

Annual Report 2013

As presented at the AGM
Wednesday 9th April 2014

Chairperson's Report

Change is always coming, and 2013 for Woodbury Boston was a year of preparing for change.

At the end of 2014, we lose 2 year groups, our year 7's as normal, but we also say goodbye to our current year 6's as year 7 becomes the first year of high school from 2015. It's a scary time for the students themselves and for their parents, my middle son being one of these students, I'm dreading this change. Feelings of loss at leaving the safe secure environment of Woodbury Boston, feelings of apprehension wondering how they will cope, or if they are ready. But throw in a measure of pride, for they are beginning a new journey.

These students were 2013's year 5 group. Not normally included in Sailing Camp or Quest, they were faced with missing out on the full experience of these highly valued and anticipated traditions. This is where Rex, Linda and Ree excelled themselves, taking a larger group of inexperienced students on Sailing camp, and this is where the year 7 students shone, taking their younger peers under their wings, and those younger students were then able to extend the same generosity, when this year's year 5's spent a day with them 'learning the ropes'. Quest 2013 was another matter. Asking younger students to extend themselves for an entire week and taking three year groups meant risking a little less quality time with each student. So again Rex, Linda and Ree, excelled a little more, organising a completely different version of Quest comprising of two phases. More organisation, but no less meaningful, their incredible effort and commitment has resulted in more experienced, more confident, more resilient year 6's who are better able to cope with change, theirs being the biggest of all.

The Governing Body spent many meetings during 2013 discussing student numbers; the loss of those two year groups at once looked set to significantly reduce the size of our school.

Of course part of Woodbury Boston's appeal is its small size, and in the past the GB had decided that 75 students was our limit, for space, for resources, and maintaining the feel of the school community.

Yet at the same time we are celebrating a surge in popularity, and a need to accommodate those on a growing wait list. Bev, our financial advisor, along with Whitney showed us we could easily grow to 90 students for 2014, with the focus on our Kindy and pre-primary years, which would in turn offset our loss of numbers in 2015 and so we ended 2013 with enough students for 5 classes.

A Capital Grant from the Commonwealth Government allowed work to begin on the new office building. This was completed in time for the 2014 school year. This new building provided vital space, freeing up the vital fifth classroom, significantly more office space for Whitney, a new large kitchen, sick bay, meeting room, conference area, storage and essential space for teachers to utilise in their DOTT time. Having updated facilities has to play a big factor in the overall morale of staff and students, and those parents involved with canteen lunch preparations.

The students are to be commended on their willingness and tolerance to sharing their fairly small top oval and accept an imposing fence surrounding a messy and noisy, off limits building zone. Areas off limits to students, as you know, are uncommon at Woodbury Boston.

In 2013 the GB also conducted another whole school survey, with the main focus being to trial (for free) software aptly named, School Survey, created by Education Services Australia for this purpose. The survey tool proved easy to navigate, offered a variety of options for those being surveyed to complete it, and collated the data into easily understood summaries and graphs. We are now debating the value in making these surveys an annual undertaking, especially given the relevant feedback from Students, Staff and Parents and as an additional form of communication with the school community and the Governing Body.

Moving to five classes for 2014 meant we needed more staff. We now welcome Jules to teach kindy, Oliver has become our music teacher, Caromy for DOTT relief, teaching history, geography and science across the school, and Kim as an E.A., and Sunny has returned in her new role as teacher. Very exciting times.

All this hard work and preparation has led to a smooth start to 2014, and I welcome our many new students and their families. It is fantastic to see so many families embracing the Woodbury Boston ethos, and to see the school itself going from strength to strength.

Thank you.

