

**THE SOUND OF MANY VOICES:  
INVESTIGATING HOW PRINCIPALS VIEW AND INFLUENCE  
MASSED SINGING IN SECONDARY BOYS' SCHOOLS**

Submitted by

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## Statement of Sources

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without acknowledgement in the main text of this thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution. All research procedures reported in this thesis were conducted with the approval of the relevant Ethics Committee.

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## **Abstract**

This research focused on how three principals in Melbourne boys-only schools view and influence the place of massed singing within their respective school cultures. The views of the principals themselves and their own capacity for self-reflection were critical to the thesis. The study was underpinned by three theoretical propositions: principals, although not usually involved in the teaching of massed singing, nevertheless exert an influence on it; massed singing has a unique power to enhance the broader school culture; and, cultural assumptions about gendered participation in music-making can affect student attitudes towards massed singing.

The review of literature highlighted three themes which informed the conceptual framework underpinning the research: organisational and educational leadership; the construct of masculinity in boys' education and in leadership; and the nature and benefits of massed singing. Given the themes of the review, it seemed appropriate to undertake a study which would be essentially qualitative, interpretive, and based on in-depth interviews with the key stakeholders.

In the case of each of the three participating principals, data was collected from key documents produced by the schools, from a written questionnaire, and from a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire was designed both to collect data and to raise participants' consciousness prior to the interview. The questionnaire's 17 questions, structured so as to address the three themes identified through the review of literature, were designed to create a flexible framework for an in-depth exploration of key issues in the context of the interview itself.

### III

Findings from the study indicated that there was a very strong belief amongst the participating principals that massed singing affects the overall culture of their schools in a range of profound and significant ways; that they themselves exercise a sponsorial or support role in relation to the singing programs in their schools, and rely on experts for the effective delivery of musical content; that traditional stereotypes of gender can be challenged and debunked through student participation in massed singing; and that their own personal histories of singing, and their favourable disposition towards it, are significant factors in how effectively they are able to promote and support it.

The study findings have implications for school leaders and their boards; the teaching profession in general, and choral and vocal educators in particular; parents and the arts community; government education authorities and policy makers; and this researcher himself. Recommendations for further research have also emerged out of this study.

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE RESEARCH DEFINED

#### 1.1 Introduction to the Research

In Australian culture there exist some strong traditions around gendered participation in cultural activities such as music and singing. For boys, these traditions have tended to reinforce non-participation and the marginalisation and ridicule of those who defy the prevailing consciousness. This, of course, is not the case for boys in every culture. Masculinity in Wales, for example, is very much tied to the ability to sing resonantly and with confidence. What experiences of singing do adolescent boys in Australia have across their years of secondary schooling? How do their principals, entrusted with shaping school culture and the personal development of their students, see their role in influencing how massed singing happens in their schools, if indeed they are at all interested in promoting and resourcing it?

This research project aims to explore the influence of principals in selected Victorian boys' secondary schools on the place of corporate singing in their school cultures. It therefore encompasses three interconnected fields: educational leadership, boys' education and massed singing. The first central belief of this project is that wherever a healthy culture of massed singing is absent from a boys' school, the school is greatly impoverished as a result. The second belief is that school principals should be aware of this fact, and act to promote, develop and sustain a credible program of massed singing in the lives of their schools.

I have been involved in education and educational leadership since 1982. My teaching experience has been mainly in boys' secondary schools administered by the Christian Brothers. I am also a singer and musician with a wide background in music theatre and opera. Throughout my professional career as a teacher, I have continued to perform as a freelance musician, at the same time taking the opportunity of supporting the performing arts as strongly as possible wherever I have been teaching. Currently, I teach singing at St Kevin's College Toorak and Corpus Christi Regional Seminary in Carlton. My professional experience over the years has led me to ask: How can we who teach in secondary schools make available to boys the extraordinary experience of massed singing, and all of the many benefits which can flow from it?

## **1.2 Research Site**

The three Victorian secondary boys' schools which comprised the research site for this study into the role of the principal in influencing massed singing were: School A, located in Toorak and Richmond; School B, located in Canterbury; and School C, located in South Yarra. School A is a Kindergarten to Year 12 school in the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne with an enrolment of over 1700 boys. School B is an independent Grammar school in the Anglican tradition, catering for some 1200 boys in Prep to Year 12. School C is a select-entry state school with an enrolment of over 1300 boys in Years 9 to 12.

## **1.3 Identification of the Research Question**

The research question embodies three interrelated components: What are the leadership decisions principals make about massed singing in their schools, and what factors influence these decisions? What understanding do principals have of the

relationship between the issues surrounding boys' education and the place of massed singing in their schools? What do principals understand about the nature and purpose of massed singing?

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of the research is to investigate how principals see themselves as influencing the practice of massed singing in their schools, and to explore the connections they make between their role as leaders and this specific activity. Central to this statement of purpose is the belief that massed singing is an activity with great potential for shaping school culture, and that principals should be encouraged to exploit this potential in order to build a healthy and vibrant culture in which there are special opportunities for challenging gender stereotypes and promoting aesthetic values.

#### **1.5 Evolution of the Research Question**

A number of sub-questions emerged out of the review of literature. They are listed as follows:

1. How do the life experiences of principals shape their views on massed singing and the way they influence it?
2. In what ways do principals use their leadership to influence the practice of massed singing in their schools?
3. What effect does the practice of massed singing in schools have on the principals of these schools?
4. What particular cultural and educational challenges do principals recognise for single-sex secondary boys' schools?

5. What understanding do principals have of the general benefits of massed singing for the human person?
6. What forms does massed singing take in secondary boys' schools?
7. In what ways do principals believe that a massed singing program can affect the climate of single-sex secondary boys' schools?

Questions 1, 2 and 3 address the first component of the research question whose focus is the role of the school principal in relation to massed singing; Question 4 relates to the second component of the research question which concerns boys' education and issues of gender; and Questions 5, 6 and 7 inquire into the nature and benefits of massed singing, especially in relation to schooling.

## **1.6 Design of the Research**

The research was constructed as a qualitative in-depth interview study, designed to afford maximal scope for hearing and understanding the views and experiences of the participating principals. Specifically, data collection for this research has resulted from a questionnaire, a personal interview, and a document search. The questionnaire was sent to each of the three participants two weeks in advance of their interviews. Its aims were threefold: to collect data related to the broader issues raised by the research, such as gender in education and priorities in boys' education; to raise consciousness among participants of the context of their interviews, thereby preparing them to participate more deliberately in a face-to face dialogue with the researcher; and to assist in impression management, a phenomenon documented by researchers in the field of qualitative research (Peeters & Lievens, 2006; Lopes & Fletcher, 2004) in which the risks of interviewees providing answers to satisfy the expectations of interviewers are acknowledged and explored. The second method, a semi-structured interview, was designed to focus on the personal history and experiences of the participant, with scope

for the participant to reflect and respond in depth. The collection of background data from school publications and websites was also undertaken as a strategy to assist in providing a context for the data obtained via the first two strategies.

## **1.7 Significance of the Research**

The present research project is innately valuable for a number of reasons. In the first instance, it has the potential to inform practice by raising consciousness of the particular relationships between sets of factors which have not been examined before in these particular combinations. These include the influence of the principal on massed singing in a secondary boys' school, and the principal's views on the nature of massed singing as an activity capable of shaping the broader culture of a school.

Furthermore, the education of boys is currently a key feature of the Australian educational landscape, and informed attempts at exploring this area are increasing in number and intensity at present. Through the House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Education of Boys and its report entitled *Boys: Getting it Right* (2002), the Australian Government has recognized that there remains much to be done if the outcomes for boys in formal schooling are to be improved and optimised.

The area of boys and singing belongs with other sets of fundamental issues which go directly to the core of their identity. The fact that boys can feel pressured into inauthentic subject or behavioural choices can reflect a broader cultural problem of underperformance and alienation whose direst manifestations are depression, addictive behaviour and suicide, issues on which a significant amount of literature now exists (Dorais, Lajeunesse, Tremblay, 2004; Osborne, 2005; Neu & Weinfield, 2006). The



broader social context of this research project for boys and their families is of immediate and far-reaching import.

Often the articulation of a problem and its attendant issues can lead to a breakthrough in thinking, or inform an improved course of action. Principals who struggle with the issues surrounding the singing of their students may feel empowered to improve the situation in their respective schools by cultivating an awareness of why singing is important in the greater scheme of things, and by appropriating a language to allow enhanced dialogue in this field among principals, their colleagues and school communities.

## **1.8 Limitations and Delimitations of the Research**

Limitations relate to the internal validity of the study and addressing them helps to identify potential weaknesses of the study, while delimitations deal with issues of external validity and the ways in which the focus of the research has been narrowed to specific variables or key phenomena (Cresswell, 2002). A limitation affecting the current research is the inclusion of only three school principals, all from secondary boys' schools in Melbourne. While this is fitting given the nature of the research problem, it does not allow for generalisability. This study is delimited by two sets of factors. The first of these relates to the fact that only one type of research design - in this case a qualitative interview study - has been adopted. The second set of factors concerns the fact that the research concentrates solely on the perceptions of principals. No attempt was made to survey other members of the school community who are involved directly in massed singing, either as participants or teachers. This is a conscious decision which is a response to the nature of the research problem.

## **1.9 Definitions**

### **1.9.1 Principal**

Also referred to in some schools as the *head*, *head teacher* or *headmaster*, the principal is the most senior member of staff whose role is commonly an executive one, in the sense that he or she is often chiefly responsible for the implementation of the policies of the governing body in the operational life of the school. The principal is the person in the school who must ultimately accept responsibility for what happens (Gurr, 2008). In the context of leadership, principals also accept responsibility for developing and articulating the school's vision, and empowering others to join them in this and other key tasks. In this study, the word 'principal' will be used as a generic term to represent all of the possible titles which can be used for this position, except when variants appear in quotations from the participants themselves. The role of the principal and the terms, conditions and selection processes for his or her appointment can vary significantly across systems and sectors.

This research involved three male principals of Melbourne secondary boys' schools, one each from the State system, the Independent sector, and the Catholic system. Two of these school leaders are referred to in their own schools as headmasters and the third is known as the principal. All three school leaders completed the same questionnaire and participated subsequently in semi-structured interviews with the researcher.

For the purposes of this research, it has been a key understanding that the principal is always involved in the most significant formal decision-making processes of his institution and holds the most senior designated position of leadership in his school.

### **1.9.2 Leadership**

As the literature review establishes, leadership is a concept highly resistant to definition. Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999) argue that there is no universally agreed definition of the concept of leadership. Furthermore, Yukl (2002) contends that attempts to define leadership are always arbitrary and subjective, a view also held by Gronn (1998) who maintains that definitions of leadership inevitably reflect the personal parameters of the person formulating the definition. Nearly two decades ago, Cuban (1988) claimed that there were more than 350 definitions of leadership but that no clear and unequivocal understanding had emerged of what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders. Since then, many more definitions have been advanced and some are clearly more useful than others. In this research, key understandings of leadership are explored and developed around the concepts of influence, values, vision, and change.

Many definitions of leadership acknowledge the centrality of a process of influence. Yukl (2002) contends that “most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person [or group] over people [or groups] to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organisation” (p. 3). Yukl believes that leadership can be exercised by teams or groups, as well as by individuals, a view reinforced by those who advocate distributed leadership as an alternative to traditional hierarchical models (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2005; Day, Gronn & Salas, 2006). Leithwood and Riehl (2003) explore the nature of this influence, stating that leaders do not impose goals on their followers but create a shared sense of purpose by working with others so as to mobilize them towards the attainment of shared goals. The concepts of shared goals and the primacy of influence are also taken up by Stokes and James (1996) who describe leadership as “the art of consistently influencing or directing people towards

the achievement of a clear common goal...” (p. 1). Their description of leadership as an art form contrasts with the views of Cuban (1988) who refers to the exerting of influence as a bending process in which the motivations and actions of others are turned towards achieving specific outcomes.

Certain alternative constructs of leadership emphasise the need for a firm grounding in personal and professional values (Caldwell, Hayes, Karri & Bernal, 2008). Sanders (1994) has described two of the most obvious perils in leadership as pride and egotism. Power can become a potential danger if leaders allow themselves to become the centre of the enterprise, or if they focus on building resources only, rather than on building their followers (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Leaders who lack integrity can come to rely on dishonest and manipulative methods to engage people’s support or to promote their own agendas (Tucker & Russell, 2004). In all successful organisations, including educational institutions, it is imperative that leaders embody and exemplify the shared values of that community, and that their exercise of leadership reflects the utmost integrity. The need for leaders to avoid appearing inconsistent, or to be acting in ways that communicate insincerity, has been stressed by Badaracco and Ellsworth (1989). End values such as liberty, justice and equality must be the principal’s ultimate concern (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1997). When this is so, the commitment, enthusiasm and drive of employees can be intensified and secured, and the organisation can increase in productivity and innovation. Out of their research on the relationship between personal and organisational values, Kouzes and Posner (2004) have described the various positive effects of shared leadership and shared vision.

Vision is an increasingly significant component of leadership, although there are divided opinions on whether it is an essential aspect of leadership or simply a feature of

it (Caldwell, Bischoff & Karri, 2002). A key task of principals is to set direction by articulating a vision for the future that can inspire others (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Hough and Paine (1997) have described vision as “the capacity to create and communicate a compelling image of a desired state of affairs” (p. 177). Some scholars assert that the establishment of a shared vision is the single most common theme in leadership studies (Bender, 2002; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). Starratt (2004) has proposed that the deepest source of a principal’s power lies in a vision which can “attract the commitment and enthusiasm of the members” (p. 43). On the other hand, Treston (1994) has stressed the necessity of communal ownership of the leader’s vision, without which its legitimacy is compromised. Sergiovanni (1996) has described three sources of authority that enable a leader to foster commitment to a vision. The first two sources, bureaucratic and personal authority, derive from an external mandate of the *follow-me* variety. The third source, however, is directed towards community leadership where the goal is to build “a broad-based commitment to shared values and conceptions that become a compelling source of authority for what people must do” (p. 83).

Leadership has become increasingly understood as being intimately bound up in the processes of change (Beach, 2006). Hallinger (2004) has highlighted the need for principals to assess accurately the demands for change within their school communities and to respond appropriately in light of the school’s capacity for change. The principal’s key role in facilitating change has been described by Pepper and Thomas (2001) in terms of bringing about a renewal of commitment towards success for students, teachers, staff and parents. Fullan (2006) has argued that school leaders must not be content simply with achieving good school results, but must work to develop a sustainable pedagogical institution.

The concepts outlined above establish a basis for understanding how leadership is viewed in this research. Firstly, leadership is a process of influence which takes a variety of forms (Yukl, 2002; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Stokes & James, 1996). Secondly, leadership is grounded in personal and professional values which foster productivity and innovation, and which achieve end values such as liberty, justice and equality (Tucker & Russell, 2004; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Beare, Caldwell & Milikan, 1997). Furthermore, Kouzes and Posner, as cited in Hesselbein, Goldsmith and Beckhand (1996) have described the positive effects of values on the practice of shared leadership, asserting that when we “liberate the leader in everyone, extraordinary things happen” (p. 110). Thirdly, leadership is an activity through which a compelling vision of a desirable state of affairs is presented, such that it attracts the enthusiasm and commitment of others (Starratt, 2004; Hough & Paine, 1997). Lastly, leadership is necessarily bound up in the processes of change which principals must learn to understand and influence in order to achieve sustainability for their school communities (Pepper & Thomas, 2001; Fullan, 2006). The concepts discussed above are key aspects of the literature review.

### **1.9.3 Massed Singing**

Sometimes also referred to as *corporate* singing, the practice more commonly known as *massed* singing describes in this research any vocal performance or rehearsal of a group of secondary boys that is significantly larger than an average classroom cohort, and which comprises more non-specialist singers than trained or designated choristers. Examples of this would include groups of boys at an assembly, in a massed singing item at a concert, in a cheer squad at a sporting event, or in a whole-school or year-level liturgical celebration. This research was not primarily concerned with the formal choral programs which operate in secondary boys’ schools, except in cases

where a relationship between such a program and the practice of massed singing was identified or discussed.

#### **1.9.4 Secondary Boys' School**

Secondary boys' schools, though holding in common the enrolment of male students only, can vary significantly in a number of ways. They may be located on a single campus or be spread over several different locations, either on the one site or on a campus or campuses which may be several kilometers away from each other; they may vary significantly in student numbers; they may commence their intake at different year levels; or they may have their own primary sections in addition to their secondary schools. In fact, all of these permutations apply in some shape or form to the schools of which the three participants in the research are principals.

School A, governed until 2007 by the Trustees of the Christian Brothers in St Patrick's Province, and now under the governance of Edmund Rice Education Australia, enrolls boys from Preparatory to Year 12 on three separate sites: Glendalough and Heyington campuses in Toorak, and Waterford campus in Richmond. The Glendalough campus accommodates students in Preparatory to Year 6; the Heyington campus caters for boys in Years 7 and 8, and Years 10 to 12; and the Waterford campus houses Year 9 students only.

School B is a single-campus independent school in the Anglican tradition with a Junior School (4 year old Pre-Preparatory to Year 5), Middle School (Years 6 to 8), and Senior School (Years 9 to 12). It is located in Canterbury, Melbourne.

Located in South Yarra, School C is a single-campus select-entry secondary school administered by the Victorian Department of Education for boys in Years 9 to 12.

## 1.10 Outline of the Thesis

In total, the thesis consists of six chapters, an overview of which is provided in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

*Overview of the thesis structure*

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Heading</b>
<i>1</i>	The Research Defined
<i>2</i>	The Context of the Research
<i>3</i>	Review of the Literature
<i>4</i>	Design of the Research
<i>5</i>	Presentation and Qualitative Analysis of Research Findings
<i>6</i>	Review and Conclusions

### 1.10.1 Chapter Outlines

Chapter 1, The Research Defined, introduces the research question, and addresses aspects of the research design. It concludes with an outline of the thesis structure.



Chapter 2, Context of the Research, outlines four major aspects of context which underpin research into the influence of principals on corporate singing in secondary boys' schooling. These are the 2002 House of Representatives Standing Committee report on the education of boys in Australia; the 2005 national review of school music education in Australia; and the particular backgrounds of the three principals selected for this research, and profiles of their respective schools.

Chapter 3, Review of the Literature, consists of a review of the literature concerning three main concepts: organisational and educational leadership; masculinity, boys' schooling and leadership; and the human experience of massed singing. In the first instance, the literature on organisational and educational leadership is significant for this research because it creates a framework and a language for understanding and discussing the concepts and issues which characterise this field. These include the expression of leadership referred to as transformational, and the place of vision, values, distributed leadership, culture and change. In relation to the second main section, the literature on boys' schooling and gender offers insights into the issues which affect the willingness of boys to participate in massed singing. There are key issues here which influence the decisions of principals who take responsibility for determining whether or not massed singing takes place in their schools. As regards the third section, literature on the experience of massed singing helps to clarify the nature of the activity about which principals are called to make decisions, and affirms its positive characteristics. The final section explains how the research is illuminated and enhanced by the review of the literature.

Chapter 4, Design of the Research, outlines a strategy for the collection and analysis of research data. Ontological, epistemological and theoretical perspectives are

discussed within the context of a theoretical framework. The research design is discussed, and an explanation of data collection methods is provided in which the relationship between the questionnaire and interview stages of the process is explained. This is followed by a description of the methods used to select the research participants themselves. A discussion of trustworthiness is presented in which reference is made to the concepts of credibility, reliability, generalisability, dependability, confirmability and methodological rigour. A six-phase data analysis strategy is outlined based on a coding process. Out of the coding process, seven subthemes are developed as a means of structuring the data. Finally, ethical considerations are discussed.

Chapter 5, Presentation and Qualitative Analysis of the Research Findings, consists of eight sections, the first seven of which contain the findings from the questionnaire/interview process for each of the participating principals. The findings are presented according to the seven subthemes described in Chapter 4. In the final section of the chapter, comparisons are made between the responses of the three principals.

Chapter 6, Review and Conclusions, assesses the results of the research project by revisiting the project's stated purpose. The research design is recalled and answers to each of the research questions are addressed in light of the research findings. The study findings are then compared with the principal themes which emerged out of the Review of Literature in Chapter 3. To conclude, a brief discussion is presented which addresses the potential for this study to contribute to scholarly debate. Finally, some implications for the profession are discussed, together with suggestions for further research in this field.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

#### 2.1 Introduction

The purpose of the research, as stated in Chapter 1, is to investigate how principals see themselves as influencing the practice of massed singing in their schools, and to explore the connections they make between their role as leader, the culture of their school, and this specific musical activity. Central to this statement of purpose is the belief that massed singing is an activity with great potential for shaping school culture, and that principals should be encouraged to exploit this potential in order to build a healthy and vibrant culture in which there are special opportunities for challenging gender stereotypes and promoting aesthetic values.

This chapter reviews four aspects of context which facilitate an understanding of the research and situate it within an expanded socio-cultural milieu. Context informs research by enlarging perceptions of the framework of factors which influence the study and its participants, including the researcher. The methodologies which underpin the various forms of qualitative research are not asocial or ahistorical events, but rather processes embedded in race, culture, historical period and a multitude of personal views and biases (Wengraf, 2001). The four aspects of context referred to above are set out in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

*Four aspects of the context*

<b>Aspect 1</b>	Postmodernism and the Redefinition of Gender
<b>Aspect 2</b>	Boys' Education in Australia: <i>Boys: Getting it Right</i>
<b>Aspect 3</b>	Music Education in Australia: <i>National Review of School Music Education</i>
<b>Aspect 4</b>	Backgrounds of the Participating Principals' Schools

More specifically, these aspects of context locate the research within a socio-historical framework (Postmodernism), in which the role of gender is highlighted (Redefinition of Gender); they describe key aspects of the contemporary Australian educational landscape pertaining to boys' education (*Boys: Getting it Right, 2002*) and music education (*National Review of School Music Education, 2005*); and they provide historical summaries and environmental profiles of the schools from which the participating principals in the study are drawn.

## **2.2 Postmodernism and the Redefinition of Gender**

Postmodernism is a difficult concept to define and can mean many things to many different people. To understand Postmodernism, it is important to characterise what came before it, namely the diversity of historical movements known as Modernism which encompassed the period from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. The motivating spirit behind these movements devolved from a belief in the power of human beings to improve, shape and influence their environment with the aid of scientific knowledge, through technology and by means of experimentation. Modernism fostered a vigorous re-examination of every aspect of existence, from the

smallest concerns of everyday life to the heights of philosophy. Its goal was to identify those practices and attitudes which impede progress, and to replace them with new and progressive means of achieving the same ends. Philosophically, Modernism canonised reason as the highest of epistemological tools, and signified the belief that humans more or less universally possess the faculty of rational thought; reason is the “ultimate and legitimate earthly judge of truth beauty, moral goodness and political right independent of the dictates of tradition and authority...” (Cahoone, 2003, p. 17). Modernism has also been described as closely sponsoring the dominance of social masculinity (Mullins, 2006), a fact which is much clearer to the contemporary mind due to the work of the feminist movement: “The Centrality of gender to an understanding of Modernism has been made evident by feminist scholarship over the past few decades primarily through the analysis of Modernism’s patriarchal ‘construction’, or deformation, of female identity...” (Izenberg, 2000, pp. 2-3).

By the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, a number of structural theories of human existence had grown out of the assumptions of Modernism (Claude Lévi-Strauss, 1949; Barthes, 1957; Piaget, 1970). For the structuralist, the individual is shaped by sociological, psychological and linguistic structures beyond human control. Structuralism, then, is “a way of thinking about the world which is predominantly concerned with the perception and description of structures” (Haw, 2003, p. 6). These structures can be exposed using appropriate methods of investigation. On the other hand, the contrary worldviews espoused in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century by poststructuralism and deconstructionism established a new set of theoretical formulations for what we now describe as the postmodern condition. While conceding that language and society are clearly shaped by rules and systems, the French philosopher, historian and prominent poststructuralist Michel Foucault (1961; 1969), emphatically rejected the structuralists’ belief in definite

underlying structures capable of explaining the human condition, and denied the possibility of critiquing a discourse objectively by standing outside it. Around the same historical period, Derrida (1967; 1972) developed deconstruction as an approach to uncovering the multiple interpretations of texts. Influenced by Heidegger and Nietzsche, Derrida suggested that all texts are of their nature ambiguous, and therefore remain resistant to final and definitive interpretation. Moreover, Macleod (2001) has argued that poststructuralism, in addition to influencing social discourses such as those surrounding childhood, language and education, has also been instrumental in “inciting self-reflexive modes of subjectivity, and in cultivating new norms of gender conduct” (p. 259).

In many ways, Postmodernism has become a reaction against the patriarchal endorsement of reason, power and dominance which represent the pretensions of high-modernist culture. Hicks (2004) argues that many postmodernist thinkers deconstruct reason, truth and reality because they believe that “in the name of reason, truth and reality Western civilization has wrought dominance, oppression and destruction” (p. 3). Hicks describes the conflict between men and women which has resulted from modernism as a brutal one because “Males, whites and the rich have their hands on the whip of power, and they use it cruelly at the expense of women, racial minorities and the poor” (p. 3). In recent decades, Western epistemologies of dominance have been subjected to a growing and sharpened attack by those who have traditionally been excluded from exercising defining roles in social theory and practice. In her assessment of the postmodernist landscape of the 1980s, Di Leonardo (1991) maintained that, over the preceding 20 years, these “others” of the West – women, colonised peoples, ethnic minorities, blacks, labouring people – had “disputed their displacement by the intellectual mainstream, effecting profound changes in the disciplines of history and

social life” (p. 142). In the 1990s, the postmodernist politics of gender assumed greater definition, and the term ‘masculinity politics’ was coined by Connell (1995) who described how, in this new political dispensation, the place of men in the gender order is always the principal focus. Subsequently, Lingard and Douglas (1999) articulated the following range of masculine responses to post-1960s feminist-inspired reforms: men’s rights, profeminism, masculinity therapy and conservatism. The range of stances is indicative of the plurality of responses among men to the contemporary politics of gender.

In his discussion of the cultures of masculinity in contemporary Western civilisation, Edwards (2006) summarises the plight of men in terms of what he calls the “crisis from without” (p. 7) and the “crisis from within”. In the first instance, the crisis from without “...includes some partially empirically documented concerns relating to the position of men within such institutions as family, education and work” (p. 8). This crisis derives from the perception that men have lost, or are losing, power or privilege relative to their prior status in these institutions. On the other hand, the crisis from within centres on a perceived shift in men’s *experiences* of their position *as* men, especially the feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness and uncertainty. Edwards sees the dynamic of power as central to both definitions of crisis: “The continuity concerning the importance of *power* here highlights not only its significance for masculinity *per se*, but rather the sense that this is a key factor that informs the entire masculinity in crisis thesis” (p. 8).

The notion of Postmodernism as an approach in which the “meanings of social phenomena are continually shifting and being re-assessed” (Briggs & Coleman, 2007, p.

40), especially in the discourses surrounding gender and the politics of masculinity, provides a backdrop to the investigation of how school leaders and the boys in their schools view involvement in the arts, and in massed singing in particular. Postmodernist gender politics also help to contextualise the role of the male leader in the cultures of traditional institutions. As this study investigates how male principals influence a particular activity in which adolescent males participate, and because this is an activity which is traditionally regarded in Australian culture as more appropriate for women and girls than for men and boys, historical perspectives on and contemporary understandings of gender identity are particularly relevant.

### **2.3 Boys' Education in Australia: *Boys: Getting it Right***

The initiative in 2000 of the Federal House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training to undertake a study into the education of boys in Australia reflected a widely held perception that issues of gender in Australian schooling needed to be researched and understood as a matter of urgency. The study resulted in a Government report entitled *Boys: Getting it Right* (2002). The report acknowledged the attention given in previous decades to addressing inequities which had worked to the disadvantage of girls and women in education, in the workplace and in the broader community, before endorsing the concern of many parents, teachers, academics and community workers that boys were not coping with school and life as well as girls.

The Committee cited the following indicators as evidence of a context of underperformance for boys in Australian schools:

- underachievement by boys in early literacy testing;
- significantly lower rates of school retention of Year 12 boys in 2001;



- a marked widening of the gap between the superior achievement of girls in the majority of Year 12 subjects and the results achieved by boys;
- lower rates amongst boys of admission to higher education;
- other indicators related to formal disciplinary proceedings in school which involve many more boys than girls (Bartlett, 2002, p. xvi).

The Committee also took into account a range of socio-economic factors and education policy changes which it saw as having shaped the context surrounding boys and their educational outcomes. The Report insisted that “Education does not occur in isolation from the wider community, and must be considered in the context of social and economic changes that have occurred over recent decades” (Bartlett, 2002, p. xvii). The Report went on to describe influential changes in the labour market which, for young males and females aged between 15 and 24 years, had collapsed spectacularly while school retention rates had doubled. Furthermore, as the labour market continued to demand better communication and interpersonal skills, young men who would previously have filled unskilled labouring positions were finding the changing labour market less congenial and accessible.

In discussing social change, the Committee cited the changing status of women and changing family structures as the most obvious social developments impacting on the present generation of boys. Recognition was given of an increase in the number of single-parent families headed by women, and of the potential impact of this on the social development of boys.

The Inquiry also addressed the influence of the various strategies and programs in girls’ education which had been designed to help girls through the social and economic changes of the previous twenty years. It concluded that, by contrast, “little has been done to help boys understand and negotiate the same changes” (Bartlett, 2002,

p. xviii). Reference was made to the document “Gender Equity: A Framework for Australian Schools” (Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 1997) which had explored growing understandings about the construction of gender and its implications for policy and practice, as well as developments in education addressing the differences in the experiences and outcomes of schooling both for boys and girls. The Committee concluded that “Gender Equity: A Framework for Australian Schools” is too narrow in its approach, and proposed that the way forward both for boys and girls was to “identify their common and separate educational needs and to implement policy framework with positive strategies to address those needs...” (p. xviii).

A more detailed examination of the Committee’s report is undertaken in Chapter 3. The present discussion is intended to inform only the issue of context as it applies to the present study. It is also important to recognise that the Australian Government has initiated, participated in, or supported, a large number of programs and studies into gender in schooling. The website of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR, 2008), currently lists 62 such links, of which 27 relate directly to the education and training of boys.

## **2.4 Music Education in Australia: *National Review of School Music Education***

The past decade has seen a growing concern amongst music educators and academics that music education in Australian schools has become critically inadequate. In March 2004, the Australian Government announced a national review of school music education. A team led by researchers from Murdoch University, Western Australia, undertook the review on behalf of the Australian Government to assess the

current quality of teaching and learning of music in Australian schools; to identify factors that affect the quality and status of the teaching of music in Australian schools; to describe examples of best practice in teaching and learning of music both in Australian schools and schools overseas; and to establish key recommendations, principles and priorities for enhancing school music education.

The study undertook an examination of the challenges facing schools in providing music education, and highlighted opportunities for strengthening music education in schools. The resultant *National Review of School Music Education* (2005), also known as the *Seares Report*, after its author Margaret Seares, provided a detailed examination of the existing context for music education in the light of past studies and reviews, all of which had identified significant deficiencies in the provision and delivery of music education in Australia.

The immediate context for the Review was derived from a variety of factors which may be summarised as follows:

- the widespread recognition that music is an important part of every child's education;
- a general perception that Australian school music education is approaching a state of crisis;
- the influence of evidence from United States research (Fiske, 1999) and current Australian studies, that education in the Arts (including music) has the potential to enhance significantly the skills children need to flourish in the knowledge economy;
- the belief amongst educators that the arts achieve diverse and valuable educational ends that also have positive flow-on effects to other areas of learning;
- the desire to affirm music as an important area of arts education that can provide powerful learning experiences for young people (Seares, 2005, p. 2).

More specifically, the Review addressed the disparity between girls' and boys' participation in singing, particularly in the context of choral groups, and attributed this to a number of factors including the designation of singing as a feminine or non-masculine activity; the inhibiting impact of physiological changes in boys' voices during puberty; and the vulnerability of boys to peer pressure in activities involving the singing voice. These factors and the literature surrounding them is examined in greater detail in Chapter 3; they are cited in this instance as elements which contribute to the current debate on music education in Australia, and as factors which shed light on the context of the present study.

## **2.5 Backgrounds of the Schools of Participating Principals**

This study focuses mainly on three secondary principals and the ways in which they view and influence massed singing in their schools, and does not seek to make the schools themselves a key focus. However, the principals' schools constitute the actual arenas in which many of the phenomena under investigation actually occur, and as such, represent important aspects of the context of this study.

### **2.5.1 School A, Toorak, Victoria**

In founding the College in 1918 the Christian Brothers set out to establish a strong tradition of high academic standards. School A was the Matriculation centre for all the Brothers' schools in Melbourne. With its early academic success, the enrolment soon outgrew its buildings in East Melbourne and so the College moved to Toorak in 1932. Here it grew to a full primary and secondary school. When the Associated Public Schools of Victoria enlarged its number in 1957, School A was invited to membership (*School A Website*, 2008).

In recent years, much development has occurred at the senior campus, Heyington, while the modern Junior School, Glendalough, has been revived. Most recently, a dedicated campus for Year 9 students, Waterford, has been established on Richmond Hill on the site of the former Vaucluse College. In partnership with Loreto Mandeville Hall and St Peter's Parish of Toorak, an Early Learning Centre has most recently been opened as a venue for the beginning of the educational journey of 3 and 4 year olds. The College has grown to over 1,400 students ranging from Preparatory to Year 12. School A is a prominent Catholic school of Melbourne, an established member of the Associated Public Schools of Victoria, and a foundation member of the recently inaugurated Australia-wide network of Edmund Rice Schools. (*School A Website*, 2008).

School A seeks to promote a love and appreciation of music as an art form that facilitates emotional, cultural and spiritual development. Music is highly regarded within the school community and is a major contributor to the College's reputation for excellence in the Arts.

All students at Glendalough in years 3 to 6 learn a string or wind instrument for a least one year. Over 200 boys participate in instrumental lessons which are available for a full range of instruments including string, brass, wind, percussion, guitar, voice and church organ.

School A is also the home of the St Patrick's Cathedral Choir which is administered by the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. Boys who gain admission to

the Cathedral choir after a formal audition process, attend School A on an academic scholarship. As well, the College offers a wide range of bands, orchestras and choirs catering for all levels of development. The rich ensemble program complements a strong class music program and includes annual music camps, tours and performances in the wider community, as well as weekly performances within the College. Each week, 33 ensembles rehearse at School A.

Central to the mission of School A is the promotion of excellence in learning as an essential means of facilitating human growth and liberation, the recognition of family life as providing an affirming context for the nurturing of the whole person, and a desire for all to achieve fullness of life (*Mission Statement*, n.d.).

The students at School A participate annually in a range of musical and theatrical productions which, in the secondary campus, usually involve girls from nearby independent schools. In recent years, School A has performed *Little Shop of Horrors*, *My Favourite Year*, and *The Pirates of Penzance*.

The current Headmaster, Participant One in this study, took up his present appointment in 2004, after a period as Deputy Headmaster of School A. Out of a total academic staff of over 200, there are over forty teachers and instrumental tutors working in the College's Music Department.

### **2.5.2 School B**

School B was founded by A. B. Taylor in 1886. By 1908, the school had moved to Burke Road in Camberwell, and the current Canterbury site was established in 1934

with the purchase of the mansion house “Roystead”. This building has remained the focal point around which the expansion and development of the campus has taken place. Recent major building projects include the Danks Science Laboratories and Wootton Design Studios, the Performing Arts Complex and Mallinson Music School, and most recently, the McDonald Humanities and Library Building and a new Middle School (*Prospectus*, p. 3).

School B enjoys a longstanding tradition of music-making. All students are encouraged to learn a musical instrument and over 300 boys do so, assisted by 35 specialist members of the Music Staff. Many performance opportunities are available to all the boys in the two symphony orchestras, three string orchestras, two concert bands, two stage bands, various chamber ensembles, and the three main school choirs which involve some 300 boys. Major school concerts, student recitals and church services provide further opportunities for music-making.

In the classroom, music is a core subject up to Year 7 and an elective subject from Year 9. The school also maintains a strong focus on drama and productions occur at all levels in the school. In the Junior School, opportunities are presented through the Drama Club and recent productions such as *Around The World in a Thousand Years* (2003), *Ali Baba* (2005) and *Circus Norge* (2006). Recent Middle School productions have included *Treasure Island* (2004), *The Seven Deadly Sins* (2005) and *Medieval Night* (2006) while the Senior School dramatic and musical productions in recent years have included *West Side Story* (2004), *The Front Page* (2005) and *Hair!* (2006).

The school's vision of education extends beyond the classroom, and students are encouraged to involve themselves in the broad co-curricular program which offers opportunities to participate on the sporting field, on the stage, in the Concert Hall and on the Debating platform.

In the words of the Headmaster, School B encourages boys to “aim high in their studies, to take pride in their appearance, to work hard and to be sensitive to the rights and needs of others” (*School B*, n.d.). The school's Headmaster, Participant Two in this study, commenced his current appointment at School B in 2001.

### **2.5.3 School C**

Victoria's first state secondary school, School C was originally known as the Melbourne Continuation School, and was opened in 1905, with 135 girls and 68 boys. The school was the result of the vision of Frank Tate, the first Director of Education, to enable students from the state primary schools to continue on with their education. It was housed in the Old National Model School in Spring Street with Joseph Hocking, an inspector of schools, the first principal. A rich extra curricula life was built with the strong academic curriculum, sports, music, cadets, drill, excursions, sporting exchanges with Adelaide High School (from 1910), social events and a school magazine. World War I was an important hiatus for the school with many serving in the Australian armed forces (over 500), and the school having a special association with particular military campaigns (*School C*, n.d.).

The School continued to grow until accommodation became critical in the 1920s, with the building literally falling down, and the decision was made to split the



School and move to alternative sites. The boys were the first to move, in October 1927 to their new home on Forrest Hill, South Yarra when the school's current name was officially adopted. The girls moved to Government House in 1931, then to King Street Central School the following year, and finally to their new home at Albert Park in 1934 when the girls' school was renamed MacRobertson Girls' High School.

The outbreak of World War II meant the school building was requisitioned by the Royal Australian Navy, and the School was forced to move to two different sites: the new Camberwell High School and Tooronga Road State School. In 1944 the School returned to Forrest Hill, with a new Principal, Major-General (later Sir) Alan Ramsay. By the 1980s the School was in poor physical condition, and urgently in need of new facilities to meet the changes taking place in education, particularly following the introduction of computers. In 1995 the original 1927 building was refurbished and the expansion of facilities allowed the School to increase its enrolment to 1366, the highest level ever.

The present principal, Participant Three in this study, took up his current appointment in 2002. He himself is a former student of School C. He describes his school as a place where “boys are well looked after; there are many learning options; boys are expected to excel; boys are encouraged to be themselves; and nonconformity of thought and intellect is encouraged within an environment of rigorous, and sometimes frenetic, application to learning opportunities” (*School C Website*, 2008).

Music is firmly entrenched in the ethos and traditions of School C. All students are involved in music in some way through the School's music curriculum. The

school's website states that "This is best witnessed at major events such as Speech Night and the House Choral competition, when the whole School reflects its unity and strength with the massed singing of over 1300 boys".

## **2.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has identified and addressed four aspects of context which contribute to the research: Postmodernism and the redefinition of gender; recent initiatives in boys' education in Australia; the state of music education in Australia; and the backgrounds of the schools which the principals involved in this study represent. In light of these contextual aspects and given the purpose of the research, literature is reviewed in Chapter 3 which focuses on organisational and school leadership, especially as it relates to influencing school culture; issues in boys' education, particularly those relating to gender; and the effects of music and massed singing on the human person.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, Context of the Research, a review was undertaken of four aspects of context which facilitate an understanding of the research and situate it within an expanded socio-cultural milieu. These aspects were postmodernism and the redefinition of gender; boys' education in Australia and the report, *Boys: Getting it Right* (2002); the Australian music education scene as described in the *National Review of Music Education in Australian Schools* (2005); and the backgrounds of the participating principals' schools. Context was seen as informing research by enlarging perceptions of the framework of factors which influence the study, its participants, and the researcher.

Given these contextual factors, and the three interrelated components of the research question identified in Chapter 1, it seems appropriate to examine the literature in three corresponding and overlapping areas. First, organizational and educational leadership is examined in light of the emphasis in the research question on exploring factors which influence the leadership decisions principals make about massed singing in their schools. Second, masculinity in boys' education and leadership is examined, given that the research question locates massed singing within the context of boys-only schools whose principals, in this study, all happen to be male. Lastly, the nature and benefits of massed singing are explored in response to the priority given in the research question to the nature and purpose of massed singing.

In this chapter, literature relating to organisational and school leadership is reviewed with particular attention to the characteristics of transformational leadership

(Bass, 1985; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Deluga & College, 2000). Dimensions of transformational leadership such as vision (Starratt, 2004; Hallinger & Heck, 2002; Spillane, Diamond, Sherer & Coldren, 2004) are also discussed and provide both a framework and a language for conceptualising key aspects of leadership. Literature pertaining to masculinity (Connell, 1995; Collins, 2005) and boys' education (Connell, 1996; Crotty, 2001) provides a context for examining aspects of gendered participation in music (Green, 1997; Harrison, 2007), especially as it applies to massed singing (Adler, 2002; Harrison, 2007), and attention is also given to the influence of masculinity on leadership (Collins & Singh, 2006; Eagly & Carli, 2007). Literature on the experience of singing establishes historical, musical and sociological contexts for singing as a human activity, and points to the multiple benefits it provides for wellbeing (Clift, Hancox, Morrison, Hess, Kreutz & Stewart, 2007), for education (Fiske, 1999; Hetland & Winner, 2001), and for therapeutic intervention (Kreutz, Bongard, Rohrman, Hodapp & Grebe, 2004). Table 3.1 provides an overview of the structure underpinning the review of the literature perceived to be relevant to this study.

Table 3.1

*Outline of the Literature Review*

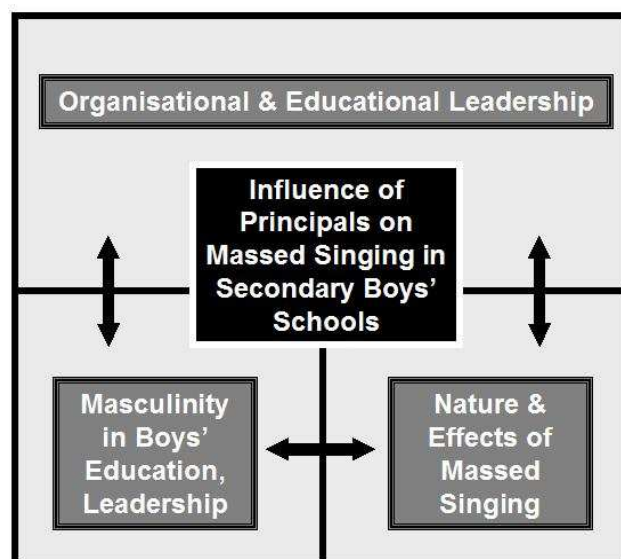
3.2	<b>Conceptual Framework</b>	
3.3	<b>Organisational &amp; Educational Leadership</b>	Educational Leadership
		Transactional & Transformational Leadership
		Vision
		Values, Integrity, Authenticity & Credibility
		Principals & Shared Leadership
		Leadership & Organisational Culture
		Leadership & Change
		Personal Awareness & Self-reflection
3.4	<b>Summary</b>	
3.5	<b>Masculinity in Boys' Education &amp; Leadership</b>	Gender
		Multiple, Hegemonic & Alternate Masculinities
		Masculinity in Australia
		Masculinity and Sport
		Masculinity & Schooling
		Boys' Education in Australia
		Gender & Musical Activity
		Gender & Adolescent Boys' Singing
		Masculinity & Leadership
3.6	<b>Summary</b>	
3.7	<b>Massed Singing</b>	Historical Perspective
		Benefits of Music & Singing
		Effects on Physical, Psychological & Social Wellbeing
		Educational Benefits
		Group Singing in Liturgy & Worship
		Massed Singing in the Cultures & Rituals of Schools
		Choral Music in Australia: Historical Perspective
		Music Education in Australia: Contemporary Issues
3.8	<b>Summary</b>	
3.9	<b>Conclusions</b>	Concepts
		Specific Issues

### 3.2 Conceptual Framework

The three themes identified above, namely organisational and educational leadership, masculinities in education and leadership, and massed singing, combine to create a thematic network which characterises the conceptual framework underpinning this research. In the first instance, literature on organisational and educational leadership informs the research by exploring aspects of the professional world of principals whose views and actions are central to this study. Secondly, literature on masculinity and its expressions in the contexts of boys' education and leadership culture establishes a framework in which issues of gendered participation in music can be contextualised. Lastly, material specifically describing massed singing and its various benefits clarifies the nature and history of the activity itself, and provides a point of comparison between the viewpoints of the participants in this study and those of scholars and expert practitioners in the field of vocal and choral music. These three themes and their interrelationships are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1

*Conceptual framework of the literature*



### **3.3 Organisational and Educational Leadership**

Leadership has been variously defined, and is characterised in the literature by a wide range of adjectives such as instructional, participative, democratic, transformational, moral, and strategic (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). Early research into leadership concerned itself primarily with the leader as hero (Bossert, 1988) and focused on the exercise of power and authority as characteristic of the role (Stokes & James, 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1996). Leadership has also been described as situational (Hershey, Blanchard & Johnson, 2008); functional (Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson, 2008; Fernandez & Vecchio, 1997); instructional (Leithwood et al., 1999; Southworth, 2002); or resulting from a particular leader's individual style (Tucker, 1997; Tuohy, 1999). Writers have described a range of values-centred concepts such as moral leadership (Sergiovanni, 1992; Rhode, 2006) and servant leadership (Neidhart, 1998; Hunter, 2004). Theories have been advanced which stress the importance of one person as leader (Burns, 1978; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999), while others have developed models of collaborative or distributed leadership (Gronn, 2002; Bennett, Wise, Woods, & Harvey, 2006; Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Some writers have sought to cluster the vast literature on leadership into broad themes or types. Drawing on the work of Leithwood et al. (1999), Bush and Glover (2003) have proposed a typology for educational leadership which describes eight broad categories or theories, as represented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

*A typology for leadership*

	<b>Leadership Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
1.	<b>Instructional Leadership</b>	Targets schools' central activities of teaching and learning. However, underestimates other aspects of school life such as socialisation, self-esteem and student welfare.
2.	<b>Transformational Leadership</b>	Provides a normative approach to school leadership which focuses primarily on how leaders seek to influence school outcomes rather than on the nature or direction of these outcomes.
3.	<b>Moral Leadership</b>	Assumes that the critical focus of school leadership ought to be on the values and ethics of leaders.
4.	<b>Participative Leadership</b>	Assumes that decision-making processes of the group ought to be the central focus of the group. However, evidence of its successful implementation in schools is sparse.
5.	<b>Managerial Leadership</b>	Assumes that the focus of leaders ought to be on functions, tasks and behaviours. Authority and influence are related to hierarchical status. Can lead to managerialism if all that leaders do is implement external policy decisions.
6.	<b>Postmodern Leadership</b>	Celebrates the multiplicity of subjective truths as defined by experience and revels in the loss of absolute authority. Gives attention to the diverse and individual perspectives of stakeholders.
7.	<b>Interpersonal Leadership</b>	Stresses the importance of collaboration and interpersonal relationships.
8.	<b>Contingent Leadership</b>	Recognises the diverse nature of school contexts and advocates adapting leadership styles to particular situations, rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach.

(Adapted from Bush & Glover, 2003, pp. 7-11).

The rich diversity of leadership theories is at once extremely valuable, and also potentially confusing, as each definition sheds light on yet another aspect of the phenomenon of leadership with its own particular emphases and priorities. These eight models serve to emphasise the fact that the concepts of leadership are complex and diverse (Northouse, 2007; Kezar, 2008). However, they are also artificial distinctions, as



“most successful leaders are likely to embody most or all of these approaches in their work” (Bush & Glover, p. 12).

An important distinction has also been drawn between leadership and management (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Bush, 2003). While some writers have argued that both leadership and management are necessary in organisations such as schools (Bush & Glover, 2003; Coleman & Early, 2005), Starratt (2005) has depicted the differences between the qualities of leaders and administrators in terms of basic polarities, as illustrated in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

*Polarised qualities of leaders and administrators*

<i>Leader</i>	<i>Administrator</i>
Is concerned with growth	Is concerned with maintenance
Is a director	Is a stage manager
Writes the script	Follows the script
Based in moral authority	Based in loyalty and bureaucratic authority
Challenges people	Keeps people happy
Has vision	Has lists, schedules, budgets
Exercises power of shared purpose	Exercises power of sanctions and rewards
Defines what is real as what is possible	Defines what is real as what is
Motivates	Controls
Inspires	Fixes
Illuminates	Coordinates

(Source: Starratt, 2005, p. 10)

### **3.3.1 Educational Leadership**

The literature of educational leadership has its origins among non-educational business-oriented literature. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) have asserted that efforts to improve educational leadership should build upon the foundations of well-documented and well-accepted knowledge about leadership that already exists. Literature concerning educational leadership has flourished in recent decades and a substantial corpus of credible research now exists, representing a wide variety of views and approaches. Gunter (2001) has identified four main positions taken by those who research and write about leadership in educational settings: critical, humanistic, instrumental and scientific. The critical position is concerned with emancipatory agenda in which there is a movement away from oppressive power structures towards the generation of more just and creative alternative structures (Ball, 1994; Blackmore, 1999; Grace, 1995; Smyth, 1989). The humanistic position is based on narrative bibliographical epistemology which provides a vehicle for principals to tell their own story of what it feels like for them to exercise leadership in particular settings over time (Ribbins, 1997). This position has been promoted as an effective means of investigating the perceived realities of doing the job, and of revealing how the tensions and dilemmas encountered in this work are negotiated in real time (Day, Harris, Hafield, Tolley & Beresford, 2000). The scientific position sets out to measure the causal impact of principals (and other key leadership figures) on the behaviour of followers and on student learning outcomes, thus allowing statistical evidence to be generated on the links between policy and practice (Gunter, 2005). This form of research is highly congenial to those government departments and agencies which require empirical data as a basis for policy formulation and funding decisions. The emphasis here is on quantitative research that deals with the production of knowledge and on models of leadership that address what works and what doesn't. Thus, knowledge production lies

more and more with commercial consultancies, rather than with professional researchers in universities (Gunter, 2001; Forde, Hobby & Lees, 2000). The instrumental position is a site-based model which allows performance management to be operationalised *in situ* (Grace, 1995). Those holding positions of responsibility are defined as leaders, the behaviours of effective leaders are described, and strategies are devised to deliver favourable organisational outcomes (Halpin, 1990). More recently, Gunter and Thomson (2007) and Thomson and Gunter (2008) have critiqued contemporary research into educational leadership as excessively leader centric, in that it ignores the role of students and other adults in shaping the vision. Gunter and Thomson have attributed this imbalance to a dominant positivist epistemology which “emphasises students (and many adults) as objects to be identified and measured” (p. 27). Currie and Lockett (2007) has described how transformational leadership in certain organisational contexts is particularly vulnerable to the influence of policy-makers rather than leaders.

### **3.3.2 Transactional and Transformational Leadership**

In the late 1970s, Burns (1978) proposed a new leadership paradigm which was further developed in the 1980s (Bass, 1985; Yukl, 1989). It drew a distinction between the traditional form of leadership described as *transactional* and the newer form which came to be known as *transformational*. This distinction between the simple exchange of one thing for another which characterises the transactional process, and the priority placed by transformational leadership on “a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation” (Burns, 1978, p. 28) as initially identified by Burns, has also been similarly described by Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1997). Transactional leadership encourages individuals to seek their own objectives, is task and relationship oriented, focuses on the leader’s particular style (Tuohy, 1999) and involves “a bargaining over the individual interests of people going about their own separate ways” (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993,

p. 186). The leader motivates followers to bring about intended outcomes, and rewards them appropriately. This results in leader-subordinate exchange relations, in which “the subordinate receives some reward related to lower-order needs in return for compliance with the leader’s expectations” (Doherty & Danylchuk, 1996, p. 292). Sergiovanni and Starratt characterised transactional leadership as that of the “administrator who sees to the day-to-day management of the system, listening to the complaints and concerns of the various participants, arbitrating disputes fairly, holding people accountable to their job targets...” (p. 186).

