The introduction of recurrent funding to non-government schools in Western Australia: National statesmanship or provincial pragmatism?

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The introduction of recurrent funding to non-government schools in Western Australia: national statesmanship or provincial pragmatism?

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of the Doctor of Philosophy
School of Education, Faculty of Education and Arts,
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ABSTRACT

State aid to private schools has been a controversial issue in Australia since the beginning of European settlement. This was true in all colonies and remains a national issue in the twenty-first century. At various times colonial governments chose to provide assistance to private schools, principally those operated by the Catholic and major Protestant churches. However as the colonies grew and statehood loomed, the governments of the day sought to withdraw their aid from private schools and concentrate their funding on the growing non-denominational, public school systems.

In Western Australia, the withdrawal of state aid was formalised with the passing of the Assisted Schools Abolition Act, 1895. This Act specifically forbade state aid and was used for many years by governments and their officials to reject petitions from interest groups for a resumption of state support. Catholic schools were the most affected. Indeed, the loosely administered system of Catholic parish schools that had developed during the nineteenth century came close to disintegration after the cessation of support from the government. It was not until the passing of the Education Act Amendment Act, 1955 that provision was made for limited forms of state government assistance to private schools, such as subsidies for the purchasing of projectors and radios. In terms of the overall cost of educational provisions these subsidies constituted a very meagre level of assistance.

In 1965 prior to the State election the Premier of Western Australia, David Brand, announced, at the launch of his election campaign, that if returned his government would provide a tuition subsidy for each secondary student attending a private school. The Brand Liberal Country Party Coalition was duly elected.¹ Later that year on 1st October 1965, Amendment No 17 to the Education Act, 1928–1964 received parliamentary assent enabling this commitment to take effect.

¹ Hon. Sir David Brand was Premier from 2nd April 1959 – 3 March 1971.
What led the Brand government to set up a recurrent funding mechanism to support private schools ahead of Commonwealth and other state governments? There are two explanations.

The first and perhaps the most obvious explanation is that the Western Australian Liberal Party made a calculation that the small grant to every parent of a private school student would be politically advantageous: the policy would win more votes than it would lose. There is no question that state members of parliament knew that per capita state aid would draw strong support from Catholic voters who in 1966 constituted 25.5 per cent of the West Australian electorate. The Church activists had been vigorously lobbying for a resumption of state aid prior to the election. So it can be argued that the resumption of aid can be attributed to Catholic activism, political pragmatism, or a mixture of both.

The fact that Western Australia was the first state to go down this path may be explained by reference to the election cycle in Australia. The Liberal Party strategists in the West boldly took the plunge in committing to state aid because they sensed electorate acceptance of such a policy. Other states quickly followed suit over the ensuing years and would have done so with, or without, the lead from the Brand government. It should be emphasised that the Brand government was acting on a pragmatic impulse. There is no evidence that the government was implementing a strongly ideological platform based on libertarian principles. Such a thesis might have more plausibility if it was applied to events in 2005 than 1965.

However, there is a second, more cogent explanation for the introduction of per capita funding in Western Australia. The decision to introduce per capita payments was an example of what might be described in today’s terms as ‘economic pragmatism’. The Brand government was facing huge financial pressures supplying public services to a rapidly expanding population: between 1952–1960 student enrolments in primary schools had grown by 34.7 per cent. The private education sector was nearing collapse, an event that had it occurred would have had enormous economic consequences for the government. The government was approaching a third term. In this circumstance it was persuaded that providing per capita funding to subsidise private school fees—thereby strengthening the private school sector—was
a more cost effective strategy than allowing that sector to crumble thereby exacerbating the growing pressures on the public school systems.

The amount provided in 1965 for each private school student was initially small. However the quantum grew considerably in real terms over a short time. Furthermore, following the establishment of the Schools Commission in 1973 per capita funding became the principal mechanism whereby the Commonwealth government channelled funding to the private school sector. This remains the primary funding mechanism today. Private schools now receive recurrent per capita funding from state and Commonwealth governments of up to 70 per cent of the average recurrent cost of educating a child in a government school.

Whether the Brand government was aware that it was setting a national precedent, or whether it considered the precedent to be of any political value seems unlikely, although ministers were aware of this development in other states. Neither the Premier of Western Australia nor the Minister for Education sought to gain any national kudos for their actions. However, the motives of those who set the recurrent funding process in train have not been revealed with sufficient clarity to absolutely resolve this question. The provincialism of Western Australia politics of the 1960s meant that there was little to be gained from seeking to claim national leadership. If too much were to be made of the funding arrangements then the government could have found itself re-igniting the latent sectarianism in the community. There is no evidence among the other states that either governments or interest groups saw advantage in citing the West Australian precedent.

Western Australia was the first state to introduce recurrent per capita funding for private schools. Scholars who have written accounts of Australian education in the twentieth century have overlooked this fact. Their accounts have centred on developments in New South Wales and Victoria, where the state governments of the day provided per capita funding some years after Western Australia. Historians have also focused on the role of the Commonwealth government which provided capital grants for science and library facilities in 1963 and 1967 respectively even though the Commonwealth did not commence per capita recurrent funding until 1973.
Does this omission by historians matter? Rather than explain the 'anomaly' historians have tended to airbrush the Western Australian experience out of the picture. The dominant historical narrative of state aid rightly places the political locus for government policy formation in the Canberra-Sydney-Melbourne triangle. Western Australia’s initiative does not appear to have shaped events on the east coast though it does suggest that composers of national narratives would be well served if they were less sweeping in their generalisations about accounts of Australian education. However, the Brand initiative can be regarded as a considerable political and administrative success, showing a deft reading of local politics. The mechanism for recurrent funding was essentially retained and the level of recurrent funding was increased by subsequent Western Australian State governments.
DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

(i) incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
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Dated 19/12/08
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I wish to recognise all the members of my family who in various ways, have supported me as I have worked my way through my Doctoral studies.

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother, Elaine Whyte and to the memory of my father, Jack Whyte, who I am sure, knows in spirit.
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CHAPTER 1

THE INTRODUCTION OF PER CAPITA FUNDING IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Introduction

This chapter explains why the introduction of recurrent funding by the Western Australian government is of historical interest. The important dates and the significance of these dates are highlighted. A brief discussion of the Catholic situation that existed from almost the very beginning of the Swan River settlement is outlined. The structure of the dissertation is described and finally the sources used to provide the explanation are discussed.

The framing of the study

During the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, the non-government school sector in Australia has grown at a faster rate than the government school sector. This development has been made possible by the massive injection of state and Commonwealth funding. On average, state governments now directly fund non-government schools 25 per cent of the average cost of educating a child in a government school. The Commonwealth government provides a larger quantum of support—56.2 per cent of the average cost of educating a child in a government school².

The Commonwealth contribution has increased significantly over the past decade. While the increase in levels of funding by the Commonwealth to the non-government school sector has been a controversial issue, state funding, which has remained relatively constant, has escaped attention. Commentators have been inclined to forget that it was the state governments that initiated recurrent funding in the 1960s, nearly

² The recurrent funding received by non-government schools is calculated as a per cent of the Average Government School Recurrent Cost (AGSRC). The Western Australian government provides approximately 25 per cent of this figure. The Commonwealth's contribution is tied to the SES of the school intake and amounts to an average to 56.1 per cent of the AGSRC.
a decade ahead of the Commonwealth, with the Western Australian government being the first state government to do so.

In 1965 the Western Australian Education Act (1928–1964) was significantly amended. For the first time since the abolition of the Assisted Schools Act in 1895, non-government school students received direct funding towards the cost of their education. A decade earlier, the Education Act Amendment Act, 1955, had been passed that enabled the Government to provide limited forms of assistance to non-government schools. However, it was the 1965 amendment to the Education Act that provided a mechanism for direct, on-going funding. Hence, these Acts and their 1895, 1955 and 1965 Amendments are of major importance in this study.

During the first half of the twentieth century, while government funding was restricted to government schools, the states developed their public secondary school systems, merging the elementary schools and high schools into a unified public education system in which education was free and secular. At the same time, without state aid private schools struggled to make ends meet; some were forced to close and many occupied inferior buildings and employed under-qualified staff.

The Catholic sector especially was under extreme pressure. It had established a large system of parish schools, many of which served working class Catholic families who struggled to pay any fees at all. The fact that this impoverished system was able to survive at all can be explained largely by the voluntary contribution of the religious teaching orders. Had the Catholic schools been obliged to pay these teachers at the rate of their government school counterparts then there is little doubt that the Catholic school system would have collapsed. Hence, the reintroduction of state funding for private schools was on the political agenda during these years.

Although the Catholic sector was not the only religious group hoping for government financial support, it was certainly the most vocal and the most in need. For many years the Catholic Church in Western Australia, as in other states, had been

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attempting to realise its principal economic objective of restoring state aid for all of
their schools. However this prospect eluded them until mid-century.

The reintroduction of government funding for non-government schools in Australia
during the twentieth century began during the 1950s in an ad hoc way, with state and
Commonwealth governments providing non-government schools with a variety of
relatively minor concessions. These concessions tended to take the form of tax
rebates or subsidies of one kind or another. For example, non-government students
received travel concessions, as did their government school student counterparts.
Often these concessions were made available with little fanfare as the governments
were very mindful of the volatility of the issue of state aid.

As useful as these forms of aid may have been they fell short of the level of support
required to enable the poorer private schools to reach resource standards comparable
with government schools. Parity would only be achieved with an injection of funding
that would augment the private sources of funding to an extent that enabled recurrent
and capital funding to match that of government schools. Further, one-off grants,
while helpful, would not guarantee that private schools—Catholic schools in
particular—would be able to function effectively on a continuing basis. What was
needed was a basis of funding that could be adjusted to take account of rises in the
cost of living and growth in enrolments. The system that would best meet these needs
was clearly a formula that would ensure a yearly payment for each student enrolled.

In advancing their claims, advocates of government funding of private schools
pointed out that non-government schools saved taxpayers and the government
money. Without private schools the cost of the consequentially expanded public
system would be significantly increased. In 1956, 24 per cent of all students in
Australia attended private schools.\(^4\)

This fact was brought home to the public and politicians when the Bishop of
Goulburn temporarily closed Catholic schools in the diocese so that Catholic students

\(^4\) The numbers attending the Government sector were listed as 1,373,592 and those that attended non-
government schools numbered 432,985. (Year Book of Commonwealth of Australia. Number 44.
were obliged to attend local public schools. This chaotic and highly publicised event was a clear reminder to politicians that if the Catholic Church were to close its schools the results would be catastrophic. The closures would place unbearable demands on the public school sector that was already overstretched. This will be discussed more fully later on in this thesis.

For political parties the issue was how to read the consequences of restoring and extending state aid. The debates on state aid during the 1940s and 1950s had been sectarian and highly divisive. In Western Australia, the Labor Party was locked into intransigent opposition to the restoration of state aid. A leading figure at the state and Commonwealth levels was Joe Chamberlain. Chamberlain was a powerful figure in the Western Australian Labor Party whose views may have been based on principle, but were more likely derived from a deeply entrenched anti-Catholicism. Chamberlain’s view with respect to the issue of state aid to independent schools is best explained using his own words.

My attitude was predicated on the inefficiencies which would result from the use of public money to support a dual system of education, that in any case there would never be enough money to properly fund both systems, which would result in either one or other suffering in the future, and what I considered to be inherently wrong for the secular State to support church schools in their teaching of religion. I outlined the position at the twenty fifth Federal Conference in Perth in 1963, I moved that citizens who chose not to use education facilities provided by the State, for conscientious or other reasons, should have the absolute right to develop an independent system of schools of a recognised standard, provided they did so at their own cost. 5

The final phrase in this text received a lot of publicity at the time. This was ironical as Labor depended on the blue collar vote and many of these workers were from Irish-Catholic backgrounds. The conservative parties, the Liberal and Country parties, had no ideological objection to state aid though the leadership was more commonly associated with the established Anglican Church and to private colleges than with schools with Catholic interests.

This broadly was the background to the February 1965 state election. Three weeks prior to the polling day the Premier, Mr David Brand, launched the election campaign with a speech highlighting a raft of education initiatives including ‘tuition fee subsidies’ for full-time secondary students. The payments were calculated on a sliding scale per year level, from £15 to £21 and payable to the student’s school or university. The local newspapers recognised the significance of this election promise, realising that it would break a 70-year drought in state aid. Later in 1965, the Western Australia Education Act (1928–1964) was amended. The amendment of the Act meant that for the first time since the abolition of the Assisted Schools Act in 1895, students received direct funding towards the cost of their education.

Why did Brand take this step, establishing Western Australia as the first government in Australia, Commonwealth or state, to introduce per capita funding? Writers have tended to give greater emphasis to the per capita funding changes that followed in New South Wales and Victoria. Further, the states’ initiatives tended to be glossed over as attention was given by scholars to the Commonwealth injection of per capita funding to non-government schools following the establishment of the Schools Commission in 1973. However, by this time there was a well-established precedent for per capita funding to non-government schools, which had been provided by the states. It can be argued that the state funding, though smaller in scale than the Commonwealth’s, in effect laid the foundation for the Commonwealth effort. If that is so it can be further argued that the Western Australian initiative broke the mould of ad hoc support and provided the basic mechanism that would be used from then on to substantially fund the recurrent costs of non-government schools, so making the expansion of the non-government sector possible.

On the other hand, it could be argued that the Western Australian activists were minnows and the big fish were the leading Catholic clergy and lay activists in New South Wales and Victoria. They provided the national leadership and established the climate that enabled the Western Australian government to ‘jump the gun’.

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6 These figures of £15-£21 were to be paid to those in the early years of high school, the last two years of high school and to university students.
Moreover, if Western Australia was of paltry political significance in the national political landscape then it can be argued that whatever happened in this state was unlikely to have influenced the others.

This dissertation, therefore, aims to extend our understanding of a controversial public policy issue: the use of public funds to support private educational institutions. The issue was a vexed one all those years ago and remains so in the twenty-first century. Specifically, this dissertation will examine the events surrounding the introduction of per capita funding in Western Australia. As previously stated the events that transpired in Western Australia have largely been ignored in other accounts of this matter.

The structure and scope of the dissertation

The research for this dissertation begins in Chapter 2 with a brief survey of the history of state aid from European settlement in Western Australia to 1965. This early history allows us to understand the origins of the sectarian views that were held so strongly in the late 50s and the early 60s.

Chapter 3 describes the growing pressures on the states to expand their educational provision and the attempts of the Premiers to interest the Prime Minister in some form of national funding. During the debate that took place during the Premiers Conferences the Commonwealth showed almost no interest in the requests made by the Premiers for funding.

Chapter 4 will begin with an account of the rapid growth in population Australia was experiencing post World War II and will describe how the state was struggling to provide basic educational services. Most of the states were experiencing similar difficulties. However, the situation in Western Australia was probably the most acute. If the Commonwealth was unable to provide a financial rescue package then the State government would need to find its own solution.

Chapter 5 focuses on the Catholic activists of the period. Although government schools were under pressure, the Catholic system was in dire straits. The role of the
Parents and Friends Federation is examined as is the parts played by the major activists who, over the years, were able to keep their request and attitudes to the fore in the media. The roles of the Archbishops and the deputations made by these activist groups will be detailed. Finally the impact of the Grants Commission and the effect that the Grants Commission had on the way that non-government schools were treated will be discussed.

In Chapter 6 the emerging role of the Commonwealth in the politics of state aid is examined. The state aid initiatives introduced nationally by Prime Minister Menzies during the early sixties are analysed. It is clear that in other states there had been a slow, incremental restoration of state aid although by 1965 no government had gone as far as to introduce per capita recurrent funding.

Chapter 7 concentrates on the local Western Australian political scene immediately prior to the 1965 state election. This chapter addresses 'this vexed question'. This was a term used by the Minister for Education when he referred to the problems he was facing with regard to state aid. The tenth Annual General Meeting of the Parents and Citizens Federation is explored in detail, looking particularly at the impact that it had on the Minister. The government files give a detailed account of what took place. This is an interesting event with repercussions that continued for a number of months. These repercussions are outlined. The chapter concludes with the election of 1965, where in Brand surprisingly announced recurrent funding as a key election promise.

In Chapter 8 the economic underpinning of the decision to introduce per capita funding are explored. The chapter begins with a detailed account of the impact of the Commonwealth Grants Commission during the years 1950–1970. This chapter considers why it was initially not in the interests of the Treasury to introduce state aid, and then outlines the policy changes that eventuated. A number of issues that are specifically related to Western Australia are outlined and discussed in this chapter. A document from the Cabinet files that records the Minutes and Decisions from the period January 5th 1965 to June 8th 1965 is outlined and discussed. At the conclusion of this chapter the election of 1965 is assessed in detail. The changes that this
election were to bring are illustrated with the passing of the 17th amendment in the Western Australian Statutes for 1965.