Kate Grocott
Governing Body Chair

Teaching Principal's Report

As a result of the legislation enacted under former Federal Education Minister Brendan Nelson and continuing accountability required by the present and past governments the school is required to sign an agreement with the Commonwealth to secure ongoing funding. This agreement requires the school to undertake a performance report displayed for community scrutiny. This includes information that can be found on the 'My School' website, as are results from the NAPLAN tests. The thin slice across many subjects does little to inform us accurately of a student's development and national testing does little to help the school generally, except that can show differences in data over time. This data is often spoilt by the cohort or the make-up of the students present. A student's personality or challenges often have little to do with home or school, maybe a medical condition or maybe it's just who they are and their interest in schooling.

I will be reporting on:

- Contextual information about the student body
- A description of how attendance is managed at school
- Student attendance.
- The National Benchmark tests.
- The breakdown of funding sources.
- Teacher standards and qualifications, The National School Improvement Agenda and the National Quality Standards.

Contextual information about the student body

The student body is made of a very wide and disparate group. We have students across the socio-economic range and a broad range of and a broad mix of academic and social appropriate abilities. We replicate the average across the schools across Australian Socio Economic Score. 25% in the lowest about 60% in the middle and 20% at the top. This has slowly changed over the years; however our SES score which determines our funding has stayed the same.

How attendance is managed at school

Woodbury Boston manages its attendance protocols very much the same as other schools.

An attendance check is marked early in the day and then sent to admin to call any missing students' carers to establish a reason, if there isn't a note or call previously. Continued non-attendance without a reason may result in a meeting at school with the possible impact on the student discussed, and possible implications with the education department. Students who do leave without notice are, as much as possible, tracked through the office and the compulsory 'Student Tracking' legislation.

Our average attendance in 2013 was 92%, about the same as last year.

Student outcomes.

The National Benchmark tests.

School policy.

Woodbury Boston Primary School has tried to avoid utilising comparative reporting, and does not believe that its performance as a school, or satisfaction of the parent body, would be improved by introducing grades or levels in its reporting. Nor does it believe that testing necessarily improves academic outcomes in most students. Diligent teaching and record keeping is usually enough to maintain a close appreciation of students' levels. These levels may also be the subject of our regular moderation exercises where samples of student work are compared across the school to make sure we are all in agreement and there is a flow of increasing achievement.

This year (NAPLAN) we are reporting in comparisons with the national NAPLAN tests against national averages, and 'like schools'. Our intake is scattered across all levels, and there are many variables that might have little to do with the standards of teaching, or the school's programme. It is now being recognised that kids are different, in the same school class, with the same teacher, even in the same home with the same family, differences between kids can be obvious. The implications for measurement are that we can, for example have a high rate of results in the middle band, a few in the higher bands and one in the very low band (i.e. special needs), and our overall average drops considerably.

The cohorts tested in 2013 have had some challenged students, however except for two students in one subject in 2 classes we did considerable well in improving all students results in years 3, and 5 against previous NAPLAN test results.

All students reported here, at the average were at the minimum or above the benchmark.

Results of the NAPLAN tests for 2013 are as follows.

Reading

Yr 3 and 5 reading were substantial above the national average and like schools and an improvement on the school's results over the last 2 years.

Yr 7, reading was close to the national average and the like schools; however, our internal results contradicted the NAPLAN scores, as reported; all year 7 students except one, could read and comprehend a previously unseen year 7 text easily in class; above 90% correct, with multiple tests and were beyond the BMS reading scale.

Writing

Year 3 writing was below the national average but close to the like schools average. This is a focus for staff this year.

Year 5 same as national and like schools averages.

Year 7 below average, however, again our internal results contradicted the NAPLAN scores, as reported; 2 out of 7 students were well below the writing level as agreed in moderation with other teaching staff in the school in 2012 with little improvement in 2013, all others were at or above.

Spelling

Year 3 and 5 were at or within the scope of reliability for national and like school averages.

Year 7 were down against other schools and unimproved from the previous tests in years.

Grammar and punctuation

year 3 substantially above all criteria

Year 5 well within the average

Year 7 down against all other schools.

