



THE BIRTH, LIFE, AND DEATH  
OF A COMMONWEALTH  
EDUCATIONAL FUNDING  
POLICY:  
A CASE STUDY OF THE  
NEW SCHOOLS POLICY  
1985-1996

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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 inter-related 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.

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signature

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