"From Whence Shall They Come?"

Attracting the New Generation

of School Leaders

Submitted by

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STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP AND SOURCES

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No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the 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 the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics Committee (Appendix A).

Signature _____   Date: 1-4-13

Andrea O'Brien

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ABSTRACT

The research problem underpinning this study concerns the paucity of applications for the principalship in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Townsville, North Queensland. Deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals in the Diocese of Townsville are reluctant to apply for the principalship. Initiatives to address this challenge have been unsuccessful. Consequently, the purpose of this research is to explore why few deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals are applying for principal positions in the Diocese of Townsville.

The following specific research questions were generated from a synthesis of the literature. These questions focus the conduct of this study:

1. How do principals, members of school leadership teams and Townsville Catholic Education Office (TCEO) personnel understand the role of a Catholic school principal?

2. Why are deputy principals, assistants to the principal – religious education and assistant principals deterred from applying for the principalship?

3. How can potential applicants be prepared to undertake the principalship in a Catholic school?

An epistemological framework of constructionism underpins this study as it explores the meaning constructed through the experiences of school leaders. An interpretivist design is adopted, with Symbolic Interactionism providing the particular interpretivist lens. Case study is the methodology chosen to orchestrate the data gathering strategies of focus group interviews, semi-structured, in-depth individual interviews and surveys.

Participants in this study include principals, members of leadership teams and senior representatives from the Townsville Catholic Education Office. In total, 83 participants are involved.

The following seven conclusions were generated:

First, the role of the principal has become all-encompassing and complex. Responsibilities and expectations of the principalship have increased. Paradoxically, principals claim to "love" their roles, but describe their professional experiences negatively. This paradox deters potential applicants.

A second conclusion concerns potential applicants' inability to agree with all the teachings of the Catholic Church, the ultimate authority under which the Catholic systems operate. Like many Australian Catholics, these potential applicants are "cafeteria Catholics" (Everett, 2012), choosing the teachings they believe to be relevant and defensible and rejecting others. These potential applicants are aware that the role of the Catholic principal challenges them to be representatives of that Church. Their faith reservations, they believe, disqualify them from applying for principalship.

The third conclusion is that principals believe that personal authenticity is important. Principals reported that in their role they were expected to maintain the persona of the "Catholic school principal", which often required them to undertake activities contrary to their conscience or silence some of their own beliefs. Potential applicants are reluctant to undertake a role which requires such challenges to their personal authenticity.

A fourth conclusion is that the Catholic school, and not the parish, currently presents the credible face of the Catholic Church to the wider community. An increasing number of Catholics no longer engage with the parish for support and guidance. They find guidance and support from the principals and other school pastoral personnel. This phenomenon has generated new expressions of ministry, which are principal-led and school-based. Unfortunately, some senior school leaders do not believe they are adequately prepared and qualified to undertake these religious and spiritual leadership responsibilities.

The fifth conclusion is that principals and senior school leaders appear reluctant to energetically engage with all the responsibilities of educators. Principals' negative attitudes towards additional study indicate that they may entertain a too-simplistic perspective of the principal's role. They appear to lack a comprehensive appreciation of the benefits to be gained from research and sabbatical opportunities. Likewise,

senior leaders appear unable to commit to additional study, under the current conditions and criteria.

The sixth conclusion is that leadership, and particularly the role of the principal, is not considered to be sustainable. Leadership sustainability requires a committed and intentional focus on a formal, authentic, strategic leadership succession plan. The current diocese-by-diocese, state-by-state approach may be short-sighted, repetitive and unable to address the shortage of quality applicants to senior leadership positions.

The final conclusion is that women are deterred from senior leadership by the structure of schools and the approaches taken to leadership development, selection and appointment. There is a perception that leadership in the Diocese of Townsville is a male domain. The principalship is not considered to be female friendly.

ACRONYMS

For the purpose of this research, the following acronyms are provided to lend consistency and clarity in the usage of these terms.

ACEL   Australian Council for Educational Leaders

ACU   Australian Catholic University

AP   Assistant Principal

APAPDC   Australian Principals Association Professional Development Council

APRE   Assistant Principal Religious Education

CECNSW   Catholic Education Commission of New South Wales

CEO   Catholic Education Office

COMMICS   Conference on Middle Management in Catholic Schools

COSMOS   Conference of Senior Managers of Schools

CTD   Curriculum Teacher Developer

DEEWR   Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

DEST   Department of Education, Science and Training

DP   Deputy Principal

ELT   Extended Leadership Team

ET6   Experienced Teacher 6

FG   Focus Group

FTE   Full- Time Equivalent

I   Interview

ICP	International Confederation of Principals
IDEAS	Innovation Design for Enhancing Achievement in Schools
ISPP	International Study of Principal Preparation
LAUNCH	Leadership and Urban Network for Chicago
NAESP	National Association of Elementary School Principals
NASSP	National Association of Secondary School Principals
NCEC	National Catholic Education Commission
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headship
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operative Development
P	Principal
PAR	Position of Added Responsibility
QCEC	Queensland Catholic Education Commission
QSA	Queensland Studies Authority
S	Survey
SQH	Scottish Qualification for Headship
TAP	Teaching Assistant Program
TCEO	Townsville Catholic Education Office
VCEC	Victorian Catholic Education Commission
VSAT	Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania
WHS	Workplace Health and Safety

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CHAPTER ONE: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM IDENTIFIED

1.1 Introduction

My involvement with Catholic education in the Diocese of Townsville spans the past 30 years, with experience across three schools. For the past 25 years I have held a variety of leadership positions including English co-ordinator, administration assistant, deputy principal and principal, with the deputy principal position being a job-share position for a period of time. I held the position of principal at St. Margaret Mary's College in Townsville from 1996–2003. At the end of 2009, I resigned as principal of Ryan Catholic College, after a satisfying and challenging six years. Ryan Catholic College is a large prep-year 12 co-educational college of approximately 2,000 students. It is the largest Catholic college in Queensland.

Throughout my professional life in leadership positions, I have worked with many colleagues with a diverse range of leadership experience. Some are veterans, while others are new to senior leadership. They agree that senior leadership has been a positive experience which has contributed to their growth and satisfaction. This positive experience of senior leadership is reflected in the literature (R. Collins, 2006).

It is not only senior leadership which invites attention, but also the middle management or middle leadership position. This includes positions such as academic and pastoral co-ordinators. These positions have traditionally been considered the requisite path to senior leadership.

My interest in the area of the development and mentoring of teachers into middle and senior leadership positions is nurtured by my own personal experiences, in particular my own mentoring in the early years of my teaching career by a professional and caring principal. Her supportive, yet challenging approach to leadership development was inspirational, as well as offering practical advice for the growing professional. Furthermore, I have been involved in formal and informal programs of professional development at both the school and the diocesan levels. Two such programs are sponsored by the Townsville Catholic Education Office (TCEO). They are the

Conference on Middle Management in Catholic Schools (COMMICS) and the *Aspirant Leaders* program.

COMMICS was introduced by the TCEO in 1988. Its aim is to nurture and support those in existing middle management positions. Its focus is both philosophical and practical, with emphases on spiritual development and the practical elements of school management. It is a positive initiative in the establishment of middle management networks across the Diocese. COMMICS was offered as a possible source of potential future leaders.

Since its inception in 2007, the aim of the *Aspirant Leaders* program has been to identify and develop those young teachers within Catholic education who possess leadership potential. Selection is based on nominations by those within senior leadership positions in schools and the program was originally only open to those not already in a middle leadership position. In its second year, the *Aspirant Leaders* program included those in middle leadership positions.

However, despite the existence of such programs, few teachers are applying to be considered for middle and senior leadership positions. Data collected between 2006–2011 (inclusive) indicate that there is an average of 2.7 applications for each position (Blake, 2012). The TCEO has identified the ongoing paucity of applications as being of concern. This problem is not isolated to the Townsville Diocese, but is also identified throughout Australia and internationally (Brooking, 2007; Chapman, 2005; Cushing, Kerrins, & Johnstone, 2003).

1.2 Research Context

This research occurs in the Diocese of Townsville in North Queensland, Australia (Figure 1.1). The Diocese of Townsville covers an area stretching from Proserpine in the south to Ingham and Palm Island in the north and west to Mt. Isa. Covering 435,000 square kilometres, this area includes 33 Catholic schools educating approximately 11,500 students. The TCEO has responsibility for all Catholic schools, with the exception of four religious institute schools.[1]

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[1] Religious institute schools are schools which are owned and administered by religious congregations such as the Sisters of Mercy or the Edmund Rice Educational Directorate.

***Figure 1.1* Catholic schools in the Diocese of Townsville.**
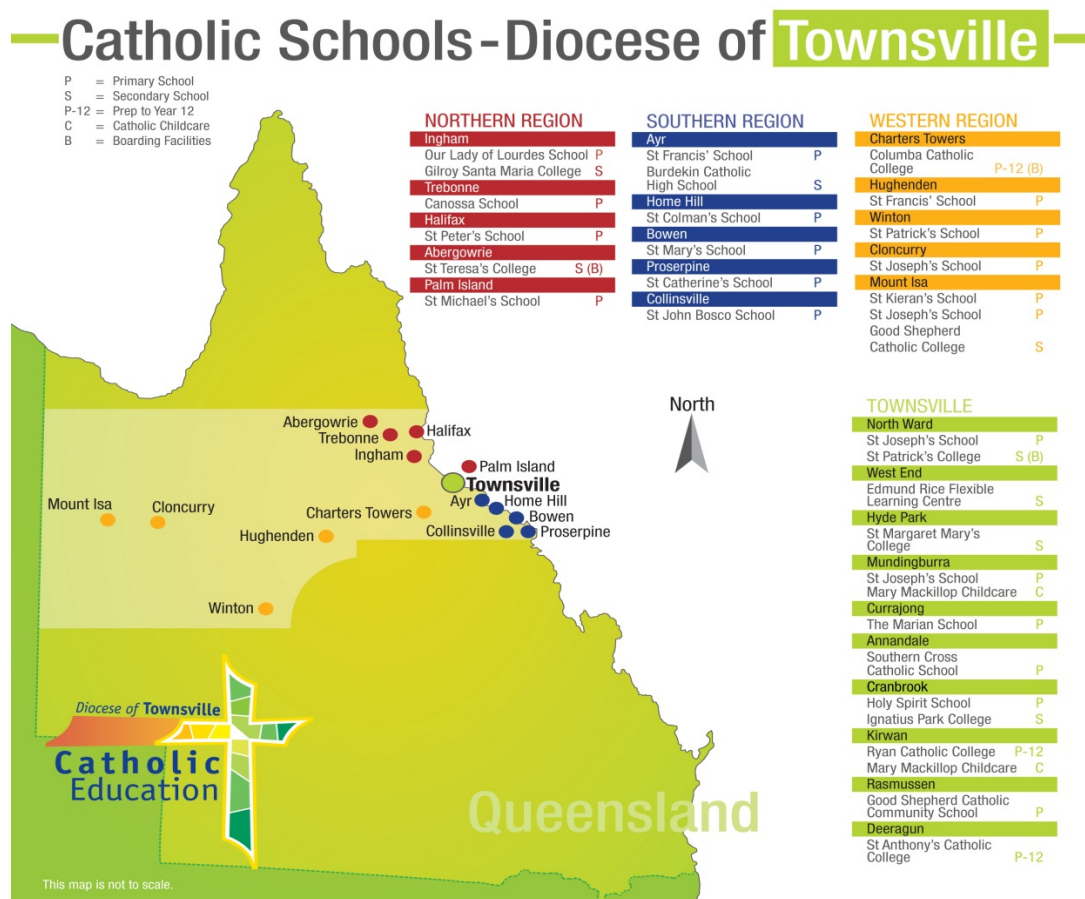
Source: Townsville Catholic Education Office

Since 2005, a decline has occurred in the number of applicants for middle and senior leadership positions within the Townsville Diocese. As a result, the TCEO commenced maintaining records of the number of applicants for each advertised position, in order to ascertain if anecdotal evidence could be sustained by empirical data. Data collected for 2005 appear to be unreliable, so records from 2006–2011 only can be examined with some degree of accuracy and validity. An examination of these records concludes there is an average of 2.7 applications for each position (Blake, 2012). For the total number of advertised senior leadership positions i.e. principal, deputy principal, assistant to the principal religious education and assistant to the principal administration/pastoral/student services/curriculum (93), only 249 applications were received (Blake, 2012).

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The research concerns the issue of a lack of applications for leadership positions, with a particular focus on the principalship.

1.3 The Research Design

The purpose of the research is to explore why few deputy principals, assistant to the principal religious education and assistant principals in schools in the Diocese of Townsville are applying for principal positions. The explanation and justification of this research purpose is explicated in Chapter Two.

The literature review (Chapter Three) generates three specific research questions which focus the conduct of the research design. They are:

- How do principals, members of leadership teams and TCEO personnel understand the role of a Catholic school principal?

- Why are deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals deterred from applying for the principalship?

- How can potential applicants be prepared to undertake the principalship in a Catholic school?

Given the interpretive nature of the research, the following research design was generated (Figure 1.2).

Table 1.1 A Summary of the Epistemological Paradigm and Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Data Gathering Strategies

Epistemology	Constructionism
Theoretical Perspective	Interpretivism • Symbolic Interactionism
Methodology	Case study
Data Gathering Strategies	Focus groups Individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews Survey

1.3.1 Epistemology

This research adopts a constructionist epistemology (Crotty, 1998). Constructionism asserts that meaning is generated by human beings as they engage within their context. That is, knowledge is not created, but constructed. Humans make sense of their own experiences based on their individual historical and social perspectives (Crotty). This study is an exploration of how principals, leadership team members and system leaders within the Diocese of Townsville construct their reality, thus inviting a constructionist epistemology. The meaning making of leaders is socially constructed and is linked to the cultural, historical and social contexts within which the individual leader operates.

1.3.2. Theoretical Perspective

Since this study concerns how senior leaders construct their understanding of the world, the theoretical perspective adopted for the study is interpretivism. Interpretivism "looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life–world" (Crotty, 1998, p. 67) and as such is consistent with research focusing on the life-world of school leaders.

1.3.3 Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionism is adopted as the lens to inform the theoretical perspective of this study as it generates a better understanding of the everyday lived experience of principals and leaders and how they create meaning within the various contexts in which they operate.

Symbolic Interactionism represents a theoretical perspective based on an image of the individual, rather than a collective image of society. Central to Symbolic Interactionism is the belief that humans act towards things on the basis of the meanings they ascribe to them – meanings are handled and modified through an interactive process (Charon, 2007). In order to understand the actions of people, it is appropriate to perceive objects and situations as they themselves perceive them. Humans are perceived as pragmatic actors (Charon) who constantly adjust their behaviour to the actions of others. Studying leadership through the perspective of Symbolic Interactionism allows the researcher to understand how principals define their worlds, taking account of both past and present contexts.

1.3.4 Research Methodology

Methodology provides a rationale to orchestrate the use of particular research methods to explore the phenomenon under study.

Case study methodology is adopted for this research as it lends itself to the investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context. Merriam (2002) holds that, "The case study is an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as an individual, group, institution or community. The case is a bounded, integrated system" (p. 8). The phenomenon under investigation is leadership within Catholic schools in the Diocese of Townsville, with particular emphasis placed on the principalship.

1.3.5 Participants

Participants include principals and members of the leadership teams of all 29 diocesan schools within the Diocese of Townsville, as well as six members of the Extended Leadership Team of the TCEO. Participants cover a range of age, experience, gender and career aspirations. The decision to include all members of the leadership team is a deliberate one, reflecting the desire to gather as much comprehensive and real life data as possible.

1.3.6 Data Gathering Strategies

The strategies chosen for the collection of information for this research are:

- Focus group interviews ($n = 54$ participants);

- Individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews ($n = 13$ participants); and

- Survey ($n = 18$ participants).

1.4 Significance of the Research

Research on this issue is important for two main reasons. First, a substantial senior leadership pool is necessary for the continued health of the Catholic Education system and specifically the Townsville Catholic Education Office.

A second reason that research on this issue is important concerns succession planning. It is timely that the lived reality of the principalship in the Diocese of Townsville is

researched in order to better understand the professional life of potential leaders and hence attract them to these roles.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

An outline of the structure of the thesis is given below:

Chapter One: The Research Problem Identified introduces the study of the reasons why there is a paucity of applications for the principalship in the Diocese of Townsville.

Chapter Two: Defining the Research Problem offers the context in which decisions about leadership are made. The study presents a summary of the international, national and Catholic educational contexts. This chapter documents the changing nature of leadership in schools, the changing nature of the role of the school, incentives and disincentives to leadership, leadership sustainability and succession planning. These issues provide a justification for defining the research problem.

Chapter Three: Review of the Literature. This chapter presents a critical outline of the appropriate research literature concerning this problem. In achieving this, research questions are identified and justified.

Chapter Four: Design of the Research presents the research design. This chapter outlines the methods employed for data collection.

Chapter Five: Presentation and Analysis of New Understandings presents and justifies the themes generated from an analysis of the research and offers justified issues inviting discussion.

Chapter Six: Discussion of the New Understandings. This chapter presents a critical discussion of new understandings.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions and Recommendations identifies the contributions to scholarship and generates how these contributions influence practice, policy and theory.

CHAPTER TWO: DEFINING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The purpose of this chapter is to articulate and justify the research problem this study addresses.

2.1 Conceptualising the Research Problem

The conceptualisation of the research problem is diagrammatically represented in Figure 2.1, to provide structure for the exploration of the context in which teachers and leaders in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Townsville make decisions about leadership aspiration. In exploring this phenomenon, international, Australian and Catholic educational contexts are examined.

There is a number of issues which influence the changing nature of the world of teachers and leaders. These include:

- the complexity and changing nature of leadership;

- incentives and disincentives to leadership;

- the unique skill set required of the leader; and

- sustainability and succession planning.

Each of these contexts and influences is explored, commencing with the international context. See Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 **Conceptualisation of the research problem.**
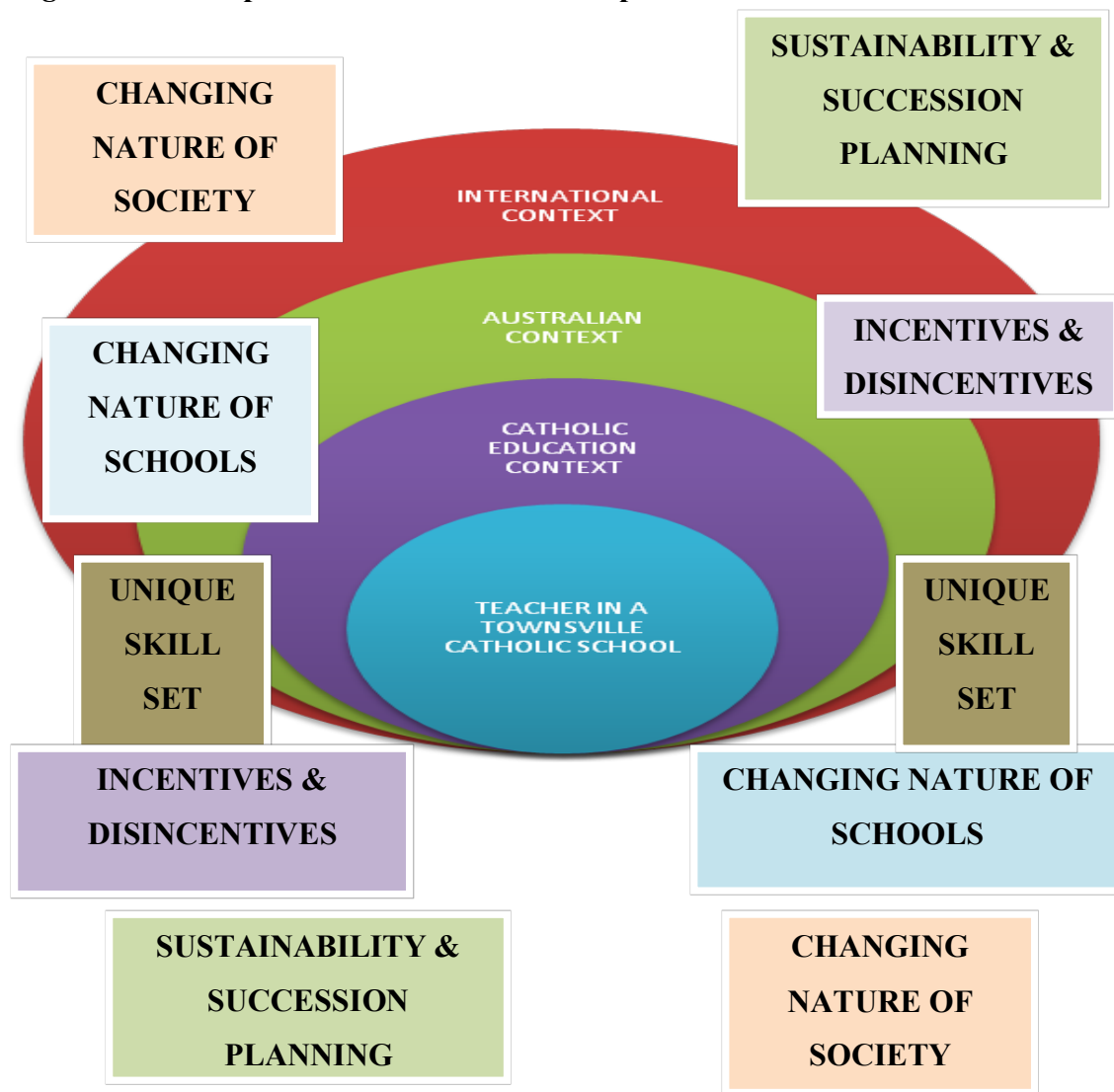
2.2 The International Context

Fewer teachers are applying for middle and senior leadership positions in schools (McKenzie, Rowley, Weldon, & Murphy, 2011). This research has been undertaken in the area of recruitment to senior leadership positions such as the principalship, leading to claims that the situation is bordering on crisis level. Studies in the USA, Britain, Canada and New Zealand have identified concerns similar to those outlined in Australian studies (McKenzie et al., 2011; Rhodes, Brundrett, & Nevill, 2006; Thomson, Blackmore, Sachs, & Tregenza, 2002). Studies focusing on middle level leadership recruitment and retention are not as prevalent, but related trends have been observed (McKenzie et al., 2011).

A paucity of leadership applications has also been identified in the United Kingdom, where a headline states, "Catholic schools struggle to find heads" (Lamb, 2009). One third of advertised principal vacancies are unfilled and require readvertising (Rhodes et al., 2006). The decline in the number of principal applicants and a predicted retirement "bulge" contribute to serious concerns. It is estimated that 43% of incumbent deputies and 70% of current middle leaders do not aspire to the principalship (National College for School Leadership (NCSL), 2007).

What is occurring in the United Kingdom is also occurring in Canada (Williams, 2003) and New Zealand (Brooking, 2007), as "reports from nation after nation refer to the shrinking pool of applicants for the principalship" (Caldwell, 2000, p. 2).

2.3 The Australian Context

As in the United States, it was the Australian media and professional associations which first raised concerns regarding the potential shortage of applicants for senior leadership positions (Gronn & Rawlings-Sanaei, 2003). These concerns identified a decrease in the number of applicants for advertised vacancies in an increasing percentage of schools, a decrease in the number of applicants considered worthy of short-listing, an increasing percentage of positions unable to be filled after the first round of advertising and an increase in the number of positions filled by people in an acting capacity (Gronn & Rawlings-Sanaei).

There are several reasons for this decline in applications for principal and other leadership positions. They include the loneliness associated with the principal's position and unrealistic expectations from departmental personnel, school communities and the wider community (Lacey & Gronn, 2005). Survey data is outlined in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Data from Australian Research Council Discovery Project "Principal Aspirations and Recruitment amidst Leadership Disengagement" **(Lacey & Gronn, 2005)**

Interest in applying for principal position	%
Yes	12.5
Already applied	7.5
Definitely not	45.5
Unsure	34.5

Perhaps the most insightful research concerning this issue stems from a survey conducted by McKenzie et al. (2011). This survey offers the most recent and detailed research information on the Australian teacher and school leader workforce. It shows the full extent of leadership aspirations of all teaching staff within Australian schools. The research findings indicate that 10% of teachers intend to apply for either a deputy principal or principal position within the next three years and only 20% of deputies indicate that they intend to apply for a principal position within the next three year period.

The McKenzie et al. (2011) research identifies two paradoxical new understandings. While confirming that there is a decline in applicants for the principal position, it indicates that more teachers are displaying tentative interest in applying for the principalship. Furthermore, current principals report high levels of satisfaction with their present positions, indicating they appreciate the opportunity to make a difference and work with professional and committed teams of professionals (R. Collins, 2006). Research even identifies the combative nature of leadership, with the principalship portrayed as a combination of extreme sport and martyrdom (Thomson et al., 2002), depicting a role so complex and disparate that it fails to attract applicants.

2.4 The Catholic Education Context

The new understandings identified above are consistent with the Australian Catholic education context. However, to establish the educational context of the study, some explanation of the Australian Catholic school system is appropriate. Catholic schools have been a major component of Australian education for over 180 years. There are

approximately 1,700 Catholic schools in Australia, with a total enrolment of almost 704,000 students, or approximately 20% of the Australian school age population (National Catholic Education Commission, 2009). Catholic schools in Australia are administered through the 28 established dioceses of the Roman Catholic Church. The administration of these schools is undertaken in one of two ways. A number of the dioceses have a centralised administrative model for school administration. However, other dioceses encourage independent administration of schools or the administration by the local parish. In addition, a number of schools known as religious institute schools are owned and administered by religious congregations rather than the diocese's Catholic Education Office. These schools are owned by the religious orders, which take responsibility for all aspects of school administration. While the Bishop maintains overall responsibility, they remain independent schools. The Bishop has ultimate responsibility for all Catholic education within each diocese.

While no single, overarching entity administers Catholic education in Australia, the need for a single entity to provide effective liaison with the Commonwealth Government and other key national education bodies became evident. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference established the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) in 1974 (NCEC, 2009). NCEC supports, at the national level, the work of the State and Territory Catholic Education Commissions. Therefore, while in theory it is not possible to talk about one single Catholic education system, in reality the individual State and Territory Catholic Education Commissions do work in partnership.

An example of this co-operation is research undertaken at the state level within the Catholic education sector. This research indicates an increase in leadership disengagement and a corresponding decline in the number of suitable applicants for middle and senior leadership positions (d'Arbon, 2003; d'Arbon, Duignan, Duncan, & Goodwin, 2001; Duignan & Gurr, 2007). When the added complexity of the faith dimension of Catholic schools is included, a situation of serious concern arises:

> In addition to the normal administrative and leadership qualities required of a principal in any school system, those who decide on a career path in a Catholic school bear the additional challenge of leading a faith based school community in which their personal lives, faith commitment and religious

practices are placed under scrutiny by Church authorities as well as by the Catholic Education system, the students and their parents (d'Arbon et al., 2001, p. 13).

The Catholic Education Commission of New South Wales (CECNSW), the Victorian Catholic Education Commission (VCEC) (acting on behalf of Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania) and the territorial authority of the Northern Territory commissioned the Australian Catholic University (ACU) to undertake a leadership succession project, providing a definitive picture of future trends in principal and senior leadership. In Queensland, similar research was undertaken by the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) (Spry, 2007). The research concluded that unless initiatives were generated to address these issues a shortage of principals in Catholic schools would eventuate (d'Arbon et al., 2001; Spry, 2007).

2.5 The Townsville Catholic Education Context

This problem is particularly challenging in the Townsville Diocese (Table 2.2). Within the six year period from 2006-2011, 90 senior leadership position vacancies were advertised. These positions included principal, deputy principal, assistant to the principal Religious Education (APRE) and assistant to the principal administration/ pastoral/student services/curriculum. A total of 245 applications were received for these 90 positions (Blake, 2012). This equates to 2.7 applications per advertised position, a rather small set of responses.

Of the 26 advertised positions for principals across the same six year period, 73 applications were received, equating to 2.8 applications per position. Seventeen males and nine females were appointed to the principal position. In a similar vein, fourteen deputy principal positions were advertised, with seven males and seven females successful. Thirty-five applications were received for the fourteen positions – 2.5 applications per position. Thirty-nine assistant to the principal religious education positions were advertised in this period of time, with nine males and 29 females being appointed. 2.7 applications were received for each advertised position. Of the 104 applications received, 36 were from males and 68 from females. An interesting phenomenon here is the reversal of the male/female proportion, with a little over three times the number of females than males appointed to Religious Education positions. This trend is reflected in the applications, with 30.8% more females than males

applying. The fourth senior leadership area, that of assistant principals, saw 33 applications for 11 advertised positions, an average of three applications per position. Of those appointed, six were male and five female.

Table 2.2 Advertised Positions within the Diocese of Townsville 2006–2011

Role	No. of positions	Total no. of applications	Male appointed	Female appointed	Applications per position
Principal	26	73	17	9	2.8
Deputy principal	14	35	7	7	2.5
APRE	39	104	9	29	2.7
Assistant principal	11	33	6	5	3.0

This state of affairs is not sustainable for the future leadership of Catholic schooling in the Diocese of Townsville. Data collected since 2006 (Blake 2012) are consistent with international and Australia wide trends which indicate a diminishing pool of principal and senior leadership applicants and a decline in the number of those seeking such positions.

As middle leadership positions are administered internally by schools, no such data on vacancies and application numbers are available for analysis. However, anecdotal evidence suggests a similar trend is occurring in this context, with a number of schools in the Diocese indicating difficulty in filling middle leadership positions. This phenomenon is identified in both rural and urban areas.

In response to this phenomenon, the TCEO introduced the *Aspirant Leaders* program in 2007. Between 2007–2011, three *Aspirant Leader* programs have occurred, with 63 aspirant leaders participating. Of the 63 participants, 15 were male and 48 female, and 6 (5 female and 1 male) have progressed into senior leadership positions. *Aspirant Leaders* complemented COMMICS, providing professional development and

enrichment to those in middle management/leadership positions such as pastoral and academic co-ordinators. COMMICS has been the only centrally co-ordinated, diocesan organised professional development opportunity for those in middle leadership positions in the Townsville Diocese. With themes such as "managing for resilience", "developing team work" and "personal leadership skills", COMMICS is viewed as the training ground for future senior leaders. In the period 2001–2011, 125 middle managers have participated, with nine subsequently appointed to senior leadership positions (Blake, 2012). These programs, however, appear to have done little to allay fears of a looming crisis of leadership in the Diocese of Townsville.

2.6 Reasons for Reluctance to Engage in Senior Leadership Positions

The research identified above emphasises the need to attract teachers to senior leadership positions. It is not only contexts which influence teachers and their decision making around leadership aspiration, but also numerous other influences. These influences include:

- the changing nature of society and its expectations of schools;

- the complexity and changing nature of leadership;

- incentives and disincentives to leadership;

- the unique skill set required of the leader; and

- sustainability and succession planning.

2.6.1 The Changing Nature of Society and its Expectations of Schools

The Australia of the twenty-first century is characterised by increased fragmentation, secularism and diversity (Hargreaves, 2003; Mackay, 1993). This fragmentation is coupled with an increased awareness of, and adherence to, the rights of the individual. Diverse family structures, racial and ethnic backgrounds, religious affiliations and practices, cultural diversity and employment options are reflected within the microcosm of the school (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007) and lead to demanding and conflicting expectations of all those who work within the educational environment. The breakdown of the family unit generates increased responsibility for parenting and socialisation focussed on schools, leading to a change in the expectations of schools. Schools are no longer expected to transmit knowledge but have moved to more of a

full-service model of education, in which they are perceived as learning communities where the social, emotional, physical, health and spiritual needs of students and their families are met (Goldring & Sullivan, 1996). Parent effectiveness training, cyber safety programs and driver education programs are just some examples of the expanding nature of school responsibility.

At a time when more is expected of schools, it is ironic that society is increasingly unsupportive of schools, with many individuals publicly and openly critical of educational practice (McCormick, 2003). Schools are often blamed for societal problems, with media and social commentators frequently turning to schools as the scapegoats for society's ills (Lamb, 2009). Just as society's expectations of schools have changed, so too has the perception of the type of leadership needed in a contemporary educational institution.

2.6.2 The Complexity and Changing Nature of School Leadership

The nature of school leadership has changed greatly over recent decades, with changes in society and the expectations of schools, changes in the concept of leadership and what constitutes leadership, changing expectations of the role of school leaders and changes in the type of work undertaken by school leaders.

2.6.2.1 Changing Nature of Leadership

Perceptions of leadership in general, and what constitutes effective leadership, have undergone change over the years, with a shift in perception of the manner in which leadership is exercised. This shifting view of leadership is best seen in changes in leadership trends. Changing leadership trends include increased complexity of challenges, the innovation revolution, the art of virtual leadership facilitated by technology, the need for collaboration, increased interruptions, the need for authenticity, addressing employment needs as baby boomers[2] retire, addressing leadership succession and leadership longevity and the shift from an autocratic to a more participatory style of leadership (R. Collins, 2008) These are substantial changes in the way in which leadership has been constructed in the American business world.

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[2] Baby Boomers is the term used to describe the generation who were born in a "baby boom" following World War II. The Boomers were born between 1944–1964.

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These trends are mirrored by similar changes in school leadership. The growing complexity of the leadership role, with its higher expectations and greater emphasis on management and accountability, is reflected in the increasing expectations placed upon leaders within the Catholic school (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007). The growing disenchantment with the traditional paradigm of leadership leads to the perception that an alternative paradigm of leadership is needed in schools, and in particular, in Catholic schools (Milburn, 2005). A transition from the traditional, industrial, male dominated, clinical approach to school leadership is needed, with an increasing emphasis placed on the need for the development of leadership capabilities (R. Collins, 2008).

Five leadership capabilities, focusing on educational, personal, relational, intellectual and organisational skills (N. Cranston, 2007), summarise the types of skills needed by leaders in a modern school. It is no longer sufficient to be a good organisational leader. A combination of skills is needed, from the emergence of the importance of the human dimension of leadership to entrepreneurial and strategic management skills. This supports the notion that the expectations of the role of the leader have changed dramatically, leading to the perception that the role of a leader has become too large and unattractive (Barty, Thomson, Blackmore, & Sachs, 2005).

2.6.2.2 Changing Expectations of the Leader's Role

The growing complexity of the leadership role is undisputed (R. Collins, 2006), highlighted by higher expectations and an increased emphasis on management and accountability (Barty et al., 2005). Common elements of the role of a principal can be identified (R. Collins, 2006). Principals are responsible for the overall quality of learning within the educational environment: the quality and nature of relationships with students; staff; parents and the wider community; the quality of the teaching and learning programs; the overall learning environment; positively oriented and physically safe environments; being a role model for the profession of school leadership; strategic direction; planning and goal setting.

This all-encompassing and time consuming role is further complicated when the religious dimension in a Catholic school is added, with its at times conflicting and contradictory expectations (Coughlan, 2009). Coupled with ever increasing legal, managerial and accountability responsibilities (N. Cranston, 2007), the belief has

developed that the role of principal in a Catholic school is too complex for a single person. This is identified as one of the main reasons staff tend to shun the position of principal within the Catholic education system (d'Arbon, 2004).

Deputy principals, assistant principals and middle managers in schools face similar issues of increasing, changing and conflicting expectations, with the simple difference that, compared to principals, the complexity is experienced on a reduced scale. Concern exists about the difficulties encountered in carrying out the role of a middle manager in a school, with incumbents often receiving little or no preparation for the realities of the roles which they undertake (Dinham, 2001). The complexities of people management, conflict resolution, pressures of time and overwork, interpersonal demands and conflicts, and increased parental expectations and demands all combine to contribute to the view that the role of a leader within an educational institution, regardless of the actual role designation, needs redesigning (Fletcher-Campbell, 2003).

Of concern to all leaders within schools is the increasing emphasis placed on managerial organisation and accountability procedures. A common anxiety expressed by principals, deputy principals, assistant principals and heads of departments is the dichotomy between the number of hours spent in operational activities, versus the amount of time which should be devoted to strategic and curriculum leadership (Barty et al., 2005; N. Cranston, 2005a). This management versus leadership dilemma epitomises the leadership disengagement crisis, indicating as it does one of the principal areas of change in the leader's role – the changing nature of the work in which a leader is involved.

2.6.2.3 Changing Nature of the Leader's Work

Popular media and leadership theory generate a number of metaphors describing the role of a principal within a schooling environment. Images such as gatekeeper, juggler and puppeteer are common parlance, all conjuring the image of a profession in crisis, a profession in which conflicting demands and responsibilities impose unrealistic expectations on leaders.

The work undertaken by the principal in a school is seen as "greedy work" leading to occupational servitude (Gronn & Rawlings-Sanaei, 2003). The work of the principal

has moved beyond the core focus of teaching and learning, with the emergence of a new paradigm of governance and accountability (Watson, 2007). This increased emphasis on accountability, with its focus on legal and system requirements, excessive paperwork and documentation and ever-changing educational reforms and agendas (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007), contributes to the disillusion and disengagement being experienced by many within positions of leadership in schools. This feeling of increased pressure for accountability is coupled with the experience of less autonomy and authority to act (Williams, 2003), leading to a dissonance and the belief that principals are confined by conflicting expectations and demands.

The pace of educational change and reform experienced internationally also contributes to the pressures placed on principals in schools. The belief that schools are the ideal vehicle to ameliorate society's ills leads to the inclusion of numerous new programs and innovations, creating extra pressures on schools and the demand for more time, resources and creativity. Unsustainable educational reform, at all levels, contributes to the changing nature of the work in which principals are involved (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005) and also contributes to the view that the role of a leader, especially a principal, is too large and unattractive (Barty et al., 2005).

A public perception also exists that leaders, and in particular principals, should be actively involved in the wider community in which their school is located. There is a keen expectation that principals form part of the social fabric of the community, serving on committees and boards, contributing to the civic aspect of life in the wider community. For those involved in leadership in a Catholic school, this expectation is magnified, with the belief that active parish involvement is central to the work of a Catholic school principal. The principal is expected to form part of the Parish Council, to participate in sacramental and adult education programs (Milburn, 2005), and to be the face of the Church to all those within the school community. This contributes to the work/life imbalance experienced by many principals.

2.6.2.4 Leadership within the Context of the Catholic School

The task of leading faith based schools poses additional complications and forces consideration of a number of other factors (d'Arbon, 2003). Personal lifestyle, faith commitment and religious practices are issues which leaders in non-faith based schools do not need to consider. However, for a person about to take up the

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principalship within a Catholic school, all these factors should be taken into consideration. If one undertakes the principalship within a Catholic school context, then one has to be prepared to accept that all aspects of personal and spiritual life will be under examination by Church authorities, Catholic education systems and school communities. Being a principal in a Catholic school brings with it additional responsibilities, commitments and pressures that predominantly grow out of church and community expectations.

2.6.2.5 The Catholic School of the Twenty-first Century

The Catholic Church in the twenty-first century has undergone considerable change. So too, has the Catholic school (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1998). Catholic schools are typified by a pluralism of students, with clientele from an array of religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007). Staff were once predominantly members of religious orders , but this is no longer the case.[3] The faith and religious development continuum which exists in Catholic schools is immense, ranging from students and staff with staunch, traditional adherence to the Catholic faith to those with no religious or faith affiliation at all. Parental expectations fluctuate similarly (Fincham, 2010) with many rejecting institutional Church, yet clinging to what the Catholic school has to offer. This diversity of faith experience and expectations leads to a tension within Catholic schools (McLaughlin, 2005), with principals left with the feeling that they have too many diverse task masters to satisfy.

2.6.2.6 Challenges for Catholic School Principals

All of this coalesces to form a unique set of requirements for the principal of a Catholic school. Four main challenges are identified for the principal of a contemporary Catholic school (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007). These challenges are:

1. The competing purposes of Catholic schools.

2. The changing role of the Catholic school principal.

3. The relationship between the principal and the parish priest.

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[3] Teachers in Catholic schools were once religious brothers and sisters. Since the 1960s, lay teachers have come to predominate.

