

Holy Saviour School. (2006). Our mission.   Retrieved June 28, 2006, from http://www.holysaviour.nsw.edu.au/

Hostetler, K. (2003). The common good and public education. *Educational Theory, 53*(3), 347-361.

Howard, J. (2005). *Islamic Schools in NSW*. Sydney: Association of Independent Schools of NSW.

Immanuel College. (2006). Immanuel College.   Retrieved July 4, 2006, from http://www.immanuel.qld.edu.au/default.htm

Independent Schools Council of Australia. (n.d.-a). The role of religion in independent schools.   Retrieved January 8, 2008, from http://www.isca.edu.au/html/PDF/Booklet%2003/ISCA_06.pdf

Independent Schools Council of Australia. (n.d.-b). What makes independent schools different.   Retrieved July 11, 2006, from http://www.isca.edu.au/html/PDF/Booklet%2003/ISCA_02.pdf

International Baccalaureate Organization. (2005-2007). International Baccalaureate. Retrieved 21 August, 2006, from http://www.ibo.org/general/what.cfm

Interview with Barry McGaw. (2006, 23 March). ABC Radio 702.

John Mark Ministries. (2007). John Mark Ministries.   Retrieved November 20, 2007, from http://johnmark.net.au/jm/?page_id=2

Kaestle, C. (1983). *Pillars of the republic: Common schools and American society 1780-1860*: Harper Collins Canada.

Karmel, P. H. (1973). *Schools in Australia: Report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Karmel, P. H. (1985). *Quality of education in Australia: Report of the review committee*. Canberra: AGPS.

Karmel, P. H. (Ed.). (1981). *Education, change and society*. Radford House, Victoria: ACER.

Keynes, J. M. (1936/1997). *General theory of employment, interest and money*. New York: Prometheus Books.

Kincoppal - Rose Bay. (n.d.). About us: School goals.   Retrieved June 28, 2006, from http://www.krb.nsw.edu.au/contact/abt_goal.asp

Kinross Wolaroi School. (n.d.). Principal's message.   Retrieved July 7, 2006, from http://www.kws.nsw.edu.au/school/school.asp?pageid=15

Kirby, P. (1985). *Quality of education in Australia: Report of the review committee*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Knox Grammar School. (n.d.). Knox Grammar School.   Retrieved July 7, 2006, from http://www.knox.nsw.edu.au/img/pdfs/enrolments/fees_2006.pdf

Kymlicka, W. (2002). *Contemporary political philosophy: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Kymlicka, W. (2006). Liberal nationalism and cosmopolitan justice. In S. Benhabib, J. Waldron, B. Honig, W. Kymlicka & R. Post (Eds.), *Another cosmopolitanism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lingard, B., Ladwig, J., Mills, M., Bahr, M., Chant, D., & Warry, M. (2001). *Queensland school reform longitudinal study: Final report. Vol. 1*. Brisbane: University of Queensland.

Linz, C. C. (1938). *The establishment of a national system of education in New South Wales*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Locke, J. (1688/2002a). A letter concerning toleration. In *The second treatise of government and a letter concerning toleration*. New York: Dover.

Locke, J. (1688/2002b). The second treatise of government. In *The second treatise of government and a letter concerning toleration*. New York: Dover.

Lovat, T. (2005). *Values education and teachers' work: A quality teaching perspective*. Paper presented at the National Values Education Forum. Retrieved January 7, 2008, from http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/Values_Conf_020505_forum_addr ess_Lovat.pdf.

Lovat, T. (2007). Values education: The missing link in quality teaching and effective learning. In D. Aspin & J. Chapman (Eds.), *Values education and life-long learning* (pp. 199-210). New York: Springer.

Lovat, T. (n.d.). What is values education all about?   Retrieved July 13, 2006, from http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/verve/_resources/Terry_Lovat_VE_Newsletter. pdf

Lovat, T., & Schofield, N. (2004). Values education for all schools and systems: A justification and experimental update. *New Horizons in Education, 111*, 4-13.