The final chapter concludes with an argument that seeks to explain why Brand made the eventful decision to introduce per capita funding in 1965. Chapter 9 reviews the state and national significance of this political act. The subsequent expansion of recurrent funding of private schools in Australia is described. Finally, the chapter considers the historical significance of the findings of this study for contemporary accounts of the school funding.

Primary sources of evidence and method of inquiry

The starting point for this study was to survey, as closely and widely as possible, the primary sources that described the events preceding the decision of the Western Australian state government to introduce per capita funding for non-government students. The first body of evidence lies in the official files. There are limits to what can be found in such files. Experienced bureaucrats will consider very carefully what should or should not be committed to official files. Only those materials that could bear public examination are included. In any event, a decision to instigate recurrent funding must surely have been perceived by politicians at the time as having potentially wide political ramifications. State Cabinet would presumably have discussed these issues; however the data was not recorded.

Cabinet Minutes formed another body of evidence, however brief. In the period being researched the records of the Cabinet meetings were very scanty, almost to the point of being non-existent. Generally any document found in these files could also be found in another file: they shed little additional light. Finding anything of interest in relation to education policy in the Cabinet Minutes was hardly ever the case. In all of the six years of particular interest the only document that gave any insight or any information was a document that was filed just before the 1965 election on the 12th January of that year. However the discovery of just a couple of phrases in this document were worth the research effort, and counter-balanced finding almost nothing for the other six years of record in the Cabinet papers.
Another starting point was the body of evidence held by the protagonists, particularly the Catholic activists. Records of their meetings and correspondence were drawn on. The truth however does not speak for itself as in every historical study interpretation must be brought to bear. In Western Australia it is important to remember that there were a number of activists that kept the matter of state aid in the news. Some of these early activists came from the State Parents and Friends Association, which came into being prior to 1962 and laid the foundations for the formation of the Australian Parents Council.8

One of these activists was Mr Paul Donnelly who arrived from England in 1947. He brought with him his experience of working for education justice in England through the Catholic Parents and Electors Association. His influence in organising an active campaign in Western Australia was important.9 Another activist was Mr. W.A. Mahoney who was the President of the Association from 1954–1969. Mahoney was very involved with many of the meetings with the government and wrote many letters to the government supporting government funding to the non-government schools. Another activist who was involved for many years was a Mr W.I. Keogh, the secretary of the Parents and Friends Association of Western Australia, he wrote many letters to the government, and kept reminding them of the Association's needs. Another person equally involved over those years was Mr Brian Peachey, who was active in the Democratic Labour Party.

During the early aspects of this research, general texts and papers were viewed in an attempt to find out what had already been written. The information about state aid generally was very limited and especially limited was the information about Western Australia.

The Hansard volumes between the mid 1950s and late 1960s were viewed. The detailed index of each Hansard volume simplified this task, beginning with the Department heading of Education, and then under the sub-heading of state-aid. It was therefore relatively easy to locate all the references to this topic in each volume.

8 APC Review. (July 2000). p.4.
However, the depth, quality and quantity of the comments in Hansard were very limited; the one exception was Hansard Volume 8, where the debate for the 1895 Act was recorded. The debate and discussion recorded in that volume gave a very clear picture of the attitudes and views held at the time. The Statutes were useful, but of course really only for the final document, the completed amendment to the Act.

The State Records Department of Western Australia proved to be the best source of material for this study. Its index files of information are extremely well-referenced. At the point in the research, when I became aware of the key dates, I was able to limit the years for major research down to 1959–1965. These years were selected for two reasons. Firstly this period took in the final year of the Hawke Labor government and the beginnings of the Brand Coalition government which in turn lead to the legislation of the 1965 Amendment. Secondly this was a period of intense interest shown in education in the Premiers Conferences in Canberra. However, my research began with a file that included a letter written in 1936 to The West Australian. So it was that painstaking work of an archivist all those years ago that was able to help me build a picture of the sectarian feelings and the attitudes of the time towards state aid.

I was very careful to record these documents in their fullest detail. This was important as often highly pertinent information came not in sentences but in phrases. So it was important that the notes taken were not summaries. They had to be exact copies of the pages of these files. Although these files were only four in number, each file had approximately 200 pages. It was not really possible to have these documents photocopied, so it was important that each was read and recorded in detail, as these crucial phrases were easily missed in the first reading.

From these files other file numbers were sometimes recorded. These were investigated. In the documents in the files comments were often made either in the memoranda, letters or, on occasions, there were very brief hand-written notes at the end of these documents, making reference to Cabinet Meetings in Perth and Premiers Conferences held in Canberra.

The Premiers Conferences yielded a wealth of information. Generally, the accounts of the meetings did not specify individual states, especially if that state had a small
population and was politically less powerful. This was the case with Western Australia. The perspectives of the larger states like New South Wales and Victoria tended to be described in more detail. Because the conferences were only two days in length, the discussion was often limited, and where a large number of agenda topics were considered, there was not much opportunity for wide-ranging discussions. The debate was nevertheless invaluable, especially in terms of the state government versus the Commonwealth Government. These documents gave a clear and detailed account of the attitude and personalities of the times—especially if the problem was a concern for one of the larger states.

During this era concerns about education were seen as a national problem for all the states. So a macro view of education was outlined in these documents. The amount of time devoted to the area of education over this period was large and the problems outlined were very much common to each state. Each state was certainly in a very similar situation, but there were differences. Yet, as often was the case, the difficulties experienced by all of the states were frequently exacerbated in Western Australia.

The Western Australian Cabinet Meetings records for 1959 were comprised of four files. As the years went by the number of files increased to five. Often the information relating to educational issues was negligible, especially in the early years. The files covered all departments and were full of interesting information but not necessarily about education. The final copy of any Act would appear in these files but the debate, if it occurred at all, was not recorded. There might be just a hand-written note to say that the members of the Cabinet had agreed to the amendment of the Act. Towards the end of the years of particular interest there was a memorandum from the Under Treasurer that gave some important and invaluable insight. Once again it was only a phrase, but it was all that was needed. And the phrase confirmed what I believed to be the case, and it was certainly what I had been hoping to find to support my argument.

This investigation has followed events 40 years after they occurred so most of the key protagonists were either deceased, or unavailable for comment, or had forgotten what had transpired so long ago. I was able to contact one member of the Brand
Cabinet prior to formally commencing the study. Education had not been his portfolio and he was unable to recall discussion about state aid in Cabinet in 1965. At the same time I had met with a prominent Catholic activist of that period. While interested and helpful he could not shed any new light on what had led the Premier to go to the polls with state aid a key election promise. So the mystery of what actually happened cannot now be resolved from the first hand accounts of participants in the events.

When researching and recording the data, I took note of many of Alun Munslow’s comments.10 One comment that seemed particularly appropriate was that historians are not free agents, like sculptors who can simply take the clay of evidence and shape it as they see fit; and this should be remembered.11 It is not just a matter of sifting through the evidence and facts. Interpretation is an act of linguistic and literary creation, so great care should be taken when using primary source data.

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11 Ibid p.74.
CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Introduction

This chapter surveys the history of state aid from the beginning of colonial settlement until the 1960s. The chapter focuses on Western Australia. The survey is divided into three phases: from the beginning of settlement in 1829 until 1895, from 1895 until 1954 and from 1955 until 1965.

The first phase (1829–1895) examines the period between the beginnings of the Swan River Settlement and the Assisted Schools Abolition Act of 1895. This is an important period since it provides the historical content against which the events of later years can be interpreted. Of particular significance in this period are the parliamentary proceedings as revealed in Hansard. The Hansard debate gives an insight into the origins of the sectarian views that were so strongly held even into the late 1950s and early 1960s. A reading of this debate provides an illuminating perspective on those sectarian attitudes.

The second phase (1895–1954) covers a period when there was no government funding for the non-government schools in Western Australia. This sixty year period incorporates the turn of the century and the federation of the colonies into states, the Great Depression and the two World Wars. By 1954 the state school system was bursting at the seams as a result of population growth. It was clearly facing infrastructure problems. Yet at this critical point in time, rather than direct all their revenue to expand the state school system, the Government began to modify its funding policies to enable a trickle of state aid to the non-government schools.

The third phase (1955–1965) will describe the decade between 1955 and 1965. During this period the Hawke government introduced legislation to provide

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equipment subsidies and some other rather meagre forms of assistance. Nevertheless it signalled a shift in the political climate with respect to state aid.

In 1959, the Labor government in Western Australia was defeated. It was replaced by the Liberal Country Party Coalition under the leadership of David Brand. The Coalition government then completed two terms during which time they showed very little interest in funding non-government schools (although, at times, this might not have been the view of the various deputations and activists who approached the government). This situation changed with the announcement of the 1965 election. At the election launch Brand gave the top priority to education. Given the minimal interest in education in the previous two terms, and especially in the last part of this political term, this came as a considerable surprise to the electorate. Certainly this outcome must have delighted those who had been involved for so long in campaigning for a change in the legislation. After the election, with the Brand Liberal Country Party Coalition returned major changes took place in government policy in regard to support for private schools.

**State aid during the early years: 1829–1895**

Ever since European settlement and the establishment of the first schools in colonial Western Australia, state funding for schools had been a divisive and controversial issue. Colonial governors, who did not have the means of establishing non-denominational schools, instead provided the churches and the private entrepreneurs with subsidies of various kinds to support the establishment of those schools. This support fuelled vitriolic and sectarian debate.

In the early days of the Swan River Settlement, Chaplain Wittenoom established the first school. However in 1839 with the withdrawal of government support this school came to an end.13 Four years later, in 1843 with the arrival of Father John Brady, the colony saw the beginnings of Catholic education. Tannock contends that the arrival

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of Brady aroused both fear and hostility in many settlers, especially those in positions of power and influence.14

This was a period of religious intolerance between the Catholics and Protestants. Brady's initial request for financial support from Governor Andrew Clarke was refused.15 In 1847 Clarke's successor, Governor Irwin, established a committee to investigate the performance of the colonial schools in Perth. This committee was renamed the General Board of Education, and was retained to administer the colonial schools in parallel with the Catholic system for a period of more than thirty years.

The arrival of the convicts in the 1850s, along with the economic and demographic growth of the colony, meant that the demand for schooling increased. On the instructions of the British Secretary of State, Lord Grey, a small grant was made in support of Catholic schools. The amount increased rapidly as the proportion of Catholics in the population grew.

However the grant was withdrawn in 1856 to the great dismay of the Catholic community. Its withdrawal became a source of long-running resentment. With the appointment in 1870 of the first Roman Catholic governor, F. A. Weld, hopes were raised among colonial Catholics for the restoration of the grant. Weld decided to introduce an Education Bill modelled on the English Forester Act. After some modification this bill became law and the overall administration of education remained in the hands of the Board, which was renamed the Central Board of Education.16 Thus a dual system was put in place; the Central Board would have administrative control of denominational and non-denominational schools (mostly Catholic) and allocate forms of assistance to all schools.

The magnitude of that funding was still an issue however. Weld argued that the Catholics were relieving the government of an annual expenditure of £500 per annum based on the number of students enrolled in Catholic schools. Under Weld a nexus for funding was established. This became known as the 'Barlee-Gibney

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compromise—a reference to the two main negotiators. However, when this proposition became public there was uproar. Many colonists claimed that Weld was overriding the wishes of the majority of the colonists by providing the aid.

When the newly elected Legislative Council held its first session in December 1870, the majority of members wasted no time in firmly rejecting the 'Barlee-Gibney compromise'. Eventually, the Elementary Education Act of 1871 was passed bringing a fair degree of sectarian peace by providing a dual grant system that aided both the Catholic and the Government schools but at a substantially different level. This system was tolerated for more than two decades. However in the 1890s the Gold Rush brought many immigrants from the eastern colonies that were familiar with systems from which state aid had been eliminated. Fletcher describes how some of the new arrivals contributed strongly to a rigorous Protestant campaign aimed at bringing the dual system to an end.

Peachey, commenting on the Elementary Education Act, 1871, states that the efforts of the Catholics in Western Australia had resulted in a measure of assistance from the government, albeit for a period of only 24 years. This took place after much acrimonious debate and bitter sectarianism. The Act provided assistance to Catholic schools at a rate of a yearly per capita grant of one pound, seven shillings and six pence per student. To put this grant in perspective it was exactly half the per capita grant paid to government schools during that period. It may well be coincidental, but a century later Catholic activists sought, a per capita payment of similar proportions—50 per cent of the cost of educating a student in a government school.

Following the discovery of gold in the 1890s the population of the colony grew rapidly. The increased migration acted as a stimulus to the economy of Western Australia. In this circumstance of increasing economic growth and stability, enrolments in the colony's elementary schools increased. The strongest growth,

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however, occurred in the assisted non-government schools, thereby arousing considerable debate on the implications of government financed education.

At this time there was a decrease in enrolments in government schools which coincided with an unfortunate decline in their annual exam results. Stewart claims that this led to concern among certain groups in the community over the efficiency of government schools in relation to the non-government assisted schools, which in turn raised questions over the wisdom of retaining a dual system. Stewart states that at the time there was a strongly held view that churches should be voluntary associations and should not be subsidised by the state.20

By 1890 Western Australia had acquired the status of a self-governing colony. Tannock comments on the performance of Catholic and government schools during this period. He asserts that the Catholic schools clearly exceeded the performance of the publicly administered schools, which in turn led to great concern especially when the enrolments in several leading government schools began to decline significantly. The advent of responsible self-government made the prospect of eliminating state aid for denominational schools more achievable. Between the years 1890-1895 powerful campaigns were mounted to achieve this end 21

In October 1893 the Forrest government established the Education Department. The leaders of the Catholic community fought fiercely against what they saw as a threat to the survival of the Catholic school system. Premier John Forrest and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, James Lee Steere, had established a personal friendship with Gibney. The election of 1894 was a turning point: state aid was the main issue and, in a clear-cut contest, most of those who had supported the idea of state aid were decisively beaten.

With the resumption of parliament in June 1895, the end of state aid was in sight. It had been a bitter and divisive debate and one that Tannock argues was to have deep

and lasting consequences for the character of Catholic schools, the attitude of Catholics and the nature of government schools in Western Australia.  

The Assisted Schools Abolition Act, 1895

The Legislative Assembly began debate on the Assisted Schools Abolition Act, 1895 on 11th September 1895. John Forrest, the Premier, was the main speaker, and the transcript provides an interesting insight into the attitudes, pace of life and events of those early years. Forrest began:

I believe that the action of the Government, in bringing this Bill before the House, will be commended not only at the present time, but commended also in the future, as time goes on; because there can be no doubt whatever, in the mind of any one who is acquainted with what has been going on in this colony during the last two or three years, that differences and dissensions, and disputations have arisen, perhaps more in regard to this question than to any other, and especially during our Parliamentary elections. I believe the action we propose to take tonight will meet the wishes of many persons in the colony.

Forrest then outlined some of the history with respect to the proposed Act, claiming that the government was not responsible in any way for the Education Act of 1871, and stating that the government found the Act in existence when it took office during the latter part of the 1890s. Forrest provides the reader with some data about and views of the era.

... during these 24 years, the Act of 1871 has worked fairly well ... the principal religion to take advantage of it has been the Roman Catholic body. There is no need to mention the reason, but various reasons, the Church which has been foremost in a desire to carry on the education of the children has been the Roman Catholic Church ... in 1894, one-third of the children being educated in the colony were attending the Assisted Schools. There were 3,552 children attending the State Schools and 1,815 attending the Assisted Schools. The cost of educating (those attending) the State Schools was 11,356 pounds, and those attending the Assisted Schools, 2,093 pounds.