4. The lack of professional development for leadership within the Catholic school context.

2.6.2.6.1 Competing Purposes of Catholic Schools

Catholic schools are often perceived as counter-cultural, promoting values which are seen as counter to those dominantly upheld within the wider community. These values are consistent with the mission of the Church, but increasing numbers in contemporary society question their validity and the place of the Catholic Church in the modern world (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1998). Parental support for the school is often high, but many parents fail to see the integral connection between the Catholic school and the Catholic Church (Belmonte, 2007). It is the principal's responsibility, with the support of the leadership team, to tread this very fine line of conflicting expectations.

2.6.2.6.2 The Changing Role of the Catholic School Principal

As has already been indicated, the role of the Catholic school principal has changed greatly over recent decades (Coughlan, 2009). The role has become more diverse and all-encompassing, with the additional focus of involvement with the mission of the Church. Indeed, the Catholic school is the only face of the Catholic Church that many within its community will experience. Thus, the principal within the Catholic school often provides the only human face of the Church to many, and this brings with it the weight of expectations and responsibilities. The continually changing context in which the Catholic school principal and leader operates is cause for concern, with a growing list of duties and expectations. The move from a religious to a lay model of leadership within the Catholic school (N. Cranston, 2005b) brings with it new and increasing expectations and accountabilities, not the least of which is the responsibility for the development and nurturing of the relationship between the Catholic school principal and parish priest.

2.6.2.6.3 The Relationship between the Principal and the Parish Priest

This relationship is crucial. Many principals, however, have reported growing frustration with the ever-increasing demands placed on them by parish priests, with parish meetings, parish involvement and priest expectations increasing exponentially (Milburn, 2005). An additional source of tension is that experienced by the conflict of

styles of operation between many parish priests and Catholic school principals, with the perceived autocratic style of the parish priest often clashing with the more collaborative approach displayed by the principal. This is a growing source of tension, however, with many principals expressing the concern that the perceived archaic mind set of many parish priests relegates principals into the role of minion, subservient to the demands of the parish priest (Coughlan, 2009). This has been a source of frustration for female principals in particular (Neidhart & Carlin, 2003).

2.6.2.6.4 Lack of Professional Development for Leadership

Professional development in preparation for the principalship in a Catholic school is often lacking, with principals reporting inadequate training and a reliance on on-the-job training, almost leadership by osmosis. Catholic school principals surveyed throughout Australia report little or no formal preparation for leadership within the Catholic school context, with scant recognition paid by employing authorities to the need for preparation for the special context that is Catholic education (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007). This lack of preparation is cited (Belmonte & Cranston) as one of the disincentives to applying for leadership positions.

2.7 Incentive/Disincentive Imbalance

An examination of the research on the incentives and disincentives to undertaking leadership positions within schools shows an unequivocal imbalance. While incentives for promotion to leadership exist, they are outweighed by the disincentives to such action. Not until this imbalance is addressed will an increase in the number of applications for middle and senior leadership positions be seen.

A definitive study undertaken in this area is the work commissioned by the CECNSW, and replicated in Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania (VSAT), focusing on leadership and leadership incentives within the Catholic education sector in Australia (d'Arbon, 2004). It reports on the incentives and disincentives for potential applicants for leadership positions within Catholic schools.

2.7.1 Leadership Incentives

Two major categories of incentives emerge, with the first focusing on the internal rewards associated with leadership in a Catholic school, the sense of satisfaction

associated with being principal and the ability to really make a difference (d'Arbon, 2003). The ability to nurture and develop a professional and committed leadership team and the multi-facetted nature of the job are also cited as powerful incentives (R. Collins, 2006). A second area of positive incentive for leadership centres on external rewards, on the status associated with the principalship and the position within the school and the wider community.

Further research (Lacey, 2000) exposes other incentives for aspiring leaders, including the impact possible in the principal's position, the opportunity to facilitate change and aspirations to lead a particular style or type of school.

2.7.2 Leadership Disincentives

Perceptions of leadership disincentives reported by principals provide insight into the issue (R. Collins, 2006; L. Cranston, Ehrich, & Morton, 2007). Five major sources of discontent and disincentive have been reported (R. Collins, 2006):

1. The changing demands of the job, with increased accountability, legal and special education issues.

2. Inadequate salary.

3. Lack of time.

4. Lack of parent and community support and the negativity of the media and the public towards schools.

5. Lack of respect.

2.7.3 Disincentives to Promotion

A disturbing finding from the Leadership Succession Project (d'Arbon et al., 2001) is that half of those surveyed report that they are unwilling to seek promotion, citing an array of disincentives. These disincentives are reinforced by numerous other studies conducted both in Australia and overseas (Cannon, 2007; R. Collins, 2006; Dorman & d'Arbon, 2001). The eight major disincentives are (D'arbon, 2004):

1. negative impact on personal and family life;

2. unsupportive external environment;

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3. demanding expectations placed on the principal as faith leader and the expert on all things Catholic;

4. flawed nature of the interview process, with the selection process seen as too complex and cumbersome and not providing sufficient feedback to interviewees;

5. excessive demands placed upon principals for accountability;

6. perception by respondents that they lacked the necessary skills and expertise to successfully undertake the job of principal;

7. perception of gender bias in the selection and interview process, with a belief that the process was unfairly biased towards men; and

8. perception that it is necessary to forfeit close relationships with students and colleagues in order to fulfil the requirements of the principal's role.

The role of principal is seen as stressful, traumatic, demanding and overwhelming (Lacey & Gronn, 2005), which is the manner in which the position is often portrayed by principals themselves. It is hardly surprising that few people would consider such a position, with its overwhelming job description (Cook, 2004) and unrealistic demands and expectations.

Location, the size of school and local politics are also reported as deterrents to potential applicants (Barty et al., 2005). The city versus country contrast is of importance, with factors such as the pressures of relocation, family disruption, the disruption to the career path of the aspirant's partner and the education of children, all playing a part (Barty et al., 2005). The existence of an incumbent or a likely "heir" or successor is also a powerful deterrent to people seeking promotion, with applicants not likely to apply if they feel that the position is already designated.

2.7.4 Gender Factors

Gender plays a noteworthy role in leadership aspirations and perceived disincentives to leadership. The culture of schools, and in particular secondary schools, is perceived as defined and constructed by men, with traditional, authoritarian modes of operation (Neidhart & Carlin, 2003). Women are often unwilling to apply for leadership

positions, finding it difficult to lead in the powerful, stereotypical, male dominated corporate culture. The paradigm of leadership preferenced by women focuses more on elements such as collaboration, participation and shared decision making (Horst Giese, Slate, Stallone Brown, & Tejeda-Delgado, 2009; Spiller & Curtis, 2007). The three most serious disincentives for women are the impact on personal and family life, problems associated with recruitment, with the interview process perceived as being skewed towards males, and the unsupportive external environment (Neidhart & Carlin, 2003).

2.7.5 Imbalance

The incentives/disincentives imbalance thus highlights a very powerful reason why few teachers are applying for senior leadership positions. The perceived positives associated with leadership, whether at the middle or senior leadership level, are far outweighed by the negatives, with fewer and fewer teachers wishing to undertake work within such a pressured and unrewarding environment. This overwhelmingly negative perception of the role of leadership, particularly in a Catholic context, is a major disincentive to aspirant leaders (Carlin, d'Arbon, Duignan, & Neidhart, 2003). It is also a contributor to the belief that in order to succeed in a leadership position, particularly the principalship, a unique set of skills is required.

2.8 The Unique Skill Set

The dilemma facing leadership in schools in the twenty-first century emerges as a result of change – change in the nature of school leadership, change in the expectations of leadership within the context of the Catholic school and change in leaders' perceptions. They all contribute to the incentive/disincentive imbalance and all help to create the perception of the unique skill set required for a person to successfully and skilfully lead in a Catholic school. It is this perceived skill set that acts as one of the foremost disincentives to leadership.

The job of leader, and in particular the job of principal, in a Catholic school can be seen as so large, complex and diverse that only a person with superhuman abilities would be able to successfully undertake that role. A principal in a Catholic school is required to be multi-skilled, possess unlimited energy, enthusiasm and stamina, have an infinite capacity for goodwill and be willing to toil for long hours for the greater

glory of others (Gronn, 2003b). The perfect blend of people skills, and managerial and strategic skills is also required, along with the ability to delegate, collaborate, motivate, challenge and inspire. The best school leaders also possess the highest levels of resilience, with a sound balance between technical skills and a sense of individual purpose (Presland, 2006). Attention to detail and an ability to efficiently and effectively deal with paperwork, documentation and accountability requirements are also necessary (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007). Combine this with the need to be transformational, strategic, inclusive, collaborative, self-directed, inspirational, entrepreneurial, environmentally aware and self-renewing! An image of leadership is created which is unsustainable and unattractive, and unfortunately, this is often the image that is projected by principals themselves (Lacey, 2002a).

2.9 Leadership Sustainability and Succession Planning

2.9.1 Leadership Sustainability

The future of successful leadership at all levels within Catholic schools is dependent on the principal and his/her leadership capacity (Goodwin, Cunningham, & Eagle, 2005). Leadership development is not arbitrary and should not be left up to chance. It is important that individual schools and education systems endeavour to make leadership development and sustainability an absolute priority **(**Hargreaves & Fink, 2005)**,** for the ongoing development of all staff in leadership roles is vital to the continued existence and success of schools (Fullan, 2003).

2.9.2 Succession Planning

A planned, organised approach to succession planning is a high priority for any school or organisational institution. Succession planning is essential to the survival of the principalship (Canavan, 2001, 2002, 2007; d'Arbon et al., 2001; Lacey, 2003b). There is a growing body of evidence which suggests that a proactive approach to leadership succession is the only way in which the leadership capacity of schools can be maintained (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005; Henning & McIver, 2008; Lacey, 2003b).

2.9.3 Building Blocks for Leadership Succession

Effective succession planning identifies future organisational needs (capabilities) and potential future leaders, inspires leadership aspirations, bases the selection processes

and program design on future leadership capabilities, creates pools of talent and recognises multiple paths to leadership (Liebman, Bruer, & Maki, 1996). Canavan (2001), responding to the crisis of leadership in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney, outlines the need to develop a succession planning mindset, exemplified in a 12 phase management process termed *Building Blocks for Leadership Succession in Catholic Schools.*

It is further suggested (Canavan, 2001) that the 12 phase leadership management succession plan is founded on a number of key assumptions, all based on the understanding that leaders within schools and organisations are committed to the development of the next generation of school leaders. An identification process takes place, to clearly outline the essential competencies required of core positions and to identify those staff who demonstrate the potential to meet those competencies. Potential leaders are provided with opportunities to show their leadership abilities, along with opportunities for on-going professional development.

2.9.4 Proactive Approach to Succession Planning

Within the wider Australian educational setting, a great deal of research has focused on leadership sustainability and succession (Lacey, 2003b), with emphasis placed on the reasons why many potentially suitable applicants are not applying for positions of leadership within schools. A sustained and proactive approach to succession planning is important, with emphasis placed on the attraction, selection, development and retention of high quality staff.

2.9.5 Attraction

To attract high quality applicants to leadership positions it is important that those already within the roles share the positives and the joys associated with the role. Principals are often their own worst enemies, portraying a negative image of the principalship. More often than not, the image conveyed by incumbents is one of overwork, inordinate stress and pressure, with little positive reward. It is no wonder that few applicants aspire to this position, when the image conveyed is so predominantly negative. This negative image actually contradicts research which indicates that the majority of principals express a great deal of satisfaction with their positions (R. Collins, 2006). Principals have a responsibility to play a part in

projecting a positive image of the role, publicly voicing the rewards and experiences which bring satisfaction.

Leadership role responsibilities should be reviewed, in order to include the possibilities of shared leadership positions and flexible work options. Incentives such as relocation support programs warrant attention, so that disruptions to spouse/partner/family are not so great (Simpson, 2003).

2.9.6 Selection

Selection processes need to be reviewed so that application processes and the time and stress involved are greatly reduced. Potential applicants require training in how to apply for positions and in the "secret" business that is the application and selection process (Lacey, 2003a). There is a widely held perception by teachers, particularly within state education systems, that one needs to be "in the know" in order to successfully compete for promoted positions. Similar beliefs are held by potential leaders in the Catholic system (d'Arbon & Cunliffe, 2007).

2.9.7 Development

Greater attention is required to the leadership development of all staff within the teaching profession, but especially to those who have either expressed leadership aspiration or have demonstrated leadership potential. It is important to provide early leadership experience for young teachers, to motivate and extend them and then provide a taste of life within the context of leadership. Similarly, those already holding leadership positions need to be continually challenged and developed so that stagnation and disenchantment do not occur (Weindling, 2000). There is a real need for teachers and leaders at all levels to be given the opportunity to act in leadership roles, to experience life as a middle manager, deputy principal or principal (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). In this way, the role becomes real and confidence can be developed. This sampling approach is a valuable way to build leadership capacity and confidence.

2.9.8 Retention
Care needs to be taken to ensure that teachers, and those already holding leadership positions, are retained within the relevant school or system. This can be achieved by providing flexible work options, such as shared leadership, and by providing early

leadership experiences for those relatively new to the teaching profession. Special attention also needs to be paid to ensuring that experienced leaders are provided with opportunities to maintain enthusiasm and interest and to undertake ongoing development. Without this ongoing challenge and professional development, experienced leaders may lose interest and may seek to move away from schools in order to find alternative sources of gratification, challenge and stimulation (Lacey, 2003b).

2.9.9 Outcomes of Succession Planning

The existence of a clearly thought out and implemented succession plan leads to immense benefits, both for the individual and the school or system (Canavan, 2002). Succession planning leads to renewed vision and focus on mission, goals and priorities, within a culture that is self-renewing and encouraging of growth and development. This focus leads to strategic continuity, regardless of who may, or may not, be in specific leadership positions within the organisation. Emphasis is placed on the development of leadership potential, rather than reactive replacement of personnel. It is a much more disciplined approach to leadership, providing for quality, stability and sustainability (Canavan).

2.10 The Research Problem Defined

Schools are one of the vehicles for the ongoing transmission of society's knowledge, skills and values, and in the case of Catholic schools, faith and spiritual development. A "crisis" of leadership (R. Collins, 2006; Cook, 2004; McKenzie et al., 2011) is occurring within educational institutions throughout the world, leading to serious concerns about the sustainability of school environments. Leadership positions within schools are no longer considered attractive, and much research has been undertaken in an attempt to ascertain why this phenomenon occurs (Earley, Evans, Collarbone, Gold, & Halpin, 2002; MacBeath, 2006). At the TCEO, concern has emerged as to why few potential applicants are applying for middle and senior leadership positions within Catholic schools in the Diocese. As a consequence, the TCEO has implemented a number of professional development strategies and programs aimed at encouraging potential applicants to apply for leadership positions. However, in spite of these initiatives, there is still a paucity of applicants for senior leadership positions,

and particularly the principalship, in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Townsville. This is the problem that this research addresses.

2.10.1 The Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to explore why few deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education an assistant principals apply for principal positions in the Diocese of Townsville.

2.10.2 Major Research Question

The major research question that focuses the conduct of this research is:

Why is there a paucity of applicants applying for the principalship in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Townsville?

CHAPTER THREE: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to explore why few deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals are applying for principal positions in the Diocese of Townsville. This chapter generates a literature review.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

This literature review is conceptualised using three major concepts. These concepts are:

- The role of the principal;

- Leadership preparation and development;

- Succession planning and sustainability.

Influencing these concepts are changes in society, church and school, which contribute to the increased expectations and complexity of Catholic school leadership. This is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 **Conceptual framework of the literature review.**
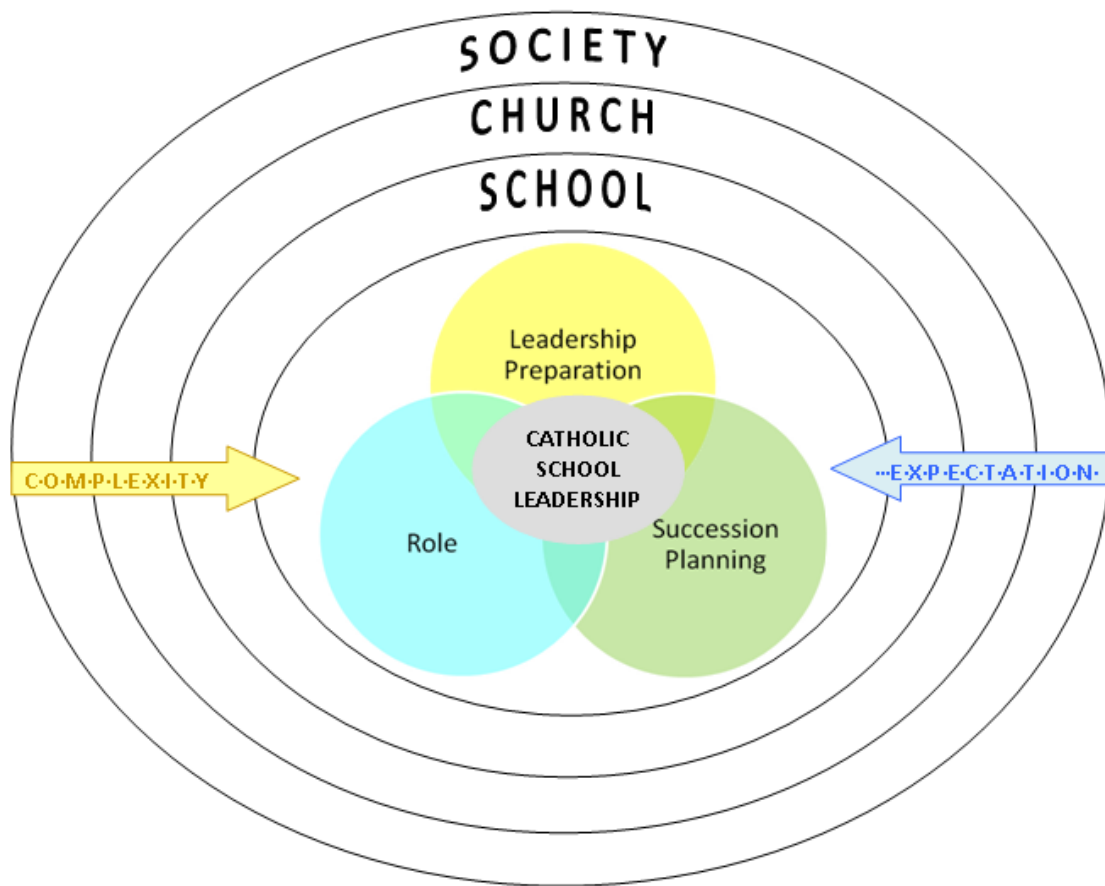
An explanation of Figure 3.1 is appropriate**.**

The Catholic school and **Catholic school leadership** are influenced by an increasingly complex world. Society has evolved into a diverse microcosm and this has influenced the Church and the school (Thomson, 2009; Treston, 2006). The growing **complexity** evident in schools, church and society has had influence on the way in which **Catholic school leadership** is exercised (Billot 2003; Drysdale & Gurr, 2011).

These **complexities** have contributed to one of the many challenges facing Australian Catholic education. This is the apparent lack of aspiring school leaders. Contributing to this leadership deficit is the perceived imbalance between incentives and

disincentives to leadership (Lacey, 2002b). Planned **leadership succession** is one way of helping to address this shortage (Canavan, 2001; Fincham, 2010).

Two of the key aspects of leadership **succession planning** are **preparation** and professional development programs (Caldwell, 2006; Cowie & Crawford, 2007; Dempster, Lovett, & Fluckiger, 2011). **Preparation** and development programs aim to offer aspiring leaders the knowledge, skills and practices to address current leadership deficiencies. In addition, a variety of professional development experiences is available to serving principals to sharpen their capacity to meet the current **complexities** in Australian education. There is a need for comprehensive education for all levels of the principalship. This is exacerbated as the role of the principal has become more **complex** because governments, society and church have increased their **expectations** of the **role** (Thomson, 2009). The manner in which the principal's **role** is fulfilled is directly influenced by factors such as the **preparation** for leadership which the principal has experienced and the system level approach to **succession planning** and professional development which has been implemented (Canavan, 2007).

All of these factors contribute to the uncertain state of Catholic school leadership (Carlin & Neidhart, 2005; Duignan & Gurr, 2007). Practitioners insist that previous models of leadership are incapable of addressing contemporary challenges and they encourage the exploration of alternative models of leadership (Crowther, 2011; Duignan & Cannon, 2011).

3.2.1 Sequence of Literature Review

The literature review is presented linearly in Table 3.1. This is not to negate the fact that the issues underpinning the review are in a dynamic relationship where a state of tension is more the reality. To demonstrate the conceptual framework, key concepts identified throughout the literature review are listed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Sequence of the Literature Review

3.3 The Role of the Principal

      3.3.1   The Changing Nature of Society

      3.3.2   The Changing Role of the Church in Contemporary Society

      3.3.3   The Changing Nature of the Catholic School

      3.3.4   The Changing Nature of Leadership and the Principal's Role

            3.3.4.1 The Interplay between Church and School

            3.3.4.2 Business-like Approach to School Leadership

            3.3.4.3. Leadership Capabilities

            3.3.4.4 Responsibilities of the Principal's Role

      3.3.5   Leadership Disengagement

      3.3.6   Research Question One

3.4 Leadership Sustainability and Succession Planning

      3.4.1   Leadership Sustainability

      3.4.2   Succession Planning

            3.4.2.1 Outcomes of Succession Planning

      3.4.3   Research Question Two

3.5 Leadership Development Programs – Preparation for Leadership and On-going Professional Development

      3.5.1   Principal Preparation Programs

      3.5.2   Leadership Standards and Frameworks

      3.5.3   Mentoring

      3.5.4   Apprenticeships, Shadowing and Internships

      3.5.5   Research Question Three

3.3 The Role of the Principal

The first concept underpinning this literature review is the role of the principal. In the Australian Catholic school system, as in the government sector, the principal has the prime responsibility to ensure that the school carries out its educational mandate. It is the principal who has the key responsibility concerning the success and direction of the Catholic school (Belmonte, 2007). In fulfilling this educational mandate, the principal contends with issues such as the changing nature of society, the changing nature of the Catholic Church and of the Catholic school, the changing nature of leadership and the principal's role and leadership disengagement.

3.3.1 The Changing Nature of Society

In contemporary Australia, a number of societal issues influence education. These issues include the diversity of: family structures; racial and ethnic backgrounds; religious affiliations and practices; and employment options (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007). The apparent evaporation of the family unit and diverse family structures compel schools to engage in increased parenting and socialisation roles and responsibilities, in addition to their central educating mission (Howley, Andrianaivo, & Perry, 2005). Where once schools were defined as learning communities, they have broadened their responsibilities to include responsibility for the social, emotional, physical, health and spiritual needs of students and their families (Goldring & Sullivan, 1996). The belief that schools are the appropriate vehicle to ameliorate society's ills leads to the inclusion of numerous innovations, creating increased pressures on schools. These new roles currently expected of educators make schools more overtly vehicles of social change (Hargreaves, 2003). School leadership responsibility has also expanded to include site administration and management of the increased numbers of childcare, kindergarten and medical facilities established on school properties (Lovely, 2004).

Paradoxically, at a time when more is expected from schools, the degree of public trust in schools and education systems appears to be declining (Zepeda, Bengtson, Parylo, Teitelbaum, & Shorner-Johnson, 2008). Indeed, the public and government are insisting that schools become more transparent and accountable. Governments

appear to be increasingly unsupportive of schools and more willing to criticise educational practice (McCormick, 2003). Schools are often blamed for societal problems, with media and social commentators criticising schools and their educational and social mandates (Lamb, 2009). Just as society's perceptions of schools have changed, so too has the perception of the role played by the Church in contemporary society.

3.3.2 The Changing Role of the Church in Contemporary Society

A number of issues influence the role of the Church in contemporary society. Increased globalisation, secularisation and societal dysfunction have led to changes in the perception of the role played by the Church. Global challenges for the Catholic Church include the crisis of values, the widening gap between the rich and the poor and the evolving fragmentation of society (Tinsey, 1998; Treston, 2006). Similar tensions occurring in the Australian Catholic Church have been identified. These include tensions which directly affect the exercise of leadership within the religious domain in Catholic schools and education systems (National Catholic Education Commission, 2005). Tensions include:

- the emergence of a more conservative perspective aimed at reviving traditional piety and "reclaiming" the young for the Church;

- the desire for more personal and less institutionalised forms of Catholic life;

- the establishment of "breakaway" movements outside the existing Church structures;

- the decreasing numbers of ordained ministers;

- the harm caused by clerical sexual abuse and the official response to such abuse;

- movements towards reconciliation and ecumenism;

- the changing ethnic mix within the Catholic Church in Australia, with different traditions, ways of relating within the Church and differing expectations of Church;

- the marginalisation of Christian faith in society, reflective of increased individualism, the pace and secularity of contemporary life, the changed social status of women, the multi-faith world, globalisation, sustainability and the connections between fundamentalist religion and terrorism.

These tensions, coupled with the diminution of the numbers of vowed religious personnel working within both the Church and Catholic schools, has led to a diminishing respect for ecclesial authority (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007). Increased lay participation in church leadership has led to demands for more democratic structures within the Church organisation.

The culture of silence within the Church has been challenged (Grace, 2002b). Previously, members of the laity were fearful of voicing their opinion. However, increased numbers of lay people have been empowered by a more open and critical society to demand in the Church democratic structures that are typical of secular organizations (Fincham, 2010; Morwood, 2007). This demand for increased transparency has a degree of urgency since so many in church leadership have been convicted of paedophilia. Sadly, the current organisational structures are seen by some to favour those who are convicted and offer a disservice to victims. There exists a crisis of confidence in the institutional Church, with many questioning the role and function of the contemporary Church (Morwood).

Trust in the Catholic Church has not been regained through efforts of the wider Church, priests or clergy. What has contributed greatly to the rebuilding of credibility within the Church has been the emergence of the modern Catholic school.

3.3.3 The Changing Nature of the Catholic School

The role of the principal has been further influenced by the changing nature of leadership of the Catholic school. The Catholic school has undergone considerable change, influenced by a number of factors. These include a transition from a monastic model of leadership, fluctuating parental expectations, the peculiarities of leadership in a faith based school and the increasingly secular beliefs of students and staff (Mellor, 2005).

The first factor under consideration is the move away from a monastic model of leadership to alternative models. A monastic model of leadership was once the norm within Catholic schools, with the religious sister or brother principal drawing immediate authority because of the membership of his or her order (Cannon, 2007). This gave the school, as a Catholic institution, its religious credibility (Fincham, 2010; Mellor, 2005). Members of religious congregations are now almost non-existent

in schools. Religious, spiritual and ecclesial leadership is the responsibility of the leadership team, especially the principal, and an associated paradigm shift has occurred. While a lay sense of vocation to Catholic education has replaced the monastic vocation (Mellor, 2005), no such change has occurred in Catholic society. Much community and Catholic Church expectation is still firmly focused on the school (Arthur, 2012; Coughlan, 2009; Tinsey, 1998), with the belief that the school should continue to serve as an evangelising arm of the Church.

A second factor to be considered is the changing expectation parents have of Catholic schools. Since the Second Vatican Council (1961–1965), there has been a considerable decrease in the number of Catholics attending worship (Grace, 2002b). In 1960–61, 53% of Catholics attended mass on Sunday. By 2006, this figure had declined to 13% (Wilkinson, 2011). Fewer Catholic parents respect the authority of the Church. A similar change has occurred in parental expectations of Catholic schools. For some, Catholic schools are considered an extension of the Church, providing a Catholic faith based education. Others view the educational mandate of the school of greatest importance, with education of a religious nature of lesser significance. An increasing percentage of those enrolled in Catholic schools are from diverse faith and cultural backgrounds. All bring with them diverse expectations and views (Coughlan, 2009) .

This diversity of faith experience and expectations has led to a tension with many parish priests, with many believing that the faith education of adults should be orchestrated by the Catholic school (Milburn, 2005; Wilkinson, 2012). There is a belief that the schools may be an effective strategy to engage in the evangelisation of parents, with the school taking the place of the parish as the first point of contact with parents. This, in turn, generates tension with school principals, who believe that their role is more specifically educational in nature, with direct responsibility for the education of students, not the evangelization of parents (Coughlan, 2009). Principals are challenged with educational, societal and spiritual demands (Coughlan, 2009; L. Cranston et al., 2007).

This tension leads to a third area for consideration, the specific nature of leadership of a faith based school. Leading faith based schools generates additional complex factors (d'Arbon, 2003; Grace, 2002a). Personal lifestyle, faith commitment and religious

practices are issues to be considered in the leadership of a faith based school (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007). Leadership within a Catholic school invites scrutiny of personal and spiritual life by Church authorities, Catholic education systems and school communities. Being a leader in a Catholic school demands additional responsibilities, commitments and pressures that have grown predominantly out of church and community expectations (d'Arbon, 2004; Grace, 2009).

Finally, Catholic schools are typified by a pluralism of students, with clientele from a variety of religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007). There were almost 712,864 students in Australian Catholic schools in 2010. Of these students, 192,898, or 27%, were non-Catholic, indicating the increasingly diverse nature of the students within Catholic schools. Since 2006 the number of non-Catholic students in Australian Catholic schools has grown by more than 25,000, while there are more than 7,600 fewer Catholic students in 2010 than there were in 2006 (National Catholic Education Commission, 2010).

The faith and religious development continuum which exists in Catholic schools is immense (Tinsey, 1998), ranging from students and staff with staunch, traditional adherence to the Catholic faith to those with little or no affiliation. In the Diocese of Townsville, of the 1,594 staff employed in 2011, 37% were non Catholic (Catholic Education Office, 2011). This diversity in the religious affiliation of both staff and students typifies one of the dilemmas faced by the Catholic school. In a time when decreasing numbers of students and staff practise the Catholic faith, there is an increasing demand from families for a Catholic education. Consequently, what the Catholic school is offering is considered of value by society, even though there still remains considerable distrust of the institutional Catholic Church.

3.3.4 Changing Nature of Leadership and the Principal's Role

In order to understand how the changing nature of leadership has influenced the role of the principal, a number of issues invite consideration. These include the interplay between church and school, the move to a more business-like approach to school leadership, the emergence of a capabilities-based conceptualisation of leadership and the extension of responsibilities included in the principal's role.

3.3.4.1 The Interplay between Church and School

The role of the Catholic school principal is more diverse and all encompassing, with its clear involvement in the mission of the Church (Belmonte, 2007). The Catholic school is the only face of the Catholic Church that most within the community experience. As such, the principal within the Catholic school may offer the only human face of the Church to many, and this invites additional expectations and responsibilities (Cannon, 2007). There is the belief that the Church pastoral mission is increasingly a school responsibility (National Catholic Education Commission, 2005), for incumbent in the principal's role is responsibility for developing an effective relationship with the parish priest. Parish–school relationships are central to school leadership (Davison, 2006), as is the move towards a more business-like approach to school leadership.

3.3.4.2 Business-like Approach to School Leadership

Trends associated with the business world have emerged within the schooling sector (R. Collins, 2008). Education has become more politicised, market and data driven (Eacott, 2011; Lashway, 2003b) and is increasingly measured in terms of efficiency, standards, targets, productivity and outcomes (Duignan & Gurr, 2007). An economic, market-driven paradigm has been imposed on a people-centred, developmental education environment. A culture of accountability and national testing (NAPLAN) has changed the nature of the traditional school process (Eacott, 2011). This has led to increased complexity with principals forced to assume the role of change manager within the educational community.

Traditional paradigms of leadership tend to focus on an industrial, male dominated, clinical approach to school leadership (Starr, 2007). Growing disenchantment with the traditional paradigm of leadership has led to the perception that an alternative paradigm of leadership is required in schools, and in particular, in Catholic schools (Milburn, 2005), with an increasing emphasis placed on the development of leadership capabilities to better equip the Catholic school principal for leadership in a Catholic school (R. Collins, 2008; Duignan & Gurr, 2007; Spry, 2007).

3.3.4.3 Leadership Capabilities

The types of skills needed by the modern school leader focus on educational, personal, relational, intellectual and organisational capabilities (Dempster et al., 2011). No longer is it sufficient to be a good organisational leader. A combination of sophisticated skills is needed, ranging from the interpersonal human dimension of leadership to entrepreneurial and strategic management skills. This supports the belief that the expectations of the role of the leader have changed, adding to the perception that the role of a leader has become unmanageable and unattractive (Barty et al., 2005).

Challenges for school principals centre on changing student demographics, schools and curricula inappropriately designed for the students of the twenty-first century and the pace of technological change (Tirozzi, 2001). The coupling of leadership responsibilities with managerial responsibilities has led to complex and demanding responsibilities for principals (Lashway, 2003b). The increased emphasis placed on managerial organisation and accountability procedures is of concern to all school leaders. A common concern expressed by principals, deputy principals, assistant principals and heads of departments (Barty et al., 2005) is the dichotomy between the number of hours spent in operational activities and the amount of time which could be devoted to strategic and curriculum leadership. This managerial/leadership dilemma epitomises the changing nature of the work in which a leader is involved.

3.3.4.4. Responsibilities of the Principal's Role

Common elements of the role of a school leader can be identified (R. Collins, 2006). These include: responsibility for the quality of the teaching and learning within the educational environment; relationships with students, staff, parents and the wider community; creating and maintaining positively oriented and physically safe environments; being a role model for the profession of school leadership; strategic direction, planning and goal setting (R. Collins, 2006). Furthermore:

> Many of today's schools feed, counsel, provide health care for body and mind, and protect students, while they also educate and instruct. The principal is expected to be legal expert, health and social services co-ordinator, fundraiser, diplomat, negotiator, adjudicator, public relations consultant, security officer,

technological innovator and top notch resource manager, whose most important job is the promotion of teaching and learning (Flockton, 2001 p.20).

Indeed, research has identified common elements in the roles of principals across a number of countries. These include:

1. To accept the fundamental responsibility for the quality of the learning which forms the educational foundation for all the young people in their community.

2. To develop, nurture and maintain excellent relationships with the students, staff, parent community and other providers within the wider school context.

3. To be accountable for the quality and effectiveness of the teaching and learning programs in the school.

4. To create and maintain a learning environment that values the academic, vocational, spiritual and broad developmental needs of all their students, and to integrate these characteristics in a holistic way.

5. To maintain a positively oriented and physically safe learning environment, which encourages and values the contribution of all people who work, teach and learn within it.

6. To be a role model for the profession of school leadership.

7. To use effective processes to establish strategic directions and set realistic goals for their organizations.

(International Confederation of Principals, 2001, pp. 3–4).

These seven main descriptors of the role of the principal contribute to the six conceptions of leadership identified from an analysis of articles on educational leadership published in four major administration journals from 1985–1995. The six conceptions of leadership comprise instructional, transformational, moral, participative, managerial and contingent (Leithwood & Duke, 1999).

These descriptions of leadership generate metaphors to describe the role of leader within a schooling environment. Images such as gatekeeper, juggler and puppeteer are common, all conjuring the picture of a profession in crisis. Coupled with ever

increasing legal, managerial and accountability responsibilities, the belief has developed that the role of the principal in a Catholic school is too complex and onerous for one single person to undertake (Thomson, 2009). This complexity is the reason why many teachers fail to volunteer for promotion to the role of the principal (d'Arbon, 2004). The traditional role that a Catholic school principal adopts can be described as that of the "heroic leader" (Chapman, 2005), the one who leads all, manages all, serves all, does all, is everything to everyone. Descriptors of the heroic leader do not encourage the ordinary teacher to aspire to the principalship. The concept of the "heroic" leader has been challenged, with the alternative recognition of a need for a more distributed approach to leadership. However, the concept of a "superleader" (Di Paola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003) remains the prevailing image of leadership within the traditional school environment.

Linked to the concept of a "superleader" is the notion of "greedy" work. The work undertaken by the school leader is seen as greedy, demanding more and more time and expertise. "Greedy" work is defined as work with an increased emphasis on "administrivia", bureaucratic structures and the demands concerning accountability and its documentation, as well as perennial innovations unrelated to student achievement (Gronn & Rawlings-Sanaei, 2003).

The work of a leader has moved beyond the core focus of teaching and learning, with the emergence of a new paradigm of governance and accountability (Billot, 2003; Watson, 2007). This responsibility of increased pressure for accountability has been associated with the reality that principals have less autonomy and authority to act (Williams, 2003), leading to a discontent and the belief that leaders are confined by conflicting expectations and demands. The term "occupational servitude" (Gronn & Lacey, 2005) has been coined to describe the excessive demands of time and expertise required of principals: "We have reached the point where aggregate expectations for the principalship are so exorbitant, they exceed the limits of what reasonably might be expected from one person" (Copland, 2001, p. 529).

Unreasonable expectations are also created by the rapidity of educational change and international reform. Unsustainable educational reform contributes to the changing nature of the principal's work (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005) and also contributes to the view that the role of a principal has become too large and unattractive (Barty et al.,

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2005). There is a public expectation that principals form part of the social fabric of the community, which requires them to serve on committees and boards and contribute to the civic aspect of life in the wider community. This expectation is magnified for those involved in leadership in a Catholic school, with the belief that active parish involvement is central to the work of a Catholic school principal. The principal is expected to form part of the Parish Council, to participate in sacramental and adult education programs (Fincham, 2010; Milburn, 2005) and be the leadership face of the Church to those within the school community. This perceived principal work–life imbalance contributes to the negative image of the principalship held by many teachers and contributes to the perceived unattractiveness of the role.

3.3.5 Leadership Disengagement

Clearly then, the current range of responsibilities of principals in Catholic schools is a major reason that teachers are deterred from applying for senior leadership positions. There is an ever increasing unwillingness of those within middle and senior leadership ranks to aspire to such promotion (Lazaridou, 2009; Munby, 2006; Pounder & Crow, 2005). In the United Kingdom, 30–40% of departmental heads and middle leaders expressed no desire to aspire to the principalship, citing the onerous demands of the position, increased pressure and stress, personal commitments, reduced contact with students, reduced teaching, and escalating pressures associated with accountability (Munby, 2006). Similar research has been reported which documents disincentives such as increased job stress, inadequate school funding, balancing school management with instructional leadership, new curriculum standards, educating an increasingly diverse student population, shouldering home and community responsibilities and accountability demands (Lazaridou, 2009). A survey of potential high school principal candidates found that only a third considered the position of principal to be attractive or very attractive, with salary and personal stress consistently rated as critical factors influencing the decision to apply or not to apply for a leadership position (Pounder & Merrill, 2001; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009).

In addition, Australian research concludes that the time requirements of the principal's position, the perceived stress generated in the job, and the intrusive effects on personal and family life are disincentives to leadership aspirations (Lacey, 2002b). Most school leaders express high levels of job satisfaction, but over one third of

principals consider school leadership positions to be unattractive to qualified applicants (McKenzie et al., 2011). Factors which might increase the attractiveness of leadership positions are reduced workload, the provision of additional support staff, the development of a more positive public image of leadership positions and the imposition of fewer externally directed changes to schools (McKenzie et al., 2011).

Within the Catholic sector in Australia, employing authorities have commissioned research on the leadership aspirations of senior leaders within five state and territory jurisdictions (d'Arbon, 2003), contributing to the growing awareness that care needs to be taken to ensure an ongoing supply of high quality leaders provided with comprehensive and relevant faith formation and professional development. Evidence suggests that many potentially good candidates are not applying for principalship in Australian schools citing: lifestyle issues; increasing societal demands on personal and professional life; gender concerns; city versus country placement issues; disruption caused to family life due to relocation; income concerns; the increasing responsibilities of the position; the transition from a monastic to a lay model of school leadership; and the ambiguity of recruitment pathways to the principalship (Dorman & d'Arbon, 2001).