Lucas, M. (1880, February 6). Report of committee discussion on Public Instruction Bill in NSW Legislative Assembly. *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Lutheran Education Australia. (n.d.). About us.   Retrieved July 28, 2006, from http://www.lea.org.au/national/about_us_details.asp?ssid=1&sid=182&iid=9

Macarthur Anglican School. (2006). Macarthur Anglican School.   Retrieved June 30, 2006, from http://www.emmanuelcollege.nsw.edu.au/about_EAC.htm

Macintosh, M. (1879, December 5). Report of second reading debate on Public Instruction Bill in NSW Legislative Assembly. *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Mackay, H. (2004). *Right and wrong – How to decide for yourself*. Sydney: Hodder Headline.

Macquarie Anglican Grammar School. (2006). Macquarie Anglican Grammar School. Retrieved June 30, 2006, from http://www.mags.nsw.edu.au/bwWebsite/

The Macquarie Concise Dictionary. (1988). The Macquarie Library.

Maddison, S., & Hamilton, C. (2007, January 26-28). The repression of the bleeding hearts. *The Sydney Morning Herald,* p. 30.

Mannheim, K. (1946). *Ideology and utopia: An introduction to the sociology of knowledge*. New York: Harcourt.

Marginson, S. (1997). *Educating Australia: Government, economy and citizen since 1960*. Cambridge; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

Marginson, S. (1998). Putting the 'public' back into public education. In A. Reid (Ed.), *Going public: Education policy and public education in Australia*. Canberra: Australian Curriculum Studies Association.

Martin, R. (2002). National priorities in a national system [Electronic Version], *2008* from http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Debates/Educarearticle.html

Martin, R. (2003). Reforming Commonwealth school funding to make private school funding more public spirited?   Retrieved August 4, 2006, from http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Debates/PSfunding.pdf

Masada College, S. (2006). Mission statement.   Retrieved July 8, 2006, from http://www.masada.nsw.edu.au/VisionandValuesMissionStatement/tabid/436/Defa ult.aspx

Matters, G., Masters, G., & Australian Council for Educational Research. (2007). *Year 12 curriculum content and achievement standards*. Canberra, ACT: Department of Education, Science and Training.

Mayer, E. (1992). *Putting general education to work: The key competencies report*. Melbourne: Australian Education Council and Ministers for Vocational Education, Employment and Training.

MCEETYA. (1989). The Hobart declaration of common and agreed national goals for schooling in Australia.   Retrieved December 14, 2006, from http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/nationalgoals/index.htm

MCEETYA. (1994). *National strategy for equity in schooling*: Curriculum Corporation for the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training.

MCEETYA. (1999). The Adelaide declaration on national goals for schooling in the twenty-first century.   Retrieved December 14, 2006, from http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/nationalgoals/index.htm

MCEETYA. (2005). *National report on schooling in Australia 2005: National benchmark results: Reading, writing and numeracy in Years 3, 5 and 7*.

McGaw, B. (1997). *Shaping their future: Recommendations for reform of the HSC*. Sydney: NSW DET.

McGaw, B. (2005). *Achievement and equity: Where is Australia at?* Paper presented at the Curriculum Corporation Conference, Brisbane.

McGaw, B. (2006, August 3). *Achieving quality and equity education*, University of South Australia.

Mendelssohn, J. (2006). Moving private *Griffith Review*(February), 115-121.

Meyer, J. W., Boli, J., Thomas, G. M., & Ramirez, F. O. (1997). World society and the nation-state. *The American Journal of Sociology, 103*(1), 144-181.

Mill, J. S. (1998). *On liberty and other essays*: Oxford University Press.

Miller, R. (2003). *Where schools might fit in a future learning society*. Jolimont, Vic.: Incorporated Association of Registered Teachers of Victoria.

MLC School. (n.d.). About MLC.   Retrieved July 7, 2006, from http://www.mlcsyd.nsw.edu.au/content/about_mlc/index.cfm

Monbiot, G. (2003). *The age of consent: A manifesto for a new world order*. London: Flamingo.

