



National Catholic Education Commission

**Catholic School
Enrolment Trends
2003**

**Report from the
NCEC Working Group on Catholic Schools Data**

June 2004

Catholic School Enrolment Trends

2003

Executive Summary

Background to this report

Catholic School Enrolment Trends 2003 is the second report to NCEC on enrolment trends and policy issues in Catholic schools from the NCEC Working Group on Catholic School Data. The Report examines trends from 2001 to 2003 in the context of the first report. *Catholic School Enrolment Trends 2003* also examines new issues relating to single-parent families in Catholic schools, large families in Catholic schools, and whether Indigenous students are under-represented in Catholic schools. With significant change to Commonwealth funding for non-government schools in February 2004, and subsequent recent national discussion, this report also examines Catholic schools and the Socio-Economic Status (SES) Index.

Key Findings

The main trends arising from this report are:

- There are 664,500 students in Catholic schools in Australia, which is an increase of 16,000 between the years 2000 and 2003. However, although the number of students has increased, the rate of increase has been declining, and 2002 to 2003 was the lowest rate of increase since the mid-1990s.
- Between the years 2000 and 2003, primary school enrolments have increased significantly in Queensland and South Australia, and to a lesser extent in the ACT and NSW; while Victoria, Western Australia, Northern Territory and Tasmania have all witnessed decline in primary student enrolments. By contrast, enrolments in Catholic secondary schools have increased in every state and territory (except Northern Territory). These trends are significantly different from the 2001 Report to NCEC, when significant growth in Catholic education in Western Australia had occurred.
- The size of Catholic schools continues to increase, with the number of large Catholic primary and secondary schools increasing; while the number of small Catholic primary and secondary schools continues to decline.
- Retention of students from Catholic primary schools to Catholic secondary schools remains in excess of 100%. Tasmania has the highest Retention Rate in Australia, particularly for the retention for boys.
- Student/teacher ratios for both primary and secondary continue to reduce. In 2003, the ratio for primary schools was 18.6 and for secondary was 13.2

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- The number and proportions of ATSI and SWD students continue to increase in Catholic schools.
 - There has been a significant shift in FFPOS enrolments, with significant increase in FFPOS students in NSW, South Australia and Victoria. Importantly, the majority of schools with FFPOS students have only 1 or 2 FFPOS students enrolled.
 - Approximately half of all Catholics continue to attend Catholic schools. However, between the 1996 and 2001 Censuses, half of the total growth for Catholics has been to the other non-government schools, rather than Catholic or government schools.
 - While the majority of students in Catholic schools continue to be Catholic, the proportion of non-Catholic students in Catholic schools has increased between 1996 and 2001.
 - There is a pattern for low income Catholic students to attend government schools, while high income Catholic students attend Catholic or other non-government schools – especially for secondary education.
 - Three in every four families with a single parent have their children attending government schools in Australia, while only 13% of single parent families attend Catholic schools. Government schools also have a higher proportion of single-parent families within their schools.
 - Students from large families represent less than 3% in Catholic schools, as almost half of the students in Catholic schools are single child families, and 85% of students are from families with only one or two children.
 - While the number of Indigenous students in Catholic schools has increased, 86% of all Indigenous students attend government schools, while 9% of Indigenous students attend Catholic schools.
 - Socio-Economic Index (SES) scores for Catholic schools range from a very low 66 to a very high 134. However, the majority (62%) of Catholic schools in Australia have an SES score greater than 96. Similarly, all states and territories (other than Tasmania (96) and South Australia (98)) have a weighted SES average of 100 or more.

Further Research

Through the ACES database and observations arising from this report, further opportunity for analysis is available to NCEC. To this end, the Working Group on Catholic Schools Data will be exploring emerging trends and issues relevant to Catholic schools enrolments, and reporting to NCEC. The Working Group will continue to examine enrolment trends in Catholic schools, and three projects will be reported to NCEC between July and December 2004. These projects are:

1. Investigation of Catholic school enrolment trends in the broader contexts of all school sectors and the school-aged population (NCEC November meeting).
2. Electoral analysis and handouts for every Federal electorate (NCEC July meeting).
3. *Catholic School Enrolment Trends 2004* will be provided to NCEC (December subject to DEST providing 2004 Schools Census data).

In conclusion, this report is intended to provide NCEC with a summary of some recent trends in Catholic education, and to provide NCEC with an opportunity to consider and further develop discussion of possible policy issues relevant to Catholic education for investigation in 2005 and beyond.

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Catholic School Enrolment Trends

2003

Background

Catholic School Enrolment Trends 2003 is the second report to NCEC on enrolment trends and policy issues in Catholic schools from the NCEC Working Group on Catholic School Data. This report builds on the first report, *Catholic School Enrolment Trends, 1985-2010*, presented to NCEC in September 2001, which examined enrolment trends in Catholic schools from 1985 to 2000.

In July 2000, NCEC agreed to establish a Working Group to identify, collect and analyse a range of data from 1985 to 2000 relevant to Catholic school enrolments, in response to concerns expressed by members of the National Catholic Education Commission about the perceived changing pattern of enrolments of Catholic school-age children; in particular, that fewer students from Catholic families were now enrolling in Catholic schools, while Catholic schools are enrolling more and more non-Catholic students.

The Working Group was established to explore these issues on a national basis with a view to determining the current trends in enrolment patterns, and to identify any policy implications for Catholic educators and the Catholic community more generally. The Working Group was required to produce a report setting out the requested data in graphical/tabular form and provide analysis of issues and decisions underlying the varying trends in the data. From this basis, the Working Group produced *Catholic School Enrolment Trends, 1985-2010*, which examined enrolment trends for Catholic schools; as well as student-specific trends in Catholic schools relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) students, Students with a Disability (SWD), English as a Second Language (ESL) students, Full-Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS) and non-Catholic students in Catholic schools.

The Working Group further examined policy issues in the first report relating to Catholic schools and considered the policy questions:

- What schools do children of Catholic families attend?
- Who attends Catholic schools in terms of religion?
- Who attends Catholic schools in terms of family income?
- What schools do Catholic school-age children attend in terms of income?

Catholic School Enrolment Trends 2003 builds on the 2001 report and examines trends from 2000 to 2003 – in the context of the first report – for each of the trends and policy issues explored in the 2001 Report (other than for ESL which is no longer collected nationally). *Catholic School Enrolment Trends 2003* provides an update of the policy issues, as new data from the 2001 ABS Census has enabled the Working Group to further examine trends pertaining to the policy questions initiated in the first report. In addition to the policy questions raised in the first report, the Working Group examines new issues in this report relating to single-parent families in Catholic schools, large families in Catholic schools and whether Indigenous students are under-represented in Catholic schools. With significant change to Commonwealth funding for non-government schools in February 2004, and subsequent recent national discussion, the Working Group also examines Catholic schools and the Socio-Economic Status (SES) Index in this report.

In preparing the first report on Catholic school enrolment trends, the Working Group recommended the development of a permanent database for research relating to Catholic school trends beyond the first report. NCEC supported the development of the permanent electronic database, and the Australian Catholic Education Statistics (ACES) database was officially launched by NCEC on 10 September 2003.

The Australian Catholic Education Statistics (ACES) database has enabled the analysis for this report, and other questions relating to Catholic education, to be examined in the national context and for trends in state/territory commissions to be placed in a context beyond their dominion.

ACES is available to all states and territories, and is being utilised by states to investigate local trends and policy questions, including those examined in this report. Importantly, electoral information has already been effectively utilised during several recent state elections; and when state commissions, dioceses and schools (both Catholic and other non-government) have been lobbying political parties, and federal and state Members of Parliament.

Membership of the Working Group on Catholic School Data is drawn from each state Commission. The membership is:

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Brian Croke Chair | Vin Thomas South Australia |
| Joan Warhurst NCEC | Eileen Lawrance Western Australia |
| Bill Walsh NSW | Neville Behrens Tasmania |
| Jeff Gunn Victoria | Richard Keys Northern Territory |
| Vic Lorenz Queensland | Michael Haigh ACT |

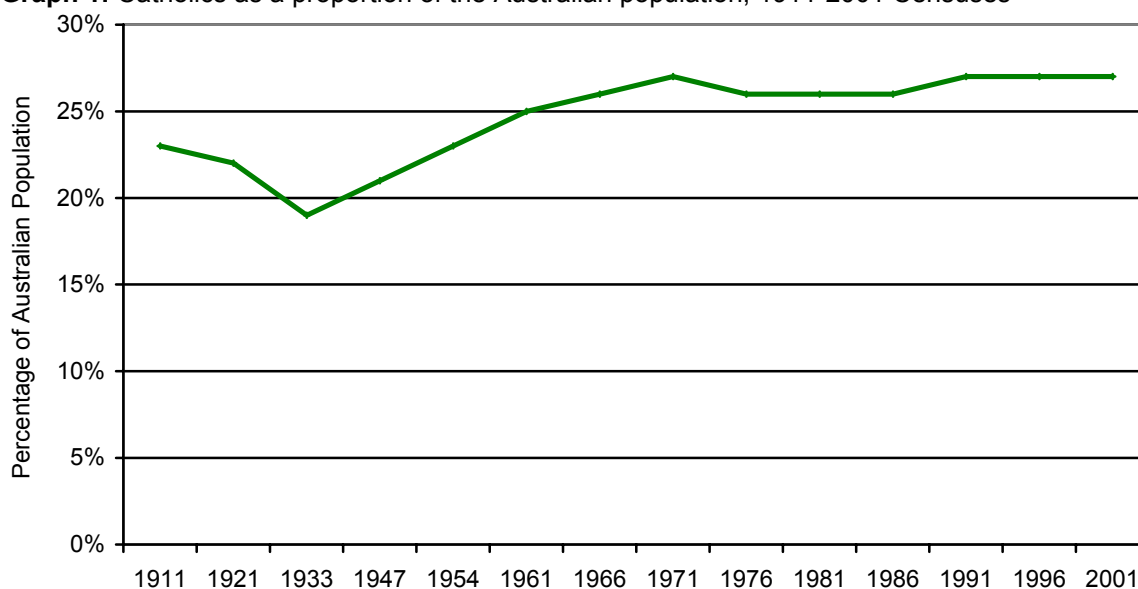
Administrative and technical support for the Working Group, and the development and maintenance of the ACES database is provided through Crichton Smith and John McKinnon (NSW), and Brendon Gardner (NCEC).

As with *Catholic School Enrolment Trends, 1985-2010* it is the view of the Working Group that this report does not represent a definitive and conclusive analysis of trends in Catholic schools. Instead, this report is best viewed as work in progress, as it provides a summary snapshot Catholic school enrolment trends and policy issues at the present time. Consequently, the issues investigated here continue to form part of a program of ongoing analysis and discussion. Hopefully, this report points the way to new directions and more meaningful analyses of data to enhance policy and planning for Australia's Catholic schools.

Catholics and Catholic Schools – A National Context

This report begins by placing the Catholic education effort in the context of the Catholic community itself. **Graph 1** demonstrates that historically, Catholics have always formed a significant proportion of the Australian population. In 1871 Catholics were 23% of all the inhabitants of the Australian colonies, and were still 23% when the first Australian Census was held in 1911. That proportion declined during the 1920s and early 1930s before rising again. With natural growth and a disproportionate increase during the years of high migration from 1946 to 1966 the Catholic proportion of the population only increased further. More recent patterns of migration have maintained the Catholic proportion of the population.

Graph 1: Catholics as a proportion of the Australian population, 1911-2001 Censuses



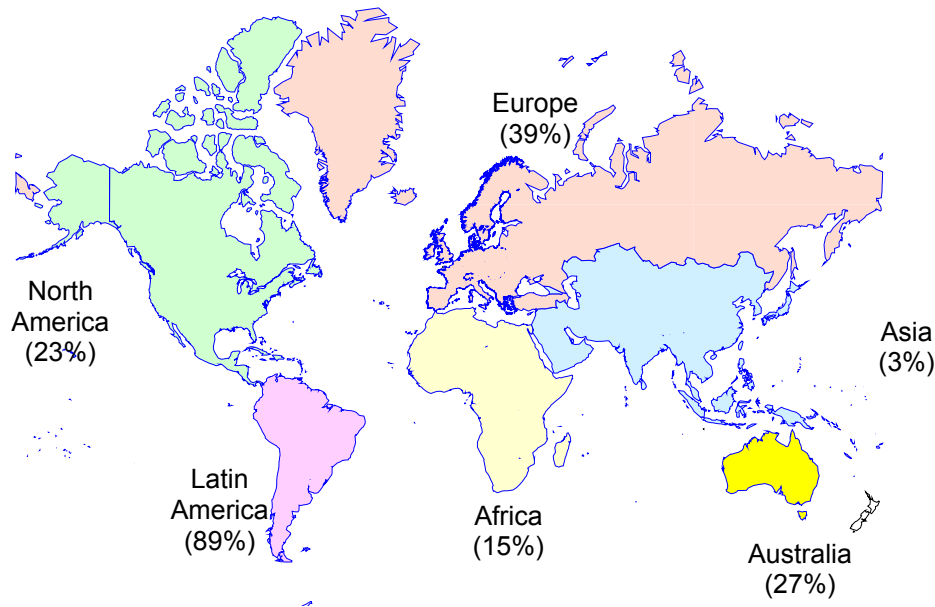
At the latest ABS Census for which information is available (2001), just over five million Australians identified themselves as Catholic. This constituted 27% of all Australians and 39% of all Christians (**Table 1**).

Table 1: Catholics as a proportion of the Christian and Australian population, 1986-2001

| Census | Catholic Population | Catholics as % of Christian Population | Catholics as % of Australian Population |
|--------|---------------------|--|---|
| 1986 | 4,052,827 | 35.7% | 26.1% |
| 1991 | 4,591,622 | 37.0% | 27.4% |
| 1996 | 4,798,530 | 38.1% | 27.0% |
| 2001 | 5,001,624 | 39.2% | 26.7% |

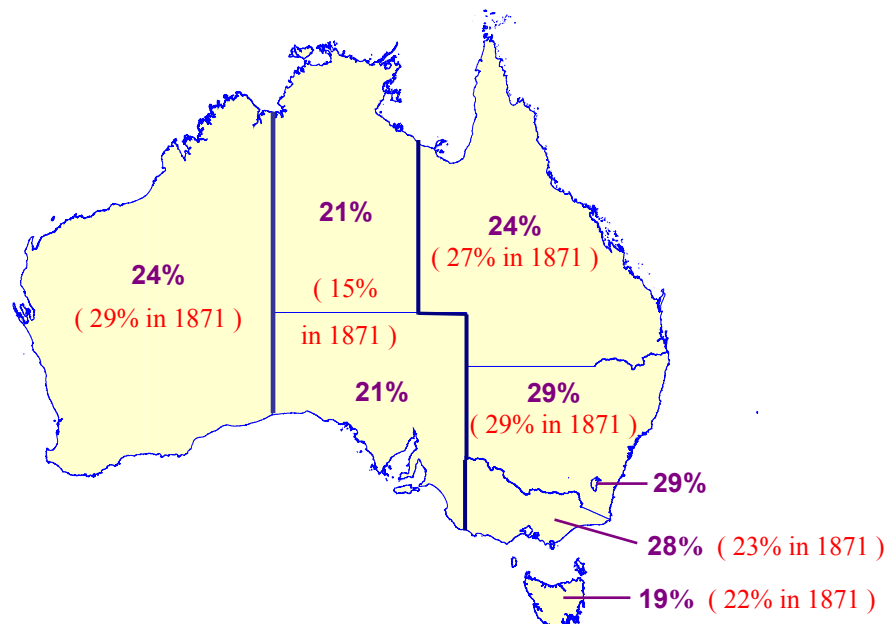
At twenty-seven percent, Australia remains a region with a high proportion of Catholics (**Map 1**) compared to North America, Africa and Asia (data in *Religious Population of the World 1998*, available at <http://www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0001484.html>), although the Australian Catholic community constitutes only a tiny fraction of the world's Catholics.

Map 1: Catholics of the world, as a proportion of their region's population, 1998



There are considerable variations in the Catholic proportion of the Australian population across states and territories (**Map 2**) reflecting the different historical circumstances of these states and territories. The highest proportion of Catholics at the 2001 Census was in the ACT (29%) and the lowest was in Tasmania (19%). In some states (e.g. NSW) the Catholic proportion of the population has hardly changed in 120 years, in others it has declined (Victoria, Tasmania, WA) and in others increased (SA/NT, Queensland).

Map 2: Catholics as a proportion of the Australian population, States and Territories, 2001 (and 1871)



In the most recent population censuses, the number of people identifying as Catholic has increased, but Catholics as a proportion of the Australian population has reduced marginally in most states and territories.

Table 2: Catholics as a proportion of the Australian population, by States and Territories, 1986-2001

| Census | 1991 | 1996 | 2001 |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| NSW | 29.6% | 29.3% | 28.9% |
| Victoria | 29.2% | 28.9% | 28.4% |
| Queensland | 25.5% | 25.2% | 24.8% |
| South Australia | 21.0% | 20.8% | 20.8% |
| Western Australia | 25.8% | 25.0% | 24.7% |
| Tasmania | 19.8% | 19.4% | 19.3% |
| Northern Territory | 23.0% | 22.5% | 22.2% |
| ACT | 31.2% | 29.8% | 29.1% |
| Australia | 27.4% | 27.0% | 26.7% |

Unlike most other faith communities in Australia, the Catholic community has always sought to provide a Catholic education for its children. Since George Morley opened the first Catholic school at Parramatta in 1820, each new Catholic community, in both city and country, has striven to first provide what other Catholic communities already had and valued – a school. With the cessation of government financial aid in the 1870s/1880s the influx of religious men and women ensured that Catholic schools continued to survive and that new ones were founded.

The Catholic school is an integral part of Australian Catholic culture and its constructive contribution to the building of the Australian nation is incalculable. At the same time, the Catholic school has been central to the creation of Catholic identity in Australia and has created its own popular mythology. Part of the mythology is that there was a time when all Catholic children attended Catholic schools. However, this was never the case. In 1933, for instance, the proportion of Catholic children attending Catholic schools was 65% (calculated from data in *Commonwealth Yearbook No.37 (1946-7)*, p.228). Currently, Catholic schools accommodate approximately half of the Catholic school-age population.

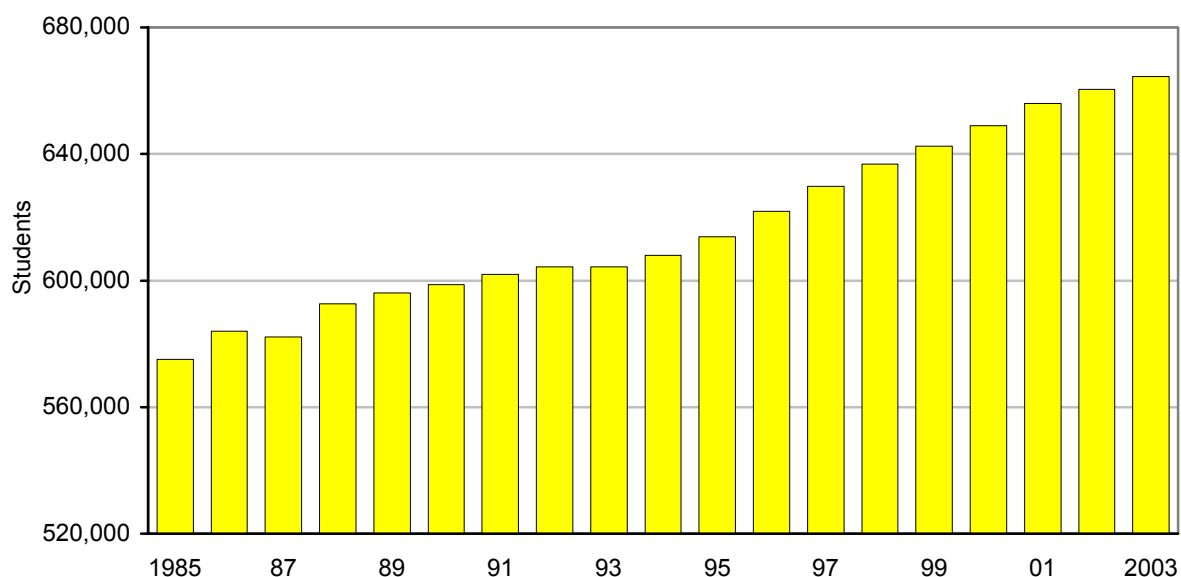
Catholic School Enrolment Trends

Enrolment Trends

Since 1985, the number of students in Australian Catholic schools has increased by 89,500 students from 575,000 to 664,500 students in 2003 (**Graph 2** and **Table 3**), which is a 16% increase since 1985. Since the *Report of the Working Party on Catholic School Enrolments* in 2001, the number of students in Catholic schools has increased by almost 16,000 – from 648,900 (in 2000) to 664,500 in 2003.

