
A Thesis Presented to The Faculty of Education The University of New England

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study, "The Birth Life and Death of an Educational Funding Policy", was to illuminate the forces that affect the full cycle of Commonwealth school funding policies. To achieve this, a case study of the late New Schools Policy was made which showed how political activities and behaviour in society are interrelated and affect the nature and process of policy making.

The main question that the inquiry set out to address was:

What factors contributed to the formulation, implementation, review and termination of the 1986-1996 Commonwealth New Schools Policy?

To explore the policy process and address the research question a theoretical framework was developed based on two models of policy analysis, Harman's adaptation of the Process Model and Easton's Political Systems Theory. A combination of the two models formed a conceptual framework which gave a broader understanding of a multi-dimensional policy process. Harman's process model formed the foundation of the analytical framework, within which to recount the story of the New Schools Policy. It did this by identifying the successive stages of: issue emergence, formulation and authorisation, evaluation, redirection and termination of the policy. However, at the heart of this story was a scenario based on a conflict situation. Harman's model revealed aspects of the scenario but Easton's Political Systems Theory probed deeper, providing a clearer understanding of the forces behind the evolution of the policy. It achieved this because as a model, it provided a framework for showing how interest groups, official structures and policy actors (Harman, 1980, p64) were able to influence policy development at various stages.

The forces it revealed surrounded a complex struggle between the existence and Commonwealth funding of two educational systems, public and private. These forces included: political ideologies and party value preferences including equity, choice and competition; the Governmental party in control and the effects of changes in government; Commonwealth budgetary constraints; and; the standing and political weight of pressure groups from both sectors of education, public and private. By illuminating the forces that affected each stage in the process of a Commonwealth educational policy the research has hopefully made a valuable contribution to the understanding of Australian educational policy making and the policy process.
DECLARATION

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

signature
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# Table of Contents

**Chapter** | **Page**
--- | ---
1. The Birth, Life and Death of an Educational Funding Policy | 1
   - Purpose of the Study | 2
   - Overview of the New Schools Policy | 4
   - Methodology | 7
   - Limitations of Methodology | 11
   - Organisation of Thesis | 12
2. The Nature and Development of a Commonwealth Education Policy | 14
   - The Political Systems Model | 16
   - The Process Model | 24
   - Conceptual Framework | 27
3. Emergence of the New Schools Policy: Demands and Support | 34
   - A Brief Historical Background | 34
   - The Whitlam Era | 36
   - The Era of the Fraser Government; 1975-1983 | 44
   - Summary | 57
4. Policy Formulation and Authorisation | 59
   - Election of the Hawke Labor Party | 62
   - Formulation | 67
   - Authorisation | 76
   - Summary | 81
5. Implementation | 84
   - Trends in Enrolments, Schools and Finance 1986-1995 | 84
   - Policy Modifications | 96
   - Summary | 104
6. Evaluation and Termination | 107
   - Review Instigated | 108
   - The McKinnon Review | 112
### Abolition of the New Schools Policy

Future Directions 119

Summary 125

### 7. The Factors that Influenced a Policy’s Birth, Life and Death

- Issue Emergence 130
- Formulation 134
- Authorisation 137
- Implementation 139
- Modifications 141
- Evaluation 143
- Termination 146
- Future Directions 148
- Concluding Comments 149

### References Cited

152

### Appendices

159

**A. Models of Policy Analysis** 159

**B. Attachment B: Guidelines for General Recurrent and Capital Grants for New Non-Government Schools** 163

**C. Commonwealth School Commission's Proposed Changes to Attachment B contained in Guidelines for General Recurrent and Capital Grants for New Non-Government Schools** 165

**D. Letter to Dr Tannock** 166

**E. Background to the Panel of Commissioners Selected to Draw up Proposals for a New Schools Policy** 168

**F. Bodies and Organisations who made Submissions to the Connors Panel, 1984-85** 169

**G. Terms of Reference to the McKinnon Review** 170

**H. Statistical Information Pertaining to Australian Schools 1972-1995** 172

- Number of Government and Non-government Schools in Australia 172
- Student Enrolments - Government and Non-government Schools 175
- Commonwealth Recurrent Expenditure by Sector 1974-1995 174
- Apparent Retention Rates of Secondary Schools to Year 12, Category of School, Australia, Selected Years 1967-1994 175
List of Tables

3.1 Proportion of Enrolments in Government and Non-Government Schools, August Census 1963-1972 37
3.2 Federal Funding to Government and Non-Government Schools 1972-1983 53
5.1 Applications and Success Rates for Commencing Non-Government Schools 1986-1996 89
5.2 Total Expenditure on Education as a Percentage of Gross Domestic Product 92
5.3 Number of Primary Schools by Size and Student Enrolment in Australia 1970, 1985, 1990, 1994 98
5.4 Application and Success Rate for Commencing Non-Government Schools by State, Australia, 1986 - 1996 101
5.5 Success Rate of Non-Government Schools Making Applications for a Funding Category Review, 1985 - 1994 103
H.1 Number of Government and Non-government Schools in Australia 1972-1995 172
H.2 Student Enrolments - Government and Non-government Schools 1972-1995 175
H.3 Commonwealth Recurrent Expenditure by Sector 1974-1995 174
H.4 Apparent Retention Rates of Secondary Schools to Year 12, Category of School, Australia, Selected Years 1967-1994 175

List of Figures

1.1 Timeline of Major Historical Events Affecting funding to Non-Government Schools 8
1.2 Timeline of Major Events in the Life of the New Schools Policy 9
2.1 A Simplified Model of Easton's Political Systems Theory 17
2.2 Harman's Model of the Policy Process 25
2.3 Easton's Political Processes Model Combined with Harman's Adaptation of the Process Model 29
2.4 The New Schools Policy: Integrating the Political Systems Theory and Harman's Process Model 30
3.1 Numbers of Schools by Sector 1972-1983 45
3.2 Real Increase of Schools by Sector 1972-1983 46
3.3 Proportion of Total School Enrolment Retained by Sector 1972-1983 47
3.4 Apparent Retention Rates of Government and Non-Government Schools to Year 12: 1973-1994 Overlay: Enrolment Share of Respective Sectors Over the Same Period 51
3.5 Retention of Students to Year 12 in Government Sector Shown as a Percentage 1973-1994 Overlaid With: Percentage Real Loss of Enrolment Share per Year Over Same Period 52
3.6 Ratio of Public to Private Recurrent Funding to all Australian Schools 54
3.7 Growth in Commonwealth Recurrent Grants to Education by Sector, Compounded with Rate of Inflation, 1972-1982 55
4.1 Diagram Showing Intentions and Driving Force Behind the New Schools Policy 83
5.1 Proportion of Total School Enrolment held by Sector 1974-1992 85
5.2 Yearly Growth in Enrolment Share held by the Non-Government Sector 1975-1991 86
5.3 Number of Government and Non-Government Schools in Australia 1972-1994 87
5.4 Percentage Growth per Year of Non-Government Schools 1975-1995 88
5.5 Ratio of Government to Non-Government Recurrent Funding 1974-1993 90
5.6 Growth in General Recurrent Funding to Education by Sector, 1974-1994 91