Moorhouse, F. (2004a, May 1). Lessons in privilege. *The Age*.

Moorhouse, F. (2004b, April 7). A sense of privilege poisons our schooling. *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Moriah College. (n.d.-a). Moriah College.   Retrieved July 8, 2006, from http://www.moriah.nsw.edu.au/ArticleDocuments/Fees%20Schedule%202006.pdf

Moriah College. (n.d.-b). Moriah College: Our core values.   Retrieved July 8, 2006, from http://www.moriah.nsw.edu.au/default.aspx?FolderID=37&ArticleID=34

Mount Sinai College. (n.d.). Mission statement.   Retrieved July 4, 2006, from http://www.mountsinai.nsw.edu.au/show_page.php?pageId=55

National Assembly of France. (1789). Declaration of the rights of man and of the citizen. Retrieved February 20, 2007, from http://www.hrcr.org/docs/frenchdec.html

National Board of Employment, Education, & Training. (1993). *Five to fifteen: Reviewing the compulsory years of schooling. Project Paper No. 8*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

National Catholic Education Commission. (2000). *The contribution of religion and religious schools to cultural diversity and social cohesion in contemporary Australia: Submission to the Australian Multicultural Foundation*: National Catholic Education Commission,.

National Catholic Education Commission. (n.d.-a). Australian Catholic Schools: Why we have them? What they aim to achieve?   Retrieved July 26, 2006, from http://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/rationale2.html

National Catholic Education Commission. (n.d.-b). Some reflections from the religious education committee of the National Catholic Education Commission [Electronic Version]. Retrieved July 28, 2006 from http://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/Fundamentalism.pdf.

Newington College. (n.d.-a). Fee schedule 2006.   Retrieved July 7, 2006, from http://www.newingtoncollege.nsw.edu.au/admissions/06FeeSchedule.pdf

Newington College. (n.d.-b). Welcome to Newington.   Retrieved July 7, 2006, from http://www.newingtoncollege.nsw.edu.au/aims/default.htm

Newmann, F. M., & Wehlage, G. G. (1996). Conclusion: Restructuring for authentic student achievement. In F. M. Newmann & Associates (Eds.), *Authentic*

achievement: Restructuring schools for intellectual quality. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Newmann, F. M., Wehlage, G. G., & Lamborn, S. D. (1992). The significance and sources of student engagement. In F. M. Newman (Ed.), *Student engagement and achievement in American schools* (pp. 11-39). New York: Teachers College Press.

Nicholls, J. (2004). *Commonwealth Funding Program for private schools 1996-2004: A favourable climate for expansion and growth*: Australian Education Union.

Northern Territory Department of Employment Education and Training. (n.d.). *Essential learnings overview*.

Nozick, R. (1974). *Anarchy, state, and utopia*. New York: Basic Books.

NSW Board of Jewish Education: Academy BJE. (2006a). Our mission.   Retrieved July 4, 2006, from http://www.bje.org.au/templateBase_general.php?id=74&keyword

NSW Board of Jewish Education: Academy BJE. (2006b). Our mission.   Retrieved June 25, 2006, from http://www.bje.org.au/templateBase_general.php?id=74&keyword

NSW Department of Education and Training. (2000-2004). Statistical compendium: Annual reports.   Retrieved August 7, 8, 2007, from https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/reports_stats/annual_reports/index.htm

NSW Department of Education and Training. (2003). *Quality teaching in NSW public schools: Discussion paper*: Professional Support and Curriculum Directorate, NSW Department of Education and Training.

NSW Department of Education and Training. (2004a). NSW public schools strategic directions 2002-2004.   Retrieved June 13, 2006, from https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/strat_direction/stratdir02_04/pub_school.htm

NSW Department of Education and Training. (2004b). *Statistical compendium - Annual report 2004*: NSW Department of Education and Training.

NSW Department of Education and Training. (2006a). *Annual report*. Sydney: NSW Department of Education and Training.