Although the number of students enrolled in Catholic schools in Australia has increased each year since 2000, the rate of increase has been declining (**Graph 3**). The rate of increase for enrolments from 2002 to 2003 was the lowest percentage increase since the mid-1990s.

Graph 2: Students in Catholic schools, Australia, 1985-2003



Graph 3: Annual percentage change in Catholic school enrolments, Australia, 1985-2003

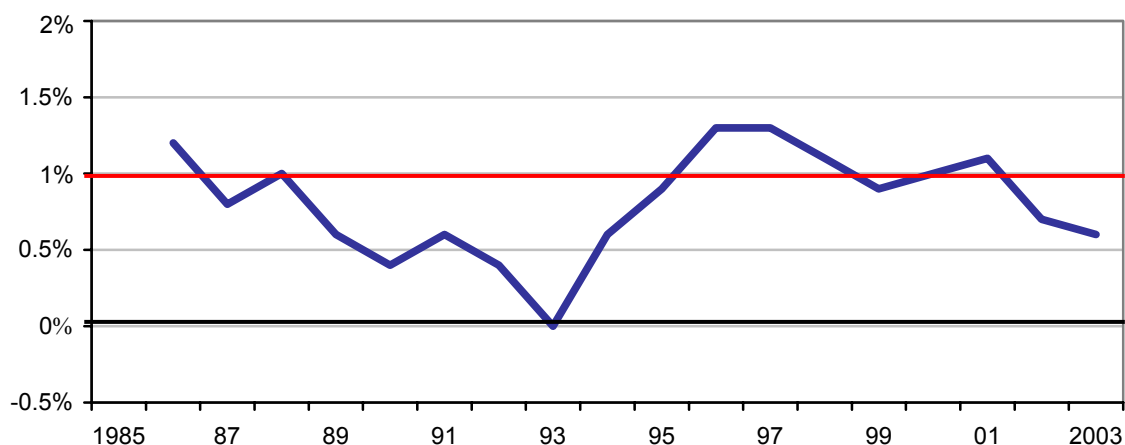


Table 3: Student enrolments and annual change in Catholic schools, Australia, 1985-2003

| Year | Students in Catholic Schools | Change from previous year | |
|------|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| | | (Number) | (% Change) |
| 1985 | 575,005 | — | — |
| 1986 | 581,846 | 6,841 | 1.2% |
| 1987 | 586,783 | 4,937 | 0.8% |
| 1988 | 592,673 | 5,890 | 1.0% |
| 1989 | 595,966 | 3,293 | 0.6% |
| 1990 | 598,627 | 2,661 | 0.4% |
| 1991 | 601,949 | 3,322 | 0.6% |
| 1992 | 604,153 | 2,204 | 0.4% |
| 1993 | 604,391 | 238 | 0.0% |
| 1994 | 608,066 | 3,675 | 0.6% |
| 1995 | 613,760 | 5,694 | 0.9% |
| 1996 | 621,851 | 8,091 | 1.3% |
| 1997 | 629,677 | 7,826 | 1.3% |
| 1998 | 636,878 | 7,201 | 1.1% |
| 1999 | 642,512 | 5,634 | 0.9% |
| 2000 | 648,920 | 6,408 | 1.0% |
| 2001 | 655,988 | 7,068 | 1.1% |
| 2002 | 660,422 | 4,434 | 0.7% |
| 2003 | 664,517 | 4,095 | 0.6% |

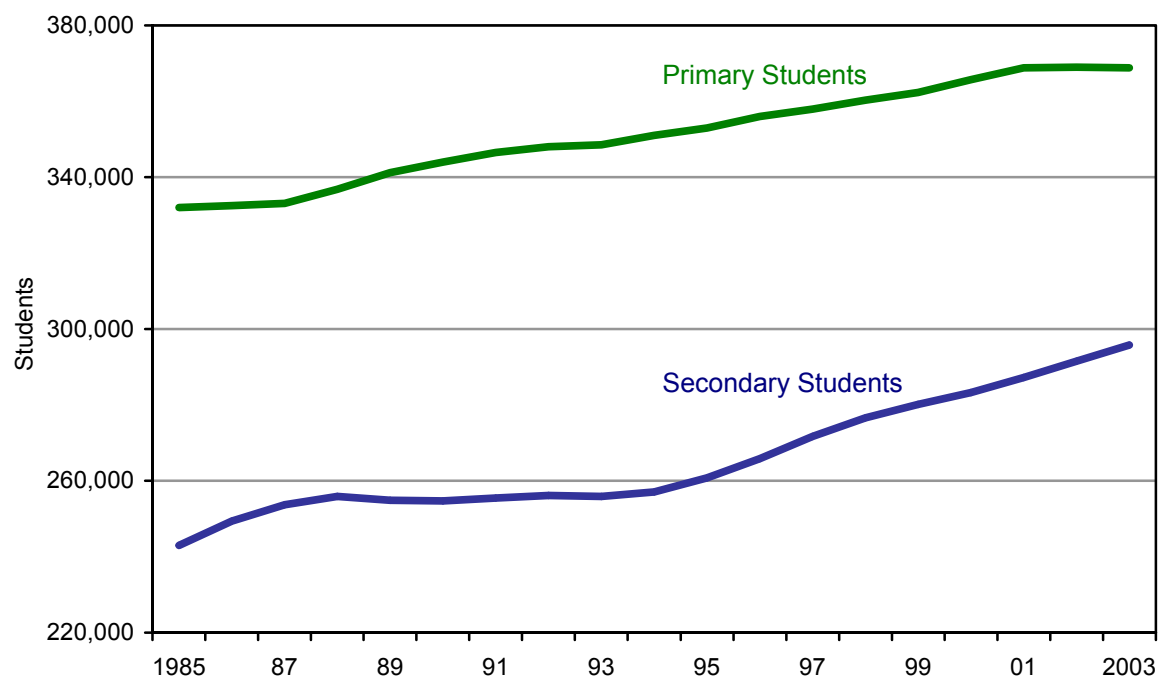
Primary and Secondary Enrolment Trends

Of particular interest are the varying patterns of growth across both primary and secondary schools. While the growth rates for both primary and for secondary have been broadly comparable at a national level (**Graph 4**), there are significant differences between states.

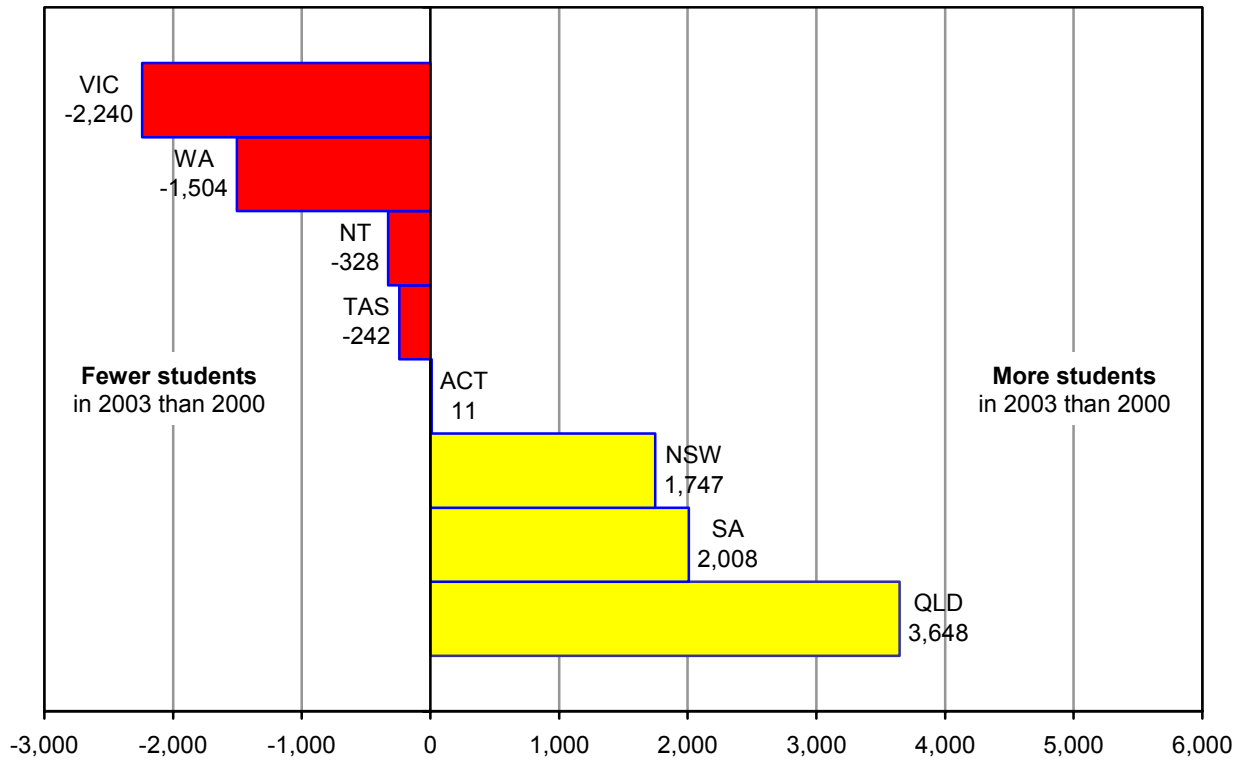
The 2001 *Report of the Working Party on Catholic School Enrolments* identified growth in primary school enrolments in every state and territory – other than the ACT – from 1985 to 2000. The report identified significant primary school enrolment increases in Western Australia (11,000), Queensland (9,300) and South Australia (6,700). Similarly, every state and territory in Australia had an increase in secondary student enrolments, with NSW (16,800), Queensland (8,500) and Western Australia (7,000) having significant increases in secondary enrolments between 1985 and 2000.

Since the 2001 *Report of the Working Party on Catholic School Enrolments*, the number of students in Catholic primary schools has declined in the years from 2000 to 2003, in Victoria, Western Australia, Northern Territory and Tasmania (**Graph 5**). By contrast, enrolments in Catholic secondary schools have increased in every state and territory (except Northern Territory) in this period (**Graph 6**).

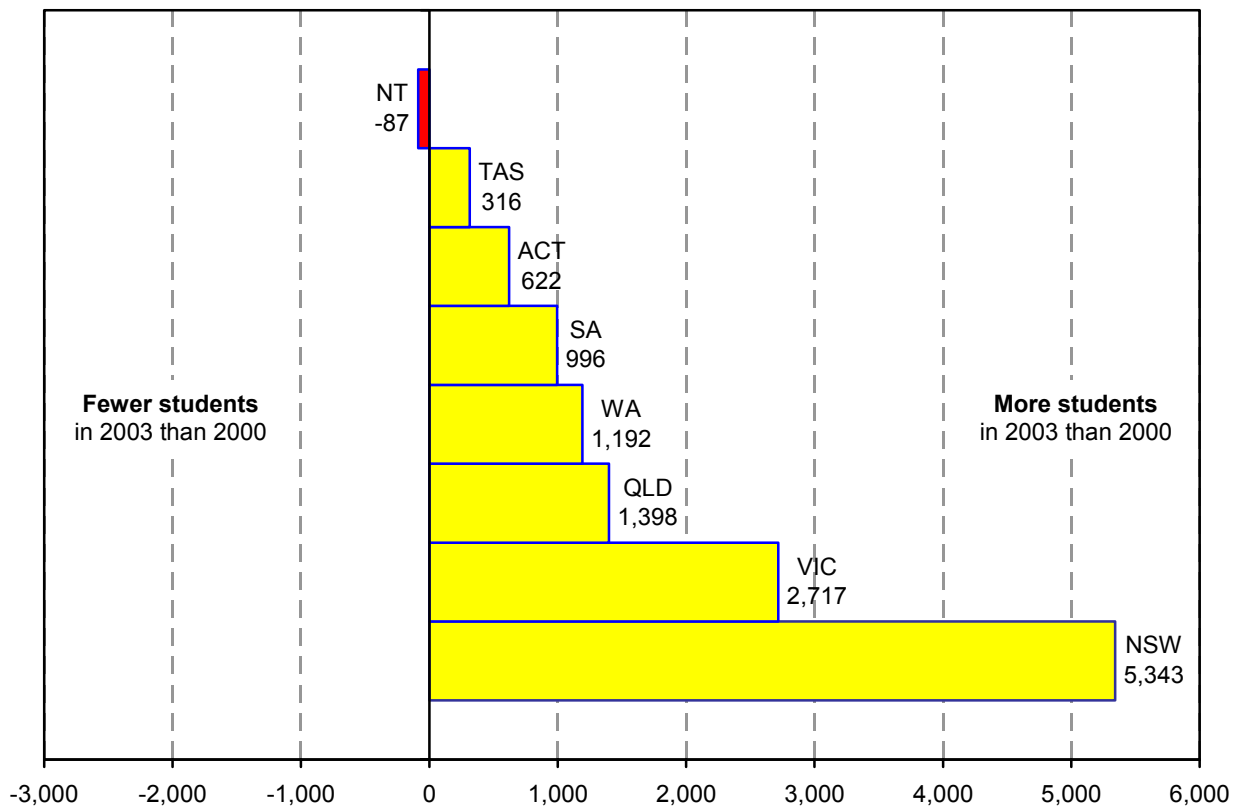
Graph 4: Students in Catholic schools, Primary and Secondary, Australia, 1985-2003



Graph 5: Changes in Catholic Primary enrolments, by States and Territories, 2000-2003



Graph 6: Changes in Catholic Secondary enrolments, by States and Territories, 2000-2003



The decline in primary school enrolments in Western Australia is likely to be the result of changes to the eligible enrolment age for (non-compulsory) pre-year 1 students in 2002. This change resulted in a decrease of 1,650 primary students, from 36,669 students in 2001 to 35,017 primary students in 2002. While primary school enrolments also declined in Western Australia in 2003, this decline was only 63 students. **Table 4** identifies the changes in primary and secondary enrolments in all states and territories in the year from 2002 to 2003.

Table 4: Changes in Catholic school enrolments, by States and Territories, 2002-2003

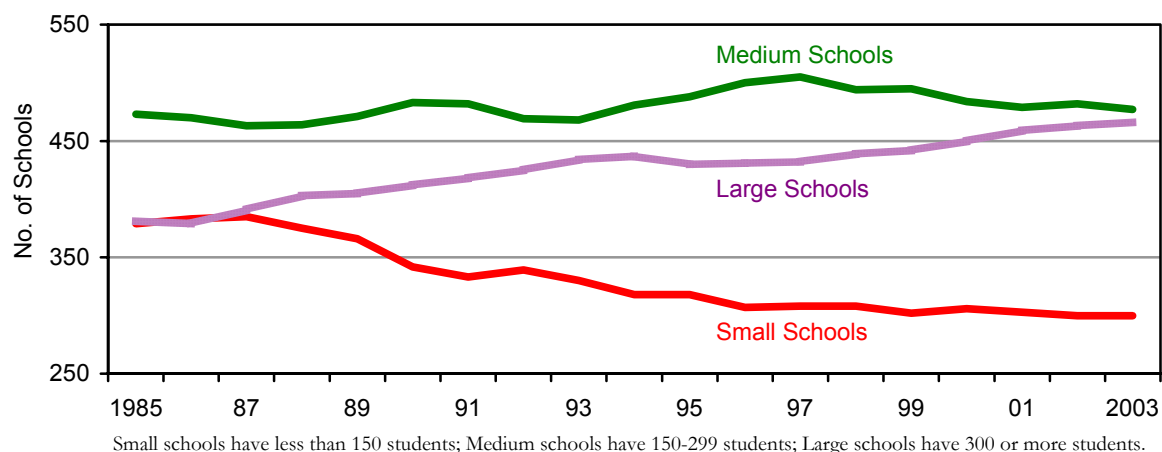
| | Primary | | Secondary | | All Students | |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|
| | 2003 | Change from 2002 | 2003 | Change from 2002 | 2003 | Change from 2002 |
| NSW | 125,069 | -359 | 111,647 | 1,408 | 236,716 | 1,049 |
| Victoria | 99,796 | -1,655 | 80,209 | 1,007 | 180,005 | -648 |
| Queensland | 62,962 | 1,419 | 45,326 | 786 | 108,288 | 2,205 |
| South Australia | 27,359 | 772 | 17,336 | 422 | 44,695 | 1,194 |
| Western Australia | 34,954 | -63 | 25,218 | 581 | 60,172 | 518 |
| Tasmania | 6,670 | -150 | 6,163 | 128 | 12,833 | -22 |
| Northern Territory | 3,258 | -44 | 1,414 | -102 | 4,672 | -146 |
| ACT | 8,701 | -97 | 8,433 | 39 | 17,134 | -58 |
| Australia | 368,769 | -177 | 295,746 | 4,269 | 664,515 | 4,092 |

School Size

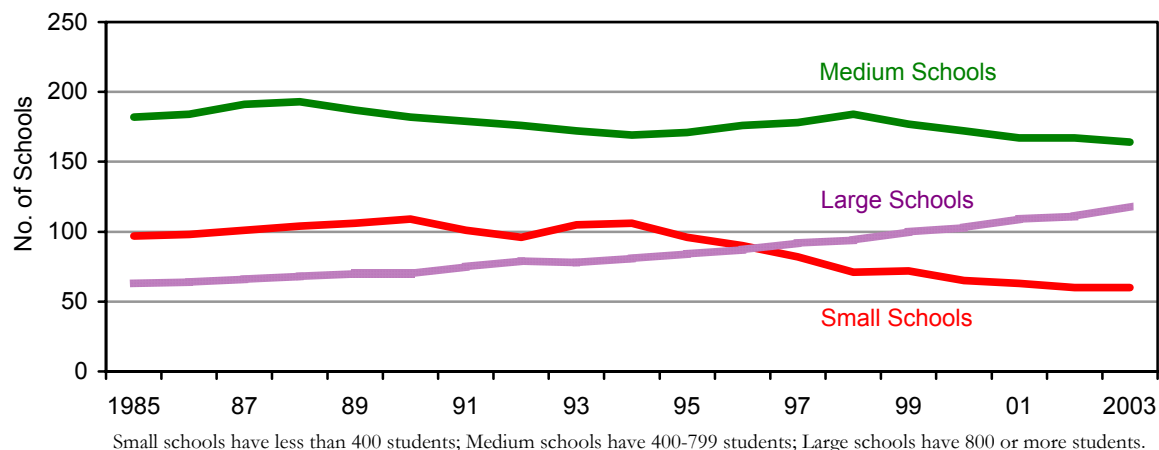
One of the associated factors in the increase in enrolments in Catholic schools has been the tendency to develop and redevelop schools, particularly secondary schools, to their greatest capacity. In the period 1985 to 2003 the number of large primary schools (more than 300 students) has increased significantly (**Graph 7**); while the number of large secondary schools (more than 800 students) has doubled (**Graph 8**), and the number of small secondary schools (less than 400) has declined dramatically.

Although some small schools may have closed, thereby reducing the total number of small schools, the trend from small to large schools in the graphs below may be equally attributable to a number of small schools increasing enrolments over time, and thereby ‘shifting categories’ to become medium, and then large schools. For example, a new or growing school might have been a small school in 1985, but as the enrolments increased, the school would have ‘category jumped’ into becoming a medium sized school, and then eventually a large school. Schools built in stages (where grades are added as the school is established) would be examples of where this might be likely to occur.

Graph 7: Size of Catholic Primary schools, Australia, 1985-2003



Graph 8: Size of Catholic Secondary schools, Australia, 1985-2003



Student Retention

Part of the growth in larger secondary schools has been created by students increasingly tending to stay in Catholic schools once they commence. The Apparent Retention Rate for students from primary to secondary increased annually until 2001 but has reduced slightly in 2002 and 2003 (**Graph 9**). Retention rates in excess of 100% from Catholic primary to Catholic secondary means in effect that there are more students in the first year of Catholic secondary schools than there were in the last year of Catholic primary school the previous year. Clearly, many students from other schools commence their Catholic education in secondary school. Anecdotal evidence suggests that a considerable number of these are Catholic students for whom the local government primary school was more convenient than the Catholic school. It also suggests that many parents seek to confine their fee-paying commitment to the secondary school years only. In 2003, every state and territory – other than Northern Territory – had a retention rate from Catholic primary to Catholic secondary above 100% (**Table 5**).