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22 Ibid p.143.
24 Ibid p.1040.
... the building of the Assisted Schools had to be provided by the managers of those schools; while the building of the State education had to be erected by the State ... Now that the government schools are in full swing, it is found that the Roman Catholic body has the teaching of one-third of the children, although, of course, very many of these children belong to the Protestant denominations. ... the Assisted Schools have been doing their work quietly and well.\textsuperscript{25}

For Forrest there was no doubt that public opinion in the other Australian colonies had been declared in favour of government schools.\textsuperscript{26} Forrest went on:

The Government has been urged during this session, not by the dauntless three who sit opposite, but by their own supporters and members on both sides of the House, to deal with the question, so that it might be settled ... The law of 1871 gave to the Assisted Schools certain rights. They have taken advantage of the law, and built up an institution—a great institution, which is equal to one-third of the entire educational system of the colony ... I have never heard any fault found with the manner in which the Roman Catholic body conduct their schools, unless it be that they are too eager, in the eyes of some people, to look after and conserve the interests of the religion they profess.\textsuperscript{27}

The Premier then read the statement made by Father Bourke before the Joint Select Committee:

"I regret very much that our connection with the Government is to be severed. The Government has always been very kind. ... It will be regrettable, no matter what agreement is come to. Whatever may be the amount of compensation we receive, I would willingly sacrifice it in preference to being cut from the position we have held up to the present." Those were the words of Father Bourke. The Roman Catholic Bishop said: "If the Government put us off without a penny, we would say nothing; we would simply have to bear it." ... These are the declarations of these reverend gentlemen, and I am very pleased at being able to read them to the House.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid p.1041.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid p.1042.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid pp.1043-1044.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid p.1044.
The debate on this matter was highly charged as is illustrated in a speech by Mr F. Illingworth, member for Nannine of the Legislative Assembly.

The views of the country as expressed on every occasion upon which the country has had an opportunity of expressing them is that the Assisted Schools—and not the Assisted Schools particularly—but the dual system of education—should in the interests of the country cease ... I desire that in the future the children growing up in this colony shall sit side by side with each other recognising the brotherhood of man ... I desire the old world feuds, the old world prejudices, and the old world sectarianism, shall live out their miserable life in the old world from which they came and die an ignoble death and be buried in dishonoured graves.  

Forrest was determined that there would be a generous settlement to compensate the Catholic community for their lost revenue. A sum of £30,000 was recommended but subsequently halved by the Parliament. The bitterness that resulted led to many non-Catholic children being withdrawn from the Catholic system, making the schools more 'Catholic', with a greater emphasis on religion. This tended to isolate the Catholic community from the colony, further strengthening the sectarian division.

Peachey saw the Catholics at the time as being politically impotent and having very little impact on the decisions in Parliament. He supports this by stating that there were no Catholic members in the Legislative Council during that period. So powerless were the Catholics in fact that by 1895 what assistance they were receiving at the time was abolished on 1st October 1895 with the passing of the Assisted Schools Abolition Act.

The Assisted Schools Abolition Act, 1895 was an important and powerful piece of legislation at the time. Moreover it was used for many years, even in the 1950s and 1960s, to limit government spending on private schooling. This Act was even cited with respect to spending after the amendment to the Education Act of 1955. The passing of this Act must have been devastating to those involved with supporting non-government education even more so given that its power continued without

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29 Ibid p.1047.

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question for so many years. With the passing of the 1895 Act, a period of sixty years followed during which there was absolutely no support of any form, financial or other for the non-government system.

The chronology of the key events in the narrative of state aid in the colony of Western Australia is shown below.

Table 1.
Key events in the history of state aid: 1829–1895

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>A committee established by Irwin to investigate the performance of Colonial schools.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>Small grants made to Catholic schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>Grants withdrawn from Catholic schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>First Catholic governor appointed – FA Weld.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Elementary Education Act.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>Establishment of Education Department by John Forrest</td>
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<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Turning point, state aid became major issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>With resumption of Parliament in June – the end of state aid was in sight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sixty years without state aid: 1895–1954

During the next half-century the economy of the State bore the consequences of world events. The 1920s was a period of rural education expansion and by 1929 there were some 800 small rural schools in the State, which in later years added to the State’s costs and problems. The Great Depression that followed this expansion had a profound effect upon education in Western Australia, contributing to the difficulties that were to be experienced in the 1960s.
The effects of the Great Depression on the public education system during the 1930s and beyond were nearly catastrophic. Mossenson comments on the impact of the Great Depression on Western Australia:

The effects of the Depression did not end with the closure of the Teachers' College, the abolition of the continuation classes and the cut in salaries, as the search for economy involved every phase of the work of the Education Department. The expenditure of the Public Works Department was slashed so severely that classrooms became dilapidated for lack of a coat of paint and grounds deteriorated for the want of a load of gravel. Charts and science equipment disappeared from the schools and increasing numbers of older boys and girls were denied instruction in woodwork or household management because of the government's inability to provide facilities. The employment frustrations encountered by adolescents caused them to return to schools and produce severe overcrowding in the central schools in the metropolitan area ... For some years the Education Department strove to reduce the number of teachers in its employ in the schools.32

As Mossenson observes, the effects of the Depression were particularly pronounced in Western Australia:

By devices such as increases in class size, the suspension of long service leave and the dismissal of all temporary personnel, the department managed with seventy-nine fewer teachers in 1931 than in 1930, not withstanding the fact that pupil enrolment had in the meantime increased by 1300. Despite the difficulty of comparison, there was a force in the contention that the economies imposed on the public education in Western Australia during the Depression were the most severe of any in the Commonwealth.33

Catholic schools also endured the effect of the Depression. However, in the Catholic arena there was an actual increase in teacher numbers owing to an increase in the number of brothers and nuns; these additional personnel enabled the system to open 26 new schools between 1930 and 1939.34

33 Ibid p.141.
34 Ibid pp.5-6.
Although some recovery for both the government and non-government schools was evident by the end of the 1930s, the devastating effects of the Second World War brought even this to an end. The effect of the war was to prolong the inadequacies of the Depression. There were shortages in commodities, costs rose and teacher shortages impacted negatively on an already difficult situation.\textsuperscript{35} The effects of the Depression were to continue on in the early 1960s and became part of the problem that was experienced by the government that will be discussed later in this dissertation.

During these hard times the pressure by the non-government system to reintroduce state aid was always present. The Western Australian state government files on state aid contain the first entry on the resumption of state aid in 1936, and from this date there can be identified a continual stream of letters either to the government or to the newspaper, \textit{The West Australian} showing that the requests and concerns in relation to this issue were always present.

The first item in the files is a letter written in 1936, in which a father of four wrote to the editor of \textit{The West Australian}.\textsuperscript{36} The writer comments that many people who sent their children to non-government schools were not wealthy, and that these schools were deserving of a state subsidy. At the end of that year the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Perth, Dr Prendiville claimed that the Catholic Church had saved the government between nine and ten pounds for each child they had educated.\textsuperscript{37} In August the next year the Anglican Synod wrote an article in opposition to the principle of state aid.\textsuperscript{38} In May 1950, a letter was written to Mr Watts, the Minister for Education, requesting financial assistance. The Minister's reply was, as always, that assistance was not possible due to the Assisted Schools Abolition Act, 1895.\textsuperscript{39}

These were common refrains during these years: the people using non-government schools were not wealthy; the non-government schools saved the state money; and

\textsuperscript{36} This letter was typical of many of the comments and letters that appeared during that period. \textit{(The West Australian 23rd April 1936.)}
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{The West Australian} Newspaper 1\textsuperscript{st} December 1936.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid 20\textsuperscript{th} August 1937.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid 20\textsuperscript{th} December 1951.
the Anglicans were opposed to any form of assistance. Responses to these petitions for support nearly always included the statement, succinctly put, that assistance was refused owing to the Assisted Schools Abolition Act of 1895.

Late in 1951, an article in The West Australian newspaper indicated that the Commonwealth Government might instigate a trial in the A.C.T. and provide government aid for denominational and private schools within the Federal Territory. This of course would be a reversal of a long-standing policy that Australian church schools should not receive state aid. The matter of state aid and the possible involvement of the Federal government were always matters of great concern for the Director General of Education at the time, Dr Logan Robertson.

Early in 1952, Robertson wrote a memorandum to the Minister of Education, in which he requested that the matter of Commonwealth government aid be raised at the next Premiers Conference. Robertson wanted the Prime Minister to be made aware that any unilateral action of the Commonwealth would embarrass the states. He suggested that the Premier write unofficially to the Prime Minister and point out the serious repercussions that this possible 'state aid' would have for the states. This was the generally accepted view of all the Directors General, and was often expressed over the years in the letters they wrote to each other. They were very conscious that if the Commonwealth Government entered the arena of education there would be a serious shift of power. Obviously this shift of power was from the states to the Commonwealth, but more importantly the Directors General knew that at the present the power was very much in their hands and they stood to lose it.

During 1952 a number of articles appeared in The West Australian commenting on the financial problems being experienced in some of the Protestant schools. This was a significant change: to this point these schools had not apparently experienced any financial problems, nor had they expressed any interest in receiving government funding. The assistance they required however was in the area of hostel assistance

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40 Ibid 26th December 1951.
41 Private schools—government subsidy. Education Department, file 1538-58. SROWA Cons 1601. p.33.
42 The West Australian. 5th September 1952.
and funding for buildings, rather than funding for the actual cost of education. This was a new change, a new focus for the Protestant schools.

The article in The West Australian was titled, 'Money Tight for Schools'. The article produced alarm from the Anglican schools councils. For example a Mr Goode from St Hilda's School stated that they were suffering from a lack of endowment funds, and at the conclusion of the year they only had a small surplus. Christ Church Grammar School, it was reported was in a similar situation and had shown a small trading loss. The article reported that both schools had raised their fees from the beginning of the year. The Anglican Synod felt that as they were now offering hostels for some state school students they were in a more 'fruitful situation'. It was unanimously decided that the possibility of getting state aid for church schools should be canvassed with the Education Department.

Signs of a restoration of state aid

For the first fifty-five years of the twentieth century the Western Australian state governments had used the Assisted Schools Abolition Act of 1895 to reject requests for any funding. When the 1955 Act was amended there were still major limitations as to what the government was legally able to provide. For example an appeal was made by a Mrs J. Mohr on 25th April 1957 for chairs and desks for 60 children. The request was rejected. The appellant was told instead that she would be permitted to buy some old chairs when they came up for sale. This was not an isolated incident; there is a number of examples of such rejection in the State Record files, and all such requests received the same negative response.

The accounts of what took place in Western Australia during this time are limited. Even those writers who give an account of the history of education in the period fail to address the events immediately prior to the 1965 election and its promise of per capita funding for private schools.

41 Private schools—government subsidy. Education Department, file 1538-58. SROWA Cons 1601. p.79.
David Mossenson, whose history of education in Western Australia is the most comprehensive and insightful, ends his account in 1960. Towards the end of his manuscript he does allude, however, to what might eventually. It is clear from his account that non-government education providers, especially the Catholic Church were finding it increasingly difficult, to provide the required facilities. This was particularly the case in secondary schools.

Mossenson makes a brief comment about the 1955 amendment to the Education Act. In this amendment the Hawke Labor government authorised the purchase of radios and projectors for use in denominational schools and for the issues of free stationery and departmental publications. This change represented a distinct departure from the situation that had prevailed since the overthrow of the dual system more than half a century before. The episode went almost unnoticed by the public. Mossenson believes that this reflected the degree to which the sectarianism that had characterised much of Western Australia’s educational experience had now diminished. Mossenson concludes his work with the following insight.

With the advent of the 1960s, the anticipated response by the Commonwealth government to the nation-wide pressure for more direct federal assistance promised far-reaching changes for state and church schools. New forces were at work and once again the outlook was becoming uncertain. For the student of Western Australian educational history perhaps it was an appropriate time to recall that in the past the state system had commonly emerged from periods of transition with its role enhanced and its responsibilities increased.

Tannock is another prolific writer on the topics of Catholic education and state aid, although he makes no mention of the events of 1965 or the reasons for this event. Tannock describes the increasing enrolments in Catholic schools. He notes that during the 1930s and 1940s many challenges were faced and overcome by the religious orders in a time of relatively low population growth and a relatively high

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level of vocations to the religious orders. Consequently for most of this twenty year period, Catholic schools were able to expand in number and the provision of staff for these new schools was not a cause for concern. The Catholic system was able to cater for the state’s population of Catholic students. This situation changed significantly during the 1950s.

Tannock also comments on the reintroduction of state aid by the Hawke Labor government in 1955, with its provision for the purchase of visual aids, and the free list of other items including school papers, spelling books, pads and writing cards. Premier Hawke had made it clear that substantial public assistance for non-government schools would only come as a result of initiatives by the Commonwealth and the larger eastern states. Tannock believes that Hawke’s position was also adopted by Premier Brand.

Another work that looked in detail at these events, although from a slightly different perspective was the work by Gallagher. He looked at the main factors involved in the change to state aid, particularly the contribution made by the Parents and Friends Federation who represented the Catholic Schools in Western Australia. Gallagher’s work covered the period 1953-1967. In the early 1950s Gallagher claimed that the West Australian public appeared to be very unsympathetic to the idea of state aid. Gallagher’s work looked specifically at the way the Parents and Friends Federation behaved as a pressure group in their attempts to gain the government assistance that they so desperately required. Gallagher’s focus was on primary school assistance rather than secondary assistance. However it was in the area of secondary school assistance that the Federal and state governments were to become committed in the first instance.

In most cases the comments were brief, especially around the events that took place in 1965. For some historians there was a common theme which looked at the political manoeuvring that took place with regards to picking up votes. However, as will be seen this was more apparent in terms of comments made in reference to the

48 Ibid pp.161-162.
Commonwealth than the states in general. Most historians commented on the difficult times that were experienced by the Catholic schools during the late 1950s and the 1960s. They tended to focus on the lack of resources in the Catholic education system, the dramatic changes that were in progress and the possible collapse of the Catholic education system.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the education history in Western Australia from the early days of settlement in 1829 until the early 1960s. Throughout these years state aid for private schools had simmered as a political issue. There were times during the early colonial years when private schools received a high level of support indeed comparable to present day levels—only to have it withdrawn. The 1895 legislation appeared to bury any prospect of state aid for the non-government schools.

But tenacity has been one of the prime virtues of state aid campaigners. During the 20th century, requests for aid continued in the face of the legislation which prohibited assistance. Their tenacity yielded some small gains but insufficient to enable low fee schools to continue to operate.

However during the 1950s it is clear that the tide was beginning to turn. Either the state or Commonwealth government had to come to the rescue of the private schools or they would be forced to close and their students constitute a burden on an already overstretched government schools. Most were expecting the rescue operation to begin in Canberra. It was in this context that Premier Brand led his Party into the 1965 election.

As I have stated while several prominent historians have addressed the issue of state aid in Western Australia during the 1950s and 1960s none has focused on the intriguing question: What led Premier Brand to introduce recurrent per capita funding in 1965?
CHAPTER 3
WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND THE PREMIERS CONFERENCES

Introduction

This chapter describes how the premiers and ministers of education in the period 1959-1964 were, at the same time as they were being petitioned by denominational interest groups, were also themselves petitioning the Commonwealth government for a larger share of income tax revenues to sustain their ailing systems. This chapter is therefore about competing demands and pressures of government. At the various meetings of premiers: it will be argued that the first priority of the premiers was to secure scarce funding for their public systems. This made practical sense. Education was by far the largest and most costly to administer part of their portfolio. Occasionally, the plight of private schools was also raised.

The Sources

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the sources used in investigating issues of funding. One source of information about the decision to introduce recurrent funding is the archive of the proceedings of the Premiers Conferences. This material is of interest for several reasons. First, careful analysis of the documents contained therein may provide clues as to the motivation behind Brand’s decision to take the funding initiative in 1965. The material can be analysed to uncover the extent to which it corroborates the correspondence in Cabinet minutes and other official files dealing with the capacity of the State to support the stream of requests for assistance. Secondly the records should show how other premiers were responding to the strains on their school systems. Finally, the records may give some insights about the likelihood of the Commonwealth rescuing the states by providing school funding.

The archives contain a number of supplementary files that recorded facts and figures that were linked to the Premiers Conferences. The documents present data and opinions. These opinions were sometimes recorded in statements that have the appearance and tone of speeches which may or may not have been given. Other
folios appear to be summaries of documents prepared for the conferences. Other items provided information along with data that was of interest to this thesis. However the documents are often anonymous: it is often impossible to know from whom or where this information originated.

The Premiers Conferences that are of particular interest to this thesis are those that occurred between 1959–1964. The records of these conferences reveal the debates that took place between the premiers and their Commonwealth counterparts. The debates provide a detailed account of the arguments used by the state premiers as they attempted to increase their share of the income taxation revenues and their share of the special Commonwealth assistance. The discussions and documents therefore provide the national backdrop against which the decision to introduce per capita funding to private schools in Western Australia took shape.

Growing demands of education: March 1959

The first Premiers Conference of interest was the Conference of March 1959. During this conference Premier Hawke from Western Australia outlined the problems his state was experiencing in the area of education. Premier Hawke was the only premier who spoke at the March Conference about education. At this point in time there is a sense evident in the record that Hawke was the leader among the state premiers.

Hawke suggested that there should be a joint Commonwealth-State Commission into the primary, secondary and technical education systems throughout Australia. Premier Hawke outlined in detail the difficulties he was experiencing in Western Australia.