Parent and student satisfaction with the school

The school Governing Body conducts a regular school review (survey) of our school; the scope of the review covers such items as things that do or don't need improvement. These involve all members of the community and are one of the methods by which we keep ourselves accountable.

In the 2013 review 34 families responded which represent 68% of the families. Over all, the responses were positive.

Suggestions for change including but not conclusive of:

- Better access from the car parks.
- Improved IT, increase in sports.
- More use of nature play.
- Vegetable gardens.
- More control over buses.
- Increased contact with staff over their child's welfare and academic achievement.

We take all the doable suggestions seriously, as we do with staff and students, and plan our improvements accordingly.

Teacher standards and qualifications

All teaching staff are registered by the Teachers Registration Board of WA.

Conditions, these conditions are requisite:

All hold suitable qualifications for the responsibilities of their practise.

Also staff

- Are encouraged to undergo ongoing professional development.
- Have current working with children registration
- Updated national police check.
- Are collegial, share their practise and maintain an elevated professional standard.

Communication

The school community is proud of its openness, through the newsletter, and teachers and co-teachers are keen to keep parents informed and will make contact with parents for many reasons, or parents can feel free to contact the school if either feel the need, and are encouraged to visit the school.

At this stage I would like to present a comment on briefs or papers about the Compliance required by schools, under the new Federal Education Act 2009.

Firstly a paper by Professor Graham Lock

The Burden of Compliance: The Implications and Unintended Consequences for School Leaders. (see appendix 1)

In part this paper concluded that 'Principals (Leaders) are overloaded with work largely unsupported by Government, and under re-sourced to the point that children's education is at risk'.

That to meet compliance standards demands more resources in the schools and the impact of these measures have on the independence of schools. Compliance in school now involves 32 separate items of accountability,' ...*hyper rationalisation...determines that the best school is the one who's adherence best suits accountability measures.* In other words compliance with Government standards now determines how good you are. If we believe that, I think we miss the point.

The second is a paper from myself to the Governing Body in regards to-

'The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers'.

This brief pointed out the Federal government's initiative of creating a one-size-fits-all method of accountability for teachers through a set of standards that need to be demonstrated to the school principal. The teachers need to be observed and shown to be competent by the standards. 'The Australian Professional Standards for teachers' is another of the compliance rules that Woodbury Boston is required to participate in.

The teaching standards may not be our standards. Importantly it misses our core values or contradicts our preferred practices. Therefore, not following the prescribed standards does not decrease the high level of teaching practice that we demand of ourselves, and therefore is not necessarily an exclusive measure of good teaching. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers method of measurement is possibly self-contradictory. The evaluation document is very long, covering the attributes a teacher should show through a whole career, with spaces to show illustrations of the particular teacher's practice. Too little evidence for a broad stroke and too much to do, or that, difficult to achieve through its complexity; thus giving it credibility for us is difficult. It is well known that if you contrive to observe a teacher's class with the intention of making a judgement, the result will be artificial and often does little to facilitate change, (sound like NAPLAN?), because those observed may by omission cover their weaknesses; or by way of stress expose transitory weaknesses.

Constant formal observation and top down suggestions (complaints) that don't suit an individual's style of working, have unintended consequences. This potentially dis-empowers individuals, may create feelings of failure and resentment in an already stressful situation. Lack of self-belief and autonomy means spontaneity and creativity are at risk, with the consequence of teaching becoming about itself, about being seen to be right, risking not responding to the immediate needs of students in a changing and a diverse classroom.

The school Governing Body has decided to support a 'Teachers Practices Guide', that encourages self-reflection and involves another colleague. Our teachers worked through the guide, and most have chosen their co-teacher or aide to help them with any challenges. We also measure the success or not of students (And by default teachers) based on the 'standards' during moderation of students' work, and to cooperate in a project that sharply targets core skills in important curriculum areas each year as a school. This year (2014) it's reading. In our setting the 'Standards'. as prescribed could be an unworkable imposition. In the meantime we will continue with our culture of collegial support to underpin our knowledge, practice and professional engagement.