Concerned by such research, the Australian National Secondary Principals' Association commissioned a research report into school leaders (National Secondary Principals' Association Report into School Leader Welfare, 2007). Involving over 1,000 secondary school principals, deputy and assistant principals from across Australia, questions were asked revolving around psychological and physical wellbeing in an attempt to obtain a definitive picture of leader wellbeing within the Australian secondary context. The two greatest stresses identified were the quantity of work expected within the parameters of the leadership role and the lack of time to undertake all that was required and expected within the role. These understandings were identical, regardless of the role undertaken. For most respondents, a lack of balance and the impact on personal and family lives were identified as the key factors which contributed to a sense of being overwhelmed by the responsibilities of the leadership role. The survey also sought to identify issues concerning the physical health of school leaders, with 32% indicating a medically diagnosed illness attributed to, or exacerbated by, the work undertaken (National Secondary Principals' Association Report into School Leader Welfare). Over half of the respondents

indicated that they had felt stressed within the last month, and one in six recorded feelings of depression. The area of school leadership physical and psychological wellbeing appears to be an emergent area of concern. The increasing level of stress is constantly cited as one of the major disincentives to leadership (Lacey, 2002a; Lindle, 2004; Thomson et al., 2002) and is emerging as an area of significance for principal wellbeing. The conflict between a principal's drive for instructional leadership, as opposed to system pressure for managerial and accountable leadership, is also a major contributing factor (Eacott, 2011).

3.3.6 Research Question One

The work undertaken by principals has changed considerably with complex expectations imposed by society, the Catholic Church and the school. There has also been a decline in the number of deputy principals and assistant principals aspiring to principal positions. How these issues are inter-related invites research. How the role of the principal is understood by principals, members of leadership teams and TCEO personnel may explain why there are few applicants for principal positions. Consequently, research question one is:

How do principals, members of leadership teams and TCEO personnel understand the role of a Catholic school principal?

3.4 Leadership Sustainability and Succession Planning

The second concept underpinning this literature review concerns leadership sustainability. Declining applications for leadership positions in faith based schools is an international phenomenon (Lovely, 2004; Pounder & Crow, 2005; Thomson, 2009). In the United Kingdom, for example, more than half of the Catholic schools that advertised for a principal/head position re-advertised the position, due to the lack of suitable applicants (Lamb, 2009). Whilst the situation in Australia is less acute, there are increasing concerns about the diminishing number of applicants for middle and senior leadership positions (Barty et al., 2005; Dempster et al., 2011; Lacey & Gronn, 2005). Indeed 22% of primary deputies and 25% of secondary deputies intend to apply for the principalship. Those who decline the opportunity to apply for promotion cite the excessive time demands of the position as the primary disincentive (McKenzie et al., 2011).

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3.4.1 Leadership Sustainability

Concerns are raised over the sustainability of current models of leadership within schools, prompting calls for the development of new approaches to leadership. Leadership behaviours can be viewed as a continuum with sole leadership at one extreme and shared leadership at the other (Court, 2001).

Sole leadership typifies the traditional paradigm of leadership, characterised by a linear, male-centric, hierarchical structure with knowledge and authority the responsibility of one individual (Caldwell, 2006). This model is commonly practised in educational institutions throughout the world.

Supported leadership offers a differing view of the role of the principal. Proponents of supported leadership emphasise a shared leadership approach with collaborative decision making and responsibility (Pont, Nusche, & Moorman, 2008). One person does not exercise ultimate responsibility.

Research within the international and Australian contexts identifies five models of supported leadership (Duignan & Cannon, 2011):

1. Model 1: The Business Matrix Management Model – single principal with full-time release; an assistant principal with a balance of teaching and leadership responsibilities; business manager responsible to the principal for administrative activities, including WH&S, supervision of non-teaching staff, finances, resources and maintenance.

2. Model 2: The Distributed Leadership Model – single principal with full-time release; an assistant principal with full-time release; an expanded leadership team with allocated release time for specific, delegated responsibilities.

3. Model 3: Dual Leadership with Split Task Specialisation Model – a principal for administration and a principal for educational leadership; an assistant principal with a balance between teaching and administration.

4. Model 4: Dual Leadership with Job-Sharing Model – two part-time principals who share administrative and educational leadership responsibilities.

5. Model 5: The Integrative Leadership Model – two principals working together with equal responsibility.

These models of leadership emphasise a more dispersed exercising of authority, with roles and responsibilities shared across a range of people. With the distribution of responsibility, leadership becomes more sustainable.

Further along the leadership continuum is shared leadership (Lambert, 2003), a term often used to include concepts such as dual, distributed (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006) and parallel leadership (Crowther, 2011). Shared leadership emphasises professional collegiality and support, work and personal life balance, and collaborative partnerships (Lacey & Anderson, 2009). Shared leadership is holistic, with authority and decision making shared by a range of persons and groups. It is collaborative and utilises a diversity of skills, with an emphasis on relationships and people working with and through teams to achieve results (Holter & Frabutt, 2012). Furthermore, shared leadership is characterised by high levels of trust, openness and honesty and a belief in the value of individual differences. Shared leadership focuses on the development of relationships, with a commitment to the development of all through challenge, support and feedback (Lambert, 2003).

With an emphasis on collaborative information and responsibility, shared leadership has many benefits. These include increased staff morale, shared resources and decision making, reduced isolation, better communication and increased commitment. A final benefit is increased leadership density, with the roles and responsibilities of leadership being shared across personnel (Holter & Frabutt, 2012).

A further example of shared leadership is distributed leadership, in which teachers are empowered within a supportive school culture of shared decision making. Distributed leadership is multi-levelled, with the principal and leadership team working collaboratively with teacher leaders (A. Harris, 2011). There is a change in perception of the role of leadership, with a shift from leadership as position to leadership as interaction. This move to a more distributed approach to leadership is an observable characteristic in international education. In The Netherlands, for example, it forms part of new leadership competency frameworks. In England, distributed leadership models are being utilised to facilitate workforce remodelling and the introduction of

new models of schooling, and in Wales, distributed leadership is a key component of emerging national school effectiveness frameworks (A. Harris, 2011) .

Within Australia, parallel leadership is a concept that has gained respect:

> Parallel leadership is a process whereby teacher leaders and their principals engage in collaborative action to build school capacity. It embodies three distinct qualities – mutual trust, shared understandings, and allowance for individual expression (Crowther, Ferguson, & Hann, 2009, p. 53)

Parallel leadership has its foundation in the *Innovative Design for Enhancing Achievement in Schools* (IDEAS) program (Crowther, 2011), and offers a particularly powerful understanding of shared leadership. Parallel leadership distinguishes between the roles of principal as strategic leader and teacher leaders as leaders who provide instructional leadership. Inextricably linked with perceptions of distributed leadership is the view of schools as professional learning communities, with a focus on school wide approaches to teaching and learning (Andrews, 2008). Parallel leadership enhances school identity, teacher professional esteem, community support and student achievement, leading to the enhanced capacity of all within the school community (Crowther, 2011; A. Harris, 2011).

This increased capacity is catalytic to sustainability. Capacity building occurs on both vertical and lateral planes – the capacity of all within the hierarchical structure is linked to the horizontal development of individuals, groups and networks within the wider community. Leaders who hold different responsibilities undertake development in order to strengthen the capacity of the pool of personnel within the school environment (Crowther et al., 2009). Such a dynamic in any organisation promotes its sustainability.

Sustainable leadership is based on the following seven principles:

- Depth – sustainable leadership matters.

- Length – sustainable leadership lasts.

- Breadth – sustainable leadership spreads.

- Justice – sustainable leadership actively improves the surrounding environment.

- Diversity – sustainable leadership promotes cohesive diversity.

- Resourcefulness – sustainable leadership develops, and does not deplete material and human resources.

- Conservation – sustainable leadership learns from the best of the past to create an even better future. (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006)

Shared, distributed and parallel leadership all share a common attribute; they are based on the concept of a plurality of leadership. When leadership is shared, roles and responsibilities are not arduous or time consuming, which means that the individuals involved are able to achieve an effective work–life balance.

Therefore, it is appropriate for Catholic school leadership to be reconceptualised, in order to address the increasing diversity and complexity of the role of the principal (Cannon, 2007). Nine fundamental premises underpin this new paradigm:

1. The principalship needs to be shared.

2. Flexible models of leadership need to be contextualised.

3. Shared, flexible models of leadership should be underpinned by positive relationships.

4. Flexible models of leadership should enhance the overall perception of the school as a learning community.

5. The new paradigm of leadership needs to restore balance to the principalship.

6. Gender sensitivity is central.

7. Building the leadership capacity of the school is essential to shared leadership.

8. Professional support and formation for principals and school leaders should be based on frameworks for building leadership capabilities.

9. The new paradigm of leadership needs to be sustainable.

The sustainability of leadership at all levels within Catholic schools is the product of a partnership in which the individual teacher (Hargreaves, 2005) works with the principal (Goodwin et al., 2005) and the system (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006) to ensure the continuing viability of schools and systems and the enhanced role satisfaction of all involved.

3.4.2 Succession Planning

It is important for schools to develop leadership sustainability. This is particularly the case when fewer teachers are applying for leadership positions. One way of achieving this is through succession planning.

Succession planning is essential to the survival of the principalship (Canavan, 2001, 2002, 2007; d'Arbon et al., 2001; Lacey, 2003b). Incompetent management of leadership succession initiatives may lead to teacher apathy, low morale, inconsistent school improvement efforts and lack of continuity in school vision and development (Zepeda et al., 2008). A proactive approach to leadership succession is a pragmatic option to cultivate leadership capacity (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005; Henning & McIver, 2008; Lacey, 2003b). Leadership succession is not merely the problem of the individual school. Rather, it is a pervasive problem challenging education in general (Bush, 2011; Hargreaves, 2005), and as such, education departments and systems are required to undertake a planned and carefully delineated approach to leadership development. Effective succession planning identifies future organisational needs (capabilities) and potential future leaders; inspires leadership aspirations; bases the selection processes and program design on future leadership capabilities; creates pools of talent and recognises multiple paths to leadership (Liebman et al., 1996). Thus, successful succession planning depends on researched planning principles, the appropriate employment of leadership knowledge, limiting the frequency of succession events and implementing an appropriate balance of leadership with management (Hargreaves, 2005). Furthermore, effective succession plans are formulated and implemented within an appropriate time interval before a current leader's anticipated departure, in order to offer candidates an appropriate amount of time to prepare. They are incorporated into standard school development plans and are the responsibility of many within the system, including the incumbent. Succession plans are based on an analysis of the school's current stage of development and are transparently linked to defined leadership standards and competencies (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).

Concerns over the future of leadership in Catholic schools have led to the establishment of leadership succession plans in some settings. In the Archdiocese of Sydney, these considerations prompted the development of an organisational

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succession planning mindset, exemplified in a 12 phase management process termed *Building Blocks for Leadership Succession in Catholic Schools* (Canavan, 2001). The building blocks are based on five major assumptions:

- the need to enhance the long term evangelisation focus of Catholic schools;

- the need for all schools to achieve their goals;

- the need to ensure leadership continuity at all levels;

- the need to identify future leadership requirements; and

- The need to develop a pool of potential leaders.

 (Canavan).

These building blocks focus on leadership development and sustainability and consist of:

1. Establishing future strategic directions which embrace the vision, mission, culture and emerging priorities of the school or organisation.

2. Establishing criteria and competencies for the positions that will need to be filled.

3. Identifying future leaders.

4. Providing leadership development opportunities.

5. Identifying disincentives which discourage staff from applying for leadership positions.

6. Planning for the long term retention and development of staff who demonstrate strong leadership potential.

7. Assuming those aspiring to leadership roles will accept a great deal of responsibility for their own development and capacity as leaders.

8. Recognising that some staff will feel left out in the quest for leadership opportunities and will need to be helped to remain motivated in their current positions.

9. Expecting staff who are currently in leadership positions to take ownership of the need for the preparation and nurturing of future leaders.

10. Recognising that different schools and educational institutions have differing requirements, needs and expectations of leaders. The "one size fits all" model does not lead to the development of leadership capacity and does not work.

11. Providing recently appointed leaders with quality induction and support programs.

12. Talking about succession planning programs with all of those involved and who may be affected by future leadership programs (Canavan, 2001).

The 12 phase leadership management succession plan centres on articulated leadership principles (Canavan, 2001). There is an understanding that those in leadership positions within schools are committed to the development of future leaders. Without this acceptance of responsibility, leadership development lacks vitality. Thus, senior school staff share ownership of, and responsibility for, succession planning (Chapman, 2005). An identification process takes place, to outline the essential competencies required within core positions and to identify those staff who demonstrate the potential to meet these leadership competencies. A pool of potential applicants for positions is established to fill any future vacancies. This is considered a proactive approach, rather than waiting for positions to become available.

A succession planning mindset also fosters the development of all staff. Succession planning is more effective when all are targeted for development. It would be appropriate to develop all staff with leadership aspirations, and then apply a selection process when leadership positions become available (Canavan, 2007). In this way, the potential pool of applicants for leadership positions is greater and the professional development more widespread. It is important that potential leaders are provided with opportunities to demonstrate their leadership potential, as well as ongoing professional development to continue this growth process (Chapman, 2005).

Further research within the Australian educational setting focuses on leadership sustainability and succession, with emphasis placed on why appropriate applicants do not apply for leadership positions (d'Arbon, 2004; Gurr, 2008; Lacey, 2003b;

Thomson, 2009). The identification, selection, development and retention of high quality staff are central (Brooking, Collins, Court, & O'Neill, 2003).

In order to attract high quality applicants to leadership positions it is important that those already within the roles share the satisfactions associated with their leadership (R. Collins, 2008). Principals often convey a negative experience of the principalship (Lacey, 2002c), emphasising overwork, inordinate stress and pressure, lack of time and balance and infrequent rewards (Cook, 2004). As the image conveyed is so predominantly negative, few applicants are aspiring to the position. This negative depiction is not consistent with research which indicates that principals express a high degree of satisfaction with, and enjoyment of, their position (Buckingham, Donaldson, & Marnik, 2005; R. Collins, 2006). Principals have a responsibility to project a positive image of the role, publicly voicing the rewards and experiences which bring satisfaction and enjoyment. Furthermore, leadership roles should be demystified, so that they are not perceived as too complex or overwhelming (Cannon, 2007). This would help to counteract the widely held negative image of the principalship.

Perceptions of leadership roles could be widened to include the possibilities of shared leadership positions and flexible work options promoted as viable and realistic alternatives (N. Cranston, 2007; Donahoo & Hunter, 2007). Attention to incentives such as relocation support programs, so that disruptions to spouse/partner/family are minimised, could also be beneficial (Simpson, 2003).

A further boost to leadership applications is the simplification and clarification of selection processes, so that the complexity of the application processes and the time and stress involved are reduced. Assistance could be given to potential applicants in applying for positions and in the secret business that is the application and selection process (Lacey, 2003a), for there is a widely held perception by teachers, particularly within state education systems, that one should be "in the know" in order to successfully compete for promoted positions (d'Arbon, Duignan, & Duncan, 2002). Furthermore, non-traditional career paths could be acknowledged as viable alternate paths to school leadership. This highlights the importance of better professional development of staff, so that perceptions are broadened. (d'Arbon et al., 2002).

The development of all staff within the teaching profession warrants attention, but none more so than those who have either expressed leadership aspirations or have demonstrated leadership potential. It is important to provide early leadership experience for young teachers, to motivate and extend and then provide some experience of life within the context of leadership. Similarly, those already holding leadership positions should be continually challenged and developed so that stagnation and disenchantment do not occur (Dempster et al., 2011; Weindling, 2000). Teachers and leaders would benefit from experience in acting leadership capacities, being given the opportunity to experience life as a middle manager, deputy principal or principal (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). In this way, the role becomes familiar and confidence can be developed. This sampling approach is a valuable initiative to build leadership capacity and confidence.

Capable teachers, and those already holding leadership positions, warrant retention within the relevant school or system. This can be achieved by providing flexible work options, such as shared leadership, and by providing early leadership experiences for those relatively new to the teaching profession (Dempster et al., 2011; Roza, 2003). Special attention also can be paid to ensuring that experienced leaders are provided with opportunities to maintain enthusiasm and interest and to undertake ongoing development (Gronn & Lacey, 2005). Without this ongoing challenge and professional development, experienced leaders may lose interest and move away from schools into other professional contexts (Weindling, 2000). This is just one of the many benefits which can be gained from succession planning.

3.4.2.1 Outcomes of Succession Planning

The provision and implementation of a clearly developed succession plan provides benefits, both for the individual, the school, and the system. Succession planning leads to renewed vision and focus on mission, goals and priorities, within a culture that is self-renewing and encouraging of growth and development. Thorough succession planning recognises the accumulated knowledge and skill of outgoing leaders. This outbound knowledge is captured and ensures valuable cultural capital knowledge is not lost to the community. In a similar manner, knowledge from leaders new to the school or system is utilised to fill organisational gaps, so that the school community can benefit (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005). This acquisition and distribution

of both inbound and outbound knowledge is predicated on an assumption of distributed leadership, in which knowledge is shared across many individuals within the organisation. This focus leads to strategic continuity, regardless of who may, or may not, hold specific leadership positions (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005). Emphasis is placed on the development of leadership potential, rather than simply reactive replacement of personnel when a resignation or retirement occurs. Planning for leadership succession is a disciplined approach to leadership, providing for quality, stability and sustainability (Canavan, 2002; Dempster et al., 2011). Quality, stability and sustainability are the dynamics to help address the shortage of leadership applicants.

3.4.3 Research Question Two

A review of relevant literature on leadership sustainability and succession planning identifies the importance of an integrated, concentrated and co-ordinated approach to the attraction and retention of quality applicants to senior leadership positions, and in particular, the principalship. The factors which influence the decision making processes of potentially suitable applicants warrant consideration, in order to more fully understand why it is that there is such a paucity of applications for principal positions. Fewer applications are being received for principal positions in the Townsville Diocese, so a logical second research question is:

Why are deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals deterred from applying for the principalship?

3.5 Leadership Development Programs – Preparation for Leadership and On-going Professional Development

The third concept underpinning this literature review focuses on leadership development programs. Much research has been undertaken concerning the shortage of school leaders and the ongoing pressures for accountability being placed on school leaders (Pont et al., 2008). Recommendations include a redefinition of school leadership responsibilities, the need for a distributed approach to school leadership, the development of skills for effective school leadership and the transforming of school leadership into an attractive profession.

These international recommendations are replicated in Australia, where a re-conceptualisation of what constitutes quality school leadership programs has been undertaken, with attention focusing specifically on national, state, professional, system and school based leadership preparation and development programs (Anderson et al., 2007). Research on effective approaches to professional development repeatedly stresses the importance of workplace relevance, "just in time" access to relevant resources and ideas, active learning strategies, ongoing peer support, problem based learning and the importance of practice (Scott, 2003). Indeed, helpful, formal principal development programs are relevant, promote active rather than passive learning, consistently link theory with practice, provide sustainable learning pathways and are appropriately supported (Scott, 2003).

3.5.1 Principal Preparation Programs

There is considerable criticism internationally of the relevance of leadership preparation courses, principally about the "dumbing down" of admission criteria and course work disconnected with leadership practice (Cowie & Crawford, 2007; Moos & Johansson, 2009). American principal preparation programs are inadequate, with 96% of practising principals admitting that professional experience and guidance from colleagues is more helpful in preparation for the role rather than learning undertaken through graduate school studies: "…the majority of (educational administration) programs range from inadequate to appalling, even at some of the country's leading institutions" (Archer, 2005, p. 5).

Similarly, in the United Kingdom, criticisms of university based leadership preparation programs centre on failure to prepare for the pace of the leadership role, particularly in the addressing of conflict situations, work related communications and the emotional content of the workplace (Anderson, 1991). In response, professional organizations are offering certification and licensing of principals to address what universities are unable to do (Anderson, 1991).

Because there is a relationship between principals' performance during their inaugural years and future success, it is logical to provide extensive professional development in

the first year (Alvy & Robbins, 1998). The development of professional leadership practices forms the basis of ongoing success in leadership roles.

Principal preparation programs that participants identify as realistic incorporate specific knowledge and skills generated from research on the pragmatics of principalship. This knowledge then forms the basis of leadership frameworks (capacities and competencies) and constitutes the foundations for leadership development. Principals and leaders are required to have a conceptual understanding of school and classroom practices that contribute to student achievement (Alberta Education, 2009; Bottom & O'Neill, 2006; Brundrett, Fitzgerald & Sommefeldt, 2006). They are required to know how to work with teachers and others to achieve continuous school improvement and to provide support for staff to carry out sound school, curricula and international practice. Leaders are required to be able to: create a focused mission to improve student achievement; make things possible; set high expectations and encourage higher level processes; recognise and encourage the development of effective instructional practices that motivate students and increase student achievement; create a school organisation where every student is considered important and receives the appropriate support; use data to motivate and encourage continued improvement; keep all informed and focused; make parents partners in education; understand the change process and have the leadership facilitation skills to effectively manage change; understand how adults learn and tailor professional development accordingly; organise time in innovative ways to achieve the goals and objectives of school improvement; acquire and use resources wisely; and involve themselves in a continuous process of learning (Alberta Education; Bottom & O'Neill; Brundrett et al.).

If leaders achieve this, then they are considered "successful". Successful school leadership is legitimised by four types of collective knowledge – declarative, experiential, procedural and contextual (Gettys, 2007), which are foundational in many leadership development tools and programs. Authentic principalship development programs are career long, rather than episodic (Johnson-Taylor & Martin, 2007), embedded in practice, and focused on student achievement rather than organisational goals (Watson, 2005).

Successful leadership programs include a well-connected set of learning opportunities grounded in theory and practice. These offer opportunities for leaders to explore their own practice; are based on a learning continuum that spans from pre-leadership preparation to induction and into the future; use mature and retired principals as mentors; are systematic, comprehensive and ongoing; utilise a flexible mode of delivery; involve participation in principal networks; promote collegiality and involve peer coaching and are focused constantly on continuous school improvement (Roulston, 2007). In a similar manner, effective professional development programs are collaborative, planned, focused on the principal's personal and professional needs, centred on student achievement, derived from professional practice and supported by experienced professionals (Zepeda et al., 2008).

Leadership development strategies include leadership standards and frameworks, mentoring processes, leadership internships, apprenticeships and shadowing, and ongoing professional development programs aimed at retaining and extending those already within leadership positions (Hess & Kelly, 2007; Pont et al., 2008).

3.5.2 Leadership Standards and Frameworks

An additional form of leadership preparation centres on leadership standards and frameworks. Internationally supported leadership standards and frameworks have been developed in order to more appropriately prepare and develop school leaders (Australian Education Union, 2005; Bottom & O'Neill, 2001; Canavan, 2007; Pont et al., 2008). A leadership framework identifies what it is that school leaders need to know and do in order to develop professionally. It gives long term direction to professional learning and provides the foundation for recognised qualifications for leadership. Explicit standards of performance are clearly defined, as are the specific skills needed by educational leaders. This "designer leadership" (Gronn, 2003a) is aimed at establishing uniform expectations and standards of performance.

Leadership standards and frameworks co-exist with qualifications for leadership. International professional bodies, such as the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) in England, have as one of their four key priorities, "to ensure that our current and future school leaders develop the skills, the capability and the capacity to lead and transform the school education system into the best in the world" (NCSL, 2002, p. 2). The NCSL provides leadership development throughout the five stages of

a leader's professional career, as well as certification through the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), the mandatory qualification for head teachers. Since 2009 those with NPQH certification are considered appointable to headship (Wildy, Clarke, & Slater, 2007). A similar situation currently prevails in Scotland.

The need for preparation and certification in the United States has been under discussion for a longer length of time. Criticism of the qualifications and training of principals has prompted research (Davis, Darling-Hammond, La Pointe, & Meyerson, 2005), resulting in four key understandings:

1. Essential elements of good leadership – effective school leaders influence student achievement through the support and development of effective teachers and the implementation of effective organisational practices.

2. Effective program design – the most effective programs are research based, provide experience in authentic contexts, use cohort groupings and mentors and enable collaboration between programs and schools.

3. Multiple pathways to higher quality leadership development.

4. Policy reform and finances – research is required to examine policies and funding streams that influence personal and professional development (Davis et al., 2005).

Similar understandings occur in Canada, where the Principal Qualification Practice Guidelines were introduced in February 2009 (Brundett et al., 2007). Recommendation 76 identifies the importance of developing a principal qualification practice standard, to identify the knowledge, skills and attributes required of principals. Seven leadership dimensions are established: fostering effective relationships; embodying visionary leadership; leading a learning community; providing instructional leadership; developing and facilitating leadership; managing school operations and resources and understanding and responding to the larger social context.

Australia has no national qualification for leadership. States and systems establish individual standards and frameworks. While similarity does exist within the core

components of each framework (Anderson et al., 2007; Gronn, 2003a; Macpherson, 2009), a variety of approaches is evident. Standards frameworks have been developed by employing authorities and professional associations such as the Australian Council of Educational Leaders (ACEL), Teaching Australia and the Australian Principal Associations Professional Development Council (APAPDC). The publication of the National Professional Standards for Principals (Ministerial Council for Education, 2011) by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) is a first step towards a national qualification for leadership. This direct linking of leadership development to a professional standards agenda highlights the professional development of aspiring and established leaders (Blackmore, 2009).

In Australia, the most common type of principal preparation takes the form of principal induction programs but professional learning programs for prospective school leaders are emerging (Hess & Kelly, 2005; Spry, 2007). These programs are based on leadership frameworks developed at the state or employing authority level. An example of this is the Townsville Catholic Education Leadership Framework, aimed at senior leadership. Its focus is on the personal, inter-personal and professional capabilities required for leadership, within the core dimensions of religious, educational, human and strategic leadership (Townsville Catholic Education Office, 2007).

3.5.3 Mentoring

Mentoring emerges as a new form of leadership preparation, working in conjunction with leadership standards and frameworks. While perceptions of the effectiveness of mentoring vary (Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Lashway, 2003a), mentoring provides positive organisational benefits in the form of management continuity, improved employee retention and increased job satisfaction (Hale & Moorman, 2003). On a more personal level, mentoring is beneficial for both the mentor and the mentee. Those being mentored benefit from support, the sharing of ideas and on-going professional development, while the mentors are provided with increased networking opportunities, the time and opportunity for reflection and professional development opportunities (Hansford & Ehrich, 2006). Mentoring is adaptable to individual career stages, fosters supportive relationships and nurtures development from novice to expert (Zepeda et al., 2008).

Mentors' personal qualities are pivotal for the success of such initiatives. Mentors are required to have demonstrated prior effectiveness in a mentoring role, an ability to answer questions, an acceptance of alternate ways of carrying out the role of principalship, a desire to help others, a knowledge of models of continuous learning, an understanding of the values of reflection and an awareness of the political and social realities of holding the principalship (Hansford & Ehrich, 2006).

Mentors provide instructional, administrative, managerial and emotional support, but to ultimately achieve success, mentoring programs need to be formalised and given recognition by educational systems or authorities. The literature (Gettys, 2007; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006) identifies factors which contribute to successful mentoring. These include careful matching of mentors and protégés, clearly established expectations and guidelines, the allocation of adequate time and careful attention to the selection of mentors. Mentors are required to have a proven professional history of success in practice, be reflective, compassionate, good listeners and communicators and able to discern the truth in an honest and open manner (S. Harris & Crocker, 2002).

3.5.4 Apprenticeships, Shadowing and Internships

A final area of leadership preparation concerns apprenticeships, shadowing and internships. An informal apprenticeship system is the default model of leadership preparation within the Australian context. The deputy principal role is established as "on the job" training, guiding the deputy and assistant principal to assume the role of educational leader (Bloom & Krovetz, 2001).

The American context, however, is different, with states assuming responsibility for the development of apprenticeship models. The Boston Public School sector takes this approach, establishing *Apprenticeships for Aspiring Leaders* (Lovely, 2004), with the primary focus on preparing deputy principals to take on principal positions. The *Teaching Assistant Principals* (*TAP)* model is another approach, where principals recruit strong teacher leaders for a year of additional responsibilities, grooming the aspirant leaders and providing a variety of additional responsibilities and experiences (Lovely, 2004). The *Chicago Public Schools' Leadership, Academy and Urban Network for Chicago* program (*LAUNCH*) is a resounding success, its focus is to

accelerate and deepen the knowledge, skills and experiences aspirant leaders have prior to selection as a principal (Lovely, 2004).

In addition to mentoring and apprenticeships, the process of shadowing is influential as a leadership development strategy (Simkins, Close, & Smith, 2009), but its effectiveness is dependent on the relationship that is established between the two parties involved. A further development of this can be seen in Baltimore, where newly appointed principals are paired with veteran principals for six months on-the-job training (Bottom & O'Neill, 2001). Similar in philosophy to mentoring, internship has the advantage of providing growth and professional development for veteran principals, yielding a viable and rewarding alternative to retirement.

The retention of experienced principals and leaders is more likely to occur in harmonious and professional working environments (Pijanowski & Brady, 2009). The right balance of autonomy, feedback and progression are at the core of successful retention strategies (Chapman, 2005; Cushing, Kerrins & Johnstone, 2003; Hartle, Stein, Hobry, &O'Sullivan, 2007). There is a growing awareness of the importance of personal sustainability strategies, planned and timely movement between schools, opportunities for renewal and personal growth and flexible working arrangements (Hartle et al., 2007; Pont et al., 2008).

3.5.5 Research Question Three

Given that few potential applicants are applying for leadership positions in the Diocese of Townsville, it is appropriate to examine current leadership preparation and retention practices. Therefore, research question three is:

How can potential applicants be prepared to undertake the principalship in a Catholic school?

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter presents a review of the literature. The role of the principal, leadership sustainability and succession planning and leadership preparation and development are the main concepts addressed by the literature. Change is a constant, and the changes in society, church and school all directly influence the changes that have occurred in Catholic school leadership.

In conclusion, the three research questions generated from the literature review are:

1. How do principals, members of leadership teams and TCEO personnel understand the role of a Catholic school principal?

2. Why are deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals deterred from applying for the principalship?

3. How can potential applicants be prepared to undertake the principalship in a Catholic school?

The next chapter, Chapter Four, explains and justifies the research design for the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains and justifies the research design adopted in order to explore why few deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals apply for principal positions in the Diocese of Townsville. The following research questions focus the conduct of the research design:

1. How do principals, members of leadership teams and TCEO personnel understand the role of a Catholic school principal?

2. Why are deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals deterred from applying for the principalship?

3. How can potential applicants be prepared to undertake the principalship in a Catholic school?

4.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework explains the research design that is generated from the research purpose (Crotty, 1998). The components of a theoretical framework are the researcher's epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and data gathering strategies. Epistemology is concerned with how knowledge is understood by the researcher, with assumptions about learning. It is the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective (Crotty, 1998). Constructionism is the epistemology to underpin this study, as this study explores the role of the principalship from the perspective of key stakeholders.

The theoretical perspective of a study is "the philosophical stance informing the methodology ... providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria" (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). A particularly appropriate theoretical perspective within the constructionist epistemology is interpretivism. More specifically, Symbolic Interactionism is an especially appropriate lens of interpretivism in this research as it generates a better understanding of the everyday lived experience of principals and leaders and how they create meaning within the contexts in which they operate (Neuman, 2006).

Case study is the methodology to orchestrate the data gathering processes (Merriam, 1998). Figure 4.1 diagrammatically illustrates the theoretical framework underpinning the research design.

Figure 4.1 **Overview of the research design.**

Epistemology	Constructionism
Theoretical perspective	Interpretivism Symbolic Interactionism
Methodology	Case study
Data gathering strategies	Focus groups Individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews Survey

This understanding of the theoretical framework invites amplification.

4.2.1 Epistemology

Epistemology is a world view which offers an understanding of knowledge and how knowledge is created, making explicit how humans know what they know (Creswell, 2002). Constructionism is the epistemology underlying this research design as it asserts that meaning is generated by human beings as they engage within a given context. That is, knowledge is not created, but constructed, with humans engaging and making sense of their experiences, each based on their own historical and social perspectives (Crotty, 1998). Knowledge "emerges only when consciousness engages" (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). The engagement and initiative of the individual are of importance, for it is when the individual chooses to act and interact within a given context that knowledge is generated.

Constructionism views meaning as constructed within a social context. Social context and its complementary concept, "culture", play important roles, for constructionism holds that human beings function within culture (Crotty, 1998); culture influences behaviour and organises experience. Culture is a contributor to life, giving meaning and providing the parameters within which the individual functions and makes meaning.

In a similar manner, constructionism asserts that thought and emotion are socially constructed and that a person's view of the world is influenced by historical and cultural interpretations. Because meaning is the product of social dynamics, constructionism focuses upon the quality and nuances of interaction, as well as the human context. So, from a constructionist perspective, meaning may be negotiated between people in context, within a time frame (De Koster, Devise, Flament, & Loots, 2004). Consequently, for the constructionist, knowledge is a negotiated process embedded with experiences, perceptions and values. It is a community narrative that engages in a dynamic process (De Koster et al., 2004), for knowledge is dependent upon interaction within a social context.

As this research design explores the experiences of some leaders in the Diocese of Townsville, a constructionist epistemology is appropriate. The experiences of principals and those in leadership positions do not occur in isolation, but grow out of interactions with individuals, contexts and situations. The meaning-making of leaders is socially constructed and is linked to the cultural, historical and social contexts within which the individual leader operates. The social realities of language, symbolism, meaning and interactions are the dynamics which influence the construction of meaning in understanding the reality that is the principalship (Crotty, 1998).

In seeking to understand the phenomenon of the principalship, it is important to consider the experience of serving principals and those aspiring to be a principal. Each experience of the phenomenon of principalship is considered equally valid, real and worthwhile (Crotty, 1998), because these experiences are generated from the varying interactions and differing social, cultural and historical perspectives. Therefore, each participant in this study draws on his/her own personal background and knowledge to make sense of the world that is the principalship and senior leadership within the Diocese of Townsville.

4.2.2 Theoretical Perspective

A theoretical perspective provides the philosophical stance which underpins and informs the choice of the research methodology and data gathering. For this study, a particularly appropriate theoretical perspective within the constructionist epistemology is interpretivism. Interpretivism "looks for culturally derived and

historically situated interpretations of the social life-world" (Crotty, 1998, p. 67) and as such, is congruent with research focusing on the life–world of school leaders. A basic tenet of an interpretivist approach is that knowledge is embedded in experience – knowledge means nothing until humans interact and interpret the experience. Meaning is constructed by and through the interactive process which occurs when humans communicate.

In order to generate meaning across individuals, conventions are honoured so that socially constructed meaning becomes the norm for community solidarity (Candy, 1989). In research design an interpretive approach aims to generate a deeper, more extensive and systematic representation of reality from the point of view of the participants. In this research design the aim is to understand the responsibilities and commitments experienced by those within the principal position, from the perspective of those actively involved with the role. While an interpretivist approach places emphasis on the social perspective, it also maintains that the social world can only be understood from the individual viewpoint. Interaction is crucial to the construction of reality but reality is understood by the individual negotiating meaning with others.

The aim of an interpretivist inquiry is to develop an understanding of individual perspectives, rather than the collective generalisations. Three common assumptions underpin interpretivist research. Inquiry is always value laden and there is general acceptance of the challenge in obtaining complete objectivity. Interpretivism maintains that any single event or action is explicable in terms of multiple, interacting factors, reflecting the view that the world comprises multi-facetted realities (Candy, 1989).

Research undertaken within the interpretivist perspective is ideographic (Gibbons & Sanderson, 2002) in that the focus concerns individuals or small groups of people. In this case, it is an attempt to focus on the perceived reality of individual principals and senior leaders as they negotiate their role as principal or leader, and the perceptions of those who might aspire to such positions. In other words, "the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct, detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain the social world" (Neuman, 2006, p. 88).

4.2.2.1 Symbolic Interactionism

A particular lens within the interpretivist perspective is that of Symbolic Interactionism. Defined by Herbert Blumer (Charon, 2007) Symbolic Interactionism represents a theoretical perspective based on an image of the individual, rather than a collective image of society. Central to Symbolic Interactionism is the belief that humans act towards things on the basis of the meanings they ascribe to them – meanings are generated and modified through an interactive process. In order to understand human actions, it is necessary to perceive objects and situations as participants perceive them. Humans are perceived as pragmatic actors (Charon, 2007) who constantly adjust their behaviour to the actions of others. Humans are thus active and creative participants who construct their social world. They are not conforming objects of socialisation.

Five central premises underpin an understanding of Symbolic Interactionism. First, the individual is constructed through interaction, contributing to the construction of society, which is formed through social interaction. Second, it is this ongoing, lifelong social interaction which contributes to human definition as a person in a community. A third theme is that humans are active, thinking beings who define their situations and make meaning through their interactions. Fourth, human action is a result of what occurs and, "to understand human action we must focus on social interaction, human thinking, the definition of the situation, the present and the active nature of the human being" (Charon, 2007, p. 30). Finally, Symbolic Interactionism suggests that meaning is transferred through symbols which are learned from others and shaped by the everyday use of those symbols. Spoken language is one such example of a symbol which is used and modified through interaction. Thus reality is in a constant state of negotiation and construction. All meaning and knowledge form a process of a socially constructed and negotiated reality.

The concepts of identity and "taking the role of the other" are central to the lens of Symbolic Interactionism. The concept of identity is considered first. An individual's perception of self is a direct result of his or her interaction with the world around and the individual's negotiated reality. What individuals perceive they are, and the images they portray to the world, are the products of social interaction. How a person defines a situation influences how a person acts in that situation (Charon, 2007).

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Consequently, constructionist epistemology and an interpretivist theoretical perspective are appropriate for this research design, as the focus is on understanding how the role of principal is perceived by those in the role and those aspiring to the role. In particular, it is important to understand the reality of those within principal positions, to examine the role requirements and definitions, and to understand how the principal negotiates and defines the role.

"Taking the role of the other" is central to an understanding of how individuals negotiate and define their role. In order to understand the realities of senior leadership, it is important to understand what the senior leaders themselves believe (Charon, 2007). Thus, it is important to gather data through interviewing principals and senior leaders about their workplaces and their experiences. For the purpose of this research, "What the researcher must do is interact with the actors, observe, partake in their activities, conduct formal interviews and try to reconstruct their reality" (Charon, 2007, p. 193). Studying leadership through the perspective of Symbolic Interactionism offers frameworks for the researcher to understand how principals and senior leaders define their worlds, taking account of both past and present contexts.

4.3 Research Methodology

Research methodology is "the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcome" (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). A case study approach is adopted for this research, as the purpose of this study is to explore why few teachers are applying for leadership positions in the Diocese of Townsville. Furthermore, the use of a case study approach is consistent with both the epistemology of constructionism and the theoretical perspective of Symbolic Interactionism. An additional benefit of a case study approach is that it allows the gathering of multiple sources of information to illuminate the phenomenon under discussion.

4.3.1 Case Study

Case study is "an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as an individual, group, institution or community. The case is a bounded, integrated system" (Merriam, 2002, p. 8). In contrast, Yin (1994, p. 13) describes case

study in terms of the actual research process: "... an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not really evident". What is common to both definitions, however, is the necessity for the case to be circumscribed within a bounded system (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

A bounded system situates the case within a setting or context, bounded by time and place. Data collection occurs within that specific context, time and place. The study is bound by the geographical construct that is the Diocese of Townsville.

Regardless of the descriptors employed, the purpose of case study is to provide illumination into the phenomenon under examination and some insight into the research questions which seek to address the perception of the principalship and why there are fewer applicants expressing interest in undertaking leadership.

Case study research is conducted in such a way as to allow the researcher to: explore features of the case; create reasonable interpretations of what is found; test for the trustworthiness of interpretations; construct a defensible argument or story; relate the same argument or story to relevant scholarly literature; convincingly convey this argument to an audience; and provide an audit trail by which other researchers may critique the research new understandings. These strategies of conduct highlight the centrality of the research questions, for "the research questions are the engine which drives the train of enquiry" (Bassey, 1999, p. 67).

Certain characteristics of case study make it particularly appropriate for this research. The first is that it allows the use of a wide variety of data collection strategies (Merriam, 1998). This case study uses a variety of ways to draw on the experiences of those in leadership positions in the Diocese of Townsville. A quality case study generates rich and vivid description, focusing on individuals or groups and their perspectives (Stake, 1994). Case study also allows for a constant internal debate between the description of events and the researcher's analysis of events, focusing on particular events or phenomenon. In addition, the researcher plays an integral role within the case (Hughes & Hitchcock, 1995).

As the researcher takes the role of the ultimate research instrument (Gillham, 2000), it is the researcher who plays a major role in data collection, interpretation and analysis,

and it becomes important for the researcher to be cognisant of her own prejudices and preferences. The researcher is obliged to be open and transparent about these issues, since researcher subjectivity, bias and arbitrary judgement may distort the outcomes (Flyvberg, 2004). Case study has its own rigor, however, with checks for verification and validity essential to ensure objectivity and credibility (Flyvberg, 2004).