Graph 9: Apparent Retention Rates for Catholic Primary to Catholic Secondary schools, Australia, 1986-2003

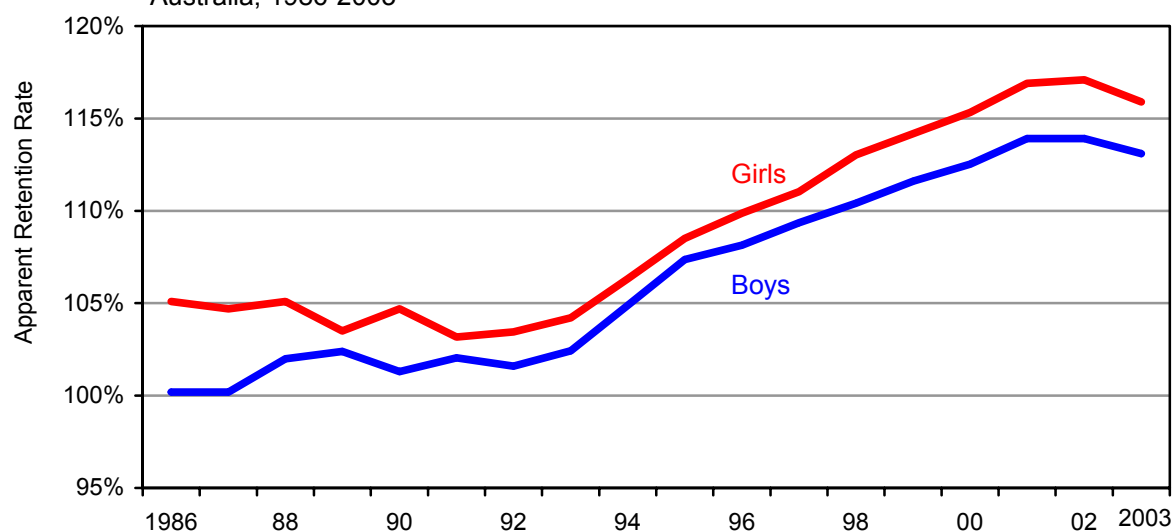


Table 5: Apparent Retention Rates, Catholic Primary to Catholic Secondary schools, Australia and States and Territories, 2003

| | Boys | Girls | All Students |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| NSW | 121.5 | 122.9 | 122.2 |
| Victoria | 101.0 | 109.4 | 105.1 |
| Queensland | 117.8 | 122.5 | 120.1 |
| South Australia | 117.2 | 117.1 | 117.2 |
| Western Australia | 122.8 | 122.0 | 122.4 |
| Tasmania | 128.4 | 121.6 | 125.0 |
| Northern Territory | 80.9 | 103.2 | 91.5 |
| ACT | 110.4 | 132.1 | 120.4 |
| Australia | 113.1 | 115.9 | 114.5 |

Note: NSW, ACT, Vic and Tas retention are from Grade 6 to Grade 7. SA, NT, Qld and WA are from Grade 7 to 8.

A contributing factor to the increase in enrolments in Catholic secondary schools has been the improvement in the secondary Apparent Retention Rate in the 1980s and early 1990s although that is now fairly stable in all states. Further, there has always been a difference in Apparent Retention Rates between boys and girls in all school sectors and that is no less evident in Catholic schools, and the Apparent Retention Rate for girls remains consistently higher than for boys.

The Apparent Retention Rate for post-compulsory education (students in Catholic schools staying from Year 10 to complete year 12) increased from 1987 to the highest level in 1992 for females (85.5%) and 1993 for males (78.2%). Following this, post-compulsory retention rates declined until 1997/1998. However, since then, the Retention Rate has increased annually for both males and females, and in 2003, post-compulsory Retention Rates have returned to rates similar to the peak in 1992/1993 (**Graph 10**). In 2003, the post-compulsory retention rate for females was 84%, and for males was 77% (**Table 6**). Post-compulsory retention rate for females was higher than for males in all states and territories other than the ACT and the Northern Territory.

Graph 10: Apparent Retention Rates for post-compulsory schooling (Year 10 to Year 12) in Catholic Secondary schools, Australia, 1987-2003

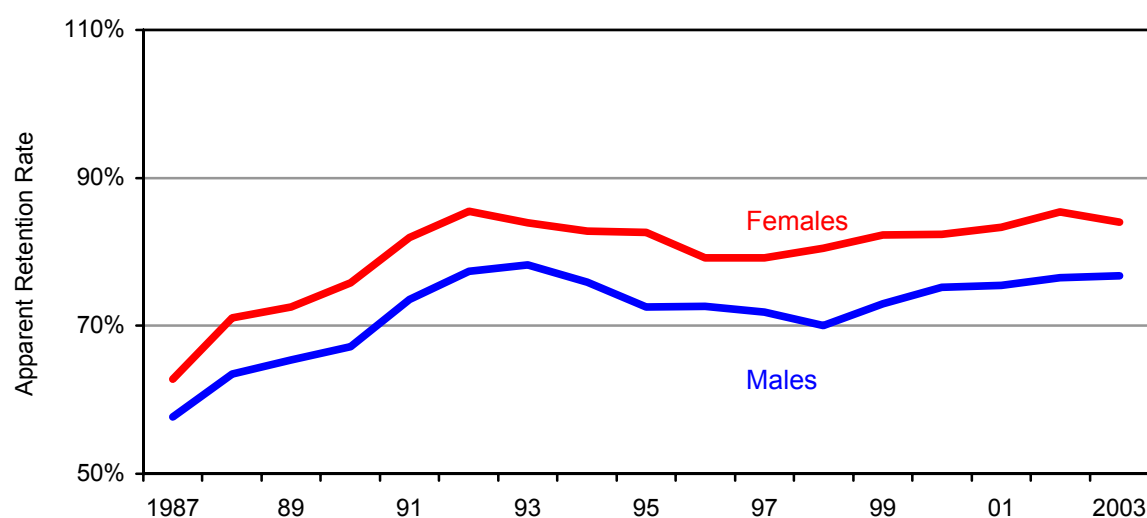


Table 6: Apparent Retention Rates for post-compulsory schooling (Year 10 to Year 12) in Catholic secondary schools, States and Territories, 2003

| | Boys | Girls | All Students |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| ACT | 80.1 | 70.6 | 75.2 |
| NSW | 74.5 | 79.8 | 77.2 |
| NT | 47.9 | 43.4 | 45.7 |
| QLD | 84.0 | 87.9 | 85.9 |
| SA | 71.8 | 94.3 | 82.8 |
| TAS | 67.5 | 86.2 | 76.6 |
| VIC | 79.3 | 88.4 | 84.0 |
| WA | 71.6 | 79.6 | 75.5 |
| Australia | 76.8 | 84.0 | 80.4 |

Student/Teacher Ratios

Throughout the period of enrolment growth from 1985 to 2001 there has been a reduction in the student/teacher ratios in both primary and secondary Catholic schools. **Table 7** sets out the changes.

Graph 11: Student/Teacher Ratios for Catholic primary and secondary Catholic schools, Australia, 1989-2003

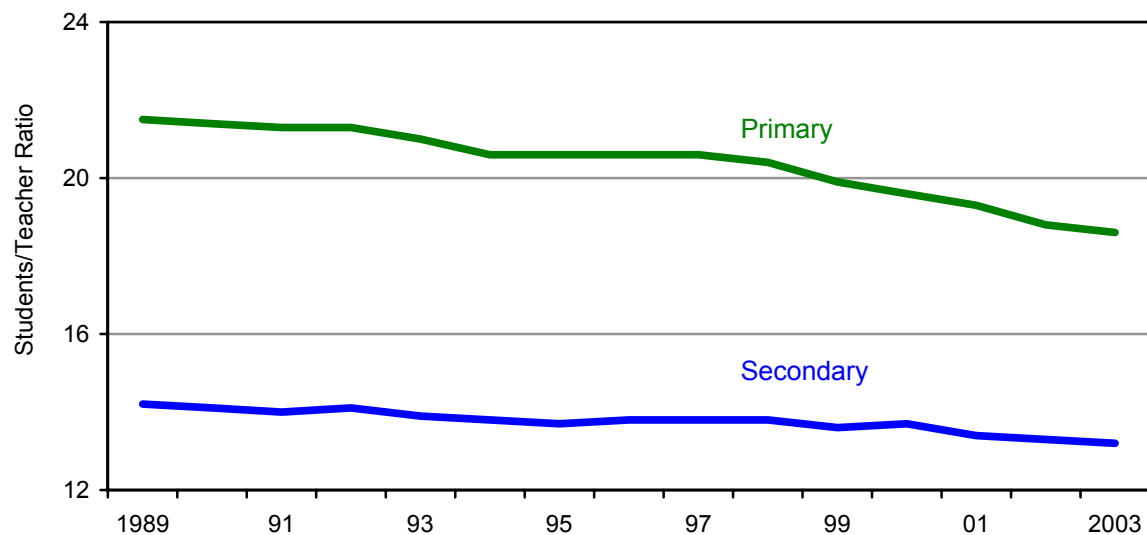


Table 7: Student/Teacher Ratios for Catholic Primary and Secondary schools, Australia and States and Territories, 1989, 2000 and 2003

| | Primary | | | Secondary | | |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 1989 | 2000 | 2003 | 1989 | 2000 | 2003 |
| ACT | 23.0 | 21.7 | 19.4 | 14.4 | 14.1 | 13.7 |
| NSW | 21.8 | 19.9 | 18.9 | 14.3 | 13.6 | 13.2 |
| NT | 18.0 | 19.9 | 18.5 | 12.7 | 11.3 | 10.6 |
| QLD | 21.7 | 19.0 | 18.7 | 14.6 | 13.4 | 13.2 |
| SA | 20.1 | 18.7 | 18.5 | 13.6 | 13.4 | 13.0 |
| TAS | 20.3 | 19.2 | 19.1 | 13.5 | 13.3 | 13.3 |
| VIC | 21.1 | 19.4 | 18.2 | 14.2 | 13.5 | 13.2 |
| WA | 22.9 | 20.6 | 18.5 | 13.9 | 13.5 | 13.3 |
| Australia | 21.5 | 19.6 | 18.6 | 14.2 | 13.5 | 13.2 |

Student Specific Trends

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students

It is important to recognize the increased openness of Catholic schools to Indigenous students in recent years. The number and proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) students has increased significantly over the period 1985-2003 (**Graph 12** and **Table 8**), and in all states and territories (**Table 9**). This increase is likely to be maintained for the foreseeable future, especially given the increased levels of financial and other support now available for Indigenous students. One of the key factors has been the significant increase in the level of Commonwealth Government support mainly through the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme. Apart from the Commonwealth program, many dioceses began to develop more systematic enrolment and support policies in response to the Statement by Pope John Paul II to the Indigenous community at Alice Springs in 1985.

Graph 12: Number and percentage of students identified as ATSI in Catholic schools, Australia, 1985-2003

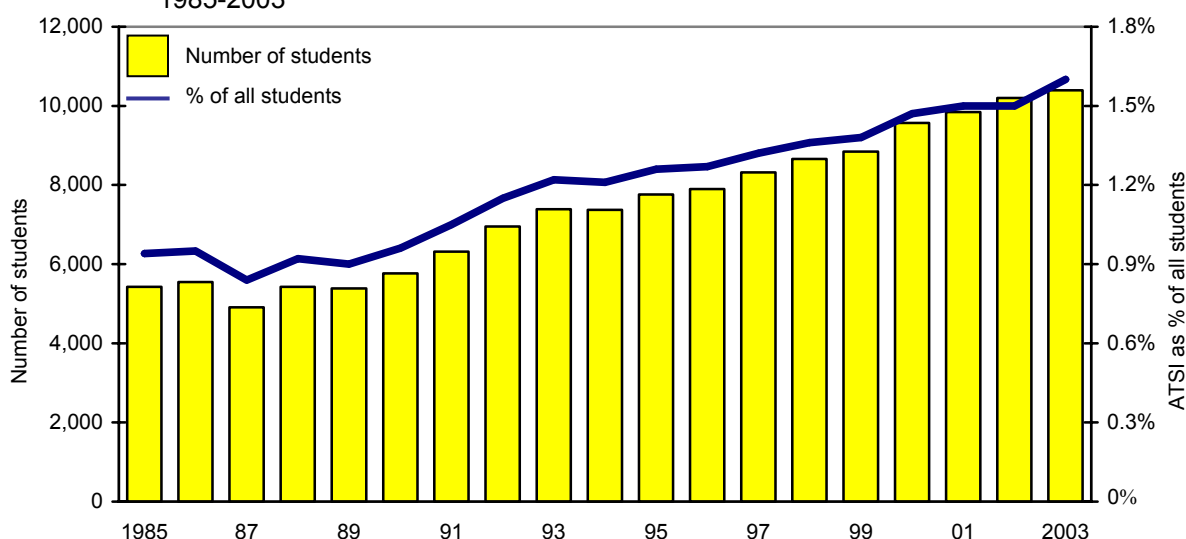


Table 8: Number and percentage of students identified as ATSI in Catholic schools, Australia, 1985-2003

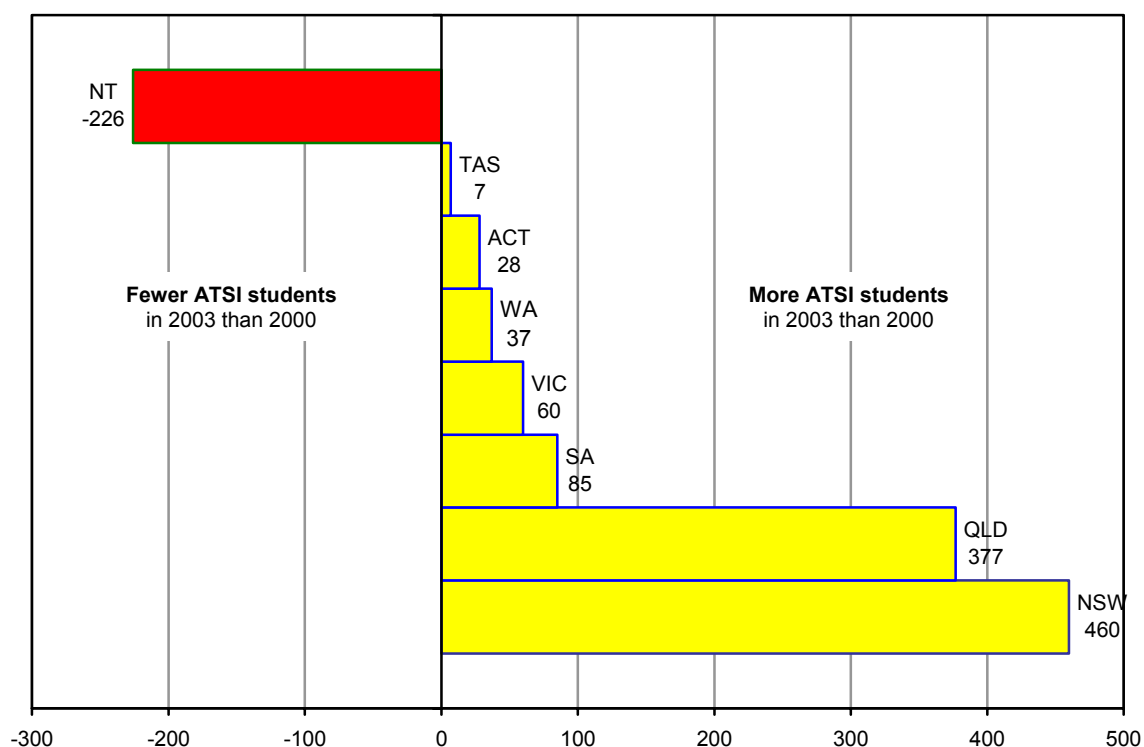
| Year | ATSI Students | ATSI as % of all students |
|------|---------------|---------------------------|
| 1985 | 5,423 | 0.9% |
| 1986 | 5,523 | 0.9% |
| 1987 | 5,045 | 0.9% |
| 1988 | 5,425 | 0.9% |
| 1989 | 5,384 | 0.9% |
| 1990 | 5,769 | 1.0% |
| 1991 | 6,313 | 1.0% |
| 1992 | 6,951 | 1.2% |
| 1993 | 7,385 | 1.2% |
| 1994 | 7,369 | 1.2% |
| 1995 | 7,763 | 1.3% |
| 1996 | 7,895 | 1.3% |
| 1997 | 8,316 | 1.3% |
| 1998 | 8,655 | 1.4% |
| 1999 | 8,845 | 1.4% |
| 2000 | 9,566 | 1.5% |
| 2001 | 9,843 | 1.5% |
| 2002 | 10,199 | 1.5% |
| 2003 | 10,394 | 1.6% |

Table 9: Number and percentage of students identified as ATSI in Catholic schools, States and Territories, 1985 and 2003

| | 1985 | | 2003 | | Change from 1985 to 2003 | ATSI Students as % of all Australian Catholic schools |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------------|---|
| | Number of Students | % of Students | Number of Students | % of Students | | |
| NSW | 1,029 | 0.5% | 2,852 | 1.2% | 1,823 | 27% |
| Victoria | 93 | 0.1% | 407 | 0.2% | 314 | 4% |
| Queensland | 1,400 | 1.6% | 2,759 | 2.5% | 1,359 | 27% |
| SA | 83 | 0.3% | 346 | 0.8% | 263 | 3% |
| WA | 1,617 | 3.8% | 2,145 | 3.6% | 528 | 21% |
| Tasmania | 131 | 1.2% | 426 | 3.3% | 295 | 4% |
| NT | 1,060 | 25.4% | 1,281 | 27.4% | 221 | 12% |
| ACT | 10 | 0.1% | 178 | 1.0% | 168 | 2% |
| Australia | 5,423 | 0.9% | 10,394 | 1.6% | 4,971 | 100% |

Since 2000, the number of Indigenous students in Catholic schools has increased in every state and territory other than the Northern Territory (**Graph 13**). However, the Northern Territory still has the significantly highest proportion of ATSI students, with more than one-quarter of students in Catholic schools identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Graph 13: Recent change in ATSI student enrolments in Catholic schools, States and Territories, 2000-2003



Students with a Disability

The fastest growing category of students in Catholic schools from 1985 to 2003 has been those with a disability (**Graph 14**), and this has occurred in every state and territory (**Graph 15** and **Table 10**). As with Indigenous students, there arose a greater awareness among Catholic educators in the early 1980s of the educational needs of Students with a Disability (SWD) and a preference for integrating them into regular schools wherever possible. This led to improved access to appropriately trained staff and better advisory services. Despite the failure of the Commonwealth to match the increase in students with comparable per capita funding increases, the trend of increased enrolment of Students with a Disability is likely to continue. The advent of the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act* in 1992 is clearly reflected in the data. It has both heightened awareness and created a real pressure point for enrolment. In brief, the data illustrates that Catholic schools have responded significantly to this particular challenge.