Bass (1985), who developed the transactional-transformational model on the basis of the earlier efforts of Burns (1978), proposed that transactional leadership and transformational leadership are, in fact, two distinct dimensions rather than opposite ends of one continuum, and that they remain closely related aspects of leadership despite their distinctive characteristics (Yukl, 1989; Weese, 1994). Bass and Riggio (2005) have described transformational leadership as an “expansion” (p. 4) of transactional leadership, in that transactional leadership emphasis the exchange that takes place among leaders, colleagues and followers which is based on the leader discussing and specifying with others the conditions and rewards they will receive for their cooperation. However, transformational leadership raises leadership to the next level because it involves, “inspiring followers to commit to a shared vision and goals for an organization or unit, challenging them to be innovative problems solvers, and developing followers’ leadership capacity via coaching, mentoring, and provision of both challenge and support” (p. 4).

In illustrating the differences between transactional and transformational leadership, Giancola and Hutchison (2005) have drawn a sharper distinction between the

administrator's use of power *over* people, as opposed to the transformational leader's use of power *with* people. They identify the former with the managerial domain, and the latter with the humane dimension:

In relationships of the Managerial Domain, the manager relies on explanations, position power over people, and system awareness or adherence to organisational policies and procedures. In contrast, in the Humane Dimension's second component, namely, Empowering Relationships, the leader emphasizes the importance of group deliberations, power shared with people, and self-awareness. (p. 14).

A number of comparative studies have reported that transformational leadership behaviours are more positively related to subordinate effectiveness in a variety of organizational settings than are transactional behaviours (Zhu, Chew & Spangler, 2006; Waldam, Ramirez, House & Puranam, 2001).

At the heart of the transformational leadership paradigm is the view that "leadership is not just the provenance of the people at the top" (Bass & Riggio, 2005, p. 2), but can occur at all levels and be exercised by any individual. In the last decade, research has demonstrated that transformational leadership is important in every sector and setting (Avolio & Yammarino, 2002), and numerous studies have reported positive relationships between transformational leadership and organisational outcomes (Zhu et al., 2006; Howell & Hall-Merenda, 1999); between transformational leadership and outcomes at both the individual and firm levels (Avolio, 1999); and between transactional leadership and follower performance (Avolio, Zhu, Koh & Puja, 2003; Jung & Sosik, 2003).

In the educational context, transformational leadership draws attention to "a broader array of school and classroom conditions that may need to be changed if learning is to improve" (Leithwood et al., 1999, p. 4). Hallinger and Heck (1996) maintain that transformational leadership replaced instructional leadership in the early

1990s as the dominant model of school leadership. Although instructional leadership had focused on the school's core technology of curriculum and instruction, "it did not attend to important influences from outside the school" (p. 145). The transformational image posited a more overarching view of school leadership in which principals would not intervene directly in curriculum and instruction, but would develop conditions that supported school improvement such as staff professional development programs and strategies aimed at building a collaborative culture. Transformational leadership has therefore been viewed by some as having less to do with educational leadership and more to do with leadership in educational settings (Gunter, 2001).

The four main components now widely regarded as characteristic of transformational leadership were initially described by Bass (1985) and have subsequently been elaborated on and adapted by a wide range of writers and researchers in a variety of fields (Deluga & College, 2000; Armstrong, 2001; Bass, 2004). In the original form, Bass' four components are: charisma, or idealized influence (attributed or behavioural); inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation; and individualised consideration.

Charisma, or idealised influence, refers to the capacity of the leader to generate "good symbolic power with which the employees want to identify" (Deluga & College, 2000, p. 302) and to foster the commitment of followers in order to optimise their potential. Such leadership is envisioning, sets high standards for emulation, and promotes ethical policies and procedures within organisations (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Fairholm (1998) has described the spiritual dimensions of such influence, while its moral dimensions have been identified by Kanungo and Mendonca (1996) and Rhode (2006).

Inspirational motivation describes the means by which transformational leaders inspire and encourage subordinates to identify more closely with a future vision of their organisation and to share in its gradual realization. Here, such leaders tend to focus on the best in people, and they work to promote harmony, charity and good works. According to Bass and Steidlmeier (1999), they are, "... inwardly and outwardly concerned about the good that can be achieved for the group, organization, or society for which they feel responsible" (p. 188).

Intellectual stimulation indicates how transformational leaders "encourage employees to approach old and familiar problems in new ways" (Deluga & College, 2000, p. 302), and to be more curious and creative in thinking and problem solving. The intellectual stimulation of transformational leadership favours an open architectural design for processes of situation analysis, vision formulation and patterns of implementation (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). The openness of Japanese commercial and business organisations to adopt and improve upon Western technologies has been cited by Bass and Riggio (2005) as illustrative of this approach. Intellectual stimulation creates the expectation that everyone will be involved and listened to in the strategic planning process and that all creative thoughts, even those that seem irrelevant, will still be entertained (Barbuto, Stohs & Matkin, 2003). When an organization is practising intellectual stimulation and brainstorming, it makes processes such as envisioning and free-ranging discussions the norm. It is during this time of intellectual stimulation that an organization most optimally realises its creative potential (Avolio, 1999).

Individual consideration expresses how the leader serves as a mentor to employees, recognizing and responding to their individual needs and concerns. Doherty and Danylchuk (1996) have shown that this recognition can operate at two levels: in

developmental orientation and individual orientation. In the former, leaders assign tasks “that will enhance an individual’s potential, abilities and motivation” (p. 295); while in the latter, the leader emphasises “mutual understanding and familiarity via one-to-one relations and two-way communication” (p. 295). Thus, the transformational leader treats each follower as an individual; provides coaching, mentoring and growth opportunities; prefers and uses two-way communication and empathy; and is willing to delegate (Bass & Riggio, 2005). By understanding and developing people, the leader is also developing the knowledge, skills and dispositions required for achieving organisational goals (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2006). Bass’ four components of leadership appear in various guises in the writings of other theorists. Some see them as falling most congenially under the category of charismatic leadership (Mumford, 2006; Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Kanungo & Mendonca, 1996).

Transformational leadership has also been the subject of a range of important critiques (Yukl, 1999; Kelley, 2005; Lakomski, 1995; Gronn, 1996). Smyth and Shacklock (1998) have argued that transformational leaders exercise a disciplinary function which is couched in optimistic *aerosol* words such as commitment, consensus, empowerment, quality, standards and excellence, when the real discourse relates to what can and cannot be said or done. Yukl (1999) has suggested that transformational leadership suffers from a form of heroic leader bias, and has failed to give attention to shared leadership or reciprocal influence. Gunter (2001) has argued that transformational leadership is not really transformational at all, but rather a *top-dog* theory that meets the needs of management control: “The particular demands of teaching and learning do not seem to shape its purpose, and the practice of it is not educative for leaders and led” (p. 98). Gurr (2001) has critiqued transformational leadership as leader-centred and generally ignorant of either “the context in which



leadership is exercised or other personal dimensions that may be important” (p. 2). In recognising that history is full of charismatic individuals who have used their power influence destructively, Northouse (2007) has cautioned that transformational leadership “puts a burden on individuals and organisations to be aware of how they are being influence and in what directions they are being asked to go” (p. 187). Thus, there is a need to understand how transformational leaders affect followers psychologically, and how leaders respond to followers’ reactions (Bailey & Axelrod, 2001).

In a detailed discussion of transformational leadership approaches, Sashkin (2004) contends that only through further longitudinal research can we determine which variables are crucial for transformational leadership.

By contrast, pseudotransformational leadership (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999), which endorses corrupt modal values such as nepotism, victimisation, racial superiority and social Darwinism (Solomon, 1996), is a dark form of leadership, often arising out of what Gill (2006) describes as “dysfunctional charisma” (p. 53). Pseudotransformational leaders tend to encourage adversarial competitiveness, pursue their own interest rather than the common good, and use the symbols of authority and hierarchical differentiation to their own corrupt advantage. This type of behaviour has been compared with Machiavellianism (Deluga, 2001). Furthermore, Dasborough and Ashkanasy (2005) have argued that manipulative pseudotransformational behaviours are such that they may not be obvious to others because of their superficial resemblance to the behaviours of true transformational leaders. Their detection, therefore, requires astuteness on the part of researchers.

### 3.3.3 Vision

A key task of principals is to set direction by articulating a vision for the future that can inspire others (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Hough and Paine (1997) have described vision as “the capacity to create and communicate a compelling image of a desired state of affairs” (p. 177). Some scholars assert that the establishment of a shared vision is the single most common theme in leadership studies (Leithwood et al., 2004). Shared vision leads to shared purpose and the acceptance of group goals (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2006). Starratt (2004) has proposed that the deepest source of a principal’s power is the vision which can “attract the commitment and enthusiasm of the members” (p. 43), and Sergiovanni (1996) has described three sources of authority that enable a leader to foster commitment to a vision. The first two sources, bureaucratic and personal authority, derive from an external mandate of the *follow-me* variety. The third source, however, is directed towards community leadership where the goal is to build “a broad-based commitment to shared values and conceptions that become a compelling source of authority for what people must do” (p. 83).

Crow, Matthews and McCleary (1996) have made a distinction between the *process* of vision and the *content* of vision, along similar lines to the argument advanced by Sergiovanni (1996). In relation to the process of vision, Crow et al. propose that this entails the leader using the power resources of office, such as expertise, loyalty, rewards and charisma whenever he or she is “exchanging ideas, negotiating purpose, and building consensus” (p. 80). This results in bonding between leader and followers which provides a commitment to the shared vision. Regarding the content of the vision, Crow et al. argue that the vision should not be construed as a strategic plan, but more as a compass that points in a direction which people are able to participate in shaping. They also maintain that the traditional view of principal as the sole keeper of the

school's vision is "unrealistic given the complexity of environmental changes and the enormity of the task" (p. 81). Nevertheless, the principal does have a role to play in the creation of a collective vision, but needs to recognise that others play leadership roles in this process. Indeed, not only does the principal not need to play every key leadership role in a school, he or she may at times also play a follower role.

In an attempt to restore balance to an otherwise idealised discussion of vision and leadership, Kouzes and Posner (2007) have described how the development of organisational vision shows "the untidiness, plural parentage, and emergent nature of that process" (p. 54). There is an "unheroic" (p. 53) side to vision, in the same way that there are unheroic sides to all the other key dimensions of leadership. In educational institutions, it is rare to see vision articulated clearly by a leader at the top of the hierarchy and then installed by followers. It is more likely that, during the process of providing a scaffold for collaboration or a general direction rather than a specific destination, leaders will discover a vision as a consequence of involving other actors and "clarifying and synthesizing their views" (p. 54).

### **3.3.4 Values, Integrity, Authenticity and Credibility**

Sanders (1994) has described two of the most obvious perils in leadership as pride and egotism. Power can become a potential danger if leaders allow themselves to become the centre of the enterprise, or if they focus on building resources only, rather than on building their followers (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Leaders who lack integrity can come to rely on dishonest and manipulative methods to engage people's support or to promote their own agendas (Tucker & Russell, 2004). In all successful organisations, including educational institutions, it is imperative that leaders embody and exemplify the shared values of that community, and that their exercise of leadership reflects the

utmost integrity. The need for leaders to avoid appearing inconsistent or acting in ways that communicate insincerity has been stressed by Badaracco and Ellsworth (1989). Kouzes and Posner (2008) have described the belief of followers in a credible leader as the “Kouzes-Posner First Law of Leadership: if you don’t believe in the messenger, you won’t believe the message” (p. 38). From their studies, they have identified five likely behaviours of people who recognise their immediate manager as highly credible, and five likely reactions of those who perceive their manager to have low credibility. These behaviours are represented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

*Likely employee reactions to high and low credibility in their managers*

<b><i>Likely Employee Reactions to Managers with High Credibility</i></b>	<b><i>Likely Employee Reactions to Managers lacking Credibility</i></b>
Are proud to tell others they’re part of the organisation	Produce only if they’re watched carefully
Feel a strong sense of team spirit	Are motivated primarily by money
See their own personal values as consistent with those of the organisation	Say good things about the organisation publicly but criticize it privately
Feel attached and committed to the organisation	Consider looking for another job if the organisation experiences problems
Have a sense of ownership of the organisation	Feel unsupported and unappreciated

(Source: Kouzes & Posner, 2008, p. 38)

By acting with integrity and authenticity leaders are able to create an effective context for carrying out the core business of their organisation (Duignan, 2004). Starratt (2004) has identified a commitment to authenticity as the first of three ethics of leadership, along with the ethic of responsibility and the ethic of presence. Authentic leaders are “a moral presence” (Duignan, 2002, p. 172) and model values for others in a world that frequently lacks a commitment to values and ethical standards. They act out of a deep moral purpose and regard their leadership as a form of service to others (Gurr & Duignan, 2007). Successful principalships are “underpinned by the core values and beliefs of the principal” (Gurr, Drysdale & Mulford, 2006, p. 379). End values such as liberty, justice and equality must be the principal’s ultimate concern (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1997). When this is so, the commitment, enthusiasm and drive of followers can be intensified and secured, and the organisation can increase in effectiveness, productivity and innovation.

### **3.3.5 Principals and Shared Leadership**

The environmental and organisational contexts for educational leaders are much more complex today than they have ever been before (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Educational systems are multi-layered, dispersed and comprehensive, a fact which impacts in varying degrees on all members of any particular system. School leadership is not a simple task that can be accomplished by a single person (Knapp, Copland, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin & Talbert, 2002), but rather, it requires an interrelated set of roles and functions addressed simultaneously across the system (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Inquiry into the concept of distributed leadership has been fuelled by organisational restructuring programs and corporate initiatives aimed at developing team leadership (Day & Harris, 2002; Hall, 2002).

Leithwood and Riehl (2003) have reported that, although support for the idea of distributed leadership is widespread, empirical evidence concerning its nature and effects in any organisational context is at an early stage of development. However, research activity in this field is now on the rise as interest in the area of distributed leadership grows (Woods, Bennett, Harvey & Wise, 2004; Spillane et al., 2004; Spillane, Camburn, & Pareja, 2007). Questions have already arisen out of this research which address more specific aspects of distributed leadership, such as the interrelationship of the various roles and functions created as colleagues and peers share in the experience of distributed leadership, and as their activity is enacted in real time. Spillane, Halverson & Diamond (2005), have observed that the distribution of leadership “involves not only a consideration of who takes responsibility for which leadership functions, but also a consideration of how leadership tasks are co-enacted by two or more leaders” (p. 125). Leithwood and Riehl (2003) contend that there is an urgent need for more conceptual and empirical research aimed at identifying the contexts in which this orientation to leadership is most productive.

Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) have adopted a more cautious tone in relation to the concept of distributed leadership, suggesting that it is in danger of becoming little more than a slogan unless it is given more thorough and thoughtful consideration. They advise that policymakers and leadership developers would do well to adopt a more conservative attitude toward the concept “until more evidence is developed to move the term beyond the obvious and provides a clearer understanding of its actual impact on schools and students” (p. 5). Spillane (2006) has stressed, however, that distributed leadership means more than shared leadership. It is not the number of people involved in leadership that counts, but the quality of the interactions in which they participate:

Too frequently, discussions about distributed leadership end prematurely with an acknowledgement that multiple individuals take responsibility for leadership: that there is a leader *plus* other leaders at work in the school. Though essential, this *leader-plus* aspect is not sufficient to capture the complexity of the practice of leadership. From a distributed perspective, it is the collective *interactions* among leaders, followers and their situations that are paramount. (pp. 3-4)

Robinson (2007) has argued that shared leadership is also related to shared learning on the part of the principal. The more that leadership is “focused on the core business of teaching and learning the greater its impact” (p. 15). Thus, the leader participates with his or her staff as “the leader, learner or both” (p. 16). As Munro (2007) has suggested, principals need to be able to demonstrate that they are leaders *in* learning as well as leaders *of* learning. Nevertheless, while principals do rely on others to achieve school success, they “remain pivotal in connecting schools with the wider knowledge about learning and what works in schools” (Gurr, 2008, p.17).

### **3.3.6 Leadership and Organisational Culture**

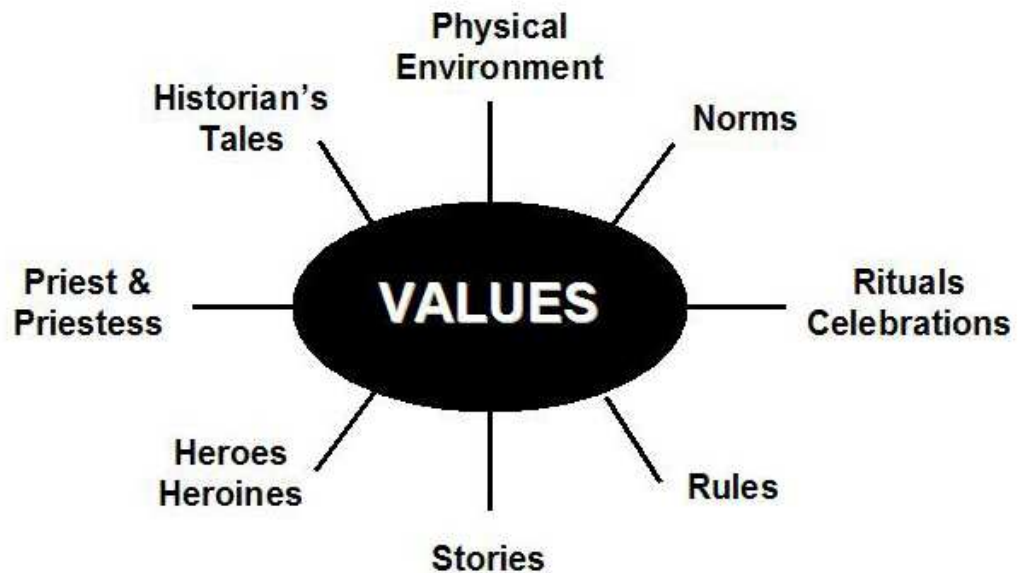
It is not easy to define or explain culture in any great depth, as it is often only its external characteristics which can be perceived and not its core features. Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbeck (1999) have defined culture as “the norms, beliefs, values and assumptions shared widely by members of an organization” (p. 82). In the realm of institutional schooling, Peterson and Deal (2002) have described school culture as a combination of the complex elements of values, traditions, language and purpose. They maintain that, operating beneath the surface of everyday life,

School culture exists in the deeper elements of a school: the unwritten rules and assumptions, the combination of rituals and traditions, the array of symbols and artifacts, the special language and phrasing that staff and students use, the expectations for change and learning that saturate the school’s world. (p. 9)

This “unwritten tablet of social expectations” (Fiore, 2005, p. 5) influences almost everything that happens in a school, creating a system of meaning that provides people with continuity, tradition, identity, meaning and significance. Robbins and Alvy (2003) have described school culture in terms of eight key elements which proceed from the core values of the organisation. These categories are represented in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4

*Elements of school culture*



(Source: Robbins & Alvy, 2003, p. 28)

Robbins and Alvy see the physical environment of a school as communicating symbolic messages about what it values and makes room for. Rituals such as meetings can be used to reinforce the cultural value of learning from one another. Celebrations “call attention to what is important” (p. 32), and reflect the culture’s values in forums that are shared by groups and subgroups within the organisation. Individuals in an organisation behave toward each other according to the expectations of the culture which are “usually a function of an unwritten code for behaviour called norms” (p. 34). The written code of expectations is represented by rules and regulations. Story is an avenue



through which “new and existing members of a culture are informed about and reminded of its values” (p. 35), especially the group’s most important values and beliefs. Respected people within cultures are entrusted with passing on the most sacred cultural stories, many of which concerned involve the deeds and qualities of heroic figures. Official and special tasks linked to the culture’s deepest sources of meaning are performed by those who are assigned priestly roles, and who are the only ones entitled to operate in this cultural sphere.

The role of leaders in shaping organisational culture has been widely recognised. Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbeck (1999) have suggested that leaders are able to influence the building of organisational culture by exhibiting behaviours which develop these characteristics. Examples of such behaviours include the use of rituals and symbols to embody and express cultural values, the fostering of collaborative work practices and frequent explicit focusing on vision and goals. Ogawa and Bossert (1995) assert that school culture does not exist in a vacuum, and that the practices of the school principal are crucial to its creation and maintenance. Similarly, Peterson and Deal (2002) have argued that, “Although school culture is deeply embedded in the hearts and minds of staff, students and parents, it can be shaped by leaders” (p. 12). Schein (2004) has claimed that the only really important thing that principals do is to manage culture, and Sarason (1996) has argued that the only way a leader can change the culture of a school is by understanding it and trying to improve it before making other more significant changes. One way of doing this has been proposed by Peterson and Deal (2002) who suggest that, as core features of school culture are molded over time, new principals should ask the following questions about the histories of their schools in order to understanding the foundations of the culture they are about to lead:

- How long has the school existed?
- Why was it built and who were the first inhabitants?
- What was the school's design and architecture supposed to convey?
- Who has had a major influence on the school's direction? What were that person's core values?
- What critical incidents occurred in the past and how were they resolved, if at all?
- What were the previous teachers, principals and students like in the 1970s, 80, and 90s? (pp. 52-53)

Bolman and Deal (2005) have added to the need to know and understand school culture the further tasks of celebrating it; diagnosing its existing strengths and reinforcing and celebrating them; and marking transitions with ceremony. The significance of commencement rituals in schools has been explored by Magolda (2003) who describes them as powerful means of transmitting cultural norms. All of these tasks represent ways in which the transformational leader contributes to a more desirable school culture. Thus, the principal is in a unique position to influence the norms, values and beliefs that shape policies, practices and procedures in a school (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1997). Drawing on a series of qualitative studies in more than 200 organisations, Kotter and Heskett (1992) have supported the view that leadership effectiveness results primarily from the leader's influence over culture. By developing practices aimed at establishing shared norms, values, beliefs and attitudes amongst staff, and by promoting mutual caring and trust across the organisation, leaders can influence school culture at a profound level (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). The task of the cultural leader is "to shape this culture and to devise ways and means whereby that culture is transmitted to others" (Sultmann & McLaughlin, 2000, p. 90). Fiore (2005) has asserted that no one occupies a more influential position from which to shape a school's culture than its principal.

### 3.3.7 Leadership and Change

The leadership of change has been described as a vast subject that cannot be “definitively sewn up and solved” (Rowland & Higgs, 2008, p. 2). Nevertheless, a key finding to which Rowland and Higgs have referred is that leaders who see change as an ongoing process which “occurs naturally around them all the time”, as opposed to those who see change as a “one off event”, are more likely to be successful in realising the desired change outcomes. Beach (2006) has suggested that leadership is necessarily about change, “but not arbitrary change” (p. 1), adding that organisations can find themselves in trouble if they do not change in response to the “dynamics of internal and external environments”. It is, therefore, a prime responsibility of those in leadership to work with others to acquire and interpret information about the environments. This form of assessment usually consists of,

... information about the current status of the external and internal environments, forecasts of future status of the environments, and indications of the present and future intentions and desires of stakeholders ... The goal is to create a picture of how the organization, with its unique internal environment, functions within its unique external environment. (p. 2).

The importance of understanding environmental factors in the context of education and schooling has also been raised by Hallinger (2004) who has argued that principals must assess the “demands for change originating in the school and its environment in light of the school’s capacity for change” (p. 62). This means that principals should always remain sensitive to the competing pressures for stability and change (Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Lam, 2003).

Kotter and Cohen (2006) have argued that large-scale organisational change occurs less because people are given analysis that shifts their thinking, than because they are shown a truth that influences their feelings. Although thinking and feeling are

both essential ingredients in processes of change, “the heart of change is in the emotions” (p. 2). The importance of emotional responses in creating a positive climate for change has also been affirmed by Leithwood, Jantzi and Mascall (2002), and Kelley, Thornton and Daugherty (2005). Moreover, Pepper and Thomas (2001) have described the “profound effect” (p. 156) on school climate of the principal’s role as leader, especially through the use of facilitative power:

There is hope, optimism, and energy in a kind of leadership that facilitates the process of change, the refocusing of the school toward higher collaborative goals, and a renewal of the commitment toward success for students, teachers, staff and parents. (p. 157).

In a study of 400 people from 130 organisations, Kotter and Cohen (2005) found that successful large-scale change is a complex process which happens in eight stages, each with a core imperative:

The flow is this: push urgency up; put together a guiding team, create the vision and strategies; remove barriers to action; accomplish short-term wins; keep pushing for wave after wave of change until the work is done; and create a new culture to make new behaviour stick” (p. 2).

The central challenge in all eight stages is changing people’s behaviour – “What people do, and the need for significant shifts in what people do” (p. 23) – and the first step in the process of changing people’s behaviour depends on the emergence of a “leader with a vision, or a leader who works with others to create vision”. Gladwell (2000) has proposed that, in order to change people’s behaviour, “you need to create a community around them where new beliefs can be expressed and nurtured” (p. 173). A number of researchers have also linked the behaviours of principals to the quality of school climate, the likelihood of positive change (Deal & Peterson, 1990; Bulach, Boothe & Pickett, 1998; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1998), and pupil outcomes (Day, Sammons, Hopkins, Harris, Leithwood, Gu et al., 2007).

Fullan (2006) has argued that it is the organisation leaders who must act to change the contexts in which they work. School leaders must not be content simply with achieving good school results, but must also work at developing a sustainable pedagogical institution. The key to moving forward is “to enable leaders to experience and become more effective at leading organizations towards sustainability” (p. 115). The second of the eight elements of sustainability enunciated by Fullan concerns a commitment to changing contexts at all levels. In the case of educators, the tri-level contexts are school/community, district, and system. Fullan maintains that, in order to change systems, it is important to “increase the amount of purposeful interaction between and among *individuals* within and across the tri-levels, and indeed within and across *systems*” (p. 116).

### **3.3.8 Personal Awareness and Self-Reflection**

The importance of leaders understanding themselves, their personal histories and qualities, and the ways in which these awarenesses interact with their professional roles is a field of ever-increasing interest to leadership theorists and researchers. Schaetti, Ramsey and Watanabe (2008) contend that leaders take on leadership, form relationships and engage in reflection based on who they are. While personal leadership is therefore highly relational, it begins by focusing on the self, rather than on the other. Covey (1997) has suggested that self-awareness is central to the building of positive relationships in organisational culture:

The place to begin building any relationship is inside ourselves, inside our circle of influence, our own character. As we become independent – proactive, centered in correct principles, value-driven, and able to organize and execute around the priorities in our lives with integrity – we can choose to become interdependent: capable of building rich, enduring, productive relationships with other people. (p. 60)

In personal leadership, reflective practice is important on an individual level. Kouzes, Posner and Sheppard (2006a) have stressed that leaders are also learners and that growth as a leader means learning from one's experiences in order to improve future practice. Donaldson and Marnick (1995) have described how personal reflection on professional experience puts leaders in touch with the "twists and turns of our evolving identities as leaders" (p. 7). According to Petrie, Lindaur and Tountasakis (2000), leaders, especially in education, "need an introspective look at themselves to become more self-aware, productive, and effective" (p. 243). One practical reason for principals being aware of their own strengths and weaknesses is so that they can hire people who complement them with strengths they themselves do not possess (Schmieder and Cairns, 2005).

Critical self-reflection has also been described by Dantley (2005) who sees it as a tool for dealing with issues such as the leader's assumptions about power and authority; his or her predispositions towards teachers and the work they perform; and how he or she responds to issues of patriarchy, positional privilege, and racial and class divides. This form of reflection should not be regarded as an optional activity for leaders, but as an essential part of developing idiographic morality, a quality which, "forces school leaders to contend with themselves in a serious ontological and axiological debate. This process challenges leaders to see themselves within the whole social, political, and economic context within which schools are mired" (p. 42).

By contrast, Avolio (2005) has stressed that self-reflection is, to some extent, oxymoronic, in that it rarely occurs alone, and is rarely just about oneself. His own experience of asking leaders to self-reflect is that their responses are "almost always focused on the leader and someone or something else" (p. 108). However, he regards

this as highly appropriate, given that leadership is essentially about some form of “bilateral relationship” (p. 108). Leaders are therefore able to learn about themselves and their practice by reflecting on these relationships and on the many actions in which they participate:

At the core, reflection after action is a way of conducting learning in parallel with performing. It causes short delays, but the likely improvements in performance would counter the disadvantages associated with stopping to think for a moment about what you have just done. (p. 108)

At the same time, Dantley (2005) has warned that the critical self-reflection of school leaders is in danger of becoming inane navel gazing, unless it is accompanied by “a serious effort to develop strategies designed to resist the persistent policies, procedures, and personal as well as organisational behaviours” (p. 42) which promote inequity in schools.

### **3.4 Summary**

The review of the literature on organisational leadership focuses on historical and current understandings of organisation and educational literature, with a particular emphasis on transformational leadership. Attention is drawn to the broader context of organisational leadership on which the insights of educational leadership have been based (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). The corpus of literature on educational leadership which has become available in recent decades is divided into the four main positions described by Gunter (2001). These positions underline the dominance of the globalised model of transformational leadership developed initially by Burns (1978), expanded on in the 1980s by Bass (1985), and further explored in subsequent years by a large number of theorists and researchers. The distinctions between transactional and transformational leadership are highlighted (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1997; Starratt,

2005), critiques of transformational leadership are discussed (Foster, 1989; Smyth & Shacklock, 1998; Gunter, 2001), and the notion of pseudotransactional leadership is also addressed (Bass & Avolio, 1997; Gill, 2006). The role of vision in leadership is considered (Starratt, 1985; Leithwood & Grace, 2002) and the distinction between the process of vision and the content of vision is identified (Crowe, Matthew & McCleary, 1996). The relationship between leadership and organisational culture is also explored (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999; Peterson & Deal, 2002; Bolman & Deal, 2005). Shared and distributive leadership are addressed through the views of its contemporary advocates (Gronn, 2002; Spillane et al., 2005), as well as the perspectives of those who counsel a degree of caution in respect of this approach (Leithwood et al., 2004; Gunter, 2001). Literature is presented on values, integrity, authenticity and credibility in leadership (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; and the Kouzes-Posner First Law of Leadership (2008). Lastly, the notions of personal awareness and self-reflection in the lives and practices of leaders are acknowledged (Petrie, Lindaur & Tountsakis, 2000; Sachetti, Ramsay & Watanabe, 2008).

The literature on organisational and educational leadership is significant for this research because it creates a framework and a language for understanding and discussing key concepts and issues which characterise this field. The light shed by these issues on the current research problem leads to the following questions which emerge as a focus for the research:

- How do the life experiences of principals shape their views on massed singing and the way they influence it?
- In what ways do principals use their leadership to influence the practice of massed singing in their schools?



- What effect does massed singing in schools have on the principals of these schools?

### **3.5 Masculinity, Boys' Education and Leadership**

As this research project aims to explore the influence of principals on the place of massed singing in three secondary boys' schools, it seems appropriate to explore the effects of masculinity and gender stereotyping on the nature of boys' schooling, and on their participation in music and singing. Furthermore, as the principals in question are all males, the relationship between masculinity and leadership is also explored. These concepts are now addressed as a second theme impacting on this research.

#### **3.5.1 Gender**

Masculinity and femininity are commonly viewed as opposites in a binary structure (Harrison, 2004a), though achieving a precise definition of either key term is problematic. The historical roots of Western male gender have been described by Doyle (1995), whose survey traces the development of masculinities from the epic sagas of Greece and Rome to the bourgeois world of 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Kimmel (2005) has proposed that in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in the United States, three models of masculinity prevailed: the genteel patriarch, who derived his identity from land ownership; the heroic artisan, who embodied the physical strength of the yeoman farmer, independent craftsman or shopkeeper; and the marketplace man, who was an absent father, devoting himself more and more to working in a homosocial environment in which he pitted himself against other men. Western models of masculinity in subsequent periods have been described by Tosh (2005), Edwards (2006), Dudink, Hagemann and Clark (2007), and Forth and Taithe (2007).

The identification by Jung (1962) of the anima and animus led to the theory of individuation whose various characteristics Brome (1980) and Humbert (1984) have described. Jung's insights into gender have been developed by later writers and theorists (Johnson, 1989; Bly, 1991; Goldberg, 1984) who have explored the psychology of masculinity, principally by qualitative methods. Nevertheless, sustained academic research into masculinity and its multiple expressions is still only decades old. Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1987) have argued that feminism, men's liberation and gay activism have contributed directly to the accelerated development of research into masculinity. They identified the need for a sociology of masculinity "built on actual social practices rather than the discussion of rhetoric" (p. 141). In the 1990s, Edley and Wetherell (1995; 1996) undertook an historical investigation of writings on masculinity, covering the period from the late 1960s to the early 1990s. They presented a variety of understandings of masculinity which they grouped under six perspectives: biological, psychoanalytical, role theory, social relations, socio-cultural, and the feminist critique of masculinity. As Lee (2003) has observed, the work of Edley and Wetherell is useful in that it provides a framework for reporting the contested definitions of masculinity, and an acknowledgement that there is no single, correct theory of masculinity. This emergent sociology of masculinity became what Whitehead and Barrett (2001) have described as a "critical study of men, their behaviours, practices, values and perspectives" (p. 14). Along with the feminist tradition, it has contributed significantly to deconstructing the view that masculinity and femininity are opposite polarities, and that males and females will more or less automatically conform to one or the other.

### **3.5.2 Multiple, Hegemonic and Alternate Masculinities**

Over the last two decades, the concept of multiple masculinities has gained enormously in credibility and currency (Jefferson, 1994; Tolson, 1997; Connell, 1995;

White, 2004). Instead of focusing on masculinity as the male role, this model asserts that “there are a variety of masculinities, which make sense only in hierarchical and contested relations with each other” (Pascoe, 2007, p. 7). The notion of contest has been popular in definitions of multiple masculinities. Segal (1990) has referred to “competing masculinities” (p. x), and the various differences between men which become particularly significant in their struggle for change, and Oliffe (2001) has suggested that masculinities are continually contested and renegotiated in each context that a man encounters. They require compulsive practice, because they can be contested and undermined at any moment, such as when a man loses his job or is hospitalised with a debilitating illness (Courtenay, 2000). Others have argued that contest is only one dimension of the dynamic and that relations between the different masculinities include alliance and subordination, since they are “constructed through practices that exclude and include, that intimidate, exploit, and so on” (Connell, p. 37).

From among these competing masculinities, a dominant or hegemonic form arises and subjugates the others. The concept of hegemonic masculinity is traceable to Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1987) who were the first authors to describe it. They had borrowed from Gramsci (1971) an understanding of hegemony as the social dominance of a group, and adapted it for the purposes of applying it to the expression of an authoritative masculinity. In Britain, Tolson (1977) examined class differences arising out of the politics of masculinity, and this was followed in the United States by an examination by Messerschmidt (1993) of how white collar and street crime can become resources in the construction of class-specific masculinities. In Australia, Connell (1995) then took the concept further by challenging the definition of masculinity as an object, maintaining instead a focus on the “processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives” (p. 71). Connell also created a fourfold

hierarchy of masculinities which has become a reference point within the literature. He described this hierarchy as a movement from marginalised masculinity, through complicit masculinity, to subordinated masculinity, and ultimately to hegemonic masculinity.

More recently, two fundamental aspects of hegemonic masculinity have been identified by Howson (2005). The first is the axiomatic position it holds within the literature as both the symbolic representative of the legitimate masculine ideal, and also as a focus for the critique of masculinity; and the second is the fact that hegemonic masculinity emerges from the socio-cultural milieu, rather than being forced upon it exogenously. Furthermore, in Western societies, hegemonic masculinity is classically characterised by the expulsion of all contesting forms of masculinity, especially ambiguous behaviours which are labelled as feminine or homosexual (Hall, 2002). To be a normal male, therefore, is to be “white, masculine and heterosexual” (Collins, 2004, p. 97), a set of criteria constituting what Collins has labelled as “core hegemonic white masculinity”, and which Butler (1993) has referred to as the “hegemonic presumption” (p. 171).

Those who reject hegemonic masculinities, to whatever degree, necessarily become part of a marginalised minority, working out of alternate models of masculinity and running the risk of disapprobation and rejection from the dominant majority. Most examples of alternate masculinities can be described as either protest masculinities, which adopt some of the themes of hegemonic masculinity, but rework them; or complicit masculinities, which reject direct displays of power, but nevertheless accept the privileges of their gender (Connell, 2005).

### 3.5.3 Masculinity in Australia

Gender researchers such as Doyle (1995), Layoun (2001) and Canning (2006) have asserted the significance of situational, historical and cultural factors in the discussion of gender within particular geographical boundaries. Constructing a geography of gender allows the researcher to call attention to the significance of “place, location and cultural diversity” (Pollock, 1996, p. xii), and to connect “issues of sexuality to those of nationality, imperialism, migration, diaspora and genocide”.

In Australia, masculinity has been closely linked to national identity by theorists such as Grimshaw, Lake, McGrath and Quartly (1994), Moylan (2000), and Garton (1998). As a nation, we have generated no real, solid, or cohesive national identity, only substitute forms based on a mythology conceptualised solely in terms of masculinity. The colonial roots of Australian masculinity and its foundational mythologies have been traced by Moore (1998) who explains the dominance of Anglo-Celtic masculinity in early settlements as a reaction to the presence of women, recent immigrant males and non-Caucasian males. Colling (1992) has described the ways in which male roles in Australia have been shaped by key events and periods including the arrival and settlement of the early convicts, the gold rush of the 1850s, the two World Wars and the sexual revolution of the 1960s. Furthermore, he has suggested that the growth of Australian models of masculinity has proceeded along the same lines of hegemonic presumption as those articulated by Butler (1993). In Colling’s view,

It is now abundantly clear that the Australian identity was not just constructed around the image of a man, but around the image of a white man and that race relations and racialised identities are of great importance in the enactment of masculinities. (p. 14).

Hegemonic presumption is also evident in the work of Crotty (2001) who has explored the construction of middle-class masculinity in Australia in the period 1870 – 1920 by

examining changing emphases at boys' schools; mutations of the ideal hero in children's literature and boys' adventure stories; and the evolution of boys' organisations such as the Try Society and the Boy Scout movement. A classic description by Ward (1958) characterises Australians of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century as independent, imbued with an ethic of mateship, laconic, irreverent, egalitarian, rough, sharing, cooperative and male:

According to the myth the typical Australian is a practical man, rough and ready in his manners and quick to decry any appearance of affectation in others. He is a great improviser, ever willing to have a go at anything, but willing to be content with a task done in a way that is near enough ... he swears hard and consistently, gambles heavily and often, and drinks deeply on occasion ... he is usually taciturn rather than talkative ... he believes that Jack is not only as good as his master, but, at least in principle, probably a good deal better and so he is a great knocker of eminent people. (pp. 1-2).

Bode (2006) has identified the most dominant and prevailing version of Australian masculinity as the Aussie battler. In the past decade, however, this hegemonic construction has begun to yield to the “white male victim” (p. 1) or the “man in crisis”, a prominent figure in American society who has now entered Australia's cultural consciousness. The contemporary reality for Australian society is that “the Aussie battler and the man in crisis currently exist in tension”. Louie and Low (2003) have argued that dominant Australian masculinity in the new millennium “appears to emphasise sporting prowess, the ability to consume alcohol, sexual conquest and heterosexuality” (p. 203).

#### **3.5.4 Masculinity and Sport**

A key contributing factor to hegemonic Australian masculinity is watching and participating in sport. Connell (2005) has described competitive sport in Australia as

“intensely gender-segregated and male-dominated” (p. 15). Sport has become a major institutional influence on Australian culture, and is highly significant in shaping masculine identity and gender relations (Parker, 1996; Rowe & McKay, 2003). The images and symbols of sport characteristically involve “contestation and categorisation, marginalisation and incorporation of elements of masculinity” (Whannel, 2001, p. 64). Moreover, the influence of sport on teenage boys can be enormous (Hickey, Fitzclarence & Matthews, 2000; Connell, 1996; 2000), to the extent that a boy’s masculinity is frequently judged on the basis of his performance in sport (Messner, 1992). Sports such as the various codes of football are extremely popular, enjoying high participation rates among boys and young adult men: “A recreation involving bodies in ritualised combat is thus presented to enormous numbers of youth as a site of masculine camaraderie, a source of identity, an arena of competition for prestige, and a possible career” (Connell, 2005, p. 15). A major implication for boys of the need to perform creditably in sport is the size and strength of their bodies which become powerful symbols of the attainment of hegemonic masculinity (West, 2000). Totems of muscularity, physicality and bodily posturing become “implicated in the self-regulatory and policing practices of normative masculinity” (Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003, p. 17). Drummond (2003) has also referred to the “unsuccessful body” (p. 134), a term which relates to social and cultural stigmas associated with less skilled boys in the area of sport and physical activity. Just as the successful body plays an important role in the construction of positive masculine identity for the individual, so too can perceptions of an unsuccessful body impact adversely on the self-esteem of adolescent boys.

Participation in sport reinforces the imperatives of physical strength and toughness, and can also teach boys to tolerate pain and to demonstrate appropriate

physical aggression: “Physical education and sport are social practices and they are bodily practices, one’s involvement as a participant is through one’s physicality. Through such practices, young men learn some things about their bodies and what it is to be a male” (Tinning, 2000, p.109). However, Laberge and Albert (1999) have argued that powerful taboos are in place against transgressing the rules of the gender order and participating in so-called women’s sports. In a study involving the content analysis of 174 essays written by boys from three different socioeconomic milieus on the subject of gender transgressions in male sports, Laberge and Albert found that the study participants showed a marked reluctance toward degendering based on class backgrounds, interests and power relationships.

Harrison (2003) has described how, in the problematic relationship between music and sport in Australian schools, success in sporting endeavours is often prized to such an extent by hegemonic masculinity, that the arts become marginalised, creating in many schools an “unhealthy divide between music and sport” (p. 10). This can inhibit boys to such an extent that they choose not to become involved in music at all. In the case of those who do become involved, the range of their musical activities may be reduced by the social acceptability of particular instruments or musical styles.

### **3.5.5 Masculinity and Schooling**

Over recent decades, the influence of schooling on shaping student masculinities has been well documented (Blye, Kehler, Lovell & Davidson, 2003; Willis, 1996; Heyward, 1988; Nayak & Kehily, 2001). Connell (2005) has argued that, for large numbers of boys, especially middle-class boys, “schools are the most important formal institutions in their lives” (p. 21). Like other institutions, schools have definable gender regimes where different constructions of masculinity are possible, and where such



regimes can change through social factors or through conscious reform. In an investigation of male student culture in an inner city Australian school, Walker (1988) found that the peer group was a key influence on the masculinities of boys. Beynon (1989) studied the induction of eleven and twelve year old boys into a large comprehensive boys' school in New South Wales in the 1980s, concluding that the school is unmistakably a gendering agency in which the established order favours and sponsors aggressive masculinity.

Connell (1996) has highlighted the pivotal role of teachers in educational reform, asserting that teachers need to be actively involved in gender equity and the transformation of masculinity. He has also acknowledged that schools are major institutions, and have a significant capacity for influencing gender and the transmission of culture; that teachers and schools impact on masculinity in a mostly unreflective way; and that many male teachers find little reason to challenge or subvert conventional understandings of masculinity.

### **3.5.6 Boys' Education in Australia**

As reported in Chapter 2, the Federal House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training undertook a study in 2000 into the underachievement and underperformance of boys in Australian school. This resulted in the report entitled *Boys: Getting it Right* (Bartlett, 2002). The report highlighted aspects of social change which had shaped the context surrounding boys and their educational outcomes and, on the basis of 178 submissions, formulated 24 recommendations grouped under four headings. These headings are listed in Table 3.4, together with a brief summary of the recommendations proposed in each instance, and a comment on the significance of each set of recommendations.

Table 3.4

*A summary of recommendations from Boys: Getting it Right*

<b>Heading</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>General Description of Recommendations</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<i>Putting it in context: Labour market, social and policy change</i>	<b>1</b>	A recommendation aimed at policy reform to ensure that the social and academic needs of boys and girls are being met.	This recommendation addresses certain procedural requirements of government reports and is directed at the Minister for Education, Science and Training.
<i>Putting it into practice: Curriculum and pedagogy</i>	<b>2-3</b>	Two recommendations addressing the pre-service and in-service needs of teachers, with a view to raising teachers' awareness of the learning styles of boys and girls; and calling on government to fund professional development and research.	The focus on these recommendations is on equipping teachers with a wider repertoire of skills with which to address differences in gendered learning styles.
<i>Building strong foundations: Literacy and numeracy</i>	<b>4-13</b>	Nine recommendations focusing on behaviour and learning; health issues, including specific strategies relating to hearing and auditory processing; the role of parents in the pre-literacy stage; literacy and numeracy programs, services and assessment procedures; and class sizes in lower primary.	In the main, these recommendations are directed at improving outcomes for prepubescent children.
<i>Making the connections: Schools, teachers and role models.</i>	<b>14-21</b>	These eight recommendations cover school-based issues such as retention rates and suggest further research into the influence of school structures on boys and girls. Issues such as behaviour management; teacher education; and the use of inducements to attract skilled teachers are also represented.	These recommendations represent an attempt at addressing relational issues within schools in order to promote effective relationships with boys.
<i>Conclusion</i>	<b>22,23,24</b>	The last three recommendations are essentially administrative and deal with review mechanisms, data collection practices, and policy frameworks.	The emphasis here is on government attending to the major structural supports which will enable it to manage the implementation of the recommendations.

(Adapted from Bartlett, 2002, pp. xxv-xxxii)

Francis and Skelton (2005) have suggested that the response to the report has been “mixed” (p.31), while expressing their own concern that some policy documents in this field are mistakenly conflating academic underachievement with psychological illness. In general, the report is notable for its strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, its preoccupation with administrative and infrastructural matters, and its failure to address

in detail either the issue of multiple masculinities, or the role of the arts in improving social and educational outcomes for both genders. In a critique of the report's understanding of gender construction, on which many of its recommendations are predicated, Gill (2005) has questioned the depiction of the differences between boys and girls as "attached to some notion of a biological binary divide instead of recognising the processes which produce boys and girls as different" (p. 112). Moreover, Gill has rejected the report's assumption vis-à-vis role models, that boys are influenced from the outside to behave in particular ways, since this ignores that boys are inside the discourses which offer numerous ways to be. Dalley-Trimmm (2006) has also critiqued the report's understanding of gender, and its failure to address the complex and multifaceted issues pertaining to boys' education. It fails fundamentally, however, "because it does not move away from essentialist conceptualisations of masculinity" (p. 31). Instead, it operates in such a way as to stereotype boys and girls, and works from "within an essentialised category" of all boys.

### **3.5.7 Gender and Musical Activity**

Gender-based participation in musical activities has long been accepted as a common sociological phenomenon (Kunst, 1958; Pucciani, 1983; Abeles & Porter, 1978). In Australia, Bartle (1968) was amongst the first to research musical stereotyping in schools, drawing on a sample of 474 schools. He expressed concern at the high frequency of girls-only choirs in coeducational schools and noted that in at least half of the schools he sampled, the voices of senior boys were not being used to any appreciable extent. Since then, strong views among students about the appropriateness of certain instruments for males and females have been identified by a large number of researchers (Bruce & Kemp, 1993; O'Neill & Boulton, 1996; Green, 1993; 1997). Harrison (2007) has constructed a select chronological review of literature

relating to gendered participation in music which surveys material from 1916 to 2007. The studies fall into two basic categories: research which “seeks to prove the existence of stereotyped musical choices”; and “gender-related studies that examine the association of masculinity and femininity with particular instruments” (p. 269).

### **3.5.8 Gender and Adolescent Boys’ Singing**

Koza (1993) was motivated in her efforts to find empirical data on gendered participation in music education programs by the reluctance of boys to participate in school singing groups, and by the work of Gates (1989) who found that, in the United States, “the female percentage in choral activities surpasses the male percentage by greater than a 5:2 margin” (p. 37). Koza began by examining the *Music Educators Journal* from the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with a view to ascertaining whether or not a comparable discrepancy existed at that time. Using a socialist feminist perspective, she endeavoured to discover if the subject of gender preference was discernible in any significant way. In her discussion of the place of singing in music education, she identified the view that singing is not considered an appropriately masculine activity. One of the reasons for this – the problems associated with the breaking voice of boys – has since been researched by Green (1993) and Schmidt (1995). Changes in the physical properties of the adolescent voice have been described by Harries, Walker, Williams, Hawkins and Hughes (1997), Cooksey (2000) and Welch (2001; 2002). In a longitudinal study of 26 boys, Harries et al., assessed changes in the male voice in relation to the biological characteristics of puberty. They found that,

Anthropometric changes are considerable at the time of male puberty. Changes also occur in the organs of phonation. These include an increase in breathing capacity and an increase in neck width and length, which leads to a relative descent of the larynx, and subsequent enlargement of the vocal tract and resonatory system. Growth of the paranasal sinuses and nasal turbinates, with atrophy of the tonsils and the adenoids, also affects vocal quality. (p. 447).

In addition to physiological issues, social obstacles to participating in vocal music also affect adolescent boys. Hall (2005) has argued that hegemonic masculinity regards singing as feminine and inappropriate for boys because it “neither constructs nor defends masculinity” (p. 6). Adopting a developmental perspective, Adler (2001) has identified a change in the attitude of young boys to singing as they move into adolescence: “Many boys make a decision not to sing between elementary and secondary school, in response to psychological and sociological messages that singing is not an appropriate activity for males beyond a certain age” (p. 2). Hanley (1998) has noted that girls are clearly more successful at singing than boys. Singing, she maintained, is viewed as a feminine activity; therefore “boys who engage in singing are feminine by implication” (p. 58). Some exceptions to this view include aggressive singing, singing in a jazz choir, rock band, bebop band or in the school musical. Green (1997) has suggested that boys view singing in stage productions as safe because the stage provides a mask and an audience.

The so-called singing “disability” (Hall, 2005, p. 70) of boys remains contentious, with opinions divided on whether the causes are essentially physiological, psychological, or a combination of both. Welch (1997) has suggested that any decline in boys’ song-singing from the age of seven, when their pitch-matching ability is comparable with girls, is “more likely to be cultural in origin than biological” (p. 711). White and White (2001) have attributed the reticence of adolescent males to engage in singing to a variety of factors including sociological perceptions about music and singing; psychological and physiological developments during puberty; and inappropriate choral literature and training. Harrison (2003) has compiled a list of solutions to the problem of the “missing males” (p.21) in choral and vocal programs by

drawing on existing literature, fieldwork, and discussions at workshops held around Australia. These suggestions are represented in Table 3.4

Table 3.4

*Suggestions for overcoming the missing males problem*

1.	Employment of role models: teacher, community, industry, student
2.	Selection of repertoire
3.	Flexible scheduling, particularly in relation to conflicts with academic, sport and work commitments
4.	Sensitivity in uniform design
5.	Single sex activities where appropriate
6.	Producing high standards which are honoured by the community
7.	Providing a variety of opportunities for involvement
8.	Cautious use of sporting analogies
9.	A physiological approach to singing
10.	Achievement of a critical mass, involving so many boys in singing that the notion of minority is negated
11.	Multicultural environments, where divergent views of masculinity are present seem to enjoy higher success rates
12.	A developmental program that starts boys young and keeps them singing
13.	In schools, a zero tolerance approach to bullying

(Source: Harrison, 2003, p. 23)

### 3.5.9 Masculinity and Leadership

Though professional leadership roles are exercised today both by women and men in a wide variety of professional fields, the most elite and powerful roles, even in professions such as education and nursing which embody softer cultural images, have essentially “agentic definitions” (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 96). Often, the masculine nature of leadership roles mirrors the extent to which they have been in the provenance of men. Furthermore, it appears that, in the past decade, few women in western

countries have moved into leadership positions in either the private or public sectors of the corporate world (Adler, 2001). Joy (2008) has argued that, although businesses have become more inclusive of women over recent decades, even dismantling many of the traditional barriers to women's advancement, "progress has been slow at the very top" (p. 4). Nevertheless, Collins and Singh (2007) have argued that organisational cultural barriers built on biases and gender stereotypes work to prevent women from attaining senior positions, and that women continue "to face prejudice and are disadvantaged in the workplace" (p. 12).

The various discourses of leadership and administration are, in many ways, products of their specific historical moments and particular readings. Blackmore (1999) has argued that some discourses of leadership have been privileged in education. Foremost amongst these are the discourse of patriarchal masculinity, created by the regulative practices of emergent state educational bureaucracies of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century; the discourse of paternalistic masculinity, encapsulated in the post-war ideal of the neutral, rational bureaucrat; and today, the discourse of strategic masculinity embodied in the image of the multiskilled, visionary, entrepreneurial post-modern manager. These three discourses may reflect different priorities and emphases, but "their underlying thread is the ongoing association between masculinity and leadership" (p. 24). Researchers have also described an additional emergent leadership discourse known as emotional or affective leadership (Bono & Ilies, 2006; Gaddis, Connelly & Mumford, 2004) with its associated concerns of emotional intelligence, intimacy, trust, informality, and self-esteem. Affective leadership rejects the old-fashioned role of the bureaucrat who sidelines personal preferences and emotions, and issues a call for the humanising of managers and leaders (Kerfoot, 2000). In this new model of affective leadership, "... the emotional individuality of the leader in terms of their enthusiasm,

vision, charisma and strong values is critical to developing affective relations between leaders and followers and bringing about transformation in the workplace” (p. 64).