The advantages of case study are numerous. Case studies produce context dependent, concrete and reality centred knowledge. Understandings from an individual case study can be used to illuminate the single phenomenon under review or may be transferred to more generalised cases and can contribute to a growing body of evidence on the research phenomenon. In this research, the insights gained from the experiences of those working in, or aspiring to, principalship help contribute to an increased understanding of the concept of principalship and may explain the decline in interest in principalship in Townsville Catholic schools.

4.4 Participants

Since this study explores why there is a paucity of candidates to apply for the principalship, it is appropriate to ask those engaged in school leadership capacities for their opinions. These include principals, members of school leadership teams and those within the TCEO who work closely with principals. In this way it is possible "to discover, understand and gain insight ... from those (from) which most can be learned" (Merriam, 1998, p. 61).

This case occurs in the naturally bounded area of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Townsville (see Figure 1.1), a geographical area of North Queensland which spans a region from Proserpine in the south to Abergowrie, Ingham and Palm Island in the north and west to Mt. Isa. Covering 435,000 square kilometres, this area includes 32 Catholic schools, of which 29 are under the jurisdiction of the Townsville Catholic Education Office. Of these 29 schools, 21 are primary schools, five are secondary colleges and three cover prep to year 12, educating a total of approximately 11,500 students.

These schools are scattered across the Diocese, with 19 classified as rural or remote and 10 located within the Townsville urban environment. The schools attract students from varied demographic backgrounds. While no school could be considered affluent,

one does fall into the category of extreme disadvantage. All 29 schools are included in this study since their inclusion offers comprehensive information on the issues facing those in principal positions in all schools within the Diocese, "the thick description of participants' lived experiences, of thoughts about and feelings for a situation" (Cohen & Manion, 2004, p. 254).

Purposeful selection was adopted as the process in inviting participants (Creswell, 2002). The following criteria were used:

1. Registered teacher in the state of Queensland; and

2. Currently a principal or a member of the senior leadership team in a diocesan school in the Diocese of Townsville.

Principals and members of the leadership teams of the 29 schools were invited to participate in this study. This totalled 78 participants. Of these, 28 were principals (one principal was responsible for two schools), with the remainder holding a variety of positions including deputy principal and assistant to the principal (with varying designations such as religious education, administration, student services, pastoral, residential, curriculum). The decision to include all members of the leadership team was a deliberate one, reflecting the desire to gather maximum, comprehensive data.

Participants for individual, semi-structured interviews comprise two groups. The first group consists of a number of members of the Extended Leadership Team of the Townsville Catholic Education Office. Criteria for selection of this group of participants are seniority and those who work closely with principals and members of school leadership teams. Thus, six participants are chosen – the Director, the two Assistant Directors, and three of the four Education Consultants. (The fourth Education Consultant is excluded, due to the close personal relationship to the researcher.) Additional factors which influence this decision are the stability and experience of this group of people, with all having considerable previous experience within senior leadership positions in schools, both in and out of the Diocese of Townsville.

The second group of participants for semi-structured individual interviews was selected principals. After the two principal focus group interviews were held, seven principals were selected to participate in individual, in-depth semi-structured

interviews. These principals were chosen after an analysis of their reflections and because of their ability to provide the rich data of case study. Principal participants for individual interviews include a range of age, gender and experience.

Table 4.1 summarises participant selection with data gathering processes.

Table 4.1 Participants and Data Gathering Processes

Category of Participant	Individual Interview	No. of Focus Groups	No. of Persons	Survey	Total
Principal	7	2	27	10	44
Deputy principal	0	1	14	4	18
Assistant principal – R.E.	0	2	28	3	31
Assistant principal – Other	0	0	0	1	1
Director – TCEO	1	0	0	0	1
Assistant Director – TCEO	2	0	0	0	2
Education Consultant - TCEO	3	0	0	0	3

Invitations to participate in this study were emailed to proposed participants (see Appendix B). It was planned that through the provision of adequate details any possible fears of participation would be minimised. Sufficient information was provided for participants to feel comfortable with the study through the explanation of ethical frameworks and safeguards.

4.5 Data Gathering Strategies

As this research is essentially interpretative in design, it is appropriate to select data gathering strategies which allow for participants to adequately share their opinions concerning various leadership roles. The following strategies are adopted in this research:

- Focus group interviews
- In-depth, semi-structured interviews

- Survey.

4.5.1 Focus Group Interview

The focus group interview is an interpretative data gathering technique with a small group of participants, usually 10–12 in number, interacting with a researcher in order to share understandings around certain phenomena (Creswell, 2002). Interaction is usually directed by the interviewer either in a structured or unstructured manner, dependent on the purpose of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 1989). The purpose of the focus group discussions and interviews in this research is to address the specific research questions.

Five focus group interviews provide the initial round of data collection. Focus groups are a beneficial way of exploring participants' views without imposing the researcher's own agenda, allowing a probing of the thinking behind responses and enabling the researcher to cross check responses and identify issues (Marshall & Rossman, 1994).

In the semi-structured atmosphere of a focus group, it is possible for participants to be overshadowed by others, to be intimidated by the dynamics of particular individuals or the group as a whole (Patton, 1990). Some participants may feel uncomfortable and reticent to share details of a personal or sensitive nature, or may even be concerned about the professional implications of sharing their perspectives. Also, from a researcher's perspective, it can be difficult to follow up on individual responses within the context of a group situation and thus check for authenticity of responses.

The following categories of participants were engaged in focus groups:

- principals;
- deputy principals; and
- assistants to the principal – religious education.

Focus group interviews were conducted across a three month period, from March–May 2011. The first focus group conducted comprised deputy and assistant principals. This was followed by two principal focus groups and two focus groups comprising assistant to the principals religious education. A set of open-ended questions (Appendix C) was used to provide participants with the opportunity to share their

individual experiences and perceptions of leadership and to reflect on personal aspirations to leadership. Below is an example of this reflection on individual perception.

Example Focus Group 1 – Individual experience.

Q: What do you see as the role of the principal in a Catholic school?

Participant 1: *"It's the need to be seen as the leader that's important. The school community wants someone they can look up to, who can talk the talk and do those sorts of things. It is a public position and to do that well you have to be able to delegate the other stuff."*

Participant 2: *"Principals are put on that pedestal too much. You need to try not to do that as a leadership team and as a school. You have got to try and not do that. It has to be a team approach. You need to get everyone respecting their role and fulfilling their roles. The principal is not there to do everything. They need everyone else stepping up to their role."*

Participant 3: *"The school community expects the principal to be there, to be sitting up front, the font of all knowledge. The community expects that of the principal."*

Participant 4: *"It is also a culture that can be broken. Parents need to be re-educated."*

Focus group questions were used as a guide only, allowing the interviewer to probe further and thus further explore the rich information about the phenomenon of the principalship.

4.5.2 Individual, In-depth, Semi-Structured Interviews

Described as "a conversation with a purpose" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews are "face to face encounters between the researcher and the informants directed towards understanding the informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences or situations, as expressed in their own words" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 77). Semi-structured interviews allow depth to be achieved by permitting the interviewer to probe behind, and expand upon, the participant's

responses, allowing the researcher to engage with the other's perspective (Patton, 1990).

In this research, seven principals were each invited to participate in an individual, in-depth, semi-structured interview. The principals chosen for in-depth interviews were decided on after focus group interviews took place, concentrating on those whom the researcher believed would provide the "rich" data of productive case study research. Principal interviews took place between January–June 2011. The Director, two Assistant Directors and three Education Consultants from the Townsville Catholic Education Office were also interviewed. These interviews provide the system view of the principalship and affirm or contradict the perceptions and insights of those principals currently working in the field. These interviews took place between March–May 2011.

Interviews began with the assumption that others' perspectives were meaningful, knowable and able to be made explicit and this assumption underpinned this research study. An interview guide was developed for this research (Appendix D), to ensure that the same lens of inquiry was utilised with each participant interviewed. The interview guide provided the framework for questions to be developed and asked and also assisted the researcher to make informed decisions about which information should be pursued in greater depth throughout the interview (Patton, 1990). Open-ended questions were utilised once again, allowing participants to respond by sharing their perspectives and experiences. Open-ended questions also allowed the researcher to probe, to attain the in-depth reflection necessary for rich data.

Example: Probing for in-depth understanding during in-depth, individual interview.

Q. What do you think can be done to make the position of principal more attractive so that more people are interested in applying?

"We're not in it for the money, but they need to look at it. Money is not an incentive, but it can be a disincentive. And we need more support?"

Q. What do you mean by "You need more support"?

"They have to know the support is there because this whole business of litigation is completely out of control. There's got to be a support network. The job is too hard otherwise."

Q. How too hard?

"The notion of 24/7/52 – holidays, weekends, early mornings – you are constantly available. Having the balance in life is the key. I've achieved it by trial and error – it's how I am. My first priority is me and my family. If I don't look after me, I can't look after my family. Then my faith – I have a great faith. My faith is so important. Then my work – I love my work."

The advantages of interviews as a data collection strategy are many. Interviews provide richer, more contextualised data which aids the researcher in understanding the experiences of the participants, while at the same time allowing the researcher to probe responses and observe such aspects as non-verbal communication (Cohen & Manion, 2004). The disadvantages of interviews stem from the logistics as they can be time consuming and expensive. Also, the researcher needs to be skilled as a questioner and a listener and should be cautious not to lead the participant through biased questioning (Cohen & Manion, 2004).

It is in this way that this researcher comes to a fuller understanding of how the role of the principal is perceived. Consequently, it is possible to better understand the complexities involved in the principalship and why it is that those in support roles do

not aspire to the principalship. The participating principals are also able to articulate what can be done to better prepare potential aspirants to the principalship.

The following categories of participants were interviewed:

- Principals;
- Townsville Catholic Education Office Extended Leadership Team members.

4.5.3 Survey

A survey is a paper response strategy designed to obtain information from a large group of people (Creswell, 1998). Surveys are commonly used to identify beliefs and attitudes (Creswell, 2002), providing insights into the currently held beliefs, attitudes and opinions of participants. Surveys invite participants to give their responses to a range of general questions which are designed to explore their experience of a particular phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 1994). The survey is an appropriate form of data collection when subjective perspectives are sought from a large number of participants (Neuman, 2006). Through this strategy rich data can be obtained, either laying the foundation for further data collection and exploration or seeking clarification of issues raised through other methods of data collection.

Key characteristics of survey research include gathering information from a designated population, data collection through questionnaires or interviews, the design of an effective instrument for data collection and a high rate of participant response (Creswell, 2002). There are advantages associated with the use of the survey as a data collection instrument. Surveys allow the collection of data from a considerable number of participants. They are neutral and thus eliminate the possibility of researcher bias. They allow for wide and inexpensive distribution, provide consistency and uniformity in questions asked, and are a convenient and relatively inexpensive form of collecting information (Neuman, 2006). The disadvantages of surveys as a form of data collection are inflexibility and lack of clarity (Marshall & Rossman, 1994). The survey can also be considered a slow method of data collection, being heavily reliant on the supportive intentions and honesty of participants.

A component of any quality survey is the questions themselves. Questions should be

clear, concise and aimed to elicit the greatest amount of information from the participants. Because of this, the questionnaire should be pilot tested before it is made available for wider distribution: "A pilot test of a questionnaire or interview survey is a procedure in which a researcher makes changes in an instrument based on feedback from a small number of individuals who complete and evaluate the instrument" (Creswell, 2002, p. 402).

The pilot sample for this research consisted of four participants who had recently retired or resigned from principal positions within the Diocese of Townsville. In this way, a "think-tank" approach was taken to the deconstruction of the questions in order to ensure that they were clear, succinct and unambiguous.

In this research, the survey is used as to provide further insight into issues raised by participants during focus group and semi-structured, in-depth individual interviews. Open-ended questions are used to allow for a wide range of perspectives, contexts and responses. The survey was developed specifically to address the three research questions (Appendix E). Once administered, responses were collated, coded and analysed. Table 4.2 provides a matrix of the three research questions and the aligning survey items.

Table 4.2 Matrix of Research Processes, Questions and Survey Items

Research Question	Survey Item
	Demographics *Section 1* *Questions 1,2,3,4,5,6,7*
Research Question 1: *How do principals, members of leadership teams and TCEO personnel understand the role of a Catholic school principal?*	*Section 2* *Questions 8,9,10,11*
Research Question 2: *Why are deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals deterred from applying for the principalship?*	*Section 3* *Questions 12,13,14*
Research Question 3: *How can potential applicants be prepared to undertake the principalship in a Catholic school?*	*Section 4* *Questions 15,16,17,18*
	Section 5 *Question 19* *Open-ended response*

All those in senior leadership positions in the Diocese of Townsville were invited to participate in this survey. All participants were contacted prior to receiving the survey and advised of the purpose of the survey. The open-ended survey was then e-mailed to all participants, with an invitation to complete the survey and return it to the researcher by a specified date. Seventy-six surveys were distributed and 18 were returned. The response rate was 24%.

4.5.4 The Researcher as a Data Gathering Strategy

In interpretative research design, the researcher is inextricably involved with the process (Edwards, 1999). Within the context of this particular research project, the researcher has worked with many of the principals in the Diocese. The benefits of this "deep, insider researcher" (Edwards, 1999) are the heightened knowledge, awareness of organisational history and culture, trust, rapport and potentially "rich" shared history which the researcher brings to the research process. On the negative side, however, the researcher needs to guard against complacency, over-familiarity and the intrusion of personal bias and opinions into the research process (Edwards, 1999).

4.6 Analysis of Data

Interpretative data analysis is the process of making sense of non-numeric data. This process acknowledges contexts and personalities (Lewin, Taylor, & Gibbs, 2005). The research design guides the methods of data collection and analysis chosen, which are in turn dependent on the theoretical perspective adopted and guiding research questions (Lichtman, 2006).

In particular, constant comparative data analysis is an inductive analysis process where the researcher moves back and forth between the data to gather information about particular concepts that are coded into categories (Vander-Patten & Nolen, 2008). Constant comparative data analysis is both simultaneous and iterative. It involves a simultaneous process of analysing and collecting data, constantly moving back and forth between the two. Gaps in data collection may be highlighted through data analysis, with a subsequent return to data collection to provide further data to fill the gaps. In this way, it is both simultaneous and iterative. Analysis occurs as soon as data collection begins, with the researcher constantly checking for emerging categories and themes.

There are four distinct stages of constant comparative data analysis. These include:

1. Comparing incidents applicable to each category.

2. Integrating categories and their properties.

3. Outlining the theory.

4. Writing the story (Glaser & Straus, 1967).

As data collection progresses, data are critically examined in a constant process of checking, refining, discarding and evaluating, leading to the development of new meaning: "By continually comparing specific incidents in the data, the researcher refines these concepts, identifies their properties, explores their relationships to one another and integrates them into a coherent theory" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 126). The process of data analysis is presented in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 Data analysis process
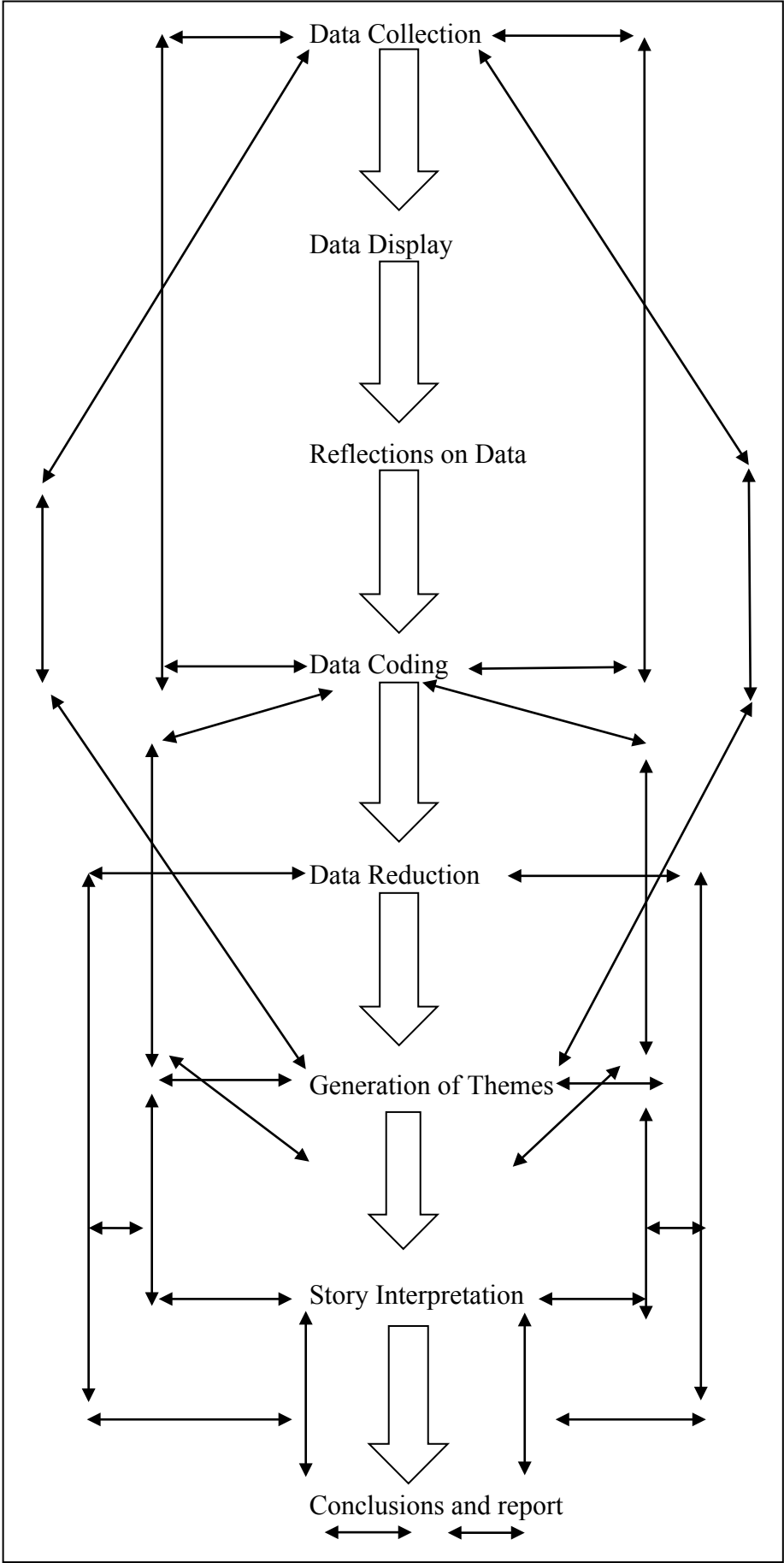
4.6.1 Organising, Managing and Analysing Data

Data organisation, management and analysis occurred across three phases. In stage one, the exploratory phase, focus group interviews were utilised as an initial means of data gathering. Five focus group interviews were conducted with principals and leadership team members. These interviews were digitally recorded and then manually transcribed. Data analysis began with the first transcription as codes were applied and themes were generated.

Codes are central to the use of constant comparative data analysis. Coding is "the process of segmenting and labelling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data" (Creswell, 2002, p. 450). Open coding is the first stage of coding. It is the process of breaking down, comparing, examining and categorising data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Codes may be based on themes, topics, ideas, concepts, terms or phrases, and be *a priori* (drawn from pre-existing theories) or grounded (emerging from the data) (Lewin et al., 2005). Axial coding is the next step in data analysis. Axial coding is "a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories. This is done by utilizing a coding paradigm involving conditions, context, action/interaction, strategies and consequences" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 96). This is an important process in meaning-making. Codes that are developed are more rigorously examined, refined and then elaborated upon. Through constant comparative data analysis, axial codes are used to form a linking process. The resulting coding paradigm portrays the relationship of causal conditions, strategies, contexts and consequences (Creswell, 2002). This making of connections and linkages leads into selective coding. Selective coding is "the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships and filling in categories that need further refinement and development" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 116). In this way a general overview of the phenomenon under discussion emerges.

With the primary purpose of identifying categories of data and their related properties, open coding is a crucial first stage of data analysis. Table 4.3 exemplifies the process of open coding concerning the question, "What do you see as the role of the Catholic school principal?"

Table 4.3 Principal Focus Group Responses to Question 1 with Open Codes

Participant Response	Open Code/Emergent Theme
My role is to make sure students are safe and happy in their learning; staff are safe and happy in their work.	Student/staff welfare
Overall co-ordinator of teaching and learning, and because of boarding, their life arrangements.	Educational leadership
Managing staff professional development.	Professional development
Managing people. The mediator between parents who might be feuding. A maintenance person. Makes sure all IT is working. All the little nitty gritty things.	People management
	Human leadership
Paid to be guidance counsellors, financial matters, you hit the ground running. Where does our job finish? When do you get home? Never!	Time factor
In smaller schools, there's a greater link with the parish. Your role is your life. The smaller the community, the more you do.	Parish responsibilities
The provider of the pastoral care. The person who empowers learning in your school.	Pastoral
Marketing. No marketing training, but you take it on.	Marketing/organisational
You have to be very resourceful, very organised, patient, jack of all trades.	Skills
You inherit the culture of that place.	Cultural aspects

In stage two, the clarification phase, two further data gathering strategies were employed. These were semi-structured, in-depth individual interviews and a survey. As a result of insights gained from an analysis of the focus group interview data, seven principals were invited to participate in in-depth, semi-structured, individual interviews. Interviews took place in a variety of settings, from coffee shops and restaurants to formal school settings. All interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed. Guide interview questions were flexibly adopted in order to pursue themes or issues which the participant raised. Once transcribed, codes were assigned to assist in the classification process and these codes were further refined against previously established codes.

Individual interviews also took place with six members of the TCEO. These interviews were transcribed and coded using open codes. Concepts generated from the data were closely examined for similarities and differences and constant comparative data analysis was undertaken at all times. It was at this stage that data reduction began to occur. This was the actual process of deconstructing the data. Categories identified were refined and clarified, and axial coding was applied as an aid in the distillation process.

The second data gathering strategy of the clarification phase was the survey. The survey was developed based on data generated from the focus group and in-depth, individual interviews. The purpose of the survey was to assist in the clarification of further themes and issues. The survey was administered and the responses were analysed using constant comparative analysis and open and axial coding to generate themes.

The third stage of data analysis was the documentary phase or final analysis phase. In this research, all three data gathering strategies had been administered and data analysed using constant comparative data analysis. Focus group and individual interviews had been transcribed and survey responses collated. Open and axial codes had been assigned and themes had emerged and been refined. The three major research questions, and the survey sub-questions, were then used as the organisational constructs around which data were further collated and coded. The use of open, axial and selective coding is exemplified in Table 4.4, using the survey as the organisational construct.

Table 4.4 Open, Axial and Selective Coding: Key Themes from Data Analysis

Research Question 1: How do principals, members of leadership teams and TCEO personnel understand the role of the Catholic school principal?		
Open Codes	Axial Codes	Selective Codes
(1)What do you see as the role of the principal in a Catholic school?		
Lead	Religious/spiritual dimension	Types of leadership
Empower	Vision	Human dimension
Vision	Stewardship	Strategic leadership
Catholic faith	Succession planning	Religious leadership
Balance	Curriculum & pedagogy	Educational leadership
Ordered calm	Empowerment	Role of the principal
Leader among leaders	Achieve potential	
Development	Management	
School promotion	Leadership	
Education	Demands – 24/7/52	
Community	Collaborative	
Pride	Mission	
Support	Parish reality	
Challenge	Relationships	
Stewardship		
Curriculum		
Pedagogy		
Exemplary		
Management		
Inspiration		
Accountability		
Teacher development		
Opportunities		
Presence and present		
Human		
Strategic		
Positive strength		
Compassion		
Achieve potential		
Inclusive		

Table 4.4 Open, Axial and Selective Coding: Key Themes from Data Analysis

Research Question 1: How do principals, members of leadership teams and TCEO personnel understand the role of the Catholic school principal?		
Open Codes	Axial Codes	Selective Codes
Role model		
Financial management		
Holistic		
Business management		
Parent support		
Project management		
Change maker		
Student/staff welfare		
Mediation		
Legal aspects		
Employing staff		
Administration		
Nurture		
Public profile		
Faith leadership		
Conflict resolution		
Mission		
Career broker		
(2)What are the responsibilities of the principal in a Catholic school?		
Accountability	Accountability	
Quality control	Omnipresence	Change in role
Government & system requirements	Responsibility	
School profile	Changing Role	
Religious identity	Mentor	
Staffing		
Curriculum leadership		
Financial		
Strategic		
Compliance & renewal		
Pastoral care		

Table 4.4 Open, Axial and Selective Coding: Key Themes from Data Analysis

Research Question 1: How do principals, members of leadership teams and TCEO personnel understand the role of the Catholic school principal?		
Open Codes	Axial Codes	Selective Codes
Ultimate responsibility Risk management Faith leader Social welfare Teacher mentor		
(3) Are there areas where principals should take on more responsibility? Instructional leadership Pastoral care Vision Policy direction Presence Succession planning	Too demanding Succession planning	Role all encompassing Succession planning

Research Question 2: Why are deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals deterred from applying for the principalship?		
Open Codes	Axial Codes	Selective Codes
(1)Why would fewer teachers be expressing interest in undertaking leadership positions in Catholic schools? Time Faith criteria Remuneration Perception Ignorance of the role Increased work load expectations Lack of support	Perception – lack of support, forgone conclusion, no job satisfaction, old boys network, lack of autonomy Changing social paradigm	Perception Changes in society, school,

Research Question 2: Why are deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals deterred from applying for the principalship?		
Open Codes	Axial Codes	Selective Codes
Family issues	Role – time, ignorance,	Leadership.
Anxiety over responsibility	workload expectations, anxiety,	
Study requirements	responsibility, sustainability,	Barriers to success
No job satisfaction	accountability, liability,	
Principal portrayal of position	increased role demands,	
Work-life balance	criticism, complexity, lack of	Preparation & support
Sustainability	preparation, changing	
Accountability & liability	expectations, no flexibility, lack	
Criticism	of autonomy	
Increased role demands		
Complexity		
Pressure, stress, burnout	Faith criteria	
Lack of preparation for		
leadership	Parish responsibilities	
Limited career paths		
Distance from teaching		
Working families		
Parish/church involvement		
Changing expectations		
No flexibility in role		
Bureaucracy		
Emotional toll		
People		
Lack of encouragement		
Self-doubt		
Gender		
Perception – pillar of the		
Church		
Not Catholic		
Multi-dimensional position		
Ignorance		
Lack of autonomy		
No opportunity to practise		
Release time		

Research Question 2: Why are deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals deterred from applying for the principalship?		
Open Codes	Axial Codes	Selective Codes
(2)What could be done to encourage more teachers to undertake leadership positions in schools?		
Change perceptions	Perceptions	Approaches to preparation
Shadowing		
Mentoring	Criteria for leadership	Support structures
Identification of potential		
Support	Active learning	Succession planning
Restructure and realign		
Shared responsibility	Succession planning	Induction
Reduce load		
Remuneration	Conditions	
Better succession planning	Preparation	Alternative models of
Preparation and training		leadership
Opportunities to act	Culture of professional dialogue	
Improved work conditions		
Change traditional structures	"I love my job"	
Qualification for leadership		
Internship		
More autonomy		
Early identification		
Models of shared leadership		
Culture of professional dialogue		
Model job satisfaction		
Skill set for principals		
Opportunities		

Research Question 2: Why are deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals deterred from applying for the principalship?		
(3)What are some of the barriers facing teachers interested in undertaking leadership in Catholic schools?		
No talent identification	Personal barriers – conflict of values, family	Personal issues
Lack of positions		
Lack of opportunity		Organisational issues
Time	Role related barriers	
Family		Religious/lifestyle issues
ET6 status	Perception	
Balance		
Perception – "male thing"		
Geography/location	Geographical/locational barriers	
Understanding of the role		
Authenticity of faith dimension	Leadership criteria	
Conflict of values		
Inflexible work arrangements	conditions	
Conditions		
Family toll		
People		
Religion issues		
Lifestyle issues		
Rules and regulations		
Study requirements		

Research Question 3: How can potential applicants be prepared to undertake the principalship in a Catholic school?		
(1)What preparation for leadership did you experience when you undertook your first leadership position?		

Research Question 3: How can potential applicants be prepared to undertake the principalship in a Catholic school?		
Open Codes	Axial Codes	Selective Codes
Acting positions Religious institute COSMOS/COMMICS Middle/senior/PAR Emerging courses Formal study Mentor No formal induction Community leadership CEO lack of prep, support, induction	CEO sponsored Middle management Community leadership Formal study Acting positions Little formal training or preparation	Lack of formal, structured preparation Efficacy of CEO preparation
(2) How could you have been better prepared for your first leadership position? Business aspects Mentor Management skills Financial accountability Opportunity to act Networking Time with experienced principals Shadowing Internship Thinker skin Study earlier Orientation Professional development Coaching	Professional development Professional networking Preparation – acting, shadowing Career anchoring	Career anchoring Preparation for leadership
(3) What continuing professional development have you undertaken in your leadership position?		

Research Question 3: How can potential applicants be prepared to undertake the principalship in a Catholic school?		
Open Codes	Axial Codes	Selective Codes
System required study Self-chosen study Principal conferences Mentoring Professional reading Retreats/spirituality programs Professional associations Networks/colleagues QSA initiatives CEO organised professional development	Two types of professional development Dependent on the individual Professional networks and associations	Dissatisfaction with CEO provided professional development
(4) In which areas would you like to receive more support or development? Financial/business/legal Industrial Work/life balance Time management Conflict resolution Staff/team development Peer debriefing Professional coach CEO support Culture of professional dialogue Time release for study Principal clusters Affirmation Peer mentoring Belief and respect	Technical/managerial aspects Support Role of CEO consultant Human element	Coaching/mentoring Role of the CEO

The final component of the documentary and analysis stage is the "story". This discussion centres on perceptions of leadership in the Townsville Diocese, preparation for leadership and what can be done to support those aspiring to leadership positions. This "story" is also referred back to participants, in order to ensure the accuracy of the data reported and the conclusions drawn from that data. This was achieved through telephone and face-to-face conversations with the principals and Townsville Catholic Education Office representatives who participated in individual interviews. The last stage is the production of the final report, a report which accurately and ethically reflects the views, perceptions, beliefs and feelings of the participants. This is achieved by ensuring that the report adhered to the four aspects of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). See Section 4.7.

The close relationship between the stages of data collection, data analysis and interpretation is illustrated in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Relationship Between Stages of Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data Collection Techniques	Stages for Data Collection and Analysis	
Exploratory phase	Step 1	Data collection and reflection Focus group interviews conducted
Focus group Interviews (5)	Step 2	Analyse responses for trends and patterns Constant comparative data analysis
	Step 3	Purposeful identification of participants from Step 1 for in-depth, semi-structured interviews
Clarification phase	Step 4	Interview selection of school principals and TCEO personnel
Individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews	Step 5	Analyse data collected in Step 4 Constant comparative data analysis Generate survey to assist in clarification
Survey	Step 6	Administer survey
	Step 7	Analyse survey returns
Documentary phase and final analysis	Step 8	Constant comparative data analysis
	Step 9	Write up analysis/discussion (analytical interpretation)
Report writing	Step 10	Give participants analysis to verify researcher's interpretation
	Step 11	Final analysis

4.7 Verification

It is important that research is valid, reliable and ethical (Stake, 1994). These can be achieved through the concept of trustworthiness (Guba, 1981). Trustworthiness in interpretative research is the key to ensuring authenticity. It involves the four aspects of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility refers to the reader's confidence in the truth and accuracy of the research interpretations and new understandings. A number of strategies are employed to ensure credibility. These include prolonged engagement, peer debriefing and member checks. Each of these is discussed.

- Prolonged engagement – substantial involvement with the research project occurred. The researcher was engaged with participants from October 2010– September 2012, enabling the researcher to establish rapport and trust through immersing herself in the relevant culture.

- Peer debriefing – "The disinterested peer poses searching questions in order to help the evaluator understand his or her own position and values and their role in the inquiry" (Guba, 1989, p. 237). Peer debriefing occurred. Three ex-principals assumed the roles of disinterested peers, meeting regularly with the researcher to discuss progress and interpretations and to assist in exposing any bias or inconsistencies in data analysis and interpretation.

- Member checks – "If the evaluator wants to establish that the multiple realities he or she presents are those that stakeholders have provided, the most certain test is verifying those multiple constructions with those who provided them" (Guba, 1989, p. 239). Member checks in this study occurred after individual, in-depth individual interviews were carried out. The transcribed interview, along with open and axial codes, was provided to the interviewee, to ensure that the researcher's interpretation was accurate and reflective of the interviewee's intent.

Triangulation is also a strategy used to ensure credibility of research interpretation (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1989 ; Merriam, 1995). This involves the use of multiple investigations, sources of data and methods of data collections. This assists

in ensuring the interpretations are confirmed by the use of various participants and through the use of multiple data gathering strategies.

The strategies of prolonged engagement, peer debriefing, member checks and triangulation are all employed to ensure research credibility. Furthermore, a statement of the researcher's involvement with the participants and the research project, her experiences, assumptions and perspectives was tabled at the outset of the project.

The second component of trustworthiness is transferability. Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of the research interpretation may be generalized or transferred across to other contexts and settings (Guba, 1989). There is considerable disagreement amongst case study scholars regarding generalisability, with some doubting that it can be achieved. "The only generalizability is that there is no generalizability" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 110). Others contend that the context specific nature of qualitative research limits its transferability (Creswell, 1998).

However, transferability may be enhanced by a thorough description of the research context and assumptions central to the research project. Details of time, place, context and culture are very explicitly explained, ensuring a "thick description" (Merriam, 1995). In this way, ample information about the phenomenon is provided, so that readers can determine how closely their situations match the research situation. The onus is placed on the reader to determine if research understandings can be transferred from the research situation to other situations. This research study, through the use of rich description, thus meets the requirements of transferability.

Dependability is the third aspect of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is achieved when the researcher accounts for the ever-changing context within which the research occurs. In this research, changes that occurred are documented, as are the ways in which these changes affect the manner in which the researcher approached the study, thus ensuring the stability of research data over time (Guba, 1989). One strategy which helps to ensure this occurs is the inquiry audit, or use of an audit trail (Guba & Lincoln, 1994): "In order for an audit to take place, the investigator must describe in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry" (Merriam, 1998, p. 172). A perusal of the tables in this chapter attests to dependability. Table 4.1 outlines research participants, linked to the relevant data gathering processes. Table 4.2 provides a matrix of the research

questions and survey items and Table 4.3 provides an example of principal focus group responses to the first guide question, coded using open codes. Table 4.4 builds on from this, outlining open, axial and selective codes utilised in the data analysis, illustrating how themes are derived from the data. The relationship between stages of data collection and stages of data analysis is outlined in Table 4.5. These details are summarised in Table 4.6, which provides an overview of the research design. This clear accountability illustrates the dependability of this research. As a further check, all aspects of the decision making process were explicitly discussed with the research supervisor, thus ensuring a clear audit trail existed for this research project.

The final aspect of trustworthiness, confirmability, refers to the degree to which results can be corroborated by participants. This study has provided evidence of an audit trail to ensure confirmability and to document procedures for the checking and rechecking of research interpretations.

4.8 Ethical Issues

Three basic tenets underlie the ethics of all research – respect for democracy, respect for truth and respect for persons (Bassey, 1999). These three tenets are fulfilled by ensuring that this research study is conducted in accordance with the requirements of the ACU Research Projects Ethics Committee. Ethical approval was granted from the ACU on November 25, 2010 (Appendix A) and the TCEO on December 8, 2010 (Appendix F).

In meeting these requirements, the following took place:

- All participants were assured of the voluntary nature of their involvement and that no personal benefits or disadvantages would be incurred. Signed consent was obtained prior to the commencement of data collection. (Appendix G)

- An information letter for participants outlined the research objectives, the phenomenon under examination, the types of data to be collected and details of how this data was to be utilised and reported upon. (Appendix B)

- Procedures for the maintenance of confidentiality were clearly delineated in writing, as were protocols for ensuring anonymity. (Appendix B)

- Data was stored securely and safely, in accordance with ACU protocols and recommendations.

- Copies of their own interview transcripts were made available to all participants. (Appendix H)

- Progressive and final reports were made available to participants for member checking. (Appendix I)

- Participants were consulted regarding the publication of data and conclusions drawn from the data.

- Participants could choose to withdraw from the research project at any time.

This research project can thus be considered ethical in design, methods, participants, analysis and new understandings.

4.9 Overview of Research Design

An overview of the research design is represented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Overview of Research Design

Research Question and Related Issues	Data Gathering Strategy	Participants	Data Analysis	Timeframe
Research Question 1: How do principals, members of leadership teams and TCEO personnel understand the role of the Catholic school principal?	Focus group interviews	Principals – 28 in 2 focus groups. Deputy principals – in 1 focus group. APRE – 28 in 2 focus groups.	**Stages 1–3:** Transcription of interviews, open coding, constant comparative analysis.	October 2010–March 2011
	Individual, semi-structured, in-depth interviews	Seven principals, chosen after analysis of responses to focus group interviews. 6 senior TCEO personnel.	**Stage 4**: Open coding, generation of themes and categories.	January –May 2011
Research Question 2: Why are deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals deterred from applying for the principalship?	Development of pilot sample survey to seek clarification of issues raised. Survey	All members of leadership teams (78) TCEO representatives – Director, Assistant Director x 2, Education Consultants x 3.	**Stage 5**: Transcription, data reduction, open and axial coding, constant comparative analysis. Refinement of themes and emerging issues. **Stage 6:** Collation of survey responses. Selective coding of data.	May–June 2011

Research Question and Related Issues	Data Gathering Strategy	Participants	Data Analysis	Timeframe
Research Question 3: How can potential applicants be prepared to undertake the principalship in a Catholic school?			**Stage 7:** Development of "story". **Stage 8:** Conclusions, Report.	August 2011– November 2012

CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF NEW UNDERSTANDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The research conducted in this thesis is interpretative. This means that the research product is not "found" but negotiated or generated by the researcher's engagement with the various perspectives of multiple participants. What is reported in this chapter is described as the *double hermeneutic* (Norreklit, 2006), that is the researcher's justified understandings of the research problem. Consequently, the traditional nomenclature "Research Findings" is an inappropriate title for this chapter, since nothing is "found". This argument offers a rationale for the use of the term "New Understandings" as the appropriate title for this chapter.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the new understandings generated from research exploring why few teachers in schools in the Diocese of Townsville are applying for senior leadership positions. Data were collected using focus group interviews (FG), individual in-depth interviews (I) and a survey (S).

5.2 Research Question One

The first specific research question that focuses the conduct of this research is: *How do principals, members of leadership teams and TCO personnel understand the role of a Catholic school principal?* The key element of this area of research is the principal's role and how it is understood by principals, members of leadership teams and TCEO personnel.

5.2.1 The Role of the Principal

The views of principals, members of senior leadership teams and TCEO personnel are sought, focusing on:

   i.   the role of the principal in a Catholic school;

  ii.   the main responsibilities undertaken by principals; and

 iii.   areas in which principals could exercise more or less responsibility.

Analysis of the data collected identifies multiple issues, which are outlined in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Research Question One: How Do Principals, Members of Leadership Teams and TCEO Personnel Understand the Role of a Catholic School Principal?