NSW Department of Education and Training. (2006b). Priority schools program.   Retrieved November 7, 2007, from http://www.psp.nsw.edu.au/about/index.html

NSW Department of Education and Training. (2006c). *Statistical compendium 2006*. Sydney: NSW Department of Education and Training.

NSW Department of Education and Training. (2007). Schools policies and procedures.   Retrieved November 7, 2007, from https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policiesinter/category.do?level=Schools

NSW Department of Education and Training. (n.d.). Implementation of religious education policy.   Retrieved November 26, 2007, from http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/policies/religion/assets/pdf/implementation.pdf

NSW Department of School Education. (2005). Letter from NSW Minister of Education and Training to Mr Vanlyn Davy.

NSW Department of School Education. (2006). Letter from Dr Christine Ewan to Van Davy.

NSW Institute of Teachers. (n.d.). Professional teaching standards.   Retrieved January 4, 2008, from http://www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/Main-Professional-Teaching-Standards.html

NSW Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs. (1994). NSW State Equity Strategy: Draft plans for the NSW Department of School Education, the Board of Studies, the TAFE Commission and the Office of Youth Affairs. Unpublished papers held privately by Van Davy.

NSW Public Education Council. (2005). *Building on strong foundations: Report of the NSW Public Education Council*. Sydney.

NSW State Archives. (1848-1866). *Administration under two boards*. Sydney: NSW State Archives.

NSW Teachers Federation. (2006). Students move back to public schools.   Retrieved July 14, 2006, from http://www.nswtf.org.au/media/latest_2006/20060319_survey.html

O'Reilly, B. (2002). Education and training: How does Australia compare internationally? In *Year Book Australia 2000*. Canberra: Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

OECD. (2001a). *Knowledge and skills for life - First results from PISA 2000*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

OECD. (2001b). *What schools for the future?* Paris: CFC, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

OECD. (2002a). *Education at a glance: OECD indicators 2002*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

OECD. (2002b). Schools and classroom climate. In *Education at a glance: OECD indicators 2002*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

OECD. (2003a). Learners for life - Student approaches to learning: Results from PISA 2000. In *OECD Education and skills* (Vol. 2003). Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

OECD. (2003b). Literacy skills for the world of tomorrow: Further results from PISA 2000. In *OECD Education and Skills* (Vol. 2003, no. 5). Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation.

OECD. (2003c). *Student engagement at school: A sense of belonging and participation - Publications PISA 2000*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

OECD. (2004). Problem solving for tomorrow's world: First measures of cross-curricula competencies from PISA 2003. In *OECD Education and Skills. Vol. 2004, no. 22*. Paris.

OECD. (2005). *Education at a glance: OECD indicators 2005*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation.

OECD, McKenzie, P., & Hirsch, D. (2002). *Education policy analysis*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation.

Our Lady of Lebanon College. (2001). Our mission. Retrieved June 28, 2006, from http://www.olol-college.nsw.edu.au/default.asp?action=category&ID=2

Pacific Hills Christian School. (2006). Pacific Hills Christian School. Retrieved July 4, 2006, from http://www.phcs.nsw.edu.au/PHCS/values.htm

Paine, T. (1776/2004). *Common sense*. London: Penguin.

Parkes, H. (1880, February 25). Third reading speech on Public Instruction Bill in NSW Legislative Assembly. *Sydney Morning Herald*

Parkinson, J. (2006). *Deliberating in the real world: Problems of legitimacy in deliberative democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pell, G. C. (2006, September 28). *Keynote address*. Paper presented at the Religion and Culture: Catholic Schools in Australia NCEC Conference, Sydney.

Penrith Anglican College. (n.d.). Penrith Anglican College. Retrieved June 30, 2006, from http://www.pac.nsw.edu.au/

Plato. (2003). *The republic* (2nd ed.). London: Penguin.

PLC Sydney. (n.d.). Mission statement. Retrieved July 7, 2006, from http://www.plc.nsw.edu.au/public2/mission_statement.asp

Prest, S. U. (1992). Euphemisms. *Curriculum Perspectives, 12*(4), 22-24.