In the past decade, however, there has also been a resistance to what Reay and Ball (2000) have termed “homogenising conceptions of what it means to be female” (p. 145) which “depict women as uniformly nurturant, affiliative and good at interpersonal relationships”, and fail to represent a reality which is more complex. In contrast, Reay and Ball have suggested that, “... gendered identities are in context more fluid and shifting than they are depicted in such texts ... female leadership practice frequently appears to be both more multi-faceted and more contradictory than the idealized depictions in some feminist texts”. Similarly, Macgregor (2007) has suggested that it is important to avoid relating feminine traits only to women and girls, and masculine traits only to boys and men, and to “think of feminine and masculine leadership styles as *modern* and *traditional*” (p. 64). Furthermore, leadership is also about the person leading and the context in which leadership is being exercised, as well as gendered leadership style. Much of the discussion around gender in leadership, therefore, depends on generalisations: “While some girls and women may naturally use more modern styles, and some boys and men may naturally use more traditional styles, these statements are in fact generalizations” (Macgregor, p. 64).

### **3.6 Summary**

The review of literature on boys’ schooling and gender examines the construct of masculinity and identifies an historical legacy (Doyle, 1995), a multiplicity of expressions, a contemporary hierarchy (Connell, 1995), and an Australian context (Colling, 1992; Crotty, 2001). The influence of schooling on the shaping of student



masculinities is discussed (Angus, 1993; Nyak & Kehily, 2001), and the pivotal role of teachers in modelling gender equity is affirmed (Connell, 1996). The tradition of gender-based participation in musical activities is identified (Kunst, 1959; Pucciani, 1983; Abeles & Porter, 1978; Green 1997), and the particular efforts of Koza (1993; 1994) and Harrison (2007) to investigate the reluctance of boys to participate in singing are outlined. Lastly, the relationship between masculinity and leadership is discussed (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Collins & Singh, 2007).

The literature on boys' schooling and gender is of significance to this research because it offers insights into the issues which affect the willingness of boys to participate in corporate singing. Literature on the relationship between masculinity and leadership helps to illuminate key aspects of the role of principal. In the light of the high degree of relevance of these issues in underlining the complex nature of the research problem, the following question evolved as a focus for the conduct of the research:

- What particular cultural, social and educational issues do principals recognise for single-sex secondary boys' schools?

### **3.7 Massed Singing**

The third theme impacting on this research into the influence of principals on massed singing is the nature of massed singing itself as a musical activity which impacts on many aspects of human existence. A number of issues emerge from the literature and provide a context and rationale for understanding the nature and significance of participation in massed singing in schools. The following headings represent the range of these issues: historical perspective; the benefits of music and singing; effects on physical, psychological and social wellbeing; educational benefits; group singing in

liturgy and worship; choral and massed singing in the cultures of schools; choral music in Australia, an historical perspective; and music and choral education in Australia, contemporary issues.

### **3.7.1 Historical Perspective**

Singing has been described as the most common everyday musical activity observable in all cultures (Nettle, 2000). Its precise origins are unknown as it predates recorded history. Prehistoric music, beginning somewhere very late in geological history, may stem from a vocal imitation of naturally occurring sounds and rhythms, and may have been used to particular effect in caves where the acoustic properties of the venue endowed the human voice with special qualities (Reznikoff, 2005). It is therefore widely believed the first musical instrument was the human voice itself (Eliasar, 2006; Wald, 2006), which can make a vast array of sounds, from singing, humming and whistling through to clicking, coughing and yawning. Prehistoric music is followed by the period known as Ancient Music which extends to 500 AD. This is followed in the Western tradition by the Early Music Period which extends to 1760. The era known as Common Practice covers the period from 1600 – 1900, and this is followed by the modern and contemporary periods which carry through to the present day. Although the history of music can also be told in terms of the introduction, disappearance and fluctuating popularity of various musical instruments, scholarship is unanimous in asserting that the human voice has always been central to musical expression in all of the world's cultures, irrespective of other developments in solo or concerted instrumental music (Bonds, 2005; Griffiths, 2006).

### **3.7.2 Benefits of Music and Singing**

Many scholars, writers and researchers have recognised the power of music to bring to the human person a wide range of benefits in areas such as personal well-being, spiritual growth, psychological health, pain management, aesthetic pleasure, interpersonal and communication skills, fine and gross motor skills, cultural understanding and identity, problem-solving skills, academic performance, and creativity (Chapman & Aspin, 1997; Fowler, 1994). More specifically, a number of qualitative and survey studies have shown that adults report a wide range of social, psychological, spiritual and health benefits derived from singing together (Clift & Hancox, 2001; Silber, 2005).

### **3.7.3 Effects on Physical, Psychological and Social Wellbeing**

Early affirmations of the holistic benefits of music can be found in classical Greek ideas about music education. Pythagoras taught music to his students on the understanding that, if used properly, it could bring about a variety of benefits, including improvements to physical health, and “he called the medicine which is obtained through music by the name of purification” (Rudhyar, 1982, p. 167). Other Greek philosophers speculated on the effects of music on bodily chemistry (Levman, 2000), and recommendations were formulated for using music therapeutically against mental and physical illness (Bruhn, 2000).

Horden (2000) has described how, in subsequent historical periods such as the Renaissance and Early Modern Period, and in non-European traditions such as Judaism and Islam, music has been employed in various ways to bring about improvements in wellbeing. In a longitudinal analysis of music-therapy related articles in the *Etude* music magazine for the period 1883 to 1957, Hunter (1999) has argued that support for

the physical and psychological health benefits of singing across these years was consistent and emphatic. The various advantages described were both physical and psychological, and were recommended prophylactically for well persons and therapeutically for ill persons. Although the articles varied in the perspectives and methodologies adopted, there was a consistent holistic medicine theme which shaped the early practice of music therapy.

Moreover, music as a therapeutic medium has been demonstrated to be efficacious for pain management (Trauger-Querry & Haghghi, 1999); in assisting the resolution of grief (Bright, 2002); as a means of constructing a personal identity (Smeijsters & van den Hurk, 1999); in improving the lives of people with communications problems stemming from cognitive impairment (Goddear & Abraham, 1994); and in enhancing the quality of life for sufferers of Alzheimer's (Hanser, 1999).

In a recent study involving 600 choral singers drawn from English choirs, Clift, Hancox, Morrison, Hess, Kreutz and Stewart (2007) described six “generative mechanisms” (p. 4) linking choral singing with wellbeing and health. According to their findings, singing in a choir,

- Engenders happiness and raised spirits, which counteract feelings of sadness and depression;
- Involves focused concentration, which blocks preoccupation with sources of worry;
- Necessitates deep controlled breathing, which counteracts anxiety;
- Offers social support and friendship, which diminish feelings of isolation and loneliness;
- Involves education and learning, which keeps the mind active and counteracts the decline of cognitive functions;
- Requires a regular commitment to attend rehearsals, which motivates people to avoid being physically inactive (pp. 4, 5).

Medical science has also offered new insights into aspects of singing and its influence on wellbeing. A relationship between singing and immune functions has been investigated by Kreutz, Bongard, Rohrman, Hodapp and Grebe (2003) who concluded that amateur group singing leads to increases in the production of salivary immunoglobulin A, a protein considered as the first line of defence against respiratory infections. Their conclusion “replicates previous work demonstrating an association between singing and immune function, and suggests a possible influence of musical behaviour on wellbeing and health” (p. 632).

Music in various forms has also become widely used by health professionals as a form of therapeutic intervention across a diverse range of patient groups (Snyder & Chlan, 1999), although scholarship does not universally acclaim its efficacy. Kenny and Faunce (2004) have explored the impact of group singing on mood, coping and perceived pain in chronic pain patients attending a multidisciplinary pain clinic. A group of singers participated in nine 30-minute sessions, while a comparative group listened to music during regular exercise. A short form of The Profile of Mood States (POMS) was administered before and after select singing sessions to assess whether or not singing produced short-term elevations in mood. However, in only one of the 15 variables was the set of pre-to-post scores different across the two groups. While the study suggests that singing may have some benefits, it also highlights the fact that quantification of the benefits of singing in clinical contexts remains problematic.

The idea that group participation in singing leads to stronger emotional experiences and more positive moods has gained currency in recent studies conducted in the field of music psychology. In a study involving 121 members from three different choirs, Bailey (2005) assessed the comparative effects of group singing, isolated

listening and social listening. On 73% of the items, which included ‘getting a high’, having an exhilarating experience and being in a better mood, active singing was found to be more beneficial than either of the two listening categories.

Group singing has also been shown to improve the self-esteem and social skills of marginalised groups. Bailey and Davidson (2002; 2005) have highlighted the crucial importance of group singing for homeless men. They found that singing in a group not only created the potential for social bonding between the choristers themselves, but also established a social distance from which they could begin to build a relationship with the public in which it was possible to demonstrate that they were much more than might be suggested by their appearance (Davidson & Bailey, 2005).

#### **3.7.4 Educational Benefits**

Plato’s vision of the ideal state included a privileged place for education and the arts. The Greek word for music also included literature and dancing, as well as vocal and instrumental music (Mark, 2002). In *Protagoras and Meno*, Plato asserts that proficiency in music is not only an important form of preparation for good citizenship, but also as a means of developing the best qualities of the self:

The music masters by analogous methods, instill self-control and deter the young from evil-doing. And when they have learned to play the lyre, they teach them the works of good poets of another sort, namely the lyrical, which they accompany on the lyre, familiarizing the minds of the children with the rhythms and melodies. By this means, they become more civilized, more balanced, and better adjusted in themselves and so more capable in whatever they say or do, for rhythm and harmonious adjustment are essential to the whole of human life. (Keith & Guthrie, 1965, p. 57).

Wong (1998) has compared Plato’s teachings on the place of music in education with those of Confucius who expected his students to learn the six arts: rites, music,

archery, chariot-driving, literature and mathematics. Confucius affirmed the capacity of music to cultivate the mind and to create people endowed with benevolence. During the lifetimes of the Confucian scholars, music was used as a “tool in moral education” (Wong, p. 111), and as an aide to maintaining high moral standards and promoting just human relationships.

In more recent times, the volume of literature investigating the relationship between arts programs and academic achievement has grown to enormous proportions. Hetland and Winter (2001) have located 11,467 publications and unpublished papers of this kind. One of the most significant contributions to this field has been a massive landmark study involving 25,000 American high school students and seven teams of researchers which examined the impact of the arts on learning and socialisation, including the influence of intensive involvement in music on student achievement. Although the researchers employed a range of methodologies, and conducted their investigations and presented their reports independently, there was a remarkable consensus among their findings. The final report, entitled *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* (Fiske, 1999), found that learners could increase their level of achievement through their engagement with the arts. Of the fourteen major findings, the following ten relate directly to the educational environment:

- When well taught, the arts provide young people with real and authentic learning experiences that engage their minds, hearts, and bodies;
- Whereas learning in other disciplines may often focus on a single skill or talent, the arts regularly engage multiple skills and abilities;
- Engagement in any of the arts nurtures the development of cognitive, social, and personal competencies.
- The arts reach students who are not otherwise being reached;
- The arts reach students in ways that they are not otherwise being reached;
- The arts connect students to themselves and each other
- The arts transform the environment for learning;
- The arts provide learning opportunities for the adults who work with young people;

- The arts provide new challenges for those students already considered successful;
- The arts connect learning experiences to the world of real work (pp. ix-xi).

In his work on the Mozart Effect, Campbell (1997; 2000) has stated that music can increase the IQ, help in relieving pain, and facilitate learning in young children. Shaw and Rauscher (2000) have investigated the capacity of music to enhance brainpower and showed that music can facilitate creativity, verbal and social skills, logic, order and abstract reasoning. Music can also play a role in assisting students to cope with conditions such as autism, attention deficit disorder, learning disabilities and sensory processing disorders. Louise (1997) has highlighted the sociological relevance of music in shaping socio-cultural values, stating that music helps in socialising people, transmits ideologies and shapes patterns of thought and perception through epistemological constructs. From a technical point of view, choral singing also supports students in developing improved levels of musicianship such as aural and sight-reading skills, and it is also economically equitable and accessible to students of all academic levels (Phillips, 1988).

### **3.7.5 Group Singing in Liturgy and Worship**

Parker (1991) has described singing as the most human of the arts, affirming its special power as a group activity: “When we sing alone, we are let out of ourselves into the world of song. When we sing together, we create a community, a communion in sound. The group becomes more than the sum of its parts” (p. 115). The corporate nature of song has also been explored by Wren (2000) who has described massed singing from the point of view of liturgy and congregational hymn singing. He has proposed a set of seven hallmarks of congregational song, of which the first three



categories are directly relevant to this study: corporate, corporeal and inclusive. First, the corporate nature of singing is signalled by the fact that “no individual voice is heard, and no single participant receives recognition” (p. 85). In singing together, people agree not to be soloists, self-absorbed mediators or competitors, but to compromise with each other by joining their voices and keeping the same tempo. Singing together is a powerful way of embodying a commitment to one another. Second, congregational song is also corporeal in that it is a body-experience. The diaphragm expands to draw in air which is expelled through the delicate muscles of the larynx, producing sound that resonates through the head and is given meaning by the vocal articulators. Davies and Jahn (1998) have pointed out that there are only a few parts of the body not involved in some way in voice production. Third, congregational song is inclusive: almost everyone can sing or make a joyful noise. Jourdain (1997) has found that only five percent of the population are monotones and even they are able to hear a half-step alteration in pitch. Wren has argued that the congregation does not require advanced musical education or expensive instruments to join in the act of singing: it is innately accessible to the human being. Poor musical performance in group situations is inevitably the result of psychological and attitudinal factors rather than any want of ability on the part of the singers. Given that congregational song is by definition inclusive, the issue is not so much whether or not one has a voice, but whether or not one has a song; and not whether or not one can sing, but whether or not one is prepared to sing.

### **3.7.6 Choral and Massed Singing in the Cultures and Rituals of Schools**

Hylton (1981) has suggested that, within schools, choral singing represents a cooperative, creative, expressive force with meanings that vary from student to student. Literature examining massed singing outside the realm of formal choral activity and

more directly in association with the cultural, symbolic and ritualistic dimensions of schools, appears to be extremely rare. A longitudinal study by Welch (2000) found that school ethos is a factor in influencing whether or not young children sing at school, but here the focus was on the student as recipient, rather than on the school and its culture. A number of other studies reinforce this unidirectional view of the relationship between massed singing and school culture (Finney, 2006; Hall, 2005). In a paper analysing the rituals of a number of Adelaide private schools, Kapferer (1981) highlighted the role of hymns sung at assemblies and speech nights in “inculcating religious and social morality” (p. 266), and identified the singing of hymns and school songs as key elements in the schools’ *rites de passage*. Norton (2008) has conducted a multicultural feminist critical narrative inquiry into the relationships between singing, schooling and spirituality, and has described how spiritual people negotiate public schools in the United States. The findings demonstrate how the participants’ age, ethnicity, class and spirituality shape music as a spiritual practice, and influence whole-school values such as the desirability of working together as a community.

### **3.7.7 Choral Music in Australia: Historical Perspective**

Choral performance and composition can be traced back to the early settlements when, as a transplanted tradition, its characteristics reflected the tastes of British and European musical style (Dumont, 1996). In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Percy Grainger attempted to compose a distinctively Australian genre of choral music. Though innovative in its use of scale-less and non-metrical notation, it nevertheless followed trends in the western music of his time (Shaw, 1988). In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Australian choral music composition took two discernible directions. On the one hand, composers such as Margaret Sutherland and Henry Tate struggled to find a new musical language for Australia; while on the other, the traditional musical idioms

of Britain were maintained by the likes of Miriam Hyde and William Lovelock. Government funding for the arts was introduced in the 1950s and increased significantly under the Whitlam Labour Government of the 1970s. However, by this time, choral composition was in decline. Radic (1991) has documented the decline of the ABC Wireless Chorus which was established in the 1930s, but which had disintegrated by the 1960s. In schools, choral singing was displaced by the popularity of school bands programs. Pride (1996) has argued that, prior to World War II, singing was regarded as a natural part of everyday life, and not considered the embarrassing activity it became after 1960.

### **3.7.8 Music and Choral Education in Australia: Contemporary Issues**

As reported in Chapter 2, the past decade in Australia has seen a growing concern amongst music educators and academics that music education in the nation's schools has become critically inadequate. In March 2004, the Australian Government announced a national review of school music education whose rationale derived from a widespread recognition that music is an important part of every child's education; from a general perception that Australian school music education is approaching a state of crisis; from the influence of evidence from United States research (Fiske, 1999) and current Australian studies, that education in the arts (including music) has the potential to enhance significantly the skills children need to flourish in the knowledge economy; from the belief amongst educators that the arts achieve diverse and valuable educational ends that also have positive flow-on effects to other areas of learning; and from the desire to affirm music as an important area of arts education that can provide powerful learning experiences for young people. A team led by researchers from Murdoch University in Western Australia undertook the review on behalf of the Australian Government to assess the current quality of teaching and learning of music in Australian

schools; to identify factors that affect the quality and status of the teaching of music in Australian schools; to describe examples of best practice in teaching and learning of music both in Australian schools and schools overseas; and to establish key recommendations, principles and priorities for enhancing school music education.

The *National Review of School Music Education* (Seares, 2005), provided a detailed examination of the existing context for music education in the light of past studies and reviews, all of which had identified significant deficiencies in the provision and delivery of music education in Australia. A key concern identified by the review was the disparity between girls' and boys' participation in singing, particularly in the context of choral groups. The Review attributed this to a number of factors including the designation of singing as a feminine or non-masculine activity; the inhibiting impact of physiological changes in boys' voices during puberty; and the vulnerability of boys to peer pressure in activities involving the singing voice.

The review also established a set of priorities for Australian schools aimed at "improving and sustaining the quality and status of music education" (p. v). Specifically, it identified seven key action areas which are represented in Table 3.7.

Table 3.5

*Priorities of the National Review of School Music Education (2005)*

<b>1.</b>	Improve the equity of access, participation and engagement in school music for all students.
<b>2.</b>	Improve teacher pre-service and in-service education.
<b>3.</b>	Improve curriculum support services (advisory, instrumental music, vocal music and music technology).
<b>4.</b>	Support productive partnerships and networking with music organisations, musicians, the music industry and the Australian community.
<b>5.</b>	Improve music education in schools through supportive principals and school leadership, adequately educated specialist teachers, increased time in the timetable, adequate facilities and equipment.
<b>6.</b>	Improve levels of accountability.
<b>7.</b>	Improve the overall status of music in schools.

(Source: Seares, 2005, pp. v-vii)

These “key messages” (p. v) formed the basis of a comprehensive set of strategic directions and recommended actions. The report made several specific references to principals, and stressed the need for them to support and value their music programs in practical ways including the provision of increased teaching time for music, adequate facilities and equipment, and suitably qualified specialist teachers.

### **3.8 Summary**

The literature on corporate singing examines eight key areas in the experience of singing together as a group: historical perspective; the benefits of music and singing; effects on physical, psychological and social wellbeing; educational benefits; group singing in liturgy and worship; choral and massed singing in the cultures of schools;

choral music in Australia, an historical perspective; and contemporary issues in music and choral education in Australia.

The literature highlights the ancient origins of singing in human culture (Reznikoff, 2005) and affirms the voice as the first of all musical instruments (Eliasar, 2006; Wald, 2006). The many benefits resulting from the effects of participation in music and singing are identified (Chapman & Aspin, 1997; Fowler, 1996), with specific reference to their impact on wellbeing (Clift, Hancox, Morrison, Hess, Kreutz & Stewart, 2007); psychological states (Bailey, 2005); therapeutic treatment (Synder & Chlan, 1999); and socialisation skills (Davidson, 2008). Drawing on the work of Fiske (1999), the educational benefits of music and singing are discussed, with particular reference to learning and socialisation. The place of massed singing in liturgy and worship is examined, with a focus its corporate, corporeal and inclusive properties (Wren, 2000). The effect of massed singing in the rituals of school culture is also discussed (Kapferer, 1981). The origins of choral music in Australia are traced (Dumont, 1996), and contemporary issues in music education in Australia are examined in the light of the Commonwealth Government's 2004 report on the state of music education in Australian schools.

The literature on massed singing is significant to the current research because it clarifies the nature of the musical activity which is central to this study, and about which principals are called to make decisions; it situates it culturally and historically; and it affirms its many positive characteristics and effects. The light shed by these insights into the current research problem leads to the following questions which emerge as a focus for the research:

- What understanding do principals have of the general benefits of massed singing for the human person?
- In what ways do principals use their leadership to influence the practice of massed singing in their schools?
- In what ways do principals believe that a massed singing program can affect the culture of single-sex boys' schools?

### **3.9 Conclusion**

The three themes which form the conceptual framework underpinning this research into principals and corporate singing represent a network of fields in which the themes link directly to the research topic and also with one another (Figure 1.). The research topic is illuminated in a variety of ways by the exploration of literature relating to organisational and educational leadership; to masculinity in boys' education and in contemporary leadership; and to the experience of massed singing and its various benefits (Summaries: 5.1.8; 5.2.5; 5.3.4). In the first instance, literature on leadership provides a framework and a language for conceptualizing important aspects of the field and significant trends within it. Of particular significance in this area are transformational leadership and educational leadership, especially for the ways in which they highlight vision, integrity, collaboration, culture and self-awareness. Second, literature on masculinity and its influence on boys' schooling and leadership offers a context both for the decision-making of school principals, and for the activity of massed singing about which these same principals make potentially influential decisions. The problematic nature of gendered participation in musical activities helps to underline some of the complexities inherent in the research problem itself. Last, literature on massed singing locates this activity within the broader context of the performing arts

and music performance, affirming its value at a number of levels as beneficial to physical wellbeing, psychological health, learning, socialisation and self-esteem.

The review of the literature informs and illuminates the research in three principal ways. First, it brings into focus a body of knowledge which informs our understanding of how principals lead. Second, literature specific to masculinity, boys' education and gendered leadership highlights the range of issues underpinning the participation of boys in corporate singing. Last, the literature relating to massed singing illustrates how it is perceived as a positive and formative activity for human beings in general, and for adolescent boys in particular.

### **3.9.1 Concepts**

The literature establishes that leadership is most effective when it is enacted out of higher values such as vision and integrity, rather than the imperatives of efficiency or productivity. This distinction is illustrated clearly by the differences Starratt (2005) has described between leaders and administrators. Transformational leadership asserts itself in the literature as a key expression of leadership which brings substantial benefits to all who participate in it, not just to leaders (Crowe, Matthew & McCleary, 1996). It is important in understanding school leadership because education is about the development of people, and leaders need to be visionary in the way that they support and enable this to take place (Burford, 1996). There are certain specific implications for leaders who would see their leadership as transformational. First, it must be a leadership which acknowledges that relationships with other leaders in the school are highly significant in shaping the school's direction (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2005). Second, given that the higher values of transformational leadership are enacted by human beings with all their gifts and limitations, leaders must be prepared to come to



terms with themselves as people by cultivating self-awareness and self-reflection (Cover, 1992; Schaetti, Ramsay & Watanabe, 2008). These implications are significant in understanding how principals influence particular programs and activities in their schools, especially those programs which are subject to some degree of cultural marginalisation.

Two key concepts arise out of the presentation of masculinity in the literature: in the first instance, its historical and contemporary dominance of the feminine principle in almost every institution in the West (Tosh, 2004; Harris, 2005); and second, the multiplicity of expressions of masculinity now recognised as forming an internal hierarchy, with a hegemonic form dominating alternate forms (Connell, 1995; Pascoe, 2007). These concepts are particularly relevant in studying the behaviour of adolescent boys in schools and adult males in school leadership, as they help to explain the gender inheritance of both groups.

In relation to massed singing, the literature highlights, almost without exception, that singing in groups at whatever level of expertise, brings many and significant benefits to the human person (Louise, 1997; Clift, Hancox, Morrison, Hess, Kreutz & Stewart, 2007). The contexts may be recreational, educational, or therapeutic, but the benefits are affirmed in all such environments.

### **3.9.2 Specific Issues**

The literature on leadership establishes that schools are complex organisations where decisions are made at a variety of levels with varying degrees of interconnection, and where leaders can find the scope to be influential and effective. What can we learn about the influence of principals on specific programs or activities within a school? For

example, at what stage or level in a school's decision-making structures do principals make decisions that affect the place of corporate singing in a school? Clearly, there are likely to be other people involved in the mechanics of such a decision, such as singing teachers and music coordinators, but their level of decision-making will be different from that of the principal.

Other issues arise in this discussion about the disposition of principals towards particular activities in their schools, and the relationship between an attitude or disposition of the principal, and its expression or repression in a given school. What are the factors which shape these dispositions, and to what extent are principals aware of the ways in which they have been formed as people, and how committed are they to self-reflection and professional development?

As principals act and decide, and as they grow and change over time, how do they inform or reference their decisions, especially if the area of decision-making is not congenial to them, or if they possess no real expertise in a particular field? Conversely, if they are well informed and if they do possess knowledge specific to an area of decision-making, how do they use and apply this knowledge? As the literature indicates, while there are studies on the *big themes* of principals' leadership (Leithwood et al., 1999; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 2004), and on the educational benefits for individual student learning, the specific influence of principals on the place of massed singing in boys' secondary schooling is less well researched. It is this lacuna in the literature which the present study attempts to address.

In Chapter 4, Research Plan, an overview of the principal elements of the research plan is presented. The manner in which data was obtained and the reasons for

obtaining it are discussed, as are the assumptions on which the processes for collecting data have been based.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH PLAN

#### 4.1 Introduction

The review of the literature in Chapter 3 highlighted three themes, namely organisational and educational leadership; masculinity in boys' education and leadership; and the musical nature and multiple benefits of massed singing. Seven questions emerged from this review and provided the focus for the conduct of the study. In light of these questions, and taking into account the purpose of the study, it seemed appropriate to undertake the research in the manner described below.

The purpose of the study was to investigate how principals see themselves as experiencing and influencing the practice of massed singing in their schools, and to explore the connections they make between their role as leader, the culture of their school, and this specific musical activity. Central to this statement of purpose is the belief that massed singing is an activity with great potential for shaping school culture; that principals should be encouraged to exploit this potential in order to build a healthy and vibrant culture in which there are special opportunities for challenging gender stereotypes and promoting aesthetic values; and that principals themselves can benefit as leaders by reflecting on the themes of this study. Given that this research seeks to explore how principals see themselves as influencing the practice of massed singing in their schools, especially as it pertains to the relationship between their roles as leaders and the cultures of their schools, the study is more concerned with words and concepts than with numbers or empirical measurement. Furthermore, this research is sensitive to a range of contexts. This necessitates the study of some aspects of the schools' environments, as well as the broader issues of gender in schooling which relate to boys

in secondary education and men in school leadership. Since the research also investigates a form of musical experience for a particular social grouping, certain aspects of massed singing are also described. These factors suggest an approach to research that is (a) essentially qualitative, (b) interpretive, and (c) constructed around the interview. This research involves the researcher as an instrument of data collection. Table 4.1 presents an overview of the principal elements of the research plan.

Table 4.1

*Overview of the research plan*

<b>4.2</b>	<b>Theoretical Framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Meta-theoretical perspective</i></li> <li>• <i>Epistemology</i></li> </ul>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Research Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Qualitative Interview Study</i></li> </ul>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Theoretical Perspective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Symbolic Interactionism</i></li> </ul>
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Data Collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Document Analysis</i></li> <li>• <i>Questionnaire</i></li> <li>• <i>Semistructured interviews</i></li> </ul>
<b>4.6</b>	<b>Research Participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Secondary principals</i></li> </ul>
<b>4.7</b>	<b>Trustworthiness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Credibility</i></li> <li>• <i>Generalisability</i></li> <li>• <i>Dependability</i></li> <li>• <i>Confirmability</i></li> <li>• <i>Methodological rigour</i></li> </ul>
<b>4.8</b>	<b>Data Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Six-phase strategy</i></li> <li>• <i>Analytical Phases</i></li> <li>• <i>Review Phases</i></li> </ul>
<b>4.9</b>	<b>Ethical Considerations</b>	

## **4.2 Theoretical Framework**

### **4.2.1 Meta-theoretical Perspective**

Guba (1990) has identified three types of questions which may be used for constructing inquiry paradigms: what is the nature of knowledge? (an ontological

question); what is the relationship between the knower or inquirer, and the known or knowable? (an epistemological question); and how should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge? (a methodological question). It is important for the researcher to be as transparent as possible about any identifiable influences or biases which might colour the research process. Human beings operate, on the one hand, out of a personal epistemology (Scheurich & Young, 1997) gained through our experiences up to this point (Geertz, 1973); on the other hand, our knowledge and experiences are situated within specific contexts involving significant social and cultural factors (Reissman, 1994). By acknowledging and clarifying these various factors and their influence on the researcher's worldview, it is possible to improve the quality both of the process itself, and of its outcomes.

The relationships between ontological, epistemological and methodological positions are often identified as research traditions and paradigms (Gough, 2003). Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) propose three social science research paradigms which are represented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

*Research traditions & paradigms*

	<b>ONTOLOGY</b>	<b>EPISTEMOLOGY</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY</b>
<b><i>Positivist</i></b>	Stable external reality Law-like	Objective Detached Observer	Experimental Quantitative Hypothesis testing
<b><i>Interpretivist</i></b>	Internal reality of subjective experience	Empathetic Observer intersubjectivity	Interactional Interpretation Qualitative
<b><i>Constructionist</i></b>	Socially constructed reality Discourse	Suspicious Political Observer constructing versions	Deconstruction Textual Analysis Discourse Analysis

(Adapted from Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999)

My assumption is that knowledge is constructed and content specific (Reissman, 1994). The research I conducted was interpretive given that I sought to obtain contextual findings through a close examination of people's words, actions and records (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The purpose of the research was essentially to interpret the phenomena and to clarify meanings as I investigated human perspectives, their consequences and outcomes. This allowed me to interpret the realities of other people, and to enlarge and expand a sense of community and shared meaning. At the same time, I invited participants to construct meanings for their reality and to describe these to me. The research design and process were intended to explore, illustrate and describe human experience within a specific set of contexts, and to obtain information about "people's thoughts and feelings and the motives and emotions that lead them to act as they do" (Weiss, 2004, p.45).

#### **4.2.2 Epistemology**

Epistemology has been defined as involving the concepts of knowledge, evidence, reasons for believing, justification, probability and any other concepts that can be understood through one or more of the above (Fumerton, 2006). The ways in which research asks particular questions and assesses the relevance and value of different research methodologies may vary significantly according to our underlying epistemological commitments (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). As far as socio-historical research is concerned, "The methodologies that yield knowledge are manifold, and no one of them convincingly asserts its primacy" (Hall, 2002, p. 9).

This research into the leadership of principals is predominantly qualitative. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), qualitative research is "a complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts and assumptions" which "cross-cuts

disciplines, fields and subjects matters” (p. 2). However, as Marshall and Rossman (2006) have proposed, most qualitative researchers espouse some “common considerations and procedures for its conduct and certain habits of mind and heart” (p. 2). Moreover,

[Qualitative Researchers] are intrigued by the complexity of social interactions expressed in daily life and by the meanings that the participants themselves attribute to these interactions. These interests take qualitative researchers into natural settings, rather than laboratories, and foster pragmatism in using multiple methods for exploring a topic. Thus qualitative research is pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of people. (Marshall & Rossman, p. 2)

Qualitative methodology is characterised by the interpretive and critical approaches to the social sciences. In the interpretive approach, there is an attempt to discover meanings embedded within texts such as conversations, written words or visual images. Thus, the mode of inquiry is inductive since the movement is from the particular to the general, and the collection of data allows for the generation of theories (Babbie, 2002). The interpretative researcher applies theories so as to give a major role to historical context and social conditions, and illumines the deep structures underpinning social relations (Neuman, 1997). The experience of groups is far less important to qualitative research than the subjective and personal experiences of individuals - a focus which Burns (1997) describes as ideographic. As the researcher seeks to perceive accurately the subjective experiences of others and to identify empathetically with them, he or she necessarily inhabits the world of symbols, metaphors and subjective meanings (Carpenter, 2008).

Qualitative research can be further subdivided into a variety of distinct epistemological stances. Lincoln and Guba (2000) enumerate five inquiry paradigms: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, constructivism and participatory inquiry. Schwandt (2000) reduces the number of stances to three: interpretivism, hermeneutics



and social constructionism. Denzin and Lincoln (2000), writing from an epistemological perspective, propose and describe seven major “moments” (p. 12) in qualitative research. These are represented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

*Seven moments of qualitative research*

	<b>Moment</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Output</b>
1.	<i>Traditional Period</i>	Early 1900s-WWar II	Valid, reliable, objective interpretations	Objective research reflects the positivist paradigm
2.	<i>Modernist Phase</i>	Post WW II – 1970s (and still operative today)	Social realism, naturalism, slice-of-life ethnographies	Rigorous qualitative analysis & formalized qualitative methods
3.	<i>The Blurred Genres</i>	1970-1986	Symbolic interactionism, constructivism, naturalistic enquiry, positivism, Postpositivism, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, critical theory, neo-Marxist theory, semiotics, structuralism, feminism	Empirical material collected and analysed in diverse ways. Computerisation influences data management and analysis
4.	<i>Crisis of Representation</i>	Mid-1980s	Anthropological challenge, critical feminist theory, unsettling of issues of validity, reliability and objectivity	Writings become more reflective. Gender, class and race emerge as issues. Self-reflection becomes a method of inquiry
5.	<i>Postmodern Period</i>	Late 1980s-90s	A struggle to make sense of the crises, emergence of action, participatory and activist oriented research	Struggle to represent the other. Consciousness of the responsibilities of social researchers
6.	<i>Postexperimental Period</i>	Late 1990s – new millennium	Fictional ethnographies, ethnographic poetry and multimedia texts	Desire to connect writings to the needs of society
7.	<i>The Future</i>	/	/	/

(Adapted from Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, pp. 12-18)

This study is particularly cognizant of the postmodernist challenge of representing faithfully the world of the other, and of acknowledging and critiquing the role of the researcher in the process of inquiry.

While there exists some significant overlap across the range of approaches proposed by various writers, there are also important differences “reflecting various experiences with and emphases within the history of qualitative research” (Patton, 2001, p. 79).

The specific framework underpinning this inquiry into the leadership of secondary principals is interpretivism. Two centuries of philosophical dialogue provide our current foundation for understanding the centrality of interpretivism in qualitative research (Patton, 2001). The roots of interpretivism are often linked to Max Weber (1949) who argued that the social sciences are principally concerned with *Verstehen*, or understanding, and that to study the social world means not only to observe human behaviour, but also to understand it. The underlying assumption of interpretivism is that the whole needs to be examined in order to understand phenomena. Interpretivism is critical of positivism because it seeks to collect and analyze data from selected parts of phenomena and, in so doing, positivism can overlook important aspects required to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the whole. Interpretivists argue that positivist attempts to measure human behaviour are ultimately inadequate because they exclude the intersubjective and constructed nature of the social world. Furthermore, interpretivism proposes that there are multiple realities, not single realities of phenomena, and that these realities can differ across time and place. Interpretive inquiry aims to discover what is meaningful to the people being studied, while seeking to understand their social reality (Neuman, 1997). Punch (2005) has argued for a less simplistic dichotomy between positivism and interpretivism by suggesting that “a position on one does not necessarily imply a position on another and that a selection among these positions should depend more on purposes and circumstances of the research than on philosophical considerations” (p.2).

Given that the purposes and circumstances of this inquiry constitute an attempt to explore and understand aspects of the lived experience of school leaders by investigating *in situ* their own viewpoints and worldviews, an interpretivist approach has been employed.

### **4.3 Research Design**

The research design is a qualitative in-depth interview study (Weiss, 2004; deMarrais and Lapan, 2004) involving three principals of secondary boys' schools. Weiss (1993) has described how the qualitative interview can be used as the basis of a study design:

Interviews that sacrifice uniformity of questioning to achieve fuller development are properly called *qualitative* interviews, and a study based on such interviews, a qualitative interview study. Because each respondent is expected to provide a great deal of information, the qualitative interview study is likely to rely on a sample very much smaller than the samples interviewed by a reasonably ambitious survey study. And because the fuller responses obtained by the qualitative study cannot be easily categorized, their analysis will rely less on counting and correlating and more on interpretation, summary, and integration. The findings of the qualitative study will be supported more by quotations and case descriptions than by tables or statistical measures (p. 3).

DeMarrais and Lapan have identified a variety of labels in the methodological literature on qualitative interview studies, including the "in-depth" (p. 53) qualitative interview. This study design was chosen because it is consistent with the spirit of symbolic interactionism which privileges the viewpoints of the key participants, and respects their uniqueness: "because each participant is unique, each qualitative interview experience will also be unique" (deMarrais and Lapan, p. 53). Moreover, it permits the researcher to investigate a small number of cases through the analysis of verbal descriptions and explanations obtained by means of a flexible data-collection method in which the interviewee is the central phenomenon.

The research design has also been guided by some aspects of grounded theory, namely theoretical sensitivity and open coding. Glaser (1978) has described theoretical sensitivity as a key personal quality of the researcher which enables understanding of the meaning and subtlety of data. It requires of the researcher a high degree of conceptual insight which should be creative rather than concrete. Theoretical sensitivity in research is particularly important because data analysis “results from the researcher’s involvement at every point in the research process” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 148). Open coding refers to identifying, naming, categorising and describing phenomena found in the text. It requires “searching for the right word or two that best describe conceptually what the researcher believes is indicated by the data” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 160). However, as grounded theory seeks to produce by means of a fixed method of comparative orientation a theory which is inductively derived from the phenomena it represents, it does not serve the interpretivist nature of this study with its emphasis on multiple realities and understandings.

#### **4.3.1 The Qualitative Interview**

Kvale (1996) has likened the qualitative interviewer to a traveller who “wanders along with the local inhabitants, asks questions that lead the subjects to tell their own stories of the lived world, and converses with them...” (p. 4). For Kvale, the design of qualitative interview research is open-ended and more concerned with “being attuned to who is being travelled with, so to speak, than with setting out a precise route for all to follow, as in survey research” (Warren, 2001, p.86). As Warren has suggested, the wanderings of qualitative interviewing, as with ethnography in earlier decades, became systematised into texts and monographs during the 1990s. Amongst those who employed qualitative interviewing and endorsed it as a legitimate study design were Arksey and Knight (1999), Holstein and Gubrium (1999) and Rubin and Rubin (1995).

Kvale (1996) has described interviewing as a process comprised of seven stages: thematising, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying and reporting. Thematising is a key inchoative stage because this is the point at which the researcher fits a topic of interest to the interview method. In another sense, qualitative interviewing is also designed with the aim of thematising the respondents' experience as well.

Rubin and Rubin (2004) have identified a variety of qualitative interviews whose characteristics are represented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

*The variety of qualitative interviews*

	<b>Narrowly focused Scope</b>	<b>In-Between</b>	<b>Broadly Focused Scope</b>
<b>Focused Mainly on Meanings and Frameworks</b>	Concept clarification	Theory elaboration	Ethnographic interpretation
<b>In-Between</b>	Exit interview	Oral histories Organizational	Life history
<b>Focused Mainly on Events and Processes</b>	Investigative interviewing	Action research Evaluation research	Elaborated case studies

(Source: Rubin & Rubin, 2004, p. 5)

This research focuses narrowly on meanings and frameworks relating to the views, experiences and actions of three principals of secondary boys' schools in relation to the practice of massed singing in their schools. As such, it seeks what Rubin and Rubin have described as "concept clarification" (p. 4) in which the participants

themselves are able to describe phenomena and share meanings in response to the open-ended questions of the researcher.

However, Anderson, Herr and Nihlen (1994) have identified a number of concerns about the qualitative in-depth interview. These include the difficulty of getting together “a list of good, sequential questions” (p. 105); the fear interviewees may feel about their views on sensitive issues being exposed; and the possible skewing of data by respondents who are dishonest or inaccurate in their responses. In relation to the first concern, the questions in this study emerged from a detailed review of relevant literature and were shaped, drafted and redrafted across several processes involving a range of contributors, in a variety of forums. Furthermore, it was not viewed as necessary for them to be constructed or employed sequentially, as this may have compromised the semistructured nature of the interviews. The second concern relating to anonymity and the potential sensitivity of the issues under discussion was addressed by providing the participants with a detailed letter in advance of their interviews, in which matters relating to anonymity and the nature of the topics to be covered were presented unambiguously. Lastly, it is, of course, difficult to know at times how objectively accurate or honest the participants’ responses may turn out to be. It is important, nevertheless, to select participants carefully and to analyse their responses with a view to ascertaining overall authenticity and consistency with other sources of reliable data. In this study, a document search which was used in the first instance to provide background details relative to the schools in which each principal exercised leadership, also served to illustrate the consistency of the participants’ responses with factual data in the public domain.

There are also criticisms relating to the reliability and validity of the qualitative interview study, as well as concerns about methodological rigour. These issues are addressed in the section on Trustworthiness.

#### **4.4 Theoretical Perspective**

Research cannot be conducted effectively without the conscious or unconscious use of underlying theoretical perspectives. These perspectives inform methodology, guide theory, shape the questions to be pursued, and inform the conclusions to be drawn (Broido & Manning, 2002). Crotty (1998) has defined theoretical perspective as “the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria” (p. 3). Because perspectives draw on sets of assumptions, beliefs and values, they can also be understood as conceptual frameworks. When clearly articulated, a conceptual framework has potential usefulness as a tool to “scaffold” (Smyth, 2004, p. 1) research and, therefore, to assist a researcher to make meaning of subsequent findings. Such a framework can be used as a starting point for reflection about the research and its context, and can also function as a tool intended to help the researcher to develop awareness and understanding of the situation under scrutiny, and to reflect on and report these insights.

Nevertheless, as Smyth (2004) has argued, there are some cautions to be aware of when utilising a conceptual framework. Firstly, the framework is a construction of knowledge bounded by the life-world experiences of the person developing it, and should not be attributed a power that it does not have. Secondly, the nature of a conceptual framework means that it consciously or unconsciously informs thought and practice by increasing personal sensitivity to particular occurrences. Thirdly, no

researcher can expect that all data will be analysed using the framework without the risk of limiting the results from the investigation.

Interpretive social science offers a range of theoretical perspectives which includes the structural-functionalist perspective, the conflict perspective and the symbolic interactionist perspective. Each perspective offers a variety of explanations about the causes of and possible solutions to social problems (Rubington & Weinberg, 2003). Both the structural-functionalist and the conflict perspectives are concerned with how broad aspects of society, such as institutions and large groups of people, influence the social world. Thus, the structural-functionalist perspective highlights the interconnectedness of society by focusing on how each part influences and is influenced by other parts, and the conflict perspective views society as comprising different groups and interests in active competition with each other for power and resources (Mooney, Knox & Schacht, 2000). However, underlying symbolic interactionism is the major assumption that individuals act on the basis of the meaning that things have for them (Benzies & Allen, 2001). It is this last perspective which underpins the approach taken within the present study.

Denzin (1992) traces the evolution of symbolic interactionism from the publication of William James' *Principles of Psychology* (1890) which inaugurated a tradition of research aimed at the "interpretive, subjective study of human experience" (Denzin, p. 2). In more recent times, symbolic interactionism as a social-psychological approach has been closely associated with Mead and Blumer (Patton, 2002). In his classic description of this approach, Blumer (1969) advances the following definition:

The term 'symbolic interaction' refers ... to the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings. The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or 'define' each



other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions. Their 'response' is not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such actions. Thus, human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions. (p. 180).

Blumer went on to describe three premises which underpin the whole perspective of symbolic interactionism. The first premise is that people act towards things based on the meanings they ascribe to these things, rather than simply reacting to them on some kind of instinctual basis. These things do not have a fixed or inherent meaning, but "their meanings differ based on how we define and respond to them" (Fine & Sandstrom, 2007, p. 251).

The second premise is that social interaction between people leads to social products or relationships. Human beings are neither born with a complete knowledge of things, nor do they acquire their knowledge of the world individually. In fact, they learn what things mean through their interactions with others (Fine & Sandstrom, 2004). Thus, "the social world we experience is *constituted* in and through the continuous process of definition and interpretation through which we engage with others" (Sharrock, Hughes & Martin, 2003, p. 167).

The third premise asserts that people modify the meanings they gain through social interaction by processes of interpretation and self-reflection. This is an open and ongoing process in which meaning is constantly renegotiated. Human beings are never able to define once and for all the meanings they have constituted through their interactions with others. On the contrary, "they continually engage the interpretive

process, including the interpretation of what they mean to themselves” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1999, p. 33).

Central to the notion of symbolic interactionism is a commitment to the perspective of the actor. The interpretations of symbolic interactionism are therefore constructed on the meanings that actors attribute to social phenomena. From a methodological standpoint, this requires of investigators that they align themselves, to the best of their abilities, with the views and values of those being studied, and that they attempt to grasp the shifting relationship between the actor’s attitudes and his or her acts (Denzin, 2003). A symbolic interactionist approach views the self as always in the making, and understands life to be an unfolding process in which individuals interpret their environment and act upon it on the basis of that interpretation.

Symbolic interactionism also reflects the view of the interpretive social sciences that the world is a symbolic reality (Campbell, Petry, Diver & Stahl, 2002) in which we use symbols such as language to embody and express meaning, to interpret the meanings and intent of others, and to allow us to manipulate and control the many interactions in which we participate. Symbols are therefore inherently “dialogical” (Campbell *et al*, p. 201) as they constitute a “common set of symbols and understandings that have emerged to give meaning to people’s interactions” (Best & Kahn, 2006, p. 255).

As this study is approached from the perspective of those being studied and their points of view relative to the research questions, it is consistent with the priorities of symbolic interactionism. According to Charon (2004), symbolic interactionism

endorses two principles of investigation. First, symbolic interactionism is primarily concerned with understanding what the actors themselves believe about their social world; and second, it is conducted in the real world and adopts careful, critical, systematic and objective approaches, in order to achieve accuracy when considering the perspectives of the actors. The data collection methods employed in this study – a document search, questionnaire and semi-structured interviews – were chosen to reflect the priorities suggested by these two principles of investigation.

#### **4.5 Participants**

This study focused intently and exclusively on aspects of the self-perception of principals in relation to their understanding of and influence on massed singing in their schools. That principals would be participants in the research was understood from the outset, but it subsequently became important to determine how many would participate. Given that the aim of qualitative research is to describe and interpret rather than to generalise, there are no fixed rules determining the number of participants (Lichtman, 2006). Although sample size is regarded by some as a matter of judgement (Sandelowski, 1995), most qualitative studies use a small number of individuals with the intention of covering material in depth. Obtaining data from more than one participant allows for the potential to compare and contrast material and to obtain a variety of perspectives on key phenomena.

Patton (2001) has developed a technique called purposeful sampling to assist in the selection of participants for qualitative research. He suggests several approaches, including “typical case”, “extreme or deviant case”, “critical case”, “sensitive case” and “convenience case” (pp. 100-107). A practical constraint in relation to the selection of participants for this study arose out of the fact that there are now very few secondary

boys' school in Australia in which a significant amount of regular massed singing takes place. In Patton's schema, massed singing qualifies for classification as an extreme case since it constitutes a highly unusual manifestation of a phenomenon of interest. It followed that the principals involved in this study would be leaders in schools where this extreme phenomenon was present. From a practical standpoint, the selection of principals also depended in large measure on their willingness and availability, and on their geographical proximity. After consideration of a variety of factors, it was decided to work with three principals. The factors which were considered in the selection of participants for this study are represented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

*Factors considered in the selection of participants*

<i>Some Possible Grouping of Three Principals</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Significance for the Research Aims</i>
Three principals from different states of Australia	Coming from a particular state of Australia is unlikely to be significant, as this is not related to any specific aspect of the research aims.	LOW
Three principals from the one state	Again, the issue of which Australian state the principals come from does not appear to be directly relevant.	LOW
Three principals from different educational sectors (state, independent & Catholic)	The diversity of school cultures across sectors is potentially highly significant.	HIGH
Three principals from one educational sector	While diversity also exists from one school to another, there does not seem to be any sound reason for limiting the sectors to one. It would be different if the stated research aim involved a focus on a particular sector.	MEDIUM
Three principals representing both genders	This may or may not be significant, but could prove difficult in reality as in Australia there are actually very few female principals of boys' secondary schools.	MEDIUM
Three male principals or three female principals	The research aims presume a diversity of experience, so uniform characteristics would seem to be out of step with this presumption.	LOW
Three principals from schools in which there is as yet little or no corporate singing	As the research aims set out to establish the influence of principals on an existing phenomenon, it would seem pointless to collect data from a principal who is not in a position of immediate influence on the phenomenon in question	LOW
Three principals from schools in which there is a tradition of corporate singing	It is important that the tradition of singing be present in order for the principals' influence on it to be examined substantively.	HIGH
Three principals from a mixture of schools in which two of these schools participate in corporate singing, and the other does not, or <i>vice versa</i> .	This is a compromise position between the previous two groupings.	MEDIUM
Three schools from a particular system, governed by a particular religious order, or influenced by a particular <i>charism</i> .	This grouping could be interesting to explore, but it is not a specific focus of the present research, and tends towards an expectation of uniformity rather than diversity.	LOW

Analysis of and reflection on these factors made it possible to establish that the principals to be involved in this study should ideally represent all three educational

sectors, and come from schools in which corporate singing is a regular and established practice. In line with this combination of factors, the principals of School A, School B and School C became the three participants in the study.

## **4.6 Data Collection**

The methods of data collection relative to each participating principal include:

- a) a document search focusing on information relating to music and singing in each school,
- b) a questionnaire administered in advance of the semi-structured interview,
- c) a semi-structured interview.

### **4.6.1 Document Analysis**

Qualitative researchers may choose to review a variety of written material including newsletters, memoranda, personal diaries, official publications, organisational reports and procedures, letters, emails, and the agenda and minutes of meetings. Document analysis can yield excerpts and quotations which assist the researcher to record and preserve context (Patton, 2001). In this study, the range of documents examined included school newsletters, school websites, school prospectuses and school yearbooks. The purpose of the document analysis was to draw on printed matter generated by the schools of the participating principals so as to provide background information on the contexts in which these principals exercise leadership. Although document analysis is, to a certain degree, a selective strategy, it can nevertheless provide valuable insights into other aspects of the process and even inform the focus questions used in interviews. Furthermore, documents are non-reactive and are not affected by the behaviour of the researcher (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Felport, 2002).

#### 4.6.2 Questionnaire

Kvale (1983) has suggested that open-ended questionnaires that are qualitative and descriptive in nature are useful in phenomenologically based research because they allow the researcher to focus on specific themes, and to probe broad yet loosely defined areas of significance. Open-ended questions are projective and suggestive rather than concrete and measurable, and allow the researcher to access and explore the participant's experience and beliefs at a more intimate level.

The questionnaire used in this research was designed to function in two complementary ways. In the first instance, it was intended to collect data in a more concentrated and succinct form than would be likely in the semi-structured interview. In this sense, it was also intended to provide the researcher with additional questions for the interview which would be more participant-specific. In the second instance, it was designed as a consciousness raising strategy for the participants, aimed at optimising the thinking space between questionnaire and interview. This was seen as having the potential to increase the likelihood of the participant already having some congenial familiarity with the stated interview agenda, and therefore being better prepared for his encounter with the researcher. The participants received and were asked to complete their questionnaires two weeks before their interviews (Appendices A, B & C).

The sixteen open-ended questions which comprised the questionnaire addressed the study's three principal foci: educational leadership; masculinity in boys' secondary schooling and school leadership; and corporate singing. They were framed so as to allow for theoretical reflection, reflection on personal experience, and reflection on professional performance. In line with the principles of symbolic interactionism, the questions were designed in such a way as to recognise the participant as central to the

inquiry. Questionnaires, however, are not without their disadvantages: the anonymity in which they are administered means that there is little control over how respondents answer the questions. Apart from the fact that some respondents could be uncooperative or even hostile to the questionnaire, the fact remains that they are at liberty to respond in a selective or even perfunctory fashion (Austin & Crowell, 1984; Gillham, 2000). The respondents in this study completed all questions except Question 16 which invited them to make any comments they wished on the issues raised in the preceding questions.

The sixteen questions which comprised the questionnaire were developed through a three-stage process. In the first instance, the researcher drafted a set of questions designed to address the principal concerns of the study. These questions were subsequently presented to an in-progress doctoral seminar group with extensive experience in research and Catholic education. Lastly, the questions were refined by a small group of educational professionals. These questions then formed a conceptual basis for the semi-structured interviews which were intended to allow the participant flexibility to develop relevant themes and concepts in new or divergent directions.