	PRINCIPALS	OTHER LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS	CEO PERSONNEL
What do you see as the role of the principal in a Catholic school?	· Lead · Empower & inspire · Vision · Model Catholic faith · Presence · Develop & promote · Community focus · Support & challenge · Stewardship · Curriculum & pedagogy · Exemplary management · Accountability · Teacher development · Provide opportunities · Balance · Leader among leaders · Business management · Grounds & maintenance · Project management · Compliance · Generate change · Working with students & teachers · Welfare · Professional development · Mediation · People management · Legalities · Keeper of the secrets · Articulation of goals	· Stewardship · Presence & present · Human leadership · Strategic leadership · Support · Achieve potential · Role model · Financial management · Holistic approach · Compassion, positive, strong · W.H.S. · Public profile · Succession training · Faith leadership · Counselor · Conflict resolution	· Mission – Church, then school · Succession planning & career brokering · Educational, community and faith leadership · Empowerment · Director's delegate · Support the system point of view · Stewardship · Community · Financial management · Action

	PRINCIPALS	OTHER LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS	CEO PERSONNEL
	· Nurture next generation of leaders		
What are the main responsibilities of the principal in a Catholic school?	· Accountability – quality learning, government & system requirements, staff development · School profile · Support healthy relationships · Religious identity · Staffing · Curriculum leadership · Financial · Strategic · Compliance & renewal · Pastoral care & social welfare · Ultimate responsibility · W.H.S. & risk management · Faith leaders	· Omnipresent · Accessible · Focus – collective vision · Educational & religious leadership · Everything · Teacher mentor · Person of knowledge · Safety	· Ultimate responsibility · Everything that impacts on holistic education · Provide best possible education · Role model · Promote the Kingdom of God. · Government & system requirements.
Are there areas where principals should take on more responsibility?	· No · Instructional leadership · Pastoral care	· Visioning · Policy direction for the diocese · Difficult situations · Presence	· Succession planning/career brokering
Are there areas for which principals should not be responsible?	· Compliance audits · Marketing · W.H.S. · Useless paperwork · Student non-attendance at Mass · Student behaviour outside school hours · Curriculum leadership	· Building & project management · Financial management · Issues resolved at lower levels	

These issues are further synthesised to generate the following major research themes, outlined in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Summary of Emergent Themes from Responses to the Role of the Catholic School Principal

ISSUES	MAJOR RESEARCH THEMES
Faith leadership Active faith involvement Church–parish–school relations Promotion of charisma and values	Religious & spiritual leadership
People and relationships Students, parents, staff, educational authorities Parish priest Future leaders	Human leadership
Vision Direction and focus Ongoing development Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment expertise Teaching and learning Resourcing	Educational leadership
Vision Stewardship	Strategic leadership

These themes are encapsulated in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 **Major research themes in response to the role and responsibilities of the Catholic school principal.**
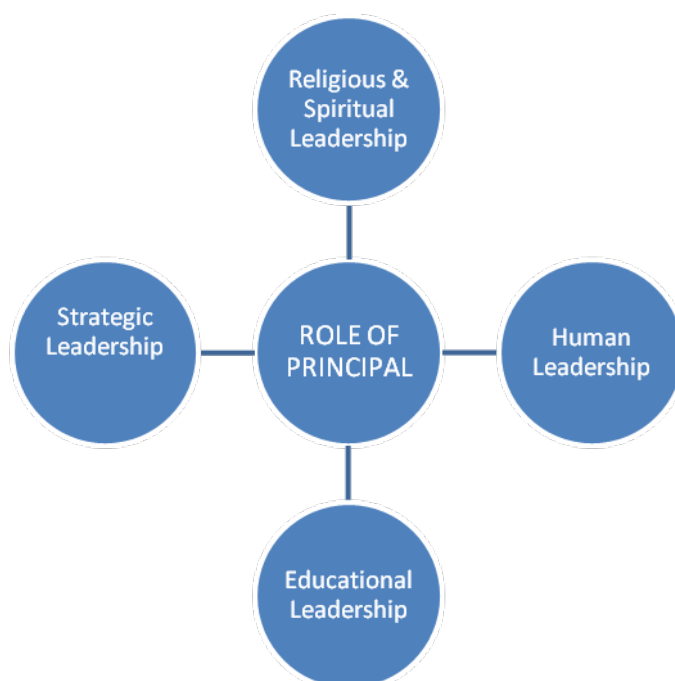
5.2.1.1 Religious and Spiritual Leadership

Religious and spiritual leadership is considered first. Stakeholders believe this dimension of leadership important, for they nominate religious leadership as at the core of the principal's role. Religious leadership focuses on living and sharing the Catholic faith, providing those within school communities with the opportunity to be involved with and celebrate Catholic identity. Participants believe religious and spiritual leadership is responsible for:

- faith leadership;

- active faith involvement;

- church–parish–school relations; and

- promotion of the values and charism of the Catholic school.

Faith leadership is considered first. TCEO personnel (system leaders) believe faith leadership is integral to the role of the principal, since the principal is responsible for fulfilling the mission of the Church. This means that the principal is a visible, Catholic presence within the school, with the ultimate responsibility for the faith development of students, staff and parents. One system leader comments:

> A key role (of the principal) is making sure the mission and purpose of the school are strongly focused on, attended to and achieved. Everything about leadership for the principal comes from an understanding that you are working in a particular context, that it has the Catholic identity, the ecclesial mandate of the Church that underpins that understanding. (CEO, I)

The second of these responsibilities centres on the promotion of the values of the Catholic Church. Principals are responsible for nurturing the Catholic life of the school and ensuring the integration of Catholic beliefs and values with the education experience. Principals have a visible role in the promotion of the Catholic Church:

> The principal is in a unique position in Catholic schools. The role of a Catholic school principal has to be intimately tied to the Catholic Church. So you have things like the evangelizing mission of the Church, bringing students, families, linking with parishes, the concept of students having a relationship with Christ. The two can't be differentiated. It can't be a school first and then a Catholic school. You don't breed people with that ability. You have to grow into that. The intimate tie with the mission of the Church is just a reality. (CEO, I)

Principals also consider religious and spiritual leadership important. All principals identify religious and spiritual leadership, encapsulated in faith leadership and promotion, as essential components of the principal's role:

> To be an exemplary leader and visionary, committed to promoting Gospel values in everyday school activities and inspiring members of the school community to work towards the realization of the Catholic mission of the school. (P, S)

In this respect, the views of principals reflect the perspectives of TCEO personnel, with one major difference. Principals reflect a more "hands on" approach to religious

and spiritual leadership, in contrast to the more philosophical and theological opinions expressed by TCEO personnel. These personnel are more able to articulate the religious and spiritual nature of leadership. Principals accept that their role is part of the mission of the Catholic Church, but few indicate an understanding of this in a theological context. For principals, religious and spiritual leadership is a given, a basic responsibility fundamental to their role as principal. Some comment that they are unsure if there is a genuine acceptance of this dimension of leadership or if principals are aware that they must appear to be publicly supportive:

> We are all on the same page that the mission and the good of the Church is right. You have to be committed to the genuine mission of the Church and perhaps not the institutionalised version of the Church. (CEO, I)

Principals believe that the responsibility associated with religious and spiritual leadership generates difficulties for them. During individual, in-depth interviews, a number of principals confessed their dissonance in personal belief and the need to maintain an official "Catholic" stance. Issues include lifestyle, divorce, the alienation of women and the male dominated structure of the Church. While these issues are raised, principals insist that their beliefs remain confidential.

System leaders also acknowledge this dissonance, with one system leader stating:

> It only dawned on me a couple of years into my principalship, how closely connected the principal role was to that of the Bishop. And the limitations that placed on your role to be natural, to be vibrant, to be an independent thinker. The closer you get to the top either the smarter you have to be or the more controlled you have got to be with your own personal thoughts on things. You can do that, but the smarter you have to be or the harder you have to work at it. We all toe the line and put some of our more strident views away. We all silence ourselves. (CEO, I)

A second component of religious and spiritual leadership is active faith involvement. Principals, leadership team members and TCEO representatives believe active faith involvement is visible, practical, public involvement in, and support for the Catholic Church. Principals portray active faith involvement in a number of ways. These

include acting as a role model, being seen to be energetic, confident and active in their faith, and assuming responsibility for the faith development of the school community.

Some principals believe they should be role models for the Catholic faith, that they need to be visible in their faith: "It's a joy to be able to live a faith. There are not too many jobs where I can proudly proclaim my Catholic faith." (P, FG) Others, however, are uncomfortable with public demonstrations of faith because of the differences between their own opinions and Church teaching. This is another area in which some principals believe that they need to remain silent, particularly given the views expressed by TCEO personnel: "If you are not prepared to name the Jesus factor, you are not being true to the name Catholic school principal." (CEO, I) Principals express a level of disquiet when they differentiate between living the "Jesus factor" and publicly upholding views which they do not share:

> People are concerned about rocking the boat. If you are the primary bread winner in the family, you don't want to be seen to be on the outer. At the tail end of my career, it doesn't matter nearly as much to me. It is quite liberating – I don't need the job for the money, so it frees me up to have an opinion which may be contrary to the established CEO position or the position of the Church. (P, I)

All believe that it is important for principals to be confident in their faith, playing an active role in ensuring that the school is based on Catholic beliefs and values and that these are expressed in actions. For example, in a principal focus group the following opinion is shared:

> One thing I constantly remind students, parents and staff is that faith and mission dimension. Being a faith based school we have to be leaders of the Catholic ethos and that's number one. We wouldn't be employed without our faith. (P, FG)

Views vary over the issue of faith development. TCEO representatives emphasise that one of the major roles of the Catholic school principal is to nurture the faith development of the school community:

> At the heart of it we would say that the mission and purpose is about first of all being a place where whoever comes gets to know the mission and purpose

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of Jesus Christ and I think the role of the principal is key in making sure that that's not sitting over to the side, but that it's part and parcel of everything that goes on in the school. (CEO, I)

While principals and others within the school consider this to be important, it is not their primary responsibility. Many believe that this is another example of the school assuming roles traditionally associated with the parish priest.

Church–parish–school relations comprise the third component of religious and spiritual leadership. Formerly, the parish was the religious, cultural and social centre, focusing the various ministries of the Church. With the priest as the visible leader of the parish, the Catholic school was one of the various church ministries. The school and its principal were important, but were closely supervised by the parish priest. With the changing dynamic of Australian society and the decline in the number of parish priests, public perception of the parish and its role has changed. Parents and the wider community acknowledge the school, and its principal, as the focal point, and this expectation generates difficulties.

The participants acknowledge that changes to the traditional parish–school dynamic and the decrease in the number of parish priests necessitate change. The principal provides the link between the Church–parish structure and the school community. Principals associated with schools with a more traditional parish structure and parish priest experience additional pressure, with increased expectation of parish involvement. This involvement includes participation on the parish board or finance committee, involvement in parish ministry and activities, and support for the parish priest. This can bring with it positive benefits, as one principal states, "For me, parish involvement is joyful and affirming and I love it. My faith and my time at Church and in the parish give me space." (P, I)

The shortage of priests in the Diocese of Townsville and the recruitment of foreign priests have led to a change in the school–parish relationship. Many respondents comment on this new relationship. One TCEO representative states:

> It is critical. Priests are more of a hindrance than a help. They have gone past the point of being neutral, they are now a liability. A TCEO driver is to strengthen the school, parish, home link – for it to work every one of the

stakeholders has to work at it. I believe principals are working like dogs at it. I don't think parents really have a clue. And when the parish priest doesn't understand that it is not a one way relationship … The influx of overseas priests has seen us go back to, "I am the parish priest and you will do what I say!" There's no mutuality. (CEO, I)

Principals also acknowledge the difficulties created for them by priests unfamiliar with the Australian context:

I am not sure overseas priests are aware of how the Parish and the schools are inter-related. I have rarely heard the Priest talk glowingly about the life of the school. The link between church, parish and school needs to be made more explicit, from both sides, and not just the school. It shouldn't always be up to the school to help out the priest. (P, FG)

Another principal comments:

Gender also comes into play. Many of these priests come from cultures where women play a subservient role. They find it hard when the principal is a woman. There is certainly no treating me as if I were an equal and I often feel that the priest does not know how to talk to me. Or indeed, does not want to talk to me, simply because I am female. (P, I)

All principals interviewed express concern about airing these views too widely or too publicly and are adamant that they need to be publicly seen to be supportive of the parish and the priest.

The final area of religious and spiritual leadership focuses specifically on the principal's responsibility for ensuring that the values and charism of the Catholic school are nurtured. Participants believe that the specifically Catholic nature of the school is important, providing the distinction between the Catholic school and other schools. Principals and TCEO system leaders are aware that principals provide "an authentic Catholic presence in the school community and lead the school students, staff and community in a wider vision that is reflective of the aims of a Catholic school." (P, S) Principals are responsible for promoting the Church's education mission.

In summary, the principal of a Catholic school is responsible for the religious and spiritual leadership of the school. This dimension of leadership includes faith leadership which models active faith involvement, promoting Church–parish–school relations and promoting the values and charism of the Catholic school. This dynamic is illustrated in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2 **Religious and spiritual leadership.**
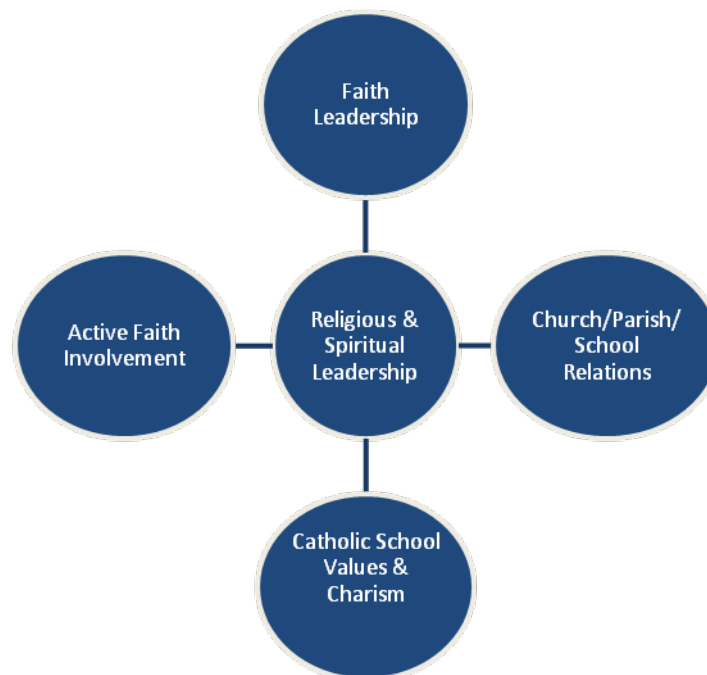
5.2.1.2 Human Leadership

The second theme is human leadership. Human leadership focuses on people and relationships – the relationships with students, staff, parents, parish and the wider community, educational authorities and the next generation of school leaders. All stakeholders consider aspects of human leadership important.

Many qualities are essential to being a good human leader. Respondents believe that a principal demonstrating good human leadership is one who empowers, inspires, supports, challenges, mediates, manages and who possesses strength, compassion, calmness, balance and understanding. These qualities are integral to the role of the Catholic school principal:

If they are true leaders they are people who try to inspire. They inspire from their own deep reflection on their mission and purpose and how they live their lives. (CEO, I)

A principal who displays human leadership is identified as being responsible for:

- supporting and challenging all within the school community;

- the provision of ongoing personal and professional development; and

- care for the future generation of school leaders.

Support and challenge are considered first. Principals believe that a fundamental aspect of their role is to support and challenge the school community. People need to be challenged to achieve their potential, and principals and TCEO representatives believe it is the principal's responsibility to do this. Interestingly, this responsibility is not mentioned by other leadership team members.

Principals in particular emphasise the importance of people and relationships, identifying human aspects of leadership as both demanding but also rewarding. Interaction with people is a priority. In particular, principals emphasise that being physically and emotionally present to people promotes empathetic communication and a warm rapport:

For me, the biggest part of the role is about people. It's about children, staff and then parents and that takes up the biggest part of the day … They are the most demanding and potentially the most important. It's the times you ignore those smaller issues that parents or teachers may have, that things blow up and it ends up being a far more pressing issue. The physical face-to-face interaction with parents, teachers and students is the most demanding and time consuming. (P, FG)

Of equal importance is the need to promote relationship development:

It comes down to the relationships you build with people. If they see you as stable, organised, calculated, controlled, human, available, they see you as a person, where they get the confidence in you. They have to see that you don't

palm things off on to other people. The community builds up its confidence in you. (P, FG)

TCEO representatives also identify relationship building as important, emphasising the importance of challenging behavior and performance where necessary:

> They have to be very good in the human dimension, in working with people, and being able to challenge when people need to be challenged, but still maintain their dignity. When they move people into a risky situation, when they can perceive that it is going to be risky, they can ark up if it's not handled properly. In this day and age it is an essential skill for principals. (CEO, I)

TCEO personnel also identify a major area of concern:

> The more you go up the leadership ladder the more you have to deal with people. People are changing. People out there now are angrier than they have ever been so if there are issues; people react instead of being more willing to work things out. That's quite a demanding aspect of the role. (CEO, I)

Other leaders also highlight this concern over strained human interaction, with deputy principals and assistant principals identifying criticism and abuse leveled at principals by parents, as disincentives for principalship.

The second area of principal responsibility under the dimension of human leadership is the development of the school community. This is a key aspect of principal responsibility. The principal is especially responsible for student and staff care, including team leadership and parent development. This is a major task, emphasised by the TCEO perception that the principal is ultimately responsible for all that influences the holistic education of students.

The principal's role also includes empowering, inspiring, challenging and enabling the development of each individual within the school environment:

> Truly effective principals empower teachers to teach well, parents to be linked to the school community well, and through the staff, empower students to learn well. (CEO, I)

Finally, succession planning and the nurturing and development of the next generation of school leaders are integral to the human dimension of the principal's role. Many principals consider they have a responsibility to ensure the emergence of middle and senior leaders:

> The principal has to build the team, to give responsibility, and to open them up to leadership. They need to see all those professional judgments and decisions. The whole business of building that relationship with your team members and them seeing your judgments and you seeing their judgments. You need to get them to see that they are capable and can do this job. (P, FG)

Surprisingly, not all principals consider this responsibility to be part of their role. Those with more experience in the role assume this responsibility, but it is ignored by less experienced principals. This perspective is in contrast to TCEO personnel, who consider succession planning to be an important part of the principal's role:

> One of the roles of the principal is to always be looking at the potential of the people they work with and to let go of the territorial–propriety view that 'those are my people'. They need to take the view that they are working as part of a system. The career broker role of the principal is to talk to young teachers about how well they are doing in the classroom, encourage them to study and consider leadership. Principals need to make opportunities available to teachers. They play a key role in how we gain new leaders. (CEO, I)

Thus, the human dimension of leadership is integral to the role of the principal, with the principal assuming responsibility for the ongoing development and extension of all relationships within the school community. Principals are the "keepers of the secrets" (P, FG), the ones responsible for nurturing and developing the culture of the school and for ensuring the ongoing development of the school culture and ethos. This conceptualisation is summarised in Figure 5.3.

*Figure 5.***3 Human leadership.**
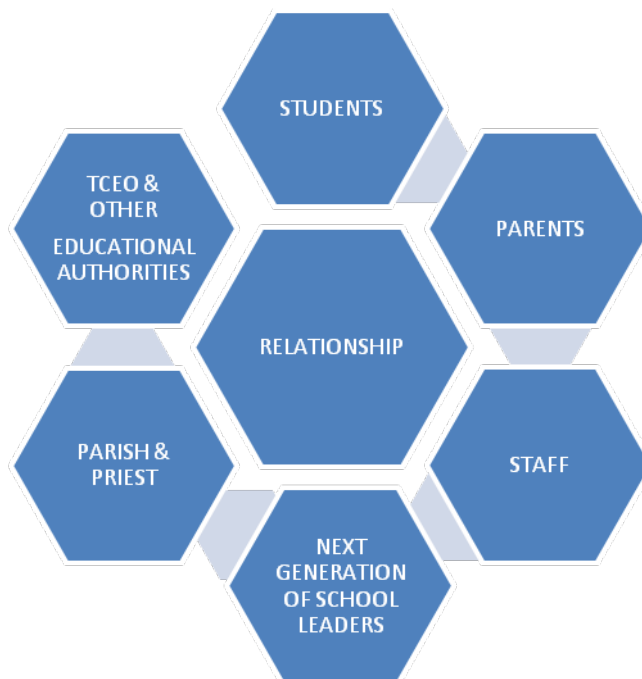
5.2.1.3 Educational Leadership

The third theme is educational leadership. The foundational aim of educational leadership is to orchestrate reflective teaching with active learning, through engagement with the contemporary curriculum, so that quality student learning is achieved. This is the core mission of schools, and as such, energetic and focused educational leadership is a central responsibility in the principal's role:

> To lead the students to achieve the directives and standards as set out by state and Catholic education bodies and to develop teachers who are inspiring and caring people. (P, S)

Educational leadership is responsible for:

- developing the vision;

- providing direction and focus;

- supporting the ongoing development of all;

- providing expertise in curriculum, pedagogy, assessment; and

- ensuring the provision of resources.

The role of the principal in establishing the vision of the school is considered first. Participants state that an integral component of the principal's role is to lead the school in the development of its vision, with particular emphasis on its educational vision. There is unanimous agreement that the principal is:

> … the driver of the vision. The principal doesn't always have to be out the front, but he or she needs to facilitate the vision, to have conversations about the vision so that when he/she leaves the school, it's a better place than when they arrived, the staff's in a better place than when they arrived. What do we as a collective group want for our school and someone needs to drive that. Someone needs to ask the parents, the students, the staff, the groundsman, the janitor, the kitchen lady. What do you see as good about our school? They need to be having the conversations and including them, driving things, then budget and make it happen. That's the vision. (Other, FG)

Educational leadership also provides the direction and focus for the school, and the principal is responsible for leading this. While all stakeholders emphasise that the team approach to leadership is important, the ultimate responsibility is the principal's:

> The principal needs to lead the vision to empower the community to thrive – teachers to teach effectively, students to learn well, middle managers to take appropriate responsibility and parents to feel included. (Other, S)

The principal likewise is responsible for the personal and professional development of staff. Other leadership team members, in particular, emphasise the principal's responsibility in providing professional development opportunities and energetically encouraging staff participation.

A third aspect of educational leadership focuses on principal expertise. All participants acknowledge the influential role the principal demonstrates in leading teaching and learning. The principal needs to demonstrate expertise in a number of fields, including curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting:

They have to know teaching and learning, curriculum, what is good pedagogy that engages children, so when they are working with teachers they can come from a sound perspective. (CEO, I)

There are many areas of specialised expertise and attempting to be especially competent in so many is a challenge identified by many participants. Principals acknowledge that it is impossible to be an expert in so many fields. At the same time, they concede that they themselves are often responsible for entertaining high expectations. Experienced principals state:

There's a bit of a conundrum too. It is expected that we are curriculum leaders, but I find a lot of my time is tied up with paperwork and people, and not necessarily the curriculum expectations. I think the job is about finding people whose strengths are curriculum and enabling them to develop that. They are better at it than we are, more hands on than we can be, because of these demands. (P, FG)

While principals are ultimately responsible for schools achieving their mission, they personally are incapable of possessing all the expertise needed to carry out that responsibility. This is particularly an issue with regard to financial expertise. Principals are expected to demonstrate financial acumen to ensure that resources are available to facilitate the educational vision into reality.

In summary, educational leadership is a priority for principals in Catholic schools. The multi-dimensional nature of educational leadership is illustrated in Figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4 **Educational leadership.**
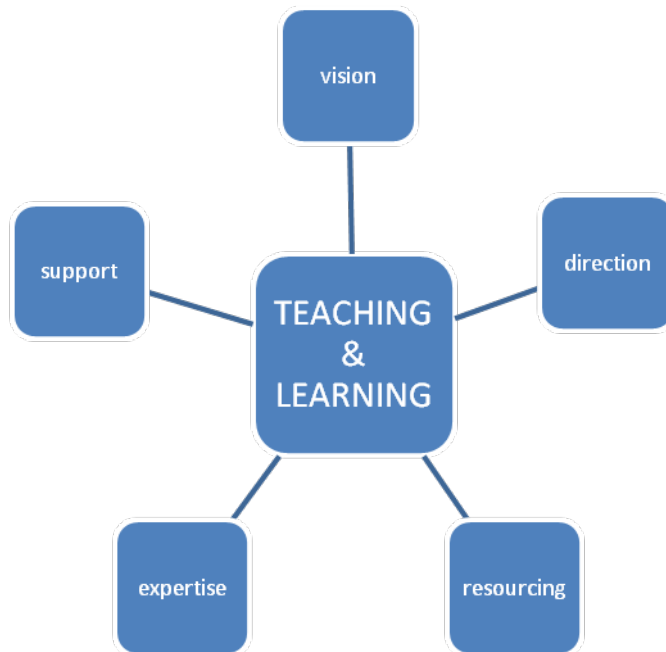
5.2.1.4 Strategic Leadership

The fourth and final theme is strategic leadership. Strategic leadership focuses on the development, support, monitoring and evaluation of operational processes within the school context. Such leadership ensures that the beliefs, values and educational philosophy of the school give direction to the work of staff, the participation of parents and partnerships within the wider community. Strategic leadership has a two-fold focus on visioning and stewardship. This dynamic is illustrated in Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5 **Strategic leadership.**
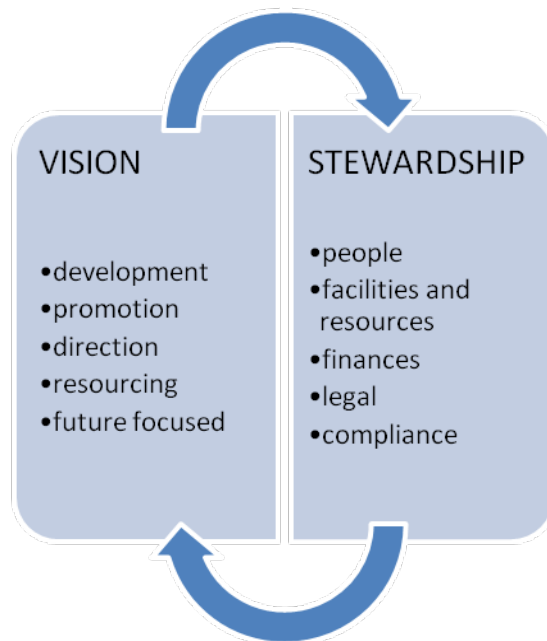
Visioning is considered first. TCEO stakeholders, in particular, believe that the principal's role is to lead the visioning process for the school. This leadership aims at identifying direction and goals, while ensuring that the school is adequately resourced to facilitate the vision to fruition.

TCEO personnel also believe it is the principal's responsibility to ensure the growth of the school. This entails the provision of the necessary resources and personnel. They state that the principal should be future focused, leading and guiding the school community through discernment and planning:

> Principals these days have to be visionaries. Not just good managers, but people who are ready and willing to implement their visions. (CEO, I)

A principal also needs to be able to manage the practicalities – the buildings and developments necessary to adequately resource the ongoing development of the school. The principal has to provide "leadership with vision, management with diligence." (CEO, I)

Principals and other school-based leaders share similar opinions concerning visioning leadership. What is of particular interest is that principals identify the realities of stewardship as more important than visioning. Principals believe that management is

a large part of their role. Visioning is important, but it is the practicalities of management which dominate.

Principals dedicate a large portion of their time to stewardship and management of resources, facilities, finances, people, plant and equipment. Respondents believe that principals should be good managers as well as good leaders and they need to be aware of legal, system, state and federal government compliance requirements. This stewardship of resources is *"part of the everythingness that encompasses the principal's role."* (P, FG)

5.2.1.5 Responsibility – More or Less?

Participants, particularly principals, report that the role of the principal is over-burdened, with the principal assuming responsibility for an increasing portfolio of responsibilities. Interestingly, one principal identifies a need to assume even more responsibility for instructional leadership. Others express a need for increased pastoral care. Other senior leadership team members wish to have more responsibility for visioning, increased presence within the school and a greater willingness to handle difficult encounters with parents and staff. These could, however, be views only relevant to a particular school context. One leadership team member would like greater involvement in diocesan policy direction and formation and the TCEO wants principals to assume greater responsibility for succession planning and the nurturing of members of staff with leadership potential.

Principals and other senior leaders identify areas of specific knowledge and expertise as areas for which principals should not be responsible. These include Workplace Health and Safety, compliance audits, marketing, building and project management, curriculum and financial management (as opposed to financial leadership). These areas require such specific and detailed knowledge that it would be more advantageous to appoint experts in the field to effectively manage the specific aspect. This greater access to qualified expertise would relieve pressure on time-poor principals.

5.3 Research Question Two

The second specific research question that focuses the conduct of this research is: *Why are deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and*

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assistant principals deterred from applying for the principalship? The key element of this area relates to incentives and disincentives to undertaking leadership.

5.3.1 Leadership Incentive and Disincentive

Analysis of the collected data identifies multiple issues, which are outlined in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Research Question Two: Why are Deputy Principals, Assistants to the Principal Religious Education and Assistant Principals Deterred from Applying for the Principalship?

	PRINCIPALS	OTHER LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS	CEO PERSONNEL
Why would fewer teachers be expressing interest in undertaking leadership positions in Catholic schools?	• Time • Faith criteria • Remuneration • Perception – forgone conclusion, lack of support, no job satisfaction • Ignorance of role • Increased workload expectations • Family issues • Anxiety over responsibility • Study requirement • Principal portrayal of position • Work–life balance • Sustainability • Criticism • Increased role demands • Complexity • Pressure, stress, burnout • Lack of preparation • Limited career path • Lack of TCEO support • Distance from teaching/classroom • Bureaucracy • Mobility • Dealing with people • Fear of confrontation • Self-doubt	• Changing social paradigm • Remuneration • Working families • Parish/church involvement • Changing expectations of parents & CEO • Lack of flexibility • "Old Boys" network – perception • Multi-dimensional position • Confidence • Family • Lack of autonomy from TCEO • Release time • Ultimate responsibility	• Perception – forgone conclusion, Church pillar, leadership a male thing • People – angry • Gender – structures not conducive to women; conflict leadership & motherhood • Lifestyle issues • Parish responsibility • Difficulty • Lack of encouragement • Time • Mobility • Not Catholic

	PRINCIPALS	OTHER LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS	CEO PERSONNEL
What could be done to encourage more teachers to undertake leadership positions in schools?	• Change perception – time, shared responsibility, satisfaction, shared wisdom • Study –release and pay • Faith commitment – encourage, challenge • Shadowing • Mentoring • Identification of potential • Support – mentors, talks with principals • Restructure & realignment • Lessen the load • Remuneration • Better succession planning, training and preparation • Opportunities to act • Improved work conditions • Change in traditional structures – shared • More authentic leadership roles • Qualification for leadership • Culture of professional dialogue • Professional debriefing • Model job satisfaction	• Internships • More autonomy • Preparation – COMMICS & Aspirant leaders • Principals display satisfaction and enjoyment • Early identification • Relevant, engaging professional dev. • Model job satisfaction	• Improved conditions • Models of shared leadership • Develop a skill set for principals • Be more creative with the job • "I love my job" • Better models of professional support
What are some of the barriers facing teachers interested in undertaking leadership in Catholic schools?	• No talent identification • Lack of opportunity/suitable positions, incentives, balance • Time • Family • ET6 status • Study requirements • Perception – gender • Geography/location • Understanding of the role	• Authenticity of the faith dimension • Conflict of values – job v family • Inflexible work arrangements • Conditions – stress, long hours • Feelings of inadequacy • Sub-strata of leadership – stay as APRE • Mobility	• Difficulties of dealing with people – not prepared • Conditions • Religion and lifestyle issues • Rules and regulations

These issues are further synthesised to generate the following major research themes outlined in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Summary of Emergent Themes from Responses to Incentives

ISSUES	MAJOR RESEARCH THEMES
Size and complexity of the role Responsibilities Change in role and expectations Time Balance Sustainability	The actual role of the principal
Role of principal Appointment processes Gender Job satisfaction Deficit model	Perception
Faith criteria Study requirements	Faith and study requirements
Lack of genuine career path Paucity of positions Lack of acting opportunities and preparation Mobility and geography	Opportunity Active Learning
Restructure of role Improved work and remuneration conditions Professional debriefing Affirmation	Conditions
Talent identification Support Active learning Career anchoring	Succession Planning

These major research themes are encapsulated in Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6 **Major research themes in response to incentives and disincentives to leadership.**

5.3.1.1 Role of the Principal

The role of the principal is considered first. Issues to be discussed are: the size and complexity of the role; the responsibilities associated with the role; the changing nature of the role; changing expectations of the principal and the role; and time, balance and sustainability.

5.3.1.1.1 Size, Complexity and Responsibility

Principals and other school leaders perceive the size and complexity of the role of the principal as the major disincentive to teachers expressing interest in applying for the principalship. Stakeholders comment on the multi-facetted nature of the role, which entails:

> … everything from the leader to the gardener and toilet fixer. The beginning and the end. You need to be the faith leader, so you need to be someone who is comfortable talking about your faith. You need to be the curriculum leader. You need to be a fine teacher. You need to be the organisational leader of the

school, able to manage a timetable, get things moving, get things right. You need to be the pastoral leader, the mentor, the person who is going to inspire those teachers, or get that teacher back in line, the person who has lost their way. You need to manage the relationships as well. You have to be a good all-rounder to do it well. (Other, FG)

The majority of principals and other leadership team members believe the role is too onerous, involving everything that occurs within the school, with ultimate responsibility for all that impacts on the lives of students, staff and the school community. Many comment that the role of the principal needs to change, in order to become more attractive and sustainable. TCEO representatives do not share this perception. Instead, they cite a change necessitated by the changing nature of education:

> You have to reconfigure the role because of the changing nature of education. We need to reconfigure the whole workforce. If you look at some of the problematic issues in teaching. One, it is a very feminised workforce. We should have more males in teaching as teachers. We need to say teaching should be a professional occupation, like medicine, but to do that we have to change a few structures that give it a view in the professional world as being not quite professional. There should be a better pay structure so we need to align pay with other professions. We need to align how work is done. So I believe that the structure of the year should change – should get five weeks annual leave and that in class time is just that. So you don't have staff meetings or parent teacher meetings. Students have to have their holidays, but teachers need to be engaged in professional activities during the holidays. They are compensated through a very good salary. If more decent salary, more men would be attracted to the workforce and teachers would be less harried by the nature of the job at the moment. As a result the principal's role would be different. The complexity in terms of management of finances, accountability, legislative issues, issues principals need to get their heads around. We need to look at other positions to support the principal. The whole workforce should be reconfigured. (CEO, I)

5.3.1.1.2 Change

A constant theme concerns change. The constantly changing nature of the principal's role and the changing expectations held by students, staff, parents, the wider community and educational authorities, including the TCEO, provide disincentives to those aspiring to senior leadership positions. Respondents believe that the expectations placed on principals, in particular, are not only excessive, but are also constantly changing, generating stress and anxiety:

> They are deterred by what they see: workload, stress, confrontational parents. People don't want to put themselves in a stressful position. (P, FG)

Increased emphasis on accountability, compliance and sustainability, and an expectation of a more business-focused model of leadership are examples of such changes. These remove principals further from the core mission of the school – the actual education of students. All of these combine to be a major disincentive. The role of the principal appears to be unsustainable:

> Anxiety about the responsibility. That the buck stops with the principal when it comes to parental hostility, student exclusions, workplace issues, even litigation, brings the principal into the firing line, and this could be a source of anxiety that teachers don't want. (P, S)

Another disincentive to leadership centres on changing social paradigms. Changing social and financial considerations lead to more families with both parents engaged in the workforce, sharing responsibilities for childcare, the raising of children and domestic arrangements:

> Most aspiring principals would also have youngish families and would find it difficult to give time to them and to the task of principalship. But then, deputy principals and some teachers who are sports coaches also spend big amounts of time at their occupations, and it doesn't seem to be an overwhelming problem for them to balance time at work with family time. (P, S)

5.3.1.1.3 Time, Balance and Sustainability

Respondents cite the substantial time commitment for the role as the primary reason why few teachers are applying for senior leadership positions. All comment that the

time needed to capably and competently carry out the role and fulfill the responsibilities of the principal seems unreasonable. The notion of "24/7/52" (P, I) appears:

> They see how busy the job is, they see what I do and the hours I put in, and they don't think it is worth it. Teachers now earn good money and don't see that the extra money the principal earns compensates for all the extra responsibility and stress. (P, I)

Interestingly, however, some TCEO personnel do not share this concern over time, believing that principals make a choice about how they utilise their time:

> We all have free will so you choose what you want to make your priorities. We all make time for the things we want to do. As a principal, you choose to spend your time on what you want to do. Some are very comfortable with the maintenance approach, so work in that. Others choose to get bogged down in forms, things, embroiled in the day to day running of the school. (CEO, I)

Participants view a role as complex and onerous as the principalship as incompatible with a healthy work–life balance, which influences many teachers to decline the principalship. Such personal arrangements focus on lifestyle and quality of life issues, with the new generation of school leaders, the Gen Ys, placing priority on lifestyle quality. Gen Ys view teaching and leadership as a profession, rather than as a vocation (Macpherson, 2009):

> They see the long hours that are put in by those who are already in leadership positions and identify that the absence of a satisfactory work–life balance is neither desirable nor sustainable. They also witness the criticism that school leaders face when dealing with irate and aggressive parents and the ever increasing accountability demands being imposed by state and federal governments, as well as educational authorities e.g. QCEC and TCEO. (P, S)

Finally, participants question the sustainability of the principal's role. Ignorance and misconception surround the role of the principal. Participants recommend that the role of the principal be redefined so that it is more sustainable. Participants concur that the principal plays a major role in this redefinition, for it is the principal who is best positioned to outline feasible changes which can be made to the role.

Action can be taken to convert these disincentives into incentives to embrace senior leadership. Participants believe that the principal's role configuration, the issues of shared responsibility and time can be explored and principals should publicly display the enjoyment and job satisfaction they derive from their role. These act as incentives to leadership.

In addition, respondents recommend that leadership should be shared, responsibility devolved, and genuine, collaborative leadership experienced. Participants suggest a model of leadership based on shared wisdom as a viable way of sharing the joys and responsibilities of leadership. Promoting the concept of team leadership, in contrast to absolute leadership by the principal, creates more opportunities for leadership and leads to greater sustainability. Respondents believe that an emphasis on the concept of a leadership team helps to make the principalship more attractive:

> Teachers need to see that responsibility is shared. A leadership team takes responsibility. If you have a good team of deputy principals and middle managers, the school pretty well runs itself. No decision is taken in isolation. Most important decisions are run past deputy principals. And the responsibility factor leads to great satisfaction. (P, S)

There is a perception that the role of the principal is too time consuming:

> Teachers need to be encouraged that the amount of time given to the job of principal is not excessive compared to the amount of time that many people give to their different occupations. I spend generally from about 7.15 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. at school, if not directly in the office then also going around to various sporting competitions after school to put a face in. I also spend 3–4 hours on the weekend in the office catching up. This amounts to about 55 hours a week. Then there are occasions such as Deb balls, eisteddfods, P&F functions, working bees, etc. that take up time. The trade-off is that you do not have to spend extra time preparing class work. But there are many times when there are still teachers' cars at school when I leave. Many teachers spend more than 3–4 hours on weekends at school or home preparing work. Many teachers also take sporting teams after school and take teams away on holidays. Many teachers spend enormous hours preparing stage musicals etc. The hours are not excessive and there are probably teachers who are putting in as many hours for

less pay. So teachers need to be discouraged from thinking that the position will take up huge amounts of time. (P, S)

In spite of the time commitment, principals affirm the satisfaction they experience from the role. Regrettably, the public rarely perceive this:

> What brings me satisfaction? Relationships with staff and parents and students, if you are doing a good job! You are respected and looked up to. You constantly get great feed-back! You can walk into classrooms and take lessons and with a principal hat on your head, you immediately get great attention. You can have great fun with P&F and Board members. You can plan new developments for the school and see the results with a feeling of pride. Putting in applications for projects and winning a result brings great satisfaction. You have freedom. If you need to leave the school grounds to see someone, to visit the sick, or whatever, you just do it. I think that the principal's role should be sold as a position that can give great satisfaction. Too many principals talk the position down as though it is a great burden. (P, S)

Principals agree that they should openly share the joys – and the setbacks – of the principal's role and play a part in debunking the many myths which surround the principalship.

5.3.1.2. Perception

Perception is another theme generated from the new understandings – perception of the role of the principal, perception of the actual appointment processes employed in the Diocese of Townsville, gender perception, job satisfaction perception and perception of a deficit model.

The first of these is perception of the role of the principal. While the principal's role is complex, ignorance and myth exist about the role. The perception is that the role is too large and that the principal is the only person who can be responsible for carrying out the myriad of responsibilities entailed. Unfortunately, principals rarely delegate substantial responsibilities to colleagues because they believe it is their responsibility to fulfill all the tasks required of them. Support structures, other leadership team members and division of responsibility are not considered by potential principals.