I think that every Premier is finding that the tasks of meeting the growing demands brought about by (the) increased population and the new developments in education imposes a financial burden which is becoming tremendously heavy and which, in

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50 Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers held in Canberra, 4th & 5th March 1959, p.65. (Departmental file 1959. SROWA Cons 6082.)
some other directions presents problems which are becoming increasingly difficult to overcome.\textsuperscript{51}

Hawke stated that there was a far greater emphasis and demand for secondary and technical education than for primary education at that time. He argued that this was largely being brought about by the mechanisation, automation and scientific development of industry. Hawke believed that there was a huge need for training and development to produce the workforce that was required. He then addressed the Prime Minister directly.

I think Mr Prime Minister, that, on the financial side too, the states could comfortably handle primary education, but there is urgent need for something to be done, on the financial side and on the other sides also, so far as the states are concerned, in regard to secondary and tertiary education. As the young people who are trained in the secondary schools and technical schools will play a vital part in the national set up, it seems to me that those two sections of the state educational system require close investigation by an expert Commission in order that plans may be developed to finance their development adequately in the future and enable them to keep pace with the growing demand of industry for trained, skilled and scientific personnel.\textsuperscript{52}

Hawke then proceeded to provide information that he had received recently about the private education sector which was conducted by the various religious institutions. He linked their needs with those of the government school sector.

(These institutions) are facing mighty problems and are getting further and further behind with them. For instance Scotch College ... I do not mention this college with any idea of enlisting anybody’s sympathy. (The) same thing is happening in several other schools ... I understand the growth of the schools population looking to those privately conducted establishments is far outstripping the number of additional teachers who can be appointed from time to time. These private institutions have similar problems to those of the government schools in relation to secondary education.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid p.65.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid p.65.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid p.65.
Again addressing himself directly to the Prime Minister, Hawke maintained that it should not be necessary to emphasise the increasing importance of education to this country. He felt that it would be wise to have an inquiry in an attempt to find a solution to this acute and accumulating problem of a system that would soon reach bursting point, and become unmanageable. Menzies’ response was quite prophetic. He responded as follows:

Your proposal invites the Commonwealth into a very wide field which could easily have the most tremendous results on its own finances. Therefore I am not attracted to this proposal. ... With respect to all other branches of education, we cannot, after all ignore the fact that the Commonwealth subventions to the states, include very, very large sums of money which states expend on educational purpose. It cannot be said that we are not contributing. We are contributing in bulk to the states, but the states in using the money, very properly have all paid growing attention to the educational problem. I admit the existence of the problem. I see it very clearly, and have great sympathy with it.54

During these years prior to the introduction of direct recurrent funding Western Australia was presented with a real dilemma. This dilemma, which was to continue for more than a decade, was as follows. This was a period where the population had begun to increase and this increase was to continue for several more years. This growth in population provided Western Australia with the need to expand essential services. The natural resources at this time were relatively meagre; the resources boom of the late 1960s and early 1970s was still more than a decade away. The population was small, and was predominantly rural and widely scattered. All these factors presented the State with a huge problem in terms of essential services. The costs of these services were met from the allocation of funds from the Grants Commission and from the revenue raised by taxation.

Between the March and June 1959 Premiers Conferences there had been a change of government in Western Australia. The Labor government was defeated and David Brand was now the premier. An observable change in the power relations took place,

54 Ibid p.65.
while Hawke appeared to have been dominant in relation to the other premiers, Brand, the newcomer, appeared to take a lesser position. It took quite some time for Brand to assert his influence. For example, during the meeting of the Commonwealth and State Ministers for Education in June 1959, the acting Prime Minister, Mr McEwen, commented that Premier Brand had communicated with him on the matter of the enquiry into all aspects of secondary and technical education. However the matter had not been attended to, so the debate on education had to wait until the Conference in 1961.

The rising tide of enrolments: June 1961

At the Premiers Conference in June 1961 the pressures arising from escalating school enrolments were discussed again. Whatever other differences existed between the states, the situation with regard to increasing enrolments was generally the same for them all. Mr Heffron, the Premier of New South Wales was always very vocal at these meetings, and this meeting was no different.

The Ministers (of education) agreed that, despite their best efforts ... educational services had not kept pace with the swiftly increasing demands made upon those services during the post-war years. Heffron continued by stating that the rising tide of enrolments was the result of both a natural increase in the Australian birth rate along with the influx of migrant children of school age.

At present the wave of school enrolments has passed the primary level and is being felt in the secondary schools. ... Yet to speak in terms of waves, with the anticipation that troughs will follow, is to give a misleading picture of the present situation. A more realistic picture would be that of a continually rising tide. Despite changes in the rate at which the tide is rising, there is no sign of a turn. ... Changes in the birth rate are not of primary interest to those who are concerned with the provision of education facilities unless those changes are very marked, for it is the

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55 Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers held in Canberra. 23rd & 24th June 1959. (Departmental file 1959. SROWA Cons 6082.)
56 Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers held in Canberra. 2nd & 3rd July 1964. p.38. (Departmental file 1961. SROWA Cons 6082.)
number of places in schools which have to be provided that is the matter of immediate concern.\textsuperscript{57}

The argument was put that unless the Commonwealth and the states worked jointly to solve the problem of rising enrolments the twin problems of overcrowding and poor quality facilities would weaken Australia’s competitive position internationally.\textsuperscript{58} This was the view of the premiers generally.

Western Australia’s Premier, David Brand, added his thoughts to the debate. He felt that the education system should not be left in such a parlous condition, although he believed that education was fundamentally the responsibility of the states.

(\textit{It}) must be clear to the Commonwealth that the capital funds which have been available for State works have been inadequate to make any worthwhile impression on the difficulties which have been accumulating over the past few years. We have had our hands full in keeping up with the increased enrolments. … each time my Minister for Education approaches me as Treasurer, I shudder because of the very large sum of money involved in both the general revenue and loan estimates in even meeting to any fair degree his requirements.\textsuperscript{59}

Brand concluded by affirming that the states should retain their autonomy and authority in the field of education.\textsuperscript{60} At the conclusion of the conference, Menzies emphasised that he was the last person to advocate that all aspects of education should be transferred to the control of the Commonwealth and that he was aware of the additional burden that education was imposing on the states. At that time the amendment to the Western Australian Education Act on private school funding was still almost four years away and in terms of Commonwealth involvement the time span was even greater. Menzies could not have been aware of how momentous these changes, once started, would turn out to be.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid p.7.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid p.9.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid p.10.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid p.10.
Education and budget problems: February 1962

Some of the increasing problems being experienced by the states were once again outlined at the February 1962 Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers. At the conference each of the premiers outlined their concerns and the problems they were facing in relation to education. Premier Heffron began by referring to the statement prepared under the direction of the Australian Education Council concerning the deficiencies existing in the Australian education system.

That statement was to provide a factual assessment of the needs of primary, secondary and technical education, because of the shortage of school buildings, teachers and equipment (this) rose out of the realization by the Ministers of Education that the task of providing adequately for the ever-expanding needs of education is obviously beyond the financial capacity of the States, and that the stage had been reached where the problem must be looked upon as a national problem.61

It was pointed out that, although the premiers had devoted an ever-increasing proportion of their resources to education, more was still needed. The premiers contended that much more needed to be done if the necessary resources were to be provided.62 They emphasised once more that the States did not want to hand over control to the Commonwealth. This was a common and often—expressed view of Premiers, Ministers and Directors General of Education. For example the situation that New South Wales was in was eloquently outlined by Premier Heffron. His wonderful sentiments and beliefs about education are clear in his contribution to the debate:

Although we are training many more teachers there is still a shortage of teachers and also a shortage of classrooms. Youngsters in some places are still making do in buildings that are sub-standard. In ten years in New South Wales, we have built on an average more than 1,000 classrooms a year, but there are still many buildings that should be demolished and many new rooms that require to be built.63 ... It is just one of those things we must look at nationally. A slogan we once used in an education

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61 Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers held in Canberra, 15th & 16th February 1962. p.12. (Departmental file 1962. SROWA Cons 6082.)
63 Ibid p.12.
week was "Education is the best investment of the nation". ... We cannot afford to have youngsters leaving school earlier than they should do. We cannot afford to have them indifferently educated while they are at school. Every child is an asset that can be made better or worse by the education that we provide or fail to provide. ⁶⁴

At this meeting the other premiers also expressed their concerns and shared the problems they were experiencing in the area of education. Brand was the final premier to speak and he outlined the situation that prevailed in Western Australia.

In common with all the other states, we in Western Australia face the difficulty of meeting a demand for new teachers, more classrooms, and all the other things that have been mentioned here today. If I were to be asked what would be the most direct contribution towards relieving the problem in Western Australia, I would say it would be a sum of money made available from loans funds to help with the backlog of accommodation. I realize that the maximum amount of money from available sources is allocated to the states each year, but it is a fact that the real issue that we face in the West is the provision of necessary accommodation for our scholars. The estimate of the Education Department is that a total expenditure of £12 million is required in the next five years, compared with the expenditure over the last five years of about £10 million. It is true that we are, to some extent, catching up with the demand in the primary field, but we are now faced with the problem of meeting a very heavy demand in the secondary field. A state as large as Western Australia finds it very expensive to establish schools, particularly in the northern districts, some thousands of miles away from the capital city. ... The real problem we face is that of capital expenditure. ... There is no question that in a competitive world Australia must make its self competitive in the field of education. ⁶⁵

This tremendous upsurge in the numbers of children meant that other departments had to suffer as education took the greatest proportion of state funding. This was the reason for the request for an increase in funding from the Commonwealth as an interim measure. During this conference Prime Minister Menzies observed that from his experience the states ran education very competently and that he had 'nothing to

⁶⁵ These comments made by Brand had their origins in a document made from the Statement of Needs of Australian Education, a date within the document indicated that it was finalised in June 1960. (Ibid p.15.)
complain about’. Menzies also argued that he did not infrequently hear that, although the Commonwealth had done something about universities, it had done nothing to help the states in the field of primary and secondary education.

The Prime Minister believed that this was just not correct. Tax reimbursement grants had been made in 1959. Menzies continued that if they had taken the narrow view of tax reimbursement grants, the amount of money given to the states for expenditure from revenue would not have been as great as they had been and were today. He continued:

The fact is that whereas expenditure by the states on education in 1950-51 totalled £46,000,000, in the last completed financial year it amounted to £184,000,000. He would be a bold man who did not concede that a material factor in that expansion had been the Commonwealth’s approach to tax reimbursement grants paid to the States. In those totals that I have given, the expenditure by the states from loan funds has increased from £8,000,000 to £42,000,000. … In this way the Commonwealth has made advances to the states for capital purposes, including capital expenditure on their school systems. So a perceptible percentage of the capital outlay by the states on school buildings and accommodation has been the result of the Commonwealth’s acceptance, quite voluntarily, of a liability to take up the shortfall in the loans market.66

Menzies concluded by stating that nobody appreciated more than he what the states had done in the field of education. It is worth noting that at these conferences Menzies was always quick to compliment the states for their running of the departments of education; this was especially the case as he had no interest in aiding the primary and secondary sectors of education and thereby adding to the Commonwealth’s budget and financial concerns.

So the 1962 Premiers Conference ended in much the same manner as they always did. The Prime Minister was sympathetic though not forthcoming with Commonwealth support. Everything remained as it was.

66 Ibid p.15.
No relief in sight: 1963

The supplementary file contains a document from the Director General of Education that was prepared in response to a request by the Premier and was to be used at the 1963 Premiers Conference. The document reveals an increasing concern for the lack of funds and the rising deficit in the area of education in Western Australia. It suggests that Western Australia could safely support any submission for additional funds either for operating costs or for capital costs. The reasons were detailed:

(The) Director General who estimates that this State requires an additional—£4.6 million per annum for Capital costs for the first five years, and £2.05 million per annum for running costs to eliminate deficiencies and effect desirable improvements in State Education.67

The shortfalls in the education systems of Australia were discussed at the Conference in 1963. Heffron listed the shortfalls: shortage of teachers with adequate qualifications, the makeshift and obsolete accommodation and the year-by-year increase in enrolments were outlined. The premiers were still trying to overcome the backlog of substandard conditions that were a legacy of the Depression, World War II and the period of adjustment following the war. Heffron continued:

We have managed to keep education going at a minimum standard only by allocating to it such a proportion of the funds available to the States that other essential services are suffering and development is being retarded. But even when the expenditures of the States upon education are added together, the total expenditure in Australia is not impressive when compared with that of other enlightened and progressive countries.68

During this conference it was argued by Premier Heffron that Australia must keep abreast of other countries in a modern technological age, and that it was vital that the

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67 This document was headed the Under Treasurer, it was initialled by the Deputy Under Treasurer and date 12.2.63, and had been attached to a copy of a submission by the Director General and had been prepared in response to a request by the Premier to be used at the Premier's Conference. (Premier's Department, SROWA, Cons 6082/1963/1. Unpaginated inclusion in the file.)

68 Conference of Commonwealth & State Ministers held in Canberra, 14th February 1963. SROWA. p.12.
education system should be modernised. It was also argued that the provisions for teaching science in a modern manner were expensive, and it was claimed that the states had been told by the authorities in both science and industry that this aspect of their work was out of date. Heffron urged the Commonwealth to reconsider the principle of assisting the states in the field of education. The premiers continued by stating that in the area of secondary education the states were facing a position that they had never known before and that the problems were becoming urgent. Heffron commented:

... what we do need is the financial assistance of the Commonwealth specifically for education so that we may provide it as a standard that is worthy of Australia. In NSW financing of the needs of education services has for some years posed a budgetary problem of increasing magnitude due to the increase in school population generally and the trend to a longer school life, as well as the increasing cost of providing a standard of education to meet the needs of the modern world.69

Premier Brand supported the case for Commonwealth assistance that had been put forward by the other premiers. He outlined some of the special features that were specific to the situation in Western Australia. Brand argued that Western Australia's special circumstances went beyond the circumstances that the other states found themselves in.

A vast State like Western Australia naturally supports any move towards easing the problem of financing education. If money is available from a Commonwealth source for the purpose, it should be part of the grant that is made at the beginning of the year. ... the Director General of Education in WA has given me some figures which only go in support of the case that has been put this afternoon. If we are to make progress and maintain standards that are demanded, millions of pounds will be required not only to run but also to develop and improve the education system, and large capital expenditure from loans will be required.70

With no financial relief in sight from the Commonwealth, Premier Brand felt that the vastness of Western Australia added to his financial concerns and difficulties.

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69 Ibid p.12.
Shortages continue: July 1964

At the 1964 Premier's Conference the debate continued along much the same lines. One of the group estimated that an increase of £98 million would be needed over a period of four years to meet the backlog of deficiencies within the system. Another premier commented that the problem was so great and so urgent that he felt there should be no delay. Another premier complained that the states were receiving widespread criticism and it was viewed that they were not doing enough for education, but it was his opinion that they were in this situation because of their budgetary constraints.

Mr McEwen, the Acting Prime Minister, in ending the meeting summarised the position as follows. It appeared to him that the problem facing the states was enormous and that the Commonwealth should first digest the facts before it committed itself to a further inquiry. At this point the Conference appeared to get very heated. The position of the states was certainly at considerable variance from the Federal position. It appears very apparent to the Commonwealth that to enter into the funding of state education would be costly. The Commonwealth leaders obviously felt that only limited funding of specific school facilities should constitute the extent of their involvement.

Conclusion

This chapter has summarised the debate about education funding that took place at the Premiers Conferences between the years 1959–1964. Year after year the premiers petitioned the Prime Minister for additional Commonwealth funding to help them cope with a growing crisis in school funding. The Commonwealth lent a sympathetic ear but was wary of being trapped into an ongoing commitment towards meeting the cost of school education.

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72 Ibid p.15.
73 Ibid p.15.
At these meetings, Premier Hawke initially, and Premier Brand later, sought to advance a special case for Western Australia. It is clear that neither was posturing. Western Australia was indeed struggling to keep up with the demand for places in government schools and was under considerable political pressure from the private school sector where the Catholic system in particular was on the brink of collapse.

Two important conclusions can be drawn from the proceedings of the Premiers Conference. First, the premiers could not rely on the Commonwealth to bail them out. There is no inkling in the record of the proceedings that the Commonwealth would just a decade later enter the school funding arena on a massive scale. Second it is evident that of all the states, Western Australia was probably the most hard-pressed. That being the case, it is reasonable to further assume that Premier Brand, of all the premiers, was under the most pressure to find a solution to the problem of school funding.
CHAPTER 4
THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

Introduction

This chapter analyses the proposition that in Western Australia during the early 1960s the growth in enrolment in primary and secondary schools was imposing such pressure on the West Australian government that it had no option but to seek to acquire Commonwealth assistance—or find some other kind of solution. In addition to this analysis the chapter will provide a more detailed basis for the claims made by the West Australian Premiers, Hawke and Brand at the Premiers Conferences, described in the previous chapter.