#### **4.6.3 Semistructured Interview**

Although interviewing has been extensively employed in the social sciences, especially in the fields of anthropology and sociology, systematic literature on research interviewing is a phenomenon of the last few decades (Kvale, 2007). From a methodological standpoint, interviews can be understood as traversing a continuum from the highly structured, through the semistructured, to the almost entirely unstructured. Structured interviews are usually characterised by preset, closed and standardised questions (Seidman, 2006). The semistructured interview consists of



questions which are more flexibly worded, or in which there is a mixture of more and less structured questions (Merriam, 1998). Unstructured interviews depend on only one or two questions which are open-ended and invite detailed responses, though the interviewer may formulate additional questions during the interview on the basis on the participants' answers. As Mason (2002) has pointed out, interviews can never be entirely unstructured "because the decisions and judgments the researcher makes give some form of structure and purpose to the data generation process" (p. 69).

The interview method used in this study is the semistructured interview which is used when the researcher "knows most of the questions to ask but cannot predict the answers" (Morse & Field, 1995, p. 94). The technique is helpful because it allows the interviewer to ask a pre-determined set of questions in order to obtain the required information, and also gives the participant sufficient freedom to respond at length, and to elaborate on and illustrate concepts. Kvale (1996) has argued that, from a technical point of view, the qualitative interview is necessarily a semistructured one, as it is neither "an open conversation nor a highly structured questionnaire" (p. 27). As such, it is conducted according to an interview guide that focuses on a pre-determined range of themes that may include suggested questions. The semistructured interview has also been referred to as the interview guide approach (Patton, 2002).

With permission, electronic audio recordings were made of each semistructured interview. Recording is now understood to be good practice in all qualitative interviewing (Hermanowicz, 2002). It allows the interviewer to give full attention to the interviewee without the need to pause and take notes; relieves the interviewer of the pressure to remember independently all of what was said; and captures not only all of the verbal data but also intonation, pauses, and laughter (Elliot, 2005). A laptop

computer with sound editing software and a sensitive microphone on an adjustable stand were employed by the researcher to make the recording. Sound levels and clarity were tested before the interview commenced, and the recorded sound file was checked at the conclusion of each interview. The period after the interview is critical for assuring the “rigour and validity of qualitative methods and for guaranteeing the quality of the data” (Patton, 1987, p. 139). In this instance, there were no technical issues in relation to the recording of any of the interviews.

Transcriptions were subsequently produced by the researcher and validated by each participant. Oliver, Serovich and Mason (2005) maintain that, despite the centrality of transcription practices to qualitative inquiry, they remain superficially examined. They propose that transcription practices can be thought of in terms of a continuum with two dominant modes: naturalism, in which every utterance is recorded, including the idiosyncratic elements of speech such as stutters, pauses and involuntary vocalisations; and denaturalism, from which the idiosyncratic elements are excluded. Both methods, and the many permutations of each, can be relevant to various specific research questions. Naturalised transcription is most frequently employed in conversation analysis studies (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998), while denaturalised transcription has grown out of dissatisfaction with the empiricism of naturalised work (Billig, 1999). As denaturalism has less to do with recording accents or involuntary vocalisation and more to do with the substance of the interview, this inquiry has adopted it as the preferred means of interview transcription. Thus, while every word has been recorded verbatim, idiosyncratic elements have been omitted from the transcripts (Appendices D, E and F).

Possible disadvantages of the semistructured interview include the potential for the interviewer to adhere too rigidly to the outlined topics so as to prevent other important topics from being raised by the respondent. Another disadvantage may result from potential difficulties in comparing or analysing data in cases where different respondents provide a variety of unrelated answers to sets of significantly dissimilar questions. The open format for responses can make comparison or aggregation across individuals difficult to achieve, and the resource-intensive nature of semistructured interviews often means that the number of participants must be curbed accordingly (Jennett, Sinclair & Harrison, 2003). The researcher found that, in spite of the potential limitations of the semistructured interview, the participants covered a comparable range of key themes and were able to illustrate their responses in unique and original ways. The fact that each participant had already responded to a common questionnaire meant that he was already aware, to some extent, of the potential conceptual range of the interview.

#### **4.7 Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness or otherwise of findings from qualitative research remains the subject of much debate (Robson, 2002). Within the terminology of positivism, the concept of validity became the result and culmination of other empirical conceptions including the universal laws, evidence, objectivity, truth, deduction, reason, fact and mathematical data. Whereas these criteria for validity find themselves rooted unambiguously in a positivist tradition, qualitative research has sought over recent decades to distance itself further and further from the demands of quantitative criteria and the ontological and epistemological assumptions on which these are based (Patton, 2001; Erlandson et al., 1993; Kvale, 1996). A number of qualitative researchers and theorists have proposed various alternative approaches, re-situating validity in a variety

of theoretical frameworks. In the evolution of this debate over recent decades, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) have been noteworthy in grouping into four basic categories the various positions on what constitutes rigour in qualitative research. These are represented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

*Rigour in qualitative research*

<b>Position</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>Positivism</i>	The same categories are used as for quantitative research: validity, reliability, generalisability, objectivity
<i>Postpositivism</i>	Traditional concepts such as validity are acceptable, but only if they are reframed to accommodate the exigencies of qualitative research
<i>Postmodernism</i>	No criteria are appropriate for assessing qualitative research
<i>Poststructuralism</i>	New criteria are required which stress subjectivity, emotionalism, feeling

(Adapted from Toma, 2005)

More recently, traditional categories such as validity and reliability have been replaced in some quarters by the idea of trustworthiness (Johnson, 1997; Mischler, 1990; Davies & Dodd, 2002). Davies and Dodd have also argued that the application of rigour in qualitative research should differ from its application in quantitative research because there is a quantitative bias in the concept of rigour, and a re-conception of rigour should be attempted by “exploring subjectivity, reflexivity, and the social interaction of interviewing” (p. 281). Mays and Pope (2000) also reject the traditional categories of

validity, opting for a position they describe as “subtle realism” (p. 50), in which the aim is to represent reality, rather than to attain or demonstrate truth.

The procedures employed in this study derive from the postpositivist position described by Denzin and Lincoln (1994), and include the conventional categories of credibility, generalisability, dependability, confirmability and methodological rigour. However, these categories are understood as remaining flexible and open to modification according to the exigencies of qualitative research, and in line with the subtle realist perspective enunciated by Mays and Pope (2000). By drawing on the work of Guba (1990), Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper and Allen (1993) have constructed a model for establishing trustworthiness based on four criteria: truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality. Table 4.7 illustrates the application of these criteria to the procedures used in this inquiry.

Table 4.7

*Establishing trustworthiness*

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Naturalistic Term</i>	<i>Research Technique</i>
Truth Value	Credibility	Multiple Sources of Evidence
Applicability	Generalisability	Purposive Sampling
Consistency	Dependability	Chain of Evidence Verbatim Transcripts
Neutrality	Confirmability	Detailed Design Process Chain of Evidence Peer Checking of Data

(Adapted from Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper & Allen, 1993)

#### **4.7.1 Credibility**

Although the concept of credibility is used in some quarters as an overarching term intended to encompass all aspects of trustworthiness (Byrne-Armstorn, Higgs & Horsfall, 2001), the credibility criterion involves, more specifically, establishing that the results of qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participants in the research. Given that, within qualitative research, the symbolic interactionist approach esteems the viewpoint of the actor above all else, it follows that the actors are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results. According to Lincoln and Guba (1992), credibility is established “by having (the findings) approved by the constructors of the multiple realities being studied” (p. 296). Respondent validation, or “member checking,” (Mays & Pope 2000, p. 51) includes “techniques in which the investigator's account is compared with those of the research subjects to establish the level of correspondence between the two sets” (p. 51). The reactions of study participants to the analyses are then incorporated into the study findings. Although some researchers regard this as the strongest available check on the credibility of a research project, Mays and Pope caution that it has its limitations. As the account produced by a researcher is designed for a particular audience, it will, inevitably, differ from the individual informant's account simply because of their different roles in the research process. Bloor (1997) suggests that it is, therefore, better to view respondent validation as part of a process of error reduction which also generates further original data, and which in turn requires its own stage of interpretation. Two sources of evidence were used for each of the three participants in this study. A questionnaire administered in advance of the semi-structured interview was designed to signal to the participant the range of potential themes for discussion, and to allow the participant to be more prepared within himself for the subsequent interview than may have been the case had he encountered the key questions for the first

time in a face-to-face setting. Furthermore, the three participants interviewed for this research reviewed the full transcripts of their interviews and affirmed the transcripts as accurate records of their conversations with the researcher, thereby enhancing the credibility of the principal method of data collection in this study.

#### **4.7.2 Generalisability**

Generalisability may be conceptualised in a variety of ways and it is therefore important to be explicit about what sort of generalisability is being argued for in reaching a conclusion, and what justification can be made for advancing such a generalisation (Beach, Becker & Kennedy, 2006). Kvale (1996) has described three forms of generalisation based on the work of Stake (1995): naturalistic, statistical and analytic. Naturalistic generalisation evolves from people's personal experiences, draws most frequently on knowledge that is tacit, and rarely advances towards formal prediction. Statistical generalisation represents a more formal and explicit approach based on the probabilities discernible from the relationship of a sample to a population. Analytical generalisation depends on a well-articulated and reasoned case for how the findings of one particular study might be used as a guide to understanding a new situation or event. It draws on the similarities and differences present within situations or discernible from data. Interviewing multiple participants, as is the case in this study, can enhance analytic generalisations either by reinforcing evidence from multiple situations, or highlighting differences from a diversity of conditions, as described by Yin (1998):

Analytic generalisations may be strengthened because the multiple-cases were designed to 'replicate' each other – producing corroborative evidence from two or more cases. Alternatively, generalisations may be broadened because the multiple cases were designed to cover different theoretical conditions, producing contrasting results, but for predictable reasons. (p. 240).

Generalisability is also influenced by many aspects of research design, some directly related to sample selection. These can include the size of the sample, how representative it is of key variables in the population, and the degree to which selection is influenced by the researcher or other variables outside of the study (Burns & Grove, 1997). A particularly influential factor in making analytic generalisations is purposive or judgemental sampling (Fogelman, 2002) which allows the researcher to choose a particular case because it illustrates some feature or process of special interest. Purposive sampling demands that “we think critically about the parameters of the population we are studying and choose our sample case carefully on this basis” (Silverman, 2005, p. 129). Thus, the selection of participants is based on the purpose of the study and the judgement of the researcher (Hoare, 2006). The three participants selected for this research were chosen deliberately for their potential to reinforce each other’s situations in that they are all principals of secondary boys’ schools where massed singing takes place, and also for their capacity to offer differing perspectives based on a range of variables including the fact that they operate across State, Independent and Catholic sectors.

A further issue in qualitative research relates to who should conduct the analytical generalisation, the researcher or the reader, and “how much should the researcher formalise and argue generalisations or leave the generalisations to the reader” (Kvale, 1996, p. 233). Whatever one’s stance towards this issue might be, it nevertheless points to the need for the researcher to provide sufficient information for generalisations to be made by a reader (Bishop, Clements, Keitel, Kilpatrick & Leunig, 2003). In such instances, generalisations may also be achieved through transferability which refers to detailed or thick descriptions of findings which allow the reader to transfer them to other settings (Sørnes, 2004). However, in constructivist inquiry, the goal is to allow for



transferability of the findings rather than for wholesale generalisation of those findings. From the rich pictures provided on an individual level by the researcher, readers are then able to gather empirical evidence concerning the particular cases to which they wish to apply the findings (Pickard & Dixon, 2004): “Because transferability in a naturalistic study depends on similarities between sending and receiving contexts, the researcher collects sufficiently detailed descriptions of data in context and reports them with sufficient detail and precision to allow judgements about transferability” (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993, p. 33).

This research into the self-perception of principals in relation to their influence on a specific aspect of school culture aims at presenting rich data and informing discussion. While interpretations of this data and some conclusions from it are presented in Chapter 6, Review and Conclusions, it is, of course, possible for the reader to generalise further beyond the interpretations presented in this study. Stake (2000) has underlined the potential of the transfer of knowledge from researcher to reader to become a “hazardous journey” (p. 443). However, while it is beyond the researcher to predict how readers will interpret data, it is possible to suggest ways in which the authenticity of the data can be safeguarded. In this study, for example, an attempt has been made to construct knowledge authentically through the inclusion of multiple perspectives.

### **4.7.3 Dependability**

A feature of qualitative research is its openness to an evolving research design - a development which represents a major departure from quantitative methodology. Dependability in this context pertains to the importance of the researcher recording, accounting for or describing the changing contexts which characterise qualitative

research. The consistency of data is achieved when the steps of the research are verified through examination of such items as raw data, data reduction products, and process notes. Furthermore, dependability may be enhanced by altering the research design in response to the emergence of new circumstances during data collection. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have advocated the “inquiry audit” (p. 317) as one substantive measure for enhancing the dependability of qualitative research. This can be used to examine both the process and the product of the research for consistency (Hoepfl, 1997). Audits and process notes can ensure that “proceedings and developments in the process of the research can be revealed and assessed” (Flick, 2006, p. 377). At a mechanical level, there is also the task of examining the data produced by the research in terms of accuracy relating to transcripts and levels of saturation in document collection (Yin, 2003; Pickard & Dixon, 2004). During this inquiry, the questionnaire was modified after its first application, and in the semi-structured interviews there was significant variation in the treatment and elaboration of themes across the three participants. The dependability of the study was enhanced both by the rephrasing of the questionnaire in such a way as to invite clearer and more detailed responses from the participants, and also from the flexible approach to questioning which was adopted in the semistructured interviews.

#### **4.7.4 Confirmability**

Guba and Lincoln (1989) have described confirmability as the qualitative parallel to objectivity. In this analogy, objectivity means that the influence of the researcher’s judgement is minimised, and confirmability means that the data and their interpretation are not “figments of the researcher’s imagination” (Mertens, 2004, p. 257). Shenton (2004) asserts that, to facilitate confirmability, steps must be taken to ensure that the work’s findings are the result of the “experiences and ideas of the

informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher” (p. 72).

Confirmability also refers to the degree to which the results can be confirmed or corroborated by others. Corcoran (2005) has proposed a number of strategies for enhancing confirmability. The researcher can,

- Document the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study;
- Another researcher can take a devil’s advocate role with respect to the results and this process can be documented;
- The researcher can actively look for and describe instances that contradict study conclusions;
- After the study, one can conduct a data audit that examines the data collection and analysis procedures and makes judgements about the potential for bias or distortion. (p. 69)

However, Cutcliffe and McKenna (1999) have argued that, when the intention is to verify through confirmation, the underlying assumption must be that confirmation is necessary to prove truth. The assumption of a single reality and the use of a measure of accuracy intended to validate this truth is epistemologically untenable from the point of view of qualitative investigation. In what might be regarded as a methodological middle ground, Miles and Huberman (1994) have proposed that a key criterion for confirmability is the extent to which the researcher is prepared to admit his or her personal dispositions. The naturalistic researcher, in fact, does not attempt the impossible by setting out to completely purge observations and interpretations of the stain of human bias. As tests, questionnaires, surveys and interviews are all designed and implemented by humans, the intrusion of the researcher’s biases is inevitable (Patton, 2001). However, by trusting in the fact that the data can be tracked to its sources and the interpretations can be understood in light of the transparent reasoning that has led to them, the researcher is ultimately able to enhance confirmability. In this research, efforts have been made to ensure confirmability by documenting a chain of evidence based on timelines and written and electronic records, and by discussing in Chapter 5, Presentation and Qualitative Analysis of Research, issues relating to bias and

researcher influence. This enables both the processes of the research and the data itself to be corroborated by others.

#### **4.7.5 Methodological Rigour**

There are many forms of qualitative research, each shaped by different epistemologies, philosophies about the nature of scientific enquiry, and prescriptions for methodological rigour (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Rigour can be understood as a means by which the researcher is able to demonstrate integrity and competence as well as the legitimacy of the research project itself. Tobin and Begley (2004) argue that rigour has traditionally been approached via the “holy trinity” (p. 389) of validity, reliability and generalisability. They advocate a move from narrow methods of assuring rigour gleaned mainly from the positivist tradition, to “a more pluralistic approach as a means of legitimising naturalistic inquiry” (p. 394). Triangulation, or the use of mixed methods of inquiry, was used in its early application as a means of combining rationalistic and naturalistic paradigms (Mitchell, 1986; Duffy, 1987). The use of data from one source to corroborate data from another has been advocated by Sandelowski (1995) and is seen by Tobin and Begley as a possible attempt at gaining acceptance from the dominating scientific field. Another view of triangulation has also emerged in which its potential for offering completeness is recognised as well as its ability to accommodate multiple realities (Fielding & Fielding, 1986; Redfern & Norman, 1994): “Inquirers are thus not using triangulation as a means of confirming existing data, but as a means of enlarging the landscape of their inquiry, offering a deeper and more comprehensive picture” (Tobin and Begley, p. 393). A further approach known as ‘between method triangulation’ (Creswell, 2002; Foss & Ellefsen, 2002) explores the view that the mixing of paradigms might result in various forms of complementarity.

More recently, Flick (2006) has argued that rigour and methodological strictness are not of themselves sufficient to guarantee good qualitative research, but that it is also important to employ creativity in using research methods. A good qualitative study, therefore, “will not be limited to finding and confirming what was expected to be the result, but will produce new insights and ways of seeing the things and persons that have been studied” (p. 64). Good qualitative research is therefore developed in the tensional field inhabited by theoretical, conceptual, practical and methodological creativity, and by the methodological rigour required for studying phenomena, processes and people.

In this inquiry, the use of a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview for each participant reflects in part an attempt at methodological rigour through a form of triangulation, as well as a strategy to ensure that through completion of the former, participants would be more adequately prepared for the latter.

It must also be borne in mind that, in a qualitative study, the researcher is the primary instrument for gathering and analysing data (Merriam, 1998), and is charged with responding to the task “by maximising opportunities for collecting and producing meaningful information” (p. 20). Corbin and Strauss (1990) refer to the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher as requiring an awareness of the subtleties of meaning of data, and they refer to “the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn’t” (p. 42). Various other writers and theorists have identified the characteristics that make humans the instrument of choice for naturalistic inquiry. Lave and Kvale (1995) contend that another human being is the only instrument that is sufficiently complex to comprehend and learn about human existence. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have described

various qualities in humans which equip them admirably for qualitative inquiry. These include the fact that humans are responsive to environmental cues, and able to interact with situations; that they possess the ability to collect information at multiple levels simultaneously; that they are able to perceive situations holistically; that they are able to process data as soon as it becomes available; that they can provide instantaneous feedback and request elaboration on or verification of data; and that they can recognise and explore atypical or unexpected responses. Merriam (1998) adopts a different approach by describing a range of qualities required by a competent researcher. These include a tolerance for ambiguity, sensitivity, empathy and good communication and listening skills. The researcher is cognizant of these skills and acknowledges their importance. I have attempted to employ them appropriately in the execution of this study.

## **4.8 Data Analysis**

Thorne (2000) has argued that data analysis is the most complex and mysterious of all the phases which comprise a qualitative project. In practice, the analysis of interview data will be determined largely by the way in which the data has been recorded, and by the theoretical perspective of the researcher. Today there exist numerous reliable methods for analysing data, including software programs which can assist the researcher in the process of coding, management and analysis.

### **4.8.1 Six-phase Strategy**

Drawing on a range of data analysis strategies designed for dealing with semistructured interviews and informed by a variety of writers and theorists (Seidman, 2006; Kvale, 2007; Gubrium & Holstein, 2001; Baptiste, 2001), the researcher began by

constructing a six-phase strategy for analysing the interview transcripts. Table 4.8 outlines this basic approach.

Table 4.8

*Data analysis strategy*

<b>PHASE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>AIM</b>	<b>MEANS</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Verbatim Transcription (Denaturalist)</b>	<i>To gain a broad, generalised and preliminary familiarity with the global nature of the interview data as texts</i>	<i>By attending carefully and reflectively to the transcription process</i>
<b>2.</b>	<b>First level of Coding</b>	<i>To select and isolate from an amorphous body of material fragments of data that satisfy the researcher's curiosity, and help support the purpose of the study</i>	<i>By re-reading the transcripts in their entirety several times and labelling using images, numbers, symbols, words, phrases and themes</i>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Second Level of Coding</b>	<i>To group selected data with similar characteristics into the same group or category</i>	<i>By forming constructs, concepts, and themes</i>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<i>To compare, make connections, construct theories</i>	<i>By drawing on the data assigned to constructs, concepts and themes</i>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Process Review</b>	<i>To review the Analysis Process</i>	<i>By applying a set of review questions</i>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Data Review</b>	<i>To review the nature and quality of the analysed data</i>	<i>By applying a set of review questions</i>

It is important to clarify that the process is not universally linear. Although some of the mechanical steps can operate sequentially, the process of interpreting data and forming interpretations begins at the inception of the project and may well continue beyond its formal timeline.

#### **4.8.2 Analytical Phases**

Apart from creating a textual record of an interview, the transcription process also allows the researcher who undertakes this process independently, an early opportunity to begin thinking through the data, preparatory to the use of more formal strategies. Familiarity with the data and attention to what is actually there, rather than what is expected, can facilitate insights or ideas which emerge during analysis (Pope & Mays, 2000). This researcher's experience of transcribing the three participant interviews led to some early distinctions between data that was predictable, given the stated agenda of the questionnaire phase, and data that was new, unexpected or outside the stated agenda.

Coding is the process by which lengthy answers are reduced and sorted into specific response categories such as age group, sex or religion (Sommer & Sommer, 2001). Dey (1993) has challenged the use of the term coding in qualitative data analysis, on the grounds that it has a rather mechanical overtone at odds with the conceptual tasks involved in categorising data. The most serious risk is that the use of codes may obstruct the work of the qualitative analyst in creating or adapting concepts relative to the data, and replace these with "a consistent and complete set of rules governing the assignment of codes to data" (p. 58). One way of overcoming this risk is for the researcher to become immersed in the data, so that it becomes the starting point for ideas, themes and interpretations. Brent and Slusarz (2003) have stated that



“qualitative research seeks to capture and discover meaning by immersion in data” (p. 284); measures are “not created in advance but evolve from the data”. In this study, the researcher achieved immersion by re-reading each transcript in its entirety, and then re-reading sections of particular interest.

The first level of coding led to the identification of a multiplicity of fragments which suggested a preliminary categorisation of themes. In the second level of coding, these fragments crystallised into the seven interrelated themes represented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9

*Seven themes identified from the data*

Theme Number	<i>Theme Name</i>
1.	<b>PRINCIPALS &amp; LEADERSHIP</b>
2.	<b>PRINCIPALS &amp; PERSONAL BACKGROUND</b>
3.	<b>THEORY &amp; EDUCATION</b>
4.	<b>EDUCATION &amp; GENDER</b>
5.	<b>THE FORMS OF MASSED SINGING</b>
6.	<b>THE BENEFITS OF MASSED SINGING</b>
7.	<b>SPORT &amp; SINGING</b>

Three of these themes (2, 3 & 4) conform in general terms to the three themes explored in Chapter 3, Literature Review, although some aspects of their respective subthemes

represent a range of new insights and directions. Themes 1, 5, 6 and 7 take discussion on and reflection of the key research questions significantly beyond the themes explored in Chapter 3.

#### **4.8.3 Review Phases**

To sharpen the process of data analysis, two review phases were incorporated into the overall strategy. Questions based on the work of Baptiste (2001) were formulated by the researcher for this purpose. The questions applied to the process review were as follows:

- 1) In the process of coding, have I been guided by the purpose of the study and the research questions?
- 2) Have I coded all the data I consider to be relevant? Is there other data I have not classified? If so, can it be accommodated in existing or new themes?
- 3) Are my definitions of themes and categories sufficiently clear?
- 4) Is each theme adequately supported by data fragments?
- 5) Could some fragments be assigned to more than one theme?
- 6) In what ways are the fragments assigned to particular themes similar? In what ways are they different?

The questions applied to the data review were as follows:

- 1) Have I allowed the purpose of the study and the research questions to guide the interpretive process?
- 2) Have I attended only to self-generating and self-evident relationships amongst data, or have I been able to construct the data towards new theories and stories?

- 3) Is the data framed in such a way as to be accessible and useful to participants and readers in understanding more broadly and deeply their own life experiences?

On the basis of the six-phase data analysis process, a initial summary list of findings (Appendix G) was compiled in which were enumerated, in raw point form, the understandings of principals relative to the phenomenon of massed singing in their schools, to their exercise and experience of leadership, and to the role of gender in schooling.

#### **4.9 Ethical Considerations**

It is understood that research can occur in right or wrong contexts and that the responsibility of the researcher is to ensure that optimal ethical contexts are achieved. In any research study, ethical issues relating to the protection of participants are of vital concern (Berg, 2007; Marshall and Rossman, 2006). The central issue regarding the protection of participants relates to the ways in which the information is treated (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2008). Thus, ethical considerations are extremely important both to the collection of data and to its analysis.

The researcher was aware of his privileged position as a guest in the private space of each participant (Stake, 1995), and endeavoured to present himself as credible, professional and trustworthy. Developing a relationship of trust with the participants is critical in ensuring that they themselves are shown respect, and also results in enhanced data (Sieber, 1992). My aim was to establish that the participant and I were coworkers in producing the information required by the study. A good research partnership is

more important to the quality of the interview than other tasks such as the phrasing of specific questions (Weiss, 2004).

As the primary research instrument in the research, the researcher was in a critical position to make decisions about the inclusion, prioritisation and exclusion of data. Given that respect for the integrity and significance of each participant's perspective is essentially an ethical concern (Altheide and Johnson, 1994), the researcher made every effort to allow the data to tell its own story. At the same time, the issue of voice is always present in qualitative research. Voice has multiple dimensions which include the voice of the author, the voice of the participant, and the voice of the subject matter itself (Hertz, 1997). The researcher sought to report the information supplied by participants in a form of language as close to their own as possible, in order that their voices and perspectives would be able to resound clearly and distinctively.

In relation to data collection, conventional ethical principles were followed, and clearance was obtained from the Australian Catholic University Human Resource Ethics Committee (1997). The research was conducted in accordance with the Committee's guidelines (Appendix J). Specifically:

1. Participants received a letter prior to the commencement of the study in which information summarising the research project and its potential benefits was provided. (Appendix N)
2. Participants completed consent forms prior to their participation.
3. Participants were asked in writing to indicate whether or not permission from higher or governing bodies was required for them to participate in the study. In all three cases, the principals concerned indicated that, due to the

emphasis on their personal experiences and beliefs, and not on detailed or confidential material relating to their schools, such permission was not required.

4. All records of interviews and questionnaires have been stored in a locked filing cabinet at Australian Catholic University in the office of the principal supervisor.

#### **4.10 Summary of Research Design**

In this chapter, the research design has been outlined and explained. The interpretivist framework underpinning this research is consistent with the inquiry's aims of discovering what is meaningful to the people who were studied, and how aspects of their social reality are constructed. Given the nature of the research questions, the research design is grounded in the constructionist paradigm. The theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism was chosen to assist the researcher in exploring and understanding the nature of the participants' interactions with key aspects of their school environments, especially through the medium of language, and how they define and shape their actions. In keeping with this theoretical perspective, a qualitative in-depth interview study was selected as the research methodology, in order to allow the participants' voices to be heard as the most significant sources of data in this inquiry. Consequently, the principal data collection method chosen for this study was the semistructured interview. This was supported by the use of a pre-interview questionnaire which was designed to prepare participants for their interviews and to collect data from participants via an alternate method. A document search was used to assist in contextualising the other two methods. By addressing the ethical issues for conducting this research, it has been possible to enhance the authenticity of both process and data. A timeframe for the study is presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.10

*Timeframe for the study*

<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<i>October 2007</i>	Principal questionnaire, School A
<i>November 2007</i>	Interview with Headmaster, School A
<i>November 2007</i>	Principal questionnaire, School B
<i>November 2007</i>	Interview with Headmaster, School B
<i>January 2008</i>	Principal questionnaire, School C
<i>February 2008</i>	Interview with Principal, School C
<i>March – June 2008</i>	Analysis of Data
<i>July 2008</i>	Draft Report, Review of Draft Report
<i>September 2008</i>	Final Report
<i>November 2008</i>	Submission of Thesis

#### **4.11 Conclusion**

Defining the manner in which the research has been designed makes it possible, in the first instance, to understand with greater clarity the assumptions on which the processes for collecting data have been based. Furthermore, as data is a “product of research, and not something that researchers simply collect” (David and Sutton, 2004, p. 27), its presentation and interpretation must be informed by the manner in which it was

obtained, and by the reasons for obtaining it. In light of these principles, and given the purpose of the study, the research itself is presented and analysed in Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 5

### PRESENTATION AND QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH

#### 5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate how principals see themselves as experiencing and influencing the practice of massed singing in their schools, and to explore the connections they make between their role as leader, the culture of their school, and this specific musical activity. Central to this statement of purpose is the belief that massed singing is an activity with great potential for shaping school culture; that principals should be encouraged to exploit this potential in order to build a healthy and vibrant culture in which there are special opportunities for challenging gender stereotypes and promoting aesthetic values; and that principals themselves can benefit as leaders by reflecting on the themes of this study.

#### 5.2 Design of the Research

The research was grounded in interpretive symbolic interactionism. The views of three principals of secondary boys' schools were researched in order to better understand their experience of leadership in the specific areas of school culture and massed singing.

The methods of data collection relative to each participating principal included:

- a) a document search of school-generated publications focusing on references to music and singing,
- b) a questionnaire administered in advance of the semi-structured interview,
- c) a semi-structured interview.

Three principals were selected for the study on the basis of their involvement in secondary boys' schools where massed singing takes place regularly and substantially.



The schools were chosen from the Independent, State and Catholic systems with a view to obtaining data from a diversity of sources.

A document search concentrating mainly on school-generated literature provided background information on the participating principals and their school communities.

In order to begin collecting data from the principals, and also to help prepare them to participate in their interviews with greater preparedness than if had they faced their interviews 'cold', a questionnaire was distributed to them two weeks before they were to participate in face-to-face semistructured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews with each participant were subsequently conducted by the researcher, with the agenda of the questionnaires as a reference point for discussion. Like the questionnaires, the interviews were intended to cover in a flexible way the three main themes of the study: educational leadership; masculinity in boys' education and leadership; and the experience of massed singing as a musical and aesthetic activity.

Data analysis was undertaken using a six-phase strategy based on and combining aspects of coding methodologies described by Seidman (2006), Kvale (2007) and Baptiste (2001). Four of the phases were mainly analytical and two of them were designed to review the overall process. The analytical phases generated seven themes for the coding of data, three of which reflected directly the study's stated themes concerning leadership, masculinity and massed singing, and the remaining four of which covered areas representing a range of new thematic foci. These seven themes are represented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

*Thematic foci defined*

	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b><i>Principals &amp; Leadership</i></b>	Reporting how principals see aspects of their leadership in school communities, especially in relation to their attitudes towards supporting and defending massed singing in their schools.
<b>2.</b>	<b><i>Principals &amp; Personal Background</i></b>	Presenting factors in the lives and life histories of principals which are significant in the discussion of massed singing.
<b>3.</b>	<b><i>Theory &amp; Education</i></b>	Discussing ways in which the principals' views on leadership and massed singing relate to aspects of broader educational theory.
<b>4.</b>	<b><i>Education &amp; Gender</i></b>	Representing the discussion of masculinity and its various models, and covering other issues in boys' education relevant to massed singing and school culture.
<b>5.</b>	<b><i>The Forms of Massed Singing</i></b>	Documenting the local school practice of massed singing and other aspects of a particular school relevant to the place of massed singing within it.
<b>6.</b>	<b><i>The Benefits of Massed Singing</i></b>	Exploring the phenomenon itself, its effect on the human person, its influence on school culture, and its affective or spiritual characteristics.
<b>7.</b>	<b><i>Music &amp; Sport</i></b>	Enumerating some of the ways in which these two activities can be presented as cultural polarities, and affirming the value of robust participation in both.

The findings are presented in eight sections, the first seven of which conform to the major themes established by the application of the data analysis strategy, and the last of which presents a comparative analysis of the data gained from each of the three participants. In each thematic section, a variety of subthemes is identified in which the comments of each participant are presented. Table 5.2 provides an overview of the presentation of the findings.

Table 5.2

*Overview of the presentation of the findings*

<b>Section One</b>	<i>5.3 Principals &amp; Leadership</i>
<b>Section Two</b>	<i>5.4 Principals &amp; Personal Background</i>
<b>Section Three</b>	<i>5.5 Theory &amp; Education</i>
<b>Section Four</b>	<i>5.6 Education &amp; Gender</i>
<b>Section Five</b>	<i>5.7 The Forms of Massed Singing</i>
<b>Section Six</b>	<i>5.8 The Benefits of Massed Singing</i>
<b>Section Seven</b>	<i>5.9 Sport &amp; Singing</i>
<b>Section Eight</b>	<i>5.10 Comparative Analysis</i>

The two sets of questions which constituted the review phase were then applied to the thematised data in order to assist in enhancing confirmability. These nine questions, based on the work of Baptiste (2001), were formulated by the researcher for the purposes of this study. The questions applied to the process review were as follows:

- 1) In the process of coding, have I been guided by the purpose of the study and the research questions?
- 2) Have I coded all the data I consider to be relevant? Is there other data I have not classified? If so, can it be accommodated in existing or new themes?
- 3) Are my definitions of themes and categories sufficiently clear?
- 4) Is each theme adequately supported by data fragments?
- 5) Could some fragments be assigned to more than one theme?
- 6) In what ways are the fragments assigned to particular themes similar? In what ways are they different?

The questions applied to the data review were as follows:

- 1) Have I allowed the purpose of the study and the research questions to guide the interpretive process?
- 2) Have I attended only to self-generating and self-evident relationships amongst data, or have I been able to construct the data towards new theories and stories?
- 3) Is the data framed in such a way as to be accessible and useful to participants and readers in understanding more broadly and deeply their own life experiences?

Following the application of the review phases, the themes and subthemes assumed a definitive form which provided the basis for a comprehensive comparative analysis of the participants' responses. An overview of these themes and subthemes is presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3

Overview of themes and subthemes

<b>PARTICIPANT 1</b> <i>School A</i>	<b>PARTICIPANT 2</b> <i>School B</i>	<b>PARTICIPANT 3</b> <i>School C</i>
<b>5.3 Principals &amp; Leadership</b>		
Structural Decisions	Structural Factors	Fostering & Nurturing
Affirmation Strategies	Nurturing the Singing Program	Defending Year 12 Singing
Maintaining Standards	Working as Part of a Team	Envy of Other Principals
Validating One's Views	Fighting for Singing	Talking to Prospective Parents
/	Talking to Other Principals	/
/	Talking to Prospective Parents	/
<b>5.4 Principals &amp; Personal Background</b>		
Singing as a Young Man	Schoolboy Love of Singing	Family Influences of Singing
Influence of Own Children	Cultural Opposition to Singing	Positive School Experiences
<b>5.5 Theory &amp; Education</b>		
Impelling into Experience	Renaissance View of Education	Compulsoriness
/	Multi-faceted School Culture	/
<b>5.6 Education &amp; Gender</b>		
Observation/Recording of Data	Climate of Permission	Counter-cultural Effect
Comfort & Permission	/	Replication in Coed schools
Multiple Masculinities	/	/
<b>5.7 The Forms of Massed Singing</b>		
Assemblies	Assemblies	Assemblies with Singing
House Singing Competition	House Singing Competition	Assemblies for Singing
Musicals	Biennial Concerts	Orientation Assembly
Worship/liturgy	Church Services	House Singing Competition
Specialist School Choirs	Chamber Choir	Auditioned Choirs: Chorale
St Patrick's Cathedral Choir	300 Voice Choir	Non-auditioned Choirs
/	/	Massed Choirs/Speech Night
<b>5.8 The Benefits of Massed Singing</b>		
Enhances Worship/Liturgy	Values & Priorities of School	Creates & Expresses Passion
Corporate Identity	Symbol of Unity	Learning, Social Interaction
Academic Performance	Spiritual/Transcendent	Impact on Visiting Premier
School Culture	Element in School's Character	Vital Change Force
/	Old Boy Reunions	Lasting Effect on Inner Person
<b>5.9 Sport &amp; Singing</b>		
Singing at Sports Carnivals	Sportsmen & Musicians	First XVIII Boys also Sing
Sporting & Musical Staff	Dominance of Sport	/
The 'Jock' Climate	Singing only at the Football	/
/	Greater Emotion in Singing	/

### **5.3 Principals and Leadership**

This theme incorporates comments and reflections made by each participant on his own influence on massed singing; and on how he leads, influences, promotes and defends various aspects of school culture.

#### **5.3.1 Participant One**

In his questionnaire responses, Participant One recognised that he had influenced the place of massed singing at School A by increasing the number of occasions when it takes place and through the appointment of key staff in this area.

During his interview, Participant One discussed aspects of his leadership in relation to structural and organisational decisions which support massed singing; personal strategies for affirming boys involved in singing and cultural activities; the risks of not maintaining standards in all aspects of school life, including singing; and the challenges involved in checking and validating one's own views and opinions about what is going on in the school.

Participant One discussed a number of ways in which the structural decisions he is involved in making can influence the place of massed singing at School A. These included staffing issues, the choice of venues, and the organisation of calendars and scheduling of events. In recognition of the importance of cultural activities such as massed singing, Participant One has increased staffing levels in the Music Department. The choice of venues can also reflect the profile given to an event or activity, and sometimes involves "financial decisions of some import". An example cited by Participant One relates to the biennial Combined School Concert which involves

students from all three campuses of the College. Until 2006, it had been held in Robert Blackwood Hall at Monash University's Clayton Campus. This is an 800-seat venue with excellent acoustics, but very limited backstage accommodation for the 600-plus students performing in the concert. Participant One made the decision to upgrade the event to Hamer Hall in the Victorian Arts Centre, a 2,500-seat world-class concert hall with extensive backstage facilities:

... so I think the move from Robert Blackwood Hall to Hamer Hall next year is a statement in itself of where we see ourselves as a school in terms of the performance base that will allow the boys to be at their best...

The timing and scheduling of events in the calendars of busy schools can also reflect some of the basic priorities of those in leadership. Participant One reflected on the practical ways in which policies and decision-making can influence the standing of cultural activities in the school:

... and I think even the way that we'll place events within calendars and give protection to a range of the events, and so, when calendars are done, again, that's a reflection of that broader policy, decision-making, that these things *are* given a high priority, be it in a range of the concerts, or performances, or knowledge that large numbers of boys are going to be involved in these activities and therefore other things can't occur at that time ...

Using one's leadership to influence structures that give priority to particular activities is an important part of the principal's role:

... I'll deliberately take what might be something that could slip by and give it a significance beyond... if there was such a thing as a mathematical weighting of the relevance of a particular performance or an individual boy's efforts, sometimes you've got to put a much greater weighting on it to make sure that a point's being made. And I think... sometimes I do that deliberately with what we're doing in terms of singing. I just do.

Participant One stated that there is a need at boys' schools to make sure there is "enough attention and profile given to the arts", and then to "singing as one performance area within the arts".

Support for particular cultural activities can sometimes be best expressed in a range of ways which draw on the positive personal skills of the leader. Participant One referred to the “excitement that you as a Head display in performances and conversations you can have with boys” as significant in affirming students’ involvement in a range of activities. It is important to speak directly to boys, “saying you think they’re talented, or they’re brave, or whatever it is”. Affirmation can also be expressed in other ways including “the phrase you’ll use in a newsletter” and through particular forms of correspondence:

... a two-line letter to a boy that goes to a home address that says “Congratulations on your part in ...” can mean that a boy’ll continue to do an activity for some time ... it’s so rare these days, “I got a letter!” That affirmation across a whole range of areas, and in a whole range of ways.

Participant One made several comments on the improvement in standards at School A, and the necessity of remaining constantly vigilant lest they suddenly begin to slip away. He expressed the belief that, in the specific area of singing, there has been a marked change “between the boys’ willingness to participate in preparation for Valedictory by hymn practice from 1998 to now”. This improvement, however, does not apply to singing only: it is a change that is manifested more broadly in the boys’ “willingness to walk with you most of the way”. Nevertheless, such improvements should not be taken for granted, as they are never givens:

... if you just sit back, it’s like most of these things, ... if we sit back and say it’s just going to happen because this is the way we are, we’d be fools because it probably would unravel a little bit, or it might unravel completely!

Participant One explained that it can be difficult in leadership to know how in tune one’s aims and opinions are with what others are thinking or with what might be regarded as an objective reality:



I guess sometimes that there's going to be that issue that the Head's aims seem quite clear, and the leadership group might be saying "This is what we're trying to do," and we might think we're achieving it, but that might not be the reality ... I thought a number of times when I was doing it (the questionnaire), "This requires validation from someone else".

Participant One reflected on how difficult it can be sometimes to know how accurate one's perceptions are generally, and in this case, specifically, in relation to the place of singing in the school. He recalled thinking to himself, as he filled out the study questionnaire, "Well, gee, I hope I'm accurate in my own assessment of the impact that we're having by doing this (singing)!"

Some of the strategies Participant One uses to inform his thinking include casual observation ("you can simply look at the number of boys who are prepared to join in"); and formal observation which may translate into "a deliberate attempt to sometimes socially engineer", and which may also involve the intentional tracking of numbers:

... I've got them (numbers) recorded over time... the quality, and getting feedback, not simply from whether I sat there and was surprised, enlivened by the performance, but asking others to be critical of themselves, given very often they're the people involved, and say: "well, where are we in terms of a standard?"

### **5.3.2 Participant Two**

In his questionnaire responses, Participant Two referred to his role in influencing massed singing as one of supporting the present culture. He also acknowledged the "huge" influence of the Director of Music on the success of the massed singing program.

In his interview, Participant Two stated that he has supported massed singing in all of the schools in which he has taught. He commented on the structural factors which support massed singing at his school; he underlined the need to nurture the phenomenon

because of its inherent fragility; he reflected on the importance of working as part of a team; he spoke of having had to fight for out-of-class rehearsal time; he referred to discussions with other principals about singing in schools; and he includes references to singing in his meetings with groups of prospective parents.

Participant Two referred to the fact that structural factors need to be considered in order to make space for the activities connected with massed singing. He explained that “we structure our program through the year in such a way that it values singing”.

While acknowledging that massed singing is a special part of the current life of School B, Participant Two also drew attention to the fact that the program has had to grow over time to the strong condition it is in today, and that it could be potentially fragile if taken for granted: “... I know it’s fairly fragile and it could easily be lost, I think, you know, if we didn’t think twice about it”. There must also be the determination to see it through. Trying to get a school that doesn’t sing to suddenly start doing so would involve many setbacks and could prove to be very disheartening:

... it’s hard to convince the kids to open their mouths and let fly, and there’s all sorts of tricks, I guess, you’d use to do that, but I just think you need to be persistent and you need the support of a core group of people that share that vision. So, the principal is part of it, but I think it needs to be more than the principal, probably.

Participant Two also stated that it would be “difficult for a principal acting alone” to influence the culture of massed singing as it requires the active cooperation of a number of key people across a school to build such a culture. The person at School B who is most influential in this regard is the Head of Music who is “very dynamic and very passionate about singing”. He is able to “whip the boys up in very theatrical

ways” at singing practices, and is regarded by Participant Two as much more influential in this particular case than he himself can be.

Another aspect of leadership discussed by Participant Two was in relation to answering objections raised on occasions by classroom teachers losing yet another period for a massed singing rehearsal. In such instances, he recognises that he has a role in defending the importance of the activity by asserting that it has to be valued in the way that other important things are valued:

So I've got to fight for it, and I've got to sort of hold the line a bit and say, "Well no, this is important too, and it doesn't happen all the time, but when it happens we need to support it". So yes, there's some role there.

With Heads of other schools similar to School B, Participant Two did not find the subject of singing to be a “huge topic of conversation”, but surmised that there may be a “general bemoaning” of the fact that students in most school do not participate readily in singing: “... but then, I sound very glib when I say, ‘Well, my boys sing!’”.

Participant Two also spoke about the talks he gives to prospective parents to “try to give them an insight into our school and what the school stands for”. He invariably mentions the singing program, as this can communicate quickly some of the values of the school and “some of the advantages of boys’ education” to parents who have little prior experience of this kind of activity. It also indicates that the school is attempting to “reach on a number of levels of boys’ development”. The singing program conveys a sense that there’s a “healthy, vibrant community there when you hear them all joining together and singing”.

### 5.3.3 Participant Three

Participant Three listed in his questionnaire responses four ways in which he has influenced the massed singing program at School C: he has included choir rehearsals on the program for Open Day to show potential entrants what the experience is like and what its expectations are; he has co-authored with Music staff a book chapter in this field; he has promoted the program and emphasised its importance to the school community; and he has increased the budget and other forms of support for the program.

In his interview, Participant Three referred to his personal reflections on the nature of his role in fostering and nurturing tradition; discussed how he approaches speaking to prospective parents about the massed singing program; described the task of defending the Year 12s' participation in regular singing practices in the face of pressure to concede the time to more academic study; and acknowledged that some of his fellow principals may be envious of the singing program he has in place at School C.

In the light of his school's recent centenary celebrations, Participant Three had given some time to reflection on "what's gone before, and the traditions, and also therefore, the impact or the influence that the massed singing program has had on the school". This also caused him to consider other questions such as "Where to from here?" Given that the program has been "such a central pillar of the school", he found it illuminating to reflect on where the program might go as the school continues to evolve. This self-reflection was coloured by his experiences as a past student of the school and by his current responsibilities as a leader of the school in "fostering and nurturing that tradition". Under the leadership of a line of fifteen different principals dating back to the founding of the school, the singing program has enjoyed unwavering support from

its leaders: “There are periods of time when it has grown and evolved more readily, but there has never been any even intimation from a previous principal that maybe it should be diminished as a program”.

Participant Three has used the forums of orientation days, or information sessions for prospective parents by structuring a whole component of his presentation around the singing program. His approach has been to say to them, “Well, if you want a sense of what’s unusual and peculiar about this school, it’s the singing program”. This has been followed by an explanation of why he believes this to be true, together with the invitation to attend Speech Night on the understanding that it is a special way of encountering the distinctive culture of the school.

Although the school’s massed singing program is widely acclaimed, aspects of it are queried from time to time. Interestingly, the queries do not come from the boys themselves, but from parents who are new to the school, and such queries are usually in relation to Year 12 boys. The objection relates mainly to the fact that all Year 12s have a timetabled period of singing every week, and some parents regard this as taking away from the time available for the boys to attend to more academic pursuits. The principal is therefore asked to defend the program by outlining its merits.

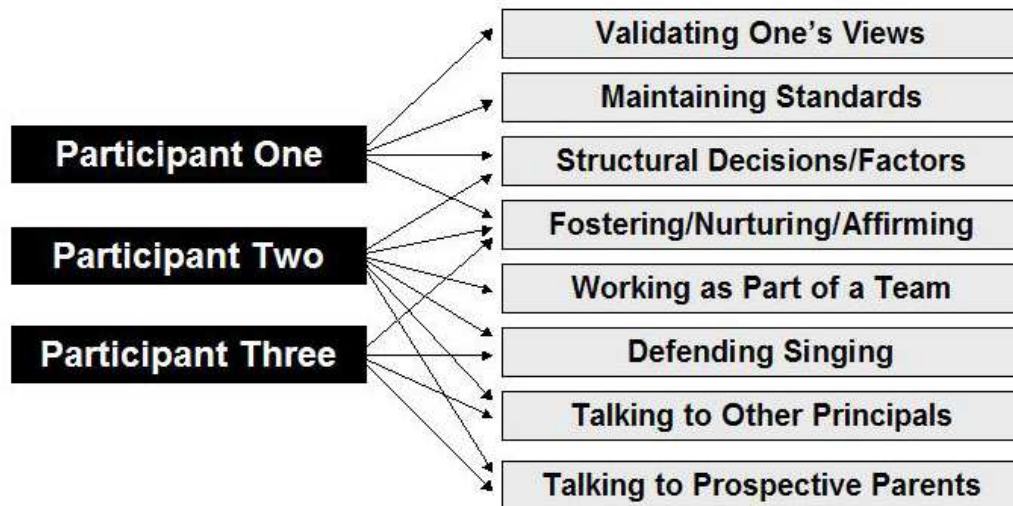
Participant Three also acknowledged that some of his fellow principals might be envious of the singing program operating at School C, especially since so few schools appear to have in place anything of a comparable nature:

... if they’ve had no experience of that themselves, and if we’re candid about it, the number of schools, boys’ schools or coed schools, that have a strong and a long-established massed singing program, which is the whole of the school singing, are few and far-between in Victoria. So, within these schools, that’s probably where the envy is.

Figure 5.1 presents a synthesis of the subthemes identified in Section 4 from the data supplied by each participant.

Figure 5.1

*Theme One, Principals and Leadership: synthesis of subthemes*



## 5.4 Principals and Personal Background

This theme includes comments and reflections made by the three participants in relation to their own experiences of massed singing as young students; their personal attitudes towards and participation in organised musical activities; and the influences on their views from other sources such as their own children.

### 5.4.1 Participant One

In his questionnaire responses, Participant One indicated that he had no particular memories – pleasant or otherwise – of experiencing massed singing when a secondary student. In the interview context, Participant One discussed his experiences of music and singing as a young man, and reflected on the influence of his children on the views he has formed about singing in schools.

As a boy at school, Participant One found himself in a climate that was a bit “jock”, or focussed mainly on sport, and in which there were not many opportunities to become involved in singing, although he certainly “put his hand up” to try to become involved. In the scouting movement, however, he discovered the phenomenon of the Gang Show and performed in a whole series of them over a period of about ten years: “So there was enough confidence or arrogance to get a few lines here and there and to become involved in that”. He described some of the Gang Shows as “half ok”, though others of them were not – “we were lucky to sell the tickets”. At university, Participant One pursued an interest in choral involvement, although “at times it was not much better than an element of the rugby club, which it was on occasions, trying to imitate a Welsh choir for performances at intervarsity”. He then began his teaching career, and as a young teacher, had the good fortune to work in a school with a “magnificent tradition in terms of its music”. This experience was highly influential, and he found himself, “being formed in schools where I saw the impact that music’d have and loving being around, watching, admiring, and I think that continued to form me”.

Participant One referred to the experiences of his children as having exerted an even greater influence on his views in relation to music and singing than his own personal experiences ever had. For his son and twin daughters, music has been a very significant dimension of their education. While his son inherited “the limited range of his father’s voice”, he nevertheless joined the Glendalough Choir in Grade 3 and remained in it through to Year 6; he participated in the School A Junior School musical as a Year 4 boy; he participated in musicals in the senior school; he joined the Senior Choir; and he learnt musical instruments at school. The twin daughters of Participant One took music even more seriously while at school, joining the “Audition Choir as

well as the Massed Choir”, and taking “formal lessons”. By watching his own children’s growth to adulthood, and by observing their participation in music generally, and in singing in particular, Participant One has been influenced personally, and also in the way he makes decisions professionally as a principal:

I think that has influenced me, then, if you’re looking for things, even though I haven’t performed as such, and would lack either the skill or exact confidence without a large amount of red wine to do so’ I think that has had an impact on decisions that I take for us as a school.

#### **5.4.2 Participant Two**

In response to the questionnaire, Participant Two referred to the fact that he was somewhat unusual at school in that he enjoyed singing and actively pursued opportunities to participate in it. He was a member of the school choir and enjoyed the wide range of music they sang. Being in a single-sex boys’ school at that time caused him some “unease”, but his “love of singing won out”.

In his interview, Participant Two expanded on his love for singing and performing as a boy at school, and described some of the difficulties this involved in an unsympathetic socio-cultural environment.

Participant Two described having always enjoyed making music, especially when he found he was good at “harmonising and reading music”. He was quick to pick up part-reading and even found himself inclined to teach other boys in the process: “... as a fairly precocious sort of kid, (I) tried to sort of take on some leadership in teaching the other kids’ parts”. His love of performing found further expression through participation in drama productions and musicals: “So, I guess it was just at some inner



level it was meeting a need of mine for musical expression, so I saw I had opportunities to do that”.

However, activities of this kind were not embraced by the school culture of the day as much as they are in Participant Two’s present school. Consequently, as a young boy at school, he felt he was the “odd one out”, although, as he enjoyed it so much, he “didn’t care anyway”. The school he attended was “a harder place in some ways” and “the sporting guys were the ones that got all the attention and the plaudits”. Involvement in music, drama and debating, rather than in sport, was seen as “a bit eccentric”. However, he believes that the same school he attended is a very different place today, and does not think that “the tension would be quite as strong as it was in those days”.