Graph 14: Number and percentage of SWD students in Catholic schools, Australia, 1985-2003

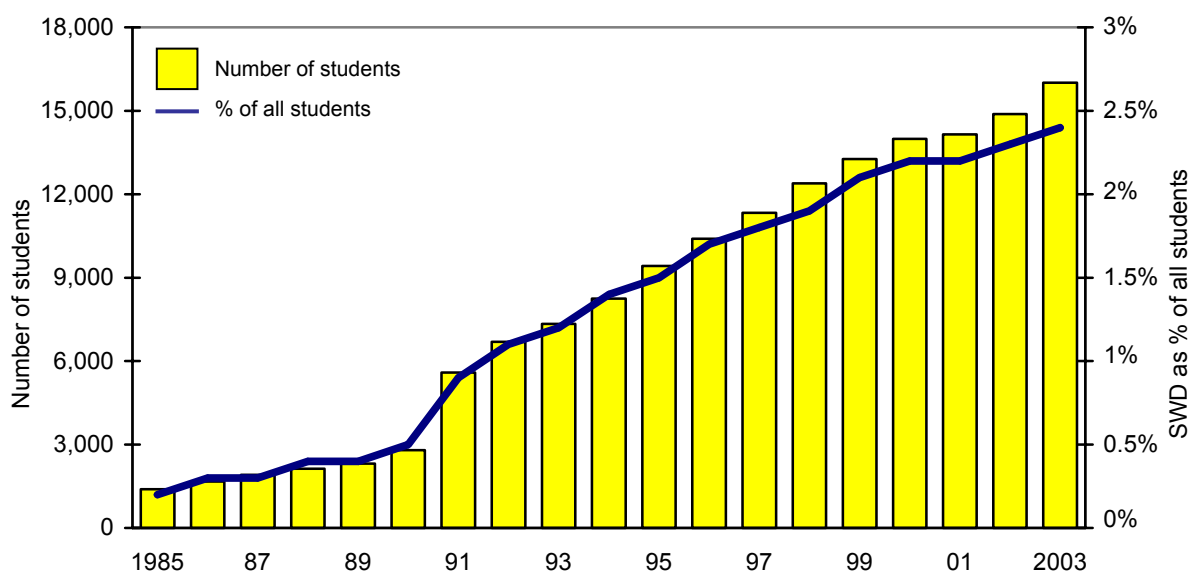


Table 10: Number and percentage of SWD students in Catholic Schools, Australia, 1985-2003

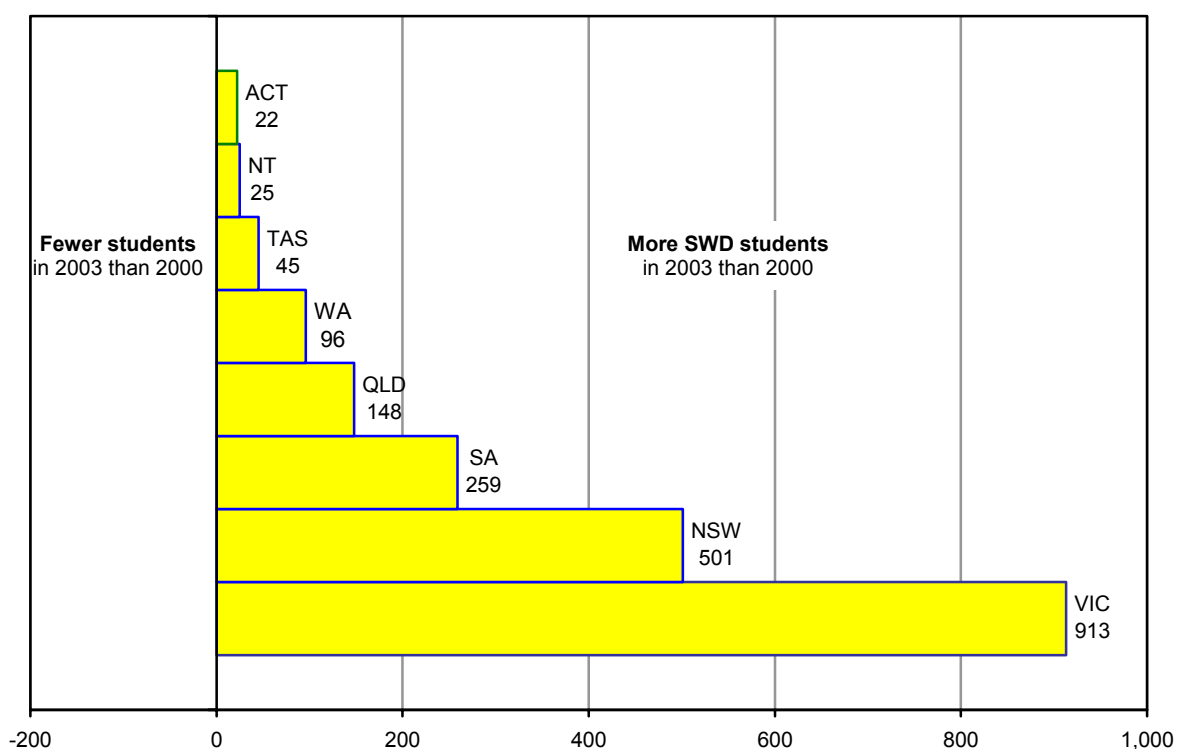
| Year | SWD Students | SWD as % of all students |
|------|--------------|--------------------------|
| 1985 | 1,391 | 0.2% |
| 1986 | 1,666 | 0.3% |
| 1987 | 1,908 | 0.3% |
| 1988 | 2,126 | 0.4% |
| 1989 | 2,316 | 0.4% |
| 1990 | 2,800 | 0.5% |
| 1991 | 5,585 | 0.9% |
| 1992 | 6,687 | 1.1% |
| 1993 | 7,336 | 1.2% |
| 1994 | 8,242 | 1.4% |
| 1995 | 9,425 | 1.5% |
| 1996 | 10,394 | 1.7% |
| 1997 | 11,329 | 1.8% |
| 1998 | 12,396 | 1.9% |
| 1999 | 13,271 | 2.1% |
| 2000 | 13,993 | 2.2% |
| 2001 | 14,157 | 2.2% |
| 2002 | 14,874 | 2.3% |
| 2003 | 16,003 | 2.4% |

Table 11: Number and percentage of SWD students in Catholic schools, States and Territories, 1985 and 2003

| | 1985 | | 2003 | | Change in Students | SWD as % of all Australian Catholic schools |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|---|
| | Number of Students | % of Students | Number of Students | % of Students | | |
| NSW | 377 | 0.2% | 7,299 | 3.1% | 6,922 | 46% |
| Victoria | 287 | 0.2% | 3,904 | 2.2% | 3,617 | 24% |
| Queensland | 177 | 0.2% | 1,845 | 1.7% | 1,668 | 12% |
| SA | 371 | 1.2% | 1,330 | 3.0% | 959 | 8% |
| WA | 75 | 0.2% | 1,103 | 1.8% | 1,028 | 7% |
| Tasmania | 12 | 0.1% | 200 | 1.6% | 188 | 1% |
| NT | Nil | — | 99 | 2.1% | 99 | 1% |
| ACT | 92 | 0.6% | 233 | 1.3% | 141 | 1% |
| Australia | 1,391 | 0.2% | 16,003 | 2.4% | 14,612 | 100% |

Since 2000, the number of Students with a Disability has increased in Catholic schools in every state and territory, with Victoria having the largest increase since 2000. In 2003, NSW remained the state with the largest number of SWD students having almost half (46%) of all SWD students enrolled in Catholic schools in Australia.

Graph 15: Recent change in SWD student enrolments in Catholic schools, States and Territories, 2000-2003

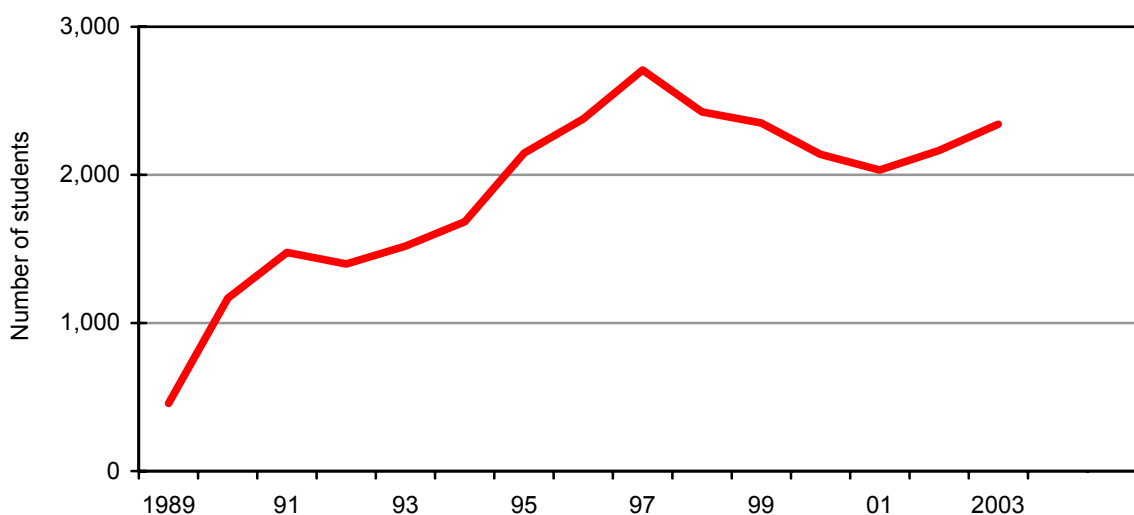


Full-Fee Paying Overseas Students

Catholic schools entered the FFPOS scheme on its introduction by the Commonwealth Government in 1989. In the following years, at least until 1997, the number of FFPOS grew quickly and consistently (**Graph 16**). From 1997 to 2001 FFPOS declined in all states and territories except NSW (**Table 12**), and this was attributable to a number of factors including the fact that Catholic schools found that there were considerable pastoral challenges involved in providing for such students.

Since 2001 however, FFPOS enrolments have increased nationally, due to the increase in FFPOS enrolments in NSW, South Australia and Victoria (**Graph 17** and **Table 12**). Since 1989, FFPOS students have been almost exclusively enrolled in secondary education. However, since the mid 1996 the proportion of FFPOS students in primary schools has been increasing and primary enrolments now comprise 12% of all FFPOS enrolments in Australian Catholic schools.

Graph 16: FFPOS in Catholic schools, Australia, 1989-2003



Graph 17: FFPOS in Catholic schools, States and Territories, 1989-2003

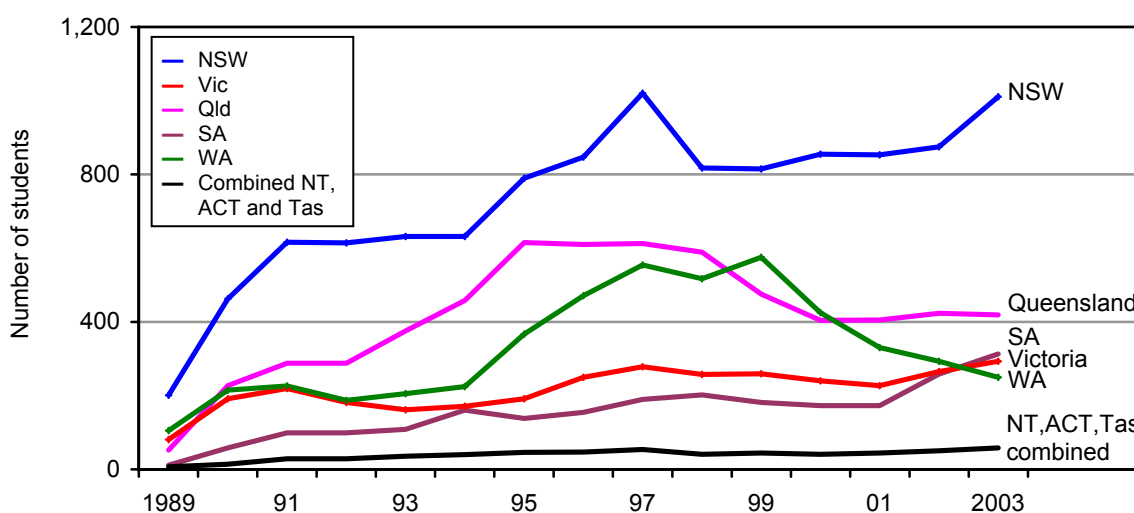


Table 11: FFPOS in Catholic schools, Australia and States and Territories, 1990, 1997, 2000 and 2003, and changes in FFPOS enrolments, 2000-2003

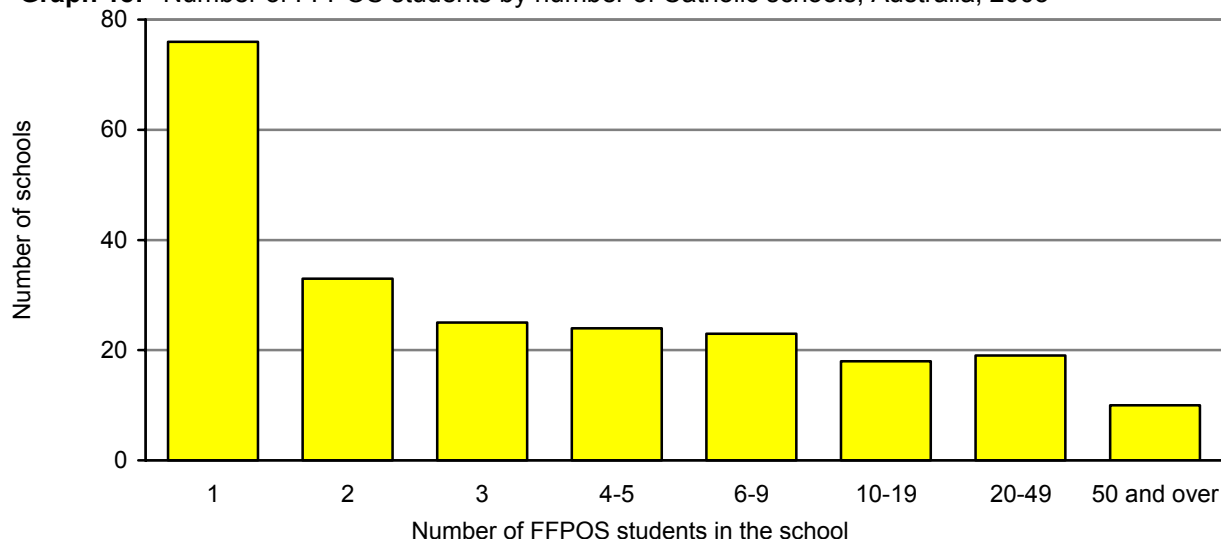
| | 1990 | 1997 | 2000 | 2003 | Change 2000-1 | Change 2001-2 | Change 2002-3 | FFPOS as % of all Australian Catholic schools |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---|
| ACT | 9 | 25 | 14 | 12 | 0 | -6 | 4 | 1% |
| NSW | 462 | 1,020 | 855 | 1,011 | -2 | 22 | 136 | 43% |
| Northern Territory | 4 | 29 | 24 | 43 | 1 | 13 | 5 | 2% |
| Queensland | 227 | 613 | 404 | 419 | 1 | 18 | -4 | 18% |
| South Australia | 58 | 189 | 173 | 313 | 0 | 85 | 55 | 13% |
| Tasmania | 1 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 2 | -1 | -1 | 0% |
| Victoria | 191 | 278 | 240 | 293 | -13 | 38 | 28 | 12% |
| Western Australia | 215 | 554 | 425 | 249 | -95 | -37 | -44 | 11% |
| Australia | 1,167 | 2,708 | 2,138 | 2,343 | -106 | 132 | 179 | 100% |

Schools with FFPOS students

Since 1989, the number of schools with FFPOS students enrolled has increased, but from year to year, the schools with FFPOS students can change. This is because the majority of schools with FFPOS students have only 1 or 2 students, and very few Catholic schools in Australia have large numbers of FFPOS students. Of the 228 schools with FFPOS students enrolled in 2003, only 12% (29 schools) had more than 50 FFPOS students (of which only 5 schools had more than 100 FFPOS students). 206 FFPOS students was the largest number in any Catholic school in Australia.

The more common pattern for schools with FFPOS students is for schools to have only one or two FFPOS students enrolled. As **Graph 18** highlights, one third of schools (78 schools) with FFPOS students had only 1 student enrolled, and 60% of schools had 1, 2 or 3 students. 85% of Catholic schools in Australia had no FFPOS students enrolled in 2003.

Graph 18: Number of FFPOS students by number of Catholic schools, Australia, 2003



Policy Issues

The 2001 *Report of the Working Party on Catholic School Enrolment Trends* explored some of the concerns and uncertainties about the changing composition of Catholic schools, and some of the perceived changes in pattern of school choice among Catholic families. In doing so, the report examined four key questions:

- 1) What schools do children of Catholic families attend?
- 2) Who attends Catholic schools in terms of religion?
- 3) Who attends Catholic schools in terms of family income?
- 4) What schools do Catholic school-age children attend in terms of income?

Drawing from the ABS 1996 Census, the report found:

- 1) The majority of students from Catholic families attended Government schools.
- 2) The majority of students in Catholic schools were from families where one or both parents were Catholic.
- 3) A greater proportion of the higher income families attended Catholic schools than the lower income families, particularly for secondary schools. There was, however, a significant distinction between the Catholic and Non-Catholic families, with Non-Catholic families forming a greater proportion of the lower income families.
- 4) The majority of the poorest Catholic families attended Government schools. Conversely, a significant proportion of the richest Catholic households attended other non-government schools, presumably high fee/high resource schools.

The report found that there were variations between primary and secondary Catholic schools and students; as well as variations between the states and territories.

Students from Catholic Families / Catholic Students

In examining policy issues and focussing on changing patterns of enrolments in Australian schools the Working Group's research was based, and remains based upon two key propositions: (1) that parents choose the school their child attends; and (2) that parents choose the religion of their child. As such, the Working Groups research proceeds on the assumption that students have been, and continue to be enrolled in Catholic schools as a conscious act of one or both parents and that students described as Catholic on the ABS Census form reflect the conscious decision of their parents.

Consequently, the identification of the parent's religion/denomination was, and is essential in identifying potential enrolments in the Catholic sector. As a result, the following data includes students **where one or both parents had identified as being Catholic on the ABS Census return**. The rationale for this being that parents have a greater role in determining whether the child is likely to be enrolled in a Catholic or Government school than does the child; and therefore, the religious identification of both parents was more important than the religious identification of the child for this project. This data differs from

ACBC research which defined a ‘Catholic’ student as **students who had identified themselves as ‘Catholic’ on a Census return**. Although from the same source (the ABS), the data do differ, and the difference is highlighted by the different proportions of ‘Catholic’ students attending Government and Catholic schools in ACBC and NCEC reports.

This report includes analysis using both definitions, and a summary of the key definitional characteristics of both definitions is outlined below.

ABS Census

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing, conducted in 1996 and 2001, asked a series of questions relating to individuals and families and included the question “*What is the person’s religious denomination?*”. The Census form notes that “Answering this question is **OPTIONAL**” (ABS emphasis on wording).

As part of a larger project on the Australian Catholic population, the ACBC identified Catholic students as **students who had identified themselves as ‘Catholic’ on a Census return**. In all likelihood, students would be unlikely to complete a Census form and the parent(s) completing the form would identify the student’s denomination. The Working Group’s research focuses on school enrolment trends, and as a result, the identification of the parent’s religion/denomination is considered to be more relevant in identifying potential enrolments in the Catholic sector as it relates to a student from a (potential) Catholic family. Therefore, the data definition relates to **where one or both parents had identified as being Catholic on the Census return**.

ACBC data provides a count of students and makes no assumption about the family structure. However this data cannot, by definition, consider a broader question of ‘potential’ students and future students, which was adopted by the NCEC Working Group research. The ACBC definition tends to capture students with greater involvement in Catholic education or the Catholic Church and would be less likely to include Catholic students at Government schools. The Working Group definition is perhaps a ‘looser’ definition of the Catholicity of the student, but a stronger identifier of the potential number of students/families who might consider education in a Catholic school. The following table (**Table 13**) identifies this difference between the ACBC and NCEC definitions for ‘Catholic’ students for the 2001 Census.

As **Table 13** highlights, the variation between the two datasets for students in Catholic schools is insignificant – less than 2,000 students, with only 318 being the difference in Catholic secondary schools, while the variation between the two populations for Catholic students in Government schools is nearly 160,000 (about one-third difference).

Table 13: Students from Catholic families and Students identifying as Catholic at 2001 Census, by school level and sector, Australia

| | Students where one or both parents are Catholic | Students identified as Catholic on Census return | Difference |
|---------------------|---|--|----------------|
| Primary | | | |
| Catholic | 271,446 | 273,759 | 2,313 |
| Other Non-Gov't | 29,702 | 19,888 | 9,814 |
| Government | 340,250 | 234,742 | 105,508 |
| Secondary | | | |
| Catholic | 190,134 | 189,816 | 318 |
| Other Non-Gov't | 34,362 | 23,761 | 10,601 |
| Government | 204,223 | 151,118 | 53,105 |
| All Students | | | |
| Catholic | 461,580 | 463,575 | 1,995 |
| Other Non-Gov't | 64,064 | 43,649 | 20,415 |
| Government | 544,473 | 385,860 | 158,613 |

Which data definition is the most appropriate?