Interestingly, principals inadvertently generate much of this misinformation themselves in their portrayal of their positions.

Principals portray their job as all-encompassing and consequently unattractive. Indeed, they too often demonstrate that their responsibility offers little job satisfaction and fewer rewards:

> They don't see it as bringing job satisfaction, whereas other positions that are closer to the teaching coalface do bring job satisfaction. This problem is heightened by the often deleterious comments made by other principals (that is talking up the difficulties of the job instead of admitting to enjoying the job). When is the last time you heard a principal talk about job satisfaction? (P, S)

Another principal states:

> I don't think we do ourselves any favors by not "talking up" the role and the many joys and celebrations that stem from the role. Staff perhaps see our sometime negative reactions and not the smiles! (P, S)

TCEO representatives reiterate this concern over the negative image principals create:

> Principals help create the impression that it is a horrible job. To hear them talk it is the worst job in the world. It dissuades people from doing it. They need to talk professionally to others and stop badmouthing the position. If you keep yourself reasonably balanced, it is a great job. You make it what you want it to be. (CEO, I)

The following quotation exemplifies this negative perception of the principalship:

> I don't think principals are very good at standing up and saying, "I love my job!" (CEO, I)

An additional way in which perception influences decision making concerns the role played by gender in the process of appointment and leadership in the Townsville Diocese. Principals and TCEO representatives indicate that leadership in the Townsville Diocese is a "male" thing, citing the gender imbalance currently evident in leadership positions throughout the Townsville Diocese:

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Some women don't see it as attractive because they see school leadership as a male thing in this diocese, despite having a female director. (CEO, I)

Principals refer to the perceived "old boys' network" which they believe exists amongst the current principals. This links with the perception that most principal appointments are "forgone conclusions", with "deals" lacking transparency. Both school and TCEO representatives allude to this and this cynicism identifies dissatisfaction with current processes and procedures. Gender imbalance thus is an area of concern and a disincentive to leadership aspiration for women.

There is a perception that men and women view leadership differently and arrive at leadership via different paths:

Men tend to think differently to women. At about 30, they want to jump to the next level. Women tend to hold back. They need to be nurtured and pushed. Men tend to think they have a right to leadership. We need to give people opportunities for leadership. We need to empower them, give them small areas of responsibility so they can develop their confidence. They need to have good role models. (P, I)

A male principal reinforces this perception:

I wanted to get into Catholic education and I wanted to be a principal. I asked, "What do I have to do? What qualifications do I need to have to be a principal?" So I started studying. I didn't have any doubt in my ability to lead but I knew I needed those bits of paper. I knew to break in, coming north would be the best option. (P, I)

Finally, many respondents identify deficit reasons for not aspiring to the principalship: a perceived lack of support; lack of autonomy; lack of preparation; lack of recognition; lack of remuneration; lack of satisfaction; lack of flexibility; lack of release time; lack of system support; and lack of freedom:

The long hours and stress associated with senior leadership positions in Catholic schools are probably the main reasons few capable teachers apply for leadership positions. Other reasons include lack of flexibility of the role

(particularly for working mothers) and the fact that applicants need to be Catholic. (Other, S)

Respondents constantly reiterate the "lack of" in their views of leadership and how leadership is implemented and supported in the Diocese of Townsville. Lack of support emerges as one of the foremost disincentives:

When you first start off, not that there can be a blueprint or a black line master, but there is no support. You hit the ground running … What are they giving us to help us to learn with our new roles? If you don't start with those habits of mind as a new leader, you won't develop them at all. (P, I)

And:

They also don't see that there is a great deal of support from the office. They rarely see TCEO people in the school, and they interpret that as a lack of interest and support. That may not be the case, but that is a common perception from a lot of people. (P, I)

A further disincentive for principals and other senior leadership team members is remuneration, with many citing recent ET6[4] industrial arrangements as exacerbating the situation. All believe that the monetary difference between a teacher, paid at the highest level under ET6 provisions and an assistant to the principal – religious education, assistant principal or principal in a primary school, is insufficient to attract those possibly considering leadership aspirations:

There is a diminishing salary gap between ET6, PAR, middle and senior leadership positions and staff do not want the added burdens and responsibilities for a perceived lack of recompense. (P, S)

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[4] The classification ET6 recognises the demonstrated skill, knowledge, proficiency and contribution of the classroom teacher. An ET6 classified teacher is a teaching practitioner whose effective teaching and learning in the school contributes to the effective implementation, development, provision and/or evaluation of the school's educational program

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The common belief is that the responsibilities far outweigh the benefits gained by the extra remuneration. The same belief applies to principal remuneration, with all stating that principals are not adequately remunerated for the responsibility, complexity and diversity of their roles:

> Money! Principals are paid so little. Principals are underpaid. I wouldn't want to do that job for under $200,000. (Other, FG)

Interestingly, remuneration is not cited as an issue by any TCEO representatives.

5.3.1.3 Faith and Study Requirements

A third theme of interest emerges around two specific criteria considered essential by TCEO for those aspiring to senior leadership. These are faith criteria and study requirements. The TCEO outlines specific criteria which must be met, before an aspirant can be considered or appointed to a senior leadership position.

5.3.1.3.1 Faith Criteria

The question of faith background is pivotal to the principal appointment process within the Diocese of Townsville. All participants agree that it is essential for the principal of a Catholic school to be a practising Catholic. However, a number of capable teachers are automatically ineligible because of this faith criterion:

> The role of principal of a Catholic school requires the person to be personally committed to a faith community, turning up to Mass each Sunday and willing to give personal witness to one's faith by involvement in parish. Now, not many teachers in Catholic schools are in that position. And teachers know that they will not get a look-in as a principal if they cannot show such commitment. (P, S)

The word "practising" invites consideration. A number of respondents raise this issue and also express concerns about the emergence of "professional Catholics". "Professional Catholics" are those who highlight their Catholicism only when it is beneficial to do so. For example, when a promotion is being considered:

> Principals these days are facing schools where a lot of people in the schools are professional Catholics – "I will do it because it is going to get me to where

I want to be. I can tick all the boxes and it will get me there." This is quite worrying! (Other, FG)

One TCEO representative states:

> The whole issue of the practice of religion and lifestyle becomes tricky. It becomes very tiresome to be the principal, at mass every Sunday, most likely on the Parish council, liaising with the parish priest, being up front and centre in the Catholic community. If it isn't a natural fit, it can become too much. (CEO, I)

This is an important issue for all respondents. While energetically supporting the Catholic ethos in schools, principals believe that their expected participation in parish administration extends beyond their primary educational expertise and responsibility. TCEO does not share this perspective.

TCEO representatives also identify the role of the parish priest with the school:

> I would like to think that the parish priest supports the principal, but it is becoming an issue here with foreign priests coming in, because they are coming in with a different background and role. It is becoming more the principal having to support the new priests. It is a different game these days. (CEO, I)

This growing area of parish involvement and support presents many challenges for the principal of the future.

5.3.1.3.2 Study Requirements

All school based participants believe that the requirement to undertake further study is a major deterrent to senior leadership aspiration. They acknowledge that the additional study, usually working towards the attainment of at least a Masters' degree in Education, Catholic School Leadership, Administration or Theology, in order to meet TCEO leadership criteria, is beneficial. However, they also maintain that the difficulties of working and study often seem "insurmountable" (Other, S). This adds to the pressure expressed by all with regards to time and work–life balance:

Study – a number of teachers have just about had their fill of study by the time they are in the workforce and further study for principal positions has to be undertaken while they are working and while they are looking after their families. Just to put themselves into contention for a principal role means they have to undertake study at the same time they are working. (P, S)

One leadership team member states:

When you do the study, it is good. But it just tipped the balance with my family life. It made things so much more difficult. It is hard to be able to do that bit more. I really enjoyed it, but something has to give. The family is the one that always suffers the most. (Other, FG)

While leadership aspirants accept the need to meet academic criteria, they hope that the TCEO might be more supportive in fulfilling study pre-requisites. It leads to the question, "Can it be done in a more family friendly manner so that senior leaders and their families do not suffer?":

Study is a disincentive. It is an expectation, but there is very little support, financially or otherwise, towards accomplishing it. (P, I)

TCEO representatives are empathetic to these concerns:

We have become so qualifications focused and not experienced focused. Study is important and can open up new ways of thinking, but it is only good if it is done at the right time. If you are forced to study to get a position, you don't appreciate it and learn from it. There needs to be a real balance between the two. It is better to construct study around what is needed. You should be able to design a course yourself to meet your needs. We need to make the study more useful. (CEO, I)

5.3.1.3.3 Faith and Study Incentives

Participants believe that the difficulties associated with the faith and study criteria for leadership should be addressed. Many principals state that early identification of those with leadership potential is a beneficial step. This allows time to assist in the faith development process:

There are a lot of people who are not faithed (sic), not churched. If someone has potential, we need to look after that aspect early on in their careers. We have to nurture that. (Other, FG)

Interestingly, TCEO personnel do not suggest strategies to assist aspirant leaders to attain the necessary faith criteria.

In a similar manner, principals and other leadership team members suggest that assisting aspirant leaders to achieve the study criteria is beneficial to leadership aspiration. They believe that aspirants could be better assisted financially and by sponsoring them early in their careers, rather than at appointment to a leadership position:

Study is good, as are emerging principals' courses etc. But they have to be time neutral. So much of education and study is time expansive – add this on, there's this weekend away etc. Somehow, this professional development has to be time neutral. (Other, FG)

TCEO personnel do not share this view.

5.3.1.4 Opportunity

A fourth theme which emerges from the data analysis focuses on opportunity. School based respondents cite lack of opportunity as a disincentive to leadership. Lack of opportunity is characterised by:

- the lack of a career path to leadership;

- a paucity of positions and the related lack of opportunity to act in a leadership position;

- a lack of preparation; and

- the need for mobility and the difficulties raised by the geographical structure of the diocese.

These phenomena coalesce to serve as disincentives to aspiring to the position of the principal.

5.3.1.4.1 Lack of Career Path, Positions and Opportunities to Act

Principals and other members of senior leadership teams emphasise the lack of a career path in schools in the Diocese of Townsville. They perceive that the leadership structure of schools, particularly in primary schools, is not conducive to encouraging capable teachers to aspire to leadership. There is a predominance of small primary schools in the Townsville Diocese. In a number of these, the principal and APRE roles are held by the same person. Even in larger primary schools, there are often only two leadership positions. In 2008, the Curriculum Teacher Developer (CTD) position was introduced, which added an additional middle management position to primary schools. However, while acknowledging that this was an initiative, school based respondents believe that capable teachers experience little opportunity to be appointed to senior leadership positions because of the limited number of such positions and the infrequency with which they become available:

> Townsville is not large enough for people to be able to move freely between schools – there's not much of a career path here. (P, I)

The TCEO perspective does not share this concern, instead crediting the introduction of the CTD position as a valued incentive which encourages and develops leadership potential:

> The new curriculum developer position, while not administration, provides another pool of people we can draw on for leadership. (CEO, I)

With fewer available positions there is a corresponding lack of opportunity for teachers to work in an acting capacity. Teachers are not given the opportunity to act in the role for a period of time and thus experience the genuine reality of the role. Many believe that the opportunity to act in a position is a major incentive to undertaking a permanent leadership position, as it provides an opportunity to debunk some of the leadership myths and develop confidence in the role.

5.3.1.4.2. Lack of Preparation

Participants believe that the lack of appropriate preparation for leadership is a disincentive to leadership aspiration. Aspirant leaders believe that inadequate

preparation for leadership is provided, contributing to their feelings that they do not possess sufficient knowledge or skills to competently fulfill the principal's role.

This issue is addressed in greater detail in section 5.4.1.

5.3.1.4.3 Mobility and Geographical Factors

All groups cite the geographical structure of the diocese and the need for mobility as disincentives to undertaking leadership. The Townsville Diocese covers an area from Proserpine in the south to Ingham in the north, Palm Island in the east and Mt. Isa in the west. Covering 435,000 square kilometres, this area includes 29 Catholic schools administered by the TCEO. The city of Townsville itself has 10 schools, Mt. Isa 3, with the rest scattered in small coastal, rural or remote locations. There are a small number of schools in appealing geographical locations, with the majority of schools scattered throughout the rest of the diocese. The larger schools are located in Townsville, with the principalship of these schools occupied by longstanding, experienced principals. Newer principals are expected to engage their initial leadership in isolated rural areas, a choice often unappealing for meeting family needs and responsibilities:

> I can't leave Townsville. I have four children and a husband who works here. I can't just up and go, because it doesn't work for them. So where do you go and what do you do? If you move to a rural area with children, what do you do? A child in Year 7 – do you send them away to boarding school? (Other, FG)

TCEO representatives also view geography as a major disincentive to leadership:

> North Queensland is still seen as a bit of a frontier land in the views of some people. Geography does play a part. We have to overcome prejudices and ignorance in people. (CEO, I)

Furthermore,

> Some of our schools would have potentially half-a-dozen good principals, but they don't want to leave Townsville. There are loads of people with capacity and capability but they won't go for administration positions because they want to stay where they are. (CEO, I)

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Thus, lack of opportunity, characterised by issues centering on career path, preparation and geography, is a disincentive to aspiring leaders.

5.3.1.5 Conditions

Principals, school based representatives and TCEO personnel suggest a number of incentives to improve aspirations to senior leadership. These suggestions include:

- restructuring of the principal's role;

- being more creative with the role;

- improving work and remuneration conditions;

- the introduction of professional debriefing; and

- affirmation.

Restructuring the role of the principal is considered first. All stakeholders agree that the role of the principal needs to be re-conceptualised in order to become more sustainable. This re-conceptualisation includes both the responsibilities of the role and the actual structure of the role. Most principals state that the role is too large and that they are unable to maintain a healthy balance:

> I think a good balance is unobtainable. The job is simply too big. (P, I)

And:

> As a principal, you need to have that balance in life. I don't have it, but you need it. (P, I)

TCEO personnel also cite this concern, stating that the responsibilities of the principalship overwhelm the incumbents:

> Balancing work and family and leisure is a problem. I think the principalship is sucking the life out of some people. Some would say depression is endemic in the principal's group. That's why people drink and overeat and don't sleep. There's a lack of exercise, diet, sleep and drinking to excess. (CEO, I)

A possible solution is to be more creative with the role of the principal. Concepts such as co-principalship, dual principalship and more effective use of the leadership team are ways in which the principalship could attain greater sustainability.

Improved work, remuneration and accommodation conditions are incentives. While remuneration is not seen by principals and other leadership team members as an incentive to leadership, it is seen as a disincentive, mainly due to recent ET6 salary increases for teachers, with the salary differences between experienced classroom teacher and senior leadership narrowing:

> Perhaps we need a review and restructure of all leadership positions, including middle management, as with the introduction of ET6, some middle managers are adopting the view of "Why should I put in the hard yards, when I can sit back and do virtually nothing and be an ET6?" People in similar roles in private enterprise are earning far more than those in senior leadership positions in schools. (P, S)

However, there are few complaints regarding salary, incentives or conditions.

All respondents view the introduction of professional debriefing as an urgent need. The introduction of this professional support mechanism as part of the conditions of employment of the principal would serve as an incentive:

> Debriefing – we need to have it, for professional mental health and well-being. The roles that we fulfill, we need it, dealing with people and their emotions on a constant basis does have an effect on people. Professional debriefing is something we need. (P, FG)

TCEO personnel also share this view:

> I have always been a great believer in mentoring and coaching. If there were more money, I would like to see consultants working less in management and more in coaching. You need a professional coach, someone who knows something about leadership, who knows the pitfalls and can ask the questions. There's a role for both a mentor and a coach. (CEO, I)

Finally, principals and other leadership team members emphasize the importance of affirmation from TCEO to encourage leadership. Unfortunately, this rarely occurs:

> It would be nice sometimes to be told that we are doing a good job. We don't need to be patted on the back all the time, but it would be good to feel appreciated. A phone call now and then to ask "How are you going?" aimed personally at the principal, not at the school, would be so nice. (P, I)

Principals express mixed emotions, with some believing that they are highly valued and supported in the role. This sentiment is not unanimous, and a number express a high degree of disillusion:

> I would like to feel more valued and appreciated. The human dimension is lacking. There needs to be a more positive image projected from TCEO. We need to feel our role is valued. (P, FG)

The concept of affirmation is not mentioned by TCEO personnel.

5.3.1.6 Succession Planning

A final major theme which emerges from the data gathering is succession planning. Focusing on the attraction and retention of teachers into senior leadership positions, all participants cite succession planning as a way of encouraging more teachers to undertake senior leadership, and in particular, the principalship. The following aspects encourage aspirant leaders:

- early identification of talent;

- support for those in the role;

- professional development/active learning; and

- career anchoring.

5.3.1.6.1 Early Identification of Talent

All stakeholders support the early identification of those with leadership talent and/or aspiration. This early identification encourages young teachers to seriously consider senior leadership as a career path and provides them with the support to develop the skills to undertake the roles. This includes meeting essential criteria, such as faith and study requirements:

Schools need to identify who people are with the potential and they need to start giving them more responsibility on the ground level. I think having an aspirant leaders' program where you bring people in for a conference, is a start. A once off conference is no good. They need a project, something to be working along with. So identify them and work with principals. What are they doing in schools, what more could you give them, how are they managing? You need someone to keep linking in and staying in touch, to develop the pool. (P, I)

A re-occurring theme, particularly among early career principals and other leadership team members, is the power of the "tap on the shoulder" or the professional chat in which the principal articulates his/her belief in the person's leadership potential:

At some point, someone you admire has indicated to you that you can do this. Or given you a job to do or some responsibility and you have done it well and the seed is planted. There's that adrenaline rush, "You can do this, you can be part of this." It's trying to get your personal best out of yourself. You are driven because you have seen people do it, you have the confidence to do it or people have the confidence in you, and you step up. You don't want to die wondering. (Other, FG)

Furthermore,

Somebody has to plant the seed. A deputy principal said to me, "You can do this you know. You are the one I am leaning on." By the time I am 35 I wanted a leadership position, but not in my 20s. But here I am! (Other, FG)

TCEO personnel also recognise the importance of this early identification:

The key is growing our own. We have a program in place – the Aspiring Leaders' program. We're also helping to pay to qualify people through study and appropriate credentialing. That's our key focus. We could do better in how principals actually see their role as career broker. One of the roles of the principal is to always be looking at the potential of the people they work with and to let go of the territorial/proprietorial view that 'these are my people'. The career broker role of the principal is to talk to young teachers about how

well they are doing in the classroom, encourage them to study and consider leadership. (CEO, I)

Respondents acknowledge the current efforts by the TCEO to encourage leadership, with many referring to the Aspirant Leaders' program and COMMICS. However, participants in schools believe that these initiatives are inadequate.

An interesting dichotomy occurs at the TCEO level, with the upper echelon of leadership (Director and Assistant Directors) stating that programs such as the Aspirant Leader program successfully encourage increased numbers to apply for leadership:

> The efforts we have put into Aspiring Leaders and encouraging people early on have paid off. (CEO, I)

The next tier of TCEO leadership, those at school consultant level, does not share this view. All consultants interviewed express concerns over the difficulties of attracting teachers to senior leadership in Catholic schools in the diocese:

> The TCEO approach is not a good approach. We have the Aspirant Leaders' program where we try to look at people. It is a good program in that we tap into people and might encourage them to think and we can give them a bit of a taste. But it's a one off thing and there's no follow up down the track. If we want to imbed anything we have to make sure it is all fired up. As an initial thing it is quite good, but we should have a more structured program to follow up on these people. (CEO, I)

Consultants express concern over what they see as a crisis of leadership:

> I am disappointed not to be more optimistic. We need to acknowledge this is a major problem facing our system. We need to make education and educational leadership attractive professions. (CEO, I)

There appears to be a mismatch in perception at the TCEO level.

In summary, a systematic approach to the early identification of teachers with leadership potential is the first step in increasing the numbers of teachers interested in aspiring to senior leadership. As one principal succinctly states:

I think people need to be actively encouraged to apply. Not tapped on the shoulder, but encouraged to throw their hat into the ring – knowing they have to win the job on their own merits, but it doesn't hurt for people to know that the TCEO think they have potential and have the ability to do the job. You need that right blend of encouragement from the office and realistic expectations from the applicant – not so that they expect to be given the job, but so that they know people believe in them. (P, I)

5.3.1.6.2. Support

Stakeholders believe that increased support for those in senior leadership roles is a way of encouraging more to aspire to the roles. There is a perceived lack of support for those in the principal's role in particular, and participants believe that an improvement in this area would do much to make the position more attractive. School based participants share this view. Examples of ways in which principals can be better supported include the provision of professional debriefing and mentors, improved support at the TCEO level, better preparation and induction into senior leadership and greater use of principal networks. These areas of support are categorised into system level support and professional support.

Principals in particular express concern over a perceived lack of system level support. Participants believe that the TCEO could be more proactive in providing support to principals, particularly in the early days of the principalship. Preparation and induction need attention, as does ongoing support of those in the role. Better support could be provided in areas of specialised expertise such as compliance and Workplace Health and Safety. Furthermore, participants believe that system level support has moved to a more supervisory model, rather than a model of consultancy:

There was little support from the office in the early days. Now there is more of a supervisory/checking role. There seems to be a lack of trust that principals can do the job they are appointed to do. There is greater compliance and greater demands of paperwork, but no extra time or support to fulfil the role. The role is now more managerial and functionary. (P, I)

TCEO personnel and principals highlight this change in the nature of their relationship:

The support that principals are getting from the office is becoming more regional directorish than consulting. Accountability, management, supervisory. In the last five years the consulting/mentoring has diminished towards management, strategic conversations etc. (CEO, I)

The issue of mentoring leads into the area of professional support. Principals universally refer to the need for the introduction of some type of professional debriefing, mentoring or coaching support:

When you first start off, not that there can be a blueprint or a black line master, but there is no support. You hit the ground running. There is nothing in place in the diocese where a principal rings you up and asks how you are going. That would be a good start. In your first twelve months, it's such a big responsibility. From running a class to running a school. There's nothing, no mentoring, no support for new principals. Most important in the first and second year. You don't know what is important, what you can and can't do. It has to be more than buddying. … If you don't start those habits of mind as a new leader, you won't develop them at all. (P, I)

Principals are unanimous in their belief that the introduction of a formal principal mentoring program is necessary:

We need to help people be reflective, to ask the questions, to establish a culture of professional dialog….We lose a lot of experience when experienced principals leave or retire. They take with them expertise in a lot of fields. Is there a possibility of using these people? To ring new principals, in a mentoring role? A sounding board? People who are good principals are the ones who are around for twenty or thirty years and know a lot of things they can pass on which make your life a whole lot easier. (P, FG)

TCEO personnel also express the belief that mentoring is necessary.

5.3.1.6.3 Professional Development/Active Learning

Active learning is a term used to cover all aspects of professional development specifically targeted at developing the skills of those who might be considering applying for senior leadership positions. Principals believe that providing aspiring

leaders with high quality professional development and support serves as a powerful incentive to senior leadership. Opportunities suggested include shadowing, mentoring, acting roles and internships, all supplemented by relevant, engaging professional development, encouragement and genuine autonomy:

> The 'Aspirant Leaders' program is excellent and should be run every year. Continue to offer sponsorship for Masters courses. Currently, if a DP/APA/Principal is away for a period of four weeks or more they will be replaced. Why not lower this to two weeks so more teachers get to 'have a taste'? They needn't be paid for the role, but given a chance to sit in the chair of a senior leader. I think this is very powerful! It also gives them something to record on their resume, which acts as some experience when they apply for senior leadership positions. (Other, S)

The TCEO acknowledges that the area of professional development of aspiring leaders warrants attention.

5.3.1.6.4. Career Anchoring

Finally, participants acknowledge the crucial role the principal plays in encouraging the progression of aspirant leaders into senior leadership. However, while principals and TCEO personnel refer to the importance of this career anchoring, it appears to be token attention, rather than a carefully planned and implemented approach:

> In human resource management they call it career anchors. Where were you and who were you with when you first thought of going into the profession? It depends critically on who were their principals in their first couple of jobs. The principal has to build the team, give responsibility, and open them up to leadership. Who is going to do…? Who is going to help me? It's getting them to see they are capable and can do this job. We should be identifying these qualities in people and pushing them when the opportunities are provided. (P, FG)

Thus, principals considerably influence the leadership aspirations of teachers.

5.4 Research Question Three

The third specific research question that focuses the conduct of this research is: *How can potential applicants be prepared to undertake the principalship in a Catholic school?* The key elements of this area of research are preparation for the principal's role and ongoing professional development and support.

5.4.1 Preparation for Leadership

Analysis of the data identified multiple issues, which are outlined in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Research Question Three: How Can Potential Applicants be Prepared to Undertake the Principalship in a Catholic School?

	PRINCIPALS	OTHER LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS	CEO PERSONNEL
What preparation for leadership did you experience when you undertook your first leadership position?	• Intensive program (not TCEO) • Acting positions • Religious Institute • COSMOS • Middle/senior/PAR • Mentors • Little formal induction • In school support • Community leadership e.g. Church, sport	• Emerging seminars • Formal study –Masters • COMMICS	• Aspirant leaders • Transition to Leadership • Little structure, induction or support
How could you have been better prepared for your first leadership position?	• Business aspects • 2 stage process • Mentor • Management skills • Financial accountability • Opportunities to act • Networking • Time with experienced principals • Shadowing • Orientation/familiarise with the school • Professional dev-time management, communication, stress management, interpersonal skills, team work, staff formation, financial	• Thicker skin • Internship • Commence study earlier • Grooming for leadership	• Coaching • Better induction and support structures

	PRINCIPALS	OTHER LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS	CEO PERSONNEL
What continuing professional development have you undertaken in your leadership position?	• Study – system required and self-chosen to meet needs • Principal conferences • Mentoring • Professional reading • Retreats/spirituality programs • Professional organisations • Networks • Talking/colleagues • TCEO – No ongoing p.d.	• QSA initiatives • TCEO organised DP/AP conferences • Networks • Shared wisdom	• Principal meetings
In which areas would you like to experience more support or development?	• Financial/business/legal/industrial • Changing role of consultants • Work-life balance • Time management • Conflict resolution • Culture of professional dialogue • Use experienced principals – loss of cultural capital when they leave • Peer interaction • Peer debriefing • Value the role • Belief and respect • Affirmation	• Time release for study • Staff/team development • More involvement in strategic issues at TCEO level	• Office support • Professional coaching • Team building • Mid-career principals • Principal clusters • Tension – TCEO consultant positions

These issues are further synthesised to generate the following major research themes, outlined in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Summary of Emergent Themes from Responses to Leadership Preparation and Development

ISSUES	MAJOR RESEARCH THEMES
Formal preparation for leadership Aspirant leaders and middle managers Formal study	System driven preparation
Community and parish leadership	Personal preparation
Inadequate induction processes	Induction
Principal induction process Shadowing, acting, internships Personal preparation	Improved preparation
Personal and system focused professional development Mentoring and coaching Sabbatical leave	On-going professional development

These themes are encapsulated in Figure 5.7.

Figure 5.7 **Major research themes in response to leadership preparation and development.**
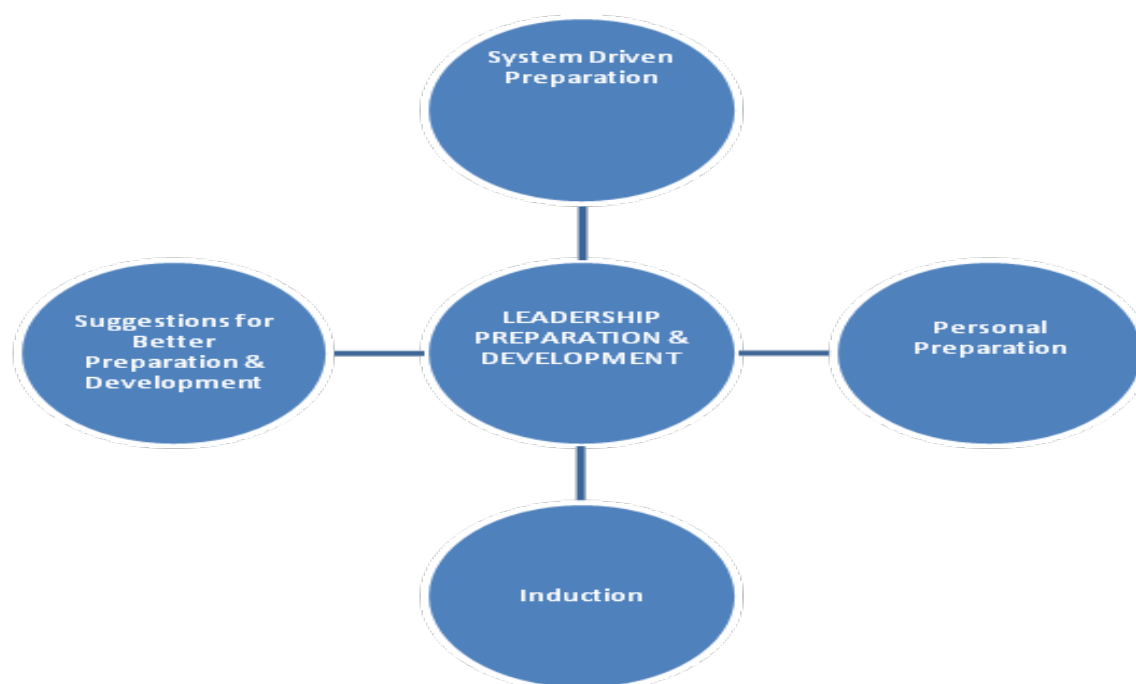
5.4.1.1 System Driven Preparation

New understandings indicate that there are two main types of preparation for the principal role; system driven preparation and personal preparation. System driven preparation includes formal, intensive leadership preparation programs, programs aimed at aspirant leaders and middle managers, and formal study.

Participants indicate that while TCEO offers system-wide formal, professional development for middle management through its Aspirant Leaders' and COMMICS programs, it fails to contribute to the formation of new principals:

> There was no specific preparation prior to the appointment. I had a PAR position for approximately 10 years as the Careers and Work Experience Co-ordinator at the College before being appointed as Assistant to the Principal – Studies. I attended a couple of COMMICS conferences. (Other, S)

All acknowledge the benefit of these programs, but they believe that they are insufficient to sustain the development of the next generation of school leaders.

Participants indicate that the lack of formal education for new principals is a deficiency, which other dioceses and religious institutes recognise by their provision of mentoring experiences for neophyte principals:

> I had training in a religious institute in religious studies, doing a first year and then a second year novitiate. This gave me training in religious background. However, I had no formal training in teaching religious education as a subject. I had no formal training in leadership studies. I progressed through Sportsmaster (the most prestigious and best leadership position in a boys' school), to deputy principal to principal without having to do formal studies. I picked up ideas about leadership from conferences, reading and advice from mentors. (P, S)

In response to this, TCEO personnel suggest that successful participation in educational leadership and theology degrees provides a foundational base for leadership preparation. They claim formal study encourages spiritual formation, develops leadership skills and encourages a culture of professional dialogue.

Principals and middle management personnel energetically oppose this policy, because it demonstrates a lack of appreciation of the reality of the principalship:

> In all honesty, I don't think that a lot of study would have prepared me better. I needed upskilling in simple management skills and in things such as preparing and controlling budgets, managing returns to governments etc. I don't think these things are covered by leadership courses. I read a lot about different leadership theories, but in the end, they are theories and an individual style of leadership that suits one's personality is the best. (P, S)

Indeed, many school personnel believe such formal programs of study are in reality "gate-keeping" mechanisms which provide access to leadership, but not a relevant preparation for principalship. In addition, many cite study as an impost, rather than a viable means of preparation for a senior leadership role, "You just do it to get through it and get it done!" (APRE, FG)

5.4.1.2 Personal Preparation

A second type of preparation for leadership is personal preparation. A number of principals cite their own, personal preparation as a starting point on their journey to senior leadership. Good examples of preparation for leadership are community and parish leadership:

> I had good preparation – being able to organise and teach a class of 30 children, being involved in the school as a community, being part of the parish, being part of the P&F association, organising and coordinating sport. Taking on additional responsibilities in these areas, not because I was asked to, but because that is the way I am. That all stood me in good stead for stepping into the position of principal. (P, I)

Of the seven principals selected for an individual interview, four are male and three female. All four male principals state that they consciously chose to aspire to the principalship and took the necessary steps to fulfill this aspiration:

> I worked with a principal who was unprofessional and lacking in competence. I thought, 'If you can do this, I can do this….what do I have to do? What qualifications do I need to have to be a principal?' So, I started studying…I didn't have any doubt in my ability to lead but I knew I needed those bits of paper. (P, I)

This is in interesting contrast to the three female principals interviewed, who all responded to the "tap on the shoulder" approach.

5.4.1.3 Induction

Principals and TCEO personnel believe that principal induction is inadequate and they claim that a better approach to induction needs to be taken. Experiences range from no induction or preparation at all, to the standard TCEO induction of a few days:

> There was no formal induction to the position, no explanation of what I could expect. In hindsight, it would have been good to have more information on the community, the school I was going into, more preparation in a formal sense. (P, I)

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And:

> There's no formal preparation in the office (TCEO). There was a finance
> meeting for all beginning principals. I would have expected someone to sit
> down with me and say "You're going to St [name deleted]. St [name deleted]
> has these particular issues and it needs to work on….I think some goals for
> you in your first year would be to focus on this and this." (P, I)

TCEO personnel also express this discontent:

> I think we are terrible at providing support and preparation for new principals.
> We can go through and tick the boxes – we do the induction, but it is not much
> better than induction in 1997. We now overload with compliance and school
> development plans and all that s..t. We get hung up here on micromanaging.
> Everyone has to do it the same way and I think we get distracted by things that
> don't matter…We don't follow up enough with our preparation and support
> for principals…I think our induction sucks. The best induction is to work with
> some excellent principals – you grow into the job and model yourself on
> people you admire. (CEO, I)

5.4.1.4 Suggestions for Better Preparation

Participants offer a number of suggestions for better preparation for senior leadership.
The first of these suggestions centres on a coordinated, well-developed and relevant
principal induction process. All respondents emphasize this need. An induction
program needs to include leadership and management skills, covering all dimensions
of leadership and management, as well as information relevant to the particular school
context. As one principal states:

> You need longer in-service, done in two stages. Stage one, what you need to
> know to get started. Stage two, what I need to know to keep going. In other
> words, a time say early in second term of the first year, to come back and be
> able to ask the questions that you did not know to ask in stage one. (P, I)

The second suggestion focuses on shadowing, acting positions and internships. These
structures are a viable way of better preparing aspirants to embrace senior leadership.
Shadowing a principal or other senior leadership team member is a practical way of

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providing an insight into the role, debunking some of the myths surrounding the position and developing confidence in the aspiring leader. Respondents believe acting positions and internships are equally beneficial:

> Spend more time with an experienced principal. As an inexperienced principal in ……. I would have benefitted from spending a half day a week with the experienced principal in another school for the first half of the year. (P, S)

These approaches erode the perception that the principal's role is too complicated and complex, thus encouraging teachers to express interest in applying for positions. In a similar manner, on-the-job training delivers effective learning and is an incentive to leadership:

> A lot of informal training happens in leadership teams if there is open communication. This on the job training with your principal is great, 'because I think it would be beneficial for you to know this.' You just seem to pick up things by osmosis. (Other, FG)

The final area focuses on the personal, on factors such as personal time management, stress management and work–life balance. Principals emphasise this sentiment as many state that they do not have the correct balance. This appears to be a growing area of concern and TCEO personnel reflect this:

> We need to do more coaching with them, to achieve the balance. We should be doing a lot more of the coaching and mentoring stuff. Almost like a life coach. Like a spiritual guide. We need to be a lot more systematic with it – build it into the principal appraisal process. Show us where and how you are looking after yourself. A blend of life coaching and mentoring which looks after the whole person. (CEO, I)

5.4.2 Ongoing Professional Development and Support

A number of areas emerge when professional development and support are considered. These areas focus on personal and system-focused professional development, mentoring and coaching, requested areas for further development and the provision of sabbatical leave.

5.4.2.1 Professional Development

Principals comment on a disparity when considering their own ongoing professional development. Many cite study requirements in order to fulfill essential study criteria for the position of principal as the primary form of professional development undertaken. Once the necessary qualification is attained, professional development takes a variety of forms, ranging from conference attendance, professional reading, networking, membership of professional organisations and personal reading:

> I have looked for the skills I lack and try to have them addressed where possible with professional development. Some have been good whilst some have been abysmal. I have also spent many hours in talking with colleagues to gain more skills, knowledge or understandings of the role. There is an abundance of experience out there amongst colleagues and yet it is relatively untapped. (P, S)

The provision of professional development by the TCEO meets with mixed reactions. The TCEO provides two professional development opportunities each year, usually in the form of Diocesan principal meetings. Once held as a vital avenue of support and professional development, principals are concerned about the changed nature of these gatherings. TCEO personnel share this reservation:

> With principals, we have to look at our whole model of how TCEO just dumps information. We have to have them, but two or three day meetings at the beginning and end of the year not the way to do it. I like the concept of a regional basis and bring the principals in once a year for a real conference and time for principals to just be together. (CEO, I)

5.4.2.2 Mentoring and Coaching

Participants constantly cite mentoring as a necessity. Principals in particular see the value in the provision of a mentor, someone with whom they can debrief, discuss decisions, plans and strategies, or turn to for support. TCEO personnel also emphasise the importance of this role, acknowledging that the current approach to the provision of mentors for new and beginning principals and senior leadership appointees is ineffective.

TCEO personnel refer to coaching, emphasising that coaching and mentoring are two very different approaches. TCEO personnel perceive coaching as a way of extending principals, of enhancing their professional development, as opposed to the more supportive role played by a mentor. This is a way of challenging and invigorating the mid-career principal:

> The mid-career principal with flagging enthusiasm. Some would benefit from the spiritual guide or the professional guide helping them talk through some of the issues they are at, to try to refocus and work out what it is that actually challenges them and do something in that regard. (CEO, I)

5.4.2.3. Areas for On-going Development

Principals list a number of areas in which they believe they need to develop greater knowledge and skill. These areas focus on technical and human–personal aspects of leadership. Technical areas for development include financial and business management, legal and industrial knowledge and compliance requirements. Human aspects of leadership in need of development include conflict management and resolution and skills in work–life balance management.

A commonly voiced concern is:

> There is nothing organised to challenge and extend principals. There are two meetings a year, but all they are is a talk fest, where we are talked at and copious amounts of information are poured in. It would be wonderful if these times could be opportunities for principals to learn and grow. Instead, it seems that we are not trusted to do a professional job, that we can't be trusted without being watched. (P, I)

Principals express concern over the lack of centrally organised, professional development for their own professional growth. TCEO personnel share a similar level of discontent:

> The support that principals and others are getting from this office is becoming more regional directorish than consulting. Accountability, management, supervisory. In the last five years the consulting/mentoring has diminished towards management, strategic conversations etc. (CEO, I)

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This dichotomy in the TCEO consultant role highlights an inherent dilemma:

> There is a tension in the TCEO consultant position – you are both advisor, part-time mentor and confidante, but also the representative of the employer, with demands for accountability etc. (CEO, I)

This illustrates the need for a mentoring role, as distinct from a consultant role, at the TCEO level, a need which a number of principals and TCEO personnel raise.

TCEO respondents outline a further area for on-going professional development:

> How principals work with their teams and what roles are developed and how you get the best out of that model. We could spend more time on that process. Some people are great team builders and great at delegating – but some do it all themselves, not trusting other team members as they should. (CEO, I)

However, principals do not consider this as a necessary area for on-going professional development.

5.4.2.4. Sabbatical Leave

The provision of sabbatical leave for principals has been a component of the principal's enterprise bargaining agreement. However, principals and others in senior leadership do not consider sabbatical leave to be an effective form of professional development. This indicates either a lack of awareness of the benefits to be gained by undertaking sabbatical leave or an unwillingness by principals to undertake further study or professional development.