### **5.4.3 Participant Three**

In his responses to the questionnaire, Participant Three referred to having been involved in choirs continuously as a schoolboy in years 9 to 12 at School C. He also sang as a choir member in Church choirs from the age of 10.

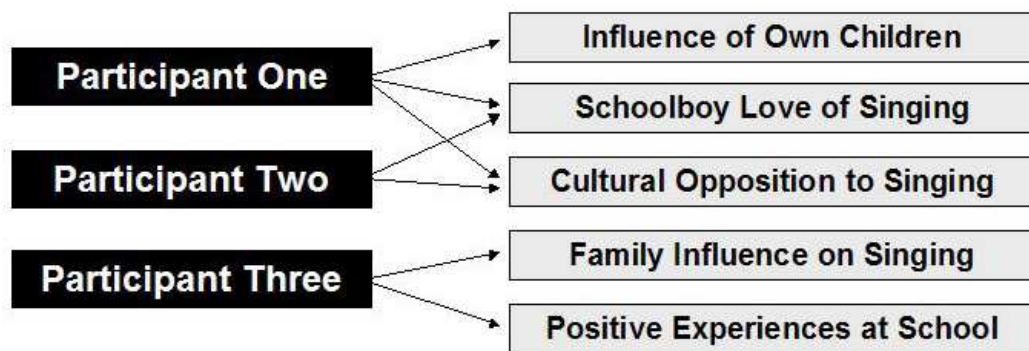
In his interview, Participant Three mentioned his prior exposure through family influences to “public singing of various shapes and forms”, and commented that this has led him to sympathise with the experience of Year 9 boys today who arrive at his school and are suddenly expected to start singing together, even though they may have had very little previous exposure to this phenomenon.

His own experiences as a student at School C told Participant Three that massed singing was “something that was an enjoyable component of the school”. He also referred to what could be understood as a meeting point between his own personal

history as a student, and the leadership position in which he now finds himself. This may be discerned from his comment that the boys have a sense of his “having sat where they’ve sat and gone through the experiences that they’ve had”, and that this is important to them. Figure 5.2 presents a synthesis of the subthemes identified in Section 5 from the data supplied by each participant.

Figure 5.2

*Theme Five, Principals and Personal Background: synthesis of subthemes*



## 5.5 Theory and Education

This theme groups together comments and reflections made by the participants on aspects of educational theory not directly related to the benefits of massed singing programs, or to the issues surrounding gender and boys’ education.

### 5.5.1 Participant One

In his responses to the questionnaire, Participant One made no specific references to aspects of educational theory. However, in his interview, he took an idea advanced by the experiential educator Kurt Hahn (1962) that young people need to be impelled into experience, adding that “a good school will do that, with boys or girls, and we do impel into experience”. This applies across the arts, to certain academic disciplines, to

sport and to outdoor education. Participant One also expressed the strong view that children should be challenged to participate in a range of experiences, even if they are not necessarily to their liking; “I don’t think it’s correct to say that children should only do something which has an appeal to them, or in which they’ve expressed interest, or they’re allowed to do it once, and then, if they hadn’t liked it that time, withdraw”.

### **5.5.2 Participant Two**

In his responses to the questionnaire, Participant Two made no specific references to aspects of educational theory. In his interview, however, he referred to and reflected on what he termed the “renaissance view of education”. From this perspective, education is “not just for university entrance, but for life”. It means having a range of skills which are not just one-dimensional, but which involve you in having “a go at everything”. It is important, therefore, to value intellectual achievement and academic endeavour, and to try hard at sport. Educators should make this “part of that parcel of things we try and present to the boys”:

... this is what it means to be an educated person, that you should be aware of all these things, and these experiences are the sorts of things that will shape your values and tastes and, you know, attitude to life in the future.

Participant Two also reflected on the multi-faceted concept of school culture which he understood to be “all the things that we do, said and unsaid, and the messages we give about what we value and what we stand for, and what, as a community, we value”.

### **5.5.3 Participant Three**

In his responses to the questionnaire, Participant Three made no specific references to aspects of educational theory. However, in his interview comments, he

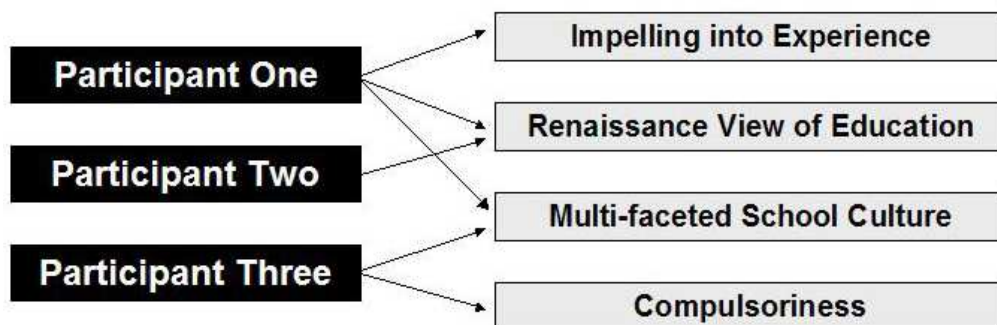
discussed the notion of compulsoriness. All boys at School C participate in a compulsory massed singing program which demands of them a high level of commitment and participation. The firm belief of Participant Three in the validity of the singing program has led him to sharpen his thinking on the compulsory-versus-optional debate:

I've always had an ambivalence about why it is with anything in education you would insist that something is compulsory, certainly by this age – we're talking about students at the age of 15, 16 – and generally, in most schools, that's a time where the obligations of a compulsory or core curriculum begin to fade, being replaced by elective components.

However, this long-held belief has been softened somewhat by his reflection on the experiences of boys at School C: "But, I think there's something to be said, both for the implication it (compulsory activity) has for a collective ethos, but also of, if you like, not having an out, of the boys understanding that they *must* participate". Figure 5.3 presents a synthesis of the subthemes identified in Section 1 from the data supplied by each participant.

Figure 5.3

*Theme Six, Theory and Education: synthesis of subthemes*



## 5.6 Education and Gender

This theme includes comments made by each participant in relation to boys' education, masculinity, and the role of gender in society.

### 5.6.1 Participant One

In his response to Question 8 of the questionnaire, which was the most explicit question relating to the issue of gender as an influence on whether or not boys participate in massed singing, Participant One agreed that gender *is* an issue, adding the exhortation to “just look at the level of male members in choirs at coeducational schools”.

During the semistructured interview, Participant One dwelt at length on issues relating to gender. His comments ranged over three main topics: personal experiences of recording data on gendered participation in music at other schools; comfort and permission as enabling factors for boys in singing; and the modelling of multiple masculinities by staff.

In relation to the first of these topics, Participant One recalled a time when he was doing some work on promoting boys’ education at his previous school, and undertook to record, at concerts involving a range of schools, the ratio of boys to girls participating in ensembles such as choirs, orchestras and jazz ensembles. He observed that the result was often 3:1 female to male, even though the schools in question often “prided themselves that they had gender balance numerically”. What surprised him was that this ratio also applied at primary level where “some would say that you don’t have the issue of either sexual or psychosexual identity determining participation”. Subsequent observations in his present school have served to reinforce this perception, which he has pointed out to the College’s last two Junior School Heads.

The second topic taken up by Participant One relates to the concept of permission in the single-sex school environment. Participant One explained that “boys

find it easier to put their hand up to do some of these things in an all-male environment: they're happier to stumble at times.” He also drew for evidence on a recent Junior School production of the musical *Oliver!* in which all 360 boys in the primary section had participated in two casts of approximately equal numbers, playing both the male and female leads:

... and *Oliver!*'s got to be a classic example because there's all boys. Was there hesitation? I sense very little hesitation in roles that boys took on, be it indeed the individual with leads, or be it boys en masse. And that spoke to me again, of saying that “They're comfortable, and prepared to do these things and experiment with their voices,” because young men are highly conscious of their voices, be it speaking or singing, and I think it frees them.

This climate of permission can also be reinforced for younger boys by the attitudes of senior students, and in some cases can lead to boys moving from participation in massed singing to joining a choir and performing in a more specialized choral context.

In his third topic, Participant One explored the modelling of multiple masculinities by the teaching staff. He explained that “masculinity can be defined in a range of ways” and cited the instances of a former First XI cricket coach who was also a musician, and the current Head of Drama who also participates in outdoor education camps. He saw these examples as “all parts of how you express yourself,” adding that “if you happen to be male – you're going to find all different ways to express who you are”. Modelling is also achieved by members of the College Leadership Team who interact with boys very deliberately to recognise and affirm their achievements across a broad spectrum of endeavours.

### **5.6.2 Participant Two**

In his response to the questionnaire, Participant Two highlighted the relationship between the gender composition of a school and the likelihood of boys participating in singing:

I think the single-sex status of our school makes it easier to build the culture of singing. I have worked in co-educational settings where it has been extremely difficult to build a culture of singing, especially for the boys. In a boys-only school, this does not seem to be an issue.

In his interview, Participant Two focused on one key concept in relation to gender and schooling, namely the climate of permission which can exist in a boys-only school, given that “there are different agendas in a coed school”. Referring to the consciousness boys have of how they appear to and are perceived by girls, Participant Two explained that “there’s all sorts of things going on about gender identity, and how the boys want to be seen by the girls, and they’re conscious of that all the time”. This self-consciousness on the part of the boys can lead to a narrower definition of their masculinity. On the other hand, “it can be in a boys’ school where they can experiment with this sort of stuff.” Participant Two saw this as a distinct advantage, given that boys in his school are able to participate freely in traditional and non-traditional male activities “and they don’t have to worry about impressing or not impressing potential girlfriends – they just sing, because we just do it”. Participant Two referred to his previous experiences at a coed school and the difficulty encountered there in getting the boys, or even the girls to sing at assembly. At this same school, the representation of girls in the school choirs was far higher than that of the boys.

### **5.6.3 Participant Three**

In his responses to the Questionnaire, Participant Three referred to the special capacity of massed singing to assist boys’ schools in “fostering an affirming pro-social

culture.” Furthermore, it can also encourage a “more affirming conception of masculinity which eschews some of the worst of prevailing macho beliefs”.

In his interview, Participant Three developed two main ideas: singing as part of a counter-cultural approach to masculinity; and the feasibility of creating a successful massed singing environment for boys in coed schools, given the research on genderfication in music.

In the first of these ideas, Participant Three explained that involvement in the singing program at School C occurs for boys at a very critical time in their social, psychological and emotional development and can assist in helping them to become gentlemen, “and that’s the word we quite deliberately use with them.” He also contrasted two opposite cultural modes which he has encountered in the cultures of various boys-only organisations:

My experience of all-boys’ environments, whether we’re talking about schools or other, is they *can* lend themselves to being very hard and steely, if not, in fact, quite nasty in terms of their influence upon the way a young man might develop.

However, Participant Three explained that such organisations do not necessarily have to be like that: “you *can* create a very different environment”. In relation to his own school, he added that “You won’t find that sort of macho mentality here”. The counter-cultural potential of a boys-only school is enhanced significantly by activities like singing which are about the giving of permission. This happens partly because the school requires it to, but it also opens up the possibility of permission being granted amongst members of the school community for an even wider range of counter-cultural activity. As Participant Three expressed it, ‘...having given each other *that* permission, what else do we give ourselves permission to do?’”



In a more hypothetical context, Participant Three surmised about the degree to which the success of a massed singing program for boys, such as he understood to be in place at School C, could be replicated for boys in coed schools. Referring to research into gendered participation in musical activity by boys and girls in secondary schools, Participant Three commented that,

We all know that the research tells us that in the genderfication of even just music, singing is something that is very much down the feminine end of the spectrum. There's good research around that. It has certainly been my experience in coed schools that, if you just have a choral program, it will be predominantly a girls' program, if it's voluntary.

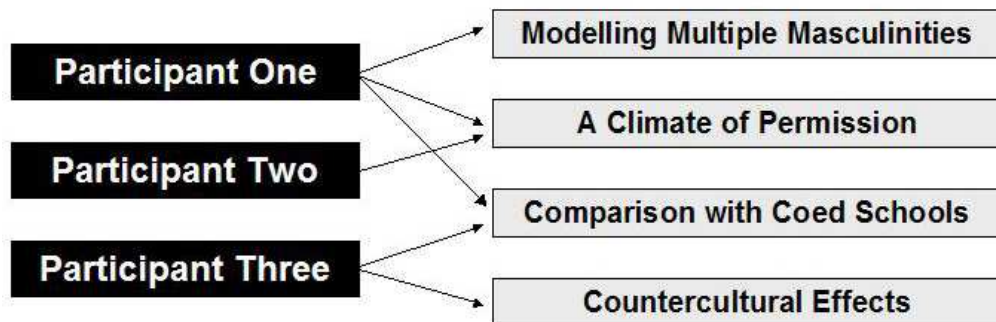
There needs to be a universal commitment to the choral program in a coeducational school such that it is compulsory for all students. Otherwise, peer anxiety will cause boys to opt out, even if they had initially been inclined to participate. Nevertheless, Participant Three expressed the belief that, at least in theory, it could be possible for a successful massed singing program involving boys, and comparable with the program currently in place at School C, to be established in a coeducational school;

You'd have to work at it, and you'd have to work a lot harder. I think you could transfer the experience that we've had to a coed setting. Maybe you might even approach it as a single-sex boys' choir and see where that took you, but I think it might lend itself to the *Billy Elliot* syndrome ... and boys would be typed by their peers. I appreciate it would be more complex in a coed setting, but I don't believe impossible.

Figure 5.4 presents a synthesis of the subthemes identified in Section 2 from the data supplied by each participant.

Figure 5.4

*Theme Two, Education & Gender: synthesis of subthemes*



## 5.7 The Forms of Massed Singing

This theme incorporates material derived from each participant's description of the forms and contexts in which singing takes place at his particular school.

### 5.7.1 Participant One

In his responses to the questionnaire, Participant One outlined the range of contexts in which singing takes place at School A. These were liturgical celebrations (year level, house, campus, college); assemblies across the three campuses; singing competitions amongst the four houses; musical performances where whole campuses are involved; and sporting events.

In the interview context, Participant One referred to singing at assembly, which can be done well or poorly; house singing competitions, which take place at the junior and senior campuses; the involvement of boys as the chorus for full-scale musical productions; singing practices for events such as Commencement Masses and Valedictory Masses; the three College Choirs (junior School Choir, Middle School

Choir, and Senior Choir); and the presence at School A of the St Patrick's Cathedral Choristers who are all holders of choral scholarships.

The Cathedral Choir, which represents the highest level of specialisation amongst the groups which sing at School A, was relocated to the College in 1996, following the closure of Cathedral College in Victoria Parade. The relocation was at the behest of the previous Headmaster who wanted to use the choir as a “vehicle to bring about cultural change”. The profile of the choir and its positive influence on various cultural contexts at the College, especially the singing program, was described by Participant One as follows:

... when I speak to parent luncheons, to people or even to other colleagues, I sometimes say we cheat a little in our choral work because we have got all these little elements of yeast sown throughout from 5 to 12 that are able to lift what we're doing.

A similar advantage is gained from the high profile of talented and competent boys who take the leads in the musical, or who demonstrate other competencies as performers, and who receive recognition and acclamation from their peers: “...you can't put a price on boys that are able to move with such ease and such confidence across such a whole range of music...”.

In the liturgical life of School A, there are numerous major celebrations in which the whole school community participates, such as the Commencement and Edmund Rice Day Masses, and others for which a significant section of the school comes together, as in the case of the Year 12 Valedictory Mass. Music and singing are featured in all of these, and they are all highly regarded as peak College events:

The singing in the Cathedral I think is probably linked to a range of other things that are happening... the boys are so cooperative in general on the way in there, that the tone and the respect within Mass surprises some

people that 1700 lads are prepared to show that level of cooperation. So, I think it's the experience of the College movement, the experience of the beauty of the Cathedral in itself, and of the music, and of the atmosphere that exists. But singing is a part of what happens.

The singing practices for the Valedictory Mass, in which the boys willingly participate, “bring a sense to that worship and the nature and tone of that worship, there's not a question about that”, and parents and boys speak of the Mass “for years to come”.

Participant One also referred to the Senior House Singing Competition at School A in which the four College houses participate annually. This is an event in which the houses “actually want to compete” against each other in a bid to see if they can do it “well enough to beat somebody”. The fact that they are actually serious about the competition demonstrates a “very high acceptance of singing as a means of expressing who we are”.

### **5.7.2 Participant Two**

In his responses to the questionnaire, Participant Two listed six different contexts in which massed singing takes place at School B: at assemblies; in church services through the singing of hymns; as part of the House Music Competition; at the Biennial Concert; in a large 300 voice choir; and in a smaller chamber choir.

In his interview, Participant Two expanded on all of the contexts identified in the questionnaire. He also added that each section of the school – junior, middle and senior – has both a larger choir and a more specialist choir within it.

The large School Choir of about 300 boys takes on at least one major choral work a year. In 2007 it was *Mass for the Armed Man*, and in 2006 *Requiem* by Mozart. They have also performed excerpts from Handel's *Messiah*. The soprano and alto parts

are sometimes sung by girls' schools. Rehearsals are held weekly and the major works are prepared over an extended period of time.

Participant Two related that the House Singing Competition is "by far the most popular competition we have". Each house chooses two songs: one to be sung in harmony and one to be sung in unison. The boys elect their own conductor and train themselves, although help is available from the Director of Music if required. Preparations last for about a month, with the boys using their timetabled house periods for rehearsal, before calling extra morning and afternoon rehearsals closer to the event. The competition is held in the evening in the school's auditorium which is capacious and well suited to the nature of the competition. Participant Two described the experience of that evening as a highlight of the school year:

... they (the boys) are so passionate about the competition and, you know, it's not worth any more than any of the other competitions, but I think because everybody does it – you don't have to be a top athlete to be the star of it – all of the Houses believe that if they pull together and perform, they have a chance of winning this, and it just seems to be one of the highlights of the year. I've said to people here that, if I had to choose one thing to show someone the culture of [school B], I'd bring them to the House Music Competition.

Participant Two made three references to the schools' Biennial Concert. This is attended by the whole school and involves instrumental, choral and massed singing items. It is held in the even years at Hamer Hall, a world-class concert venue in the Victorian Arts Centre, and there is already much anticipation of the 2008 concert.

### **5.7.3 Participant Three**

The questionnaire responses from Participant Three indicated that the singing experiences for boys at School C fall into the following categories: assemblies at which there is some singing; "singing assemblies" which are all singing; auditioned choirs;

non-auditioned choirs, including The Chorale; and the Speech Night Massed Choir of 1,370.

In his interview, Participant Three referred to all of the forms listed in his responses to the questionnaire, and also explored the process of initiating new boys into the singing program at School C.

Students newly enrolled in the school attend an orientation day in December of the year prior to their commencement, and are “embedded” in an assembly in which they occupy the seats at the front of the hall which would previously have been occupied by the Year 9 students they will be replacing. They are then able to experience the singing “wave” over them from the older boys, without having any obligation to participate at that stage. This is intended to give them a “tangential experience” which allows a “degree of introduction to the expectation” to help them realise that “this is what it is to be part of this school”. After their official commencement as Year 9 students, they attend two consecutive year-level rehearsals conducted by a vocal trainer at which they learn to sing the school song and the national anthem “properly”. Weekly rehearsals continue as they are joined by the Year 10 boys and they are taught to develop a new level of skill and technique in their singing. Like the other year levels, they then begin to rehearse new repertoire to perform at specific events such as assemblies and concerts.

Within the school’s assembly cycle, there are junior and senior assemblies at which some form of massed singing always takes place. In addition, there are also specific occasions when the two halves of the school rehearse together for a combined performance at assembly, to which special guests are often invited.

Weekly rehearsals are also used to prepare for the massed items at the annual Speech Night. The repertoire on such an occasion usually consists of at least eight songs across three languages, including traditional works such as *Gaudeamus Igitur* in Latin. It has also become customary to include a chorus from opera, usually sung in Italian.

The house-based singing competition introduces repertoire that is a little more contemporary and “jocular”, although the focus on competition ensures that it will be prepared with thoroughness:

... there’s often a bit of fun and play with it, but nevertheless it’s also purposive when they’re then singing, knowing that, literally now, in three and a half weeks’ time, a quarter of the school, which they have a sort of a sense of ownership and commitment and belonging to, will stand and compete with their peers.

The dispersal of new students within each House cohort helps them to learn from their older peers how to participate passionately in a competitive context.

Participant Three also described a group referred to in the school as “The Chorale”. The membership of this choir is in excess of fifty boys, all of whom volunteer to join it. The voluntary commitment “is a hard one for them to make” and yet, “the choir has grown and grown in its numbers”. An interesting feature of the group is that it draws from a number of peer cultures in the school and therefore represents a wide range of cultures, personalities and interests among the boys:

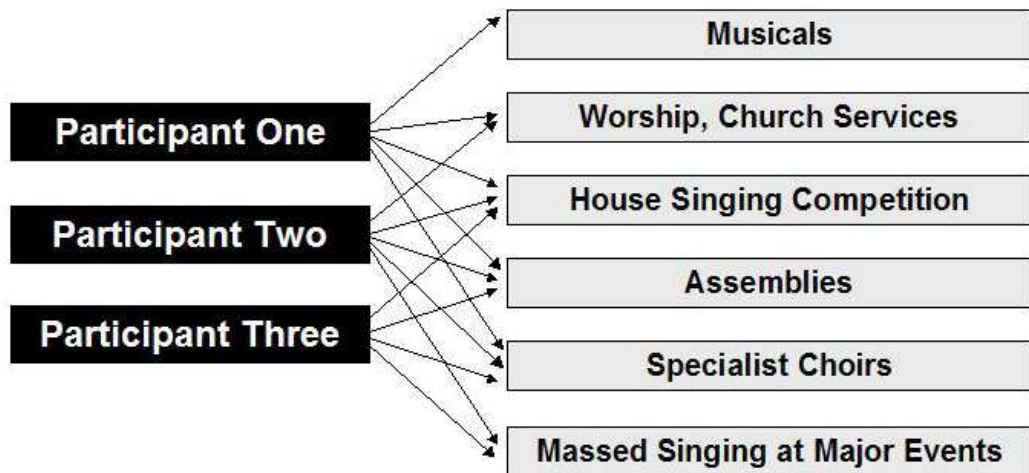
There’s over 40 different major language and cultural groups in the school, but pretty much all of them get represented within The Chorale. So, it’s not owned by anybody and it’s seen as a very eclectic group and, of course, no previous training is required.

The Chorale has now become the “vanguard” group of singing in the school and has been invited to perform nationally and internationally at conferences and eisteddfods.

Figure 5.5 presents a synthesis of the subthemes identified in Section 1 from the data supplied by each participant.

Figure 5.5

*Theme One, The Forms of Massed Singing: synthesis of subthemes*



## 5.8 The Benefits of Massed Singing

Grouped under this theme are the positive effects and impact of massed singing as identified by each of the three participants.

### 5.8.1 Participant One

In his responses to the questionnaire, Participant One referred to singing generally as having the power to lift the spirit and to provide many people with both a sense of belonging and a sense of personal wellbeing. Massed singing can affect school culture by fostering prayerfulness, a spirit of identity and an acceptance of the arts. A school which sings together, particularly a boys-only school “is far more likely to be genuinely and openly supportive of the broader arts program”.



In the interview context, Participant One referred to the effects of massed singing in relation to four broad subthemes which may be categorised as follows: worship, sometimes referred to as liturgy; corporate identity; academic performance; and school culture.

In relation to worship, Participant One described the positive experience of the departing Year 12s when they participate in singing practices for the Valedictory Mass held in St Patrick's Cathedral at the conclusion of their VCE studies, and the way in which this enhances the nature and tone of their liturgical experience. He also referred to the annual Commencement Mass at the same venue which is attended by the whole school community – a congregation of over 2,000, comprising staff, students, parents and invited guests – which also provides evidence of how comfortable the School A boys are with all aspects of the liturgy. In contexts such as this, singing is seen as a natural means of expressing “who we are, as a normal and beneficial part of worship”.

The second topic explored by Participant One was related to the concept of corporate identity. He situated the idea of identity reinforcement through singing within two further contexts: major interschool sporting competitions; and the traditional enmity between Catholics and Protestants which these days is largely only a fading memory for most people with these religious affiliations. In relation to sport, he pointed to the highly competitive world of the Associated Public Schools (APS) in which cheer squads often vie with each other for dominance as aggressively as the on-field competitors do: “What do [School A] boys do when they're at the APS Athletics or Head of the River? They sing! ... There's this group identity. It's saying, “these are our songs, we know this, this says who we are”.

In relation to the Catholic versus Protestant dimension of interschool competitiveness, Participant One recalled an occasion in recent years at a particular athletics carnival when he heard some old anti-Catholic chants being directed towards the School A boys. Their response was to sing the Catholic hymn “Christ, Be our Light” in their defence and as a statement of identity: “... it’s almost paganistic in a way, it’s tribal in another way, but that was the student response.” The singing of favourite hymns can also shape identity within the school community in non-competitive settings, as evidenced by the spirit with which School A boys sing the hymn entitled “The Power of Your Love”:

The way they’ll all leap on to “Power of Your Love” and massacre that with such delight in a whole range of circumstances, tells me that the boys say: “This is one means by which we express we’re part of [School A]”.

This phenomenon is present across all three campuses and reinforces the belief of Participant One that boys at School A see massed singing as a statement of belonging to their school.

Participant One also speculated on the relationship between an involvement in music generally (and in this case, singing specifically), and a school’s overall academic performance. This speculation stemmed from reflection on the work of the International Coalition for Boys’ Schools which sponsors school-based projects on aspects of educational practice:

I’ve put up one that I’d like [School A] to actually do, probably concentrating at this stage in our Junior School, and looking at the link between our musicality in the College and both academic performance in some areas, and also that harder-to-measure, the boys’ sense of worth and their identification with the school.

A fourth concept discussed by Participant One in relation to massed singing at School A concerned the ways in which robust participation can reflect good cultural

health within a school. He referred to having appropriated a saying over the years that “You can judge the health of a boys’ school by how they sing”. He added that, “There have been a number of times in recent years at [School A] when I’ve been there and singing with the boys, I’ve had that thought, ‘this is good; this is telling me something quite specific’”.

### **5.8.2 Participant Two**

In response to the questionnaire, Participant Two commented briefly on massed singing as a human and cultural experience, and also as a valuable dimension of school culture at School B. In relation to endorsing the value which singing has for human beings in general, Participant Two made the following observations:

The music we listen to and the songs we sing form the soundtrack of our lives. Singing raises the spirits and expresses creativity. Everybody sings – even if only in the privacy of the shower – but singing in groups has a special bonding power.

In mainstream Australian culture, however, most would consider massed singing as quaint or old-fashioned, though many would still participate in singing the National anthem or “Waltzing Matilda” at a football match. At School B, a strong tradition of singing gives boys the feeling of belonging to a larger community. They are proud to have it as one of the “defining characteristics” of their school. The culture is such that they do not question it and readily join in. The massed singing at the school’s biennial concerts is a very emotional and exciting experience to be part of.

In his interview, Participant Two spoke about massed singing as a means of building and expressing the school’s culture through statements about values and priorities; as a form of emotional engagement for boys; as a symbol of unity; as a

spiritual or transcendent experience; as a special element in the character of the school; and as having an enduring expression at Old-Boy reunions.

The experience of Participant Two at School B has proved to him the fact that massed singing is a “great way of building culture within a school”. Culture is not a given that suggests the way boys are now is the way they will always be: it is something that can be changed “by the messages you give in everything that you do”. There are messages about the culture of the school in activities like year-level and whole-school rehearsals for major events such as the biennial concert at Hamer Hall. If the students and staff working together can get the singing to work, “it will be a special thing, and they take it very seriously”.

Participant Two also described massed singing in terms of its profound emotional impact on the school community. When the whole school sings together at the biennial concert, “that’s the stuff that really sends shivers down your spine”. The emotional charge that comes from these performances is “enormous”. Participant Two described how the occasion is even more emotional for the departing Year 12 students: “They all stand around the balcony at the back and the rest of the auditorium stands and sings; it’s just an extraordinary thing”. Inherent in the great power of massed singing to shape school culture is its capacity for engaging students on an emotional level, when not many other things can do that to the same extent: “You can engage them intellectually, and there’s some emotion barracking for our school, but with massed singing, you’re part of it, you are part of this experience. That’s quite powerful”.

At School B, massed singing is also seen as a symbol of unity. The school’s big messages can be conveyed through massed singing, especially when the whole school

sings together on occasions such as the Biennial Concert, and one of these messages is that over-emphasis on self can be yielded to a richer vision of community whenever the boys “put aside their inhibitions and lose themselves in (the singing)”.

And that sense of that loss of self. It’s part of something bigger, but it needs the discipline of being all together ... we stand shoulder to shoulder and sing together. I think that’s a powerful metaphor for what we’re trying to do in the school: stand side by side and we walk on.

The fact that the staff joins with the boys for massed singing is a further reinforcement of the kind of unity which can be created across a school community. Furthermore, the participation of staff is recognised as equal in enthusiasm to that of the boys: “and in the big concerts, they’re just as much singing their hearts out as the students”. The whole tone of relationships within the school is enhanced by this joint participation in massed singing which “bonds us with the students, too, as a staff ... and I think the singing’s part of that relationship”.

Participant Two couched the experience of massed singing at his school in the language of spirituality, transcendence and transformation, all of which are part of the broader educational mission of “making people, not just good scores”. The musical and artistic dimensions of life, like the emotional dimension, are very important for young men because they can help to make them “gentler people”:

It’s a simple way for them to get in tune, I guess, with the spiritual dimension and the emotional dimension within themselves, where they don’t have to be doing long meaningful discussions about – which they find awkward to do – but they can just experience it and learn to love it, and I think ... I have faith that that can be a transforming experience for them.

Participant Two also illustrated how the benefits and effects of massed singing do not apply to his students’ school years only. At Old-Boy reunions, songs such as

“Anthem” from the musical *Chess* are sung with great gusto by the more recent alumni as “unofficial school hymns”:

And now, at Old-Boy reunions, it’s a very interesting thing that the students within the last ten years of the school want to sing that song at the Old Boys’ reunions, and the older old boys don’t even know it, but they can see the enthusiasm with which they sing this.

Lastly, Participant Two spoke of how completing the questionnaire for this study had caused him to reflect on the nature and character of School B, especially on the origins and impact of the singing tradition:

... I think the singing culture of our school is a very important part of the character of our school, and it (the questionnaire) has caused me to reflect on that and where that’s come from, and why this is the case, and caused me to value it again. It *is* a special part of life here at the moment and something I’m quite proud of, actually, the fact that they sing.

### **5.8.3 Participant Three**

In his questionnaire responses, Participant Three referred to massed singing in general terms as providing modes of being that are pleasurable and therapeutic, and which promote positive emotional wellbeing. Furthermore, he described the activity as capable of building a significant sense of collective belonging, shared purpose, achievement and camaraderie. Students at School C offer an extremely high endorsement of the singing program, and it is generally well embraced by staff who are conscious of its capacities for building ethos and wellbeing. There is also a shared sense in the school that the program “assists in broader positive influences within the learning and classroom climate of the school”. Participant Three described the relationship of massed singing to school culture as an essential one: “I am convinced we would be unable to foster an inclusive, pro-social and cohesive school environment and ethos without a singing program”.

In his interview, Participant Three explored the ways in which massed singing creates and expresses passion; its flow-on effects in the school environment by way of improving learning and social interaction; the nature of the feedback received from the boys themselves; the impact of the boys' singing on a visiting State Premier; the capacity of the singing program to be a vital force for change; and the influence of singing on forming and changing the inner person, including the enduring effects of the massed singing program in post-school life.

On the subject of passion, Participant Three related a conversation he had shared with a senior music educator from another school who had just adjudicated a School C choral competition. The adjudicator expressed the view that, while it's one thing to invite and entice a cohort of young men to sing together in public, it's quite another thing for them to do it with passion. Participant Three reflected that this is what the school has been able to do, generation after generation, and it amounts to a form of "magic". There is clearly a sense of belonging fostered through massed singing, and the boys involved do more than just go through the motions. However, it isn't possible to explain it all rationally. As Participant Three himself commented, "I do wonder about what the chemistry of that is and how that comes about". He believes that part of the answer may lie in the fact that there is a competitive edge to the massed singing program and this plays to the "psychology and egos of a young adolescent":

Once they've had the experience of the Choral Competition, a very significant critical mass of them are won over, if you like to the passionateness (*sic*) of the singing. And it's one thing, I think – and I wouldn't by any means claim that it's peculiar to this school – but I think it's one thing that this school with its massed singing program excels in, is that, literally – and I'm using the word quite deliberately – is that passion which the boys experience.

Most students enter School B at Year 9 level, having had little if any previous experience of massed singing. Participant Three sees this as a critical moment for the initiates who look to the conduct and attitudes of their peers for guidance as to how they should react to the singing program. Though they themselves may not immediately feel caught up in it, they recognise the sense of passion with which the seniors engage in singing, and this becomes influential in their own enculturation process.

To illustrate the potential flow-on effects of a massed singing program, Participant Three recalled a conversation with a colleague from some time back in which he was asked which single program he would consider implementing in this coed school to develop a much more pro-academic and pro-social environment. Without thinking, Participant Three replied, "Consider a massed singing program". He also explained how a group of boys who had formed an "unrehearsed choir" which became known as "The Chorale", independently took the initiative of introducing music from various ethnic traditions into their repertoire, and also incorporated dance into their performances, eventually becoming a vanguard singing group within the school. When Participant Three asked a staff member involved with The Chorale how the boys had been able to win from their peers such great acclaim and credibility, his reply was,

It's the massed singing program. Once you've got any of those students over a hurdle where they have to stand next to their close friends and peers and sing, and sing and enjoy it, there's no end to that. Where you can push that is up to you.

Participant Three added that, if you can achieve that sort of thing in a supportive environment and show the boys that this is something that "opens up avenues and opportunities for them," then the effects it can have include "a disempowerment of negative peer culture" because the boys have had an experience of something better. He



explained that other flow-on effects from massed singing can be seen in the classroom, “where you can push the risk-taking of learning with the boys”:

Now, I think that’s come, my strong belief is that’s come from the climate, and the ripple effect that the climate of massed singing has had, so you can push boundaries on the boys’ conceptions of what’s ok and not ok as an academic student, as a young man, as a good citizen, and I don’t know that we have yet explored the limits of where that can take you.

Another form of evidence used by Participant Three to support his view that massed singing has been such a “central pillar of the school” derives from the views and reactions of the students themselves. The ultimate litmus test has been what happens at School C when the Year 12s are preparing for the annual Speech Night. As their VCE exams take place when the rest of the school is rehearsing the massed items for Speech Night, the boys are required by the school to attend special rehearsals conducted after the exams, and during what for most Australian Year 12 students is known and celebrated as “Schoolies’ Week”. The school recognises that it has very little hold over whether or not students attend these rehearsals as they are, to all intents and purposes, finished with school life,

... but Speech Night is their last hurrah, so it would be unusual, out of a cohort of 330 plus, if we’re missing more than a dozen when we call those additional rehearsals after the school year is finished. And they turn up because they love it. They rehearse because they want it to be their last hurrah at Speech Night. So, it says something about the commitment we are able to foster and the take-up that it has for the students.

He also cited a second source of significant feedback from students which came in the form of a survey conducted in 2007 in which Year 12 boys were asked to identify those elements of the school’s programs which were supportive and helpful to them in preparing for their final exams. The massed singing program crept up so often that Participant Three began to wonder if the boys were “taking the mickey” out of him:

So I actually went back to their representatives and they were immediate in their response, in saying “No: it continues to reinforce and support our sense of camaraderie, of mutual belonging, of mutual immersion in a task,

it's therapeutic to us in the rigour of the school day with all of the level of just pressure of the academic program," and their own and their families' and their schools' expectations of them. They find it almost a cathartic release and they identify that immediately. They say, "Whatever you do, don't take singing away!" They see its value to them both therapeutically, but also, I guess, within their sense of spirit.

A final instance of student endorsement cited by Participant Three was a comment which appeared in a recent history of School C which was published in connection with the school's centenary. The quote is from a student from another school who was reflecting on his friends at School C and is recounted here in the words of Participant Three: "The trouble with [School C] students is that not only can't they stop talking about their school, but whenever there's more than two of them gathered together, they burst into song". This phenomenon of spontaneous singing can also be seen in the classrooms and corridors of the school, "but there's nothing orchestrated, literally speaking in that way, but it is part of ... the hub of the school". What can be found around the school are groups of boys – sometimes only two or three – singing at their lockers, or sports teams going off to compete and breaking into song.

Participant Three further illustrated the impact of massed singing by referring to a visit to School C by the then State Premier, Steve Bracks. At assembly, Mr Bracks was welcomed to the stage by the principal and sat next to him while the boys began to sing. The impact on him of the boys' singing was immense:

... you could literally see him not only gasp, but almost push back in the chair. If nothing else, almost the sound wave hit him, and a lot of our staff who've not experienced that before – I mean, it is, in a sense, a wonderful privilege to sit on the stage of a hall and have a massed choir of 600 sing loudly and enthusiastically with you as their audience – that, of itself, is almost viscerally an experience.

Participant Three also referred to massed singing at School C as a "vital change force", even though it is easy to think of it as the *traditional* practice of the school. In

fact, it has the capacity to “evolve an ethos and a culture in the school” that is both significant and unparalleled: “I can’t think of another program in the school that you could, Machiavellianly or otherwise, start to evolve the school’s sense of its own spirit, and its own ethos, as much as a massed singing program could do”.

The final subtheme addressed by Participant Three concerns the inner aspects of the human person as they are formed and shaped by the experience of massed singing at School C. Participant Three referred to what he called the “visceral experience of singing, or the spiritual experience of singing.” Hearing the physical reality of others around you singing strongly helps to break down anxieties and barriers:

You could call it a spiritual experience. Certainly what I see, and I see in the faces of the boys, is that it’s a passionate experience. You see that they are not just mechanically going through the motions of something: there is a clear inner feeling and an inner desire that they’re expressing what they sing.

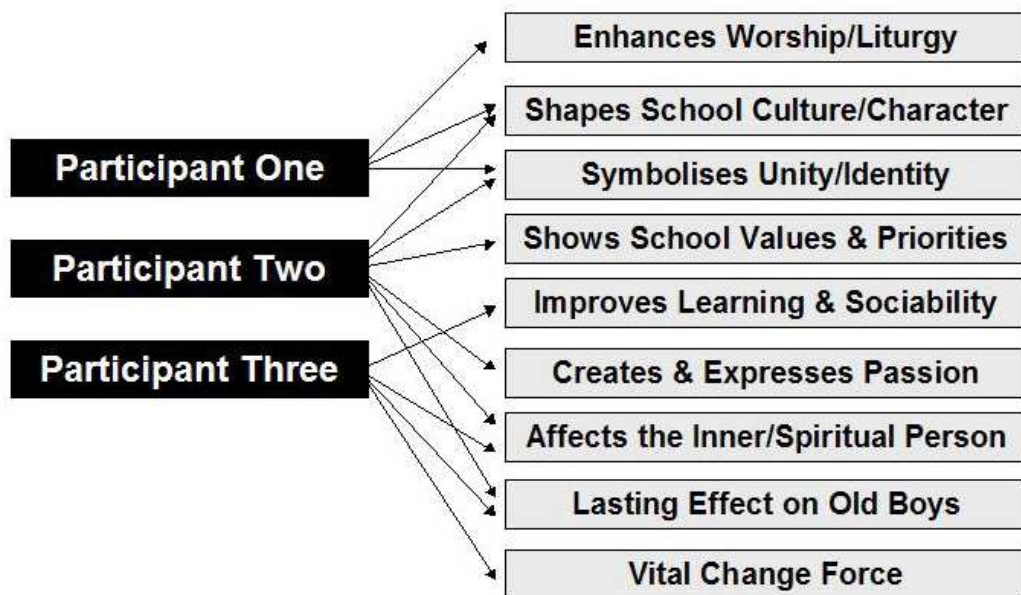
Participant Three also referred to some of the ways in which this experience lasts beyond the school years and influences young men in their adult lives. One such person is Jonathan Welch, a trained opera singer, choral conductor and former student of School C, who would say that what inspired him to take on the Choir of Hard Knocks was his experience of the power of song and its capacity to change human beings. Participant Three expressed the belief that this is a widespread experience for the old boys of School C:

... and I think a lot of our boys do experience that: that somehow they are touched by the experience, they feel it to have somehow made them better, and that’s often, then, something they continue to take with them into life.

Figure 5.6 presents a synthesis of the subthemes identified in Section 1 from the data supplied by each participant.

Figure 5.6

*Theme Three, The Benefits of Massed Singing: synthesis of subthemes*



## 5.9 Sport and Singing

This theme explores references made by the three participants to sport as a dominant cultural influence, and their observations about tensions and complementarities within their own schools concerning the relationships between sport and the performing arts.

### 5.9.1 Participant One

In his responses to the questionnaire, Participant One referred to singing at School A as taking place in “a diverse cultural climate”. In his interview, he referred to a convergence which occurs between singing and sport when, on occasions such as APS Athletics or the Head of the River, boys use singing to state their identity and cheer on their school. Participant One mentioned his delight at the fact that the former First XI cricket coach was also a musician. Participant One also referred to the challenge he

faced as a schoolboy of wanting to sing when the climate was more “jock” than it is today.

### **5.9.2 Participant Two**

In his responses to the questionnaire, Participant Two suggested that, although most Australians would probably regard massed singing as quaint or old fashioned, they would still happily participate in singing the national anthem or “Waltzing Matilda” at a football match. In his interview, he expressed his pleasure at the thought that the boys at School B can be both sportsmen and musicians without difficulty: “I mean, our First XVIII Football Team are also mainly in the choir, and are also mainly in the plays and the drama and the art”. He referred to the fact that “we try hard at sport” and that it is important, in the context of a renaissance education which includes a cultural dimension, to have a range of skills at your disposal, not just “academic or sport”.

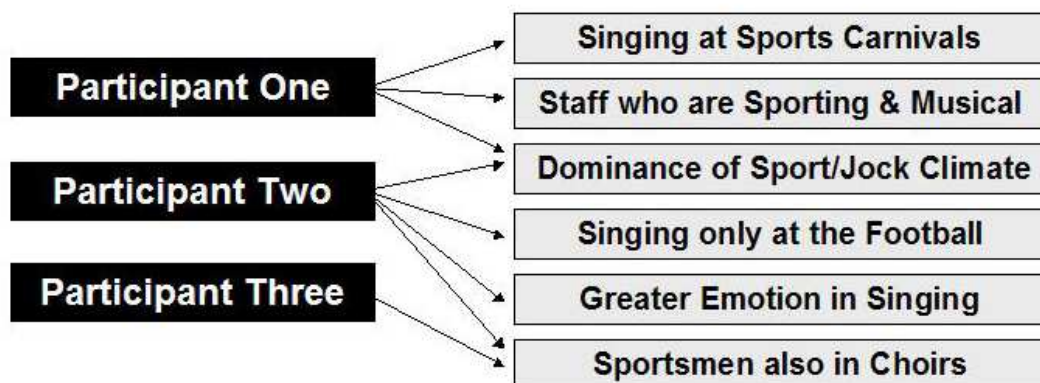
Participant Two also made reference to his own experience of schooling at a time when the “sporting guys were the ones who got all the attention and the plaudits”, and involvement in music, drama and debating were seen as “a bit eccentric”. He stated that he wasn’t sure that those who sing their hearts out at a football match or with a group of mates after they have been drinking and singing “certain kinds of songs”, would, in broader Australian culture, feel as inclined to sing hymns in church or participate in other forms of massed singing. At School B, however, “singing gets as much credence as the sporting results, the academic results, as anything else”. He also drew a distinction between barracking for your team in a football game which involves “some emotion”, and the stronger experience of massed singing in which “you are part of it, you are part of this experience”.

### 5.9.3 Participant Three

Participant Three made no specific reference to this theme in his responses to the questionnaire. In his interview, however, he twice used the instance of the First XVIII as a way of suggesting that the most sporting of boys at School C have no difficulty in joining groups such as The Chorale: “The fact that a member of the First XVIII, or several of them, will be part of a choir in a way, is quite subversive in terms of popular notions about masculinity”. Figure 5.7 presents a synthesis of the subthemes identified in Section 7 from the data supplied by each participant.

Figure 5.7

*Theme Seven, Sport & Singing: synthesis of subthemes*



### 5.10 Comparisons

In one sense, the three study participants covered a predictable range of topics during their interviews, given that the questionnaires had provided them with prior knowledge of the basic agenda to be followed. On the other hand, the semi-structured nature of the interviews gave them significant scope to develop their ideas and allowed them the freedom to digress more or less at their own discretion. However, even where the participants covered similar topics or themes, their treatment was in some cases

dissimilar, mirroring the different circumstances of their schools and reflecting the variety in their personalities and interests.

### **5.10.1 Principals and Leadership**

The responses of the three participants in relation to their roles as leaders can be divided into comments about influencing or not influencing the singing program directly, and statements about other aspects of leadership outside the sphere of direct influence on singing. In relation to the former category, all three participants made it clear that the actual mechanics of running the massed singing programs in their schools were in the hands of specialists suitably qualified for the task. Each of them, however, made it clear that they can always be seen to be singing along with the boys at rehearsals, concerts and assemblies, and that this constitutes a form of leadership by example.

Most of the comments made by the participants in this area pertained to supporting or encouraging those responsible for delivering the singing programs, and the students who participate in them. Participants One and Two referred to their influence on structural factors within the school as one of the ways in which they support singing. For Participant One, these issues included choosing and paying for suitable venues to showcase the boys' talents, selecting and employing staff, and organising calendars and dates that favour the singing program. Participant Two reflected similar priorities in commenting that structural factors need to be considered in order to make space for activities concerned with massed singing, and confirmed that School B structures its program throughout the year in such a way as to show that it values singing. Participant Three mentioned specific actions he had taken as principal which included increasing the budget and levels of support for the program; promoting

the program and its importance to the whole school community; and having choir rehearsals included in the Open Day schedule in order to advertise the choral program. It was also clear from his comments about the frequency of singing practices and the status of events involving singing, that the school's infrastructure is highly supportive of singing at all levels.

All three Participants referred to a range of ideas related to the concept of fostering and nurturing the singing program, and maintaining its effectiveness. Participant Three saw singing at School C as part of a long tradition which he is involved in fostering and nurturing. He referred to the fact that, over the 100 years of the school's existence, every principal has valued and promoted the singing program in varying degrees. Participants Two and Three made comments about supporting their program in the context of quality control. Participant Two recognised the fact that the program at School B has been built up over time to the strong condition it is in today, but that it is still fairly fragile and could easily be lost if it were taken for granted. Similarly, Participant One referred to the improvement in massed singing at School A over time, and the need to avoid thinking that singing is automatically going to continue to be successful simply because that's how it is now. Participants Two and Three developed this concept further by giving examples of how they have, at times, actively defended their singing programs in the face of potential threats. Participant Two referred to occasional objections from teachers about the amount of time given to singing and the number of teaching periods lost as a consequence. Participant Three explained how parents have queried the inclusion in the Year 12 timetables of a period of singing every week. In such instances, both participants have constructed their defences on the basis of what they see as the overwhelming merit of the programs in question.



A proactive strategy to which all three participants referred was including in their talks and addresses to parents some positive comments about singing in their schools. Participant One mentioned this in relation to other comments about the influence of the St Patrick's Cathedral choristers on the overall quality of singing at School A. When attempting to give parents an insight into School B and what it stands for, Participant Two uses the example of his school's singing program. It is useful for illustrating some of the advantages of boys' education; for demonstrating that the school is addressing the development of its boys on a number of levels; and for conveying a strong impression of a healthy and vibrant community. Participant Three spoke of structuring a whole component of his presentation around the school's singing program. His pitch to parents has been based on the approach that if you want a sense of what's unusual and peculiar about School C, it's the singing program. He has followed this with an invitation to attend the annual Speech Night on the understanding that it will provide a ringing endorsement of his claim.

Participants Two and Three referred to discussions with other principals about singing in schools, and they acknowledged that they may be the targets of some degree of envy, given the quality of massed singing in their own schools and the absence of it in most others. Participant Three mentioned that he had been involved in co-authoring a book chapter with his Music staff, and Participant One spoke about strategies that he uses to affirm individuals involved in a variety of activities including the performing arts.

### **5.10.2 Principals and Personal Background**

All three participants discussed aspects of their own schooling connected with the experience of singing. As a boy himself, Participant One found that, although he

liked singing at school, the climate was more “jock” than it is today. Participant Two expressed his love of performing by participating in drama productions and musicals, and he found himself adept at harmonising and part-reading. Like Participant One, he found the culture of the times unsympathetic to these pursuits, and more focused on achievement in sport. However, even though he felt the odd one out at times, this did not stop him from doing what he loved. Participant Three was alone in enjoying rich childhood experiences of music making without cultural approbation. Not only did he have the positive experience through his family of singing in Church choirs from the age of 10, but he also went to School C as a secondary student and found opportunities there of participating in music in a supportive environment. Participant One explained how, post-school, he found opportunities to sing and perform in the scouting movement and at university. He also reflected on how the overwhelmingly positive musical and choral experiences of his son and twin daughters have influenced not only his thinking on the performing arts in general, but also his decision-making as the head of School A in particular.

### **5.10.3 Theory and Education**

Participants covered a limited range of topics relating to theoretical aspects of education outside the spheres of boys’ education, music education and leadership. Participant One developed a concept advocated by the experiential educator Kurt Hahn (1962) that students need to be impelled into experience. Participant One saw this principle as applying to the arts, to certain academic disciplines, to sport and to outdoor education. Allied with this concept of impelling students into experience is the belief that children should be challenged to participate in a wide range of experiences, even if these experiences are not initially to their liking. Participant Three developed another aspect of this last point by discussing the notion of compulsoriness in education, about

which he had always experienced a certain degree of ambivalence. His experiences of the compulsory massed singing program at School C, however, have led him to believe that, in this case at least, there is something to be said for developing the collective ethos by not giving boys an “out”, and by helping them to understand that there are some things in which they *must* participate.

#### **5.10.4 Education and Gender**

The subthemes developed by the three participants in relation to education and gender reflected some common areas of thought, mainly in relation to the ways in which boys’ schools in general give permission for boys to behave with more freedom than coeducational schools do. Singing was seen by all participants as a special way of bringing about these behavioural freedoms. Participants One and Two focused on boys’ education mainly from this viewpoint, while Participant Three developed the concept in a different but complementary direction, expanding on the countercultural aspects of singing within the context of a healthy boys’ school.

Participant One explored the idea of permission, explaining that it is easier for boys to volunteer for cultural or artistic pursuits in an all-male environment as it can give them more opportunities to stumble or fail without fearing the reactions or judgments of girls. Another key to this is the positive modelling of senior students which can lead to younger boys taking up activities that they would otherwise have ruled out on the grounds that these would be culturally unacceptable. Participant Two also developed the concept of a culture of permission being more likely in a boys-only school, given that there are “different agendas” in a coeducational school. He explained that the self-consciousness of adolescent boys, and their fears about how they are seen by girls, can lead to a narrower range of participation in school activities. In a boys’

school, however, they are able to participate freely in traditional and non-traditional male activities without having to worry about impressing potential girlfriends. He also made the point that how boys see themselves when girls are around often leads them define their masculinity much more narrowly. Participant Three spoke about permission as deriving partly from the fact that the school itself allows or promotes it, and partly because the members of the school community grant it to each other. He also pointed to the fact that permission is not a static concept, but one which can always be taken further by asking questions such as, “Having given each other *that* permission, what else do we give ourselves permission to do?” He developed this point by linking it to the notion of School C being a countercultural community whose aim is to assist its students to become gentlemen – a cultural mode he contrasted with some other all-boys’ environments which can be steely and hard.

Although Participants Two and Three referred in passing to the concept of masculinity, Participant One was alone in developing the concept of multiple masculinities. In particular, he spoke of the importance of the male staff modelling multiple masculinities as a means of showing boys that there are many different ways of expressing who you are as a man.

Other individual approaches to this theme included that of Participant One who related how, over some years now, he has recorded basic data on the ratios of boys to girls in choral and music performances given by major coed schools. The data suggests a bias of 3:1 in favour of the girls. Participant Three speculated on the possibility of a successful massed singing program ever achieving for boys in a coed setting what his own program has achieved for the boys at School C. He believed that such a program would need to be compulsory in order to overcome peer anxiety, that you would have to

work a lot harder to implement it, but that it could be successful under the right circumstances. This was not a view held by either of the other participants, both of whom cited prior experiences of either observing or experiencing coed environments in which boys were under-represented in singing or musical activities. Participant Two referred to a previous coed school in which it was very difficult to get either the boys or girls to sing at an assembly.