This was prepared not to ask for your response but to inform you of the changing view of education as a testable object for the government, and the challenges that we face because of this.

The National School Improvement Agenda.

The main premise of the Agenda and its accompanying Tool; is that all schools can improve. The Governing Body and school principal are united, committed to this and explicit about their core objectives – to improve learning outcomes for all students in the school; and we all share high expectations for student attendance, engagement, personal development and well-being outcomes.

I believe that this school already has clearly articulated processes for improving levels of student achievement and well-being; and this can be seen in the whole school review, and teacher engagement in constant reviewing of curriculum areas. It's largely a matter of Australia catching up with us. However, even though the school has traditionally strived to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and to address obstacles to school-wide improvement; we are not complacent and the commitment by the GB and the staff to implement the changes that are necessary to meet those challenges in the future requires flexibility and open minds. Unfortunately the compliance with the government's version of this potentially demands constant measurement, measurement meaning student data; teacher performance, and testing; the school's success or failure all seems to lead to testing for its own sake. Also to undertake this tool is to duplicate to some degree what we already do, thus increasing workload largely for the sake of complying documentation.

National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (National Quality Framework).

The Australian Government and state and territory governments recognise the importance of increasing their focus on the early years to ensure the well-being of children throughout their lives and to lift the productivity of our nation as a whole. The drive for change is based on clear evidence about the early years of children's lives.

The National Quality Framework aims to raise the quality and drive **continuous** improvement in education and care services for children kindergarten to year 2, through a set of standards that the school must aspire to. May I comment that after two days professional development on the standards with a group of colleagues in Perth; it was agreed by many, that we could

never achieve those standards, therefore the process will be ongoing in all schools, so therefore continuous. This could be a productive helpful process, or a useless duplication of other compliance measures, time will tell.

In conclusion I would like to return to the Paper by Lock and Lumins on the impact on school leaders of complying with these impositions.

These National programmes are essentially non-negotiable and are challenges to our school in three main ways:

They impact potentially on our independence, so we need to be vigilant and prepared to stand up and state our case.

They impact on time on task, across the whole school staff and Governing Body -we can all be drawn into dealing with these matters at the expense of other more appropriate issues for our beautiful school and its children.

These new regulations, will inevitably be interpreted as enforced compliance by those schools' principals, who when agreeing to this, may be creating a culture of constant oversight of performance of staff, by the collection of qualitative data for referencing standards in the school. This might be met, for example, by staff regularly meeting to discuss and set objectives, to satisfy oversight of a leader whose main job, whose main priority would be to hold staff accountable and potentially turning students into mediums for their compliance, through observation and testing. This runs in the face of our school's ethos and best practice.

'The school enhances the challenge an excitement of learning while avoiding the tensions of competition and continual testing.'

Summing up

If we go blindly down this path, the obvious paradox, or contradiction, exists because resources used to complete these acts of distrust and seemingly lack of confidence in staff and our school, will create collegial disconnect; a cultural change, GB against principal, principal against staff and more importantly an obvious diversion from our essential work of educating the whole student, and possibly our independence.

This potential future belongs in another world of schooling not here, not now.

We have had a culture of strong governance in the past and given these possible future challenges, may it continue.

Rex Davies
Teaching Principal

Financial Report

The financial records of Woodbury Boston Primary School have been audited, and the Audit Report is hereby tabled for anyone to peruse. Please note; this report is not to be removed from the school.

From the Audit Report, prepared by Sue Wheatcroft

Scope

We have this day audited the financial records of the Woodbury Boston Primary School for the period 1st January 2013 to 31st December 2013. The committee is responsible for the preparation of the Cash Book and other aspects of keeping financial records of the committee. We have conducted an independent audit of the financial records in order to express an opinion on it to the Committee.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free of material misstatement. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial report, and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Audit Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report presents fairly in accordance with applicable Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements the financial position of the Woodbury Boston Primary School for the year ended 31st December 2013 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the period then ended.