Much of the material that will provide the account outlined was drawn from documents contained in supplementary folders that were prepared for the Premier prior to the Premiers Conferences. These documents provided not only a picture of the situation with respect to the problems of education nationally but also detailed information about Western Australia’s capacity to meet the demand on its school system, and a powerful comparison of Western Australia and the other states.

The key document discussed in this chapter is titled ‘A Statement on some aspects of Australian education’. This document is of interest not because it necessarily shaped Brand’s thinking—indeed he may never have read it—but because it contains a rich source of data about the state of Australian education in 1961. It predates Brand’s decision to introduce recurrent per capita funding by nearly four years.

The issue of population growth

The issue of population growth came up at the end of the March, 1959 Premiers Conference. At the conclusion of this conference Prime Minister Menzies made an ‘out of the blue’ observation that bore no apparent relation to education. It should be noted—to put Menzies’ comment in context—that earlier he had been impassive in the face of pleas for assistance from the premiers who had complained bitterly about
their inability to provide the infrastructure for their growing state populations. By the end of the Conference Menzies had become quite boastful with respect to the population growth that had occurred during his term of office:

I can remember very clearly a time before the war when we were advised by wise and confident men that the population of Australia would never go beyond, I think 7,500,000, that it would reach that figure by 1975 or 1977, and that it would then begin to decline. That was a rather melancholy picture. You will be delighted to know that I am informed by the Commonwealth Statistician that, on the nearest possible calculation—and it is a very precise one that can be made from his resources—the Australian population will pass the 10 million mark on Tuesday next, 10th March. I mention this to you because I think it is a landmark in our history. It is a wonderful thing, when we look back on the beginnings and think of some of the problems that we have had to overcome.74

Menzies comment ‘rubbed salt into’ the Premiers’ ‘wounds’. Menzies was suggesting that the problem solving was now behind them. Yet the infrastructure of the states was not in place to cope with the population surge.

The national statement on education needs

The capacity of states to provide core services, such as education, was dependent to a large extent on grants and loans from the Commonwealth. This was because the Commonwealth collected all the revenues from income tax, the principal form of taxation, retaining some of those revenues in order to fund Commonwealth services. The remainder was distributed to the states to enable them to provide the services for which they had constitutional responsibility.

Inevitably the states sought more funding than the Commonwealth was prepared to give. The meetings at which state premiers staked their claims (the Premiers' Conferences) were often heated, however in the end the Commonwealth 'held all the aces'. Because there were variations in the cost of providing services (arising from factors such as geography of the state) and the capacity of states to raise revenue, the

74 Conference of Commonwealth & State Ministers held at Canberra, 4th & 5th March, 1959. p.66. (Departmental file 1959. SROWA Cons 6082.)
Australian government had set up a statutory body known as the Grants Commission to equalise the distribution of Commonwealth grants and loans. This amounted, in effect, to a form of cross-subsidisation by the wealthier states of the poorer—the price of federation and nationhood.

Although states like Western Australia might complain that they did not get a fair deal from the Grants Commission, it is true to say that all the states had a problem in common: all the states were under financial pressure. Hence, the solution to this common problem would not come from a redistribution of the revenues set aside for the Grants Commission. Rather the solution could only come from the Commonwealth itself. Only the Commonwealth could provide additional funding for the specific purpose of assisting the states provide their essential education infrastructure.

By the 1960s the Western Australian economy was performing relatively poorly. It was not until the beginning of the 1970s that the mineral boom would enable the Western Australian economy to leap ahead. However during this period improving the educational infrastructure in Western Australia was a much more difficult undertaking than was the case for the other states.

**Western Australia in a less favourable condition**

Reviewing supplementary files—notes prepared for the Premier for the June 1960 Premiers Conference—provided interesting reading. These notes outline the situation in Western Australia and put the case for assistance. These notes indicate that the requests appear to be made during a meeting because of the reference to ‘Mr Chairman’, however this is not made completely clear. Nevertheless the speaker almost certainly is the Premier because in the body of the text a statement is made, that ‘I will not elaborate on this point at present as I will be producing more detail on the subject when speaking at the Loans Council.’ The current state of the State’s economy is under discussion:

Western Australia is at present in a less favourable position than are most, if not all, of the other states in that our economy is only showing some signs of a resurgence of
activity. Suffi~ is it now to emphasise that the economy in Western Australia is recovering but we are at present far from the rate of expansion apparent elsewhere in Australia. ... we see a grave defect in Commonwealth State financial relations. ... I would be failing in my duty if I did not bring home forcibly to you the fact that the position in Western Australia is not typical of the overall economy. At present our rate of expansion is less; our unemployment much higher; our economy less diversified and consequently more vulnerable to the vagrancies of primary production; and personal income and savings are relatively low. To ensure stability and continued growth it is essential for Government to play an active and vital role.

After years of petitioning the Commonwealth for more funding with no result, the states decided to mount a more coordinated campaign. As education was the state-run service under the most pressure, and the most expensive, a plan was hatched by the Ministers for Education at their annual meeting, the Australian Education Council. It was the Ministers' intention that the outcome of their deliberations would be written up in a report that would be taken up by the premiers at the Premiers Conference.

Another document dated June 1960 was also included as supplementary notes for the June 1960 Premiers Conference; this document discusses the 'substantially increased costs' that were being faced by Western Australia. The point was made that these costs would only be partially offset by the Additional Finance Assistance Grant payable in accordance with the formula agreed to at the Conference in the previous year. This document concluded with a comment to the effect that it would be 'highly undesirable' that Western Australia should contemplate a deficit because of the state's limited opportunity for raising additional revenue.

75 Supplementary Notes for the June 1960 Premier Conferences. p.3. (Premiers Department 1960/2. SROWA Cons 6082)
76 Ibid p.4.
77 Ibid p.6.
78 Ibid unpaginated document.
Australian Education Council Meeting: Hobart 1961

A document titled Premier’s Conference June 1961, lists the decisions that had been made in February 1961 at the meeting of the Australian Education Council that had taken place in Hobart. The Hobart meeting was to have a significant impact on many of the future discussions that were to take place at subsequent Premiers Conferences. A decision was duly made at the AEC meeting that the Education Ministers would present the report to their premiers with a request that it should be taken for discussion to their next Conference. It was agreed that the Premier of New South Wales, Mr Heffron, would take their concerns to the Premiers Conference and present a document outlining these national educational concerns to the Prime Minister. At the Conference, Mr Heffron was to inform those present that the states intended to publish the document. The document was titled, ‘A Statement on some aspects of Australian Education’. At the core of the document was a request for a huge capital grant.

In contemplating this approach the Ministers considered it essential that whatever the outcome the Commonwealth should not be allowed to intrude in the management of state education. The document was a detailed account of the many difficulties and shortcomings being experienced in the area of education in Australia. Because of the concern the states had about Commonwealth revenue and the possibility of Commonwealth resulting intrusion, it was believed that a capital grant would be the preferred mechanism. These comments were made at the meeting in Hobart.

(A request of) 50,000,000 pounds, spread over 5 years, which could well be accompanied by a condition that States do not reduce their own capital expenditure below, say the average of the previous 3 years. Any conditions imposed on States ... should refer to the proportion of all capital expenditure by the State ... spent on

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79 Conference of Commonwealth & State Ministers held in June 1961. p.1. (Departmental file 1961. SROWA Cons 6082.) (In the file titled Premier’s Conference, June 1961, there were a number of documents of interest.)
80 This document was included in a number of files over the next four years. Each time it appeared some of the data had been reassessed. (June 1961.)
education ... No condition should be laid down by the Commonwealth as to the type
or standard of buildings to be erected: that should be the matter for the ... states.81

The general consensus of the ministers was a strong feeling against a per capita style grant. The document to be presented was a well argued proposal that was to be presented to the Prime Minister. The Ministers for Education were very concerned about how their past spending on education would impact on the hoped for aid from the Commonwealth Government. They enunciated their concerns:

A state which has spent a large proportion of its loan money on education could be tied to a continuance of such proportion and a state which had only spent a small proportion of its allocation would not be required to lift its spending. The net result might be that the state which has already been spending heavily would have to continue at that level whereas the state which had not spent so much would continue similarly, so that some states would be very much better off than others.82

The states were so concerned about this matter that they had passed a resolution, to the effect that,

... (the) council urges that the Commonwealth Government should make such a grant to each State to be used by each State as the Government of each State thinks best.83

These comments would indicate the link between Commonwealth assistance and the Grants Commission. Towards the end of the document the Western Australian Minister pointed out the extent to which his state had fallen behind other Education Departments in Australia with regard to funds being allocated for school buildings.

Not only was the expenditure per pupil lower than in other States, (only half as much as in Tasmania) but it was also lower on a per capita expenditure (much less than half the amount allocated in Tasmania) and the percentage of the total State loan funds spent on school buildings was also considerably lower in Western Australia.

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82 Ibid p.2.
83 Ibid p.2.
than elsewhere. This is the important item and indicates that our percentage was half of that given in New South Wales and Victoria and about two-thirds of that given in Queensland and Tasmania.\textsuperscript{41}

The financial situation was not only unfavourable in terms of per capita expenditure for the other states, but as will be shown later it was also the case that the population of school children was also increasing at a greater rate in Western Australia than in the other states. The following set of data gives some indication as to the extent of the financial difference in the position that Western Australia was experiencing.

Table 2.  

d\textit{Expenditure on Education from Loans Funds between the years 1958-1959}\textsuperscript{53}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>1. Total Expenditure (A£)</th>
<th>2. Expenditure per pupil (A£)</th>
<th>3. Expenditure per capita (A£)</th>
<th>4. Expenditure per state(A£)</th>
<th>5. Column 1 as a percent of column 4 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>11,493,500</td>
<td>19.78</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>60,051,575</td>
<td>19.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vic.</td>
<td>9,209,560</td>
<td>23.03</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>47,038,942</td>
<td>19.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qld.</td>
<td>3,868,486</td>
<td>16.53</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>26,531,396</td>
<td>14.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>3,488,943</td>
<td>21.54</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>27,967,137</td>
<td>12.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tas.</td>
<td>1,984,274</td>
<td>30.06</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>13,742,621</td>
<td>14.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>1,772,950</td>
<td>15.28</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>18,366,841</td>
<td>9.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first column shows the amount each state spent of the money received from the Loans Council on education. However because of the lack of population details this data set does not give significant workable information. However the second column does. This data shows the amount spent on each pupil. This is revealing; Tasmania was spending almost double the amount that was being spent on the pupils in Western Australia. Queensland was spending over eight per cent more on each pupil.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid p.3.

\textsuperscript{53} This table was included at the end of the document. There was no written explanation with the data. I made the interpretation using the population data for Western Australia for 1958-1959, so checking the calculations as they appear in the document. The data is in Australian pounds. (Ibid p.5.)
student, and New South Wales was spending almost thirty per cent more. Column three shows the per capita expenditure. The variation is from 2.46 per capita in Western Australia to 5.80 in Tasmania. The state closest to Western Australia was Queensland, and the per capita spending there was almost nine per cent greater. The fourth column in the table above indicates the total amount received by each state from the Loans Council. The final column in this table indicates the per cent of the total grant that was spent on education. The state closest to the spending pattern of Western Australia was South Australia, and that state was almost 30% greater. The two states at the top end with regard to spending were New South Wales (at just under double what was being spent in Western Australia) and Victoria where the spending was more than double that of Western Australia.

Later in this thesis a detailed account will be recorded to show what each state was providing as assistance to the non-government schools. It is interesting to note from the data above that Western Australia was always more generous in the amount given as funding to this group. The other state which appeared to be quite generous was Queensland. Both these states, in terms of their size geographically were much larger than the other states. The other factor, the growth in student population, which is discussed later in this chapter shows that the two states with the greatest increase were Western Australia and Tasmania.

Another document in the folder was titled 'A Statement of some aspects of Australian Education'. This document appeared in a number of files, and gave a very detailed account of the problems being faced by the education sector in general. There were also many sets of data, associated with the changing growth patterns of the student population in Australia.

The preface to this statement set out the argument that the provision of an adequate education in Australia to-day constituted a national problem, and the purpose of the document was to be a review of a Commonwealth-wide situation in which the conclusions drawn and the statistics upon which they were based referred to the nation as a whole rather than to a particular state. The document begins with the

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86 Premiers Conference June 1961 Supplementary file. (Departmental file 1961. SROWA Cons 6082.)

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concern that the state Education Departments were labouring under a disability and that there was an increasing gap between the needs and demands of the community and what the state government could provide. These disabilities were listed. There was not really anything in the statement that had not already appeared, however the list is worth restating. There was a shortage of teachers, many of whom were inadequately trained and under qualified. The states were finding it difficult to provide the required new school accommodation as the old was seen as makeshift, substandard and obsolete. The equipment and supplies were generally low and increasing quantities were required.  

It was noticed that the demands on education were coming from employers, parents and industry. The document then goes on to detail the reasons.

The reasons for these deficiencies are numerous and complex, and they extend over a lengthy period. The steady advances of the early part of this century were seriously interrupted by the recession of the 1930s and by the stringent economies of WW11, during the whole of that period few schools were built and few teachers were recruited. Only the decline in the birth-rate in the same period, and the consequent falling off in enrolments, enable the school system to carry on. From that period there began a cumulative delay in the improvement of education facilities and programmes and in the replacement of obsolete classrooms and equipment.

By the end of the war an upward trend in enrolments was apparent. The post-war period has been characterised by constant readjustment within the administration of each school system in an attempt to bridge the gap between the available teachers and school accommodation on one hand, and the increasing population on the other.

The document outlines what was needed to replace the makeshift and obsolete classrooms and to obtain classrooms of reasonable size. To achieve the ends of more classrooms and more teachers, it was estimated that 1,000 new classrooms would be required over and above the number required for the new enrolments. A total increase of 4,200 classrooms would be necessary. The number of teachers

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88 Ibid p.5.
89 Ibid pp.11-12.
would have to increase by almost 6,000. It was estimated that the teacher training facilities would have to increase by 20% and the facilities at the training colleges would have to increase by 30%. The estimate of the number of children between the ages 6–15 years projected an increase of 16,000; these numbers would need an extra 800 teachers and 500 more classrooms and this was for special purpose rooms. Whichever way it was looked at, the additional requirements were enormous.

Enrolment in Government schools: 1911–1962

The data for the following graph shows the enrolments in government primary and secondary schools for the whole of Australia from 1911 to 1962. For each year since 1952 the enrolments had increased by 50,000–70,000 pupils. The graph is informative because it gives a very clear picture of the change that had occurred post World War II, and even more interesting is the comparison of what took place after WWI with what took place after WWII. This graph also exemplifies the Prime Minister’s comment made at the end of the Premiers Conference March 1959, about what had taken place with the growth in population. Of course Prime Minister Menzies at that time made no link between this growth in Australia’s population and the education infrastructure, or with any other infrastructure for that matter.

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90 Ibid p.17. Table 1.
The document claims that the pattern of enrolments for all the states was similar, and gives an outline of what had taken place over the years.

(There was) a generally steady rise from 1911 to 1931, a period of nearly two decades, covering the 1930s and 1940s during which enrolments gradually fell and then gradually rose again, returning to their 1931 level by 1949, and a sharp and consistent rise from 1948 to the present with an annual increase averaging approximately 7% of the 1948 enrolment.92

The graph illustrates the change in government school enrolment that had been occurring for Australia since the end of the Second World War. A comparison with the end of the First World War, there was a slight change in the population growth rate but one that is hardly detectable.93 The growth in population continues at about the same rate until 1934, after which there is a decline, and it does not return to this figure until 1949. Then from 1950 onwards the figures begin to rise at a rate that continued well into the 1960s. It was not just the steadily increasing population that caused this demographic impact. There was also a social change taking place both in

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92 Ibid p.5.
93 Figures for this data Appendix 1
attitudes about and desire for education. The post-war migration patterns, where the need to settle displaced persons from Europe meant these numbers added to the ever expanding population. Over the period of the First World War and during the Great Depression, educational infrastructure had been ignored. These years of neglect had finally caught up with the government. It needs to be remembered that this graph ends at 1962, but the growth was to continue at an increasing rate for a number of years after this date.

The data below\textsuperscript{94} shows the change in another format. The year 1952 was given as the base year (1952=100), and the other years as a result are being expressed as a percentage of the 1952 figure, so showing the relative increases over the years.