As with any research, different data definitions and population subsets are used to provide information for the research question. Consequently, neither the Working Group's or the ACBC's definition can be considered to be the single authority for defining Catholic students when using government statistics. Similarly, no single government data source can be considered to be an official data definer, or sole source of data for the Catholic Church and for Catholic education. Importantly, both ACBC and NCEC data co-exist to provide a picture of the Catholic community in Australia, and both have their advantages and limitations for research, and as such, analysis of the data relating to both Students from Catholic families, and Catholic students (as defined by ACBC) are included in this report.

It should be noted that the ABS Census data (either ACBC or the NCEC Working Group definition) should not be used to consider a level of **commitment** to the Catholic Church (such as Church attendance or even those people baptised as Catholic). As such, a proportion of those identifying as Catholic in the Population Census currently are likely to have negligible commitment to the Catholic Church. Identifying 'committed' Catholics, whether attending Catholic, Government or Other Non-Government Schools is currently not available, and would require research beyond the scope of any Government Census.

Other policy questions in this report relating to single-parent families and large families are consistent in approach with the NCEC Working Group's focus on families and family structure – rather than students in isolation from the family – for exploring some of the concerns and uncertainties about the changing composition of Catholic schools, and some of the perceived changes in pattern of school choice among Catholic families.

Emerging Policy Issues

This report builds on the four policy questions examined in the 2001 *Report of the Working Party on Catholic School Enrolment Trends* and examines how these trends might have changed since the 1996 Census (the first census in which students in Catholic schools could be identified separately from other non-government students).

This report also extends the examination of policy and enrolment trend issues, and examines the proportion of single-parent families, and large families in Catholic schools, and considers this impact in the context of the other school sectors. This report also examines Indigenous students in Catholic schools, in the context of the other school sectors.

Recent changes to funding of Catholic and other non-government schools and the importance of SES (Socio-Economic Status) is an issue of national discussion and debate, and this report analyses SES and Catholic schools.

This report – and the identification, research and reporting of these policy issues by the Working Group – are a ‘point of reference’ for NCEC. The challenge for NCEC is how to interpret those patterns and changes in this report and to identify the policy issues arising from those interpretations.

What schools do children from Catholic families attend?

Students from Catholic families attend – in fact have always attended – government schools and other non-government schools, as well as Catholic schools. However, data on Catholic students attending other non-government schools was never obtainable until the 1996 ABS Census. Data on Catholic students in government schools used to be collected and made available by state governments, but most, if not all states, no longer collect the religious affiliation of students enrolled in government schools.

The 2001 ABS Census shows that, as at the 1996 Census, approximately half of Catholic families sent their children to government schools, and approximately half the students identifying as Catholic attended Catholic schools (**Graph 19**). As with the 1996 Census data, few Catholic students (either definition) attended other non-government schools, and in 2001, this remains so, with only a relatively small number of Catholics attending other non-government schools. However, while a small number – in relation to Catholics in government and Catholic schools – the increase in other non-government schools for Catholic students is significant, and this is discussed further in the section relating to changes between 1996 and 2001, where the largest increase in school choice for Catholic students (both definitions) has been to other non-government schools. This trend is likely to continue to 2006 and beyond.

The 2001 Census highlighted that while approximately half of Catholic students attended Catholic schools, there were some variations between primary and secondary schools (**Table 14**), where a higher proportion of secondary Catholic students attended other non-government schools. Similarly, there were variations across the states and territories (**Table 15** and **Table 16**).

Graph 19: Catholics in Government, Catholic and Other Non-Government schools, Australia, 2001

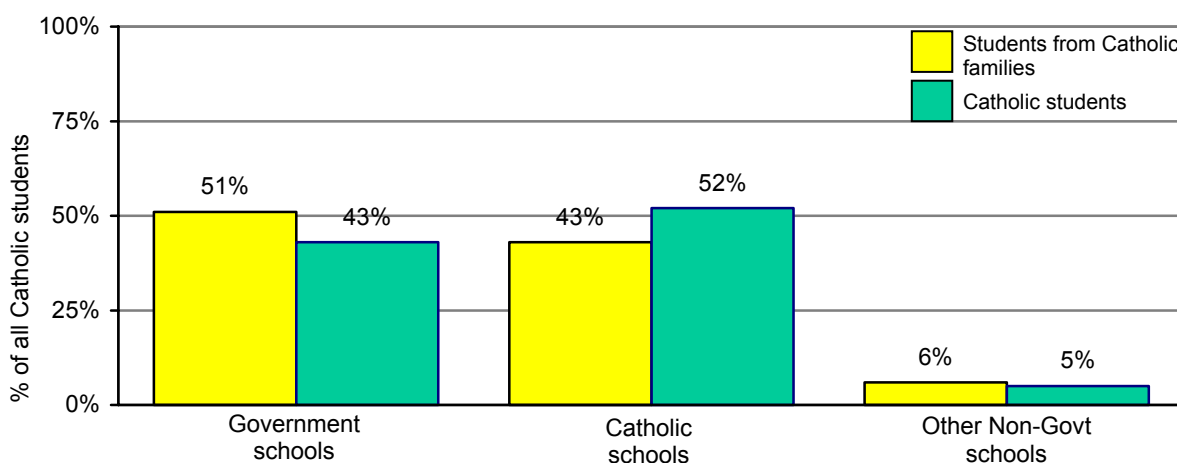


Table 14: Students from Catholic families and Catholic students by school sector, Australia, 2001

| | Students where one or both parents are Catholic | | Students identified as Catholic on Census return | |
|----------------------|---|-----------|--|-----------|
| | Primary | Secondary | Primary | Secondary |
| Government | 53% | 48% | 44% | 41% |
| Catholic | 42% | 44% | 52% | 52% |
| Other Non-Government | 5% | 8% | 4% | 7% |

Table 15: Proportion of Students from Catholic families, and Catholic students, in Catholic **Primary** schools, Australia and States and Territories, 2001

| | In Catholic Primary school | |
|--------------------|---|--|
| | Students where one or both parents are Catholic | Students identified as Catholic on Census return |
| ACT | 53% | 63% |
| NSW | 43% | 51% |
| Northern Territory | 31% | 37% |
| Queensland | 35% | 44% |
| South Australia | 43% | 53% |
| Tasmania | 34% | 46% |
| Victoria | 48% | 58% |
| Western Australia | 41% | 53% |
| Australia | 42% | 52% |

Table 16: Proportion of Students from Catholic families, and Catholic students, in Catholic **Secondary** schools, Australia and States and Territories, 2001

| | In Catholic Secondary school | |
|--------------------|---|--|
| | Students where one or both parents are Catholic | Students identified as Catholic on Census return |
| ACT | 53% | 61% |
| NSW | 46% | 54% |
| Northern Territory | 26% | 30% |
| Queensland | 38% | 45% |
| South Australia | 43% | 52% |
| Tasmania | 41% | 53% |
| Victoria | 46% | 54% |
| Western Australia | 43% | 52% |
| Australia | 44% | 52% |

Change from 1996 to 2001

The number of Catholic students (whether students from Catholic families or Catholic students) has increased from 1996 to 2001 Census, and not surprisingly, there has been growth in all three school sectors. However, approximately half the total growth for Catholic students (both students from Catholic families and Catholic students) has been to the other non-government schools, rather than government or Catholic schools (**Graph 20**).

Graph 20: Recent growth in Catholics attending school (% of Catholic growth), proportion of the increase in Government, Catholic and Other Non-Government schools, Australia, 1996-2001

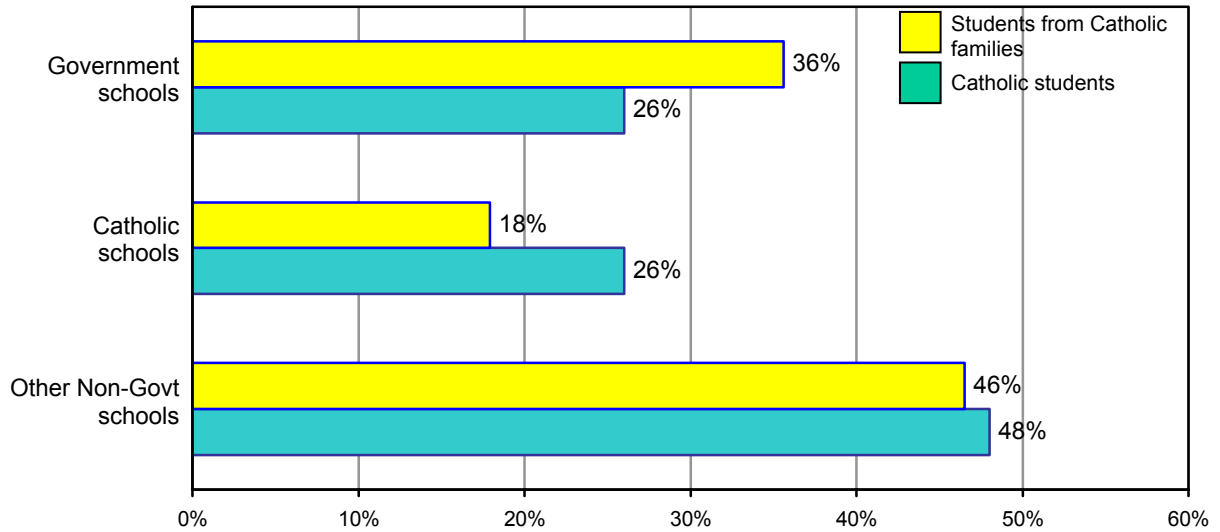


Table 17: Recent growth in Catholics attending school (% of Catholic growth), proportion of the increase by school type by school level, Australia, 1996-2001

| Students where one or both parents are Catholic | | | |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Proportion of increase | Catholic Primary Students | Catholic Secondary Students | All Catholic students |
| Government | 50% | 21% | 36% |
| Catholic | 4% | 32% | 18% |
| Other Non-Government | 46% | 47% | 46% |
| | 100% | 100% | 100% |

| Students identified as Catholic on Census return | | | |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Proportion of increase | Catholic Primary Students | Catholic Secondary Students | All Catholic students |
| Government | 44% | 6% | 26% |
| Catholic | 11% | 42% | 26% |
| Other Non-Government | 45% | 52% | 48% |
| | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Overall, the greatest increase – and the greatest percentage increase – in Catholic students has been in attending other non-Government schools, being almost half of the total increase. However, as **Table 17** highlights, there are significant differences between primary and secondary schools, with the majority of increase in primary students being in either government schools or other non-government schools. In primary schools, the increase in Catholic students has been the least significant (both definitions) with only 4% of the increase in students from Catholic families, and only 11% of students identifying as Catholic attending Catholic schools. In secondary schools, the trend in Catholics students attending Catholic schools (both definitions) is significantly changed, and a high proportion of the increase is to attend Catholic schools and even more to attend other non-government schools. Importantly, while the actual percentage increase varies between the two definitions, the trends for school choice for primary and secondary school are consistent trends for both definitions. From the trends observed between the 1996 Census and the 2001 Census, the majority of students will continue to select government and Catholic schools, but it is anticipated that there will be a trend for Catholics to increasingly select other non-government schools – especially for secondary education.

While there were variations between primary and secondary for Catholic students' school choice between 1996 and 2001 nationally, there are also significant variations between the states and territories. **Table 18** (Primary) and **Table 19** (Secondary) highlight significant differences between primary and secondary schools at the state level, and also the different trends between the states and territories.

Table 18 highlights the trends in Catholic students in primary schools, and while Queensland, and to a lesser extent, NSW trends are similar to the national trend of the majority of increase being to government and other non-government schools, Victoria had an even greater increase in students attending government schools and a net decrease between 1996 and 2001 in Catholic students attending Catholic schools. By contrast to this trend, South Australia and Western Australia had high growth in Catholic primary schools at the expense of government schools – although there was still a significant increase in the choice of other non-government schools for Catholic students. The trends for Tasmania and ACT were significantly different, with the majority of Catholic students attending Catholic primary schools, and a decrease in the number of Catholic students attending other non-government primary schools.

Table 19 reinforces the difference in school choice between primary and secondary schools for Catholics students. The increase in secondary schools is predominately to Catholic and other non-government schools.

Table 18: Recent Change in Catholics attending **Primary** school, by sector (% change), Australia and States and Territories, 1996-2001

| Students where one or both parents are Catholic – Primary Schools | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| | NSW | Vic | Qld | SA | WA | Tas | NT | ACT | Aust |
| Government | 25% | 107% | 57% | -230% | -30% | 24% | 123% | 38% | 50% |
| Catholic | 20% | -38% | 6% | 178% | 87% | 91% | -47% | 83% | 4% |
| Other Non-Gov't | 55% | 31% | 37% | 152% | 43% | -15% | 24% | -21% | 46% |
| | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

| Students identified as Catholic on Census return – Primary Schools | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| | NSW | Vic | Qld | SA | WA | Tas | NT | ACT | Aust |
| Government | 32% | 121% | 54% | -319% | -77% | -29% | 225% | 46% | 44% |
| Catholic | 23% | -66% | 12% | 275% | 144% | 147% | -158% | 75% | 11% |
| Other Non-Gov't | 45% | 45% | 34% | 144% | 33% | -18% | 33% | -21% | 45% |
| | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Table 19: Recent Change in Catholics attending **Secondary** school, by sector (% change), Australia and States and Territories, 1996-2001

| Students where one or both parents are Catholic – Secondary Schools | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| | NSW | Vic | Qld | SA | WA | Tas | NT | ACT | Aust |
| Government | -11% | 40% | 43% | 31% | 19% | 77% | 23% | 66% | 21% |
| Catholic | 56% | 11% | 19% | 34% | 44% | 36% | -9% | 42% | 32% |
| Other Non-Gov't | 55% | 49% | 38% | 35% | 37% | -13% | 86% | -8% | 47% |
| | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

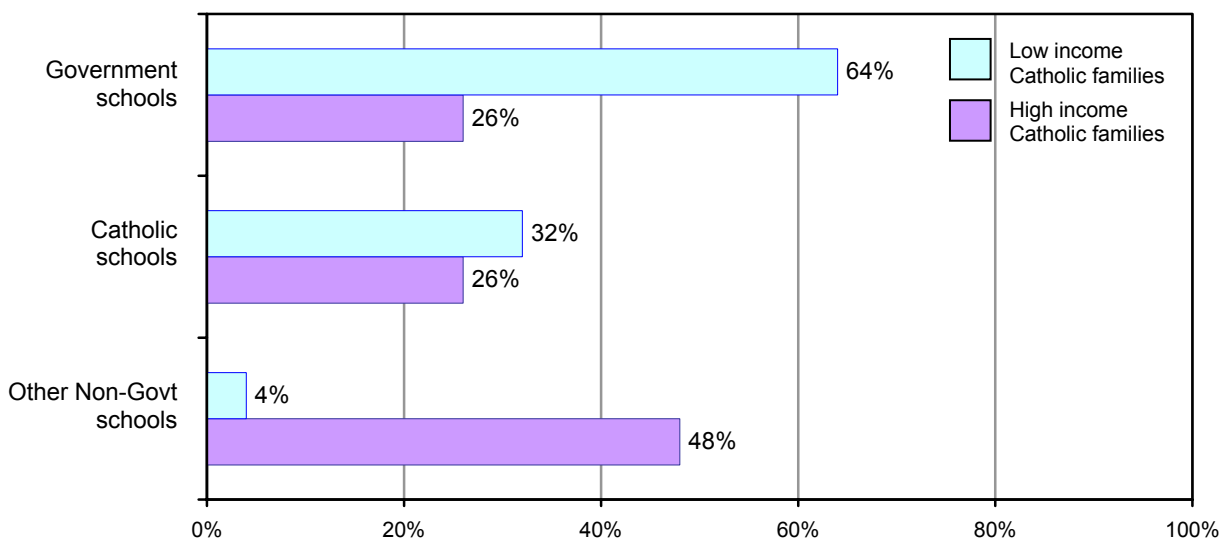
| Students identified as Catholic on Census return – Secondary Schools | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| | NSW | Vic | Qld | SA | WA | Tas | NT | ACT | Aust |
| Government | -24% | 2% | 41% | 26% | 0% | 71% | 1,043% | 69% | 6% |
| Catholic | 66% | 18% | 22% | 46% | 66% | 37% | 628% | 57% | 42% |
| Other Non-Gov't | 58% | 80% | 37% | 28% | 34% | -8% | -1,571% | -26% | 52% |
| | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Note: The net change for Catholic students in secondary schools for the Northern Territory between 1996 and 2001 was a decrease of 7 students. Of this change, government schools decreased by 73 and Catholic schools decreased by 44 students. Catholic students attending other non-government schools increased by 110 students.

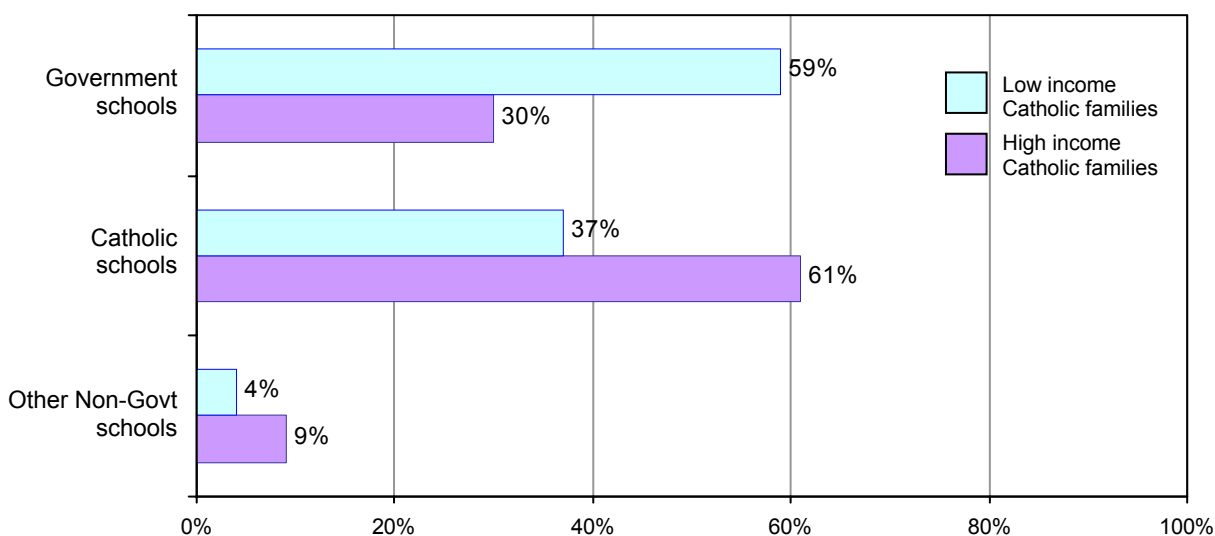
What school do Catholic children attend in terms of income?

When the data on high and low income households is combined with type of school attended, the question to be asked is which schools do the poorest and the richest Catholic families choose for their children. For low income families (**Graphs 21 and 22**), it is evident that the majority of the poorest Catholic families choose government schools; while the majority of high income Catholics attend Catholic schools, and a significant proportion of the richest Catholic households choose other non-government schools, presumably a high-fee/high resource school.