*Sue Wheatcroft
Auditor*

2013 saw the construction of the new administration building, with the assistance of a Capital Grant from the Australian Government. Despite this grant amount not matching our application, the school finished 2013 in a sound financial position, due in part to careful spending by the staff, and an increase in student numbers throughout the year.

School Funding Sources

Up to and including in 2013, Woodbury Boston funding has been based on 3 sources. ½ federal per capita, ¼ state per-capita, (using student numbers from the annual and bi-annual school census) and a ¼ parent contributions. One-off grants makes up some funds but these are usually competitive and cannot be relied upon. With the implementation of the Australian Education Act 2013, this model will change from 2014 onwards.

Whitney Weaver
Administrator

Appendix 1

**The Burden of Compliance: The Implications and Unintended Consequences
for School Leaders**

**Executive Summary from the Final Report for the Association of Independent
Schools of Western Australia** *(the full Final Report is available on request from the
school office).*

August 2013

**Associate Professor Graeme Lock
Edith Cowan University
School of Education**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

There are increasing demands placed on schools to supply data to a range of stakeholders and to meet many regulatory requirements of both Federal and State governments. Anecdotal feedback to date suggest that the role of the principal is changing due to increased demands external to the school and is placing leaders more as administrative agents of governments and taking away the from the crucial roles of school leader and the driver of education leadership within the school. A recently completed comprehensive survey of Western Australian public school principals commissioned by the State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia (SSTUWA) concluded that "principals are overloaded with work, unsupported and under resourced to the point children's education is at risk" (West Australian, May 28th 2013). A recent 'Briefing the Board' discussion session conducted by the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA), which included principals and board members from member schools, also raised concern about the amount of time and stress external compliance requests was placing on schools, particularly principals (Appendix Three). In response to ongoing concerns AISWA has commissioned this research.

Research Timeline

Participants were interviewed in their schools during the period 18th April to 8th May 2013. School leaders from ten of the twelve schools were interviewed in the school holiday period of 22nd April to 3rd May.

Chief Investigator

Associate Professor Graeme Lock: Director, Learning and Teaching; Course coordinator Graduate Certificate of Education (Educational Leadership), Edith Cowan University, School of Education.

Aims of the Research

The aim of this project was to investigate, within a sample of twelve AISWA schools, the impact of regulation compliance on the role of school principals. Research outcomes will inform AISWA's strategic direction in this area and subsequent policy development.

Research Question

The research question was: What is the impact on principal workload of completing external compliance requirements?

Ethical Considerations

Ethics approval was obtained from the Edith Cowan University Ethics' Committee prior to data collection. Before data collection commenced participants were provided with an information letter and a consent form (Appendices Four and Five).

Methodology

The data were obtained utilising semi-structured interviews with principals selected through stratified random sampling determined by school student population size. The interviews were scheduled for a maximum of 60 minutes and ranged between 38 and 57 minutes.

Consent forms and information letters were provided for the interviewees, with the signed consent forms stored in a secure location in the Chief Investigator's office. The interviews were recorded, with Pacific Solutions being employed to transcribe the interviews. Anonymity of the interviewees was maintained at all times through the use of a coding system: for example, Principal One. The recorded and transcribed interviews are stored in the Chief Investigator's computer in the password protected central drive.

Participants

There were twenty participants from twelve schools interviewed. In all cases the Principal was interviewed and in some schools the Principal chose to invite other school leaders and/or administrators to participate. Such an invitation was at the discretion of the Principal.

Participants were selected to be representative of the wide variety of schools that form AISWA's membership. Participation was voluntary. The twelve schools varied in most key elements and represented a wide cross section of independent schools in Western Australia.