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The above data illustrates the impact of this growth on the secondary sector in comparison to the growth in the primary sector. In eight short years the enrolment in secondary sector had more than doubled. It was the secondary sector where the impact was being felt.

The supplementary file for the Premiers Conferences always provided interesting reading. Unfortunately there was never any indication as to who the author was, and this file which was prior to the Premiers Conference of June 1961 was no different.

\textsuperscript{94} Supplementary documents for Premiers' Conference, June 1961, Premiers' Department. Cons. 6082. (SROWA).p.17.
of view that a considerable percentage of all pupils in governmental schools are children who have migrated to Australia since World War II. It is estimated that this percentage is not less than 10. (The) most significant fact is that the total enrolment increases rapidly each year. ... Since 1948, while this extraordinary increase in enrolments has been taking place, there have been relatively small numbers in the 17–20 age groups. As a result, at the very time when more teachers are needed, there have been fewer people available from among whom teachers could be recruited and trained. From 1930 to the end of World War II little school building was carried out in Australia. In the early post-war period many types of makeshift and unsatisfactory school accommodation were used as stop-gap measures. ... Since 1952 it has been necessary to provide accommodation in primary and secondary schools for an additional 521,000 children. This represents an increase of 47% between 1952 and 1960. ... Approximately 1,000 classroom units are needed to replace this unsatisfactory accommodation. Many older classrooms are not suitable for modern education. The problem facing Education Departments ... is not to overcome the deficiencies ... any attempt ... must be spread over several years. Total primary and secondary enrolment is expected to increase each year by some 40,000–50,000 pupils. ... This is not a true indication of the expansion required ... the expansion must be greater because—the greatest growth in enrolments is taking place in newly developed districts where completely new buildings have to be erected with all the associated facilities over and above the classrooms.

The increase in enrolments in secondary schools is higher proportionally than in primary schools and provision is twice as costly at secondary level, ... part of the increase in enrolments will be due to the tendency for an increasing percentage ... to continue at schools after reaching the upper age for compulsory attendance ... cost per pupil being as much as four times greater than in primary schools.

The document was more specific about the desirable improvements: more classrooms were needed, a more than ten per cent increase in the number of teachers was desirable, and lengthened period for teacher training was essential. This need for more teachers and a longer training period also impacted on the need for a growth rate of thirty per cent for teachers' colleges. There had been two main factors

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95 Ibid p.8.
96 Ibid p.9.
97 Ibid p.10.
98 Ibid p.11.
operating that restricted departmental development in educational services. These were the availability of finance and the availability of a large enough pool of young people from whom those suitable to enter teaching as a career could be chosen.99

The significant factor for schools was that the annual number of births, which had jumped in 1946, had steadily continued to increase, resulting in increasingly larger age groups commencing school and continuing through the various grades.100 Another major social change—revolution—was furthermore taking place.

Many more children (were) staying at school beyond the compulsory attendance age, as also is the growing conviction of many parents of the educational advantages to their children of completing the particular secondary school course which they have begun... There are ...increased opportunities for the pupils to choose from a variety of courses and increased opportunities for the children in remote areas to travel to an appropriate school for secondary education. ... (There was) a growing tendency for children to complete their secondary education.101

Towards the end of this document102 other data were provided to indicate the costs required in terms of building the schools. It was estimated that the cost in terms of new schools would be greater than £500 per pupil, although it was pointed out that this figure was dependent on the type of construction used for the school buildings. A more conservative estimate per pupil would be £300 was tendered. The problems confronting the states continued to be listed but the solutions were not apparent at this time.

The argument being advanced in this chapter is that the changes were taking place in Australia in general, but more specifically these difficulties were magnified for Western Australia.

At this time David Brand was very new to the position of Premier. These were early days; it was still more than a decade before political historian, Gordon Reid, would

100 Ibid p.19.
101 Ibid p.20.
be able to list Brand’s achievements in the area of industrial development that were to relieve the economic difficulties that Western Australia had been experiencing.

Brand is credited with the achievement of unprecedented industrial development in WA, including oil refinery at Kwinana, the standard gauge railway line from Kalgoorlie to Kwinana, the growth of mining in the Pilbara and the further progress of the Ord River Scheme. The scale of this development made it possible in 1968 to discontinue the State’s annual application to the Commonwealth Grants Commission for a special grant.\(^{103}\)

Western Australia was still in the position of requiring a special grant from the Commonwealth Grants Commission; it wasn’t until 1968 that these special grants were discontinued.

**Conclusion**

The discussions at the Premiers Conferences reported in Chapter 3 appear substantiated based on the evidence on population growth and the rising costs of providing education services. Neither the Premiers nor their Ministers were presenting ambit claims at their meetings with the Commonwealth. The states were dependent on the Commonwealth and those with under-performing economies even more so.

There seems to be little doubt that of all the states, Western Australia faced the greatest financial challenge in providing a viable school system. Though one would expect each state to put its case to the Commonwealth for additional support vigorously the evidence appears to vindicate the claim that at the beginning of the 1960s Western Australia was the most hard pressed.

Given that most students attended government schools, and given that there was a huge shortfall of teachers and classrooms, especially at the secondary level, the

question must be asked as to whether Brand was in any position to be generous to the non-government school sector.

There is one possible explanation that warrants consideration. While in one sense the government subsidised private schools, in another sense the reverse was true. Parents who sent their children to private schools saved the government a considerable sum. It would therefore be cheaper, from the government’s point of view, to have children educated in private schools and it would be an unmitigated disaster for the state if the private sector collapsed. The impediment that undermined this line of argument was the Grants Commission since it threatened to cut the state’s special grants if it broke new ground in supporting private schools.

By 1960 Brand was on the horns of a dilemma. He could hope for an economic miracle (that was to come in the 1970s), Commonwealth intervention (that too was to come in the 1970s), or confront the prospect of struggling on in the face of mounting pressure from lobbyists for more state aid.
CHAPTER 5

PRESSURE FROM CATHOLIC ACTIVISTS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Introduction

This chapter outlines the role played by the Catholic activists in their campaign for state aid from 1959 to 1963. Much of the information comes from correspondence and notes contained in government files, including letters to the newspapers or letters from the activists to the government, and of course the responses from the government to those letters.

The chapter is presented as a chronological account of attempts to persuade the government to extend state aid beyond that already provided by the legislative amendments of 1955. These had been small concessions and hardly represented the cornucopia hoped for by the activists. While Brand avoided major funding commitments, assuming office in 1959 he did allow a trickle of support. In so doing he kept his religious constituents on side and the lobbyists at bay.

The Labor government and state aid: 1959

During the 1950s, a number of Catholic activists had frequent contact with the government in their attempt to influence education funding policies. These activists usually worked under the aegis of the Parents and Friends Federation, the peak parent body associated with Catholic schools. The contact generally took the form of letters and deputations.

The advocates of state aid had met with limited success when lobbying the Labor government in the early 1950s. In his study of the Parents and Friends Federation, Gallagher found that the West Australian public during the period appeared to be very unsympathetic to the idea of state aid.\(^\text{104}\) Even so, as described in Chapter 2, the efforts of the mainly Catholic activists had resulted in an amendment to the

Education Act that allowed the payment of small subsidies to private schools. Not satisfied with this, they continued to press the Labor government for more assistance.

Typical of many letters written by Catholic activists was one written in May 1959 by Mr Keogh Secretary of the Parents and Friends Association to the Labor Premier, Bert Hawke. In this letter Keogh reminded the Premier that Australia was a signatory to the Declaration of Human Rights, a Declaration that enshrined two significant principles: that education should be free and that parents should have the right to choose the school to which they send their children.

Keogh made the point that the rapid expansion of the post-war school population was a result of the high birth rate and increased migration. He pointed out the economic and social contribution made by non-government schools, which educated a significant proportion of Western Australia’s children. He outlined the economic hardship that was being experienced in the non-government schools and especially in Catholic schools. He asserted that about 25 per cent of Catholic schools had become over-crowded and understaffed. He argued that Anglican schools and other non-government schools were not expanding at the same rate as the Catholic sector. Finally, he made the point that the education provision in non-government schools should be recognised as a valuable and important contribution to the Australian education system in terms of the national interest.

Hawke’s response was no different to that of his successor. After all, the advice to him was probably drafted by bureaucrats in either the Treasury or the Education Department who used as their draft the most recent piece of correspondence as a model for the next. The response would state the argument that the State was under extraordinary financial pressure and, not withstanding the merits of the case, was in no position to commit additional expenditure for that purpose. The Education Department officials would have strongly resisted any diversion of resources from public to private schools. The only solution was to persuade the Commonwealth government to use its revenues to bail out the private schools.

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103 Private schools—government subsidy. Education Department, file 1538-58. SROWA Cons 1601. pp.91-94.
Towards the end of his term of office in 1959, Premier Hawke attended the Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers. At this meeting in what was to be his final contribution to that group he once again raised the issue of education and the problems that the states, especially Western Australia, were facing. Later that year the State election was held. Hawke was defeated and David Brand became the Premier.

The approach of the Brand government

The change of government did not usher in any immediate change in policy on state aid. From the very beginning of his premiership it was obvious from his correspondence that Brand would always express great interest in the problems faced by citizens and would project a polite demeanour, but it subsequently became evident that Brand was a cautious politician adept at evading commitments.

The Catholic activists continued to put pressure on the government. A letter from Keogh to Brand formally requested a meeting with the Premier on the issue of state aid.106 This letter was as an outcome of a meeting that had taken place on the 29th May 1959. The request for that meeting came from the parents and citizens of a number of Protestant and Catholic schools and included Mahoney and Keogh. The request was that the deputation should meet before the opening of Parliament. The delegation requested that library facilities, books, pianos, and laboratory equipment be made available to non-government schools. There were also requests for assistance to boarding schools, in the way for living-away-from-home allowances for all secondary school boarders and a book allowance. This represented an extension of the shopping list that had been accommodated in the aftermath of the 1955 amendment.

The minutes of the deputation are recorded in the government files and dated 16th March 1960.107 The deputation made a number of requests. Its members sought subsidies for buildings erected by the schools; they reminded the Premier that private schools saved the government a considerable amount of money and that providing

106 Ibid p.96.
107 Ibid p.128.
subsidies was the cheapest way for government to cater for the increasing student numbers. They also requested assistance to schools with secondary boarders by subsidising the maintenance of, and extensions to, the boarding facilities.

The idea that this was the cheapest way to cater for the ever increasing numbers did not seem to be apparent to the government at this time. However, the comment about secondary boarders did appear to have an impact on the Premier. Brand had been brought up in the country and had left school at the end of Year 7. The deputation pointed out that the private schools with boarding provisions were the only educational facilities catering for students who lived in the country. The delegation requested that an approach be made by the Premier to the Commonwealth Government to provide assistance. One member Donnelly was very vocal during this deputation and made the following comment.

Undoubtedly more finance was needed for education in government schools, but on the other hand it was right in justice and a matter of expediency that the education of 25 per cent of the school population should not be neglected because of any excuse which arose in the past through the type of education they were receiving by being associated with church schools. It was now recognised that morality and religion in education could not be neglected.

The minutes record Donnelly as stating that he did not think that any government would be adversely affected by giving a fair go to the non-government schools. To this the Premier argued that if assistance were given, the state could find itself not only short of money but it might also be penalised in the ultimate consideration of the grant to be recommended by the Grants Commission. However Brand concluded that in order that some progress was made in this matter, he was prepared to take the problem to the Premiers Conference. Brand also commented that this would be his second conference. He was mindful of the fact that those who had been going for many years had not raised the question because it was a controversial and difficult problem.

109 Private schools-government subsidy. Education Department, file 1538-58. SROWA Cons 1601, p.128.
110 Ibid p.128.
The deputation was given some hope when Brand stated that the government would be prepared to consider assistance by interest relief or by coming to some arrangement whereby some provisions could be made to boarding schools. The delegation was assured that following the discussions in Canberra the matter would be discussed further with the Deputy Premier.

There was one issue with which Brand agreed wholeheartedly. That was in the area of a need for an increase in science education. Nevertheless he restated the dilemma that Western Australia faced in being penalised to the extent of £800 000 because of its adverse effect on the social service payments. He stated that so far the Grants Commission had been very tolerant but had issued a warning. Brand then offered the following assurance.

The government could not afford any move that would result in its having less general revenue to use for coping with its difficulties. The deputation could be assured that it was the aim of the government to come up with the solution ...

This was the position that the Government had taken for many years in relation to the Grants Commission and it later became clear that this was not really the case—although it definitely was the case for quite some time. Over the next few years this point of view was espoused by a number of people, including the Under Treasurer. At this meeting Brand indicated his in-principle support, but stated that the government could not, at this time, afford any increase in funding as that would result in a cut in revenue from the Grants Commission. This was the first of many contacts with Brand by state aid activists that raised their hopes for financial support from the state. Commentary in the files suggests that the state aid activists were led to believe that financial support was just around the corner.

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111 Ibid p.128.
112 The problems associated with the Grants Commission were to be used as an excuse on many occasions, and unquestionably the excuse was valid for a number of years. The details of the Commission and the funding procedures for Western Australia as a claimant State are discussed in Chapter 8.
Persistence pays off

Keogh continued to apply pressure. He wrote to the Premier again in July 1960. In the meantime there had been another deputation but on this occasion the Premier did not participate in the discussions. Keogh refreshed the Premier’s memory in regard to the requests for building subsidies and for a more generous treatment of school boarders.

We felt our representations were in accord with the election policies of both the Liberal and Country Parties. You indicated the Government’s sympathy with the requests and expressed your intention of bringing the question of Independent Schools before the Premiers’ Conference. ... We would appreciate some indication of your Government’s intentions. We might say Sir, that the Council of Parents and Friends’ Federation was under pressure from the Associations throughout the State to urge its claim more actively. They (the Associations) point to the fact that though half of the period of office of the present Government has expired, no steps have been taken to give effect to what could well be regarded as pre-election pledges. Perhaps an informal discussion might be to our mutual advantage.\(^{113}\)

Brand appeared to ignore the mild threat implied in the reference to the period of time that had elapsed. However, the Premier did act indirectly on the letter from Keogh. He wrote to the Minister for Education requesting that a minute be submitted to the Cabinet for the purpose of having the Act amended to include pianos and library books.\(^{114}\) Several days later the Minister for Education forwarded a memorandum to the Premier commenting on their previous discussion.

In our discussion last week and previously concerning the question of Government assistance to independent schools we came to the conclusion that, for the time being at least and particularly in the view of the representations that are being made to the Commonwealth for financial assistance for capital expenditure on State education, it would be possible only to consider some extension of the items on which subsidies can be paid to Parents and Friends’ or Parents and Citizens’ organisations connected with independent schools. And such extensions, however small, will require an

\(^{113}\) Private schools—government subsidy. Education Department, file 1538-58. SROWA Cons 1601. p.172.

\(^{114}\) Ibid p.173. (9th August 1960.)
amendment to the Education Act because of the terms of the Assisted Schools Abolition Act, 1895. The Education Act was amended in 1955 to enable subsidies to be paid on projectors, radio equipment and the provisions of school stationery and government publications especially prepared for schools.\textsuperscript{115}

Included in this same document the Minister quoted from a memorandum to the Under Treasurer from the Director General. In the memorandum it stated that if the Government \textit{desires} to make some gesture, the Director General suggests it \textit{confine} the additional aid to a further two items, namely pianos and library books. (These bolded words were highlighted by Robertson, who signed his name). The Minister then continued, that while the Director General did not actually recommend this proposal, he stated that if it were absolutely necessary to give something, the assistance might be limited to these two items and if it was on the same scale as given to the government schools the approximate cost would be a total cost of £15,000 annually. The Minister concluded by pointing out to the Premier that:

\begin{quote}
You will recollect that you and I agreed that a concession should be made following on the deputations to you to amend the Education Act for the purpose.\textsuperscript{116}
\end{quote}

The document is signed on 12\textsuperscript{th} August 1960 by Watts the Minister for Education and counter signed by the Deputy Premier on the 15\textsuperscript{th} August. There is an appendix the day after, stating that the Cabinet agreed to the proposal and that the bill should accordingly be drafted. Within a week a letter was received from the Joint Deputation, expressing their thanks on behalf of the representatives of the Parents Organisations of Independent Schools and the Parents and Friends Federation of Western Australia.

I wish to express thanks to you for your tangible interest in non-government schools, resulting in the amendment of Section 9A of the Education Act to grant them subsidies for the purchase of library books and pianos.\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid p.175.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid p.175.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid p.178.
So Robertson’s suggestion was adhered to and the additional items of pianos and library books were to follow. Robertson wrote a brief letter to Keogh (although from the dates on the correspondence he would have already known of the decision), informing him of the impending amendment to the Education Act.