Graph 21: Students from low and high income Catholic families by school type, Australia, 2001

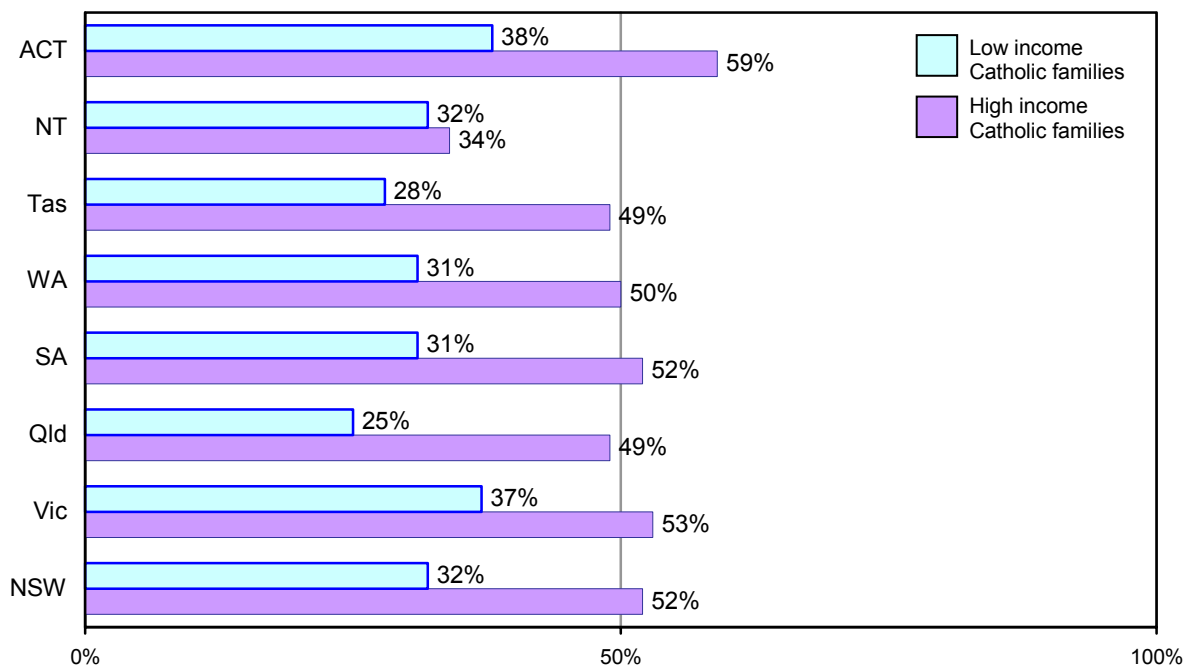


Graph 22: Students identifying as Catholic from low and high income families by school type, Australia, 2001

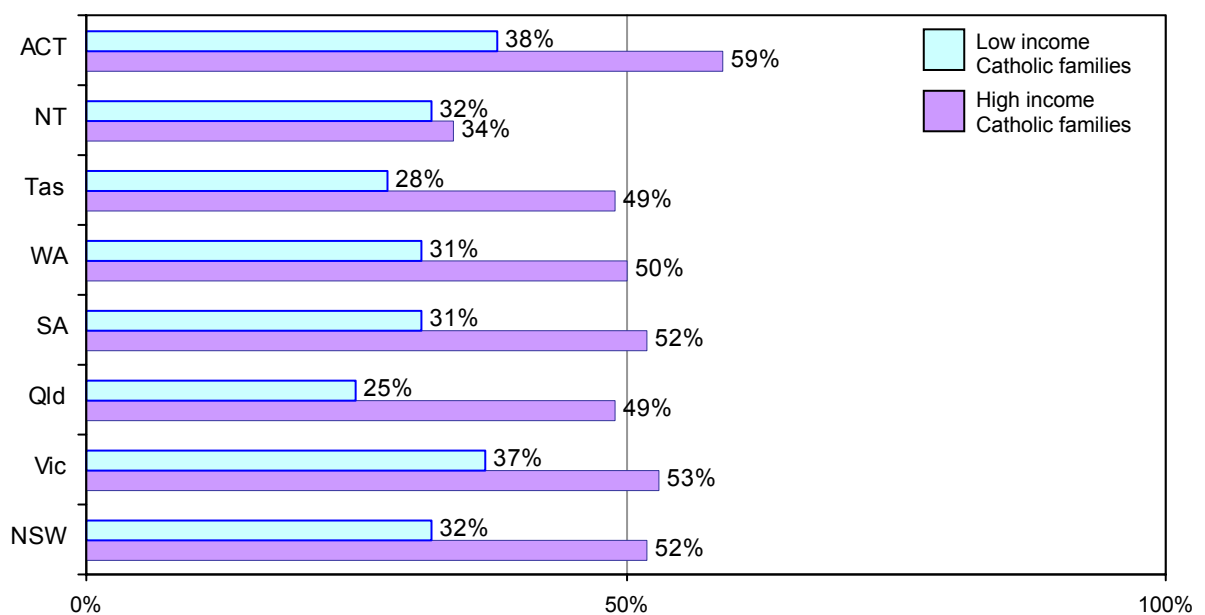


While there is some variation between the states and territories, the trend for the poorest Catholic students attending government schools and the wealthiest Catholic students attending Catholic schools is nationally consistent and consistent whether the students identified as Catholic or were from Catholic families. **Graph 23** and **Graph 24** highlight the proportions of students attending Catholic schools for the poorest and wealthiest Catholics. As the graphs illustrate, the proportion of poor Catholic students attending Catholic schools rather than government or other non-government schools, is significantly lower than that for the wealthiest Catholic students.

Graph 23: Students from low and high income Catholic families by school type, States and Territories, 2001



Graph 24: Students identifying as Catholic from low and high income families by school type, States and Territories, 2001

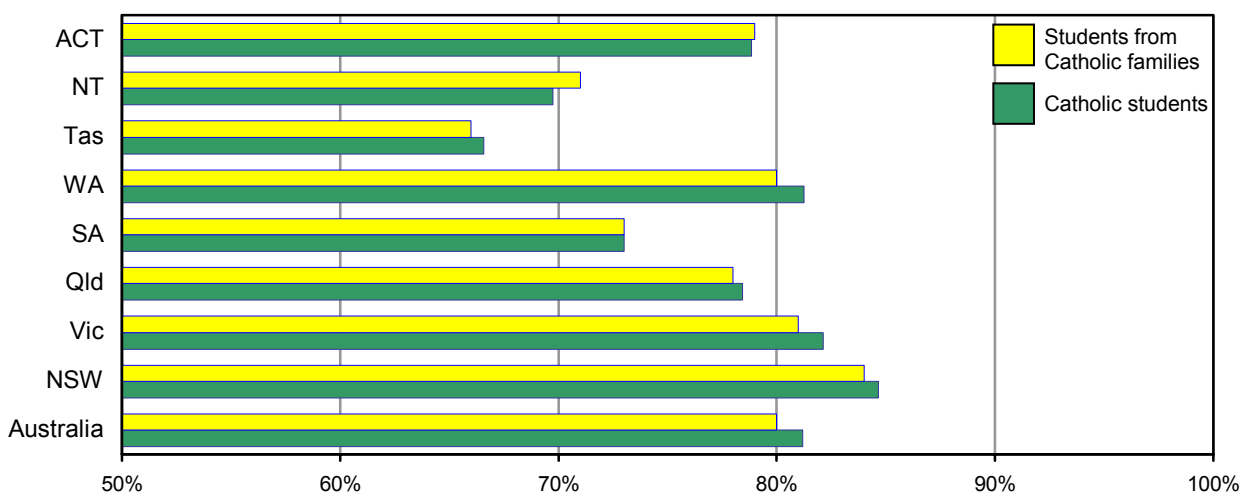


Who attends Catholic schools in terms of religion?

There was a time when nearly all students in Catholic schools were Catholic. Catholic schools were not considered a viable or preferable option for non-Catholic parents. This situation has clearly changed in recent years. The existence of a school with a religious, or at least a strong values base, has become an attractive option for many non-Catholic parents who seek a religious or values-based education for their children. All dioceses have an enrolment policy which, generally speaking, provides for non-Catholic students where places exist.

The data is unequivocally clear – the majority of students in Catholic schools are from families where one or both parents are Catholic in both primary (**Graph 25**) and secondary (**Graph 26**) Catholic schools, especially in primary schools. The significant, and evidently growing proportion of non-Catholic students in Catholic schools shows strong state and diocesan policy and practice (**Table 20** and **Table 21**) and poses special questions for Catholic schools and their communities. Such questions concern the essential character and integrity of Catholic schools with large proportions of non-Catholic students; the expectations a school may make of students and parents; as well as pastoral implications. In summary, it touches on the tension between the Catholic school's evangelical and catechetical roles and aims.

Graph 25: Catholics as a proportion of all students in Catholic **Primary** schools, Australia and States and Territories, 2001



Graph 26: Catholics as a proportion of all students in Catholic **Secondary** schools, Australia and States and Territories, 2001

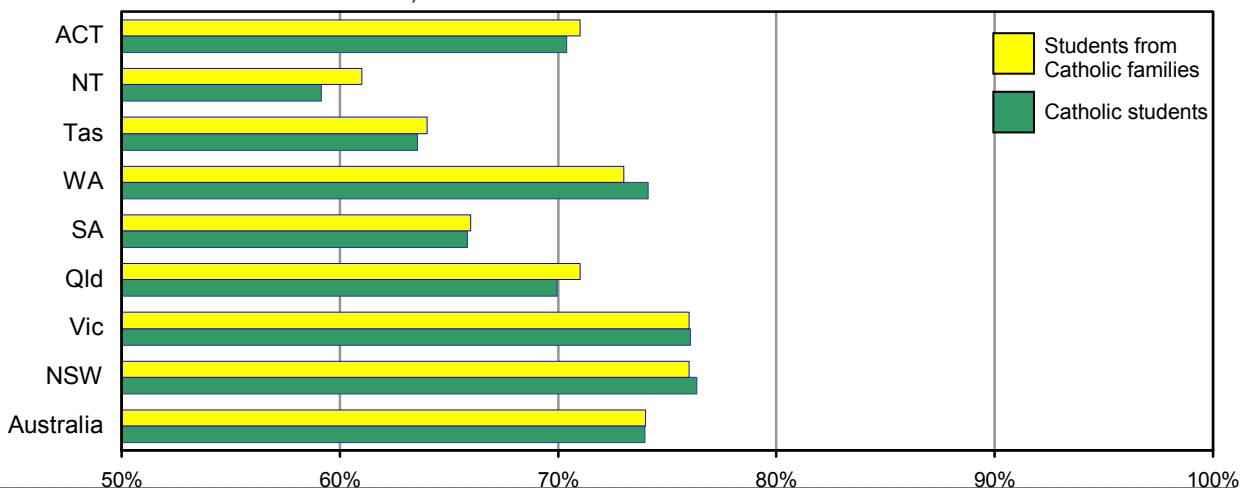


Table 20: Recent Change in proportion of Catholics attending Catholic **Primary** schools, Australia and States and Territories, 1996-2001

| | Proportion of Catholics in Catholic Primary Schools | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|------------|------------|---|------------|------------|
| | Students where one or both parents are Catholic | | | Students identified as Catholic on Census return | | |
| | 1996 | 2001 | Change | 1996 | 2001 | Change |
| ACT | 82% | 79% | -3% | 83% | 79% | -4% |
| NSW | 86% | 84% | -2% | 87% | 85% | -2% |
| Northern Territory | 73% | 71% | -2% | 73% | 70% | -3% |
| Queensland | 82% | 78% | -3% | 82% | 78% | -4% |
| South Australia | 75% | 73% | -2% | 75% | 73% | -2% |
| Tasmania | 70% | 66% | -4% | 69% | 67% | -2% |
| Victoria | 83% | 81% | -2% | 84% | 82% | -2% |
| Western Australia | 80% | 80% | — | 81% | 81% | — |
| Australia | 80% | 80% | -3% | 83% | 81% | -2% |

Table 21: Recent Change in proportion of Catholics attending Catholic **Secondary** schools, Australia and States and Territories, 1996-2001

| | Proportion of Catholics in Catholic Secondary Schools | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|------------|------------|---|------------|------------|
| | Students where one or both parents are Catholic | | | Students identified as Catholic on Census return | | |
| | 1996 | 2001 | Change | 1996 | 2001 | Change |
| ACT | 77% | 71% | -6% | 77% | 70% | -7% |
| NSW | 80% | 76% | -4% | 81% | 76% | -5% |
| Northern Territory | 71% | 61% | -10% | 71% | 59% | -12% |
| Queensland | 75% | 71% | -4% | 75% | 70% | -5% |
| South Australia | 70% | 66% | -4% | 69% | 66% | -4% |
| Tasmania | 69% | 64% | -5% | 68% | 64% | -4% |
| Victoria | 79% | 76% | -3% | 79% | 76% | -3% |
| Western Australia | 76% | 73% | -3% | 76% | 74% | -2% |
| Australia | 78% | 74% | -4% | 78% | 74% | -4% |

Who attends Catholic schools in terms of family income?

Having examined where low and high income Catholics attend school, and observing the increasing proportion of Non-Catholics in Catholic schools, the question to be asked is whether there is any distinction in family income between Catholic and non-Catholic students in Catholic schools.

Table 22 highlights that there is a difference between Non-Catholic and Catholic students attending Catholic schools, and that a higher proportion of the Non-Catholic students are from poorer families than the proportion of the Catholic families. Conversely, a higher proportion of the Catholic students are from high income families than the proportion from Non-Catholic families.

Table 22: Low and high income Catholic and Non-Catholics as percentage for Catholic and Non-Catholic students in Catholic schools, Australia, 2001

| Students where one or both parents are Catholic | Low Income | High Income |
|---|------------|-------------|
| Primary | | |
| Catholic (% of Catholics) | 2% | 29% |
| Non-Catholic (% of Non-Catholics) | 5% | 20% |
| Secondary | | |
| Catholic (% of Catholics) | 2% | 34% |
| Non-Catholic (% of Non-Catholics) | 4% | 25% |

| Students identified as Catholic on Census return | Low Income | High Income |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Primary | | |
| Catholic (% of Catholics) | 2% | 29% |
| Non-Catholic (% of Non-Catholics) | 4% | 22% |
| Secondary | | |
| Catholic (% of Catholics) | 5% | 33% |
| Non-Catholic (% of Non-Catholics) | 3% | 28% |

It has become difficult to compare trends between 1996 and 2001, as the income categories on the ABS Census form have remained unchanged since the 1986 Census. As a result, the relative nature of 'low' income (\$300 per week), has been greatly diminished, as has the relative nature of 'high' income (\$1,500 per week, which is the highest income range available on the Census form). The NCEC Working Group on Enrolment Trends has provided a submission to the ABS to have the income categories changed for the 2006 Census to reflect more representative low and high income ranges in 2006, when the next ABS Census will be conducted.

Single-parent families in Catholic schools

Three in every four families with a single parent have their children attending government schools in Australia, while only 13% of single parent families attend Catholic schools. By contrast, 20% of families with two parents at home attend Catholic schools. The difference in enrolment patterns between single and two-parent families (**Graph 27** and **Table 23**) may be due to a number of reasons, which may – or may not include – capacity to pay for a Catholic education for single-parent families; socio-religious perceptions and expectations in Catholic schools and communities; and possible differences in the number of single parent families of Catholics and non-Catholics.

Graph 27: Single-parent and two-parent families in Government, Catholic and Other Non-Government schools, Australia, 2001

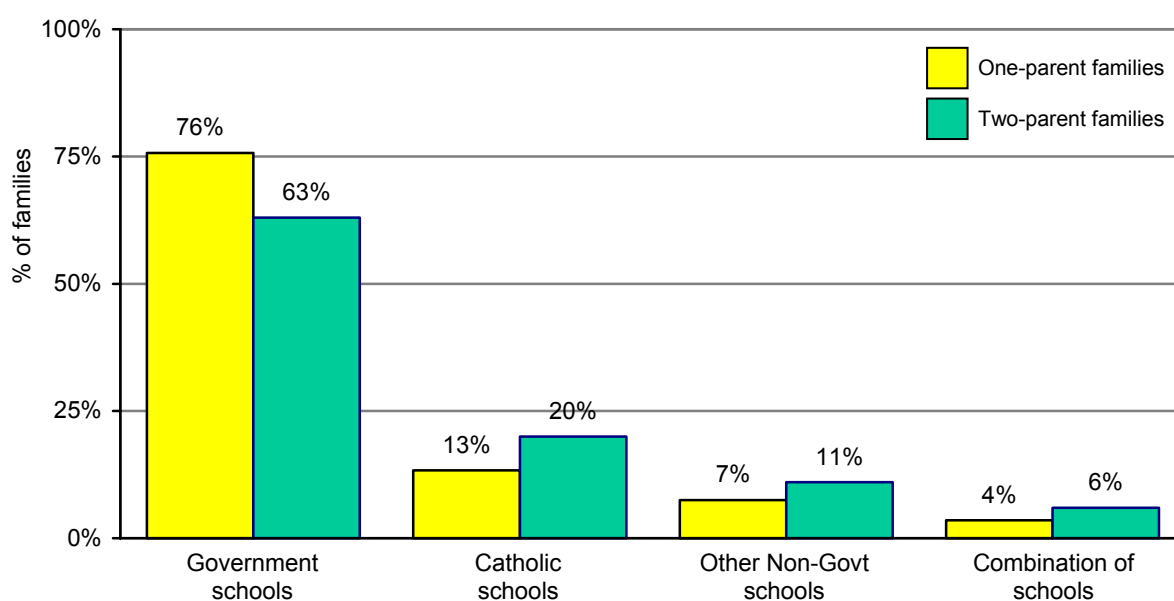


Table 23: Single-parent and two-parent families in Catholic schools, as proportion of families from all school sectors, Australia and States and Territories, 2001

| | One-Parent families in Catholic schools | Two-Parent families in Catholic schools |
|------------------|---|---|
| ACT | 20% | 26% |
| NSW | 14% | 21% |
| NT | 12% | 13% |
| QLD | 11% | 17% |
| SA | 12% | 18% |
| TAS | 12% | 16% |
| VIC | 15% | 22% |
| WA | 12% | 18% |
| Australia | 13% | 20% |

Single-parent families – in the school

Graph 27 identified that the government sector has the majority of children from single-parent families in Australia, and government schools also have a higher proportion of single-parent families within their schools, with one-quarter (25%) of families being single-parent families. By comparison, single-parent families comprise one in six families (16%) with students in Catholic schools and 15% in Other Non-Government schools (**Graph 28**). These national proportions are similar throughout most states and territories (**Table 24**).

Graph 28: Proportion of single-parent families in Government, Catholic and Other Non-Government schools, Australia, 2001

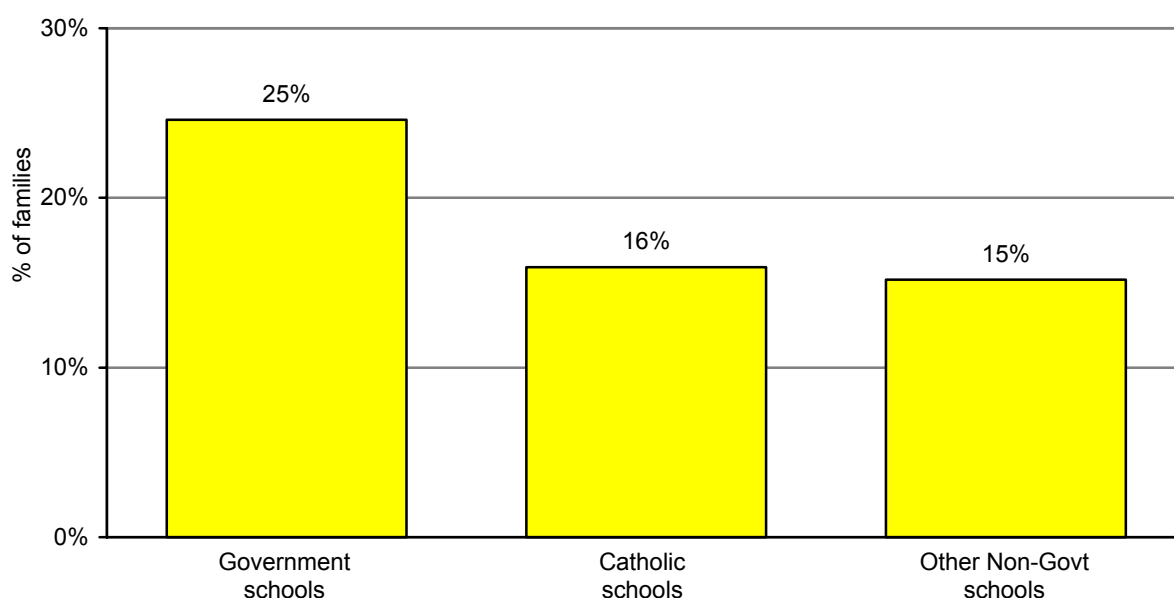


Table 24: Proportion of single-parent families within Government, Catholic and Other Non-Government schools, Australia and States and Territories, 2001

| | Government schools | Catholic schools | Other Non-Gov't schools |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| NSW | 24% | 15% | 15% |
| Victoria | 23% | 15% | 14% |
| Queensland | 27% | 17% | 17% |
| South Australia | 27% | 17% | 16% |
| Western Australia | 24% | 16% | 16% |
| Tasmania | 26% | 19% | 17% |
| Northern Territory | 26% | 22% | 18% |
| ACT | 25% | 17% | 15% |
| Australia | 25% | 16% | 15% |

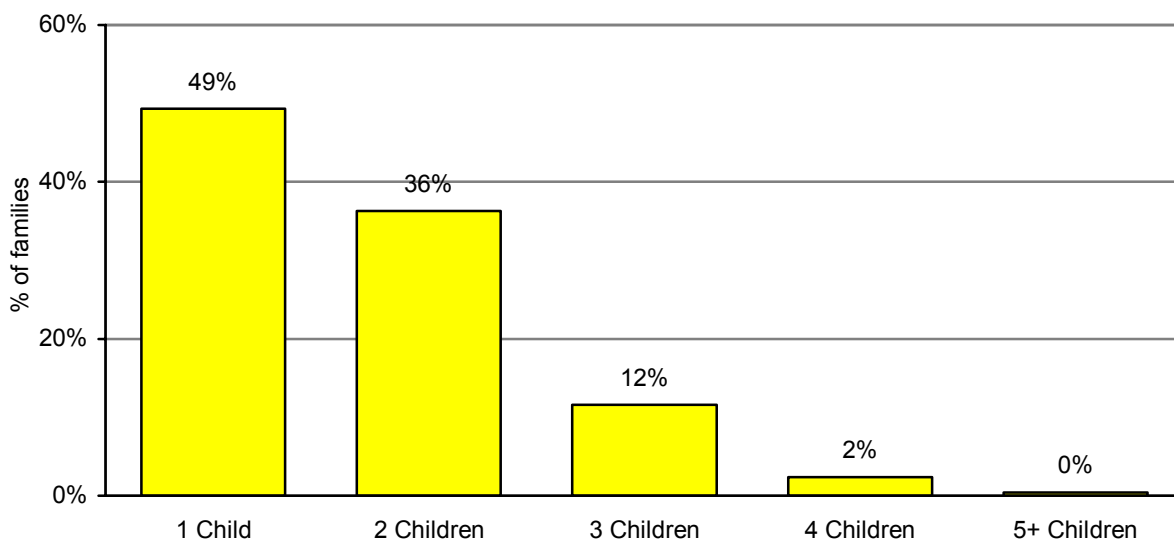
Note: Families with students in Government, Catholic and/or Other Non-Government schools are included in both/all three sectors as applicable; as data relates to number of families rather than number of students.