TCEO personnel refer to sabbatical leave, but not in a positive or constructive sense. TCEO personnel believe that principals are not accessing leave provisions such as long service leave or study leave, and indeed, "There's a lot of misuse of sabbatical." (CEO, I) This is an area which warrants further discussion and examination.

5.5 Conclusion

The presentation of new understandings outlines a number of key themes which invite further discussion. These new understandings confirm the existence of conflicting perspectives of leadership held by principals and those within the Townsville Catholic Education system. A need for a re-conceptualisation of the role of the principal and

the existence of a mismatch of perceptions over the actual existence of a crisis of leadership further complicate these conflicting perspectives. Additional areas which invite further discussion focus on the issue of gender and leadership and the principal preparation, induction and support processes.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF NEW UNDERSTANDINGS

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to explore why few deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals are applying for principal positions in schools in the Diocese of Townsville. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the new understandings generated by the research presented in the previous chapter. From an analysis of the new understandings five synthesised issues which invite discussion are identified. They are:

- Conflicting perspectives of leadership

- Role re-conceptualisation

- Gender and leadership

- A mismatch of perceptions about a crisis of leadership

- Principal preparation, induction and support

Table 6.1 illustrates connecting themes and issues which are generated from an analysis of these new understandings.

Table 6.1 Origin of Key Themes and Issues for Discussion

Major Research Question: Why is there a paucity of applicants applying for the principalship in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Townsville?

SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS	CODES	THEMES	ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION
Research Q. 1. How do principals, members of leadership teams and TCEO personnel understand the role of a Catholic school principal?	• Religious & spiritual leadership • Human leadership • Educational leadership • Strategic leadership	• Principal lack of theological understanding • Clash of personal & professional beliefs • Silencing • Personal v system expectations • Emergence of professional Catholics	Conflicting perspectives of leadership Professional Catholic
Research Q. 2. Why are deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals deterred from applying for the principalship?	• Role • Perception • Faith & study • Opportunity • Active learning • Conditions • Succession planning	• Work–life balance impossible to attain • Expectations/responsibilities too high • Perceptions & portrayal • Gender issues • Need for team emphasis	Role re-configuration Gender & leadership Mismatch of perception of crisis of leadership
Research Q. 3. How can	• System	• Inadequacy of processes of	

SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS	CODES	THEMES	ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION
potential applicants be prepared to undertake the principalship in a Catholic school?	preparation • Personal preparation • Induction • Suggestions	selection, preparation, induction • Ongoing support and professional development • Challenge for the more experienced	Issues of better selection, preparation & support

Each of these issues contributes to a framework to focus the discussion of new understandings. Table 6.2 offers a diagrammatic structure for a discussion of these new understandings.

Table 6.2 Structure for Discussion of New Understandings

6.2 Conflicting Perspectives of Leadership

    6.2.1 Disparity in Views

    6.2.2 Responsibility for Faith Formation

    6.2.3 The Parish Priest

    6.2.4 Conclusion

6.3 Role Re-conceptualisation and Perception Shift

    6.3.1 The Need for Role Re-conceptualisation

    6.3.2 A Change of Perception

    6.3.3 Conclusion

6.4 Gender and Leadership

    6.4.1 Female v Male Mindset

    6.4.2 The Boys' Club – Perception or Reality?

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6.2 Conflicting Perspectives of Leadership

The first issue that invites discussion is the participants' various conflicting perspectives of what constitutes the primary responsibilities of leadership. Principals

and TCEO personnel share similar beliefs around human, educational and strategic leadership. They identify that, while the principals' primary roles concern educational and technical responsibilities, there are increased demands to engage with management and accountability expectations, a phenomenon identified internationally (Caldwell, 2006; R. Collins, 2008). However, TCEO personnel believe that the principal's religious and spiritual roles should have increased prominence because of the principal's special faith leadership responsibilities, including the emerging complex relationships with parish priests.

6.2.1 Disparity in Views

The first area of disparity centres on fundamental views of the religious and spiritual dimension of leadership. All participants consider the religious and spiritual dimensions of leadership important:

> The principal plays a key role in making sure the mission and purpose of the school is strongly focused on, attended to and achieved. Everything about leadership for the principal comes from an understanding that you are working in a particular context, that it has the Catholic identity, the ecclesial mandate of the Church that underpins that understanding and therefore you have to have that particular disposition towards that, that you are not there to shape and change, that necessarily you are there to respond to that changing context as a Catholic. (CEO, I)

While principals value their role in religious and spiritual leadership, one fundamental difference exists. Principals adopt a more practical approach to the religious dimension of their role. This is particularly demonstrated in their interactions with people. Most seem unable to articulate the theological and philosophical underpinnings of their role. In contrast, they seem to ably exemplify religious leadership by action. Principals accept that their role is part of the wider mission of the Catholic Church, but few are able to communicate an understanding of what this actually means within a theological context. Ironically, Br. Philip Pinto (2011), Congregational Leader of the Christian Brothers, a teaching order, does not believe this to be a deficit:

For so long we have based our religious observance on beliefs and propositions. We worry about the real presence and the virgin birth, on the two natures in Christ and the infallibility of the Pope, about Transubstantiation and the Immaculate Conception. But when one reads and reflects on the Sermon on the Mount, the heart and soul of the Jesus vision, what the early Christians referred to as The Way, we find nothing about what to believe but an alternative ethic, a way of behaving, a way of living life. Jesus was telling us that there was another way of living life, another way of relating to people, and he called us to change the world from the inside. It is about behaviour rather than belief. We are invited to embrace what is truly eternal. And what is truly eternal is love.

Principal responsibilities associated with religious and spiritual leadership generate a number of problems for principals, foremost of which is the clash between official Catholic teachings and the principals' personal beliefs. In particular, principals express unease with the disparity concerning their personal beliefs on lifestyle, divorce and the perceived alienation of women by the patriarchal structures of the Church. While principals vocalise this dissonance, they do not wish to publicly express these views because they need to be "seen" to be supportive of Church teachings. A number of TCEO participants acknowledge this dilemma:

The whole issue of the practice of religion and lifestyle becomes tricky. It becomes very tiresome to be the principal, at mass every Sunday, most likely on the Parish Council, liaising with the parish priest, being up front and centre in the Catholic community. It can become too much. (CEO, I)

Clearly then, these principals are expressing opinions shared by many Catholics, including Catholic priests (McGillion & O'Carroll, 2011).

The concept of the "public persona" is generated from the data analysis. A similar concept is registered in McLaughlin (2005). Principals acknowledge the need to uphold the public face of the Church, as espoused by both the Catholic Education system and the wider Catholic Church:

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When you are in the role you learn that you have a parish priest to keep happy, a bishop to keep happy, a system to keep happy, a community to keep happy and you walk that tightrope to keep everything in balance. (CEO, I)

Some principals accept this as the case and are quite comfortable with this public and private dichotomy – they are prepared to "play the game". Others are uncomfortable, expressing internal disharmony:

People are concerned about rocking the boat. If you are the primary bread winner in the family, you don't want to be seen to be on the outer. At the tail end of my career, it doesn't matter nearly as much as for me. It is quite liberating – I don't need the job for the money, which frees me up to have an opinion which may be contrary to the established CEO position. (P, I)

An allied issue is whether principals:

"…can articulate in a cohesive and clear manner the faith ground on which they choose to stand. It is easy enough to state what we no longer believe; it is also easy enough to 'give' answers provided by others. But it is becoming more and more difficult, in the face of the many issues and questions confronting all of us, to stand in such a way that our Christian faith does not come across as hesitant, unsure, lacking depth, or afraid of addressing major questions" (Morwood, 2007).

This uncertainty of faith continues to be a source of challenge as principals endeavour to integrate their faith with the realities of contemporary contexts.

The Catholic Church is in a transitional period where established customs, practices and beliefs are challenged by changes in the secular world (Peters, 2011). Many Catholics struggle with the reality that their experiences and world views are discordant with the traditional beliefs and teachings of the Catholic Church. They endeavour to make sense of their faith within the context of contemporary society. This leads to a re-imaging of faith and belief into a vision which more closely reflects lived experience (Morwood, 2007).

The credibility of the Catholic Church as an institution is in question, particularly in the light of recent allegations regarding the Church's handling of a number of issues, and in particular, the handling of allegations of child abuse. Principals emphasise the crisis of belief this fosters.

For many Catholic school principals, the issue of religious and spiritual leadership is a source of unease, with Church and system leadership expectations not congruent with those held by principals themselves.

6.2.2 Responsibility for Faith Formation

A second area in which perspectives on educational and spiritual leadership clash focuses on the role played by the principal in faith formation in the school community. System leaders believe that faith development is one of the primary responsibilities of the principal:

> At the heart of it we would say that the mission and purpose is about first of all being a place where whoever comes gets to know the mission and purpose of Jesus Christ and I think the role of the principal is key in making sure that that's not sitting over to the side, but that it's part and parcel of everything that goes on in the school. (CEO, I)

In contrast, principals, while acknowledging the need for faith development, believe that this role exceeds their professional responsibility and pastoral competence. The increasing complexity and diversity of the principal role is exemplified, with TCEO believing that the principal should be responsible for the faith development of all within their community – students, staff and parents. Principals do not believe that faith development is their main priority. Many principals are tentative about their own faith development and believe they are inadequately prepared to undertake responsibility for the faith development of others:

> Are there enough people around who feel enough a part of the Catholic Church to take on a role where you are seen as a spokesperson for the Church in the local community? (CEO, I)

With many principals no longer privately accepting the fundamental beliefs of the Catholic Church, a major area of theological and philosophical discord has developed. This dissonance of the personal and the public reflects the wider, changing Catholic landscape (Coughlan, 2009). This changing Catholic landscape contributes to the lack of interest in leadership positions in schools, where one's theology is of more value than one's professional abilities:

> If school leadership is going to assume wider religious leadership the persons need to be identified who, alongside possessing administrative capacity, are also grounded in faith, possessing spiritual maturity, a vocational sensitivity and the awareness of ecclesial responsibility. (National Catholic Education Commission, 2005, p. 9)

6.2.3 The Parish Priest

A final area which illustrates a conflicting perspective of leadership concerns the parish priest. Since 1997, parish ministry in Australia has been increasingly reliant on priests sourced from overseas countries (Wilkinson, 2011). Initially viewed as a short term, stop-gap strategy, this short term measure appears to be a permanent solution to the shortage of priests within Australia. An increasing number of Asian and African priests are ministering in the Townsville Diocese. This tendency towards foreign-born clergy necessitates modifications to the traditional parish and school relationship. Wilkinson identifies four areas of serious contention:

1. The ethics of recruiting priests from overseas countries where the need for evangelisation is greater than in Australia.
2. The need for an acculturation and mentoring program for overseas priests.
3. The ability of overseas priests to make a meaningful contribution to Australian culture.
4. The possible mismatch between the objectives of the recruiting bishops and those of the priests arriving in Australia.

System and school leaders in the Diocese of Townsville identify problems associated with differing cultural perspectives:

> I would like to think that the Parish priest supports the principal, but it is becoming an issue here with foreign priests coming in, because they are

coming in with a different background and role. It is becoming more the principal having to support the new priests. It is a different game these days. (CEO, I)

School leaders are reluctant to publicly register concern about their relationship with the parish priest. This is another area in which principals remain silent, but privately expressed views reflect those raised by P. Collins (2011):

"They [priests] have little comprehension of the kinds of faith challenges that face Catholics living in a secular, individualistic, consumerist culture that places a strong emphasis on equality, women's rights and co-responsibility of parish ministry and mission."

6.2.4 Conclusion

Fundamental differences exist between the TCEO system perspective on religious and spiritual leadership and those espoused by the majority of principals. Principals adopt a modified version of religious leadership, with all publicly espousing the official Church stance. In private, however, there is discord, with many expressing dissonance between their beliefs and those of the Church. While some principals believe that this tension creates anxiety for them, others learn to judiciously adapt and survive:

It only dawned on me a couple of years into my principalship how closely connected the principal role was to that of the Bishop. And the limitations that placed on your role to be natural, to be a vibrant, independent thinker. The closer you get to the top either the smarter you have to be or the more controlled you have got to be with your own personal thoughts on things. You can do the vibrancy, but the smarter you have to be or the harder you have to work at it. We all toe the line and put some of our more strident views away. We all silence ourselves. (CEO, I)

All principals believe in the importance of their role in religious and spiritual leadership, but their beliefs are predominantly based on a relatively unsophisticated philosophical and theological foundation.

In connection with surviving in a religious context, a number of the participants use the term "Professional Catholic". Professional Catholics are those principals or leaders who publicly demonstrate Catholic orthodoxy, while privately holding beliefs contrary to Catholic teaching:

> Principals these days are facing schools where a lot of people in schools are professional Catholics – 'I will do it because it is going to get me to where I want to be. I can tick all the boxes and it will get me there.' It is quite worrying. (APRE, FG)

The Professional Catholic is also the persona which some leaders adopt in order to reconcile their personal beliefs with traditional church teachings. It is a persona which acknowledges the need to be publicly supportive of official church teachings in order to fulfill the requirements of the principal role.

This area of mission integrity (Grace, 2002b) invites further research and elaboration.

6.3 Role Re-conceptualisation and Perception Shift

The second major issue which invites discussion focuses on the need for a re-conceptualisation of the role of the principal and a change in how the principal's role is perceived. The principal's role is portrayed as multi-dimensional, with responsibility for all aspects of the religious, spiritual, human, educational and strategic domains of leadership. All participants hold this all-consuming perception of the role of the principal, based on the belief that the role is diverse and requires expert management and leadership:

> You need to be the faith leader, so you need to be someone who is comfortable talking about your faith. You need to be the curriculum leader. You need to be a fine teacher. You need to be the organisational leader of the school, able to manage a timetable, get things moving, get things right. You need to be the pastoral leader, the mentor, the person who is going to inspire those teachers, or get the teacher back in line, the person who has lost their way. You need to manage the relationships well. You have to be a good all-rounder to do it well. You have to be an inspiration, able to inspire others, keeping everyone moving

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in the right direction, to inspire the kids, the parents, to follow you on the journey. You are the person who is on duty, on call, all the time. It is an all-encompassing position with a lot of expectations that everyone puts on them – parents, staff, CEO, community, kids. Everyone wants to have the best and someone has to provide it. (Other, FG)

This growth in principal responsibility parallels society's increasing expectations of education (Davies, 2011; Fullan, 2003). Education is now all-encompassing (Eacott, 2011; Shoho & Barnett, 2010). This has occurred as a result of the move to a more service focused, community based model of educational delivery. Schools are convenient vehicles for bringing about social change through the implementation of government remediation and reform programs (Macpherson, 2009). Educators are calling for a re-conceptualisation of education, a re-assessment of the core purpose of schools and a re-assessment of the responsibilities placed on educational leaders (Fincham, 2010; Hand, 2010; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).

Just as education warrants re-conceptualisation, so too does the role of the principal:

Educational leaders are confronted by external and internal challenges and expectations that make considerable demands on their time, expertise, energies and emotional wellbeing. Increasingly, they are being held accountable for both performance and compliance with ethical and moral standards in their relationships and practices. (Duignan, 2006, p. 1)

Internationally, the role of the principal has likewise become more complex and time consuming (Bush, 2011; Thomson, 2009), contributing to the popular perception that the manner in which principals exercise their role is no longer sustainable.

The new understandings outlined in Chapter Five endorse these conclusions, with two particular issues inviting discussion. First, principals and school-based leaders such as deputy principals and assistant principals believe that the role of the principal needs to be re-conceptualised. This belief, however, is not shared by TCEO based leaders. A second issue is the necessity for a change in perception of the principal's role and its associated leadership responsibilities. How various stakeholders perceive the role warrants examination.

6.3.1 The Need for Role Re-conceptualisation

An analysis of current principal role descriptions illustrates the diverse range of roles undertaken by principals. There is a dominant belief that the role of the principal is, by necessity, multi-facetted, encompassing responsibility for all which takes place within the school environs. This belief has gained credibility as the expectations, roles, responsibilities and requirements of the principal have increased exponentially. Another reason for this complexity is that the move to a more market driven, regulatory, industrial model of education has led to increased emphasis on accountability, compliance and sustainability. Regrettably, these influences have overshadowed the focus on education (Davies, 2011; Fincham, 2010).

Despite this complexity, principals express satisfaction with their roles. However, those principals who strive for a more balanced practice of the role are frustrated:

> I think a good balance is unobtainable – the job is too big. (P, I)

Deputy and assistant principals also believe that the principal's role is overloaded:

> It's more than a one body job. (Other, FG)

TCEO system leaders acknowledge the need to re-conceptualise the role of the principal, but suggest that this is required not because of the complexity of the role, but because the nature of education needs to be re-conceptualised. The expectations society has of education contribute to the complexity of schooling, learning and teaching:

> You have to reconfigure the role because of the changing nature of education. We need to reconfigure the whole workforce. If you look at some of the problematic issues in teaching. One, it is a very feminised workforce. We should have more males in teaching as teachers. We need to say teaching should be a professional occupation, like medicine, but to do that we have to change a few structures that give it a view in the professional world as being not quite professional. We need to align pay with other professions. So, we need to align how work is done…The complexity in terms of management of finances, accountability, legislative issues, issues principals need to get their

heads around, need to look at other positions to support the principal. The whole workforce should be reconfigured. (CEO, I)

This re-conceptualisation of the nature of education, however, may not occur within a short time frame, as it requires major change and reform on an international scale (Davies, 2011). The pressure experienced by principals, particularly in the Catholic sector, cannot continue to be ignored, for too many are expressing concern at the current work load (Riley, 2012). A re-conceptualisation of the role of the principal is important, as principals and others in senior leadership positions emphasise that it is impossible to attain a satisfactory work–life balance (Crozier-Durham, 2007). The health and personal lives of principals are becoming untenable:

> Principals have a problem balancing work and family and leisure. I don't think they are in good health. There's a lack of exercise, diet, sleep, drinking to excess. (CEO, I)

A re-conceptualisation of the role of the principal may realistically include an examination of alternative models of leadership which take into account the changing nature of the role of the principal, the increased responsibilities required of the principal and the increasing emphasis on accountability, compliance and sustainability (Davies, 2007).

6.3.2 A Change of Perception

An examination of the research identifies a contradiction inherent within the principal's role. In spite of the difficulties, pressures and stresses involved with leadership in Catholic schools, all principal participants emphasise that they enjoy being principals:

> There can be great job satisfaction. What brings me satisfaction? Relationships with staff and parents and students, if you are doing a good job! You are respected and looked up to. You constantly get good feedback! You can walk into classrooms and take lessons with a principal hat on your head and you immediately get attention. (You don't have the issues with discipline that many teachers have.) You can have great fun with Parents and Friends and Board members. You can plan new developments for the school and see the results with a feeling of pride. Putting in applications for projects and winning

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a result brings great satisfaction. You have freedom. If you need to leave the school grounds to see someone, to visit the sick, or whatever, you just do it. I think the principal role should be 'sold' as a position that can give great satisfaction. (P, S)

Principals, however, fail to publicly portray this enjoyment to their school communities. This lack of public display of job satisfaction may explain why deputy and assistant principals fail to identify principal enjoyment with the exercising of the role. Instead, attitudes emphasise the negative:

> Too much stress. Too much time away from family. They see what is happening to members of senior leadership teams now. (Other, S)

This illustrates a fundamental mismatch of perception – principals claim that they love their jobs and derive great satisfaction from their responsibilities. Yet, the image they portray is one of long hours, exhausting work, professional loneliness, lack of support and no reward (Crozier-Durham, 2007). If the desire is to attract a greater number of quality applicants to the principal position, then these principals are failing to generate an attractive model of principalship. It is their public portrayal which serves as a considerable deterrent to those aspiring to the principalship.

A change of perception needs to be encouraged if the paucity of principal applications is to be addressed.

6.3.3 Conclusion

International research identifies a need for a re-conceptualisation of the role of the principal (Brooks, 2010; Bush, 2011; R. Collins, 2008; Pont et al., 2008). This study reaches the same conclusion. All participants acknowledge the importance of a re-conceptualisation of the role, with system level leadership broadening this re-conceptualisation. TCEO personnel believe it is timely to re-conceptualise education and the teaching workforce in general, whereas those working in schools stress the specific need to focus on the principal's role.

Along with this view that the role of the principal needs to be reconsidered is the concomitant view that the portrayal of the principal role needs attention. Principals

emphasise the enjoyment they experience from their roles – and yet, they rarely share this enjoyment with the wider school community.

6.4 Gender and Leadership

The third major issue which invites discussion centres on gender and leadership. An examination of the number of male and female principals working within diocesan schools in the Townsville area identifies an imbalance. In 2012, there were 19 male and 11 female principals in TCEO schools. This is a substantial increase, with females comprising three of the four new principal appointments in 2012. Nevertheless, given that the gender distribution of the teaching profession in Queensland is 4 (female):1 (male) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012), this reflects a large gender imbalance in the principalship. The predominance of males is more pronounced across the secondary sector. Of the eight diocesan secondary colleges, one (an all-girls college) is headed by a female principal. The statistical reality is that the principalship is a male prerogative in the Diocese of Townsville.

This imbalance is relatively stable over time, as Table 6.3 indicates.

Table 6.3 Gender Distribution of Senior Leadership Team Members 2006–2012

Year	Principal M	Principal F	DP M	DP F	APA M	APA F	APRE M	APRE F	TOTAL M	TOTAL F
2006	21	7	6	8	5	5	2	22	36	40
2007	21	7	7	8	4	4	5	22	38	40
2008	21	7	9	8	1	7	6	20	37	42
2009	20	8	6	10	5	3	5	21	36	42
2010	20	8	12	6	1	6	5	19	38	39
2011	20	9	11	7	2	7	4	22	37	45
2012	19	11	11	6	2	7	2	22	34	46

A similar imbalance is emerging when the deputy principalship is considered, for the data indicates an increasing trend towards the appointment of male deputy principals. The two positions of greatest power and responsibility within schools, the principalship and the deputy principalship, are dominated by males. The assistant to the principal religious education position is traditionally viewed as a "female" role (Hand, 2010; Long, 2006), and data from the Townsville Diocese verifies this. These

trends are replicated in national and international research (Barty et al., 2005; Blackmore, 2006; Zepeda et al., 2008).

Table 6.3 offers evidence to support the belief that leadership is considered a "male thing" within the Diocese of Townsville:

> Some women don't see the principalship as attractive because they see school leadership as a male thing in this Diocese, despite having a female Director. (CEO, I)

This belief appears to be widespread, despite the presence of a competent female leader as Director of the TCEO.

Consequently, it is important to understand why this phenomenon occurs. Regrettably, the international research indicates that the principalship is predominantly a male profession (Jean-Marie & Martinez, 2007), because the principal's accountability role encroaches so much on parenting and family responsibilities (Blackmore, 2006; Byington, 2010). This frustration is expressed by one senior female leader:

> Our structures don't fully support women into these positions. What capacity do we have for part-time principalship? We have to be creative. (CEO, I)

There appears to be a general acceptance that "it is just the way it is" and that little can be done to make the principal position more accessible, practical and amenable to female applicants.

This perception is of interest. An analysis of scholarly literature illustrates that women in education throughout the world are structurally and culturally disadvantaged (Blackmore, Thomson, & Barty, 2006). Society perceives that leadership requires strength, determination and action, all traditionally masculine qualities (Day, 2012). Even though the majority of the teaching profession is female, there is a view that women do not have the ability to competently perform within senior educational leadership (Christman, 2008). Possibly this is the reason why so few women apply for leadership positions in the Diocese of Townsville and indeed why more men are appointed to the principalship.

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6.4.1 Female v Male Mindset

The research undertaken as part of this study indicates an interesting finding. Of the seven principals involved with individual, in-depth interviews, four were male and three female. All male principals began teaching with the aim of eventually being a principal:

> When interviewed to get in Teachers' College, I was asked, "Do you hope one day to be a principal?" and the answer was "Yes". It was always in the back of my mind. When I got to being a deputy, the thought was there." (P, I)

In addition:

> I didn't have any doubt in my ability to lead. (P, I)

In contrast, the three female principals considered the principalship when a senior leader recognised their potential and encouraged them to apply:

> ….came up to me and said, "In five years' time you will be a principal". I said, "No". But it planted a seed and made me think beyond my APRE role, of what the future could possibly be. I saw the task as maybe too large and at the time, too, the children were still quite young, but the seed was there and I continued, and I thought, maybe I do have something to contribute to this. (P, I)

It appears that this is a continuation of societal expectation, in which it is assumed that men pursue a career for a lifetime, whereas women only dabble in a career until such responsibilities as motherhood, domesticity and aged parent care become greater priorities (Horst Giese et al., 2009).

The gender consideration in career development has implications for the entire recruitment, preparation and appointment process for the principalship. Current approaches to the appointment of principals are formulated on a merit based system of interview and appointment. Given the variations in approaches to applying for the principalship as detailed in this study, it seems that the manner in which principals are selected and appointed needs to be re-examined. If male principals report that they always had the principalship in focus, or moved into the role because they felt they could do a better job than the current principal, and female principals all need to be encouraged to apply, then two very different career paths exist. In order to address

this apparent dysfunction, TCEO needs to consult with all, particularly women, in their development of authentic professional development experiences which address the actual needs of leadership aspirants of both genders (Crozier-Durham, 2007).

New understandings reinforce the view of wider research on the international scene, which emphasises that current principal selection processes have produced "normalized principal identities" at odds with equity and diversity policies and innovative practices in the principalship (Blackmore et al., 2006). The TCEO needs to examine its practices, to determine if it continues on the path of perpetuating the view of the principal as white, male and middle class, because this is what has come to be accepted as the norm (Wilkinson, 2012).

6.4.2 The Boy's Club – Perception or Reality?

One particular phenomenon that invites exploration is the perception that a boys' club exists and is the dominant influence in the generation of leadership policy in TCEO schools. Perception concerns the beliefs that individuals have of their reality; this perception may or may not be factually correct. Female participants perceive the existence of such a network, with its members influencing the outcome of future principal appointments:

> I also believe the 'old boys' network is strong in Catholic education and is seen by some as a barrier. (Other, S)

This appears to be a widely held belief amongst many of the females in senior leadership positions. Furthermore, many senior female leaders believe that the opinions of the male principals on new principal appointments predominate, to the exclusion of other opinions or evidence:

> A lot is about perception. There's a lot of interest, but it doesn't translate into applications. Amongst the current principals – they have it in their mind that so and so will get the job. They see it as a done deal, when it isn't. It is stopping [other] people. (CEO, I)

The "boys' club" is a source of frustration for a number of female respondents. Thus, perception of gender bias emerges as a possible source of tension for those interested

in applying for senior leadership positions (Byington, 2010). It is also an influential disincentive to females with aspirations to the principalship.

6.4.3. Conclusion

Despite changes in society, there are still issues for women who aspire to senior leadership positions in Catholic schools (Wilkinson, 2012). The paucity in the number of female principals attests to this, and research provides possible explanations. Women are responsible for the greater proportion of family and domestic responsibilities, are still traditionally tied to mobility issues associated with their partners' careers and are socialised into more feminised ways of working and operating. For these reasons, women also tend to place greater importance on work–life balance and believe the demands of the principalship are a deterrent to their aspiring to the principalship.

6.5 Mismatch of Perception of Crisis of Leadership

A fourth major issue for discussion is the mismatch of perceptions of the actual existence of a crisis of leadership. School based leaders express concern about the difficulty of attracting teachers into formal leadership positions. Those at the consultant level of the TCEO express concern that the lack of appropriate future leaders may later become a crucial issue:

> My heart goes into my mouth every time we have to look for a principal. We have a group of good solid deputies who never want to be principals, and why would you want to move them on to other positions? We have to be respectful and should never push people into the job. (CEO, I)

Furthermore:

> I am disappointed not to be more optimistic. We need to acknowledge this is a major problem facing our system. We need to make education and educational leadership attractive professions. (CEO, I)

Senior TCEO leaders, however, do not share these views. Indeed, they believe that the use of the word "crisis" is unnecessarily alarmist:

> At the moment it is working. We have a really good second tier of leadership – a whole pool of people wanting to jump up. They're champing at the bit. (CEO, I)

And:

> So long as you have one good applicant you can have one good principal. Sometimes you need to tap people on the shoulder…Aspiring Leader [programs] encourage people to think about it early in their career. (CEO, I)

System leaders believe that systems and structures have been successfully implemented to redress the leadership decline. They cite the Aspirant Leader Program as an example of a successful initiative. Such a view is an over-optimistic interpretation since only six leaders have graduated from these programs into senior leadership positions between 2007–2011.

Nevertheless, TCEO system leaders believe that Catholic schools are not lacking appropriate leadership. This position is energetically disputed by school leaders and education consultants, who believe that there is a definite and widespread crisis of leadership. One may question the differing viewpoints. It seems more appropriate to openly address the small number of applicants for senior leadership positions, regardless of whether it is termed a crisis or not, and work collaboratively with schools, leadership team members and the wider community to address the issues. In this way, programs and strategies of discerned relevance to the Diocese of Townsville can be implemented, with the stated aim of redressing the imbalance.

6.6 Principal Induction and Support

A final issue which invites discussion is principal induction and support. There seems to be little preparation for, and induction into, the principalship within the Diocese of Townsville. Education consultants at the Townsville Catholic Education Office are unanimous in their concerns about the lack of preparation for principalship:

> I think we are terrible at providing support and preparation for new principals. We can go through and tick the boxes – we do the induction, but it is not much better than induction in 1997. We now overload with compliance and school development plans and all that shit. We get hung up here on micro-managing –

everyone has to do it the same way and I think we get distracted by things that don't matter. I feel, how much more do I have to check up on? We limit people sometimes. We have so many rules and regulations that we limit people. We don't follow up enough with our preparation and support for principals. Mentors have been organised, but often there's no follow through. I think our induction sucks. (CEO, I)

Apart from insights gained through the apprenticeship model of the deputy or assistant principalship, principals prepare for the role through practical experience in the role. This appears to be the main mode of preparation available to Townsville principals:

There is no preparation for the job. You hit the ground running. You don't even know who to call. You often haven't even met people yet. (P, FG)

Senior TCEO personnel are also concerned about the lack of preparation and induction programs:

We could do better. We have got a handover process, but sometimes it doesn't actually happen. Transition to principalship and the handover to the new person is a key way of helping the new person to understand the context. It needs a stronger focus. (CEO, I)

The research indicates that the current model of principal preparation and induction is inadequate. Principal participants believe there is a need for an overhaul of the current model of principal preparation and induction, so that the needs of both new and more experienced principals are catered for adequately. These beliefs are reinforced by national and international research which emphasises the relationship between supportive principal induction and success as a principal (Roulston, 2007; Shoho & Barnett, 2010; Thomson, 2009).

Five areas of change are signposted by research undertaken in this study. These areas of change include support for principals on initial appointment; support for mid- and later-career principals; the provision of on-going skilling of principals; proactive support for principals towards achieving a more effective work–life balance and the provision of on-going professional supervision as a support mechanism for principals.

6.6.1 Principal Support on Appointment

Principals cite few examples of on-going support, once they have commenced in their role. Principal induction in the Diocese of Townsville normally consists of two days of general management and financial tools: an induction program which this research demonstrates to be inadequate.

Principals identify many examples of the type of support they believe they need in order to better prepare them to fulfill their diverse roles and responsibilities. This ranges from support in financial and legal management to compliance requirements and conflict management. Common themes focus on the provision of mentors and the facilitation of better opportunities for collegial networking. Principals and education consultants are unanimous in their perception of the biannual principal meetings hosted by the TCEO, believing these meetings are "data dumps" (P, FG) and opportunities designed for the TCEO to fulfill its own agenda. Principals believe that these meetings are not beneficial:

> At least 50% of what happens at principal meetings is a waste of time. (P, FG)

And:

> I walk away from these days feeling worse about myself. (P, FG)

It appears that the support provided to principals on initial appointment warrants examination, as does the format and focus of principal meetings.

Research emphasises the importance of support provided to principals in the early days of the principalship (Brundrett et al., 2007), with positive correlation between type and quality of support and a principal's long term success (Drysdale & Gurr, 2011).

6.6.2 Support for Mid-Career and Later-Career Principals

Principals express concern over the movement of mid-career and later-career principals out of schools. Some exit the Diocese to jobs elsewhere and others leave Catholic education. Principals believe that substantial professional knowledge, lived experience and corporate understanding are lost when these people exit the Townsville Catholic Education system. Reasons for this movement often include

jadedness with the role of principal or the lack of new challenge and incentive. Principals believe that there is a need to address this movement of leaders with such experiential knowledge from the Diocese:

> We lose a lot of experience when experienced principals leave or retire. They take with them expertise in a lot of fields. There should be the possibility of using these people, to bring new principals into a mentoring role. People who are good principals are the ones who are around for twenty or thirty years and know a lot of things they can pass on which make your life a whole lot easier. (P, FG)

TCEO senior leadership refers to the issue of mid- and later-career principals only briefly, adopting an attitude which emphasises the negative:

> Mid-career principals? Flagging enthusiasm? The best thing is to take some time, to just stop. Sometimes it is a physical reaction, sometimes boredom, not being challenged enough. Workplace counseling? Some would benefit from the spiritual guide or the professional guide, helping them talk through some of the issues they are at. You need to try to refocus, to work out what it is that actually challenges you and do something in that regard. You have to take responsibility for your own personal well being. (TCEO, I)

There are a number of strategies which may appropriately address this deficiency. Support, challenge and a redefinition of the experienced principal role appear to be some answers (Anderson et al., 2007; Brundrett et al., 2007), with the possible widening of the role to include more system wide responsibilities. The experiential knowledge of middle- and later-career principals can be better utilised for the greater good of the wider Townsville Catholic education system.

The vital role played by middle and later-career principals has been recognised on the international scene, with the emergence of the "emeritus" principal category in the United States and the United Kingdom. Principals in the pre-retirement phase are more likely to have strong work ethics, consult widely and possess strong social consciousness (Mulford et al., 2009), along with a willingness to give back to the profession. Given the shortage of effective school leaders, middle- and later-career principals can be utilised as a committed and valuable resource.

6.6.3 On-going Principal Professional Development

Principals believe that there is a lack of interest from TCEO in their on-going personal and professional development, expressing the view that this area is ignored once they are appointed:

> There should be professional development built into CEO meetings. We encourage our staff to undertake professional development, but what professional development do we do for our own jobs? Rather than being lectured at, there should be a focus on our own professional development.(P, FG)

This results in a post-appointment support vacuum, with principals experiencing increased responsibility without sufficient support from the Catholic education system. The human leadership dimension highlights this concern as principals are expected to be responsible for the on-going development of all within the Catholic school community. The principal is expected to be involved with the mentoring and coaching of other leadership team members in particular, and yet, no additional training or professional development is provided for the principal in this particular skill set (Daresh, 2004). It is assumed that the principal is able to establish a mentoring relationship and knows, as if by osmosis, the best way by which to facilitate the development of those within their professional care.

The provision of sabbatical leave for principals may address this shortcoming (Dempster et al., 2011) but there appears to be a general reluctance on the part of principals to take advantage of this opportunity. Principals make no mention of sabbatical leave, with few seeing it as an attractive benefit of the principal's role. Given that sabbatical leave implies further study of some kind, perhaps it is perceived as merely another responsibility that principals must endure. Principals appear to be so immersed in the technicalities of their roles that they fail to understand the benefits to be gained from further professional challenge and enrichment. It is timely that principal sabbatical leave is prioritised by both principals and TCEO personnel, so that it is perceived as an attractive, rewarding and fulfilling option for principals, particularly those in the middle to later stages of their principal careers. While the TCEO has attempted to portray this renewed stance, sabbatical leave is not being adopted by principals.

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6.6.4 Proactive Support towards Achieving Work–Life Balance

Research concludes that a major deterrent to the principalship is the difficulty of attaining a healthy and productive work/life balance (Anderson et al., 2007; Crozier-Durham, 2007; Thomson, 2009). New understandings from the research reinforce this, with participants referring to their belief that the role of the principal is so extensive and complex that it makes work–life balance difficult to achieve. The perception that the principalship is not life-giving and satisfying also dominates.

Principals themselves refer to the joy and satisfaction inherent in their roles, but this is not communicated to their communities. Principals need to actively educate their communities on why the principalship is worthwhile (Crozier-Durham, 2007). TCEO has a role to play in providing this support towards achieving work–life balance. Positive examples of sustainable and productive principal work–life balance need to be upheld as examples of best practice. Furthermore, principals need to be supported to develop personal and organisational capabilities which lead to work/life balance (Benjamin, 2007). A combination of the personal and the organisational is important: "… individual principals' agency, energy, mastery and efficacy is important to achieving work/life balance for these professionals, and managing the workload is the fulcrum of that balance."(Crozier-Durham, 2007, p. 5)

Support in this area should be a priority for the Townsville Catholic education system.

6.6.5 On-going Professional Supervision

A needed area of support for principals centres on professional supervision (Bush, 2011; Macpherson, 2009). Principals are supportive of initiatives to provide this avenue of support, citing the supervision inherent in psychologist's roles, for example, and the similarity in the role played by the principal:

> For our own professional wellbeing, we need the opportunity to debrief. An educational psychologist that we can talk to when it is needed. All the stuff we deal with – divorce, separation, subpoenas, the ugly side of legal battles. (P, FG)

TCEO education consultants agree with the need for professional supervision of principals, seeing this as support that could complement their advisory/supervisory role with the principal. However:

> There is a tension in the CEO consultant position. It is advisor, part time mentor and confidante, but also rep of the employer – demands, accountability etc. (CEO, I)

Other educational systems, for example the Edmund Rice Educational Directorate, have introduced professional supervision for principals. Consequently, it is suggested that professional supervision could be a support mechanism introduced for principals within the Townsville Catholic Diocesan education system.

Professional debriefing has emerged as a support strategy for principals on the international scene (Darling-Hammond, La Pointe, Myerson, & Orr, 2007), with it becoming a common practice in many American states. This is also the case throughout many of the countries of the European Union (Day & Antonakis, 2012). Despite concerns expressed over costs and availability of qualified professionals, it is beneficial in helping to create conditions that systematically support, develop and retain highly effective school leaders.

6.7 Conclusion

An analysis of the new understandings identifies the reasons behind the lack of interest in applying for the role of principal in the Diocese of Townsville. New understandings suggest that for this situation to be addressed, further discussion needs to take place to clarify issues which centre on conflicting perspectives of leadership, principal role re-conceptualisation, gender and leadership, mismatched perceptions of a crisis of leadership and principal preparation, induction and support.

Table 6.4 outlines the conclusions generated from this research.

Table 6.4 Conclusions

Contributions to New Knowledge

- The role of the principal has become all-encompassing and complex. Responsibilities and expectations of the principalship have increased. Paradoxically, principals claim to "love" their roles, but describe their professional experience negatively. This perception deters potential applicants.

- Principals are at a crossroads, precipitated by their inability to agree with all the teachings of the Catholic Church, their employer. They are comfortable choosing and rejecting what teachings they believe to be relevant and defensible.

- Principals believe that personal authenticity is of importance and experience dissonance when there is a clash between their own personal views and some of the teachings of the Catholic Church. The persona of the Professional Catholic assists in accommodating this dissonance.

- The Catholic school, and not the parish, presents the credible face of the Catholic Church to the wider community.

- Teachers and senior leaders do not embrace the professional nature of education.

Contributions to Practice:

- Leadership sustainability requires a committed and intentional focus on a formal, authentic, strategic leadership succession plan.

Contributions to Policy:

- Women are deterred from senior leadership by the structure of schools and the approaches taken to leadership development, selection and appointment.

These conclusions are further discussed in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to generate the conclusions for this research which explores why few deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals are applying for principal positions within the Diocese of Townsville. This chapter also demonstrates how the study has made original contributions to scholarship and to educational practice.

7.2 Research Design

This study is an exploration of principal leadership within Catholic schools in the Diocese of Townsville. It examines the changing nature of the role of the principal, perceptions on leadership, incentives and disincentives to leadership and what can be done to encourage teachers to undertake senior leadership positions. The conceptual framework synthesises the literature into three main focus areas, namely: the role of the principal; leadership sustainability and succession planning; and leadership preparation and development. The research design is focused by the following specific research questions:

1) How do principals, members of leadership teams and TCEO personnel understand the role of the Catholic school principal?