I have to inform you that the new Act will not be proclaimed until the 17\textsuperscript{th} April 1961. By that time I hope to have the procedure for application for the new subsidies worked out and the information will be forwarded to you.\textsuperscript{118}

Just before the new amendment to the Education Act had taken place, a letter was forwarded to the Hon. C.D. Nalder, Acting Minister for Education, with the following suggestion. The communication with the new suggestion stated:

I have received the following request from the Research Department of the Federal Secretariat of the Liberal Party:

'It is known in various States that some Government assistance, direct or indirect, is given to private schools, e.g., free travel to school, training of teachers, schools equipment supplies, etc.

As we are anxious to obtain a Commonwealth-wide picture of this aid, I would appreciate it if you would ascertain details of any Government aid in your state and let me have it at your earliest convenience.'\textsuperscript{119}

A week later, 14\textsuperscript{th} April 1961, Robertson wrote to the Acting Minister for Education with the new amendment. It was headed Departmental Assistance to private schools in Western Australia, Materials and Equipment.

So an amendment to the Education Act, 1928 was drafted.

"9A. Not with standing anything to the contrary in The Assisted Schools Abolition Act, 1895, The Treasurer of the State shall in every year place at the disposal of the Minister such monies as be applied wholly or partly in or towards-

(a) subsidising efficient schools for the purposes and to the extent following, namely –

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid p.180.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid p.185. (7\textsuperscript{th} April 1961.)
(i) for the purchase of projectors to the extent of one-half of the total cost of the purchase; and
(ii) for the purchase of any radio equipment to the extent of one-half of the total cost of the purchase up to a maximum of fifty pounds for one school in any one year; and
(iii) for the purchase of books for school libraries to the extent of one-half of the total cost of the purchase up to a maximum amount equal to the amount of subsidy which would be granted to the school purchasing the books, if that school were a Government school; and
(iv) for the purchase of pianos to the extent of one-half of the total cost of the purchase of not more than one piano in respect of any one school up to a maximum of one hundred and twenty-five pounds; and
(v) the provision, for the use of school children, of stationery and of Government publications prepared specially for use in schools.120

This amendment enabled projectors, radios, library books and pianos to be provided to non-government schools in Western Australia on the same subsidised basis as in government schools. Stationery and other school publications were also supplied free. Consequently from the small changes in 1955 additional items were being added. Although the additional materials did not amount to what the activists really wanted, these early forms of assistance opened the door to more significant aid in years to come.

A flow-on of further concessions

The benefits continued to accumulate. The document in the file was not dated however it was headed Regulation 13 of the Education Regulations, 1960. Allowances were made for fares or 'costs of conveyance' by public transport. These were paid to parents with children at primary and secondary schools deemed efficient. Public money was also provided for boarding students. If a child lived north of the 26th Parallel of South latitude, an amount of £80 per annum was paid. If the child was situated in the South-West Land Division of the State an amount was

120 Ibid p.186.
paid of £30 per annum. Allowances were provided for children who suffered physical or mental disabilities.  

At the end of November, 1961, Mr Keogh wrote again. He expressed his gratitude on behalf of Catholic families for the departmental assistance that had come their way. However, the activists were not satisfied by this collation of items. Keogh expressed their hopes.

It is also our hope that, in view of the absence of political and public opposition to what we obtain at present, you may be encouraged to do more in the future for the large percentage of children in our schools and their parents, so that these children's education will be enabled to reach the same elaboration and the same standards as the children in Department schools, and whose education we contribute in major degree through taxation.  

At the end of 1961, the Director General, Dr Robertson, was instructed to reply to Mr Keogh advising him that he could not have any extra support, and that this decision was being made strictly in accordance with the terms of the legislation. It is interesting to speculate the degree of pleasure that Robertson would have enjoyed in drafting such a letter.

**Strengthening the claim for increased aid**

The Catholic petitioning of the government until 1961 took the form of letters containing well-rehearsed arguments but little factual detail. These letters generally met with equally well-rehearsed replies: a stalemate ensured. In February 1961, a shift occurred. It was prompted by the invitation that had been extended to contribute to a Memorandum of Educational Needs and Problems that was being sponsored by the Federal Labor Party’s Education Committee. Catholic interest groups around Australia saw this as an opportunity to promote their cause. A submission written by

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121 Ibid p.187.  
122 Private schools–government subsidy. Education Department, file 2002-61, SROWA Cons 3097, p.31.  
123 Ibid p. 35.  
124 Private schools–government subsidy. Education Department, file 1538-58, SROWA Cons 1601, p.195. (This document is four pages in length.)
the Parents and Friends Federation of Western Australia was made to the Education Committee of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party. Keogh sent a copy of the submission to the Premier which was made to the Education Committee of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party in the course of its sitting on 2nd March 1961. This submission was made at its Perth sitting, on 2nd March 1961. Keogh also sent a copy to the Premier.

This submission made a number of points. The Parents and Friends Federation spoke on behalf of the parents of some of 27,000 children who were attending 160 Catholic schools. The Federation argued that providing there was adequate and efficient schooling of the same kind as given in government schools, the addition of Christian teaching should not bar a school from its proper share of publicly provided funds. Instead, there had been no provision for financial aid to schools in Australia, other than very limited assistance. Yet, in the five years from 1955–1960 in the Archdiocese of Perth, twenty new schools had been opened and twenty-two others extended at a cost of £459,200. This figure did not include the cost of furnishings and equipment. Nor did this amount include site costs.

Keogh concluded that when these amounts were added together a conservative estimate would have been expenditure in excess of half a million pounds for the Archdiocese alone. Moreover, the interest bills on capital expenditure would increase the figure substantially. The submission argued that were the 27,000 children currently in Catholic schools to attend government schools the government would require an additional expenditure of £1,500,000 to meet running costs. It was obviously cheaper for the State to assist the non-government schools to cater for a proportion of the children than to meet the full costs of educating all students in a government school.

The costs met by the parents—tax payers who vote in state elections—varied from £30 to £200 per annum. The strong feeling of injustice was very apparent from these comments. Certainly the taxation deductions were acknowledged, but it was pointed

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125 Ibid p.196.
126 Ibid p.197.
out that, due to lower marginal taxation rates, there was little or no value in terms of these taxation deductions for those on lower incomes.

The document appeared to have little impact on the State government though it prompted Brand to request some information on the benefits made available to private schools at this time. Brand replied unenthusiastically. He referred the Premier to folios in the file where this information could be accessed. In a way, the argument in the Parents and Friends submission raised issues that would capture national attention following the Goulburn closures a year later. However neither Brand nor Robertson could know this.

The Archbishops weigh in

On the 12th March 1962 Premier David Brand received a letter from the Archbishop of St. Mary’s Catholic Cathedral and the Archbishop of St. George’s Anglican Cathedral in Perth. These two eminent clergymen outlined their concerns and their requests. Such joint approaches were uncommon and therefore carried extra weight.

(It is) with increasing concern we have watched, over the last few years, the rising costs of schools associated with our dioceses. These rising costs have limited the expansion of our schools. ... We are anxious that the service offered by our schools to children, parents and to the whole community, should not be restricted to the well-to-do. We are disturbed by the limitation of freedom of educational choice that the present cost-structure imposes. ... The Archbishops then adopted a new tack by concentrating their concerns around secondary education.

Our request is initially confined to secondary pupils. ... (We request) a payment to schools on behalf of each secondary child of a sum equal to half the current cost to the Government of educating a child in State High Schools. The application of the

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127 Ibid p.197.
128 Ibid p.198.
129 Private schools–government subsidy. Education Department, file 2002-61. SROWA Cons 3097. pp.63-64.
living away from home allowance to all secondary children ... irrespective of whether there is a local High school in the district or not. (We request) ... assistance in Capital Development, in one of the following forms. Grants to cover interest payments on capital borrowed from commercial institutions. (Or) Capital loans to efficient schools either interest free or interest at a very low rate ... the loans being payable over at least 25 years. (And for teachers) ... to serve their bond at any efficient secondary schools. We believe that there are reasons of equity, of national interest, and of long-term educational economy for the granting of our request.130

Robertson wrote to the Minister of Education, and also forwarded a copy to the Premier. The memorandum contained a per capita costing of the requests on the basis of a payment of half the current cost of educating a child in a State High School.131

This amounted to an annual figure of £1.2 million. The boarding allowance that was being sought would cost in the vicinity of £100,000 per annum. Robertson calculated that assistance in the form of capital development would be in the order of £650,000 per annum. The final request of the Archbishops was that teachers be able to serve their bond at any efficient secondary school. Robertson estimated that the training of 20 secondary school teachers would cost £80,000. A rough computation, stated Robertson, would be that an amount of about £1.5 million would be needed to fund all of these requests. Of course Robertson pointed out, as he always did, that under the Assisted Schools Abolition Act, 1895 assistance was prohibited. So it would be necessary to repeal the Act or pass a new one. He also noted that as no other state assisted non-government education to this extent, Western Australia would unquestionably be penalised by the Grants Commission for this additional expenditure on Education.

The Premier appeared to accept the tenor of Robertson's advice.132 Once again the Premier responded to the Archbishops in a diffident manner stating that should his government be returned at the elections on Saturday, he would communicate with them with a view to arranging a mutually suitable time for discussion.133

130 The title of the writers of this letter was not totally clear. However the letter responding to the request was clear. (Ibid pp.63-64.)
132 These documents are out of sequence in the file. (Ibid p.61.)
133 The election held in 1962 saw an increase of one member for both the Liberal and Labor Parties, the increase came from what was recorded as other. (Appendix 2 for data.) (http://www.abc.net.au/elections/wa/2003/guide/pastelec.htm)
Although the Archbishops were unsuccessful, it is evident that the activists were becoming more skilled in advancing their case based as it was on issues of costs and benefits.

On the 23rd March 1962, the Minister for Works Mr Wild received a deputation from the Parents and Friends Association from Armadale, in connection with aid to non-government schools. He forwarded the letter to the Premier. The deputation made a submission commenting on a number of factors relating to education. They pointed out that an increasing number of Australians supported the notion of Government assistance to non-government schools, and cited the results of the Gallop Polls of 1955 and 1960 to support this. They claimed that in the seven years between 1953-1960 enrolments in schools in Western Australia had increased by 40 per cent. The submission made the point that 22 per cent of students were at present being educated virtually free of cost to the State. It was argued that in the long run it would be more expensive for the government to accommodate the overflow from the Catholic schools. They stated that the cost of educating a child in the primary years was £50 and in secondary, £84. Finally, the authors advised that the amount of funding need not exactly equal the expenditure on government school students, but they suggested that some money should be made available as a subsidy. Such an action would cheaply discharge the government’s responsibility to the whole community.

Although the churches with largest congregations supported state aid, and public opinion appeared to be shifting towards support for state aid, the Christian community was not united. The President of the Western Australian Methodist Church Council, the Reverend C. Jenkins, argued strongly against the introduction of state aid in a letter to the West Australian. Jenkins contended that state aid would divide the community and cause chaos and prejudice in education. This period saw a change in debate and possibly there was a change in attitude appearing.

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134 Ibid p.81.
135 Page numbers recorded in this manner. (Ibid pp.80-78.)
136 The West Australian, 9th August 1962.
Unexpected allies: the Teachers’ Union and the Churches

Towards the end of 1961 supporters of state aid received a boost from an unexpected quarter. At the annual conference of the State School Teachers Union members supported in principle the motion that non-government schools should be subsidised by the government; the delegates voted by 41 to 22 in favour of a subsidy. The move came as an amendment to an original motion expressing concern over the financial injustice suffered by parents with children in private schools.

One of the delegates saw it as the right of parents to make a choice and that financial discrimination against any Australian child would do damage to the nation. Another delegate felt that the Union members were being asked to take a stand on a matter that was none of their business. This view was countered by another member who felt that as educators it was their business to support any motion that aided education. The union delegates’ views really matched those in the community and they were just as wide ranging. Although the Union was far from united in its position on state aid, its support constituted one further step forward in the campaign.

The leverage of the DLP

On the 17th August 1962 the Minister for Education, Edgar Lewis, issued a press statement indicating that he had agreed to meet a deputation from the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) to discuss the issue of state aid to private schools. The DLP delegation submitted that private schools be assisted with subsidies amounting to 50 per cent of the capital cost of new buildings and 50 per cent of the costs of extensions. The DLP delegates also put the view that parents be reimbursed with 50 per cent of the cost of educating children at private schools.

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139 This statement included in the file was on yellow paper and appeared to be a press statement. The name attached to the document was Carr Smith, at the conclusion it states that a copy was sent to Broadcast in the ABC News Services on 17.8.62 and the name John C. Pollard News Editor was printed. (Private schools–government subsidy. Education Department, file 2002-61. SROW/A Cons 3097. pp. 98-99.)
Six days later the government released another press statement.\textsuperscript{140} The press release stated that the deputation from the DLP had asked the Minister of Education, Mr Lewis to define the Government’s policy on state aid for independent schools. The State President of the DLP, Mr Flanagan, said afterwards that Mr Lewis had been asked whether the Government considered that independent schools should be allowed to remain or be abolished. In the event of funds being available, did the government support financial assistance for independent schools, and was the government prepared to ask the Grants Commission to support federal help for independent schools? Their request for 50 per cent subsidies of buildings and recurrent education costs was repeated.

The Minister in turn promised to submit the deputation’s case to Cabinet the following Monday and to make an announcement as soon as possible. However, he pointed out that there was no guarantee that it would be discussed at Cabinet and that any announcement would have to come from the Premier. The relevant Cabinet papers do not show that any discussion did take place. However, during this period there were very limited records kept of what exactly was discussed during a Cabinet meeting. It is possible that there may have been some unrecorded discussion.

*The West Australian* newspaper quoted Premier Brand as saying that the proposal by the DLP would cost the state over £1.5 million.\textsuperscript{141} This expenditure would have to be met by allocating £650,000 from the Loans Funds and would add more than £1,000,000 to the Education Department’s budget. He repeated the Minister’s words, promising that the proposal would be discussed in Cabinet. Brand said that he recognised the problems faced by the church schools and was sympathetic. He then went on to repeat the litany of reasons for rejection. The State was already hard pressed to provide public schools, hospitals and essential services, and that if money were made available it would be at the expense of an already strained loan and revenue programme. He continued that if the cost of education to the State were increased, Western Australia would suffer a corresponding cut in its disability

\textsuperscript{140} This statement was on the same yellow paper and simply said, ‘Same News Service’ and was dated 23 August 1962. (Ibid pp.100-101.)

\textsuperscript{141} *The West Australian*. 7 September 1962.
allowances assessed by the Grants Commission. Once again the Grants Commission was cited as a key obstacle. The government was adhering to its election policy by providing schools and education facilities for all who sought them, regardless of religion or status.

At the end of October 1962 the Minister for Education Mr Lewis received a letter from Mr Brian Peachey, the State Secretary of the DLP. Peachey inquired about the outcomes of the DLP delegation in August. The delegation had been informed that this matter of injustice to the private education system would be placed on the agenda for the next Cabinet meeting. Subsequently they had been advised by telephone that the matter had not been discussed because of lack of time. The DLP now presumed that sufficient time had elapsed for the Cabinet to deal with their request, and they would like to be informed about the Cabinet's decision. However it took another letter from Peachey some several months later before the government responded.

Four months elapsed and the matter had still not been addressed by the government. Peachey sent another letter. In this letter Peachey reminded the government of the issue with the comment that they had been told that the matter was to receive 'attention'. They had been told that the matter would be placed on the Agenda for Cabinet. This time he asked three questions: Was the matter fully discussed by the government? Had the government made any decision in principle? Was there any probability of some relief coming to the private education system? So the pattern continued. Letters were sent to the government, the interested group then waited for some sort of response. Always the government took months to respond, and any response showed basically no concern or interest. In addition any promise they had made essentially came to nothing.

Two months later Peachey received a reply from the Minister for Education. Minister Lewis answered Peachey's questions firstly by stating that the matter had been very

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142 Private schools—government subsidy. Education Department, file 2002-61. SROWA Cons 3097, p.109. (22 October. 1962.)
143 Ibid p.110. (5th February 1963.)
thoroughly discussed but still no decision had been made. His answer to the second question he claimed was more or less answered by his response to the first. Then he attempted to give some hope, by adding that he and the Director General frequently explored avenues for granting such aid that would not impinge materially on their present financial resources. I am certain these avenues were not the avenues that these groups were hoping for. Of course it never appeared clear that the non-government groups were aware of the Director General's opposition to fulfilling their requests.