### **5.10.5 The Forms of Massed Singing**

All three participants confirmed, by the various activities they discussed and the opinions they expressed, that singing generally, and massed singing in particular, are distinctive and significant phenomena in their schools. Several forums are common to all three schools. Assemblies of some description occur at Schools A, B, and C on a regular basis. Participant Three gave details of three different kinds of assembly: assemblies at which students sing, but which are mainly for other purposes; assemblies which are held mainly for singing to take place; and assemblies held in December partly to assist in the induction of the new Year 9 student intake. Also common to all three schools was some form of annual House Singing Competition which, in the case of all participants, was resoundingly endorsed as a key event on the school's calendar. Participant One drew attention to the fact that the boys are serious about participating, and this attitude helps to make singing an acceptable activity at School A. Participant Two gave details of how the repertoire is selected, and emphasised the role of the boys themselves in organising the items for their respective Houses. However, he focused mainly on the passion of the actual event and endorsed it by saying that, if he had to choose one thing to show someone the culture of School B, it would be this competition. Participant Three contrasted the fun element of House singing at School C with the seriously competitive dimension of the event, and also mentioned that this

competition is a way of helping the newest boys in the school to learn from their older peers how to participate in a competitive context.

The three participants also made numerous references to the ways various choirs operate in their schools. Participant One discussed the role of the St Patrick's Cathedral Choir whose younger members hold scholarships at School A, and who represent the most specialised of the choral groups based at the College. This distinction between specialised choral groups and the massed groups which sing on specific occasions was also taken up in a variety of ways by the other two Participants. At School A, there are three other school-based specialist choirs (Junior School Choir, Middle School Choir and Senior Choir), which involve boys from years 3 to 12. As Participant Two explained, School B also operates a large choir and a smaller more specialist choirs from within it at the junior, middle and senior sections of the school. He also referred in more detail to a specialist Chamber Choir and a very large 300-voice choir which, despite its size, is still a specialist choir in the sense that it rehearses weekly and performs a largely classical repertoire of major choral works. Participant Three detailed the nature and activities of a group known at School C as The Chorale. This is a 50-voice choir which also incorporates dance and movement into its performances. In this regard, it is a unique concept within the gamut of choir configurations discussed by the participants.

In relation to massed singing *per se*, all participants referred to contexts in which large numbers of boys from various sections of the school are involved in singing together as year levels, in teams, in sections of the school, or as a whole school cohort. Participant One included in this category assemblies; whole-school College Masses, usually held in St Patrick's Cathedral; the Year 12 Valedictory Mass; House and year-

level singing practices which prepare boys for major liturgical events; the House Singing Competition; and APS sporting carnivals. Participant Two mentioned assemblies; church services, the House Singing Competition; and the Biennial Concert. He elaborated in detail on this last item which is held in the even years at Hamer Hall and incorporates singing items from the whole school. School C undertakes a comparable task annually in the context of its Speech Night when all 1,300-plus boys perform at least eight massed items. Weekly singing periods at all year levels are used to prepare the various pieces. Year levels, sections of the school, and combined sections of the school also perform items on a regular basis at school assemblies.

Participants One and Two, both of whom are principals of schools with church affiliations, made specific reference to massed singing taking place within the context of worship or church services. The nondenominational nature of School C means that such contexts are not available as forums for massed singing. The only reference to boys singing as a chorus in musical productions was made by Participant One.

#### **5.10.6 The Benefits of Massed Singing**

In discussing the effects of massed singing, the three participants drew on a range of affective, symbolic, conceptual and values-based language to describe the impact of this phenomenon on the school communities of which they are principals. There was unanimity among the three participants on the general value of singing for the human person. Participants One and Three endorsed the ability of singing to promote personal well-being. Participant Three also described it as therapeutic and able to give pleasure, while Participants One and Two described it as being able to lift or raise the spirits. The unitive effects of massed singing were variously referred to by the three participants in terms of a special bonding power, a sense of belonging, and a sense

of shared purpose, achievement and camaraderie. Participants One and Two also endorsed singing as a form of positive expression and creativity. Participant Two stated that, as everybody sings, the music that we listen to and the songs that we sing form a kind of “soundtrack to our lives”.

References by the participants to questions concerning singing in the broader Australian cultural context were few in number and brief in content, although all of them focused on negative perceptions. Participant One believed that few people would have an opinion on the value of singing, while Participant Two believed that participation by men in the broader Australian context takes place mainly in relation to sporting events with the singing of folk songs or the National Anthem, but that other traditional forms are not embraced as well. Participant Three also highlighted the marginal place of singing in Australian culture by describing the popular attitude to it as one of blissful indifference. He explained that there is no real cultural locale or tradition for it within mainstream culture, although, in some institutional contexts such as Church groups, there is a form of residual memory which embraces it more positively.

In their interviews, Participants One and Two developed subthemes around corporate identity and unity. Participant One explained that corporate identity at School A is reinforced by massed singing at sporting carnivals, especially when the opposition teams are from rival Protestant schools. A common response of the School A boys to anti-Catholic chants is to return fire by singing Catholic hymns, which, because the boys sing them together, is a way of stating their group identity through ownership of a hymn from their religious tradition. Hymns can also shape identity in non-competitive contexts where boys identify collectively with favourite hymns and endorse this positive identification by singing them strongly and with passion. Participant Two also referred



to the power of particular songs, both secular and religious, to act as a bonding force among the boys. He cited “Anthem” from the musical *Chess* which has become something of an unofficial hymn at School B, and is also sung nowadays as part of the standard repertoire at Old Boys’ reunions. Participant Three referred to the comments made by his own senior students about massed singing as reinforcing and supporting a sense of camaraderie, mutual belonging and mutual immersion in a task.

Participant Two described the unitive power of massed singing as something which helps the boys to put aside their inhibitions, to lose their sense of self, and to recognise that they are part of something bigger. In this regard, the act of standing shoulder to shoulder and working together is also a powerful metaphor for what the school is trying to do for its students, in terms of its overall sense of purpose and mission. Participant Three described how the unifying power of singing is used to help the commencing Year 9 students at School C in the process of enculturation. The physical experience of initiates, as they hear the overwhelming sound produced by the older boys, is a powerful factor in how they are inducted into and bonded with a key school ritual.

The relationship between school culture and massed singing was explored in detail by all three participants. Participant One stated that robust participation in massed singing can be a sign of good cultural health within the whole school community. However, the emphasis from Participants Two and Three was more directly related to cultural construction, than to measurement or assessment. Participant Two stated that culture is not a given, but something that can be changed, and that the practice of massed singing ranks very highly amongst the best available strategies for change. The concept of cultural change also featured significantly in the comments made by

Participant Three about the positive effects of massed singing on school culture. Like Participant Two, he endorsed massed singing as having a special place in school culture, adding that he could not think of any other program with a comparable potential for helping to evolve the school's sense of ethos, culture and spirit. Participant Two also described the ability of massed singing to make statements about the school's big messages. These messages can be found in the conduct of year-level and whole-school rehearsals for major events. Whereas Participants One and Two focused on a big-picture understanding of massed singing and its influence on school culture, Participant Three also gave illustrations of how the day-to-day experience of School C is coloured by their immersion in regular massed singing. He referred in particular to regular instances of boys in small groups singing spontaneously at their lockers, in classrooms, or as they are heading off to inter-school sporting events.

All three participants saw massed singing as connected in some shape or form with what was variously described as emotion, passion, enthusiasm or desire. Participant One recounted how the School A boys leap on to and massacre a favourite hymn called "The Power of Your Love", and also referred to his impression that they actually do want to compete in house singing. Participant Two spoke of the enormous emotional charge he feels when the whole school sings together at the Biennial Concert in Hamer Hall. He saw this capacity for engaging students at a profoundly emotional level as one of the unique characteristics of massed singing within the school environment. Participant Three expressed the belief that passionate massed singing is one thing at which School B excels. He referred to the comments of an adjudicator who recognised this capacity in the boys, and affirmed it by saying that, while it's one thing to invite and entice a cohort of young men to sing together, it's quite another thing to see them do it with passion. Participant Three also recounted how the full impact of this

passionate singing was experienced at a particular assembly by the then State Premier, Steve Bracks. He further explained how the Year 12 Speech Night singing practices, held during Schoolies' Week – a time by which the Year 12s have actually severed their day-to-day relationship with the school – have continued to draw all but a few of the 300-plus cohort, despite there being no enforceable obligation to attend. The simple explanation is that they turn up because they love it. In a similar vein, Participant One referred to the positive experiences of Year 12 students at School A through their preparation in singing practices for the Valedictory Mass, and through their involvement on the actual occasion itself. In fact, all three participants discussed a variety of rituals of initiation and transition in which singing plays a major and highly influential role.

Participants recognised that there were other potential flow-on effects from the passion and emotion inspired by the massed singing programs in their schools. For Participant One, this took the form of speculation about the relationship between the boys' singing and their academic performance. He had also given some thought to attempting to quantify this relationship through a possible school-based project under the sponsorship of the International Coalition for Boys' Schools. Participant Three referred to the ripple effect created in his school by massed singing, and commented on how it helped to push the boundaries of what is possible for each boy as an academic student, as a young man, and as a good citizen.

Participants Two and Three referred to the effects of massed singing on the inner or spiritual dimension of the person. Participant Two stated that, within the school's broader mission of "making people, not scores", massed singing provides a simple way for boys to get in tune with their spiritual and emotional dimensions. He explained that boys find this hard to do in long and meaningful discussions which they find awkward

and uncomfortable anyway; but through singing, all they have to do is experience it and learn to love it. In the end, it helps to make them gentler people. Along similar lines, Participant Three discussed singing in terms of a visceral or spiritual experience. Hearing the physical reality of others around them singing strongly, helps to break down the barriers and anxieties experienced by the boys. As such, it is both a spiritual and a passionate experience that can be seen in the faces of the boys themselves. Participant Three described how it is clear that boys are not simply performing mechanically when they sing, or just going through the motions, but that they have a clear inner feeling and an inner desire which they are expressing when they sing.

The links between massed singing programs and Old Boys' associations were raised by Participants Two and Three. Participant Two referred to the popularity within the last ten years of "Anthem" from *Chess* at reunions of Old Boys from School B, and Participant Three referred to some of the ways in which a large number of former students of School C are touched personally by the singing program, or influenced positively in terms of their career choices or life directions. He cited Jonathan Welch, founder of the Choir of Hard Knocks, as one such instance.

Like Participant One, who highlighted the benefits of positive role modelling from members of staff, Participant Two commented on the impact of staff participation in massed singing as reinforcement of the kind of unity which this activity can create across the whole school community. In fact, all three participants stated emphatically that they themselves always sing with their students and staff at assemblies, and in other massed singing contexts. Participant Two described how the whole tone of relationships in the school is enhanced by the joint participation of students and staff in massed singing activities.

Apart from certain structural issues arising out of organisational matters such as how much time is allocated to singing, as opposed to other activities which teachers regard as being of equal or greater importance, no negative effects of massed singing were identified by any of the participants.

#### **5.10.7 Sport and Singing**

All three participants made references to the privileged place of sport in Australian culture, identifying in some instances its negative effect on attitudes towards the performing arts. Positive references to sport were made by Participant One who described how the singing of School A boys at inter-school sporting carnivals helps them to bond and form an identity, and by Participant Three who, in a similar vein, mentioned how School C boys often sing spontaneously on the way to sports competitions. Another positive reference was made by Participant One to the advantages of having had on staff a musician who was also coach of the First XI Cricket Team. Similarly, Participants Two and Three both remarked on the presence in their choirs of members of the First XVIII. On the negative side, Participant One and Participant Two both mentioned the predominance of sport in their boyhoods, such that singing and performance were viewed by some as eccentric or odd. Participant Two also pointed to the fact that, while it may be permissible for men to sing at sporting events in contemporary Australian culture, it appears to be less acceptable for them to do so in more formal contexts.

### **5.11 Conclusion**

In this chapter, data gathered from questionnaires administered to the three participating principals and from the subsequent semistructured interviews in which they participated was used to construct an initial presentation of the findings of the

research. These issues, together with the theory and research outlined in Chapter 3, provided a basis for answering the research questions, for framing some concluding remarks, and for considering a number of implications for the profession in Chapter 6.

## CHAPTER 6

### REVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 6.1 Purpose of the Research

As stated in Chapter 5, the purpose of the study was to investigate how principals see themselves as experiencing and influencing the practice of massed singing in their schools, and to explore the connections they make between their role as leader, the culture of their school, and this specific musical activity. Central to this statement of purpose is the belief that massed singing is an activity with great potential for shaping school culture; that principals should be encouraged to exploit this potential in order to build a healthy and vibrant culture in which there are special opportunities for challenging gender stereotypes and promoting aesthetic values; and that principals themselves can benefit as leaders by reflecting on the themes of this study.

#### 6.2 Research Design

The research was designed around a qualitative in-depth interview study grounded in interpretive symbolic interactionism. The views of three principals of secondary boys' schools were researched in order to understand better their experience of leadership in the specific areas of school culture and massed singing.

The methods of data collection relative to each participating principal included:

- a) a document search of school-generated publications focusing on references to music and singing;
- b) a questionnaire administered in advance of the semi-structured interview;
- c) a semi-structured interview.

Three principals were selected for the study on the basis of their involvement in secondary boys' schools where massed singing takes place regularly and in a variety of forms. The schools were chosen from the Independent, State and Catholic systems in Victoria, Australia, with a view to obtaining data from a diversity of sources.

A document search concentrating mainly on school-generated literature provided background information on the participating principals and their school communities.

In order to begin collecting data from the principals, and also to help prepare them to participate in their interviews with greater preparedness than if had they faced their interviews 'cold', a questionnaire was distributed to them two weeks before they were to take part in face-to-face semistructured interviews. Semi-structured interviews with each participant were subsequently conducted by the researcher, using the feedback from the questionnaires as a reference point for discussion. Like the questionnaires, the interviews were intended to cover in a flexible way the three main themes of the study: educational leadership; masculinity in boys' education and leadership; and the experience of massed singing as a musical and aesthetic activity.

Data analysis was undertaken using a six-phase strategy (refer to Table 4.6) based on and combining aspects of coding methodologies described by Seidman (2006), Kvale (2007) and Baptiste (2001). Four of the phases were mainly analytical and two of them were designed to review the overall process. The analytical phases generated seven themes for the coding of data (refer to Table 5.1), three of which reflected the study's stated themes addressing leadership, masculinity and massed singing, and the remaining four of which covered areas representing a range of new thematic foci. The review phase was undertaken by applying a set of nine control questions derived from the work



of Baptiste. In this chapter, answers to the research questions are addressed in light of the research findings; the relationships between the literature review and the findings are discussed; the implications of the findings for future research are examined; and the potential for this study to contribute to scholarly debate is considered; and recommendations for further research are made. Table 6.1 provides an overview of the structure of this chapter.

Table 6.1

*Overview of Chapter 6*

<b>6.3</b>	<b>Research Subquestions Answered</b>	<i>Question 1</i>
		<i>Question 2</i>
		<i>Question 3</i>
		<i>Question 4</i>
		<i>Question 5</i>
		<i>Question 6</i>
		<i>Question 7</i>
<b>6.4</b>	<b>The Research Question Answered</b>	<i>Part 1</i>
		<i>Part 2</i>
		<i>Part 3</i>
<b>6.5</b>	<b>The Review of Literature and the Study Findings</b>	<i>Leadership &amp; the Study Findings</i>
		<i>Masculinity in Boys' Education &amp; Leadership, &amp; the Study Findings</i>
		<i>Massed Singing &amp; the Study Findings</i>
<b>6.6</b>	<b>Observations</b>	/
<b>6.7</b>	<b>Contribution to Scholarship</b>	/
<b>6.8</b>	<b>Limitations</b>	/
<b>6.9</b>	<b>Implications for the Profession</b>	<i>Implications for School Leadership, especially Principals especially Principals &amp; their Boards</i>
		<i>The Teaching Profession, in particular, Choral &amp; Vocal Specialists</i>
		<i>Parents &amp; the Arts Community</i>
		<i>Government Education Authorities &amp; Policy Makers</i>
		<i>This Researcher</i>
<b>6.10</b>	<b>Recommendations for Further Research</b>	<i>Recommendation 1</i>
		<i>Recommendation 2</i>
		<i>Recommendation 3</i>
		<i>Recommendation 4</i>
		<i>Recommendation 5</i>
<b>6.11</b>	<b>Such an Excellent Thing</b>	/

### 6.3 Research Subquestions Answered

The research question was threefold: What are the leadership decisions principals make about massed singing in their schools, and what factors influence these decisions? What understanding do principals have of the relationship between the issues surrounding boys' education and the place of massed singing in their schools? What factors influence the leadership decisions principals make about massed singing in their schools?

Given the light shed by the review of literature on various aspects of the research question, it was further developed into a series of subquestions:

- a. How do the life experiences of principals shape their views on massed singing and the way they influence it?
- b. In what ways do principals use their leadership to influence the practice of massed singing in their schools?
- c. What effect does the practice of massed singing in schools have on the principals of these schools?
- d. What particular cultural and educational challenges do principals recognise for single-sex secondary boys' schools?
- e. What understanding do principals have of the general benefits of massed singing for the human person?
- f. What forms does massed singing take in secondary boys' schools?
- g. In what ways do principals believe that a massed singing program can affect the climate of single-sex secondary boys' schools?

Given the nature of these seven questions, the research was designed around a qualitative in-depth interview study which employed the theoretical perspective of

symbolic interactionism. From a methodological standpoint, symbolic interactionism instructs researchers to align themselves with the views and values of those being studied in order to grasp the shifting relationship between an actor's attitudes and acts (Denzin, 2003). The purpose of the research was to investigate how principals see themselves as influencing the practice of massed singing in their schools in order to highlight the potential of massed singing to build a healthy and vibrant school culture with special opportunities for challenging gender stereotypes and promoting aesthetic values. While Question 6 asked principals to describe aspects of local practice in relation to massed singing, Questions 1,2,3,4,5 and 7 asked them for their views on, attitudes towards, and understandings of a range of phenomena central to the basic research question. Furthermore, as Campbell et al. (2002) have suggested, symbolic interactionism is characterised by a heightened awareness of language as a symbolic reality used to embody and express meaning, to interpret the meanings of others, and to allow humans to manipulate the interactions in which they participate. The use of a questionnaire and semistructured interview provided scope for the participants to express themselves verbally and in writing, while the combination of strategies further enhanced the quality of data obtained from the interview. Specifically, the use of a semistructured interview allowed the participants the freedom both to respond at length, and also to elaborate on and illustrate concepts of their choosing (Morse & Field, 1995).

Each of these seven questions is now addressed by drawing on the responses of the three study participants: Participant One, headmaster of School A, Toorak; Participant Two, headmaster of School B, Canterbury; and Participant Three, principal of School C, South Yarra. It should be borne in mind that the answers to these questions are provided solely by the principals who participated in the study. Although the opinions of other members of the principals' school communities are also valid,

irrespective of whether or not they are the same as those expressed by the participating principals, it is, in this study, only the principals whose views have been investigated and reported.

### **6.3.1 How do the life experiences of principals shape their views on massed singing and they way they influence it?**

All participants recognised within themselves a natural disposition towards singing which found some form of positive expression in their youth. Involvements of this kind occurred in settings such as schools, church choirs, the scouting movement and at university. Two of the participants recognised that the school climate of their childhoods reflected a broader cultural antipathy towards the arts. All three participants referred to having been in or having observed coeducational contexts where massed singing either did not occur or was not done well, and all three were aware from professional experience of the widespread under-representation of boys in musical and cultural activities in Australian schools. Participant One referred specifically to the positive influence on his early professional development of working in a school where he was able to observe at first hand a highly successful music program in operation. He also attributed his three children, all of whom participated actively in music and singing while at secondary school, with having directly influenced some of the decisions he has made in leadership at School A.

### **6.3.2 In what ways do principals use their leadership to influence the practice of massed singing in their schools?**

In taking up their principalships, all of the participants in this study inherited well-established massed singing programs and strong school music departments. On the other hand, they were all conscious of the potential fragility of massed singing and other cultural activities when these are not supported and resourced in an active and ongoing

way by the school leadership. Participant One referred to the challenge he found in reading the school culture well enough to know if his own views on the nature and quality of singing in the school were in line with the views of others in the school community, or with what might be described as an objective reality.

None of the three participants was involved directly in the delivery of singing or choral programs in his school. Each was happy to explain that his program was in the hands of competent specialist teachers. Instead, the participants recognised that their leadership could best be exercised in favour of massed singing through supportive roles focused on resourcing, promoting and affirming the existing practices.

The most fundamental way in which participants saw themselves as resourcing massed singing in their schools was through structural, administrative and organisational factors. All three participants referred to staffing as a specific area over which they exercised significant influence. This included both the hiring of competent staff, and also the setting of staffing levels appropriate to resourcing a quality program. Another key structural area identified by participants centered on the allocation of time in the school's overall program to make space for singing-related activities. Favourable timetabling and scheduling were essential in the participants' views to enabling not only regular practices during school time, but also to promoting and showcasing peak events such as speech nights, concerts and house singing competitions. Participant One also took an initiative in paying for a major musical event to be upgraded to a first-class concert venue in order to feature the boys' talents more appropriately.

Participants recognised the important role they have in actively promoting their schools' singing programs by using opportunities such as addressing meetings of

prospective parents. On occasions such as these, they highlight themes which include the breadth of educational opportunity available at their schools, as exemplified by the presence of a strong singing program; the capacity and readiness of their schools to embrace issues pertaining to boys' education, as demonstrated by their ability to foster enthusiastic participation amongst the boys in a non-traditional male activity; the health and vibrancy of their school communities, so immediately evident in the passion boys have for singing; and the presence and impact of specialist choral groups, such as the St Patrick's Cathedral Choir whose student component is based at School A.

Two of the participants also illustrated how they not only engage in actively promoting singing at their schools, but are also called on to defend it occasionally when teachers raise questions about the number of timetabled classes being lost to singing, or when parents query the involvement of senior students in weekly singing classes instead of additional study periods. In such instances, the participants have made confident and assertive responses based on how important they believe their singing programs to be.

Participant one outlined a less up-front strategy for influencing the boys themselves, through written and verbal affirmation of their participation and achievements in activities of all kinds, but especially those related to music and singing.

All of the participants reported that they are conscious of the importance of being seen by others in the school community to sing along with the boys at assemblies and liturgies, and they also commented on the enjoyment which this level of participation brings them.

### **6.3.3 What effect does the practice of massed singing in schools have on the principals of these schools?**

The study participants all referred directly, though in different ways, to the positive effects on them of the singing programs in place at their respective schools. All of them enjoy uplifting experiences because of the singing cultures of their schools. The range of words they used to describe such experiences included emotion, excitement, pleasure and pride. Collectively, they referred to a variety of occasions on which they have been enlivened by performances; swept along by the singing; had shivers run down the spine; got a “kick” out of the singing; or felt that singing is a good thing for their school. Apart from bringing the participants pleasant experiences, massed singing has also led them to reflect on other educational topics and issues such as boys’ education, the histories and traditions of their schools, future planning, compulsoriness, coeducational schools, the need to impel students into experience, and the importance of fostering a renaissance view of education which promotes a multi-dimensional view of life and develops in students a broad range of capacities and awarenesses.

### **6.3.4 What particular cultural and educational challenges do principals recognise for single-sex secondary boys’ schools?**

Participants recognised, nationally and internationally, a range of cultural factors which are contextually significant for single-sex secondary boys’ schools. Participant One cited the almost universal phenomenon of young men disengaging from education in the Western world. All participants referred to the effect of mainstream culture on narrowing the ways in which masculinity is defined in contemporary society, and they affirmed strongly the need for schools to promote the modelling of healthy masculinities. This included giving priority to fostering qualities such as gentleness and creativity, and encouraging boys to see themselves as gentlemen. All three participants

eschewed emphatically the macho culture of aggression and hypermasculinity. The Australian cultural context was assessed unanimously by the participants as historically unsympathetic to the performing arts in general, and to singing in particular. They expressed the view that, even today, it is much less acceptable for men to sing together in social or public contexts, than it is for them to sing at a sporting event such as an AFL (Australian Football League) match. The cultural challenges identified by the participants also have educational implications when understood within the context of contemporary schooling, and affect activities such as massed and choral singing. Participants drew links between creating a countercultural environment in their schools, and the flow on-effects for other areas of the curriculum, as discussed more fully in 6.3.7.

### **6.3.5 What understanding do principals have of the general benefits of singing for the human person?**

There was unanimity among the three participants on the advantages of singing for human beings. Singing was endorsed as a means of promoting personal well-being, and its therapeutic values were acknowledged. Participants recognised that singing can raise the spirits and that it gives many people pleasure. Also identified was the special bonding power of singing, and its ability to engender variously a sense of belonging, a feeling of camaraderie, and an experience of shared purpose and achievement. Two of the participants commented on the scope within singing for self-expression and creativity.

### **6.3.6 What forms does massed singing take in secondary boys' schools?**

The three participants described a comparable range of massed singing activities at their various schools, despite differences in the intensity and regularity of practices



and performances. All three schools include massed singing at their regular assemblies, either through the singing of the National Anthem or, in the case of the two schools with religious affiliations, through the singing of hymns and religious songs. Massed singing also takes place at smaller year-level assemblies. House singing competitions occur annually at the participants' schools, and involve large numbers of boys in the presentation of massed singing items in a competitive context. Although support is available from the music staff, the boys themselves often take responsibility for aspects of the competition, including the selection of repertoire, the running of rehearsals and the conducting of their house choirs. Massed singing is featured in each of the participants' schools at peak public events, often connected with rituals of initiation or transition, such as valedictory Masses, speech nights and biennial concerts, and also at inter-school sporting events, such as APS carnivals, as in the case of School A and School B. Large groups of boys, from 50 to over 300 choristers, also sing in specialist choral groups at all three schools.

### **6.3.7 In what ways do principals believe that a massed singing program can affect the climate of single-sex secondary boys' schools?**

Participants were unanimous in stating that the effects of massed singing on their school communities are overwhelmingly positive on a whole range of scores. At the symbolic level, they saw massed singing as an activity capable of showing unity, expressing corporate identity, shaping school culture, encapsulating school values, and stating the school's priorities. Songs and hymns act as a bonding force amongst boys, and sometimes even as a rallying cry for students in the adversarial context of interschool sporting competitions. The physical act of standing shoulder to shoulder when singing in groups was seen both as having a visceral effect on the participants, and also as a metaphor capable of expressing the school's overall vision of walking forward

in solidarity. This is particularly obvious in the regular situations where teachers and their principals sing along with the boys, as this helps to enhance the whole tone of relationships in the school. Robust participation in massed singing can be used as a key indicator of good cultural health within a school community. All three participants attributed to massed singing the power to make countercultural statements in the face of hegemonic masculinity, and to represent for their students a pathway towards more authentic expressions of who they are as young men. Participant Three referred to the ripple effect created in his school by massed singing, and described how it helped to push the boundaries of what is possible for each boy as an academic student, a young man, and a good citizen.

Participant Three also highlighted the role of his schools' massed singing program as a vital force for change. He emphasised this by stating that he couldn't think of any other program with a comparable potential for helping to evolve the school's sense of ethos, culture and spirit. Similarly, Participant Two stated that, if he had to choose one aspect of his school to illustrate for others what it is all about, it would be massed singing.

Singing was described by all three participants as significant in the induction and transition rituals of their schools. Occasions such as speech nights, valedictory Masses, biennial concerts, and assemblies for prospective students, are all characterised and enhanced by boys' participation in massed singing.

In focusing on the effects of massed singing on the boys themselves, the participants referred to what was variously described as emotion, passion, enthusiasm or desire. All three principals emphasised the effect of the singing program on the energy

levels of the boys, and stressed that participation was invariably passionate and enthusiastic, rather than perfunctory or tokenistic. Participants Two and Three identified another very positive effect of massed singing as its capacity to help boys become attuned to their spiritual and emotional selves. Whereas this can be a difficult thing to achieve by means such as formal discussions, it becomes a much more accessible experience for boys through the act of singing together. As well as helping them personally in this way, it also assists in breaking down the barriers and anxieties they experience in adolescence, and encourages them to be more positive and confident in their relationships.

All participants referred to the links between massed singing and the educational agendas of their schools, either affirming or speculating on the academic benefits for boys flowing from their involvement in a robust singing program.

The positive effects of massed singing in boys' schools can also be translated into the experience of life after school. Participant Two referred to the way in which particular songs provide a unifying focus at Old-Boys' reunions, and Participant Three highlighted the way in which certain students are directly influenced in their adult lives to pursue interests and projects directly related to their schoolboy experiences of massed singing.

#### **6.4 The Research Question Answered**

The answers to these seven subquestions provide a basis for addressing the threefold research question described in Chapter 1 which underpins this study, and from which the subquestions themselves are derived.

#### **6.4.1 What are the leadership decisions principals make about massed singing in their schools, and what factors influence these decisions?**

While acknowledging that they work as part of a team whose principal agents are the choral teachers involved in delivering the massed singing program, the participants nevertheless identified a number of ways in which their decision-making as principals influences massed singing in their schools. These included decisions in relation to financial resourcing, staffing, timetabling, and the selection of appropriate venues to showcase major musical events. The participants also identified numerous factors which influence the decisions they make about massed singing in their schools. These included their positive experiences of choral singing in childhood and early adulthood; the influence of family, church and school in adolescence; observations in previous and current schools of the many profound benefits of massed singing; a consciousness of the importance of promoting constructively counter-cultural activities in schools; a desire to provide a multi-faceted educational experience for boys; and reflection on the effects on one's own children of positive singing experiences at school.

#### **6.4.2 What understanding do principals have of the relationship between the issues surrounding boys' education and the place of massed singing in their schools?**

The participants saw massed singing as a particularly efficacious way of improving the quality of education for the boys in their schools because it gives permission to boys to express themselves in ways that are not traditionally valued by men in mainstream Australian culture. The issues they raised surrounding boys' education concerned the question of masculinity and its various expressions, as well as the ways in which masculinity is modelled and critiqued in their respective school cultures. The participants highlighted the difficulties which boys in coeducational schools can encounter due to their self-consciousness in the presence of girls. This can

lead to boys defining masculinity more narrowly, and engaging mainly in activities which are sanctioned by the hegemonic tradition. In boys-only schools, however, greater scope exists for experimentation in a wide range of activities, both traditional and non-traditional, including the performing arts. The participation of adolescent boys in a massed singing program can assist them, at a critical time in the social, psychological and emotional development, to develop qualities such as affectivity, creativity and self-expression. Massed singing is particularly suited to this purpose, because it involves all boys in a common activity which offers them security, belonging, a sense of corporate identity, and a safe experience of deep emotion. When boys learn that it is possible to take worthwhile risks, such as standing side by side and singing with gusto, they are more inclined to extend the range of positive risk-taking behaviours in their school environments. Thus, the relationship between massed singing and the issues of boys' education is highly fruitful, productive and transformative in nature.

#### **6.4.3 What do principals understand about the nature and purpose of massed singing?**

The participants recognised that massed singing is beneficial to human beings in a number of ways: it promotes physical and psychological wellbeing; raises the spirits; and is pleasurable and therapeutic. In the context of a secondary school, massed singing enhances worship; shapes school culture and character; symbolises unity and corporate identity; expresses the values and priorities of the school; improves academic performance; generates passion and emotion; facilitates the growth of the inner person; acts as a vital force for change; promotes a climate of permission which helps boys to take risks; brings out a boarder range of personal qualities in boys; improves choral and vocal outcomes; and has a lasting effect on old boys in their adult lives.

## **6.5 The Review of Literature and the Study Findings**

Aspects of the findings of this study illustrate and amplify a number of the key themes explored in the review of literature in Chapter 3, namely educational and organisational leadership; masculinity in education and leadership; and the nature and benefits of massed singing. These themes will now be revisited in light of the findings of the study.

### **6.5.1 Leadership and the Study Findings**

The literature on leadership identified a number of key themes related to the concept of vision. Transformational leadership, in particular, involves inspiring followers to commit to a shared vision (Bass & Riggio, 2005; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). All three principals linked their massed singing programs to the ways in which vision is articulated and represented symbolically within their respective schools. Participant Two described the massed singing program as a “powerful metaphor for what we’re trying to do in the school: stand side by side and we walk on”. In his comments on the countercultural nature of the arts at his school, Participant Three explained that the massed singing program gives permission for new boundaries to be crossed, and raises the question, “... having given each other *that* permission, what else do we give ourselves permission to do?” The three participants also referred to situations in which they address prospective parents about the nature and culture of their school, and in which they draw on the singing program to illustrate their vision. As Participant Two explained it, one of the messages conveyed through the massed singing program at his school is that an over-emphasis on self can be yielded to a richer vision of community that is “part of something bigger”. Participants One and Three expressed a similar sentiment when they explained that the special characteristics of their schools are best appreciated from hearing the boys sing together. Participant Two also

described massed singing at his school as part of a broader educational mission aimed at “making people, not just good scores”. This articulation of vision is a key task of principals (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003) and ranks amongst the most important things they do (Leithwood et al., 2004). Vision often emerges as a consequence of the leader involving other actors who assist in the contributory processes of clarification and synthesis (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Participant One, in fact, raised the issue of how a principal might best ascertain whether or not his views on massed singing have a basis in objective reality. Participant Three described an instance of seeking clarification from the Year 12 students about the nature of their survey responses regarding the importance of massed singing in their VCE year, and also referred to another occasion on which he asked a member of staff why a particular singing group within the school had won such great acclaim and credibility. Participant Two stated that it would be “difficult for the principal acting alone” to influence the culture of massed singing as it requires the active cooperation of a number of key people across the school. In relation to the learning culture of his school, Participant Three also emphasised the need to push with the boys the “risk-taking of learning”, and linked this to a vision of creating academic students, young men, and good citizens. In general, participants did not identify themselves as shapers of vision, but nevertheless frequently spoke in the language and imagery of vision-shaping and vision-identification which permeates the literature, especially when describing massed singing in terms of shared purpose and group goals (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2006), and as an activity which attracts the “commitment and enthusiasm of the members” (Starratt, p. 43, 2003).

A second key leadership theme explored in the review of literature is the relationship between leadership and organisational culture. Peterson and Deal (2002) have described school culture as a combination of complex elements of values,

traditions, language and purpose. Again, all three principals linked their massed singing programs to the peak rituals and events in their schools, such as speech nights, valedictory Masses and biennial concerts, in which messages about the school's deepest values are conveyed in explicit and implicit ways. As Robbins and Alvy (2003) have argued, rituals and celebrations call attention to what is important and reflect the culture's values in forums that are shared by groups and subgroups within the organisation. All of the study participants made emphatic statements about the cultural significance of massed singing in their schools, especially as a means of shaping identity. Participant One commented that his school's annual house singing competition demonstrates a "very high acceptance of singing as a means of expressing who we are". Participant Two stated that if he had to choose one school event to show someone the culture of his school, it would be the house music competition. Participant Three explained how singing at school assemblies is part of a strategy of induction for the Year 9 boys into the expectations about "what it is to be part of this school". Schein (1997) has argued, in fact, that the only really important thing that principals do is to manage culture. In supporting, promoting and participating in peak events, and in recognising their symbolic value, the participants in this study appear to have been exercising a crucial role in creating and maintaining culture (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). Indeed, the comments of the study participants seem to reinforce the claim made by Peterson and Deal (2002) that, "Although school culture is deeply embedded in the hearts and minds of staff, students and parents, it can be shaped by leaders" (p. 12).

A third theme arising from the literature and recognisable in the findings of the study, concerns leadership and change. Lam (2003) has argued that principals should always remain sensitive to the competing pressures for stability and change. This perspective was reflected in a number of the comments made by the three study



participants who all referred to the fact that their massed singing programs had been built up over time. Participant Three made an explicit connection with the 100 year-old tradition in his school of singing in some shape or form, while Participants One and Two acknowledged the potential fragility of their singing programs if taken for granted. More explicitly still, Participant Three described massed singing at his school as a “vital change force” which has the capacity to “evolve an ethos and a culture in the school”. He added that he was unable to think of another program in the school which could help to “evolve the school’s sense of its own spirit, and its own ethos, as much as a massed singing program could do”. Moreover, Kotter and Cohen (2006) have argued that “the heart of institutional change is in the emotions” (p. 2), a point which has been affirmed by other researchers as well (Leithwood, Jantzi & Mascall, 2002; Kelly, Thornton & Daugherty, 2005). The use of emotional language to describe the impact of massed singing in their schools is, in fact, a notable feature of the comments made by all three participants. Using terms such as emotion, passion, enthusiasm and desire, the participants highlighted what they believed to be the unrivalled power of massed singing to stir them and their school communities in profound and lasting ways. One of the symbolic benefits of massed singing seems to be its capacity to create a sense of community. Gladwell (2000) has proposed that, in order to change people’s behaviour, “you need to create a community around them where new beliefs can be expressed and nurtured” (p. 173). In describing the enthusiastic participation of staff in the massed singing program at his school, Participant Two emphasised the value of creating a sense of community through singing, and explained how this reinforces a spirit of unity in his school. The theme of community was described variously by all of the study participants who spoke in terms of correlative concepts such as corporate identity, unity, belonging, sociability, school culture, and school character.

A fourth theme embedded in the literature on leadership relates to the typology for leadership developed by Bush and Glover (2003) who, in describing eight different leadership approaches (Table 3.2), conclude that “most successful leaders are likely to embody most or all of these approaches in their work” (p. 12). Although all of the eight approaches do not seem to be represented substantially in the responses of the study participants, it is possible to discern certain tendencies amongst them which illustrate some of the different leadership types. One of the eight approaches is transformational leadership which, although it has already been addressed above in relation to vision, is worth revisiting here in the terms in which it is described by Bush and Glover, namely as a process by which leaders seek to influence school outcomes. It seems clear that the strong desire of each participant to influence the massed singing program in his school derives from the deep-seated conviction that massed singing is highly beneficial in shaping school culture, and in helping to achieve the goals of the school. Moreover, Bush and Glover contend that the transformational leader is not primarily focused on the nature or direction of the outcomes he is trying to influence. This appears to be the case for the study participants, who described the ways in which decisions about repertoire and musical outcomes are handed over to specialists in their schools. Another leadership type described by Bush and Glover (2003) is moral leadership which assumes that the critical focus of school leadership ought to be on the values and ethics of leaders.

In their comments about the counter-cultural nature of massed singing and on the constructs of masculinity which they are endeavouring to shape within their school cultures, all three participants appear to have spoken out of certain strong beliefs and values they hold in relation to these phenomena. For example, massed singing was seen by the participants as a way of bringing about certain personal freedoms which are not

always available to boys in coeducational schools, and of giving them permission to behave in ways not always endorsed by the broader social culture. In terms of masculinity, Participant One referred explicitly to the need for schools to be places where multiple masculinities are modelled for boys in order to show them that there are many different and authentic ways of being a man. A third leadership type described by Bush and Glover, which relates to the study findings, concerns managerial leadership. In fact, the three study participants tended to reflect more explicitly on their hierarchical influence on functions and tasks, rather than on their direct influence on values and ethics, although this was implied in a number of their responses. Most of the participants' comments in relation to how they influence massed singing as leaders were made in relation to structural factors such as the selection of staff, giving time to singing in the school's timetable, influencing the calendar in favour of singing, resourcing music departments, increasing budgetary support, and paying for suitable venues to showcase events involving singing. Although aspects of these tasks can be performed by other members of staff, it is clear that the participating principals understood these structural tasks as largely falling to them.

### **6.5.2 Masculinity in Boys' Education and Leadership and the Study Findings**

The literature on masculinity concerned itself in large measure with the concepts of multiple, hegemonic and alternate masculinities (Jefferson, 1994; Tolson, 1997; Connell, 1995; White, 2004). As Pascoe (2007) has argued, "there are a variety of masculinities, which make sense only in hierarchical and contested relations with each other" (p. 7). Although Participant One was alone in explicitly describing the concept of multiple masculinities, the other two participants actually referred to the concept also, without naming it as such. For example, Participant Two stated that "if you happen to be male – you're going to find all different ways to express who you are". The

responses of the study participants therefore support the contention of Lee (2003) that there is no single, correct theory of masculinity. Furthermore, all three participants acknowledged that the hegemonic masculinity of mainstream Australian culture is critiqued and subverted in their schools by successful massed singing programs which contribute to a healthy climate of permission. Participant Three referred specifically to this critique of hegemonic masculinity in his comment that massed singing can encourage a “more affirming conception of masculinity which eschews some of the worst of prevailing macho beliefs”. The study participants were unanimous in asserting that one clear risk in indulging hegemonic masculinity in a school setting is that adolescent boys will participate in a narrower range of activities. Moreover, Collins (2005) has referred to what he calls “core hegemonic white masculinity” (p. 94) which, in the West, has led to the expulsion of all contesting forms of masculinity, especially ambiguous behaviours which are labelled as feminine or homosexual (Hall, 2005). Furthermore, Colling (2003) and Crotty (2001) have argued that this state of affairs has also prevailed in Australian society. However, the data supplied by the study participants suggests that this dominant cultural view of masculinity is not supported either by themselves or by their school cultures, a fact to which they have drawn attention by using the word *countercultural* in relation to their massed singing programs.

Literature on gender and musical participation endorsed the view that students themselves hold strong opinions about the appropriateness of certain musical instruments, including the voice, for males and females (Bruce & Kemp, 1993; Green, 1997; Harrison, 2007). Moreover, the literature identified a number of obstacles to the participation of adolescent boys in choral or group singing which included,

1. physiological issues connected with puberty (Harries, Walker, Williams, Hawker & Hughes, 1997);
2. psychological and sociological messages, including the view of hegemonic masculinity that singing is a feminine activity (Hall, 2005), and therefore inappropriate for males beyond a certain age (Adler, 2001); and,
3. inappropriate choral literature and training (White & White, 2001).

Significantly, study participants made no reference to the first set of obstacles which may suggest that, in boys-only schools, the variations across broken and unbroken voices may be less significant to the boys themselves because they feel comfortable in their school settings; that these variations may be less noticeable or exposed in whole-school gatherings where broken voices dominate; or that the variations may be less embarrassing because girls are not present. In relation to the second set of factors, it seems clear that the three school cultures in question actually convey the opposite message, which holds that singing is a masculine activity of particular appropriateness for adolescent males. Participant One certainly referred to the forthright way in which the boys at his school use cheer squad singing at sporting carnivals to assert themselves and their identity to other males who reciprocate in kind. It is also clear from the participants' responses that boys of all ages in their schools participate in massed singing activities. Lastly, all three participants referred to favourite or traditional pieces of music sung by the boys in their schools, and Participants Two and Three mentioned the fact that boys make their own choices of repertoire for major singing competitions, and, in the case of Participant Two's school, also rehearse and conduct their house choirs.

The literature on gender and leadership described various discourses of masculinism which, as Blackmore (1999) has argued, also became the privileged discourses in education. However, Swan (2007) has described an emergent leadership discourse known as affective leadership, with its “associated practices of emotional intelligence, intimacy, trust, informality, and introspection” (p. 64). It is interesting to note that, in the responses of the three study participants, a number of affective concepts were identified and described. Whereas, on the one hand, these concepts derive from the participants’ observations of the boys in their schools, they also reflect, on the other hand, the priorities, values and concerns of the leaders themselves. The very fact that the leaders described these concepts means that they are able to recognise and value them. One concept which has already been identified concerns the expression of emotion and passion. Other parallel concepts described by the participants related to the inner or spiritual dimension of the person as nurtured by participation in massed singing; and to the unity and trust which result from the overwhelming sense of community and belonging involved in singing together.

### **6.5.3 Massed Singing and the Study Findings**

The literature suggested that massed singing brings with it an impressive range of benefits due to its positive effects on physical, psychological and social wellbeing. This viewpoint was endorsed by all three of the study participants. Participant Three referred to the therapeutic benefits of massed singing, while Participants One and Two described it as being able to raise the spirits. Participant Three spoke of singing as a pro-social activity, and Participant Two described the power of singing to help boys lose their inhibitions. Clift, Hancox, Morrison, Hess, Kreutz and Stewart (2007) have identified six generative mechanisms which result from singing in a choir. Three of these mechanisms were also described by the study participants, namely the

engendering of happiness and raised spirits; the diminishment of feelings of isolation and loneliness; and the stimulation of the mind and its cognitive processes. Participants also echoed the views of Davidson (2008) who has argued that singing leads to stronger emotional experiences. This was particularly evident in the references made by Participant One to the annual Valedictory Mass; by Participant Two, who described the impact of the school's biennial concert; and by Participant Three, who spoke of the visceral experience of singing and its powerful physical and spiritual effects.

The literature investigating the relationship between arts programs and academic achievement has grown to enormous proportions, as Hetland and Winner (2001) have illustrated. This point was taken up by Participant One, who also expressed the hope that a study might be conducted in his school which would endorse this relationship at a local level. Participant Three referred to the ripple effect created in his school by the impact of massed singing which includes an increase in what is possible for each boy in the academic domain.

The literature also described the effects of massed singing on liturgy, worship and school rituals. The view of Parker (1991) that singing together creates a "communion in sound" (p. 115) was endorsed by Participant One in his references to the various annual Masses held at his school. Furthermore, Kapferer (1981) has highlighted the role of hymns sung at assemblies and speech nights in "inculcating religious and social morality" (p. 266), and identified the singing of hymns and school songs as key elements in schools' *rites de passage*. The prominent role of massed singing in rituals of transition was mentioned by all three participants.

Finally, the literature examined the seven key action areas identified by the *National Review of Music Education* (Seares, 2005), which sought to address critical inadequacies in the teaching of music in Australian schools. Priority 5 of the report describes the need to “improve music education in schools through supportive principals and school leadership, adequately educated specialist teachers, increased time in the timetable, adequate facilities and equipment” (p. vii). The principals who participated in this study were all able to enumerate ways in which they had endeavoured to show support for their singing programs, especially through the manipulation of structural factors, the employment of suitable teachers, and the attention given to timetabling and the calendaring of major events involving singing.

## **6.6 Observations**

Given the comments of the participants, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the three schools in this study are atypical in the extreme. The litany of deficiencies in schooling and music education which both the report *Boys: Getting it Right* (2002) and the *National Review of Music Education* (2005) have so graphically enumerated, seem worlds away from the experiences of boys at Schools A, B, and C. While it is true that two of these are well-resourced independent schools and the third is a select-entry government school, these characteristics, on their own, do not necessarily mean that schools in more advantageous circumstances will automatically undertake massed singing or support countercultural pursuits. While the musical quality of massed singing programs is determined to a large extent by the competence of the specialists engaged to deliver them, the introduction, resourcing and promotion of such programs appear to depend, in large measure, on the favourable disposition of the school principal towards them. In fact, by comparison with instrumental music programs, which require a substantial financial investment (given the costs of the instruments themselves, not to



mention the purchase of expensive scores and arrangements), massed singing is effectively one of the cheapest group activities available in a school, as it requires so little resourcing. The key issue, therefore, appears to be largely one of choice.

Although none of the participants referred specifically to the two major Commonwealth Government reports into boys' education and the state of music education in Australia, each of them addressed aspects of the reports' basic concerns in the comments they made about gender and masculinity, and in relation to the significance of massed singing programs in schools. In fact, the comments of all three principals reflect an acute sensitivity to the contemporary issues of socialisation and education affecting boys in contemporary society, as well as a high level of responsiveness to the challenges arising out of such issues.

It was also clear from the study that well established massed singing programs cause few challenges or concerns for school principals. Issues relating to the occasional comments from some staff and parents about the undesirability of losing study or class time to singing rehearsals, appear minor when contrasted with the impressive list of benefits established by the research. The principals who reported these negative comments were not concerned about them, and actually used them to illustrate the strength of their own convictions that the loss of time in these instances is easily justified.

## **6.7 Contribution to Scholarship**

It is hoped that this research has made some worthwhile contribution to scholarly debate on the nature of leadership and the power of massed singing to enrich and shape school culture. The research appears to offer scholarship certain findings

which the literature does not seem to address. In particular, this inquiry highlights the relationship of the principal to the process of influencing massed singing in secondary boys' schools, whereas existing research tends to emphasise the role of the music educator, the experience of the student recipients in the process, or the intrinsic merits of the massed singing experience itself. The principals who participated in this research were all of a similar mind in stating that the delivery of the musical content of their massed singing programs was in the hands of suitably qualified choral specialists. However, the same principals also described a variety of ways in which they use the influence and nature of their office to resource and support their schools' massed singing programs. They believed that their most significant practical influence was exercised indirectly through structural, administrative and organisation factors, the most important of which were the hiring of competent singing teachers; the allocation of time to massed singing, including the strategic scheduling in the calendar of peak singing events; and the wider promotion and defence of the singing program. On a symbolic level, they also influenced massed singing by being seen to sing along with their students and school communities at assemblies, concerts and in religious rituals. Underpinning these actions were a keen awareness of the various benefits of singing in groups; a personal inclination to sing, coupled with an enjoyment of singing with others; and a heightened sensitivity of the impact of singing on school culture.

This research also offers scholarship a clear picture of the relationship between massed singing and the shaping of school culture. Whilst there is substantial literature in music education which addresses the academic, social and cognitive benefits for students of participating in choral singing, there seems to have been little attention given to the relationship between massed singing and the more elusive symbolic and affective dimensions of school culture. At a more specific level still, there appears to be even

less literature which attempts to describe the multiple relationships explored in this inquiry among the key themes of school leadership, school culture and the construct of masculinity.

These findings strengthen the argument for the widespread introduction of massed singing programs in secondary boys' schools. As the literature suggests, singing has always been regarded as beneficial to human beings, but what this research also highlights is the special relevance of singing to a socio-cultural context in which adolescent boys are faced with new and potentially disturbing challenges. Massed singing is a highly effective way of offering boys a healthy sense of corporate identity; it provides a powerful means of self-expression; it offers a tangible experience of belonging; it can establish a non-threatening connection with the world of emotion and affectivity; it can counter depression and alienation; and it brings with it the promise of some extraordinarily transcendent moments. It seems, remarkable, therefore, that we must still regard it, in spite of its unique potential to shape school culture, as a marginal activity in the world of secondary boys' education in contemporary Australia.

## **6.8 Limitations**

This study has focused on how principals in secondary boys' schools view and influence massed singing. A major limitation of the study is that its findings are applicable only to the three principals who took part, and to the school contexts described by each of them. However, it is feasible to view the findings as having relevance for other principals, given that the experience and exercise of leadership, and the nature of school culture, especially as it is shaped and enriched by the performing arts, are common to many school leaders. The findings may also have implications for

secondary schools in which a massed singing program has yet to be introduced, but in which there is a desire to introduce one.

## **6.9 Implications for the Profession**

This research into the influence of principals on massed singing in secondary boys' schools has implications for school leadership, especially principals and their boards; the teaching profession, in particular, choral and vocal specialists; parents and the arts community; government education authorities and policy makers; and this researcher.

### **6.9.1 Implications for School Leadership, especially Principals and their Boards**

For principals who remain undecided about the effects of massed singing programs on the tone, culture and ethos of secondary boys' schools, this research illustrates a wide range of substantial benefits across many areas of school life. The approaches described by each principal suggest a variety of strategies, structures and philosophies which have already proven successful in practice, and which, in the case of one school, have been in place for over a century. This research indicates that boys' schools which embrace massed singing wholeheartedly and creatively, have everything to gain and nothing to lose as far as all of the key stakeholders, including principals, are concerned. It is also clear from this research that the participating principals were all conscious of performing a kind of social engineering role in resourcing, favouring and advertising their massed singing programs which they saw as countercultural strategies aimed at symbolising and enabling diversity, integrity and personal choice among their students. Principals who undermine hegemonic masculinity by promoting unselfconscious involvement in the performing arts, send a powerful message to the boys in their schools, and to their broader school communities, about the kind of

freedom and empowerment that it is possible for young men to experience. In particular, the research indicates that principals are key players in influencing the inclusion or exclusion of specific programs and activities in their schools, and that they perform important roles as advocates, promoters, entrepreneurs, defenders and supporters of the causes they choose to espouse. Of course, principals do not exercise leadership in isolation, but are required to work collaboratively with other leaders in their schools, and with school boards, governing councils and systemic authorities. If these groups are to be made aware of the benefits of massed singing for school communities, then it will most likely fall to the principal to do so. By drawing on research which represents the positive experiences of professional colleagues, and by demonstrating a personal commitment to promoting and resourcing a massed singing program, principals are in a prime position to influence those who exercise executive decision-making powers relative to their schools.