2) Why are deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals deterred from applying for the principalship?

3) How can potential applicants be prepared to undertake the principalship in a Catholic school?

This study uses an interpretative approach and adopts a constructionist epistemology because meaning is generated by human beings as they engage within a given context. Thus meaning is socially constructed as humans make sense of their own experiences based on their individual historical and social perspectives (Crotty, 1998).

The particular focus of this research is the meaning which is generated through the social interaction of principals and those within senior leadership positions. Principals

and those within leadership positions construct meaning through their own experiences. These experiences do not occur in isolation, but grow out of interactions with an array of individuals and contexts. The meaning making of leaders is socially constructed and is influenced by the cultural, historical and social contexts within which the individual leader operates. Symbolic Interactionism is adopted as the lens to inform the theoretical perspective of this study because this study seeks to understand how principals and senior leaders define their worlds.

As this study explores the phenomenon of why there are few applicants for the principalship in the bounded system, Townsville Catholic Education, case study methodology is adopted. This case study is bounded within the Diocese of Townsville. Participants include principals and members of the leadership teams of all 29 schools within the Diocese of Townsville, as well as six members of the extended leadership team of the TCEO. Participants cover a range of age, experience, gender and career aspirations. The decision to include all members of all school leadership teams is a deliberate one, in order to gather as much data as possible.

Data gathering strategies are:

- Focus group interviews (five focus group interviews with 54 participants);

- Individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews (13 participants);

- Survey (18 participants).

The participant selection and the data collection processes conformed to ethical clearance granted by the ACU Research Ethics Committee (Appendix A).

7.3 Limitations of the Research

This research is situated within the large geographical area that constitutes the Diocese of Townsville, and in this setting, distance imposes a serious limitation. Data collection opportunities need to be carefully orchestrated to ensure they occur in a timely and efficient manner. To ensure a spread and diversity of views, participants from across the Diocese of Townsville were invited to participate in this study.

A second limitation is the personal and professional relationship of the researcher to some of the participants. The researcher is conscious of the possible bias and

influence this may have on the conduct of the research. The professional integrity of the researcher and the use of multiple data collection techniques minimise the researcher's bias in the collection and analysis stages (Merriam, 1998).

7.4 Research Questions New Understandings

This section addresses each of the specific research questions which focus the conduct of this research.

7.4.1 Research Question One

The first research question is:

How do principals, members of leadership teams and TCEO personnel understand the role of the Catholic school principal?

The research generates the following three new understandings.

First, the principal's role within the Catholic school focuses on four specific dimensions of leadership: religious and spiritual; human; educational; and strategic. Stakeholders agree on the importance of the four dimensions of leadership.

There is agreement concerning the human, educational and strategic dimensions of leadership. Human leadership focuses on people and relationships. Principals are considered responsible for supporting and challenging all within the school community and this includes the provision of ongoing personal and professional development and care for the next generation of school leaders. Within educational leadership, principals are accountable for linking effective teaching and learning with contemporary curriculum, to provide high quality student learning. Strategic leadership centres on visioning and stewardship, with the principal responsible for developing, supporting and evaluating all operational processes within the school context.

Religious and spiritual leadership focuses on living and sharing the Catholic faith, providing those within school communities with the opportunity to be involved with, and celebrate, Catholic identity. Religious and spiritual leadership focuses on responsibility for faith leadership, active faith involvement, Church–parish–school relations and the promotion of the values and charism of the Catholic school.

The second new understanding is that relevant stakeholders hold conflicting perspectives on the role played by the principal in religious and spiritual leadership within the Catholic school context, with principals reporting concern at the discord which exists between their own personal perceptions and those held by the established Church hierarchy and institutions. This disparity is evident in the following areas: the role of religious and spiritual leadership; the role played by the principal in faith development; and the challenges emerging in the principal–parish priest relationship.

Principals have a more practical approach to their role in religious and spiritual leadership and are less able to articulate the theological underpinnings of their roles as Catholic school principals. The expectations expressed by Church and system leaders generate dissonance for them. Many principals express the need to remain silent and to be publicly supportive of the official Church stance on a number of issues. This is a source of conflict for them.

The third new understanding indicates a need for a re-examination of the role of the principal, as all principals believe that the role has become too encompassing and time consuming. This need for a re-examination of the roles and responsibilities of the principal is reinforced by most participants, with employing authorities emphasising a need for a re-conceptualisation of the entire education workforce.

7.4.2 Research Question Two

The second research question is:

Why are deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals deterred from applying for the principalship?

The research generates the following six new understandings. Each of these new understandings is an influence which impinges on decisions to apply for leadership positions within the Diocese of Townsville. These influences are: the role of the principal; perception; faith and study requirements; opportunity; conditions; and succession planning.

The first new understanding focuses on the disincentive to leadership that the role itself provides. The size, complexity and variety of responsibilities associated with the principalship are of concern. The majority of participants believe that the role is too

large to be realistically achieved by one individual. The constantly changing nature of the principal's role and the changing expectations of students, staff, parents, community and educational authorities are believed to contribute substantially to increasing levels of stress and anxiety. An increasing emphasis on accountability, compliance and sustainability, along with a more corporate focused model of leadership, contributes to a declining interest from teachers in applying for the principalship. The time needed to capably carry out the role and responsibilities of the principal is viewed as beyond reasonable expectations. The belief that the role requires "24/7/52" commitment is a major disincentive and invites questioning of the sustainability of the principal's role.

The second new understanding concerns perception. Leadership participants identify a number of negative perceptions of the role of the principal. Perceptions also focus on the selection and appointment process, gender bias, job satisfaction and a deficit mind set. Perceptions concerning the actual role of the principal are not congruent with the principals' descriptions of their role. All in leadership positions (apart from the principal) hold negative perceptions of the principalship, citing factors such as time, stress, lack of support and reward and the immensity of the role. Principals, however, report that they "love" the work of the principalship, finding it rewarding and stimulating. This positive portrayal is not communicated to the wider educational community.

There is a perception that a "boys' club" exists, implying that male principals' viewpoints are consulted almost exclusively in the current appointment process for principals. This process generates a gender view of leadership, with the perception that leadership in the Townsville Diocese is a male domain. As a consequence, females tend to: "stumble" into leadership; needing coaxing and encouragement to do so. In contrast, males aspire to senior leadership from the beginning of their teaching careers.

The third new understanding is that faith and study requirements are disincentives to leadership. All acknowledge the importance of faith criteria for selection to leadership, but many also believe that potentially competent candidates are deterred by these same criteria. The need to visibly and publicly uphold the traditional Catholic stance is a source of unease for some, with many believing that they are not religious

enough to be representing the Church. Similarly, the study criterion emerges as a major disincentive. All acknowledge the value of additional study, particularly in the religious and spiritual disciplines, but express concern that such study undertaken on a part-time basis is a further invasion of personal time. Alternate models of study need to be investigated, in order to accommodate the needs of young professionals with busy and active personal and family lives.

The fourth and fifth new understandings centre on opportunity and conditions. There is a lack of career paths to leadership, since there are few available positions and restricted opportunity for teachers to acquire experience by moving into acting positions. Issues of geography and location also serve as disincentives faced by individuals interested in leadership positions, as do the general conditions associated with the principal's role. Restructuring the role, being more creative with the role, improving work and remuneration conditions, the provision of professional debriefing and increased affirmation for those in the role are ways in which the role of the principal could be made more appealing.

The final new understanding concerns succession planning. The TCEO currently fails to offer succession planning activities. Succession planning is offered as a way in which more teachers can be encouraged to undertake leadership. The early identification of talent and the provision of support, professional development and active career anchoring are all viable options which could have a positive impact on the numbers of teachers aspiring to undertake leadership roles.

7.4.3 Research Question Three

The third research question is:

How can potential applicants be prepared to undertake the principalship in a Catholic school?

The research generates four new understandings.

The first new understanding is that there are three influences on leadership preparation. These areas focus on personal preparation, system driven preparation and leadership induction. Personal preparation is the most common preparation for leadership.

The second new understanding is that system driven preparation is inadequate, with little system driven leadership preparation supplied. Mid-level programs such as COMMICS and Aspirant Leaders are provided by TCEO. These are beneficial but they produce insufficient influence on appointments to senior leadership levels.

The third new understanding is that there is a need for an overhaul of existing leadership induction processes. Principals and leadership team members emphasise the need for a coordinated, well developed and relevant leadership induction process which includes aspects of job shadowing, acting opportunities and internships. Issues are also raised regarding mid-career and later-career principals and the loss of corporate knowledge when they leave the Catholic education system.

Finally, principals are unanimous in their requests for professional development, with an emphasis on coaching, mentoring and professional debriefing. Principals are not interested in using sabbatical leave, which they do not believe enhances their professional practice.

7.5. Conclusions of the Study

7.5.1 Contributions to New Knowledge

There are a number of conclusions generated from this research that contribute new knowledge.

7.5.1.1 The Paradox of the Principalship

This thesis concludes that the role of the principal has become all-encompassing and more complex. The responsibilities and expectations of the principalship have increased. Coupled with an increased emphasis on accountability, compliance and sustainability, a role of great complexity has evolved. Senior leaders and teachers appraise this complexity as almost untenable and believe that the role is beyond the capabilities of one individual.

While principals genuinely "love" their role, they communicate their professional experience negatively. This negative perception is what deters potential applicants.

Fewer applications are being received for the principalship because the role is seen as too large, complex and demanding and not conducive to a healthy work–life balance

(Eacott, 2011). This conclusion confirms the research of Byington (2010) and Crozier-Durham (2007) that work–life balance and emotional well-being rank highly as incentives for many of the aspirant leader generation.

7.5.1.2 The Credibility Gap

The second conclusion is that principals are facing a dilemma, precipitated by an inability to agree with all the teachings of the Catholic Church, their employer. The Catholic school of the twenty-first century plays an integral role in the evangelizing mission of the Church (Putney, 2008) and consequently, the Catholic school principal has a unique and complex role to fulfill. It is very difficult for principals to fulfill a highly complex role in a Catholic school when many do not share some of the core values of the Catholic Church and when many in the Catholic hierarchy are not viewed as honorable and trustworthy (Conlon, 2012).

This conclusion confirms the research of Kouzes and Posner (2011) that the credibility leaders demonstrate is the fundamental dynamic influencing organisational leadership. What is particularly important for this study is that there is a paucity of research concerning the beliefs and values of Catholic principals and their faith relationship with that organisation. It is anticipated that employees of an organization would share the official values and beliefs of the organization (Posner, Kouzes, & Schmidt, 2006). This research indicates that principals are selective in the values and beliefs they embrace – the "cafeteria Catholic" (Everett, 2012; Wilkinson, 2012). This is due to basic discrepancies over issues such as lifestyle and the role of women within the Church. In more recent times, this can also be attributed to the lack of integrity demonstrated by so many Catholic leaders in addressing the child sexual abuse issues (Conlon, 2012).

7.5.1.3 Silenced Personal Authenticity – the Professional Catholic

The third conclusion that generates new knowledge concerns personal authenticity. Principals believe that personal authenticity is important and experience dissonance when there is a clash between their own personal views and some of the teachings of the Catholic Church. This leads to internal conflict, with unease expressed over the clash which sometimes occurs around issues concerning their personal beliefs on religion, lifestyle issues, divorce and the role of women within the Church. An

increasing number of principals and senior leaders are no longer prepared to remain silent and reported that this was a growing source of contention. Hence, the emergence of the phenomenon of the professional Catholic (Morwood, 2004, 2007). This research concludes that Catholic principals and senior leaders, when necessary, engage in this charade and many potential applicants are reluctant to undertake a role which requires a silencing of their conscience.

7.5.1.4 Changing Role of Catholic Parish and Catholic School

This thesis concludes that the Catholic school, and not the parish, currently presents the credible face of the Catholic Church to the wider community. Traditionally, the parish was the religious, cultural and social centre, with the parish priest as the designated, visible leader. An increasing number of Catholics no longer turn to the parish for support and guidance (Wilkinson, 2012). Many find guidance and support from the principal and other school pastoral personnel. This is a new social–religious dynamic (Pascoe, 2007), a dynamic which creates tension for many in the traditional church (Putney, 2008). This phenomenon, combined with the growing shortage of Australian born priests, has encouraged the emergence of new expressions of ministry which are principal led and school based. This emerges as a source of tension for principals, with an increase in religious leadership roles in which they are expected to engage. Many believe that they are inadequately prepared and qualified to undertake these religious and spiritual responsibilities.

7.5.1.5 Teaching and Leading as a Profession

A fifth conclusion that generates new knowledge is that teachers and senior leaders do not embrace the professional nature of education. An integral component of any profession is the profession-imposed requirement of continuous professional development (Cogan, 1953).

Principals' negative attitudes towards additional study indicate that they may entertain a too-simplistic perspective of the principal's role. They appear to lack a comprehensive appreciation of the benefits to be gained from research and sabbatical opportunities. This is a regrettable conclusion and is inconsistent with other research concerning principals and their professional development (Moos & Johansson, 2009).

7.5.2. Contributions to Practice

The following conclusion contributes to new practice.

7.5.2.1 Leadership Sustainability

This study concludes that leadership, and particularly the role of the principal, is not considered to be sustainable. Leadership sustainability requires a committed and intentional focus on a formal, authentic, strategic leadership succession plan. An intentional focus on the development of leadership potential and staff capacity is the responsibility of all (Canavan, 2007). Leadership is sustainable when it becomes a central focus of Catholic education Australia wide. A diocese-by-diocese, state-by-state approach may be short-sighted and repetitive, failing to adequately address the shortage of quality applicants to senior leadership positions.

7.5.3 Contributions to Policy

The following conclusion, generated from this research, contributes to new policy.

7.5.3.1 Women in Leadership

The final conclusion of this research concerns the paucity in number of women principals. The reasons for this are that women are deterred by the structure of schools and the approaches taken within leadership development, selection and appointment. Catholic schools continue to be organised along mechanistic, inflexible practices lacking a research foundation which recognises how gender influences leadership (Neidhart & Carlin, 2003; Young & McLeod, 2001) and leadership incentive and motivation (Spiller & Curtis, 2007). Men and women view leadership differently, possess differing motivations for leadership and exercise leadership in different ways. An adherence to traditional approaches to recruitment and conduct of the role of principal (Lacey & Anderson, 2009) disempowers women and continues to perpetuate the myth that senior school leadership is a male preserve.

7.6 Recommendations

After reflecting on the conclusions, the following recommendations are offered.

The conclusions of this research identify a number of issues emanating from the diversity of views expressed by those involved with senior leadership in the

Townsville Diocese. The following recommendations address key conclusions and are an attempt to provide a way forward for those involved with Catholic school leadership.

7.6.1 Policy

The recommendations are:

1. That a system wide re-examination of school leadership roles, with a particular focus on the role of the principal, be initiated. This may provide direction and clarity to the principal's role and help create the perception that the role, while demanding and challenging, can also be rewarding and life-giving.

2. That alternative models of the principalship are explored, which may lead to the implementation of models of principalship which are more family and work–life friendly. The perception of the principalship is that it erodes work–life balance and is not conducive to those who carry greater responsibility for family and parental care. It is also not considered to be sustainable in its current form.

3. That principals are given a greater voice. If personal authenticity is valued by principals (Starratt, 2004), then openness and honesty are to be encouraged. The implementation of a genuine lay spirituality of leadership (Green, 2009) and the recognition of the integral role the principal plays in the wider mission of the Church could be starting points. By "mentioning the unmentionables", principals, Catholic education systems and church will cease to perpetuate the culture of public silence on key contemporary issues.

4. That the roles played by the parish and the parish priest are re-conceptualised. Discussion needs to take place around the role of the parish and the parish priest, with an emphasis on the realities of life in the modern Catholic school and the changing role of the Catholic school principal.

5. That principals are adequately prepared and supported in their roles as religious and spiritual leaders. This is a complex and growing area of principal responsibility and many senior leaders feel inadequate and poorly qualified.

6. That a re-examination of COMMICS and the Aspirant Leader programs occurs. While all acknowledge the benefits of these two programs in terms of personal and professional development, they do not appear to be having the desired flow-on effect in terms of increased numbers of applicants for senior leadership positions. A re-assessment of the aims and purpose of these courses is desirable, in order to better assess if they are meeting the current needs of the Townsville Catholic education system.

7. That a Townsville Catholic Education Succession Plan be developed. There is a need for the TCEO to develop a coordinated approach to succession planning. This includes the early identification of a talented pool of teachers interested in moving into senior leadership and recognises the need to challenge and support leaders at all stages of their careers. Attention centering on leaders in the twilight years of their careers is also important, so this valuable corporate knowledge is not lost to Townsville Catholic Education.

8. That an overhaul of the principal induction and support process takes place. Current induction processes are inadequate and are not addressing the needs of new or experienced principals.

9. That a renewed focus is placed on women in leadership. Given the perception of gender bias in the selection and appointment processes employed in the Diocese, it is timely that a renewed focus is placed on gender and leadership. The imbalance in the number of female senior leaders requires attention. In the light of gender differences in paths to leadership, a new focus can elucidate ways in which senior leadership can be genuinely more female friendly.

7.6.2 Practice

The recommendations are:

1. That processes be initiated to provide professional supervision/debriefing for principals. The principal's role requires sophisticated emotional intelligence. Coupled with the ever-increasing demands and responsibilities, this can lead to high levels of stress, anxiety and ill-health. Regular professional support

ensures both personal and organisational health are addressed in a timely manner.

2. That formal mentoring be required for all those within senior leadership positions. The provision of a formal, structured mentoring program for all those in senior leadership programs can lead to personal leadership growth. This can then contribute to organisational growth as senior leaders become more competent and capable. This becomes self-fulfilling, with all in the organisation taking responsibility for the growth and development of the organisation.

3. That induction and support processes for other members of senior leadership teams are introduced. Currently, no preparation for leadership is provided for new members of senior leadership teams. This leads to an inconsistent approach, with each individual's experience dependent on the vagaries of his/her particular school situation. There is a need for a centralised approach to leadership induction, which can then be further expanded upon by the individual school. The experience of senior leaders in their first appointment is integral to their success or failure as a leader.

4. That the profile of principal sabbatical leave is raised. Sabbatical leave is available to all principals on the completion of their first successful contractual period. Current principals appear to be hesitant to avail themselves of this privilege, and yet the personal and professional benefits of a sabbatical program are immense. Sabbatical leave is an integral component of principal professional development.

7.7 Conclusion

This research has identified numerous reasons behind the reticence of deputy principals, assistants to the principal religious education and assistant principals to apply for principal positions within the Diocese of Townsville. The need for an urgent review and revitalisation of current thinking and practices around principal roles, responsibility and support has been clearly established and is necessary if the role of

the principal within Catholic education in the Diocese of Townsville is to be viable and sustainable.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL LETTER

✛ACU
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

Human Research Ethics Committee

Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Associate Professor Denis McLaughlin Brisbane Campus

Co-Investigators: Dr Chris Branson Brisbane Campus

Student Researcher: Ms Andrea O'Brien Brisbane Campus

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:
"From Whence Shall They Come?' - Attracting the Next Generation of School Leaders. "From Whence Shall They Come?"

for the period: 25 November 2010 to 31 December 2011

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: Q2010 52

The following **standard** conditions as stipulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* (2007) 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.

K. Pashby.

Signed: .....   Date: 25.11.2010
            (Research Services Officer, McAuley Campus)

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TITLE OF PROJECT: "From whence shall they come?" – attracting the next generation of school leaders.

PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: Associate Professor Denis McLaughlin

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Andrea O'Brien

PROGRAMME IN WHICH ENROLLED: EdD

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in this study, the purpose of which is to explore why few teachers in schools in the Diocese of Townsville are applying for leadership positions. In order to explore this lack of interest in undertaking leadership positions, the following three research questions will focus the conduct of this study:

1. How do relevant stakeholders describe the role of a Catholic school principal?

2. Why do few capable teachers apply for leadership positions in the Townsville Diocese?

3. How can principals be better prepared to undertake leadership?

This study will employ a case study approach, using the data collection strategies of focus group interviews, in-depth, individual interviews and surveys. Principals, deputy principals and assistants to the principal, religious education, will be invited to participate in focus group interviews and surveys. A number of principals will then be invited to participate in in-depth, individual interviews.

Focus group interviews will be conducted at the Townsville Catholic Education Office, and will be timed to coincide with other TCEO meetings. In this way, demands on time can be kept to a minimum. Each focus group interview will comprise one hour, and each participant will only need to take part in one focus group interview. After focus group interviews have occurred, a number of principals and Catholic Education Office personnel will be invited to participate in a one hour, individual, in-depth interview, at a time suitable to the participant involved. Focus group and individual interviews will be audio-recorded. A survey will then be mailed out to all members of the leadership teams of all schools within the Diocese.

There is negligible risk involved with participating in this study, and it is anticipated that very little inconvenience will be experienced, apart from the need to give up a little valuable time.

Research on this issue is important for two main reasons. First, this research is vital to determine why teachers in the Diocese of Townsville are reluctant to apply for senior leadership positions, and in particular, the principalship. Second, in seeking the perceptions and opinions of those already in leadership positions, it is hoped that a better understanding of the roles can be gained, along with insight into how people can be better prepared to undertake leadership. As this study will be undertaken specifically in the Diocese of Townsville, any research will have direct relevance to your current working environment. Research findings will be made available to the Townsville Catholic Education Office and may be published in a number of professional journals.

You are free to refuse consent to participate, without the need for justification of that decision, and should you consent to participate, you are able to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in this study at any time, without the need to give a reason for doing so.

Confidentiality of information will be maintained at all times, with interview and survey data being coded to protect the identity of the participant. Any publications will maintain this confidentiality.

Any questions regarding this project should be directed to the principal supervisor and the student researcher:

Ass. Prof. Denis McLaughlin,   Andrea O'Brien

Ph. 36237154   Ph. 47755451

Australian Catholic University   Catholic Education Office

Brisbane.   Townsville.

I will be happy to provide you with feedback on this research at any time and I will forward to you the results of this research when the project is completed, should you so wish. An executive summary will be prepared for this purpose and I can be contacted on aobrien@tsv.catholic.edu.au.

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Australian Catholic University and has the approval and support of the Townsville Catholic Education Office. In the event that you have any complaint or concern, or if you have any query that I have not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee:

C/ Research Services,

Australian Catholic University,

Brisbane Campus,

P.O. Box 456,

Virginia. Qld. 4014.

Tel. 07 36237429

Fax. 07 3623 7328

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You 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 student researcher.

With thanks,

....

Supervisor   Student Researcher

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

The following are anticipated probe questions. The direction of the focus group discussion will be determined by the respondents and their responses to the initial questions.

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE:

HOW DO RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS DESCRIBE THE ROLE OF A CATHOLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPAL?

1. How would you describe the role of the principal?

2. What do you perceive as the activities which occupy the greatest part of a principal's day?

3. What are the activities which you believe should be occupying the greatest part of a principal's day?

4. What are the most demanding challenges you see principals facing?

5. Why do you think people are not interested in applying for the principal's position?

6. What can be done to make the principalship more attractive?

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO:

WHY DO FEW CAPABLE TEACHERS APPLY FOR LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN THE TOWNSVILLE DIOCESE?

1. Why do you think few teachers are applying for leadership positions in Catholic schools?

2. What do you think could be done to encourage teachers to apply for leadership positions in schools?

3. As a deputy/APA, what role do you play in the nurturing and development of leadership talent in your school?

HOW CAN LEADERS BE BETTER PREPARED TO UNDERTAKE LEADERSHIP?

1. What structures or systems do you think could have helped you in your early days as a deputy/APA?

2. How could you have been better prepared to take on the role?

3. What do you see as priority areas for the on-going professional development of school leaders?

4. What can be done to make the position of principal more attractive so people are interested in applying?

APPENDIX D: GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

The following are anticipated probe questions. The direction of the interview will be determined by the respondent and his/her responses to the initial questions.

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE:

HOW DO RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS DESCRIBE THE ROLE OF A CATHOLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPAL?

1. How would you describe your role as principal?

2. What are the activities which occupy the greatest part of your day?

3. What are the activities which you feel should be occupying the greatest part of your day?

4. What causes you the greatest stress in your role?

5. What parts of your job do you enjoy the most?

6. What have been the most demanding challenges you have faced in your role as principal?

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO:

WHY DO FEW CAPABLE TEACHERS APPLY FOR LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN THE TOWNSVILLE DIOCESE?

1. Why do you think few teachers are applying for leadership positions in Catholic schools?

2. What do you think could be done to encourage teachers to apply for leadership positions in schools?

3. As a principal, what role do you play in the nurturing and development of leadership talent in your school?

RESEARCH QUESTION THREE:

HOW CAN PRINCIPALS BE BETTER PREPARED TO UNDERTAKE LEADERSHIP?

1. What structures or systems do you think could have helped you in your early days as principal?

2. How could you have been better prepared to take on the role of principal?

3. What do you see as priority areas for the on-going professional development of principals?

"FROM WHENCE SHALL THEY COME?" ATTRACTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SCHOOL LEADERS

Thank you for participating in this survey which forms part of the data gathering process for my Doctor of Education thesis. This survey is anonymous and your identity will not be disclosed to anyone apart from the researcher. You may withdraw from this survey at any time up until submission of the survey. If you do decide to take part in this survey, please make sure that you complete ALL the relevant questions.

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about the role of the principal in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Townsville, to discover how principals can be better prepared to undertake leadership and to discover why few people are seeking to apply for leadership positions in Catholic schools. The data gathered may assist research into understanding the changing nature of Catholic school leadership, may assist in the better preparation of, and support for, principals and may identify the reasons influencing the recruitment and retention of teachers into senior leadership positions.

COMPLETION OF THIS SURVEY WILL BE TAKEN AS CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

SECTION 1: *Basic Information* **(*Please tick the [ ]*)**

1. Gender: Female [ ] Male [ ]

2. How long have you been teaching? 1–5 years [ ] 6–10 years [ ]
   11–20 years [ ] 21 years or more [ ]

3. Current School type: Primary [ ] Secondary [ ] P - 12 [ ]

4. Current Position: Principal [ ] APRE [ ] Deputy Principal [ ]
   Assistant Principal [ ] Other _____

5. How long have you held this position?   1–5 years [ ]   6–10 years   [ ]

                                         11–20 years [ ]   21 years or more [ ]

6. Length of time in senior leadership? _____

7. Number of senior leadership positions held?   1 or [ ] 2–5 [ ] Other _____

SECTION 2: *Research Question One – How do relevant stakeholders describe the role of a Catholic school principal?*

8. What do you see as the role of the principal in a Catholic school?

_____

_____

_____

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_____

9. What are the main responsibilities of the principal in a Catholic school?

_____

_____

_____

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_____

10. Are there areas where principals should take on more responsibility?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. Are there areas for which principals should not be responsible?

_____

_____

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_____

_____

SECTION 3: *Research Question Two – Why do few capable teachers apply for leadership positions in the Townsville Diocese?*

12. Why would fewer teachers be expressing interest in undertaking leadership positions in Catholic schools?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. What could be done to encourage more teachers to undertake leadership positions in schools?

_____

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_____

_____

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14. What are some of the barriers facing teachers interested in undertaking leadership in Catholic schools?

_____

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SECTION 4: *Research Question Three – How can principals be better prepared to undertake leadership?*

15. What preparation for leadership did you experience when undertook your first leadership position?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

16. How could you have been better prepared for your first leadership position?

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17. What continuing professional development have you undertaken in your leadership position?

_____
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18. In which areas would you like to experience more support or development?

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SECTION 5:

19. Any thoughts on the principalship and any other related issues?
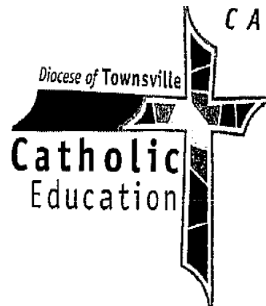
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PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN BY FRIDAY, JUNE 17.

APPENDIX F: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM TOWNSVILLE CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE

CATHOLIC EDUCATION   DIOCESE OF TOWNSVILLE

2 Gardenia Ave KIRWAN Q 4817 • PO Box 861 AITKENVALE Q 4814
Tel 07 4773 0900 • Fax 07 4773 0901 • Email director@tsv.catholic.edu.au

Diocese of Townsville

Catholic
Education

8 December 2010

Mrs Andrea O'Brien
10 Hoya Court
ANNANDALE QLD 4814

Dear Andrea

RE: Approval to conduct research – "From Whence Shall They Come?" – Attracting the next generation of school leaders

I am happy to give permission for you to approach the Leadership Teams of schools in the Diocese of Townsville, and personnel in the Townsville Catholic Education Office to take part in your research.

Yours faithfully

Dr Catherine Day
Director

TITLE OF PROJECT: **"FROM WHENCE SHALL THEY COME?"–ATTRACTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SCHOOL LEADERS.**

SUPERVISOR: **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR DENIS McLAUGHLIN**

STUDENT RESEARCHER: **ANDREA O'BRIEN**

I, ..., 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 focus group interview and/or in depth individual interview and survey between October 2010 and June 2011 and acknowledge that the interviews will be audio-taped. I realise that I can withdraw my consent at any time. 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: ....

SIGNATURE:..DATE................................

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR:.......................................DATE..............................

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER:...........................DATE......................

PRINCIPAL A

JOURNEY TO PRINCIPALSHIP?

Had been teaching quite a long time. Saw numerous other people in senior leadership, principal roles, and to be honest felt, if they can do it so can I. Felt I could do things so much better. A number of jobs came up, and I applied for them, but always missed out. Told I didn't have a Masters degree, so would have no chance. But this was about 15 years ago. Became very disillusioned and was considering leaving the Catholic system. I was so angry, I had even explored joining the state again. I felt I must have done or said something, which resulted in a black mark against my name, so I had no chance. Then I saw the job in ------------------advertised. Thought about it and then told the Principal I was thinking about applying. Then it seems I was encouraged all the way! Interviewed, offered the job, but the parish priest insisted that my husband and I go out there and see the place, and then meet the parent community before I made a decision.

Decision to apply – my children were all in their late teens, so no longer at school and so relatively independent. My husband had just been made redundant, so it seemed the time was right for a move.

The time in ------------------the making of me as a person and a principal. The first year very difficult. Felt I had to prove myself, that everything I had done before didn't matter. Still at the time when the principal was someone of importance in a small country community. You couldn't drive up to the shop on a Sunday morning to get the paper in your old shorts and T shirt. You always had to be properly dressed, or it invited comment. The principal was invited to all community events, big and small, and you were expected to attend. You were really a part of the community and had a role to play as such. Early on, one wise woman pulled me aside and told me that to survive in such a small place, you had to make the point of getting out every six

weeks or so, to maintain your sanity. And she was right. I didn't always do it, but I tried to as much as possible.

After three years in--------------, I applied for and was successful at --------------. This was a larger school and I felt that I was now ready to move on to a bigger challenge. In ---------------for 4 years. The first few years difficult. Once again, had to prove myself. A different community – a mining community, more fathers involved (4 days on, 4 days off), and higher expectations from the school community in general. Then applied for a couple of positions in-----------------, due to husband's health issues. Successful at-----------------, but moved to a school with no money, an eighty year old school with massive maintenance issues, and the APRE had applied for the position but was unsuccessful. A very difficult year – APRE used to having a great deal of power and literally running the school, and things had to change. Once she moved to another school, things got better. A great school and we have come a very, very long way.

WHAT OCCUPIES MOST OF YOUR DAY?

E mail, paper work, conflicting demands and expectations from CEO, indeed different CEO departments requesting similar information at the same time, when all or most of it is already available in the office anyway. I spend a lot of time in classrooms and with students. Don't always give paperwork the attention it supposedly needs, but then paperwork is not my priority. My number one priority is the kids, and it always will be.

Parents require a lot of time. So many parents see the school as a source of advice and help. With so many split families, the school plays an increasing role in a social welfare sense. More and more we area called upon to be the broker, to provide support, not only to the students, but to the whole family, and this is what parents expect. The Catholic nature of the school is not seen by parents as a priority any more. What they do expect is that the school provides a support network to the whole family.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY THE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

The kids, and seeing them come alive and love coming to school and feeling safe and loved and supported. That is what it is all about.

WHAT CAUSES YOU THE MOST STRESS?

Staff who don't operate from a vocational mindset, but an industrial one. Those who see it as a job, and nothing more, who ask, "What's in it for me? What are you going to do for me? What about me?" That's what causes me the most grief.

Parents can be stressful, but they are, more often than not, simply acting out of concern for their children, so I can accept their anxiety and even their anger.

The LONELINESS of the principal's role can never be underestimated. I don't think I was prepared for that. You need a confidante, someone you can confide in and simply talk issues through. Not someone who is going to solve the problems for you, but someone who will listen, understand, and whom you can trust totally. That confidentiality is so important. Sometimes you might have an APRE who can fill that role, but it often doesn't happen. When you don't have someone as a confidante it is a sad and lonely road, and I think that's what often turns people away, or makes them give up the job.

WHAT PREPARATION DID YOU HAVE FOR THE ROLE?

I had good preparation – being able to organise and teach a class of 30 children, being involved in the school as a community, being part of the P&F association, organising and co-ordinating sport. Taking on additional responsibilities in these areas, not because I was asked to, but because that is the way I am. That all stood me in good stead for stepping into the position of principal.

But there was no formal induction to the position, no explanation of what I could expect;. In hindsight, it would have been good to have more information on the community/school I was going into, more preparation in a formal sense.

WHY PEOPLE NOT APPLYING?

They see how busy the job is, they see what I do and the hours I put in, and they don't think it is worth it. Teachers now earn good money and don't see that the extra money the principal earns compensates for all the extra responsibility and stress.

They also don't see that there is a great deal of support from the office. They rarely seen CEO people in the school, and they interpret that as a lack of interest and

support. That may not be the case, but that is a common perception from a lot of people.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO APPLY?

The Aspirant Leaders program has been good, but it has also caused a fair bit of discontent amongst some older staff. They have said, "What about me? Why is it aimed only at younger ones?" Many older staff, particularly women, are ready to move into leadership roles. They have had their children, or their children are older, and the time is now right for them. They too need to be nurtured and encouraged.

There needs to be a next step from aspirant leaders, particularly as many of them don't seem to take that next step into actually applying for positions, or when they do apply, there are only so many positions to go round, and people might get knocked back a few times and then become discouraged.

I think people need to be actively encouraged to apply. Not tapped on the shoulder, but encouraged to throw their hat into the ring – knowing they have to win the job on their own merits, but it doesn't hurt for people to know that CEO think they have potential and have the ability to do the job. You need that right blend of encouragement from the office and realistic expectations from the applicant – not so that they expect to be given the job, but they know people believe in them.

There needs to be more encouragement for people to take on acting roles – from acting in the CEO to positions in other schools. Gives them an opportunity to grow in confidence and experience.

The role has changed greatly over the last five to ten years, and there hasn't been recognition of that. BER is an example. Overnight, we have had to become project managers, building supervisors, quality controllers – the additional responsibility thrown at us as a result of BER has been immense.

It would be nice sometimes to be told that we are doing a good job. Don't need to be patted on the back all the time, but it would be good to feel appreciated. A phone call now and then again to ask "How are you going?" – aimed personally at the principal, not at the school.

ON-GOING PD OF PRINCIPALS?

Absolutely nothing. There is nothing organised to challenge and extend principals. Two meetings a year, but all they are is a talk fest, where we are talked at and copious amounts of information are poured in. It would be wonderful if these times could be opportunities for principals to learn and grow. Instead, it seems that we are not trusted to do a professional job, that we can't be trusted without being watched.

Some coaching would be great. Having a professional person there to listen, to challenge, to provide that critical ear.

As principal, you need to have that balance in life. I don't have it, but you need it.

Really love my job.

Research question 2 – Why do few capable teachers apply for leadership positions in the Townsville Diocese?

2(1) Why would fewer teachers be expressing interest in undertaking leadership positions in catholic schools?

<u>Principals</u>

<u>Codes:</u>

Time

Faith criteria – not practising catholic

Remuneration

Perception – foregone conclusion

Ignorance of role

Increased workload expectations

Perception – lack of support

Family issues

Anxiety over responsibility

Study requirement

Perception – no job satisfaction

Principal portrayal of position

Work–life balance

Perception – *lack of support, forgone conclusion, no job satisfaction; old boys' network, leadership a male thing, lack of autonomy*

Role – *time, ignorance, workload expectations, anxiety over responsibility, sustainability, accountability and liability, increased role demands, criticism, complexity, lack of preparation, changing expectations parents and CEO, lack of flexibility (esp for mothers), bureaucracy, busyness, multi-dimensional, ignorance, release time, no opp to act in role, lack of autonomy*

Faith criteria – *not pract catholic, not catholic, parish responsibilities, changing social paradigm – working families, nature of people, lifestyle, Gen Y v baby boomers, Parish/Church involvement*

Sustainability

Accountability & liability

Criticism

Increased role demands

Complexity

Pressure, stress burnout

Lack of prep for leadership

Lack of CEO support

Limited career paths

Distance from teaching/classroom

Others:

Changing social paradigm

Working families

Parish/church involvement

Changing expectations parents & CEO

Lack of flexibility in role – esp working mothers

"Old boys' network" – perception

Principal individual interviews:

Difficulties of the role

Emotional toll

Bureaucracy

Mobility

Townsville's size – restriction

Lack of career path

People – dealing with

Study

Time/busyness

Perception – lack of support

Fear of confrontation

Lack of encouragement

Family

Comfort zone

Principal portrayal

Balance

Self doubt

CEO interviews:

Perception – forgone conclusion

Nature of people – angrier

Gender – structures not conducive to women

Lifestyle

Parish responsibility

Difficulty

Perception – church pillar

Lack of encouragement

Time

Mobility

Human cost – emotional toll, fear of confrontation, comfort zone, family

Restrictions – Townsville's size, lack of encouragement, mentoring, self-doubt

Mobility

Not Catholic

Perception – leadership a male thing in the Townsville Diocese

Gender – conflict leadership and motherhood

Focus groups:

Perception

Multi-dimensional position (passion might be curriculum)

Gen Y (self) v baby boomers (service)

Ignorance

Confidence

Family

Disconnection from classroom

Comfort zone

School finances – insufficient

Ultimate responsibility

Lack of control/autonomy from CEO

Lack of opportunity to practise in role

Release time

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – CEO

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE:

HOW DO RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS DESCRIBE THE ROLE OF A CATHOLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPAL?

1. How would you describe the role of the principal?

2. What are the activities which occupy the greatest part of a principal's day?

3. What are the activities which you believe should be occupying the greatest part of the day?

4. How has the role of the principal changed over recent years?

5. Do you believe that the role of the principal needs to be reconfigured? Reasons.

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO:

WHY DO FEW CAPABLE TEACHERS APPLY FOR LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN THE TOWNSVILLE DIOCESE?

1. Do you believe that there has been a decrease in the number and quality of applicants for leadership positions? The principal's position?

2. Why do you think teachers are hesitant about applying for leadership positions in Catholic schools?

3. What do you think could be done to encourage teachers to apply for leadership positions in schools?

4. What role does the CEO need to play in encouraging teachers into positions of leadership?

5. How can we go about identifying people with potential in our schools?

6. What approach has CEO taken to succession planning?

HOW CAN PRINCIPALS BE BETTER PREPARED TO UNDERTAKE LEADERSHIP?

1. Can you outline what preparation for leadership is provided to principals in this Diocese?

2. When a principal is appointed to their first position, what preparation is provided to them?

3. What structures or systems could be put into place to better support principals?

4. What do you see as priority areas for the on-going professional development of principals?

APPENDIX K: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS

1. Could you outline your journey to the principalship?

2. How would you describe your role as principal?

3. What are the parts of your job that you enjoy the most?

4. What are the parts that you enjoy the least?

5. What are the 5 areas where you spend most of your day?

6. In an ideal world, how would you like to be spending your day?

7. What causes you the most stress in your role?

8. What preparation did you have for taking on the principal's role?

9. What do you see as priority areas for the ongoing professional development of principals?

10. How do you go about achieving the balance in your life?

11. Why do you think people are not applying for principal/leadership positions?

12. How can we encourage more people to undertake leadership?

13. What can be done to make the position of principal more attractive so people are interested in applying?

14. What part can you play in encouraging leadership within your own school?