Large families in Catholic schools

There is perhaps a truism that Catholic families have been traditionally large families, and remain so; and as such Catholic schools are likely to be predominately filled with large families. While this might have been true at some stage, the Catholic population – more than one-quarter of Australia’s population (refer **Table 1**) – are no different to non-Catholic families in their family size and structure. However, analysis is important to test validity of this perception and also for issues relating to Catholic schools to be considered, such as issues of fee reduction for large families in Catholic schools.

Graph 29 highlights that almost half of students in Catholic schools are single children, and that 85% of students are from families with only one or two children. Large families, with three or more children are less than 3% of students in Catholic schools. **Table 25** highlights that these trends are similar in all states and territories. **Graph 30** highlights that family size in Catholic schools is the same as for government and other non-government schools.

Graph 29: Family size for students in Catholic schools, Australia, 2001



Graph 30: Family size for students in Catholic, Government and Other Non-Government schools, Australia, 2001

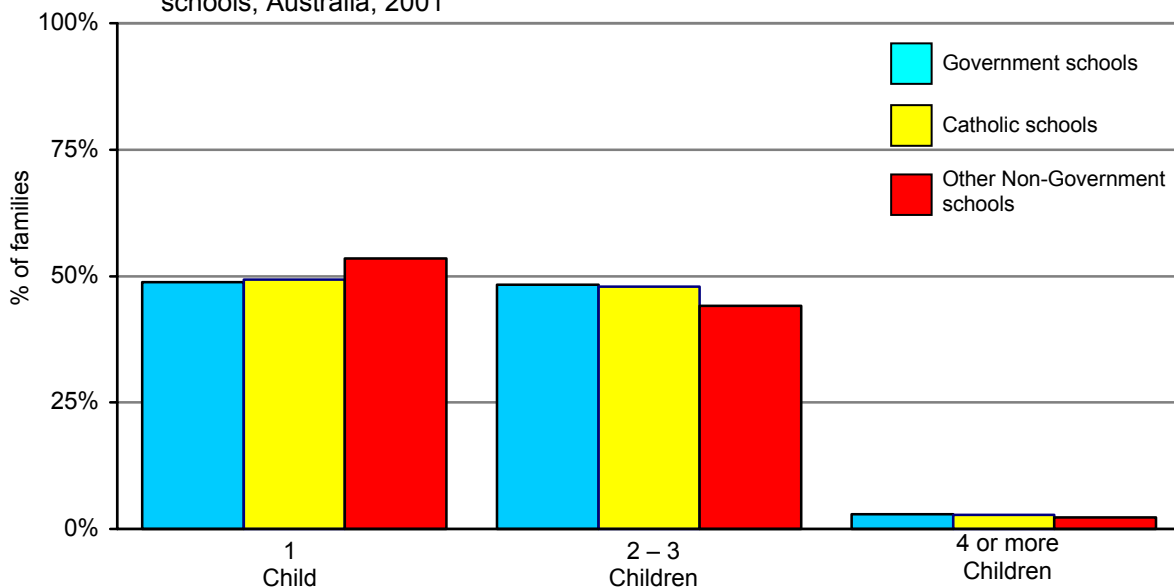


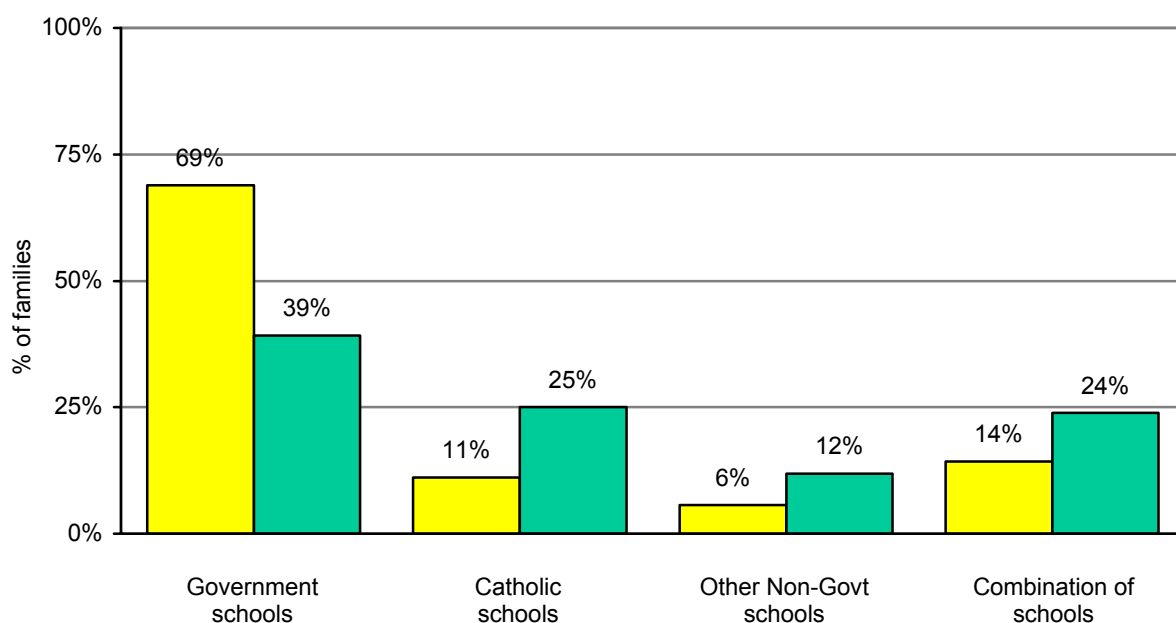
Table 25: Family size for students in Catholic schools, Australia and States and Territories, 2001

| | 1 Child | 2-3 Children | 4 or more children |
|--------------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| NSW | 50% | 47% | 3% |
| Victoria | 48% | 49% | 3% |
| Queensland | 51% | 47% | 2% |
| South Australia | 51% | 47% | 2% |
| Western Australia | 48% | 50% | 3% |
| Tasmania | 50% | 48% | 3% |
| Northern Territory | 51% | 47% | 2% |
| ACT | 47% | 50% | 3% |
| Australia | 49% | 48% | 3% |

Low and high income large families

The majority (69%) of low income families with 4 or more children (large families) attend government schools. For high income large families, government schools (39%) or Catholic schools (25%) are the most common school choices for all children in the family. A proportion of large families (especially high income families) have children in a combination of schools, which may be due to the apparent relationship between family income and school choice.

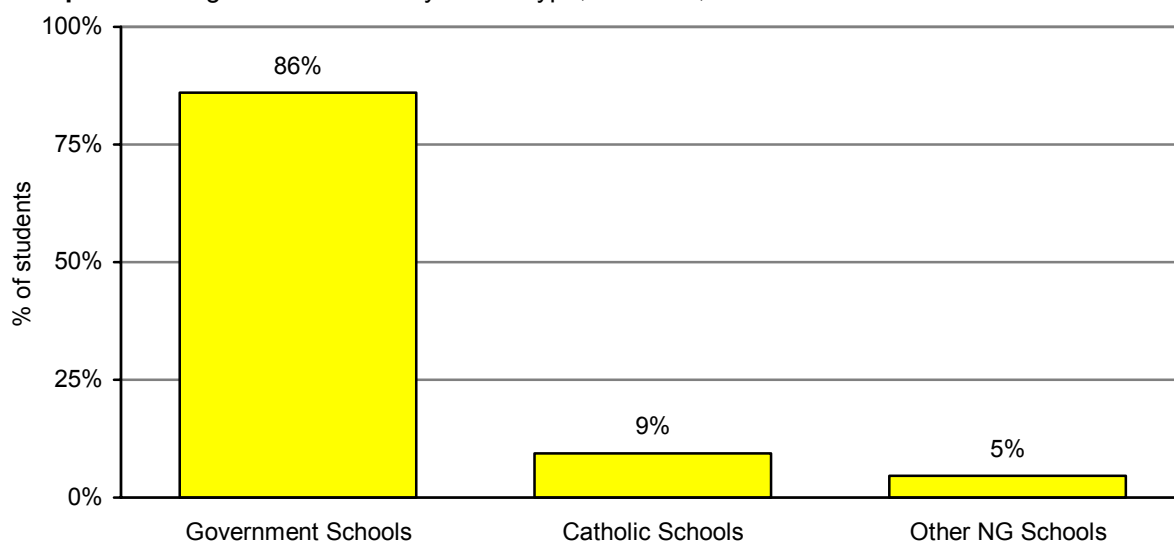
Graph 31: Low and high income large families (4 or more children) by school type, Australia, 2001



Indigenous students

Despite increases in the number of Indigenous students in Catholic schools (**Graph 12**), the majority of Indigenous students (86%) attend government schools (**Graph 32**), while 9% of Indigenous students attend Catholic schools. 88% of primary students attend government schools, and 82% of secondary students attend government schools.

Graph 32: Indigenous students by school type, Australia, 2001



Graph 33 highlights that there is a disproportionate percentage of Indigenous students in government schools, when compared with the relative proportions of all students in the three school sectors. The share of Indigenous students in Catholic schools (9%) is less than half of the Catholic sector's student share of 20%. Similarly, the proportion of Indigenous students in other non-government schools is also representatively lower. **Table 26** shows that for states other than Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia, there are significant differences between the proportions of Indigenous students compared to the proportion of all students in the Catholic sector.

Graph 33: Proportion of Indigenous students, and all students, by school type, Australia, 2001

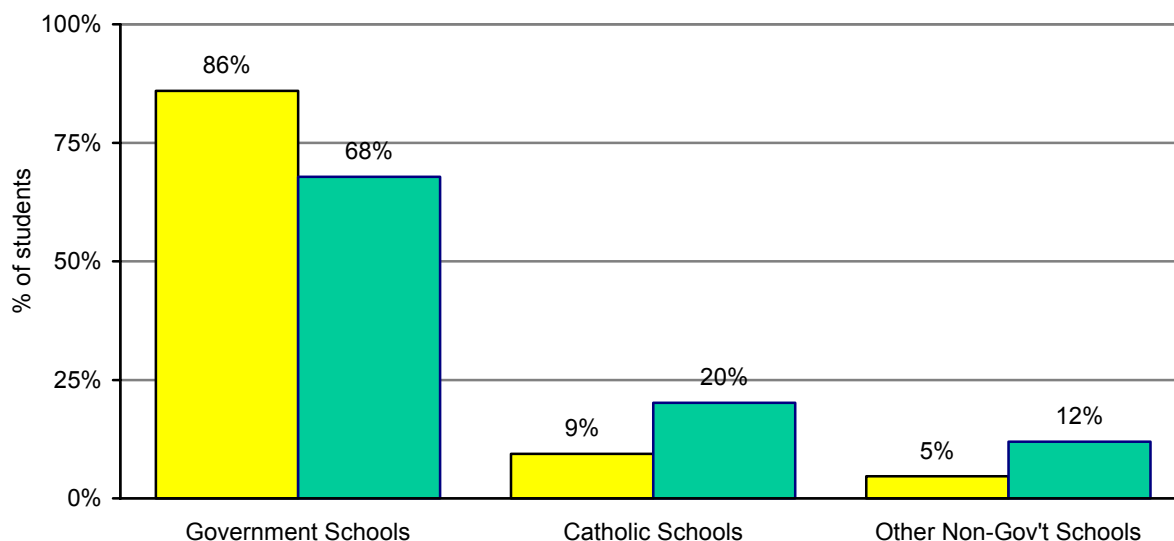


Table 26: Proportion of Indigenous students and all students in Catholic schools, Australia and States and Territories, 2001

| | % of Indigenous students in Catholic schools | % of students in Catholic schools |
|--------------------|---|--|
| NSW | 9% | 22% |
| Victoria | 9% | 22% |
| Queensland | 8% | 17% |
| South Australia | 6% | 17% |
| Western Australia | 12% | 19% |
| Tasmania | 11% | 16% |
| Northern Territory | 10% | 14% |
| ACT | 19% | 27% |
| Australia | 9% | 20% |

Catholic schools and the Socio-Economic Status Index

Since 2001, the SES (Socio-Economic Status) Index has been the basis for Commonwealth recurrent funding for students in non-government schools; and from 2001 to 2004, most Catholic schools have been funded – as a national system – at 56.2% of AGSRC, which is equivalent to an SES score of 96. (Schools outside of a state’s Catholic system have been funded at either their actual SES score or on a basis of ‘funding maintenance’ where their SES score would have meant a loss of grant funding.) In February 2004, the Commonwealth (in agreement with NCEC) altered the funding arrangements for Catholic system schools so that schools with an actual SES at 96 or higher will remain ‘funding guaranteed’ at SES 96 equivalent, while schools with an SES score below 96 will be funded at their actual SES score. This decision will result in an increase of \$360m nationally over the quadrennium 2005-2008, subject to the ‘funding guarantee’ arrangement remaining.

As a result of this decision, there has been significant recent national discussion and debate about socio-economic status based funding for students in Catholic schools. Consequently, the Working Group provides an analysis of Catholic schools SES scores in the context of the SES score of 96.

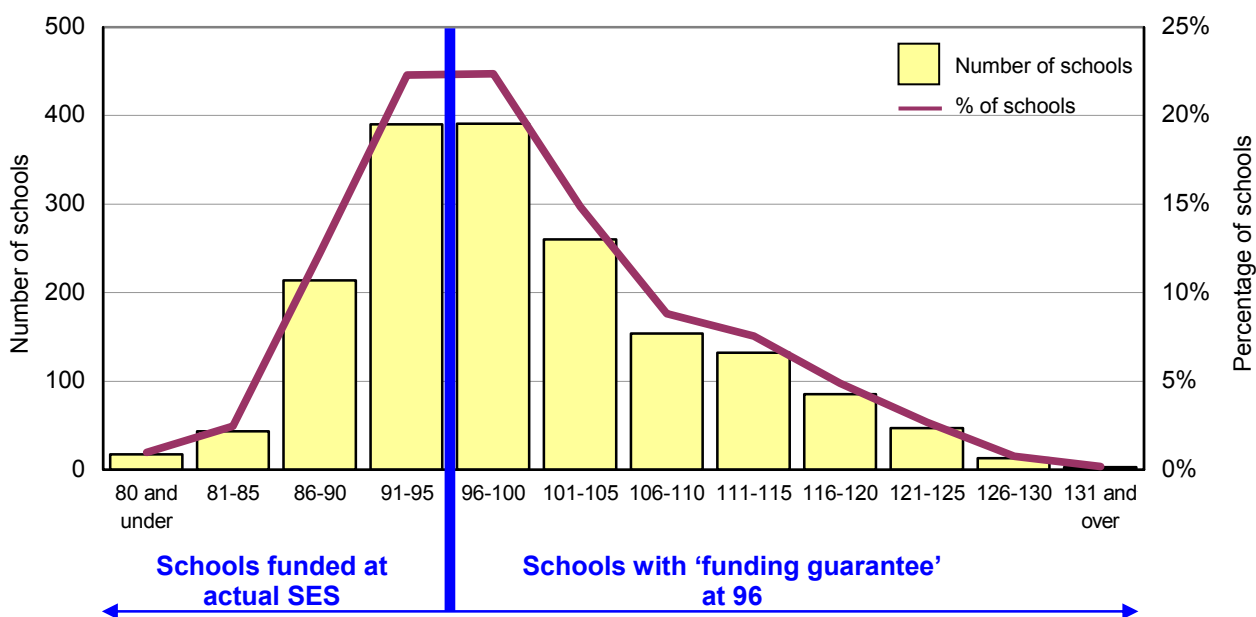
SES scores for schools are calculated using data of the ABS 2001 Census to determine a measure of socio-economic status for an ABS Census Collection District. (The Census Collection District (CD) is the lowest level at which the ABS release information – about 220 households in metropolitan areas.) Socio-economic characteristics (occupation, education and household income) of the CD’s population are calculated to provide an SES score for each CD in Australia. Addresses for Catholic and other non-government students in 2003 were coded to a CD, and the school’s SES was calculated by determining the average of SES scores for students in a school. SES is calculated to “obtain a measure of the capacity of the school community to support its school” (*Choice and Equity: Funding Arrangements for Non-Government Schools 2001-2004*, p.3). An important aspect of the SES index is that SES scores (attempt to) identify the relative socio-economic status of the population of the CD, rather than the socio-economic status of the individual (and their family).

The following analysis of SES and Catholic schools is based on 2003 student enrolments. Schools closed in 2004, and Catholic Special Schools are not included in this analysis. Four of the five schools administered by Northern Territory Catholic Education Office are excluded from this analysis. These schools are NT government funded, but CEO administered. These schools are remote Indigenous community schools which would be likely to have low SES scores, but as no SES score is available, they have been excluded from the analysis. The exclusion of these four schools has little impact nationally, but affect state level data, as there are only thirteen schools for SES analysis in the Northern Territory.