Project Gutenberg of Australia. (2006). Significant dates in Australian history. Retrieved February 26, 2007, from http://gutenberg.net.au/timeline.html

Pymble Ladies College. (2006a). Mission statement. Retrieved July 7, 2006, from http://www.pymblelc.nsw.edu.au/mission.htm

Pymble Ladies College. (2006b). School fees. Retrieved July 7, 2006, from http://www.pymblelc.nsw.edu.au/pdf/schoolfees.pdf

Queensland Government Department of Education and the Arts. (2000). *New Basics project technical paper, version 3, draft*.

Queensland Government Department of Education and the Arts. (2007). *The New Basics research report*.

Ravenswood School for Girls. (2004). Our vision.   Retrieved July 7, 2006, from http://www.ravenswood.nsw.edu.au/Home/Default.aspx?PageID=OurVision

Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Rawls, J. (1996). *Political liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Redfield College. (2006). What is Redfield?   Retrieved July, 4, 2006, from http://www.redfield.nsw.edu.au/inquiries/whatisredfield.html

Refshauge, A. (2004). *Values in NSW public schools*. Sydney: NSW Department of Education and Training.

Reid, A. (1998). *Going public: Education policy and public education in Australia*. Canberra: Australian Curriculum Studies Association.

Reid, A. (2005). *Rethinking national curriculum collaboration: Towards an Australian curriculum*. Canberra: Australian Government, Department of Education, Science and Training.

Reid, A. (2007). Putting the public back into curriculum. Accompanying paper to: Making federalism work for schools: Due process, transparency, informed consent [Electronic Version] from http://www.nswtf.org.au/media/latest_2007/files/20070517_federalism.pdf.

Reid, A., & Thomson, P. (Eds.). (2003). *Rethinking public education: Towards a public curriculum*. Brisbane: Australian Curriculum Studies Association, Post Pressed.

Relton, W. J. (1962). The failure of the dual system of education in NSW. *Australian Journal of Education, 6*(2).

Report of debate on Public Instruction Bill in NSW Legislative Assembly. (1879, November 6). *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Rhiannon, L. (2006). Public school scripture class alternatives. In *Hansard and papers: Full day Hansard transcript, October 26, 2006*. Sydney: Legislative Council, Parliament of NSW.

Rothman, S., & McMillan, J. (2003). *Research report 36: Influences on achievement in literacy and numeracy*. Camberwell, Vic.: ACER.

Rothstein, R. (2004). *Class and schools*. Washington. DC: Economic Policy Institute, Columbia University.

Rowe, K. (2003). *The importance of teacher quality as a key determinant of students' experiences and outcomes of schooling.* Paper presented at the Australian Council for Educational Research 2003 Annual Conference.

Rudd, K. (2008a). Australia 2020 - Setting our nation's sights for the future. Speech to the Sydney Institute on 16 April, 2008.   Retrieved April 19, 2008, from http://www.pm.gov.au/media/Speech/2008/speech_0203.cfm

Rudd, K. (2008b). Hard heads, soft hearts: A future reform agenda for the new Australian Government. Speech to the Progressive Governance Conference in London on April 4, 2008.   Retrieved April 28, 2008, from http://www.pm.gov.au/media/Speech/2008/speech_0203.cfm

Rudd, K., & Smith, S. (2007). New directions for our schools: Establishing a national curriculum to improve our children's educational outcomes [Electronic Version]. Retrieved June 18, 2007 from www.alp.org.au/download/now/new_directions_for_our_schools_distribution.pdf.

Rusden, G. W. (1853). *National education*. Melbourne: Argus Office.

Russell, J., Mackay, A., & Jane, G. (2003). *Messages from the myriad: Improving the middle years of schooling*. Jolimont, Vic: IARTV.

Russell, V. J., Ainley, M., & Frydenburg, E. (2005). *Student motivation and engagement*. Canberra: Department of Education, Science and Training.

Ryan, C. (2004). *Data supplied and graphed by NSW Department of Education and Training*.