### **6.9.2 Implications for the Teaching Profession, including Choral and Vocal Specialists**

The study is also relevant to vocal and choral teachers in boys' schools who attend to the actual delivery of singing programs, often in challenging circumstances, and sometimes with over 1,000 participants at a time. The research presents them with a range of insights additional to those with which they may already be accustomed as specialist music teachers. Whereas it is usual for vocal and choral teachers to judge the efforts of their choirs and massed singing groups on the basis of successful performances and the achievement of objective musical criteria, this study outlines additional benefits specific to the individual person, to the school community and to the broader cultural context. While the emphasis in this study has been on the role of the principal in influencing the phenomenon of massed singing, it is clear that competent

and committed teachers are critical team members in an enterprise which demands great energy, expertise and creativity. It could also be salutary for teachers and principals to consider how they might use the boys' participation in singing to generate discussion with them at times about the nature of what they are participating in, both from the point of view of the aesthetic dimensions of massed singing, as well as from the perspective of its countercultural qualities. Such instruction, if given sensitively and as an incidental aspect to the boys' socio-musical experience, might well enhance and extend the existing instructional context.

### **6.9.3 Implications for Parents and the Arts Community**

The research is also of potential significance to parents and the arts community. Parents may well be interested in seeing their sons participate in choral and massed singing activities which present a unique opportunity for cultivating the aesthetic dimensions of the human person, for freeing boys from negative peer pressure and cultural repression, for allowing them to experience acceptance and solidarity through making music with other boys, and for opening up the world of the performing arts beyond the experience of schooling. On the other hand, the arts community, in particular the many choral groups which rehearse and perform in major cities like Melbourne, relies on schools to provide young people, especially boys, with positive experiences of group singing which may one day inspire them to participate in adult choral societies to the mutual advantage of all concerned. The study has certainly affirmed the cornucopia of physiological, psychological and social benefits available to those who participate regularly in choral singing.

#### **6.9.4 Implications for Government Education Authorities and Policy Makers**

In conducting reviews into boys' education and the status of music teaching in Australia, the Federal Government has signalled its concerns about the challenges facing boys in a number of areas related to self-esteem and personal development. The report, *Boys: Getting it Right* (2002) concentrates heavily on identifying themes such as underachievement, alienation and disengagement, but makes no significant reference to the place of the arts in the education and socialisation of boys. This research expands contemporary perspectives on the importance of the arts in the education and personal growth of boys, and offers examples of how effective programs work in those schools which use them consciously to the advantage of their boys and in the shaping of their cultures. Government departments and agencies might do well to draw more widely on best-practice schools, especially given their rarity as far as massed singing programs are concerned, and use the insights they provide to enhance the formulation and implementation of educational policy.

#### **6.9.5 Implications for this Researcher**

Finally, the study impacts on me as researcher. The experience of interviewing principals in their own offices and on their own educational turf made a great impression on me, as it was there that I encountered three men whose deep love for their school communities was evident both in the substance of their responses, and also in the animated manner in which they offered them. All three participants are experienced practitioners in education and leadership, and yet none of them could be regarded as a musical or choral specialist. Nevertheless, their enthusiasm for massed singing and their efforts to support and develop it were abundantly clear from the time I spent with each of them in the interview context. As leaders, they also recognised and articulated their understandings of the role they have in challenging hegemonic masculinity and in

fostering the personal gifts and talents of the boys in their schools, without prejudice or exclusion. In reflecting on the participants' responses over an extended period time and through a number of intensive processes, I have come to appreciate the great humanity of those I interviewed and their genuine concern for the boys in their schools.

Taking into account the principals' responses and the literature in support of the multifarious benefits of singing, I find myself asking why it is that so few boys' schools in Australia have in place a singing program comparable with those currently in operation at Schools A, B, and C. It is worth bearing in mind that the claims made by the three principals in this study about the effects of massed singing on their respective school cultures are claims of the highest order. In other words, these men do not regard massed singing as a glamorous accessory, or a nice piece of educational window dressing. On the contrary, they see the participation of their boys in massed singing as tied in with the deepest elements of mission, identity and symbolism in their school cultures. These principals see massed singing as a potent antidote to the manifestations of alienation, disengagement, meaninglessness and lack of identity which have been so readily attributed to the current generation of boys and young adult men. In fact, the behavioural and attitudinal problems identified by *Boys: Getting it Right* (2002) and the *National Review of School Music Education* (2005) seem to be the very ones which are countered by healthy and regular participation in massed singing. Why should only a few schools be able or willing to offer those educational opportunities which appear to be the most needed, and which have the potential to enrich the human person in unique and profound ways? Why do so few principals seem aware of the benefits of a massed singing program? Why do their educational priorities seem to lie elsewhere? What is so good about this "elsewhere" if it is leading to government reports which identify significant and urgent problems in male youth culture and in the delivery of music



education programs in Australian schools? I believe that questions such as these are fundamental to contemporary social and educational debate in Australia.

## **6.10 Recommendations for Further Research**

Further research could be undertaken in relation to aspects of the three key themes which form the conceptual framework of this study (Figure 3.1), and their various interrelationships. Five issues emerged for further investigation.

### **6.10.1 Recommendation One**

First, and from the point of view of leadership, it seems important to research the experiences of those principals who represent categories unlike the categories of the three principals who participated in this study and who were unanimous in affirming the benefits of the massed singing programs in place in their respective schools. Principals in the *unlike categories* could include those who see massed singing as having no real value for their schools, and who therefore do not support it; those who have had a massed singing program in place and have abandoned it for some reason or other; those who would like to having massed singing in their schools, but who are unsure as to how to implement it or promote it to their school communities; and those who acknowledge the potential value of a massed singing program, but who do not support it because they rate other activities as more important.

### **6.10.2 Recommendation Two**

Second, and in relation to the category of principals cited above, research might be carried out which situates massed singing in the context of other aesthetic, spiritual, artistic or symbolic activities which principals also regard as influencing their school cultures in significant ways, such as dance, liturgy or the fine arts.

### **6.10.3 Recommendation Three**

Third, and focusing on the genderfication of schooling, there could also be merit in investigating how principals of girls' secondary schools and principals of coeducational schools view and influence massed singing in their various school contexts, in the hope of identifying similarities and dissimilarities between the cultures of girls-only, boys-only and coeducational schools.

### **6.10.4 Recommendation Four**

Fourth, and focusing on massed singing itself, it would be valuable to investigate how other members of school communities, such as teachers, students and parents, see the role of the principal in influencing massed singing in their schools, and to contrast this with what principals themselves say about the nature of this activity, and the level of influence they exert over it. Thus, the views of a broader range of stakeholders could help to contextualise and shed new light on the perspective of the school leader.

### **6.10.5 Recommendation Five**

Finally, studies might well be undertaken in order to explore aspects of this present research by alternate methodologies or from different epistemological stances. While the small number of boys' secondary schools in which regular massed singing takes place would militate against quantitative or statistical studies, ethnographic or case study methodologies could nevertheless shed new light on the key phenomena described in this study, or reveal other significant factors as yet unrecognised. What remains important in all such pursuits is that our understandings of these valuable phenomena be enhanced and expanded. A summary of recommendations is presented in Table 6.6.

*Summary of recommendations for further research*

<b>Recommendation 1</b>	That researchers explore views on massed singing in secondary boys schools by interviewing principals who do not have massed singing in their schools in order to explore the perceptions of those who are unfamiliar with or outside the actual phenomenon of massed singing.
<b>Recommendation 2</b>	That researchers ask principals to discuss the impact of a massed singing program relative to other arts programs in place at their schools in order to explore whether or not any of the special qualities of massed singing are present in other performance activities.
<b>Recommendation 3</b>	That researchers investigate massed singing in girls-only and coeducational schools in order to ascertain whether or not the findings relative to boys' schools are in any way comparable.
<b>Recommendation 4</b>	That researchers ask members of school communities other than principals to reflect on the role of the principal in influencing massed singing in their schools in order to compare and contrast the responses of principals.
<b>Recommendation 5</b>	That researchers employ a diversity of study designs including case study and ethnography to investigate the influence of principals on massed singing in secondary boys' schools in order to reveal and explore other aspects of the phenomena.

**6.11 Such an Excellent Thing**

Our schools need leaders who are in touch with the extraordinary opportunities available to schools to empower their students, to critique contemporary social agendas, and to inspire and ennoble the human spirit, especially through uplifting activities such as singing. A good choir is, in fact, an excellent metaphor for an effective school. The choir's aim is to use the unique timbres and characteristics of many voices to create a unity of sound in which no individual voice is recognisable, and through which the global benefits far exceed the sum of the choir's parts. A good choir also needs a leader who shapes and crafts the common sound, allowing all choristers to contribute

optimally towards something that can take on a life of its own; something which is ultimately about personal growth and self-transcendence. The great English composer of the renaissance, William Byrd, is reputed to have once said, "Singing is such an excellent thing, that I wish all people would do it". This study has suggested that there are at least three school leaders in Melbourne who, four hundred years on, continue to share Byrd's ardent belief in the remarkable power of song.

**APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

### Questionnaire

#### Written Responses from Participant 1 (P1)

##### **The Purpose of the Questionnaire:**

To investigate the role of principals in influencing the place of corporate singing in secondary boys' schooling

##### Instructions:

1. **Please read the questions carefully.**
2. **Take your time in answering the questions.**
3. **Do not put your name on this survey.**
4. **There are no right or wrong answers.**
5. **Thank you for your participation.**

##### Note:

For the purposes of this study, the term “corporate singing” refers to those situations in which a Year Level, a number of Year Levels, or the whole School Body is engaged in singing in school-related contexts, such as assemblies, and civil or religious ceremonies. It does not refer to specialist groups such as School Choirs.

#### **RESPONSES**

1. Does singing have any particular value for human beings?

**P1 It lifts the spirit and provides many with both a sense of well being personally and a sense of belonging.**

2. **How do you believe mainstream Australian culture views corporate singing?**

P1 Few people would have an opinion.

3. **When you were a student in secondary school, on what sorts of occasions did you participate in corporate singing, if at all?**

P1 Liturgy and full College practice for liturgy.

4. **Do you have any particular memories – pleasant or otherwise – of corporate singing as you experienced it when a secondary student?**

P1 No!

5. **Does corporate singing take place in the school of which you are principal? If so, on what occasions and in what forms?**

P1 Yes.

- (i) Liturgical Celebrations – Year Level, House, Campus, College
- (ii) Assembly – Campus by Campus
- (iii) House Competitions
- (iv) Musical Performances – all involved not only choir
- (v) Sporting Events!

**6. What is your reflection on the place of corporate singing in your school? Are you happy, for example, with the amount of corporate singing which does or does not take place?**

P1 A school which sings, particularly an all boys school, is far more likely to be genuinely and openly supportive of the broader arts program.

**7. Do you ever sing along with your students in situations where corporate singing is expected? If so, why? If not, why not?**

P1 Yes,  
 (i) I enjoy it  
 (ii) Set example

**8. In general, do you believe that gender is an issue in influencing whether or not boys respond to the expectation that they will participate in corporate singing?**

P1 Yes, simply look at the level of male members in choirs at coeducational schools.

**9. As principal, are you aware of any views or opinions from students in relation to the corporate singing in which they are expected to participate?**

P1 Specifically no. I do think boys accept corporate singing as part of who we are as a school.

**10. As principal, are you aware of any views or opinions from staff in relation to the corporate singing in which boys are expected to participate?**

P1 Strong support for singing as prayer. Recognition of singing's part in the creation of a diverse cultural climate.

**11. Does corporate singing affect school culture? If so, in what ways?**

P1 Prayerfulness  
 Identity  
 Acceptance of the arts

**12. As principal in your present school, have you made any decisions, taken any actions or supported any practices which were intended to influence the place of corporate singing? If so, what were they?**

- P1** Appointment of key staff  
Increasing occasions when “corporate singing” takes place.
- 13. Do you have any plans for influencing the future place of corporate singing in your school?**
- P1** No.
- 14. Does anyone else in your school have a significant influence on the place of corporate singing (please mention any such people by the roles they hold, rather than by name)?**
- P1** Music Teacher – Choral  
Assistant Head of Music  
Choir Director
- 15. Are you aware of the history of your school in relation to participation or non-participation in corporate singing? If so, what is this history?**
- P1** Present over the last 12-14 years.
- 16. Do you have any other comments to make on the issues raised in this questionnaire?**
- P1** (No response).

THANK YOU FOR FILLING OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE



## Appendix B

### Questionnaire

#### Written Responses from Participant 2 (P2)

##### The Purpose of the Questionnaire:

To investigate the role of principals in influencing the place of corporate singing in secondary boys' schooling

##### Instructions:

1. Please read the questions carefully.
2. Take your time in answering the questions.
3. Do not put your name on this survey.
4. There are no right or wrong answers.
5. Thank you for your participation.

##### Note:

For the purposes of this study, the term “corporate singing” refers to those situations in which a Year Level, a number of Year Levels, or the whole School Body is engaged in singing in school-related contexts, such as assemblies, and civil or religious ceremonies. It does not refer to specialist groups such as School Choirs.

**1. In what ways, if any, does singing have any particular value for human beings?**

P2 The music we listen to and the songs we sing form the soundtrack of our lives. Singing raises the spirits and expresses our creativity. Everybody sings – even if only in the privacy of the shower – but singing in groups has a special bonding power.

**2. How do you believe mainstream Australian culture views corporate singing?**

P2 Most would probably consider it quaint and old-fashioned. But most would also happily participate in singing the National Anthem or Waltzing Matilda at a football match. Bar room chants are a crude form of corporate singing. So while many – especially males – would turn their noses up at the idea of this type of signing, most of them would participate in some form of it.

**3. When you were a student in secondary school, on what sorts of occasions did you participate in corporate singing, if at all?**

P2 School Assemblies  
 Mass  
 School Choir  
 House Singing Competitions  
 School Musicals

**4. What particular memories of corporate singing – pleasant or otherwise - do you have from when you were a student?**

P2 I was somewhat unusual, I suppose, in that I always enjoyed singing at school and actively pursued opportunities to participate in it. I was actively involved in the choir and enjoyed the wide range of music we sang. This caused some unease, being in a single-sex boys' school, but my love of singing won out.

**5. Does corporate singing take place in the school of which you are principal? If so, on what occasions and in what forms?**

P2 Yes. Assemblies  
Church Services  
House Music – (most popular competition in the school)  
Massed Singing at Biennial Concerts (1000 voices)  
Large Choir (300+)  
Chamber Choir

**6. What is your reflection on the significance of the place of corporate singing in your school? Are you happy, for example, with the amount of corporate singing which does or does not take place?**

P2 Our school has a strong tradition in corporate singing, and our students seem proud and keen to continue it. They with gusto when given the opportunity to do so. This gives the student body a great feeling of belonging to their larger community. They know it is unusual but are proud to have this as one of the defining characteristics of our school.

**7. Do you ever sing along with your students in situations where corporate singing is expected? If so, why? If not, why not?**

P2 Yes, always. Staff and students all join in the singing – it is something we do together and it helps to promote the culture of singing.

**8. In your experience, how do you believe that boys respond to the expectation that they will participate in corporate singing?**

P2 Our boys seem to enjoy it – particularly with certain songs. The culture here is such that they do not question it and just join in.

**9. As principal, are you aware of any views or opinions held by students in relation to the corporate singing in which they are expected to participate?**

P2 The love the big occasions and have adopted some songs (eg The Anthem from Chess) as unofficial school songs. They continue to sing these with gusto even at Old Boys' Reunions.

**10. As principal, are you aware of any views or opinions held by staff in relation to the corporate singing in which boys are expected to participate?**

P2 I think all members of our community enjoy our corporate singing and join in. The massed singing at our biennial concerts is very exciting and emotional to be part of.

**11. Does corporate singing affect school culture? If so, in what ways?**

P2 Definitely. Singing bonds the members of the school together in a common experience which has an impact at a spiritual level. House Music involves every boy in the Senior School and is passionately prepared for and performed.

**12. As principal in your present school, have you made any decisions, taken any actions or supported any practices which were intended to influence the place of corporate singing? If so, what were they? Why did you make them?**

P2 Only to support the present culture.

**13. What plans, if any, do you have for influencing the future place of corporate singing in your school?**

P2 Only to support the present culture.

**14. Who are the other people in your school who have a significant influence on the place of corporate singing? In what ways do they influence the place of corporate singing?**

P2 The Director of Music has had a huge influence on the development of this culture at our school. He is a very colourful character, much loved by the students, and takes several "Hymn Rehearsals" throughout the year. He also prepares the students and conducts the massed singing at our biennial concerts.

**15. Outline briefly the history of your school in relation to its participation or non-participation in corporate singing.**

P2 Since the late 1960s, singing and music have been considered important parts of our school program. Each Head since then (all three of them?) has supported and encouraged this trend.

**16. Do you have any other comments to make on the issues raised in this questionnaire?**

P2 (No response).

**17. Please comment on any other issues which have not been raised, but which you feel are important in a study such as this.**

- P2 I think the single-sex status of our school makes it easier to build the culture of singing. I have worked in co-educational settings where it has been extremely difficult to build a culture of singing – especially for the boys. In a boys only school this does not seem to be an issue.

THANK YOU FOR FILLING OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

## Appendix C

### Questionnaire

#### Written Responses from Participant 3 (P3)

##### **The Purpose of the Questionnaire:**

To investigate the role of principals in influencing the place of corporate singing in secondary boys' schooling

##### Instructions:

1. Please read the questions carefully.
2. Take your time in answering the questions.
3. Do not put your name on this survey.
4. There are no right or wrong answers.
5. Thank you for your participation.

##### Note:

For the purposes of this study, the term “corporate singing” refers to those situations in which a Year Level, a number of Year Levels, or the whole School Body is engaged in singing in school-related contexts, such as assemblies, and civil or religious ceremonies. It does not refer to specialist groups such as School Choirs.

**1. In what ways, if any, does singing have any particular value for human beings?**

P3 Within the context of ‘corporate singing’, singing not only provides a pleasurable, therapeutic and positive emotional well-being and mode of expression, it also is capable of building significant sense of collective belonging, shared purpose and achievement and camaraderie.

**2. How do you believe mainstream Australian culture views corporate singing?**

P3 For the majority, with blissful indifference. There is no real cultural locale or tradition within mainstream culture. It is probably viewed as ‘institutional’ perhaps with some residual memory of Church or religious affiliation.

**3. When you were a student in secondary school, on what sorts of occasions did you participate in corporate singing, if at all?**

P3 Yes; consistently across Years 9-12 at MHS. I was also a member of School Choirs in Primary School. I also sang as choir member and soloist in Church choirs from age 10.

**4. What particular memories of corporate singing – pleasant or otherwise - do you have from when you were a student?**

P3 Very pleasant, with the possible exception of still having a boy soprano voice in Year 12.

**5. Does corporate singing take place in the school of which you are principal? If so, on what occasions and in what forms?**

P3 Yes. There is a well-established tradition of 'singing assemblies' for Years 9-10 and Years 11-12 for most of the year as well as singing at assemblies which are held weekly for Years 11-12 and bi-weekly at Years 9-10. There are also several large ensemble choirs, both auditioned and non-auditioned and a Speech Night massed choir of 1,370. All students also participate in a Choral competition.

**6. What is your reflection on the significance of the place of corporate singing in your school? Are you happy, for example, with the amount of corporate singing which does or does not take place?**

P3 Yes, the current program is adequate and well-proven and respected.

**7. Do you ever sing along with your students in situations where corporate singing is expected? If so, why? If not, why not?**

P3 Yes. Always, as do all staff in each weekly assembly.

**8. In your experience, how do you believe that boys respond to the expectation that they will participate in corporate singing?**

P3 Initially those with no previous exposure may have reservations but the prevailing culture and expectations overcome this very quickly. Within three months the vast majority are enthusiastic and committed.

**9. As principal, are you aware of any views or opinions held by students in relation to the corporate singing in which they are expected to participate?**

P3 We survey students on matters connected to school life regularly. Our senior students report an extremely high endorsement of the singing program despite significant academic pressures and priorities.

**10. As principal, are you aware of any views or opinions held by staff in relation to the corporate singing in which boys are expected to participate?**

P3 Generally well embraced as staff are conscious of its ethos and wellbeing building capacities.

**11. Does corporate singing affect school culture? If so, in what ways?**

P3 Absolutely. I am convinced we would be unable to foster an inclusive, pro-social and cohesive school environment and ethos without a singing program.

**12. As principal in your present school, have you made any decisions, taken any actions or supported any practices which were intended to influence the place of corporate singing? If so, what were they? Why did you make them?**

P3 Inclusion of choir rehearsals on Open Day to ensure potential entrants are exposed to the experience and expectations of the program.

- a. Assistance in co-authoring a book chapter with Music staff of the school.
- b. Promoting the program and its importance to the school community.
- c. Improving the budget and support for the program.

**13. What plans, if any, do you have for influencing the future place of corporate singing in your school?**

P3 Promoting and supporting steps through the National Review of Music Education to enhance not just the School's program but its capacity to serve as an exemplar.

**14. Who are the other people in your school who have a significant influence on the place of corporate singing? In what ways do they influence the place of corporate singing?**

P3 The Music Staff... the program's heart and engine. Student Learning Coordinators – through promotion of School Assemblies.

**15. Outline briefly the history of your school in relation to its participation or non-participation in corporate singing.**

P3 Has existed as an integral component of the school program since the School's inception over 100 years ago.

**16. Do you have any other comments to make on the issues raised in this questionnaire?**

P3 (No response).

**17. Please comment on any other issues which have not been raised, but which you feel are important in a study such as this.**

P3 Yes. I feel that singing has a special capacity to assist Boys' Schools in particular in fostering an affirming pro-social culture and encouraging a more affirming conception of masculinity which eschews some of the worst of prevailing 'macho' beliefs. We also feel that the program assists in broader positive influences within the learning and classroom climate of the School.

THANK YOU FOR FILLING OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

## Appendix D

### Transcript of Interview with Participant One

#### I. Interviewer

##### *PI. Participant One*

**So, thank you, Stephen for participating in this interview. The idea is this is what I'm calling a 'semi-structured' interview, so we have an agenda that's fixed in one sense, but it derives from the Questionnaire; so there'll be some follow up to the questions raised in the Questionnaire, and then we've got the scope, if other things emerge, to deal with those.**

Fine, good.

**And there's a certain flexibility, then, about the interview context. So the idea is that, giving you a questionnaire about a fortnight ahead of the interview helps to raise some of the issues without you being put immediately on the spot in an interview situation, so I'm hoping that your brain has ticked a little over on some of the questions that were raised ...**

There's a chance!

**So, can we just begin by going back to that experience – I know you've had a lot of things go through your mind since then – but, in terms of the Questionnaire, are there some things that stood out for you amongst the questions that caused a response, or some things that you would have liked to have given more on, or that caused you to think subsequently?**

I hope it demonstrates how much is going on in my life rather than a failed memory! The thing that ran through my mind more than anything was the difficulty I had ensuring I differentiated between what you'd referred to as 'massed singing', as distinct from choral work...

#### **Specialist singing...**

Or higher-end choral work. And I think at times I wonder whether I blurred the two – I was conscious of it – but then I think I took a decision in a few responses to differentiate clearly between the standard, say, of the Cathedral Choristers or the trained choir from what might be, ah, considered massed singing, and I would consider, for example - I think I did in my mind - massed singing to range from what we do well or poorly on Assembly, to the House Singing competitions, to even, in my mind, I think, were the boys who get to do the musicals à la *Pyjama Game* etc, in choruses who I don't consider - with no disrespect to those that prepared them – wouldn't consider them trained voices as such, and when they're in just the 'mob' – so that was in my mind, and then so a lot of my responses were flavoured by that, I think.

**But that sounds like a distinction that's pretty clear now between the specialist groups in the school and what the 'mob' does, if you like.**



Perhaps, perhaps, yeah.

**It's reasonably clear.**

I guess the other one that was in my mind a little was trying to be ... I wasn't sure whether I could be accurate, and I think sometimes this office, on a whole range of things, can confront this as a challenge ... my belief as to what we're achieving, and my view as to what we're achieving, may be different from how it's been seen by boys, by colleagues, or by our broader community.

**Yes.**

And so, I guess sometimes there's going to be that issue that the Head's aims seem quite clear, and the leadership group might be saying, "This is what we're trying to do, and we might think we're achieving it, but that might not be the reality." So, I was a little conscious of that as well, saying, "Tick off yes: this is why we're doing this; yes, we're achieving this," but I thought a number of times when I was doing it, "This requires validation from someone else."

**Well, in a sense yes, but this is where the study is focussing on the principal's views...**

Oh, okay...

**And the Role of the principal, so, in a sense, it's not going to be subject to verification by consultation with the rest of the school community.**

Okay, but even from my view – I guess my view will be represented – but it was me, perhaps, reflecting as I did this, "Well, gee I hope I'm accurate in my own assessment of the impact that we're having by doing this!" So, I question that.

**And that raises an issue that came up in relation to one of your responses, and I might come to that a little bit later on, because I'd like to pick up some ideas from the sorts of things you've said, but taking up that very first point that you've made: this is a school, then, where specialist groups are present and have a high profile, and you also have contexts where, on a reasonably frequent basis, the "mob" or the whole group would sing – the corporate group would sing together. Do you see any effect, or influence, or relationship between the two, the fact for example that this is a school that's unusual for having a Cathedral Choir and three choirs in it as well, and then it also expects everyone else to sing, trained or otherwise?**

A strong relationship. I think it would be a relationship between trained groups and corporate or community involvement, or mob singing, that would be there if we didn't have the Cathedral Choir, though. Because I think it was a commitment by a predecessor – by Bill Wilding – and something that I supported, that in my role ... it was part of a cultural ... to get boys to have the confidence and to have the enjoyment of singing was something we both thought was important. It was something that wasn't happening in a significant way, and it was seen both as a vehicle to help bring about cultural change, and also seen clearly as a litmus to see whether or not you were achieving that cultural change. Now, the fact that those desires on a timeline virtually

run parallel to the introduction of the Cathedral Choir here means that it's going to be hard to differentiate, but I would think still think that, even if the Cathedral Choir had not arrived here in 1996, some of the decisions that have been made in regards to the place of corporate singing here, would have been taken anyway. Now, having said that, when I speak to parent luncheons, to people or even to other colleagues, I sometimes say we cheat a little in our choral work because we have got all these little elements of yeast sown throughout from 5 to 12 that are able to lift what we're doing.

**So the reality is, the corporate group is infiltrated to some extent by the specialists.**

And the specialists – there's enough of a range of the specialists... I don't think the Cathedral Choir isn't seen, as it might in its first few years perhaps: "Gee they're different," but the Cathedral Choir is one manifestation of specialist choral work I think, now, and the fact that Glendalough Choir and the Senior Choir, and the one area is probably the lower secondary...

**Middle School Choir.**

Yes, Middle School, but there's so many other specialists and the profile that the boys that take the leads in the musicals receive from the community and from the boys means that so many of them are seen as specialists and receive recognition, acclamation for it that that's made the whole thing easier, so it's not just one group of specialists, and yet, obviously a number of boys we'd have in ...

**In all of the contexts.**

They're in all the contexts. When you look at someone like Captain of Music this year, [Student's name], you can't put a price on boys that are able to move with such ease and such confidence across such a whole range of music, but then just with voice, having that confidence to get up and do things and the rest of the school saying, "This is good," makes it so much easier.

**That's great. So, just talking about the phenomenon of singing generally and what it does for people, and what it does, then, when it's transferred into a specific context like a school, this idea of it bringing a sense of belonging and a sense of well-being, how does it do that? Like, how does singing promote in the school a sense of belonging?**

I was conscious of this when I was writing, actually. It reflects how I feel – appropriately or inappropriately – when I'm in that context myself, and some vain hope that a fifty year-old's sense of what's being achieved is being shared by ten, fifteen and eighteen year-olds, and I think there is some sense. So, the work that's done by yourself in the preparation for us to go in and sing at Valedictory – that brings a sense to that worship and the nature and the tone of that worship, there's not a question about that. When you share that Mass with parents and boys afterwards, they speak of it for years to come. And I think that is a manifestation directly of that. And for those – it's interesting to see staff who are new to the school with the boys when we go into the Cathedral again, so that sense of participation in liturgy that comes about because it's an access to the liturgy that perhaps many more boys are comfortable with that as access than perhaps with what might be seen as traditional access to liturgy – so it's there. To take it to the other extreme – it's that from the divine to the pagan – the fact that, you

look at, what do [School A] boys do when they're at the APS Athletics, or at the Head of the River? They sing. And so, it's not just the chant or the war cry - pretty poor singing, lots of it!

### **But what's singing doing for them?**

There's this group identity. It's saying: these are our songs, we know this, this says who we are – I don't know whether this gets published – it's a clear expression of identity because, one time a particular school I've got in my head ... some chants that belonged perhaps a few decades ago in terms of their comments on our ancestry or faith, and the student response here I saw was deciding to sing 'Christ, Be our Light' when they were being heckled or chanted against about being Catholic etc. There, as I say, it's almost paganistic in a way, it's tribal in another way, but that was the student response. So, it says, "We say who we are through doing this." The way they'll all leap on to 'Power of Your Love' and massacre that with such delight in a whole range of circumstances, tells me that the boys say: this is one means by which we express we're part of [School A]. So, it goes from the highpoint to the low point, and if you go through very often ... weekly assemblies aren't as ideal, because you'll ... peaks and troughs in terms of their involvement there ... I think of the Glendalough boys and their response there and that corporate thing, and at Waterford it's still very strong as well. So, there's enough of a constancy in that, that I think our boys therefore see the massed singing as a statement of being a Kevinian.

### **And in terms of preparing for a liturgy, there's the experience in the actual liturgy of singing, but there's also an experience in the process of coming together for as rehearsal.**

Well, I've seen many fewer of those since I've been in this office in contrast to the joy of having to help set them up or ensure that they've been done properly, and seeing when they haven't worked, and believing that they work so much better now. And so it is a difference, but I think even that in itself, it may not simply be the quality of the people taking the practice, although that *is* a factor; it also reflects this shift in culture in boys saying, "Oh well, we accept that we will have rehearsal because we know why we are practising in order to be able to involve ourselves at a different level."

### **Yes, so there's an issue of readiness too, isn't there?**

I think so.

### **If you bring a group to a practice... say for example, if you bring a group here, what's your assessment of where they would be before anything started? You know, like, would they be going along saying "Oh, singing practice!"; or how do you assess or understand the attitude generally, or in ...?**

I think the attitude's changed. The fact that we can do it with Year 12s in their final week, and that the level of cooperation, I think, is high to very cooperative is a statement in itself, and that's related to the fact that they've been used to doing that in preparation for Masses. I think it's related to – as simple as it'll seem - the fact that the Houses actually want to compete with a House Singing Competition. The fact that they do, and that they're actually serious about seeing if they can do it well enough to beat somebody else is a statement, again... it leads to very high acceptance of singing as a

natural means of expressing who we are, as a normal and beneficial part of worship and as something simply that they – and get down to this other – that they say: yeah, this is a bit of fun. And so, if you've got that operating, you're also achieving, from this office's perspective, you're making sure that the climate exists that will allow the specialist groups to actually, not just exist, but have the profile that they should have and boys access those because you don't have to be courageous to join them. And that remains a challenge very often in schools, because, if the activity isn't seen as being of general worthwhileness, then you've got to have a high level of courage sometimes to join those groups. And so that's where I see the benefit goes that way, as does the benefit flow the other way because we've got so many boys that are in the, what we might call the 'specialist' groups just back out, mixed through the mass.

**Taking up, then the issue of gender which was one of the questions, and I think also ties in with that level of participation that you're talking about, can we just investigate that a little, because we're talking obviously in the context of a boys-only school, what's your reflection, then, on the influence of that reality upon the participation of boys in activities like this?**

With all the bias and the narrowness of my own professional experience, being all-boys schools – only ever taught one co-ed class in my thirty years now in the classroom – but I will say my observations of co-ed schools, and certainly comments from daughters at all-girls schools, so I'm prepared to make a couple of comments – and this is prior to [School A]. I started keeping – and I was doing some work on promoting boys' education at my last school – and at one point I did this by, at any of the concerts involving a range of schools, and where I was we were probably the only independent all-boys' school, and most of them... there were some very good co-ed schools, I just kept the stats, just the straight balances of boys/girls in things such as choirs, orchestras, jazz ensembles etc., in public performances. And schools which prided themselves – and these are fine schools, good independent schools – that prided themselves on their both choral programs and music programs, and prided themselves on the fact that they had gender balance numerically – my distinct memory was it often went 3:1, of female to male. And that applied, and this was the thing that I found quite intriguing, that applied even at the primary level when some would say that you don't have the issue of either sexual or psychological identity determining participation. You probably do have that to have an extent but... I continued to do this for a couple of years when I came here, going to the – whether it was the JHSSA or a Junior School... I remember it used to be in at the place opposite the old [School A], I've just forgotten the name there ... Dallas Brooks Hall – and I used to do this count with Bob Stone, I can remember doing it then with [the Head of Junior School], saying: do the figures, count up because this is the type of thing in speaking to parents here... boys find it easier to put their hands up to do some of these things in an all-male environment. They're happier to stumble at times, and if we do it well as a school and give opportunities to mix on occasions, then you get the real benefits. So, the [School A] Choir performing at Mandeville's Hamer Hall concert – probably worth about ten members of the choir a year, I'd suggest, if you put as figure to it! – so I think it's good. And when you look again – massed sing – and *Oliver's* got to be a classic example because there's all boys. Was there hesitation? I sensed very little hesitation in roles that boys took on, be it indeed the individuals with leads, or be it boys en masse. And that spoke to me again, of saying that, "They're comfortable, and they're prepared to do these things and experiment with their voices," because young men are highly conscious of their voices, be it speaking or singing, and I think it frees them.

**But, wouldn't it also be true to say that you could have an all-boys' school where there was no singing? The fact that it's all boys... so there must be other things apart from the gender composition that give boys permission to participate in these activities?**

I think the key thing, Daryl, is that concept of permission in the sense of not being of one style, that either masculinity can be defined in a range of ways. And, if we're a good school, we'll be making sure that's the case. And so, you know, what's modelled the... my enormous delight, therefore when the First XI Cricket coach here for so many years was also a musician; the fact that I love the Head of Drama's out there on the Outdoor Education camps. It's this modelling of this... say, look, these are all part of, these are all parts of how you express yourself, and you happen to be male - you're going to find all different ways to express who you are, so this permission to do it in a range of ways is us being broad in that way. And I think the other thing that allows it to occur here is that – not wrapping it up in too philosophical a term, or a phrase – that wonderful expression of Kurt Hahn's, that young people need to be, and this is his expression, 'impelled' into experience, and I think a good school will do that, with boys or girls, and we do impel into experience. And the fact that you make a whole... so this applies across the arts, I think, it applies to certain academic disciplines, it applies to their sport, it applies to the Outdoor Education... I don't think it's correct to say children should only do something which has an appeal to them, or in which they've expressed interest, or they're allowed to do it once and then, if they hadn't liked it that time, withdraw. And because this is part of the culture here, I think, again, it gives... "Have a go at this, do this... yes, you are all going to do this," leads to that concept of permission. So, I think that's a culture, and I think also, then, it's that willingness to... and there is a need at boys' schools, and I've seen schools that have had to retrieve it, and I think that we did here, to be honest, whereby you make sure there is enough attention and profile given to the arts, and then singing as one performance area within the arts.

**So, bringing the world of the principal into this...**

Okay.

**It's a very complex world, isn't it, but, your reflections on where...**

There are the simple things: you've got to be prepared to stand there and sing, and to enjoy it and I wish I had a better range. I'm prepared to make noise and I don't mind singing...

**And you're not claiming to be a specialist...**

So, I think that's important, and I think that's modelled, and I think we do – be it from this office... and you look at the Leadership Group: they don't stand there mute, in a whole range of ways, and I think it's the excitement that you as Head display in performances and conversations you can have with boys – all those things you do by what the phrase you'll use in a newsletter to profile... you'll give something in official reports to... the even more valuable side of things: making sure you speak to boys about you saying you think they're talented, or they're brave, or whatever it is, and so it's the...

**The affirmation.**

The affirmation, and it's the... so many of us have learnt over years, a two-line letter to a boy that goes to a home address that says 'Congratulations on your part in...' can mean that a boy'll continue to do an activity for some time, simply on that... it's so rare these days, "I got a letter!" That affirmation across a whole range of the areas, and in a whole range of ways.

**So that, in a sense could be understood at a micro level, that you're affirming the people who are directly involved; at a macro level, because a principal, you know, operates at a whole range of levels, as obviously you're aware, you make decisions that influence staffing, culture, events and all sorts of things in a school as well.**

I think it's a recognition of the importance of all of these areas, and I guess, as our... if we're talking singing as part of the broader cultural program of the school, I think you can see shifts in both staffing – just in straight numbers... profile of events, and by 'profile', it's even where they're going to be held, so I think the move from Robert Blackwood Hall to Hamer Hall next year is a statement in itself of where we see ourselves as a school in terms of the performance base that will allow the boys to be at their best, and that is the standard we believe that we're at now, and that's reflecting the Head of Music, both work and people's expression of saying: have we taken it another stage? So, it's on that macro level... as simple as it is again, that's a financial decision of some import.

**And obviously one that's dependent on your consent.**

Yes. So that's there, and I think even the way that we'll place events within calendars and give protection to a range of the events, and so, when calendars are done, again, that's a reflection of that broader policy decision-making that these things *are* given a high priority, be it a range of the concerts, or performances, or knowledge that large numbers of boys are going to be involved in some of these activities and therefore other things can't occur at that time, and equally academics has to take a preference at some point in... "Gee, we can't possibly therefore allow some events or musicals or things to be on then because we know how many boys will be involved," whereas there've certainly been schools I've known where it wouldn't have made much difference if you did that because you're only dealing with a handful of boys.

**So, just taking this a step beyond your local environment, would you be aware of other Heads ever discussing these sorts of issues, or would you be aware of where other Heads stand, colleagues at your level of leadership?**

I'm aware of individual's positions, so... another APS Head who sings any opportunity he gets – Michael Irwin – and Michael's got actually a good voice, a very good voice, so he's prepared to sing at the drop of a hat on public occasions, and therefore, I think you'll find values within his own school. I'm aware of another Head, and I guarantee this will never happen at [School A], a good personal friend, who delights in finding bit parts for himself in musicals to try and cross the stage which, cruel critics might suggest vanity, but I happen to know it's more than that, and it has been an expression of him wanting to say, "This is of more significance, I want to back was happening." So, it's interesting. You would hope that if you look at colleagues, male or female, that end up

in this office, that there is that broadness because if you have some... if you didn't draw pleasure from this aspect of life, it's going to be a bit hard to encourage children, or be genuine in your celebration of it. So, you'd hope that that might be a part of nearly any person that found themselves in a large school in a leadership role. On a more formal level, it's interesting that the International Boys School Coalition certainly looks at this in great depth, and, in fact, one of things I've been trying to get off the ground here – a little advertisement, I might have to pull this out again – action research projects that they sponsor. I've put up one that I'd like [School A] to actually do, probably concentrating at this stage in our Junior School, and looking at the link between our musicality within the College and both academic performance in certain areas, and also that harder-to-measure, the boys' sense of worth and their identification with the school. And I think this would be a fascinating study to look at into... to contrast ourself to a couple of like schools and schools quite differently. And this work is being done internationally to look at, again, with its focus being, given it's the International Coalition of Boys Schools, you're at risk of the work being done to prove a result that you've already wanted to find. What it does demonstrate, though, is that this is something that is being thought about, certainly at a senior level and is seen as being a worthwhile study. Does that address...?

**Yes, that's great, thanks. Also, you were referring there to a Head who has background, or a disposition to performing; that probably can't be said of you in the same way.**

No, no, no no. This is true confessions – I don't know whether I ask this to be stopped now...

**There *are* confidentiality provisions!**

As a young man, I tried to sing a little. So, I performed a little. As a boy at school, there weren't many opportunities at the school I had, and yet I certainly put my hand up in a climate that was a little bit more 'jock', to try to sing. Again, as a boy, then performed in a whole serious of, you may have heard of them, 'Gang Shows'. So, I was in the Scouting movement and performed for maybe ten years, so there was enough in me that had either enough confidence or arrogance to manage to get a few lines here and there to be involved in that, and certainly, then, at university, a couple of times joined... so, I had some interest and some involvement, certainly in terms of voice, of being prepared to have a go.

**And this must have had an attraction, though; I mean, you must have enjoyed what you were doing...**

I did, within the context of the whole thing, again from the... some of those Gang Shows were half okay, I guess as events, I think, and others of them weren't. We were lucky to sell the tickets, and at university the work that I did chorally... at times it wasn't much better than an element of the rugby club which it was on occasions, attempting to imitate a Welsh choir for performances at intervarsity. So that was my level, as a young man who doesn't have any musicianship at all. But then, I guess, I think I *would* say, as a young teacher being formed in schools where I saw the impact that music'd have and loving being around, involved watching, admiring, and I think that continued to form me... a twenty-one year-old going into a school that had a *magnificent* tradition in terms of its music, and was so well set up. That must have – I

know it had impact on me, and in the same way that I think one's own family, then, has an impact on – whether its stated or simply applying – I think my own children's experiences as they've grown to be adult, and music for all three of them has been something that's been of much greater significance. Sadly, [Son's name] inherited the limited range of his father's voice, but that didn't stop [Son's name] being in musicals here, from a boy in Grade Four, being a Munchkin, to [Son's name] joined the Glendalough... he was one of these kids who *did* join the Glendalough Choir when he was a boy in Grade Three, and stayed in it all the way through to Six, and then *did* participate in musicals; *did* end up turning up to be in the Senior Choir; *did*, as House Captain, initiate the cheating in the House Singing Competition – so, that [Son's name] and the girls... and [Son's name] learnt instruments, and for my girls their singing's... so they've done another more serious level, and at the Audition Choir as well as the Massed Choir, and they've had formal lessons. I think that has influenced me, then, if you're looking for things, even though I haven't performed as such, and would lack either the skill or the exact confidence without a large amount of red wine to do; so, I think that has had an impact on decisions that I take for us as a school.

**So that's disposed you more sympathetically, I suppose...**

More than disposed – it's meant that I... I did have a disposition and a personal enjoyment of being able to sing, and I think that, then, lead to a discovery as a young teacher of how significant it could be within the life of a school, and in the lives of boys within schools, and then had that confirmed, then, once I'd been in a position to take decisions, and confirmed - I'd go as far as saying - by watching my own children's growth to adulthood... and the part that both, specifically singing, but music in general, played in their lives.

So, in one sense, you got some sort of feedback, or some information as well from [Son's name] and his participation, but, just coming back to what we were talking about at the very beginning, and I said we'd come back to: how do you know, how does the Head get feedback, or seek feedback, in relation to issues of this kind – formally and informally, I suppose?

Okay, informally it's going to be just observation – and yet, in some regards it *is* formal. You can simply look at the number of boys who are prepared to join. You can also, then, look at who are the boys who are joining, and do they represent subsets or cliques within the school, or do you have a smattering? Formal observations... and it's a deliberate attempt to sometimes even socially engineer, if you like, to ensure that you have got the boy that might be the sporting hero, making sure that he is broad in terms of what else he's doing, and that works the other way as well. That's why I think it's so crucial when a boy says: I'm not interest in doing any sport at a Year Twelve... I'll go the other way and say, "No, well, I want you to play in the Fourths; come on, you might not do this." This is this impelling into experience again: "You probably won't choose to do this later in your life, play in a team sport: soccer, football, rugby, whatever it happens to be, for your last year, 'cause that will be your memory of school, and some connection." I think it goes the other way, and the other way you've got to do that as well. So, how do I formally assess? I think it's also, and I guess we do... I track numbers very deliberately: I've got them recorded over time... the quality, and getting feedback, not simply from whether I sat there and was surprised, enlivened by the performance, but asking others to be critical of themselves, given very often they're the people involved, and say: well, where are we, in terms of a standard?



**‘Cause you have a double movement in a way, don’t you? You have specialists going into the corporate group, and then you have boys coming out of the corporate group to do things they haven’t done before like audition and participate...**

And that’s why you’ve got to have, and that’s... again, as we were chatting earlier, it’s going... if it’s been effective, it should be going both ways all the time, without a doubt. And it’s this permission – boys knowing you’ve got permission to do that, and if they haven’t sung in the choir coming through, that suddenly in 11 or 12 saying: well, maybe I will. And I think it’s, for the boy that knows he wouldn’t mind being in the musical, realising, though, that he’s never going to audition well enough to even join the chorus unless he perhaps puts his hands up and goes in the choir for a year or so, having had the confidence because everybody else sings in the corporate singing, to join the choir to then give him the access to the chorus. And again, the more we’ve got, as we say, in the speciality groups, spread throughout the College, then the more likely it is that the corporate singing’s going to be done well enough to give boys the sense that it’s not just about chanting on the banks of a river, and that there’s something intrinsically beautiful within what they’re doing and singing.

**So, does [School A] give a boy more permission to be involved in this sort of thing than the broader culture gives the average Australian male?**

I would want to say categorically yes. Look, I’m pretty sure on this. The answer is yes, and any good boys’ school needs to ensure that, because that’s exactly what...

**In a sense that’s counter-cultural, then, if it’s against the general trend, or movement or opinion.**

It’s the old issue of how one defines general trends or opinions and stereotypes, so... we’re far from... any good school should be doing this, giving children permission across a whole range of areas, but I think this is one way in which a good boys’ school can do it very well, and I think it’s one of the more accessible ways – the singing – and therefore it leads to benefits across a whole other... in many other areas as a result. I’m confident that that’s something we’re doing, but the other interesting thing is, if you just sit back, it’s like most of these things, instead of it being... be it singing, or be it darn socks, or be it academic standards, if we sit back and say it’s just going to happen, because this is the way we are, we’d be fools because it probably would unravel a little bit, or it might unravel completely!

**So you’re conscious of having a role in continuing to promote, not to let things slip back...**

You have to be. Yes, and I’ll pick, I’ll deliberately take what might be something that could slip by and give it a significance beyond... if there was such a thing as a mathematical weighting of the relevance of a particular performance or an individual boy’s efforts, sometimes you’ve got to put a much greater weighting on it to make sure that a point’s being made. And I think... sometimes I do that deliberately with what we’re doing in terms of singing. I just do.

**And you mentioned earlier on about when the boys sing in the Cathedral, and staff who are new to the school are taken by this. So you have a sense also of feedback from staff, and the impression of staff about this phenomenon in the school as well.**

Yes, I think we do. It's one of a range of things that new staff bring as gift, because within two or three years you're not looking at it with those same eyes, and it has certainly been a comment that's been passed on a regular basis to me. The singing in the Cathedral I think is probably linked to a range of other things that are happening... the boys are so cooperative in general on the way in there, that the tone and the respect within Mass surprises some people, that 1700 lads are prepared to show that level of cooperation. So, I think it's the experience of the College movement, the experience of the beauty of the Cathedral in itself, and of the music, and of the atmosphere that exists. But singing is a part of what happens.

**And in that context and in others, do you think there is something for staff in the sense of the boys saying, "We go along with this," or, "We're prepared to express ourselves in this way," or...**

From my observations, the boys certainly are not oppositional. This isn't something that we've got to now... you certainly don't have to confront or berate them about "this is good for you." I think we've just got to put it there now and create the opportunity. I think we've moved along that as a continuum, whereas I would have said in 1997 and '98, we were certainly at the stage of, "Well, why on earth are you making us do this?" But [School A] didn't go to the Cathedral... if you want little things that make a difference, [School A] didn't celebrate Mass as a full school in 1996 and people or, and people even queried why on earth we tried to do that. And yet now, be it the Cathedral Mass, and say even Edmund Rice Day...

**So you, from your actual period, you have a very sharp consciousness of the movement...**

Oh yes, and the battle to have... the difference between the boys' willingness to participate in preparation for Valedictory by hymn practice from 1998 to now – there's marked change. But look, that's not just the singing, though I think it's... senior boys, in particular, a willingness to walk with you most of the way. I might regret this next year, but the 12s this year, certainly were boys, there was never... there wasn't an atmosphere of confrontation towards end of year in any way, shape or form, and I guess that's what you're trying to achieve.

**And I have a sense that you see the participation in singing and the spirit that goes with it, as one of these indicators of health and spirit and...**

Without a moment's doubt, and I have written on a number of occasions that you can judge the health of a boys' school by how they sing. I've forgotten who I stole it from, but I'm sure, I either heard someone say something like it...

**Wasn't the Coalition, was it?**

Someone say that and I... there've been a number of times in recent years at [School A] when I've been there and singing with the boys, I've had that thought, "This is good; this is telling me something quite specific," and, in fact - I'm not sure whether it's in the

Annual or whether it's in 'Omnia' - but I've actually made that specific... newsletter it might have been...

**It was in the newsletter after the Robert Blackwood concert last year.**

Thank you. I'm sure I've used it. But, I also believe it just didn't manage to fill up a couple of lines for me, but I had that sense: this is a clear indication of ... whether we are in a range of areas, be it... permission to, for there to be a number of ways in which you express your masculinity, and also the statement that it needs to be multi-stranded.

**That's great. So, Stephen, as we come to the end of the interview, my only other question is to ask you if there's anything we haven't covered that you wanted to say, or anything that you wanted to add to the interview this morning.**

No. Great, Daryl.

**Well, thank you for your participation. That's excellent.**

Okay, ta.

- END OF INTERVIEW -

## Appendix E

### Transcript of Interview with Participant Two

#### I. Interviewer

P2. Participant Two

**All right, Paul, we're actually now in the interview, so thank you very much for agreeing to this.**

Pleasure.

**This is a semi-structured interview which means that I'm not going to ask you question after question, but I'm going to base my agenda on the questions that were in the Questionnaire that, several thousand decisions ago, you would have looked at and written about. And then, because it has that freedom, if it takes us other places, that's fine, but we'll begin with the agenda that the Questionnaire raised, on the understanding, of course, that this is the methodology, that the Questionnaire is there to plant a few things, or to stimulate some ideas, and we take them up now. And just in relation to that, could I begin by asking you what sort of things you recall from the Questionnaire that stuck in your mind, or excited you as you answered.**

Well, I think I was glad to see someone looking at the questions, actually – these questions – because I think the singing culture at our school is a very important part of the character of the school, and it caused me to reflect on that and where that's come from, and why that is the case, and caused me to value it again. It *is* a special part of life here at the moment, and something I'm quite proud of actually, the fact that they sing.

**So, would this Questionnaire have articulated some ideas, or brought to the surface some ideas that perhaps haven't come to you at this level before – that have been part of your general thinking?**

I think it was more that it seemed to be chiming in with the sort of discussions we'd had here, with our view towards... it seemed to hit a chord with several of the approaches that we take to singing here, and it just sort of reaffirmed what we were doing is a good thing.

**So, one of the things that's distinctive about this study is it's focussed not on the boys so much or the music teachers, but on the Head in all of this: that's what's a bit sort of distinctive about it. Had you previously thought very consciously that you're in any way central to this, or that you have a particular influence on this?**

It's not an easy question to answer directly in that, in all the schools that I've been in, I've supported singing and corporate singing... because I think that's a great way of culture building within a school, but, having said that, I've been at this school twice: once as Head of History and second incarnation as the Headmaster, and in all of that time, so since 1991 that I've known the school, there's always been a culture of singing here. And, to some extent that's a historical thing that's been consciously built up; and

to some extent I think it's very heavily due at our school to our Head of Music who is very dynamic and very passionate about singing, and tends to whip the boys up in very theatrical ways in singing rehearsals and in the sorts of singing activities that we do. So, over time... and he's been here, he's been here twenty-five years as a teacher and generations of boys have grown up with him, and I think he is more influential than I would be in this particular case in terms of building the culture of singing. I would be seen as someone who supports it and who sings from the front during assemblies and things like that, but he would be seen as the real driver of it.

**So, he's not an appointment of yours?**

No. No, no, no. He's a past student of the school. He's been here most of his life; his association with the school probably goes for forty years, but he is quite eccentric in many ways, and very theatrical, and when we're preparing for a singing performance, he'll whip his tie off and wave it round and get them all excited. He's also a very good judge of songs that the boys will like, and there's a couple of songs over the years that they've picked up that have become, almost become unofficial school hymns, or school songs and they now sing those songs with an enormous amount of gusto.

**I think you mentioned 'Anthem' from 'Chess'?**

The "Anthem" from "Chess" is the outstanding one. They sing it more with gusto than with skill – it's a bit of a barroom, belting-out sort of number. But boy, they sing it with great enthusiasm! And now, at Old Boy reunions, it's a very interesting thing that the students within the last ten years of the school want to sing that song at the Old Boys Reunions, and the older old boys don't even know it, but they can see the enthusiasm with which they sing this. It's been really picked up as part of the place.