Variations in school characteristics included:

- Student population size (50-2750)
- Pre-kindergarten to year 7; pre- kindergarten to year 12; and K-12.
- Location (northern, western, eastern and southern suburbs of Perth, regional and remote WA)
- Ethos
- Philosophy
- Mission
- Strategic planning
- Fee structure (if any)
- Alliance with other like schools or a completely individual community school
- Single gender or co-educational
- Teaching principals and non-teaching principals

Socio- biographical characteristics of the participants:

Current roles:

- Principal/Headmaster: 12
- Head of Junior School: 1
- Dean of Curriculum: 1
- Bursar/Financial Administrator: 3
- Director of Staffing: 1
- Business Risk/Compliance Legal Manager: 2

Number of years of experience in this position at current school:

- 0 – 5 Years: 9
- 6 – 10 Years: 5
- 11 – 15 Years: 5
- 16 - 20 Years: 1
- Over 20 Years: 0

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- Over 20 Years: 0

Number of years overall experience at this level:

- 0 - 5 Years: 5
- 6 – 10 Years: 5
- 11 – 15 Years: 4
- 16 – 20 Years: 4
- Over 20 Years: 2

Gender:

- Male: 11
- Female: 9

Age:

- 36-40 Years of age: 1
- 41 -45: 3
- 46 - 50 Years of age: 2
- 51- 55: 5
- 56 – 60: 6
- 61 and over: 3

Leadership positions (if any) held prior to current position:

- Principal: 5
- Deputy Principal: 5
- Head of Learning Area: 2
- Head of Junior School: 1
- Director of Staffing: 1
- System level administration: 1
- Outside of Education: 2

Summary of Findings

The following is a summation of emerging themes and commonalities based upon analysis of the transcripts of interviews conducted with representatives from the twelve schools. Responses to questions posed in a semi-structured interview were coded and aggregated. Quotations of support and individual opinions form part of the larger report and will not be included in this summary. The eleven questions (Appendix Two) probed three areas that surround the *Burden of Compliance*. Questions one to four inquired about the use of resources required to meet compliance; questions five to seven examine the perceived value of the request for compliance; and, questions eight to eleven relate to the impact of compliance on the independent nature of the school, educational leadership and personal cost. The summative themes presented are based on the collective responses and discussion that resulted from the interview process.

Time and Resources: Questions 1-4

1. How many hours per week, on average, do you estimate you spend in responding to compliance requirements from external authorities?
2. Identify the 5 most time-consuming compliance requirements (and, if possible, are you able to state how much time you spend on each of these compliance requests?).
3. Do you have administrative support in responding to compliance requirements? If so, please indicate how many personnel and the approximate cost of employing such people.
4. Are there any impacts of responding to compliance requirements on school resources: for example, ICT, teaching staff role responsibilities being adjusted, overall staffing)?

Common Themes

- Unanimously the participants identified that the time and financial burden of meeting compliance was expensive for schools.
- Estimates of cost varied from \$7000 per annum to more than \$500,000. Costs all related to full time employees (FTE).
- Ten principals actively took part in the compliance tasks. Estimates of time spent on average ranged from 2 hours to two days per week.
- Two principals were of the opinion that any time spent on compliance took them away from their core business of improving teaching and learning and hence took no part in it other than to be briefed and sign off.
- Larger schools had the capacity to delegate compliance tasks to a range of people within the school.
- Smaller schools had little opportunity to delegate and in the smallest school the principal alone did everything.
- The two largest schools had employed specialist personnel to manage compliance and legal matters.
- The five most time consuming compliance requests identified were: preparation for re-registration reviews; policy development, implementation and review; attendance data maintenance; census (enrolment data); and performance management of staff.
- Preparation for a re-registration review was unanimously the most time consuming and stressful compliance issue regardless of the size or type of school. In small schools the workload for the principal was enormous.
- Eleven of the schools indicated that the principal received assistance with compliance issues from at least one source.
- All schools acknowledged the assistance of AISWA in staying abreast of compliance issues and in preparing templates for policy development.
- All schools tried to protect their teaching staff from compliance requests.