Ryan, C., & Davy, V. (1989). *The essential curriculum project: Progress report to December 1989* Sydney: Disadvantaged Schools Program, NSW DET, Metropolitan East Region.

Ryan, M., & Sungaila, H. (1995). The provision of non-government schooling in Australia: Retrospect and prospect. In C. Evers & J. Chapman (Eds.), *Educational administration: An Australian perspective*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Saulwick, I., & Associates. (n.d.). *What parents want from their children's education in independent schools: A survey conducted for NCISA*. Retrieved April 3, 2008, from http://www.ais.vic.edu.au/parents/pubs/what-parents-want.pdf.

SCEGGS Redlands. (n.d.). A Redlands education. Retrieved July 28, 2006, from http://www.redlands.nsw.edu.au/redlands_education/index.html

Scott, B. (1990). *School-centred education: Building a more responsive state school system. Report of the Management Review*. Marrickville: NSW Education Portfolio.

Seddon, T. (2001). National curriculum in Australia? A matter of politics, powerful knowledge and the regulation of learning. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society, 9*(3), 307-331.

Seventh-day Adventist Schools Australia. (2006a). Adventist Schools Australia. Retrieved July 28, 2006, from http://www.adventist.edu.au/public/about.asp?ssid=1

Seventh-day Adventist Schools Australia. (2006b). SDA schools directory. Retrieved July 4, 2006, from http://www.adventist.edu.au/public/school.asp?ssid=8&aid=2

Shor, I. (1992). *Empowering education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Simons, M. (2006). Beyond the comfort zone [Electronic Version]. *Griffith Review*, 105.

Singer, P. (2002). *One world: The ethics of globalisation*. Melbourne: Text Publishing.

Smith, A. (1993). *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations*: Oxford University Press.

Smith, S. H., & Spaull, C. T. (1925). *History of education in NSW 1788-1925*. Sydney: George B. Phillip & Son.

Society of St Paul. (1983). *The Catholic School*. Homebush, NSW: Society of St Paul.

South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services. (1994). *Poverty and education: Training and development material*. Adelaide: Government Printer.

St Andrews Cathedral School. (n.d.). St Andrews Cathedral School. Retrieved July 28, 2006, from http://www.sacs.nsw.edu.au/page.php?id=14

St Gregory's Armenian School. (n.d.). Our mission. Retrieved January 7, 2008, from http://www.nareg.com.au/stg/our_school/vision.html

St Ignatius College Riverview. (2006a). Mission statement. Retrieved June 26, 2006, from http://www.riverview.nsw.edu.au/h_mission.php

St Ignatius College Riverview. (2006b). St Ignatius College Riverview. Retrieved May 30, 2006, from www.riverview.nsw.edu.au/prospectus/p_mission.php

St Ignatius College Riverview. (2006c). St Ignatius College Riverview. Retrieved June 21, 2006, from http://www.riverview.nsw.edu.au/en_fees.php

St Joseph's College. (n.d.-a). About Marcellin. Retrieved June 26, 2006, from http://www.joeys.org/about/marcellin.htm

St Joseph's College. (n.d.-b). Marcellin. Retrieved January 8, 2008, from http://www.joeys.org/Champagnat.html

St Paul's College. (2006). Welcome to St Paul's College. Retrieved July 4, 2006, from http://www.stpaulscollege.nsw.edu.au/

State Records of NSW. (1833). *Introduction: HRA. Series 1*. (Vol. 17). Sydney: New South Wales Government.

State Records of NSW. (n.d.-a). *Concise guide: Clergy and school lands corporation and cash vouchers - Parochial*.

State Records of NSW. (n.d.-b). *Introduction: HRA. Series 1*. (Vol. 23). Sydney: New South Wales Government.