**So, that's in relation to what we might call the 'herd' or the 'mob' or the "whole group", the "corporate dimension", and also in the school – not that this is the prime focus of the study – but you do have specialist groups that sing as well.**

Yes, we do. We have a school choir, and in its largest incarnation the School Choir is about 300 boys, and each year they take on at least one major work. This year they sang the 'Mass for the Armed Man.' Last year they did, I think it was the Mozart 'Requiem'. So they take on... and they've done excerpts from the 'Messiah' and so on. They'll take on a major work, and sometimes we'll get girls from girls' schools coming in to fill out the higher parts. So that's the larger choir and they sing at most of our concerts, and then we have some smaller chamber choirs and they would do spirituals and more jazz type numbers and things like that. But each section of the school – junior, middle and senior – has both a larger choir and a more specialist choir.

**So the larger choir is like an occasional choir, is it, that wouldn't rehearse every as frequently as the others?**

They would rehearse every week.

**They would rehearse every week. They just have a different repertoire...**

But a different repertoire, yeah, and they tend to focus on the larger works and prepare them over a longer period of time for the major concerts, whereas the smaller choirs,

they also meet once a week, but they would come out and do an item at the concert, whereas sometimes the bigger choir would take up the second half, for example, with the major choral work.

**So what about... in the school, then, you've got this phenomenon of corporate singing on a large scale, and you've got specialist groups – do you think in any way that the specialists groups - the presence of them and their skill, or their readiness to sing, or their impact – makes it possible for boys to come into the corporate dimension of singing as well. Does it sort of enhance, or is it perhaps that the corporate is already established?**

I think the... it seems to me the feel of it is it flows the other way, from the corporate singing into the more specialised groups. Our boys *do* sing at Assembly, and some hymns they sing very loudly! But, it's just sort of part of the culture of the place that it's ok. And I certainly didn't experience that in the coeducational school where I worked before here. It was very difficult to get boys to sing – or even the girls to sing in Assembly – and there were some boys in the smaller choirs, but far more girls.

**So what was going on there, do you think? Why was that the case?**

Well, I just think there are different agendas in a coed school that... there's all sorts of things going on about gender identity, and how the boys want to be seen by the girls, and they're conscious of that all the time. And their masculinity, in a sense, is more narrowly defined, I think, than it can be in a boys' school where they can experiment with this sort of stuff and get fully... I mean, our First XVIII Football Team are also mainly in the choir, and are also mainly in the plays and the drama and the art. And I think that's one of the great things in boys' schools that they can do that and they don't have to worry about impressing or not impressing potential girlfriends – they just sing, because we just do it.

**And so that allows a better climate of permission for that type of activity.**

Yes... I think so. And look, it's built to the stage here – and I don't want to sort of overplay it, because I know it's fairly fragile and it could easily be lost, I think, you know, if we didn't continue to nurture it – but it's built to a level here where they don't think twice about it, I don't think... it's not really an issue – they just come and sing and it's just...

**So what about, in relation to that, what are the main entry points at the school, is Year 7 one of them?**

Yes.

**When would a boy in Year 7, for example, who's come from somewhere else and never experienced this, first come across it in the school?**

Probably in his first Assembly. We do have combined Assemblies which would have 7 to 12, and certainly in those Assemblies they would hear the volume of what's going on... and all sorts of boys, you know, it's not just a certain type of the good boy that's singing, it's all boys singing. So, I think they sort of hit that as soon as they're new and just assume that that's what we do here.

And, you know, that's far better than any explanation from a person in authority, isn't it?

Well, I don't think... you can't really do that in an artificial way. I mean, to build that up where it hasn't been, I think, would be a long and slow process of gradual work that would take a fair time, I think.

**So, what about, in your own experience, going back to school, you were quite keen on all of this personally?**

Yes, I liked singing at school. Back in those days I don't think the school would have embraced it as much as it does now. So, I always felt a bit of the odd one out, but I just enjoyed it so much that I didn't care anyway - I just wanted to do it.

**What was it then about the experience that was so enjoyable for you? Can you think what it did for you, or perhaps what it does now?**

I've just... I've always enjoyed making music, and the harmonising and reading music and... I was always pretty quick to pick up the parts and, I think, probably, as a fairly precocious sort of kid, tried to sort of take on some leadership in teaching the other kids parts, and things like that, and I was involved in the drama and the musicals, and I love those sort of things as well. So, I guess it was just at some inner level it was meeting a need of mine for musical expression, so I saw I had opportunities to do that.

**But you felt a tension which, as you say, you overcame because of the simple joy of what you were doing.**

Yes. I don't think... in those days, the school I attended was a much more – I don't know... a harder place in some ways and it... you know, the sporting guys were the ones that got all the attention and the plaudits, and I guess it was seen as a bit eccentric to be involved in music and drama and debating, and not so much in the sport, whereas I think [School A] nowadays is a very different feel and all the better. I don't think the tension would be quite as strong as it was in those days.

**What about, then, there is a question in the Questionnaire about Australian culture, and singing in Australian culture, and you mentioned there about the change in school culture – is that somehow contiguous with the change in Australian culture?**

Look, I think there's singing and singing, and I think it's ok to be singing your heart out at a football match or with a group of mates after you've been drinking and singing certain sorts of songs, but whether, in broader Australian culture, they would feel the same way about singing hymns in church, or the sort of corporate singing we do at school, I'm not so sure.

**So, the context is probably...**

I think context is very important, and I'm sure that's partly why it works here, in that the context is such that it's just accepted now that this is part of what we do. And so that sort of... whether these same boys would feel comfortable singing outside in other contexts is less certain. I mean, at big interschool sporting things they're quite happy to

sing the 'Anthem' from 'Chess' or whatever it is as a sort of a demonstration of their virility or whatever, but, in all contexts? I'm not so sure, I don't know.

**What about, say from your professional level and your colleagues, are you conscious of any discussion amongst Heads about this phenomenon, or people saying, "I wish the kids would sing," or, "I'm glad that we've got a singing culture?" Does this ever arise?**

I used to talk about it with my colleagues at Caulfield Grammar, because I was trying to encourage them to sing more. It was hard, especially in Assembly, and we'd talk about ways of trying to do that. Around other Heads of schools like this... maybe, it's not a huge topic of conversation, maybe just a general bemoaning of the fact that people aren't singing or... but then I sound very glib when I say, "Well, my boys sing!"

**That's right. You'd have to be a bit careful...**

It's seems to be part of the culture of a place, doesn't it?

**Yep. But as you say, like, if it isn't there, you have to build something up, so...**

And I also believe you can change cultures in schools. When I went to [School A], we were very consciously trying to change a culture there, from a fairly non-academic culture to a more academic culture, and I think that's been very successful. And I think, you know, you don't have to accept that culture is a given, and the way the boys are now is the way they're always going to be. I think you can very much change that by the messages you give in everything that you do. You just have to be patient and do it bit by bit and build it up.

**And, I suppose, continue to nurture the things that are important to you. And you mentioned before about singing and whether, perhaps, you know, if you didn't keep up some sort of pressure or some sort of influence that it might decline...**

Yes, I'm sure.

**So, in what ways do you think that, apart from the fact that boys are passing this on to each other in Assembly... are you conscious of ways, like, you've mentioned the fact that you sing publicly?**

Yes, and I think we structure our program through the year in such a way that it values singing, and the House Singing is one aspect of that. The House Singing, by far, would be the most popular House competition we have.

**So, what form does that take? How does that operate?**

Each House chooses two songs: a harmony song and a unison song. And they also do a musical instrumental piece, but the House... they elect their own conductor, they train themselves up, they can get a bit advice from our Director of Music, but mainly it's their own work. And then we perform it all on one night in our auditorium. Having a big auditorium helps, too, but they are so passionate about that competition and, you know, it's not worth any more than any of the other competitions, but I think because everybody does it - you don't have to be a top athlete to be the star of it - all of the



Houses believe that if they pull together and perform, they have a chance of winning this, and it just seems to be one of the highlights of the year. I've said to people here, that, if I had to choose one thing to show someone the culture of [School B], I'd bring them to the House Music Competition.

**So, what sort of time is involved in preparing for this? Is there much time out of class?**

Not a huge amount of time. They tend to use a lot of their House periods for about a month before the competition, and then they will call their own morning and after-school rehearsals to work on it. But, probably about a month of training to do it.

**And is this something that... how long has this competition been in place?**

Oh, a long time, quite a long time. I don't know when it started, but certainly much longer than I've been here.

**So, was it in your first year here that you heard it and were struck by it?**

Yes, absolutely, and ever since, it just seems to go from strength to strength. And the other thing is our big concert – a biennial concert at the Hamer Hall – where we would have several massed singing items there, and the whole school will stand and sing, so we'll have over a thousand voices. And they'll be secular songs, and Broadway songs, and some hymns, and some very jingoistic things – you know, 'Land of Hope and Glory' and all that sort of stuff...

**Wonderful!**

But that's the stuff that really sends shivers down your spine. And, they'll play with full orchestra on the stage, and they all just stand and they sing. And, again, sometimes the gusto is more than the skill of singing, but the emotional charge that comes from that is enormous. And, the students who are in Year 12, particularly, find that a very emotional time. They all stand around the balcony at the back and the rest of the auditorium stands and sings. It's just an extraordinary thing. So, in the lead up to that, we will have a number of rehearsals instead of Assemblies, or after Assemblies, with different sections of the school, one year level at a time, bringing groups of year levels together, and ultimately the whole school together to rehearse that on our stage before we go in to the Hamer Hall. So, there are a lot of messages in that about what's important, and the value that we place on this; how I think we all feel that, if we can get this right, it will be a very special thing, and they take it very seriously. So, I think that flows on to everything else we do, too: all those little messages about what we value. So, the singing gets as much credence as the sporting results, as the academic results, as anything else.

**So, in that sense, like, the singing is a particularly inspiring or bonding force in the school culture.**

Yes, absolutely, absolutely. I think it is.

**And as you were saying there, if you have an athletics carnival, if you're not good at athletics, then you're on the margins of that activity...**

That's right.

**But with singing...**

Everybody can be there...

**You can be in the middle of it doing a hopeless job, but it doesn't matter.**

But you're part of it, and you're swept along with it, and I think that's what makes culture in a school: those massed, those common experiences that we all share together, here, in *this* context, as part of *this* school, and that's what builds a sense of community across the whole thing.

**And, it gets into that 'who-we-are' sort of dimension.**

Yes, that's right.

**"How do you explain who we are?" Well...**

Well, part of who we are is we're the school that sings, you, know, that's right. We're the school that sings the 'Anthem' from 'Chess', you know. It is an extraordinary thing. It engages them on an emotional level, where not many things can to that extent, I don't think. You can engage them intellectually, and there's *some* emotion barracking for your team in a football game, or watching an athletic carnival and you're barracking for our school, but with the massed singing, you're part of it, you are part of this experience. That's quite powerful.

**It is, and in some ways it's like a transcendent thing – it's much bigger than who I am in the middle of it.**

It is. I think that's it.

**So, in terms of your own role, we've talked about how you would be visible in a public context, like an Assembly, singing and showing that you're part of it ... when you're talking with colleagues, do you have any ongoing feedback from them? Is it something that perhaps take for granted?**

Colleagues at our school?

**Yes.**

I think they all like it. I think they all like being part of it. They stand up and sing, too. And in the big concerts, they're just as much singing their hearts out as the students. So, I think that's something that bonds us with the students, too, as a staff, that we like it too and are part of that. I think they generally like the students we have, and get on well with the students here, and I think the singing's part of that relationship.

**Because, in a way - once again to take the athletics comparison - the teachers and coaches prepare the students to go and do it, but with the singing,**

You do it with them.

**You can participate with them on an equal footing, so to speak.**

Yes, that's right. We all learn the songs with them.

**And, I suppose, when you look at it too, how many activities are there where you could have the whole student body and the whole staff participating simultaneously in the one thing in a given space of time?**

And that sense of that loss of self. It's part of something bigger, but it needs the discipline of being all together, but we stand shoulder to shoulder and sing together. I think that's a powerful metaphor for what we're trying to do in the school: stand side by side, and we walk on.

**And obviously it's so well entrenched in the culture that people anticipate the buzz of it, of the experience of it.**

They really do, and, you know, 2008... the even years are the years we go to Hamer Hall and already people have started talking about... will it be a concert year this year? And so, it sort of... it filters through musicians and non-musicians alike, you know. That's the other interesting thing about that concert, it's not just the musicians on stage performing, but the whole school comes and we all perform through the singing. So, it's a different experience of a concert which can be a passive thing sometimes.

**Exactly. So, there's a much different level of engagement from all of those involved, than there would be from a concert where there's a high level group of performers and people spectating. So, when you think... You were mentioning before about school culture, and how this is a powerful force in school culture: are there other things that aren't of a musical nature that you rate with it, or does it stand apart as something significant in its own right?**

I think it does. Look, I think school culture is made up of many different things and it's all the things that we do, said and unsaid, and the messages we give about what we value and what we stand for, and what, as a community, we value... and, we equally value intellectual achievement and academic endeavour; and we try hard at sport – we haven't been terrifically good at sport, but we try hard at that too; we've also had very high standards in our art work. It's trying to take a renaissance view of education and the sort of men we're trying to educate – not just for university entrance, but for life – and to have a range of skills in their control, which is not just one-dimensional - just academic or sport - but that you have a go at everything and you involve that. So, I think it's a very important part of that parcel of things that we try and present to the boys as this is what it means to be an educated person, that you should be aware of all these things, and these experiences are the sorts of things that will shape your values and tastes and, you know, attitude to life in the future.

**It sounds to me you're very conscious of that fact, in the broader context of your educational philosophy, that the whole singing, the identity, the corporate experience, is one of the key factors.**

I think it is very important. I think it is. And that might be just because I'm prejudiced towards music, and I love music, and I get a kick out of the singing, but I think it's also part of the broader educational mission which is... which is about making people. It's a

vision that we're trying to make good people, not just get good scores. And to me, the musical and artistic dimension is a very important one, especially for young men, and to help make them gentler people... it's a simple way for them to get in tune, I guess, with the spiritual dimension and the emotional dimension within themselves, where they don't have to have long meaningful discussions about – which they find quite awkward to do – but they can just experience it and learn to love it, and I think... I have faith that that can be a transforming experience for them.

**And the fact that this is a congenial world to you, I suppose, means that you have a different consciousness of it, I suppose, from perhaps a Head who doesn't have any musical ability or desire, really, to be very involved.**

Yes, maybe.

**Are you conscious of opportunities, when you're articulating school visions or values, when you're talking to particular groups... have you made any particular reference to the singing, or do you highlight it when you have those opportunities?**

Yes I do. I give lots of talks to prospective parents and try to give them an insight into our school and what the school stands for, and I invariably mention that we sing. And to me, that sort of quickly communicates to parents who may not have had any experience of that, some of the values of the school, some of the advantages of boys' education... it gives them an indication that we're trying to reach on a number of levels of boys' development, and also the strength of the community itself. You get a sense that there's a healthy, vibrant community there when you hear them all joining together and singing.

**What better evidence could there be?**

Yes, well, that's right.

**And, as you were saying earlier, if there's one thing you'd want to show people, it would be the House Singing.**

Yes, and not necessarily for their skill in singing, because I don't think they're always the most skilful of singers, but for the vigour of their singing, their enthusiasm, and their preparedness to put aside their inhibitions and lose themselves in it. I think that's terrific.

**And there's a real power in the nature of that voice, even if you say it's a bit rough or so, you can feel the power and the commitment.**

Oh, yes. Yes, you can.

**That's great. Well, I think we're getting close to the end of the marathon! I just wondered, Paul, if there's anything that we haven't covered that you anticipated we might, or anything you wanted to add in the light of areas that we've covered because, from my point of view, you know, it's been an excellent coverage of the key issues.**

Yeah, okay; no, that's fine, Daryl. I just... I know you're focussing on the role of principals, and I think it would be difficult for a principal acting alone to try to do this. I think it needs the active cooperation of a number of key people across a school to build a culture like this, and the determination to see it through. I suspect you could be disheartened early on, if you were going from a school that didn't sing at all to try and get to a school that does sing; there'd be lots of setbacks and there'd be lots of... it's hard to convince the kids to open their mouths and let fly, and there's all sorts of tricks, I guess, you'd use to do that, but I just think you need to be persistent and you need the support of a core group of people that share that vision. So, the principal is part of it, but I think it needs to be more than the principal, probably.

**But, do you think... say, for example you had a school where there was no singing culture and the principal said, "Well, I'm happy with that – we'll do other things." Then, there *wouldn't* be: if no teacher was employed, or no time was made available, or...**

Yes, of course. It would be very difficult, and if there was no vision there to try **and show how it could be different, it probably just wouldn't happen.**

**And I suppose, similarly, if, you know, a Head came in here and said, "Well, look, I really think too much time is taken up with the singing," and started to hose it down, you know, that's possibly an example of where the head's influence could be highly detrimental.**

That's absolutely true. And it could... I think it could fade fairly quickly. Even here, I sometimes get teachers saying, "We're losing yet another class for one of these rehearsals – don't you think we're getting a bit over the top here?" So, I've got to fight for it, and I've got to, sort of hold the line a bit and say: well no, this is important too, and it doesn't happen all the time, but when it happens we need to support it. So yes, there's some role there.

**Well, in a way, I mean, that seems a very key role, because if you back down in that instance, well, you will inevitably lose it because the time wouldn't be there to produce what you want to achieve.**

So they wouldn't get that sort of emotional rush.

**So, from that point of view, even though, you know, the Head may not have the expertise and be in there teaching the stuff, once again, if the Head doesn't sanction it, it's like a whole lot of other things, it just won't happen.**

True.

**And it's not, you know, so much an ego thing: "Oh, without me it just won't happen."**

No, no.

**But from that point of view, it could be argued...**

Well, it has to be valued in the way that you value other things. And I think we're very good at letting our students know what we value: not always by articulating it, but by

what we do and by body language even, and all sorts of little unsaid messages. They pick up very quickly what we value and I think, for this to work, you really do need to value it.

**That's great.**

All right, terrific.

**Thanks very much, Paul. We'll close the interview at this point.**

- END OF INTERVIEW -

## Appendix F

### Transcript of Interview with Participant Three

#### I. Interviewer

P3. Participant Three

**So, Jeremy, thanks very much for agreeing to this. I appreciate your time, I know it's valuable, and I'd like to just explain a little bit about the context of this interview. You have, of course, worked on the Questionnaire in advance, and the idea is that this is a semi-structured interview. So, the Questionnaire raises agenda for us, and the idea of the interview is to pick up some of that, or to go wherever the discussion takes us. It's quite free-ranging, but obviously we have that core agenda that the Questionnaire raised. So, it's really up to us, and I suppose the first thing I'd like to ask you is, when you were writing your answers to the Questionnaire, what sort of things stayed with you or became clear for you while you were doing that, that we might begin by opening up?**

I think, for me, firstly some purposive reflection on the history of what we would call 'massed singing' within this organisation and because the school's recently celebrated its centenary, I guess I've been mindful of the... what's gone before, and the traditions, and also therefore, the impact or the influence that the massed singing program at the school has had. So, both a sense of where this has developed and evolved from, and I guess the other provocative thing for me was some of the questions which were inviting me to think about the 'where to from here?' Like anything else, you'd expect there's going to be change and evolution, and because it's been such a central pillar of the school, it was quite illuminating to reflect on 'well, that might be the case, but where might this lead to as the program and the school continues to evolve?' So they were the things that stood out to me. I also like the sort of self-reflection as, in fact, a past student of the school – the way I'd experienced it as compared to now; my responsibilities as a leader of the school of fostering and nurturing that tradition.

**So perhaps if we take that point you're making there, because I know you wrote about this in your Questionnaire answer, your experience at school of involvement, and your experience being a positive one. So, when you contrast that with your position now, what are some of the observations that you make, because you have a foot in both camps, don't you?**

And to some extent I think that's also important to the boys: their sense - and singing's just an example of it - but their sense that I've sat where they've sat and gone through the experiences that they'd had - different as they may have been of a previous generation - I think also then lends something to their reception and their own comfort, really, with adjustments that sometimes we know that they are making to massed singing as an expectation of their new school. It calls me to pause and reflect that there had been, I guess, a prior exposure for both me within my family to public singing of various shapes and forms well before I got to the school and, given that I'd sat in the first assembly of our new intake students about two weeks previously and listened to their trepidation in their singing, and felt sort of compelled to then go and comment on it when I spoke to them at the assembly and say, 'Well, look, you'll really have a sense of having made the transition to this school when you're going to be finding that you'll

rise to your feet to sing with a confidence and an expectation – it'll be something that you'll be looking forward to doing rather than, as they were, approaching it with some obviously significant anxiety. And so, I guess it's lead me to sympathise with the experience, which will be a very common one for the majority of our students, I'd imagine, who are coming in, and this is the first time they've encountered any form of massed singing. I can appreciate more how potentially daunting that could be.

**So, your entry point – you have really only one major entry point for students coming to the school – so, what is their first experience? Do they have a practice before they sing with others? They do, on their own?**

Yes, well, in fact, I guess there's some subtlety to how we've gone about that. The new students will come to an Orientation Day in December, prior to their formal commencement at the school, and as part of that they are – to use that US military term – they're 'embedded' in an assembly of, if you like, the students they're replacing – the students moving from Year 9 to 10 – so they're seated at the front of the hall and then have the singing, if you like, 'wave' over them from who will be their senior students. So, they've experienced it without having had any obligation to participate. We've also strongly encouraged them and their families to attend the Speech Night at the end of the year, which is certainly the massed singing program of the school writ large. It really is its culmination. So, they'll probably have had that tangential experience, and I guess it's a degree of introduction to the expectation, so that is part of what it is to be a student of this school. They will then have, on joining, two rehearsals which will be a rehearsal just of the year level with a major vocal trainer. So, they will have had two opportunities of that, learning, in terms of development of a repertoire, to sing – and that's an interesting one for us to experience – the national anthem properly, and it's extraordinary to encounter the variation for a start. They're coming from over 300 different schools, so the variations of their prior exposure to even the song is itself illuminating, but also to try and begin to develop some skill and technique in their singing – and then our school song. And they'll be the first two pieces of repertoire that the will be exposed to. And then, initially within the formal assemblies of school, they are then, of course, joined by their now Year 10 peers. They tend to, I think, ride on the back of those students for a while, and it is almost a case of gradually them finding their own voice and their own volume within that. The singing rehearsals continue each week, so they're being skilled up as they go.

**So, when these boys come in Year 9 to this school, some of them, of course, would never really have sung before...**

Correct, the majority...

**The majority wouldn't have. Some might have had some experience, but you're dealing with a majority that have to be schooled quickly, in a sense, or that come into a reality that demands that of them.**

And I think the important thing there is that expectation has been created early. If you like, they know it's part of the package of deciding to come to the school. I've always had an ambivalence about why it is with anything in education you would insist that something is compulsory, certainly by this age – we're talking about students at the age of 15, 16 – and generally in most school's that's a time where the obligations of a compulsory or core curriculum begin to fade, being replaced by elective components.



But, I think there's something to be said, both for the implication it has for a collective ethos, but also of, if you like, not having an out, of the boys understanding that they *must* participate. What's interesting to me is – and it's a comment that a senior music educator from another school made, after adjudicating the choral competition of the school – that it's one thing to invite and entice a cohort of young men to sing, but the magic that we seem to be able to do, generation after generation here, is for them to do that with passion. There is actually a sense of belonging and commitment to it, rather than just go through the motions. I do wonder about what the chemistry of that is and how that comes about. To be honest, I think it is related to, then, what is the next exposure that they will have. So they'll settle into the routines of both their singing rehearsal and then, at least in the case of Year 9s, every second week an assembly where they will, if nothing else, be singing the school song at the commencement of the assembly and the national anthem at the end. They will witness in each of those assemblies also a musical item. Interestingly, the first two musical items were both small vocal ensembles of their senior students, so I guess, seeing a little bit too of where you can go with it and what excellent singing can look like.

### **Where the expertise can be demonstrated.**

Yes, but the next exposure they then have, which they will hit in their third week in the school – it's already commenced now – is rehearsals for a House-based choral competition. Now, often the repertoire for that's a little bit more, not contemporary, but a little bit more jocular, so I've just listened to one of the Houses rehearse Tom Lehrer's 'Masochism Tango'. So, you know, there's often a bit of fun and play with it, but nevertheless it's also purposive where they're then singing, knowing that literally now, in three and a half weeks' time, a quarter of the school, which they have a sort of a sense of ownership and belonging and commitment to in the House system, will stand and compete with their peers. They, I guess, feel a degree of obligation. They're then, rather than outsiders with their older peers standing behind them, if you like, inviting them into the culture of singing. They're very much dispersed within a cohort which includes students from Year 12 to Year 9, all with the goal of winning a competition – something that, I guess, very much plays to psychology and the egos of a young adolescent, but I would suggest once they've had the experience of the Choral Competition, a very significant critical mass of them have been won over, if you like, to the passionateness of the singing. And it's one thing, I think – I wouldn't by any means claim that it's peculiar to this school – but I think it's one thing that this school with its massed singing program excels in, is that, literally - and I'm using the word quite deliberately - is that passion which the boys experience.

**You've mentioned the fact that there are rehearsals and assemblies on a regular basis; also that there's a House Singing competition; and additionally, that there's a Speech Night performance - would they be the main aspects of the program?**

Correct. After, I guess, the original introduction and then orientation to the singing program that is occurring through the singing assemblies, the way in which the development of their skills and the performative component of the program will then work, is that they will then begin to rehearse repertoire to perform at a specific event. So, even within the assembly cycle, there are three occasions where the two halves of the school – the Junior Assembly, the Senior Assembly – rehearse towards effectively a performance at the assembly, to which there'll be invited guests. So, again I guess, it's stepping up both the repertoire... the sophistication of the repertoire steps up as well,

again towards a goal. I think that notion of both performance, so that it's not singing for its intrinsic sake, but also singing with an end product, as it were, in mind, I think that has some import into why it is seen as purposive for the boys. It also stages the year, and then literally from late term 3, they are then very much fast-tracked through acquiring the repertoire for Speech Night. Now, the Speech Night repertoire would generally be a minimum of eight songs, often, or commonly, I guess, across three languages, so there is a number of traditional songs that the school would sing which includes 'Gaudeamus Igitur' as a Latin number. It's not unusual, in fact, it's probably become the standard practice to have an operatic number which will generally be in Italian – we've occasionally sung in other languages. So, that's something that, by the end of their first year, all students will have had some exposure to, with Speech Night as the culmination.

**So, it seems in a way that there'd hardly be a week where there isn't some emphasis on massed singing and preparation for an event.**

That's true. I think it says something... I talked before about the passion... in a way the ultimate litmus test of that and the commitment of the boys personally is what happens with the Year 12s. The Year 12s, of course, are going to miss the significant slab of preparation for Speech Night because of their VCE final studies and exams, so they're pretty much zoned out from late term 3 until the completion of the VCE exams. However, in the time where, in the rest of Australia, things like Schoolies' Week are occurring, we require that they return to rehearse. Now, to be blunt, they have nothing but a moral conviction to the school at that point. We could not, in the end, if you like, if we were to even consider such a thing, hold much over them: they're done, they're finished with the school in a sense, but Speech Night is to them their last hurrah literally, so it would be unusual, out of a cohort of 330 plus, if we're missing more than a dozen when we call those additional rehearsals after their school year is finished. And they turn up because they love it. They rehearse because they know they want it to be their last hurrah at Speech Night. So, it says something about the commitment we are able to foster and the take up that it has for the students.

**And from a cultural point of view - within the culture of the school that is – could you talk a bit about how that bonds, about how that creates identity?**

Look, I've had a significant history in research around boys' education in particular, and when asked a question by a colleague some time ago about what single program I could recommend that they might consider introducing in their school - in this case a coeducational school – to develop a much more pro-academic and pro-social environment for their young men, I mean, literally without thinking I said, 'Consider a massed singing program.' And although it was something I sort of leapt at fairly instinctively, the more I've thought about it, the more I'm convinced of that. As one of our music teachers... I might digress for a minute to show you where we've sort of pushed the edge of the music program. We've had an unrehearsed choir in the school known as 'The Chorale'. Its membership in any year is in excess of 50. Again, it's a voluntary choir so it's only a case... the only commitment a student has to make is that they'll turn up and they'll rehearse, and with a co-curricular program in the school that means that there's something on at almost any time or part of the school day, that it's a voluntary commitment that is a hard one for students to make, and yet the choir has grown and grown in its numbers. It's also an interesting group because it really draws from, if you like, all the different peer cultures that exist within the school: members of

the school's First XVIII will be members of that group, some of our rather quirky and isolated young men who are looking for somewhere to call home will be a member of that group; it's really extraordinarily diverse. Culturally, we're a very, quite diverse community. There's over 40 different major language and cultural groups in the school, but pretty much all of them get represented within the Chorale. So, it's not owned by anybody and it's seen as a very eclectic group, and of course, no previous training is required. Now, it has been the vanguard group of singing in the school, and they've been invited internationally and nationally to perform at peak conferences and eisteddfods, and they have taken arrangements that are unique for them - often arranged by some of the boys themselves - mixtures of, for want of a better name, world music or ethnic music traditions, and also mix them with dance. They will perform and dance at the same time. Now, my view would be, if you attempted that within the normal cultures of most coeducational schools, or for that matter, probably within the operating culture of most boys' schools, you would struggle for the boys, even if it was to never happen... feel that they're putting themselves at sort of grave risk before their peers. But when... the boys love the Chorale to perform. They perform to the acclaim of their peers, and they just keep pushing the boundaries of that, and if that's the history of Chorale, to go back to the point I was going to make, when I spoke to the people involved and I said, 'How have you created a climate, both for the Chorale itself, let alone within the school, where the boys can do that and know that they will be acclaimed rather than suffer the sort of approbation of their peers for doing so?' He said 'It's the massed singing program.' He said, 'Once you've got any of those students over a hurdle where they have to stand next to their close friends and peers and sing, and sing and enjoy it, there's no end to that. Where you can push that is up to you.' And I think that has been the learned experience of more recent times that we've had with the program. But, going back to your question, I think once you've done that, what you can do in a classroom, well away from the singing program, where you can push the risk-taking of learning with the boys, has a flow-on effect. We know that a major impediment to boys' both academic success, and I'd probably say also, if you like, their social or even their psychological development, is this anxiety about peer group pressure, and when we're working within a broader culture where, in general, adolescent male peer culture is anti-learning, to some extent potentially anti-social in some of its harder edge, to be able, even if it's within these halls, to create a culture where the opposite's going to happen, where boys are encouraged for, in fact, going outside of the strictures of even masculinity and what's ok to do as an adolescent boy. And if you can do that in a supportive environment and show them that it's something that opens up avenues and opportunities for them, I think the effects it has include a disempowerment of that negative peer culture, because they've always had that alternate experience - you say, well, you know 'Why would you do that?' To give you some example of its flow-on effect, we've then had dance groups; dance troupes of boys develop in the school. That's new; the school wouldn't have attempted that five years ago. They perform at Speech Night now. Now, I think that's come, my strong belief is that's come from the climate and the ripple effect that the climate of massed singing has had, so you can push boundaries on the boys' conceptions of what's ok and not ok as an academic student, as a young man, or as a good citizen, and I don't know that we have yet explored the limits of where that can take you.

**So, it seems to me - correct me if this is not your impression - but, to some extent you bring in a whole lot of boys whose experience, by and large, is totally foreign to what we've been discussing, they come into a culture that shapes them, and then**

**they move further through it to the point where they begin shaping the culture, and so there's a cycle in a way, once it's established as a phenomenon in the school.**

And again, it plays to the psychology of adolescence, that any new student to this school will look to the patterns and the conduct of their older peers. What is ok in this environment, what is expected of me? And if it's the older peers are... the impression about whether it's singing or whatever else it might be, is 'Well, we just sort of do it because we have to', then that will become the culture, or that will become what those boys will adopt. When they see that it's something, even if they themselves are saying 'Well, there's something intangible about this; these boys clearly love doing this and enjoy it; I don't feel that sense of passion about it, but they clearly do, so it's probably worth me sticking with it until I find out why it is that they are so enthusiastic'.

**And when you came into this position, you came in knowing that this is part of the culture of the school. So, how do you stand now in your understanding of how you influence it, how you have influenced it, what your part in all of this is?**

Look, I'd certainly say I understood it always to be an integral component of the school. My own experience of a student also told me that it was something that was an enjoyable component of the school. I think, as a principal, what came as a fairly sort of revelatory consideration for me was how vital it is to creating a very affirming culture within the school, and socially affirming as well as academically affirming. Hence why I would... I'd say to any of my colleagues, and we know universally in the Western world that issue about disengagement from education for young men is almost a universal phenomena, well, there are many roads to address that, but this is one that I would have a confidence you could approach with some degree of confidence of success. So, I think it was that for me that I wouldn't have said beforehand I had a strong sense of it being a vital change force. I thought of it more as the standard, traditional practice of the school, but its capacity to, if you like, evolve an ethos and a culture in the school is significant. I can't think of another program in the school that you could, Machiavellianly or otherwise, start to evolve the school's sense of its own spirit, and its own ethos as much as a massed singing program could do.

**So, one thing specifically: when you have occasion to speak to a new intake, or, I presume, to the parents of a new intake, is this something that you would speak about at length?**

Yes. In fact, I've based at a, one of what you might call our orientation or information sessions for prospective parents, I've based a whole component of it around singing, and I said, 'Well, if you want a sense of what's unusual and peculiar about this school, it's the singing program,' and explained, as I have just previously, explained a little bit of why I believe that to be true, and then invited those people just to come to Speech Night and say 'Well, if you really want to get a sense of what this place can be like, then come along and at least have the opportunity to witness that if you're not participating.'

**And would you get feedback from staff who are new to the school and suddenly hear this, and haven't experienced it before?**

Ah yes, I mean literally. I'll use not a staff member: we had a visit from the premier, the previous premier the year before last. He came to an assembly, I welcomed him onto the stage, he was sitting beside me; as the boys began to sing, you could literally

see him not only gasp, but almost push back in the chair. If nothing else, almost the sound wave hit him, and a lot of our staff who've not experienced that before – I mean it is, in a sense, a wonderful privilege to sit on the stage of a hall and have a massed choir of 600 sing loudly and enthusiastically with you as their audience – that, of itself, is almost viscerally an experience. And universally, and many of our staff *have* come from schools that *do* have an element of a singing program, they've said, 'I've never experienced it like that before: I've experienced a sort of a drone-like recitation of the national anthem, but this is something different.'

**Would there be occasions when you've discussed this with colleagues, principals who are colleagues? I'd imagine there must be some envious ones!**

Well, yes! I think they're... if they've had no experience of that themselves, and if we're candid about it, the number of schools, boys' schools or coed schools, that have a strong and a long-established massed singing program, which is the whole of the school singing, are few and far-between in Victoria, so within those schools, that's probably where the envy is, I'd say. Hence the comment the adjudicator made; he said. 'Well, we have a singing program; our boys sing, and they sing technically well, but they sing with nothing like that commitment and passion.' But, to other schools, that don't have a singing program, I think they find it perplexing. They say, 'Well, why would you say a singing program is so important?' They think of it as unlikely, and if I say the things I have about how important it can be as an agent of change, and positive change within a school, they're bemused.

**I suppose, theoretically though, you could have when you came in, or you could now, influence the priorities of other activities in the school over singing, because not everyone values it in the way you do. So, you have a role, I suppose, in sustaining and supporting, and in your role of leadership, influencing the culture, and the directions in which you'd like to see it go. So, obviously, you're someone very consciously aware of the benefits of it and very publicly sponsoring what's going on in the school too.**

That's true, and one thing that intrigues me a bit is that, the sort of avenue of my predecessors have had very different views about priorities of education, but the singing program has existed in this school from its inception, and under the leadership now of about fifteen different principals, so it's interesting to me that all of them, with different priorities and perspectives, have all continued to support the singing program in the school. There are periods of time where it has grown and evolved more readily, but there's never been any even intimation from a previous principal that maybe it should be diminished as a program. And it's something, I may say, that occasionally we are finding we are asked to defend to parents. Interestingly, not to the boys, but the parents find it, when they first come to the school, find it a bit perplexing, maybe alarming, that we are still taking a period out of each Year 12's timetable in their final year for them to sing, and, you know, they may say, 'Look, we appreciate it – it's a priority for the school, but really, isn't the academic program, for Year 12 the absolute priority?' Now, one thing I think I commented on in the survey was last year in term 3, so that's really when the pedal was hitting the floor for the Year 12s, I went in turn to each of the form assemblies just to have a chat with them, and there was a survey we asked them to complete and one of the questions was: What elements of the school's programs would you identify as being supportive and helpful to you in your preparations for your final exams? Singing crept up so often, I was wondering whether they were trying to take the

mickey out of me, so I actually went back and talked to their representatives and they were immediate in their response, in saying “No: it continues to reinforce and support our sense of camaraderie, of mutual belonging, of mutual immersion in a task, it’s therapeutic to us in the rigour of the school day with all of the level of just pressure of the academic program,’ and their own and their families’ and their schools’ expectations of them. They find it almost a cathartic release and they identify that immediately. They say, ‘Whatever you do, don’t take singing away!’ They see its value to them both therapeutically, but also, I guess, within their sense of spirit. So, if the parents ask me now, that’s my response!

**And reinforced from competent sources.**

Yes!

**So, you talked there a little bit there about even the visceral dimension of singing, and there is a physical sensation there, isn’t there? The fact that for Year 12s in a busy day, there’s some degree of release as well. What about, in the context of the other things that the school does, this is obviously a unifying and a symbolic activity that large groups can do as well, whereas, in a lot of the activity of the school there are small groups engaged in classes and sports teams. Are there other comparable opportunities the boys have in the program of the school that bring them together in a similar way?**

I mentioned the House Competition, but that’s still massed, I mean that’s, well, 330 approximately students as a choir. It’s interesting, there’s nothing that exists formally except for, then, the ensembles and choirs. Now, there’s probably around about 200 students who, in addition to the massed singing component of the school, are involved in some form of formal singing through their involvement in a vocal group, or an ensemble, or a choir. But, what you would find around here is boys, collectively – it may only be two or three – singing at their locker, or inevitably sports teams going off to compete somewhere will break into song. I mentioned the school has recently had its centenary, and there’s a school history, and there’s a wonderful quote in it from somebody who’s not a student of this school, but reflecting on his friends who *were*, and he said, ‘The trouble with [School C] students is that not only can’t they stop talking about their school, but whenever there’s more than two of them are gathered together, they burst into song.’ And so there’s a degree to which, quite spontaneously, you will hear some sort of informal singing happening in classrooms and in the corridors of the school, but there’s nothing that’s orchestrated, literally speaking in that way, but it is part of, then, the hub of the school.

**So, in your program, and in what you’re doing with massed singing, you’re actually being highly counter-cultural.**

In terms of particularly traditional ideas about masculinity, yes, I believe very much so. We produce individuals, we don’t produce a type of student, but there’s a general feeling that – and this is something that I say has evolved in the last twenty years of the school – that the singing program also means, at a very critical time in young men’s, I guess, social development, if not their psychological and emotional development, makes for some fairly fine gentlemen, and that’s the word we quite deliberately use with them. And there’s gentleness and a sociability about them. My experience of all-boys’ environments, whether we’re talking about schools or other, is they *can* lend themselves

to being very hard and steely, if not, in fact, quite aggressively nasty in terms of their influence upon the way a young man might develop. But they don't have to be like that, and you *can* create a very different environment. I think singing is a very significant contribution to that counter-cultural notion. You won't find that sort of macho mentality here. The fact that a member of the First XVIII, or several of them, will be part of a choir is quite subversive in a way in terms of popular notions about masculinity.

**And so, it's true in a way, isn't it, that boys together in this sort of single-sex environment can give permission to each other to behave in certain ways that won't happen in other combinations, say in a co-ed situation, in the same way.**

And it's something I *have* pondered. That's exactly right. It's about the giving of permission, and we give permission mutually to each other to do this in a way because the school requires us to, but having given each other that permission, what else do we give ourselves permission to do? And it's where you can take that that is, in fact, its counter-cultural strength. I've wondered about the degree to which you could replicate this in a coed environment. We all know that the research tells us that in the genderfication of even just music, voice is something that is very much down the feminine end of the spectrum. There's good research around that. It has certainly been my experience in coed schools that, if you just have a choral program, it will be predominantly a girls' program, if it's voluntary. I think that's one reason why I would say that it almost does need to be a compulsory program. It needs to be that it's a universal commitment; otherwise, there is, for all the reasons of peer anxiety, there'll be an opt out that will happen even for those boys who may be prepared to give it a go. I think you could. You'd have to work at it, and you'd have to work a lot harder. I think you could transfer the sort of experience that we've had to a coed setting. Maybe you might even approach it as a single-sex boys' choir and see where that took you, but I think it might lend itself a little bit to the *Billy Elliot* syndrome and you... those boys would be typed by their peers. I appreciate it would be more complex in a coed setting, but I don't believe impossible.

**Because one of the things on your side is the sheer scale of the activity, isn't it, and the fact that it's easy to be caught up in it; it's easy to become part of something that's so big initially, and you can sing and participate without standing out and being noticed individually.**

Yes, there is anonymity. I guess that can work two ways: you can also hide within, and the anonymity may mean you're opting out as best you can, but it's interesting – we don't see a lot of that. I mean, we see it certainly initially, even the boys who are mouthing words and there's nothing actually coming out of that mouth, but it is in the end, I think, something about the visceral experience, or the spiritual experience of singing. That doesn't last; they want to give voice, and the fact that they hear a voice next to them, beside them, behind them, I think does enough to break down those anxieties or those barriers. You know, 'Everyone else is doing it; I'm beginning to look like the odd one out here. What have I got to lose?'

**And I think, you know, it can feel good; it can be an uplifting experience, and I think, at its peak moments, like a transcendent experience. It takes you somewhere else.**

I used the word 'passion' before quite deliberately. You could call it a spiritual experience. Certainly what I see, and I see in the faces of the boys, is that it's a passionate experience. You see that they are not just mechanically going through the motions of something: there is a clear inner feeling and an inner desire that they're expressing when they sing.

**Well, that's great Jeremy. We're coming to the close of the interview, but the last thing is just to invite you to add anything that we mightn't have covered that you were wanting to say, or to make any reflection on the interview.**

The only other thing I thought... I was pleased to make that commentary about its connections to how it may assist to redress some of what ails notions, contemporary notions, of masculinity because I think there's a lot to be said about that. The other thing I might mention in passing is then, if you like, the way somehow it has inspired the boys who've come through the school. So, to use a very obvious example, Jonathan Welch, who's an old boy of the school, would say what inspired him to take on the Choir of Hard Knocks was his experience not only of the power of song, but also, then, of its capacity to change human beings, and I think a lot of the boys do experience that: that somehow they are touched by the experience, they feel it to somehow have made them better, and that's often, then, something they continue or take with them into life. Many of our ex-students, we know, look for opportunities, for most of them clearly recreational, not professional, to reclaim or recreate... often it may not even be through singing, but they look for other avenues to, I guess, replicate the experiences that they've had here. We do produce an extraordinary number of people who continue, professionally or otherwise, a singing component of their life which is interesting because it's not what would immediately spring to mind about a select-entry school, but it becomes their passion and then I think they seek other passions and something that replaces almost the psychology of what they've experienced at the school.

**Thanks very much for those comments.**

- END OF INTERVIEW -



## **Appendix G**

### Initial Summary List of Findings in Point Form,

(Based on the Six-phase Coding Strategy Designed by the Researcher)

#### **1. The Varieties of Massed Singing**

##### *Participant One*

- Liturgies in various shapes and forms
- Assemblies on all campuses
- Singing competitions/actually want to compete
- Concerts, musical performances
- Singing at sporting events
- Importance of Cathedral Choir/its relocation
- Having talented boys involved in singing
- Singing in St Patrick's Cathedral/whole school Masses
- Lasting effects of Valedictory Mass

##### *Participant Two*

- Assemblies
- Church services/hymn singing
- House music competition
- Biennial Concert
- Choirs/large 300 voice choir/chamber choir
- Major choral works each year/with girls' schools
- Details of competition/run largely by boys
- Boys' passion for competitive singing
- Biennial concert/Hamer Hall

##### *Participant Three*

- Assemblies/normal and singing assemblies
- Auditioned choirs/The Chorale, a vanguard group
- Speech Night Massed Choir
- Strategies for "embedding" Year 9s in assemblies
- Getting the new boys started
- Cycle of assemblies and singing classes/weekly rehearsals
- House singing

#### **2. Education and Gender**

##### *Participant One*

- Look at the numbers of Male choir members in coeducational schools

- Work on numbers at concerts involving other schools/ratios
- Permission in single-sex environments
- Modelling of multiple masculinities

#### *Participant Two*

- A single-sex school makes it easier for boys to participate in singing
- Different agendas
- Self-consciousness of boys
- Experiences in previous schools

#### *Participant Three*

- Pro-social culture
- Masculinity and macho beliefs
- Counter-cultural approach to masculinity
- Making gentlemen
- Single-sex boys' schools can be hard and steely
- You can create a different environment
- Giving permission
- Hypothetical/could a massed signing program work as well in coeducation?

### **3. The Effects of Massed Singing**

#### *Participant One*

- Lifts the spirits
- Sense of belonging
- Personal wellbeing
- School culture/fostering prayerfulness
- Effect on broader arts program
- Effect on liturgy/peak Masses
- Corporate identity/sport context/anti-catholic sentiment
- Academic performance
- Measure of good cultural health

#### *Participant Two*

- Human and cultural experience
- Soundtrack to our lives
- Belonging
- Singing is a defining characteristic of the school
- Singing makes statements about values and priorities
- Provides emotional engagement for boys
- Symbol of unity
- Spiritual/transcendent experience
- Carried on by Old Boys
- A great way of building culture within a school

- Biennial concert/shivers down the spine/emotional charge
- Sense of self
- Participation of staff with students enhances unity
- Spirituality/transcendence/transformation
- Making gentler people

*Participant Three*

- Pleasurable and therapeutic modes
- Emotional wellbeing
- Collective belonging, shared purpose, achievement
- Camaraderie
- Creates and expresses passion
- Flow-on effects in learning and social interaction
- Conversation with adjudicator
- The magic involved
- Psychology and egos of the young adolescent
- As an instrument of initiation
- Consider a massed singing program to develop school
- Example of The Chorale
- Pushing boundaries/risk-taking
- Year 12s' singing practices instead of Schoolies' Week
- Year 12 survey/importance of singing to the students
- Comment from school history from student from another school
- Visit from Premier Bracks
- Vital change force
- Inner aspects/visceral experience
- Effects beyond school years

**4. Principals and Leadership**

*Participant One*

- Increasing the number of occasions when singing takes place
- Appointment of key staff/staffing levels
- Decisions/structural factors
- Risk of not maintaining standards/remaining vigilant
- How to check one's own opinions?
- Choice of venues/paying for better ones
- Calendar/timing and scheduling of events
- Attention and profile given to the arts
- Experiencing excitement
- Affirming boys' participation
- Objective reality/accuracy of one's perceptions
- Informing opinions through observation

*Participant Two*

- Supporting the present culture
- Influence of Director of Music
- Structural factors
- Fragility of singing program
- The singing program is a team effort
- Fighting for rehearsal time/Defending the program
- Talking with heads of other schools
- Referring to the singing program when talking to prospective parents

*Participant Three*

- Promoting singing on Open Days
- Co-authoring book chapter
- Increased budget/support for program
- Speaking to prospective parents
- Singing in the tradition of the school
- Singing gives an idea of what is distinctive about this school
- Envy of other principals

**5. Principals and Personal Background***Participant One*

- As a boy at school/jock culture
- Other opportunities in scouting movement/at university/Gang Shows
- First teaching job/seeing a magnificent tradition of music at work
- Influence of children

*Participant Two*

- Enjoyed singing at school/joined choir
- Unsympathetic environment
- Good harmonising/part-reading skills
- Feeling the odd one out

*Participant Three*

- Sang in church/school choirs
- Link between personal history and current experience

**6. Theory and Education***Participant One*

- Hahn/impelling into experience
- Young people should be challenged to participate

- Renaissance view of education
- Multi-faceted nature of school culture

*Participant Three*

- Compulsoriness

**7. Sport and Singing**

*Participant One*

- Diverse cultural climate
- Singing at sporting events
- Staff who are sportsmen and musicians

*Participant Two*

- Singing in public is old-fashioned, except for national anthem etc
- First XVIII football team members are in the choir
- Participant's experiences at school when sport was dominant
- Singing at football matches

*Participant Three*

- First XVIII boys involved in choir

**Appendix H**

**CONSENT FORM**

**TITLE OF PROJECT: INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS IN INFLUENCING THE PLACE OF CORPORATE SINGING IN SECONDARY BOYS SCHOOLING**

**PRINCIPAL SUPERVISORS: DR HELGA NEIDHART & DR ANNETTE SCHNEIDER**

**STUDENT RESEARCHER: DARYL JAMES BARCLAY**

I ..... (*the participant*) have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this 40 minute questionnaire, and the 60 minute interview which is to be audio-taped, realising that I can withdraw my consent at any time without comment or penalty. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: .....  
(block letters)

SIGNATURE .....DATE ...../...../.....

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR or SUPERVISOR:.....

DATE...../...../.....

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER:.....

DATE: ...../...../.....

## **Appendix I**

### **INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS**

**TITLE OF PROJECT: INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS IN INFLUENCING THE PLACE OF CORPORATE SINGING IN SECONDARY BOYS SCHOOLING**

**PRINCIPAL SUPERVISORS: DR HELGA NEIDHART & DR ANNETTE SCHNEIDER**

**STUDENT RESEARCHER : DARYL JAMES BARCLAY**

**PROGRAMME: DOCTOR OF EDUCATION**

Dear Participant

You are invited to take part in a research project which aims to explore the influence of principals on the place of corporate singing in secondary boys schooling.

The study is designed to raise consciousness of issues surrounding the way principals lead and how they make decisions. It also aims to explore the views of principals on school culture, the education of boys in the arts, and the place of gender in education. The data gathering process will involve a questionnaire and a semi-structured face-to-face interview. Three principals of secondary boys' schools will be interviewed.

The process will inevitably cause you a degree of inconvenience in that it will require some of your valuable time. It will be possible to conduct the interviews at your school.

It is anticipated that the questionnaire would take approximately 45 minutes, and the interview approximately one hour. The interview will be audio-taped. Transcripts from the interviews and questionnaires will be entered into a computer.

The research itself is potentially beneficial to you in that it may raise your own consciousness of a number of issues relating to the education of boys, which is clearly one of your main concerns as an educational leader. There are also potential benefits to society in general, given that questions relating to gender, education and leadership will be investigated in the study. There is also likelihood that the research findings may be published in educational journals.

Participants are free to refuse consent altogether without having to justify that decision, and may withdraw consent and discontinue participation in the study at any time without giving a reason.

Confidentiality will be ensured during the conduct of the research as the data will be available only to the researcher and supervisor. In any report or publication arising from the study, neither the names of individuals nor their institutions will be used.

*Any questions regarding this project should be directed to the Principal Supervisor, Dr Helga Neidhart, on telephone number 03 9953 3267, in the School of Educational Leadership at the St Patrick's Campus of Australian Catholic University, 115 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy, Victoria 3065.*

I undertake to provide appropriate feedback to participants on the results of the project. I also wish to advise that this study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.

*In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or if you have any query that the Supervisor or Student Researcher have not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee, care of the nearest branch of the Research Services Unit.*

VIC: Chair, HREC  
C/o Research Services  
Australian Catholic University  
Melbourne Campus  
Locked Bag 4115  
FITZROY VIC 3065  
Tel: 03 9953 3158  
Fax: 03 9953 3315

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, you should sign both copies of the Consent Form, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the Investigator or Student Researcher.

.....  
Signature of student researcher

.....  
Principal Supervisor



## Appendix J

Australian Catholic University  
 Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne



### Human Research Ethics Committee

#### Committee Approval Form

**Principal Investigator/Supervisor:** Dr Helga Noidhart Melbourn Campus  
**Co-Investigators:** Dr Annette Schneider Melbourne Campus  
**Student Researcher:** Daryl Barclay Melbourne Campus

**Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:**  
 Investigating the role of principals in influencing the place of corporate singing in secondary boys schooling.

**for the period:** 07.09.2007 to 07.12.2007

**Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number:** V20060 / 71

The following standard conditions as stipulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (1999)* apply:

- (i) that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
  - security of records
  - compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
  - compliance with special conditions, and
- (ii) that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
  - proposed changes to the protocol
  - unforeseen circumstances or events
  - adverse effects on participants

The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than low risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of negligible risk and low risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a *Final Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an *Annual Progress Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.

Signed: ..... Date: .....  
 (Research Services Officer, Melbourne Campus)

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