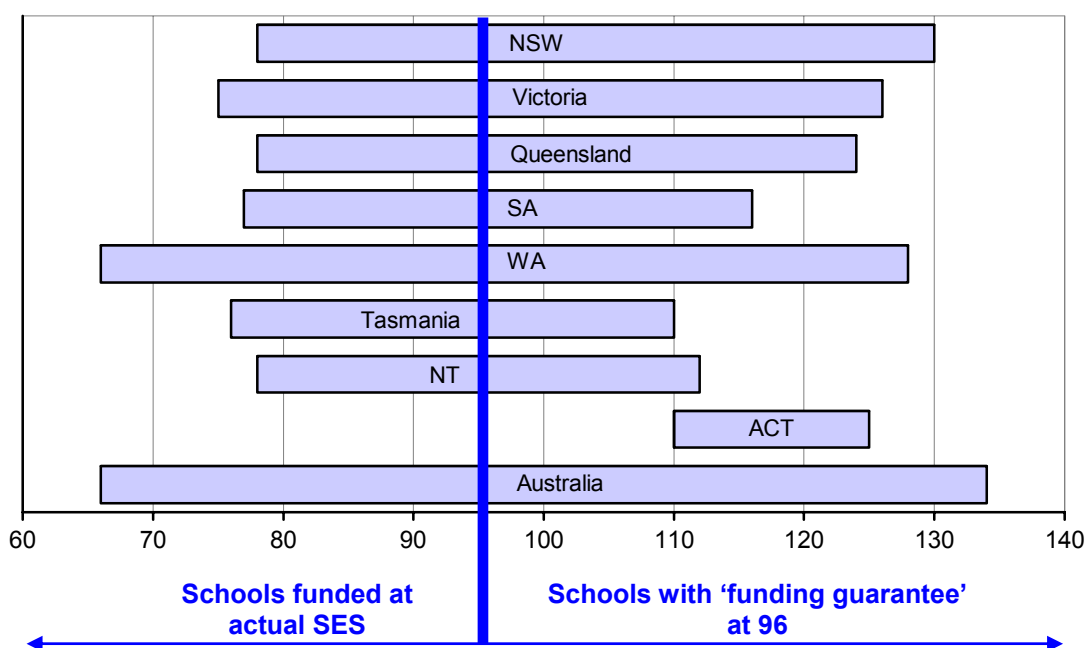
SES Distribution for Catholic Schools

SES scores in Catholic schools range from 66 to 134, with 62% of schools having an SES score greater than 96. **Graph 34** demonstrates the distribution of SES scores and highlights the number of Catholic schools with high SES scores. Nationally, Catholic school's SES scores range from a school with an extremely low SES of 66 (the third lowest school SES for all non-government schools in Australia) to a school with an extremely high SES score of 134 (the highest SES score of any non-government school in Australia). **Graph 35** and **Table 27** show this large range of school SES scores throughout the states and territories, and the significant variation between the states and territories.

Graph 34: Distribution of SES scores of Catholic schools, Australia, 2003



Graph 35: Ranges of SES scores in Australia and the States and Territories, 2003



Graph 35 highlights the variation in the ranges of school SES scores, and **Graph 36** highlights the proportion of schools with SES scores below, and above, and SES score of 96. This graph illustrates the proportion of schools in each state and territory which will be funded at their actual SES score, and the proportion of schools which will be 'funding guaranteed'.

Graph 36: Proportion of Catholic schools funded at actual SES and 'Funding Guaranteed', Australia and States and Territories, 2003

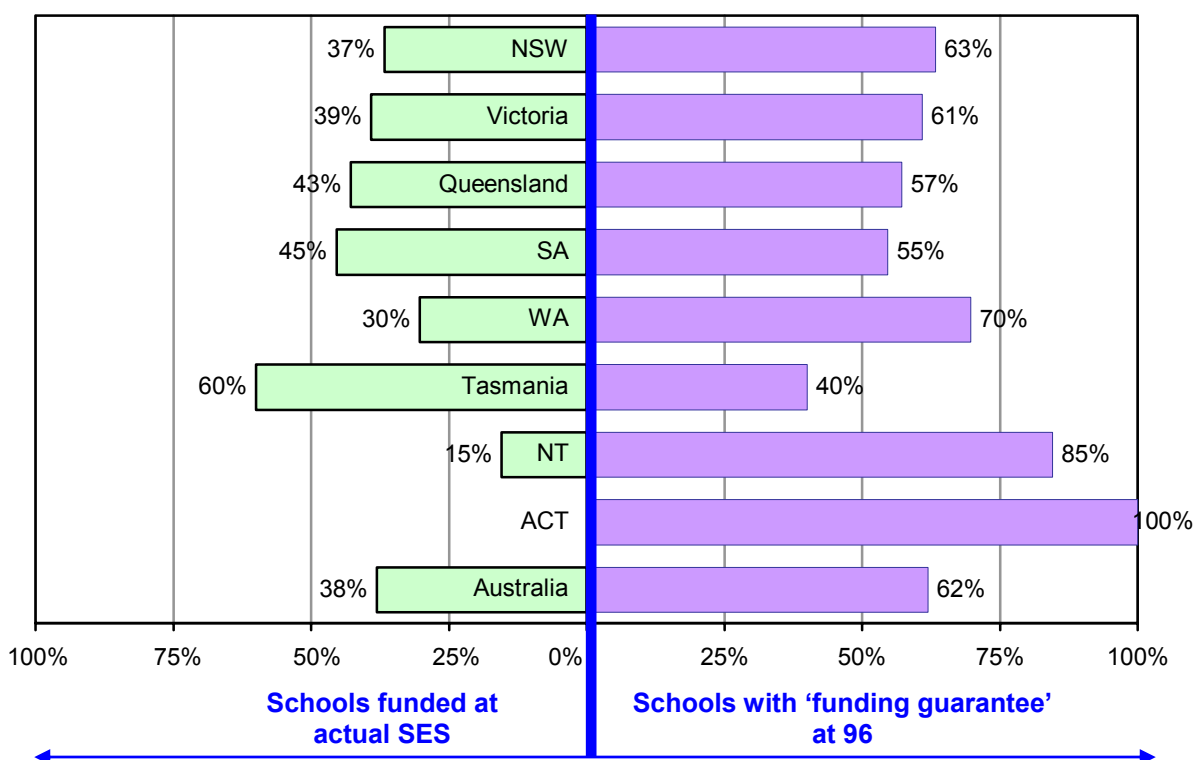


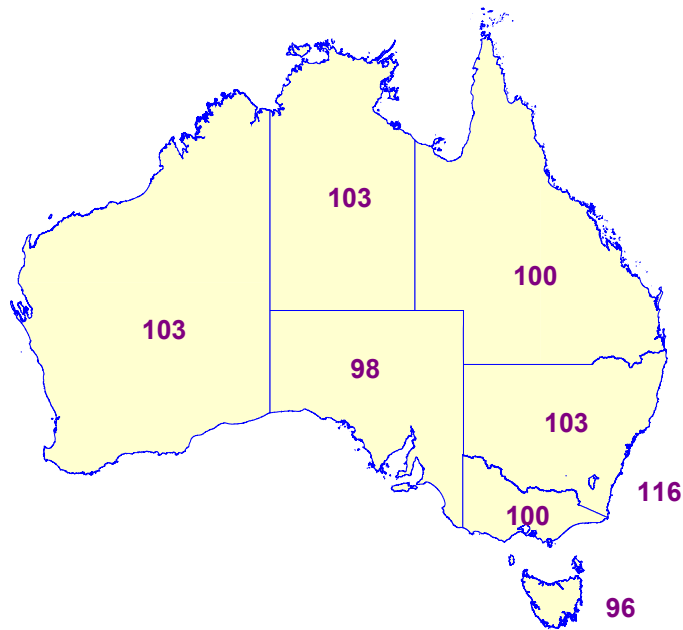
Table 27: Catholic schools' SES ranges, and schools funded at actual SES and 'Funding Guaranteed', Australia and States and Territories, 2003

| | Lowest School SES | Highest School SES | Range of School SES | No. of Schools with SES below 96 | No. of Schools with SES of 96 or higher |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| NSW | 78 | 134 | 57 | 221 | 382 |
| Victoria | 75 | 126 | 52 | 196 | 306 |
| Queensland | 78 | 124 | 47 | 123 | 164 |
| South Australia | 77 | 116 | 40 | 49 | 59 |
| Western Australia | 66 | 128 | 63 | 50 | 115 |
| Tasmania | 76 | 110 | 35 | 24 | 16 |
| Northern Territory | 78 | 112 | 35 | 2 | 11 |
| ACT | 110 | 125 | 16 | 0 | 31 |
| Australia | 66 | 134 | 69 | 665 | 1,084 |

Weighted SES

The following information provides the weighted SES averages for the states and territories of Australia. Schools' SES scores are multiplied by their student enrolments to provide the weighted SES scores for the state. Weighted SES scores provide a more representative understanding of SES than averaging the SES scores of schools. The weighted SES score for all Catholic schools in Australia is 102. Tasmania has the lowest SES score of 96, and the ACT has the highest SES score of 116.

Map 3: Weighted SES scores of States and Territories, 2003



Primary and Secondary Schools

Graph 37 highlights that a greater proportion of secondary schools have an SES score greater than primary schools.

Graph 37: SES distribution of Primary and Secondary schools, Australia, 2003

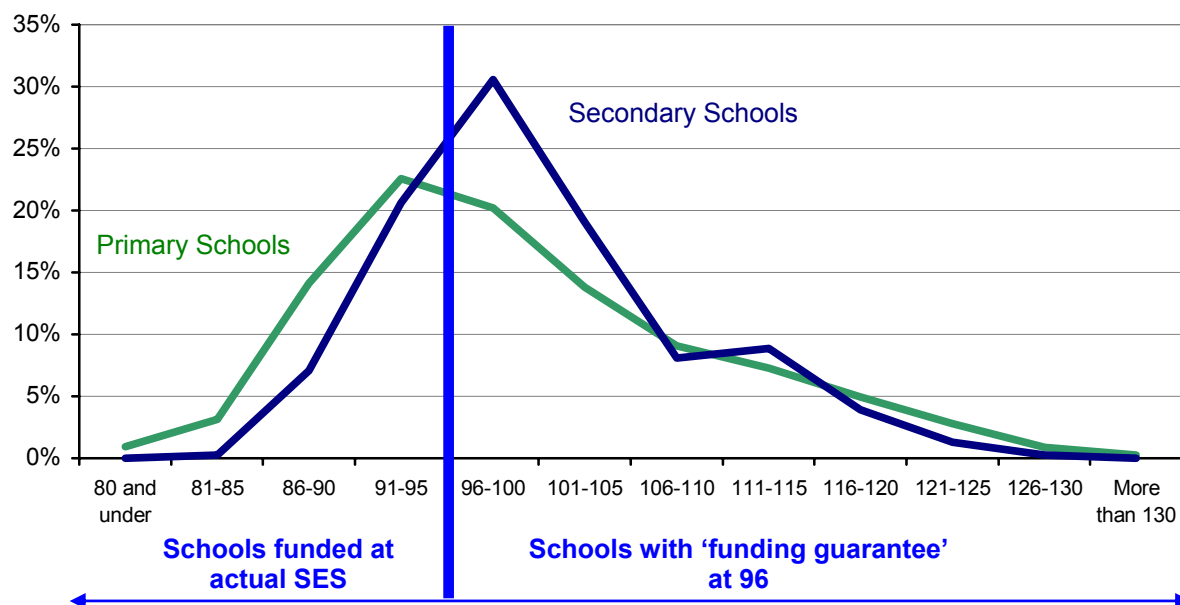


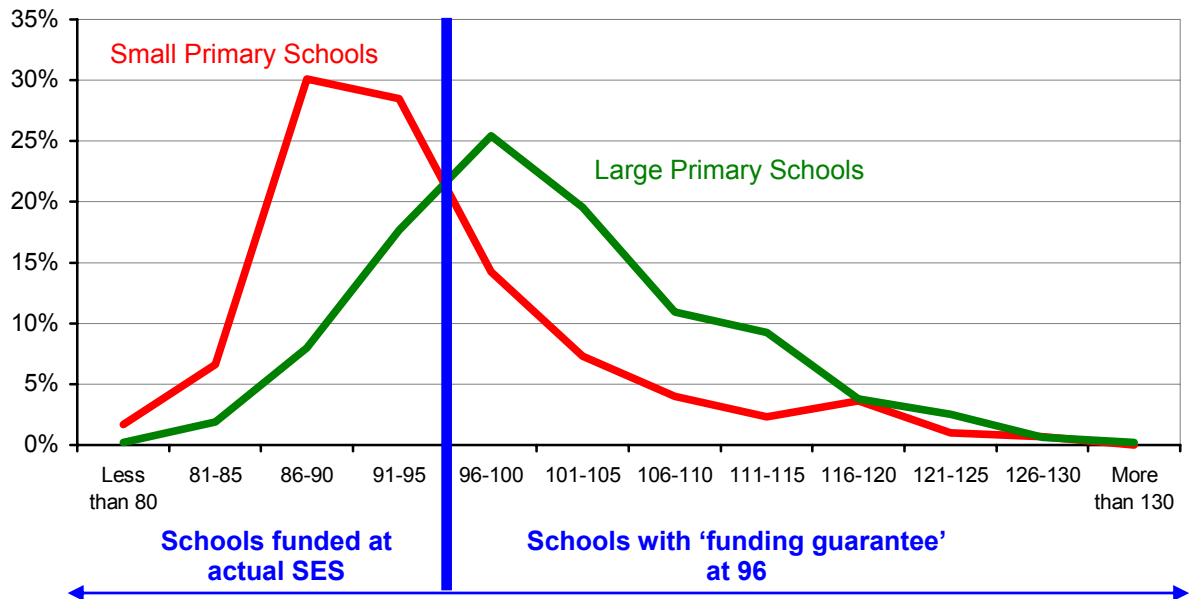
Table 28: Distribution of school SES scores for Primary, Secondary and Combined Primary/Secondary Catholic schools, Australia, 2003

| SES Range | Primary Schools | Secondary Schools | Combined Schools |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 80 and under | 12 | — | 5 |
| 81 - 85 | 40 | 1 | 2 |
| 86 - 90 | 179 | 27 | 8 |
| 91 - 95 | 286 | 79 | 25 |
| 96 - 100 | 256 | 117 | 18 |
| 101 - 105 | 175 | 73 | 12 |
| 106 - 110 | 115 | 31 | 8 |
| 111 - 115 | 92 | 34 | 6 |
| 116 - 120 | 63 | 15 | 7 |
| 121 - 125 | 35 | 5 | 7 |
| 126 - 130 | 11 | 1 | 1 |
| More than 130 | 3 | — | — |
| Total Schools | 1,267 | 383 | 100 |
| SES Range | 66 — 134 | 83 — 126 | 72 — 128 |
| Weighted SES | 101 | 102 | 104 |

Small and Large Schools

Graph 38 and **Graph 39** highlight larger schools have a higher proportion of higher SES scores than small schools, and that the majority of small primary schools have an SES score below 96. One implication of this observation is that as many schools attracting additional funding are small, the **increase** in funding will not be significant for many of these schools due to their small student enrolments.

Graph 38: SES distribution of Small and Large Catholic **Primary** Schools, Australia, 2003



Graph 39: SES distribution of Small and Large Catholic **Secondary** Schools, Australia, 2003

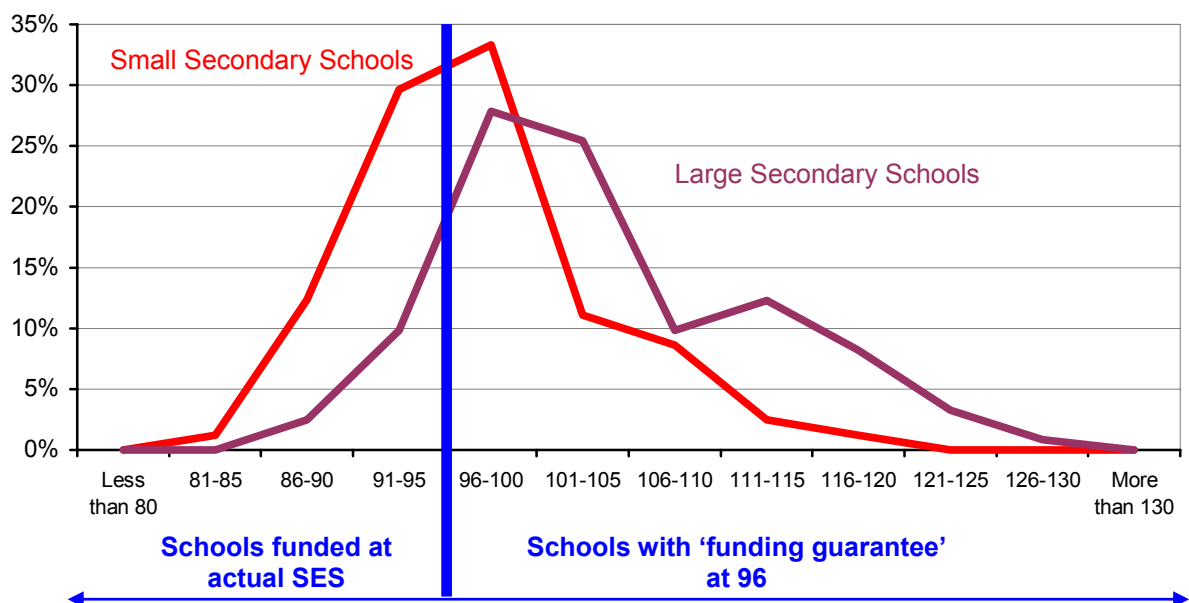


Table 29: SES distribution of Small, Medium and Large Catholic **Primary** schools, Australia, 2003

| SES Range | Small Primary Schools | Medium Primary Schools | Large Primary Schools |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 80 and under | 5 | 6 | 1 |
| 81 - 85 | 20 | 11 | 9 |
| 86 - 90 | 91 | 50 | 38 |
| 91 - 95 | 86 | 116 | 84 |
| 96 - 100 | 43 | 92 | 121 |
| 101 - 105 | 22 | 60 | 93 |
| 106 - 110 | 12 | 51 | 52 |
| 111 - 115 | 7 | 41 | 44 |
| 116 - 120 | 11 | 34 | 18 |
| 121 - 125 | 3 | 20 | 12 |
| 126 - 130 | 2 | 6 | 3 |
| More than 130 | — | 2 | 1 |
| Total Schools | 302 | 489 | 476 |
| SES Range | 66 — 127 | 76 — 134 | 80 — 131 |
| Weighted SES | 96 | 101 | 101 |

Table 30: SES distribution of Small, Medium and Large Catholic **Secondary** schools, Australia, 2003

| SES Range | Small Secondary Schools | Medium Secondary Schools | Large Secondary Schools |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 80 and under | — | — | — |
| 81 - 85 | 1 | — | — |
| 86 - 90 | 10 | 14 | 3 |
| 91 - 95 | 24 | 43 | 12 |
| 96 - 100 | 27 | 56 | 34 |
| 101 - 105 | 9 | 33 | 31 |
| 106 - 110 | 7 | 12 | 12 |
| 111 - 115 | 2 | 17 | 15 |
| 116 - 120 | 1 | 4 | 10 |
| 121 - 125 | — | 1 | 4 |
| 126 - 130 | — | — | 1 |
| More than 130 | — | — | — |
| Total Schools | 81 | 180 | 122 |
| SES Range | 83 — 119 | 87 — 124 | 89 — 126 |
| Weighted SES | 97 | 100 | 104 |

Further Research

This report provides a national summary of some of the trends and issues in Catholic education in Australia; and through the availability of the ACES databases, state commissions and dioceses are able to analyse this report further, and place their state or diocese in a context beyond their boundaries.

This report has placed some of the trends in Catholic schools, and the policy issues, in the broader community context. Through the ACES database, further opportunity for analysis is available to NCEC. To this end, the next report to NCEC from the Working Group on Catholic Schools Data will further examine enrolment trends in Catholic schools and consider these trends in the contexts of all school sectors and the school-aged population. This analysis will enable the Working Group on Catholic Schools to consider possible future enrolment trends in Catholic and other school sectors throughout the states and territories.

Through the opportunities which the ACES database offers, the Working Group on Catholic Schools is able to provide electoral analysis and handouts for every Federal electorate to assist in the upcoming 2004 Federal election. Through the ACES database, the Working Group is able provide this analysis to the July meeting of NCEC for distribution to states and territories, to enable Catholic schools to have effective and co-ordinated strategies in all states and territories. Importantly, electoral information has already been effectively utilised during several recent state elections, and when state commissions, dioceses and schools (both Catholic and other non-government) have been lobbying political parties and federal and state Members of Parliament.

This report updates many of the trends and policy issues raised in the *Report of the Working Party on Catholic School Enrolments*. In doing so, the report has drawn from both Catholic schools data and the 2001 ABS Census. It is the intention of the Working Group that an annual update of Catholic school trends be provided to NCEC, and it is anticipated that the report *Catholic School Enrolment Trends 2004* will be provided to NCEC before Christmas this year (subject to DEST providing 2004 Schools Census data).

In conclusion, this report is intended to provide NCEC, and others, with a summary of some of the trends in Catholic education in 2003, and to provide NCEC with an opportunity to consider and further develop discussion of possible policy issues relevant to Catholic education. From the basis of this report, the Working Group encourages NCEC to consider the opportunity for further short and long-term research and policy topics relevant to Catholic education to be developed by the Working Group on Catholic Schools Data, for investigation in 2005 and beyond.

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