Stuart, M. (1879, November 6). Speech on Public Instruction Bill in NSW Legislative Assembly. *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Suzuki, D. (2007). Solving global warming.   Retrieved 2 August, 2007, from http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Climate_Change/Science/

Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation. (2002). Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation. Retrieved July 10, 2006, from http://www.sasc.nsw.edu.au/

Tangara School. (2005). Tangara School for girls: Fees and finances.   Retrieved July 8, 2006, from http://www.tangara.nsw.edu.au/tangaracms/index.php?fees_and_finances

Tawil, S., & Harley, A. (2004). Education and identity-based conflict: Assessing curriculum policy for social and civil reconstruction In S. Tawil & A. Harley (Eds.), *Education, conflict and social cohesion*: International Bureau of Education, UNESCO.

Teese, R. V. (2006). Condemned to innovate [Electronic Version]. *Griffith Review*.

Teese, R. V., & Polesel, J. (2003). *Undemocratic schooling: Equity and quality in mass secondary education in Australia*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Publishing.

The Athena School. (n.d.). About us.   Retrieved June 30, 2006, from http://www.bluejeans.com.au/athena/about.asp

The Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre. (2006). The Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre.   Retrieved March 14, 2008, from http://www.unisa.edu.au/hawkecentre/events/2006events/education_McGaw.asp

The Centre for Independent Studies. (n.d.). The Centre for Independent Studies.   Retrieved July 11, 2006, from http://www.cis.org.au/

The PARED Foundation. (n.d.). PARED: Parents for education.   Retrieved November 19, 2007, from http://www.pared.edu.au/index.html

The Riverina Anglican College. (2004). The Riverina Anglican College.   Retrieved June 30, 2006, from http://www.trac.nsw.edu.au/

The State of Queensland Department of Education. (2001). *Curriculum framework for Education Queensland schools Years 1-10*: The State of Queensland (Department of Education).

Turner, N. (1972). *Sinews of sectarian warfare: State aid in NSW 1836-1862*. Canberra: Australian University Press.

Uhr, J. (1998). *Deliberative democracy in Australia*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

UNICEF. (2002). *A league table of educational disadvantage in rich nations*. Florence: Innocenti Research Centre.

Vinson, A. (2002a). *Inquiry into the Provision of Public Education in NSW - First Report*: Teachers Federation of NSW and the Parents and Citizens' Federation of NSW.

Vinson, A. (2002b). *Inquiry into the Provision of Public Education in NSW - Second Report*: Teachers Federation of NSW and the Parents and Citizens' Federation of NSW.

Vinson, A. (2002c). *Inquiry into the Provision of Public Education in NSW - Third Report*: Teachers Federation of NSW and the Parents and Citizens' Federation of NSW.

Watson, L. (2007). Possible futures for Commonwealth-State relations in sustaining and improving Australia's schools. Accompanying paper to: Making federalism work for schools: Due process, transparency, informed consent [Electronic Version] from http://www.nswtf.org.au/media/latest_2007/files/20070517_federalism.pdf.

Williams, B. (1981). Australian society in change: A demographic and economic perspective In P. H. Karmel (Ed.), *Education, change and society* (pp. 51-80). Radford House, Victoria: ACER.

Willms, J. D., & Kerckhoff, A. C. (1995). The challenge of developing new educational indicators. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 17*(1), 113-131.

Wilson, B. (2007). The politics of curriculum. Accompanying paper to: Making federalism work for schools: Due process, transparency, informed consent [Electronic Version] from http://www.nswtf.org.au/media/latest_2007/files/20070517_federalism.pdf.

Wilson, L. (2003). Religious schools and Australian democracy. *Independence, 28*(2).

Wyndham, H. S. (1957). *Report of the committee appointed to survey secondary education in New South Wales*.

Yeatman, A. (1998). Interpreting contemporary contractualism. In B. Hindess & M. Dean (Eds.), *Governing Australia: Studies in contemporary rationalities of government* (pp. 227-240). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yeshiva Schools. (n.d.). Yeshiva Schools.   Retrieved June 8, 2006, from http://www.yeshiva.org.au

Zyngier, D. (2004). A tale of two reports or how bad news for Australian education is mediated by the media. *Issues in Educational Research, 14*(2), 194-211.