Value of the Request for Compliance: Questions 5-7

5. Do you believe there are compliance requests, which are unnecessary and/or duplicated? If so, please provide some examples.
6. Are you always clear about the reasons for compliance requests? Consider, for example, in terms of public policy.
7. Are you able to identify compliance requirements to which responses are easy/difficult? Please specify and indicate the reason(s) for your selection(s).

Common Themes

- All schools acknowledged and accepted the need for accountability.
- The requests for census data from both State and Commonwealth governments within days of each other, in different formats, are sources of frustration.
- Commonly expressed was the view that if government departments communicated with each other much of the duplicated work undertaken by schools could be eliminated.
- The need for all schools to develop their own customised policies on everything is a frustration.
- Some principals expressed concern at the relevance of some policies that were mandatory even though they had little relevance to their school: e.g. Bushfire Policy.
- The provision of audited accounts as well as detailed financial data to the government seems repetitious.
- Production of financial reports was not particularly onerous as software packages and audited books made access to the information quite straightforward.
- Attendance and enrolment data require constant maintenance. Larger schools employ a school officer full time to maintain this data.
- Staying abreast of the changing requirements of registration, particularly in relation to policies, requires constant attention. AISWA's assistance is noted and valued.
- Fragmentation of who is responsible for phases of schooling is a source of frustration: e.g. Early Childhood is under the Commonwealth Government, but Pre-Primary which is now compulsory is under the State Government. After-school child care is under a different overseeing authority again.
- Frustration was expressed at the cost and inconvenience of having electrical items tested and cleared, even if the equipment was new.
- There is suspicion and disillusionment about the gathering of information for one purpose and then using it for another: e.g. enrolment data regarding family background, and then using it to determine something quite unrelated such as funding.

Impact on Independent Nature of the School; Educational Leadership; and Personal

Cost: Questions 8-11

8. In your opinion, are the compliance requirements a possible impact on the actual 'independent nature' of your school?
9. Do compliance requirements impact detrimentally on your role as an educational leader? If so, please explain.
10. Have you observed any impacts of the mandatory standardised testing program on student learning opportunities (curriculum design and implementation).
11. What advice would you give to potential or recently appointed principals regarding compliance requirements?

Common Themes

- Unanimously, the schools agreed that compliance eroded the independent nature of their school.
- Most concerns were about compulsory curriculum and reporting.
- Schools that have a particular philosophy and ethos of education were most incensed about this issue.
- Large schools that have an excellent history of success on many fronts over many years were frustrated at having to meet requirements that proved viability.
- Principals who are actively involved in meeting compliance requests agreed it took them away from the more important task of leading the teaching and learning program.
- All schools took part in the NAPLAN testing program. Nine schools were earnest in their approach to it and used results for school planning. One school saw it as undermining their independent nature as parents were now interested in the results, but it goes directly against the philosophy on which the school is founded. One school participated for compliance only and does not look at the results. One school said its students cannot access the test as it is culturally inappropriate, in a language that is their second language and they do not have the relevant literacy levels to even read the tests.
- All principals were of the opinion that compliance is an area of responsibility that is important to the effective running of the school and so, therefore, warrants careful attention.
- Several principals expressed that they would not encourage staff who were aspirant to the position to apply, citing ridiculous work hours, lack of contact with students and staff, and the weight of responsibility as deterrents.
- Loss of family time, stress and effect on health were common issues highlighted by principals.

In summary, school leadership personnel were pleased to be heard and appreciated the fact that AISWA was listening to their concerns and had taken this positive step to document their experiences and opinions. All schools found the discussion a positive experience and participated with enthusiasm.