Lewis's letter included the phrase 'Without Prejudice' and stated that it was the prerogative of the Hon Premier to state the policy of the government. The Minister added that he felt that he could quite sincerely say that with the shortage of the finances for education, 'even within our state system', he felt that this precluded the granting of financial aid to non-Government education. This made the solution to their problem very difficult. The Minister then became adventurous adding a paragraph that was later crossed out.

Concerning the probability of some relief coming to the private education system, this is a question which should more probably be addressed to the Hon Premier but frankly I cannot see at present any chance of affording the desired relief unless at the expense of our present very under-financed State system.

The answer to each of the three questions asked by Peachey should really have read, no, no and no. The Minister sent a memorandum to the Premier, in which he referred to the letter from the DLP concerning aid for non-government schools. The Minister attached the copy of the letter with the words:-

I have drafted a reply which I attach but as this is a most delicate subject and fraught with political repercussions I deemed it prudent first to submit it to you for perusal and comment.

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144 ibid p.111. (8th March 1963.)
145 ibid p.111. (8th March 1963.)
146 ibid p.112. (11th March 1963.)
The Premier added a handwritten note with the advice that the last paragraph should be changed.

... the last paragraph of the letter should simply contain the information that the Government's position on state aid has not changed and that we consider that the first call on State funds should be to provide schools for people of all creeds and colours and until this demand is reasonably met it is difficult to deflect funds elsewhere.147

At the end of this memorandum the Premier noted that the Under Treasurer had these papers on state aid and that a government decision should be made in cabinet on this subject in the near future.

Towards the middle of that year the Minister received another letter from the Secretary of the Parents and Friends Association Mr Keogh. Keogh began with a few pleasantries, but then made some main points forcefully. Keogh stated that the government was aware that the non-government sectors were part and parcel of the education system. It was his belief that while the government recognised that these schools made a great contribution, and that the parents of these students made a sacrifice, no government had made the logical step of making any budgetary provision for the endowment to the parents for educational purposes. The main obstacle lay in Western Australia's position as a claimant state. He concluded by stating:

It is much hoped that the government will take a lead in moving other governments and the Commonwealth to a new understanding of what must be done. It is unthinkable that something so important be shelved merely because of financial inconveniences.148

147 Ibid p.112.
A 'Goulburn' Incident in Bunbury

Opinions about state aid continued to appear in the newspapers. One of the country newspapers, the South Western Times, took up the fight with an article headed 'Non-State Schools Should Receive More Aid'. Their piece made reference to what had taken place in Goulburn, New South Wales in the previous year, and linked it to an incident in Bunbury.

... the climate existed recently for a repetition of the Goulburn incident in Bunbury, (when) ... Catholic parents at Goulburn ... took direct action in a State aid claim ...(and) ... many sent their children to State School while other parents refused to allow their children to attend schools at all.

This incident was reported at a Parents and Friends Association meeting. Brother Albert from the Marist Brother's College told the meeting that they had been confronted with an electrical rewiring problem, which involved expenditure of an amount of £1000. They had found themselves in a situation of being unable to find that sort of money overnight. The spokesperson concluded by stating that the financial burden was becoming too great for parents who were providing their children with their preferred form of education. The meeting put forward the following proposal: That fifty per cent of the cost of educating their children should be provided by the state and that a pound-for-pound subsidy for all new buildings or extensions, or a 20-year interest-free loan, should be provided in addition. The article stated that private school buildings and educational systems were subject to rigid Government inspection and supervision, yet parents were faced with the additional burden of educating their children under their preferred system.

The government has shown some sympathy, but the help given is insufficient and many parents are finding the education of their children at non-State schools a real burden.

149 South Western Times. 27th June 1963.
150 Ibid (27th June 1963.)
151 Ibid (27th June 1963.)
Brother Albert gave an account of an additional problem being experienced at the College. He stated that some of the Brothers at the schools were teaching 78 pupils in a class. The College had employed one private teacher and they were in need of another but were unable to finance the extra teacher. This event, despite being very similar in cause and reason to the event in Goulburn the year before, did not go anywhere.

A shift in the balance

At this point Dr Robertson began writing to the other Directors General of Education to find out exactly what the other states were providing for the non-government schools. Much of the information was exchanged at the Directors Conference in 1962. However other details emerged at a later date. Reading the files it appeared that change was on the way, and it also appeared that Robertson, being a pragmatist, wanted to be in a position where he could influence that change.

A comment in this file reaffirms Western Australia as being a claimant state therefore making it unfeasible to expand on the limited assistance that was then being given to the non-government sector. An interesting observation was made that as two of the standard states had increased their commitment in this field, it was the government’s intention to carefully examine the recent developments in those states with a view to determining Western Australia’s future course of action. But it was still the government’s view that any additional assistance that was granted at the beginning of the year would add to the deficit of the budget. Lewis made a request to the Director General at the end of this memorandum. His request was that he be furnished with the details of assistance now proposed in Victoria and NSW implying that he might follow their course.

Towards the end of 1963, Mr Mahoney wrote to the West Australian Government stating that the Parents and Friends Federation would like to put forward another submission on behalf of the parents and children attending Independent schools in

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153 Ibid p.27.
Western Australia. He put forward a plea for equality in education endowment. Mahoney maintained that as the case for state aid became better known it would gain political strength. Governments would not be able to resist the growing pressure indefinitely. Mahoney concluded by expressing the following view.

... that the time is now opportune for our present government to make a 'break through' in the struggle for progress and equality. We need hardly stress that each step forward by any government anywhere in Australia in the last decade has been met with approval at the polls – we would not urge that as a motive for action, but it is good to know that expediency is on the same side as justice. ... We would hope, for a variety of reasons that decisions be made well in advance of the next elections. 154

The Premier forwarded the letter to the Minister for Education for his information and later discussion. The Minister in turn referred it to the Director General of Education with the question, ‘Have you any comments?’ Robertson replied, ‘I have no further comment to offer on this matter’. Robertson’s written advice was generally very brief and to the point but seldom this curt. There is a sense of irritation in this memorandum from Robertson, from the final three words, 'on this matter'. 155 At this point he seems exasperated with his Minister and Premier.

Michael White gives an insightful description of Robertson. He describes him as having developed—like many of his contemporaries—a powerful aversion to privilege gained from family connection rather than from merit. This, White states, had the effect of colouring his attitude towards private schooling. 156

Conclusion

This chapter has described the events that occurred over about a six year period leading up to the 1965 election. Although there were months when the Catholic activists appeared inactive, their letters and requests flowed relatively consistently

154 Ibid pp.61-62.
155 Ibid p.59.
over those years. There were no signs during the 1960s that they were about to abandon their cause.

It is also evident that the arguments for assistance were becoming more sophisticated. There were even proposals for generous per capita funding for new non-government schools, though their authors were probably realistic about the chance of any success.

In some respects the activists could be encouraged by the small favours that they won from government. However, the big prize, a major commitment by government to share the recurrent cost of provision still eluded them.

There were plainly major obstacles. A high level of sectarianism still existed among the general public. This required the government to tread carefully even if privately some members may have been positively inclined to help. The Catholic cause was not helped by the senior public servants, the Director General of Education and the Under Treasurer. These bureaucrats resolutely put their obligations to provide adequate public services under tight economic circumstances ahead of any political opportunism. In the 1960s, the advice of the 'mandarins', such as Robertson and Townsing, was not easily ignored by ministers. Moreover over the years Robertson kept in touch with the other Directors Generals on the matter of the financial assistance to private schools. He knew that Western Australia was consistently ahead of the other states in terms of the financial assistance that was given to the private sector.

Brand emerges from these accounts as somewhat disinterested in the possibilities of recurrent funding of private schools. It does not appear to be a topic about which he had given much thought. It is clear that Robertson was therefore nervous that the Premier might merely on a whim or partially considered analysis concede to the activists more than he should.

It could be argued that up to this point the activists were too polite. It was not until a few years later that the tone of their messages would became a lot more aggressive and demanding. However, I contend that, as events will show, until the government
felt that it was in their economic interest to maintain and develop the private school sector, the funding situation would not substantially change. And these events were still some time off.

So although the Catholic activists had worked long and hard, to this point much of their effort had been in vain. It was not until the views and attitudes of the government were to change that their fortunes followed suit. These changes in views and attitudes will be dealt with in a later chapter.
CHAPTER 6

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS PRIOR TO THE 1965 ELECTION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to trace the gradual increase in support for state aid by other Australian governments prior to the Brand decision to introduce recurrent funding of private schools. A second purpose will be to analyse the reasons for that increased support.

It is clear that successive Western Australia governments during the 1950s experienced considerable difficulty in funding the public infrastructure to acceptable standards. The education sector was especially constrained. Accelerating growth in the numbers of students attending schools meant that governments simply could not provide sufficient classrooms and the teachers to work in them. All states faced similar difficulties however none appeared to be as severe as those faced by Western Australia. It has been shown in previous chapters that the West Australian economy in this period lagged behind that of other states. Hence, the State’s capacity to respond to these challenges was even more diminished when compared to the other states.

Like Western Australia, the other Australian states were being subjected to pressures for state aid from interest groups, particularly those associated with the Catholic Church. Though a thorough analysis of the dynamics of Catholic activism on the eastern seaboard is beyond the scope of this dissertation, comments from historians who have written about the state aid campaigns reveal similar tactics in exerting pressure on governments on both sides of the continent.

At the same time, as these events were unfolding the Commonwealth was cautiously developing a policy position on state aid, while carefully avoiding any ongoing commitment to school funding. The West Australian government with other state governments endeavoured to draw the Commonwealth into accepting a shared responsibility for funding their public school systems. Hence, whatever the
Commonwealth might do in regard to assisting non-government schools was of importance to the state premiers.

This study seeks to answer the question of whether the West Australian funding initiative instigated by Brand influenced the subsequent decisions of other premiers or, on the other hand, whether the actions of Brand were influenced by what he knew was about to happen in the larger mainland states. This study also seeks an answer to the question of whether the Commonwealth had contributed to shifting public opinion on state aid through its limited entry into private school assistance and, if that were so, whether its actions enabled Brand to go to the 1965 election confident that he had put forward a popular measure.

**Commonwealth involvement in education**

In the Australian Constitution education was deemed to be a state matter and for more than the first half of the twentieth century it remained clearly so. Issues regarding state aid for private schools were for the states to resolve, not the Commonwealth. Though education ministers met from time to time and voiced their concerns about their capacity to fund growth in the demand for more teachers and classrooms, occasionally raising the plight of private schools, there was no national body charged with the development of national policy on the funding of those private schools, nor even government schools.

The separation of Commonwealth and state responsibilities for education began to blur during the period under review. The progressive extension by the states of support for private schools may well have been a factor that prompted the Commonwealth to expand its role.

A major step in the build-up of Commonwealth involvement in education was the provision in 1963 of science laboratories to government and non-government schools. This development, which is described later in more detail, predates the Brand government's introduction of per capita funding and as such constituted a major symbolic change in the form of assistance, even though it fell short of a program of recurrent per capita funding. It could be argued that although the
Commonwealth was late on the scene of recurrent private school funding—it did not begin to fund schools directly until 1973—its earlier actions were instrumental in shaping the political climate that allowed the states, including Western Australia, to act.

It is difficult to explain with any confidence the reasoning behind the Commonwealth’s delayed entry into school funding because of the contradictory signals given by Menzies, the Prime Minister during this period. Colebatch’s view was simply that the conservatives had a lack of policies, stemming from a lack of interest and a failure to appreciate how important the issue was. However he saw Menzies in a different light.

Menzies was a rare figure on the conservative side of politics at this time in seeing that State Aid was both politically advantageous to his Party and socially beneficial. It seems strange that advocates of State Aid within the parties did not do more to generate policies in this area—Catholics, after all, were by no means unrepresented in the conservative lay parties, and after the split their numbers within them grew. The Liberals won the 1963 election much more easily that they had won in 1961. It is hard to know how important State aid was in this, but its significance should not be dismissed.197

At the Premiers Conferences, Menzies was constantly petitioned by state premiers for supplementary school funding. Their appeals were consistently rejected. Just as Premiers were wary of creating funding precedents when approached by state aid lobbyists, so was Menzies reticent when premiers begged him to bale them out. It is hard to know whether he was cautious because he believed that there were constitutional limits to the Commonwealth provision of aid for schools or whether he understood that to enter into this arena would generate a crushing burden on the Commonwealth government revenues. As a result, Menzies was quick to reject their claims.

Connell outlines the situation that was occurring with respect to state aid at the beginning of the sixties. Enrolments in private schools were increasing but at a very

slow rate. To Connell the financial position in these schools appeared to be decidedly unhealthy, however he also noted that this group was successful in persuading the Commonwealth government to begin providing financial capital and subsequently, annual recurrent grants to support them. During the 1960s, in Connell's view, it was the Catholic schools that were by far the worst hit. These schools endured a lack of adequately trained staff and an insufficiency of equipment, materials, laboratories and libraries. This emerging and critical situation increased the urgency of their arguments for state aid. Connell notes that the Federal government began state aid in a small way in 1952. Furthermore, gifts to non-government schools for building purposes could be claimed as taxation exemptions. Connell gives an account of the Menzies decision in 1956 to pay the interest on the loans for capital works, and the decision, made in 1961, to extend the offer to primary schools. Connell sees the Goulburn Strike as being the trigger that activated the first move by the Federal government into 'direct' state aid to non-state schools.

However, at the same time that the Commonwealth was being so unresponsive to the premiers, in 1957 the Commonwealth of its own initiative entered the state aid arena in a small way. It did this by meeting the interest bills on loans raised by independent schools within the Australian Capital Territory for the purpose of new buildings. The government's success at the next election was viewed as being partly due to the support of Catholic voters for this state aid initiative.

**Commonwealth funding for science laboratories**

The provision of Commonwealth support for private schools on a national scale began in the lead-up to the November 1963 Federal election. Menzies had also promised 10,000 scholarships for pupils in both state and non-state secondary schools. The scholarships offered up to £100 per annum for books and fees, and this was to be for a period of two years. Menzies also announced an additional maintenance allowance of £100 for parents with children enrolled in non-state schools. In addition five million dollars a year were to be provided for buildings and

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159 Ibid p.103.
facilities for science teaching in all secondary schools. This election pledge was honoured in May 1964.

When the government made the offer, and proceeded to implement its promise after the election, the churches were deeply divided. The Protestant churches felt that the grants would chiefly benefit the Catholics; they also felt that in the long run government assistance would weaken the autonomy of the independent schools. Of course, the non-Catholic churches operated fewer schools than the Catholic Church and its clientele tended to be wealthier.

The Anglican synods in Armidale and Sydney opposed acceptance of the science grants, but the synods in Queensland and Canberra–Goulburn supported state aid. Despite the opposition of the Sydney synod, most Anglcans in the diocese accepted the federal science grants. The Presbyterian Church in New South Wales suggested that the Presbyterian schools not take the grants and initially this request was respected. The Victorian and Tasmanian Methodist conference decided to investigate the question of state aid and instructed Methodist schools in these two states not to accept aid for the moment. The Queensland and New South Wales Methodist Conferences allowed their schools to accept aid. Before long, most Church schools were accepting the aid.

The changes to science funding are of interest and relevance to this thesis. Here was a Prime Minister who had not really shown any interest previously in the funding of secondary education, almost out of the blue transforming the funding policy on education. When the change to the funding of science took place in 1963 many writers commented in detail about this event. They were curious as to why this change in attitude had taken place.

Smart, for example, argues that prior to 1963 Menzies believed that although the premiers wanted financial assistance they did not want to hand over their autonomy in this area to the Commonwealth government. At the Premiers Conferences the premiers always reminded him of the necessity that they maintain their responsibility

161 Ibid p.111.
for school education. Menzies believed that this level of education was a state responsibility and therefore there should be no federal aid for education. To put it crudely, there was no political capital for the Commonwealth providing assistance if the premiers' conditions were to apply.

Smart believes the policy reversal that took place in 1963 was the result of a gradual softening of this stance under the massive pressures that were being experienced internationally and the pressures that were being applied by national interest groups. When the Sputnik was launched there was a growing concern in the scientific arena that there was a deficit of scientific knowledge in Australia. With the inception of the Australian Science Teachers Association (ASTA) Journal in 1955, there was a strong preoccupation with the shortage of trained scientists in Australia. The blame for this was laid squarely on the Commonwealth government. Smart states that industry also played a major role in 1963 in lobbying for changes in funding.

The 1963 federal elections also saw the re-emergence of the state aid issue in the Labor Party with Calwell's promise of financial support for all students. When the Menzies government offered aid to the schools in the form of science laboratories this had the impact of forcing Labor to join in the scramble for state aid votes.

Barcan explains the change that preceded the introduction of the funding for science in a slightly different manner. In 1948, secular education was a firmly established tradition in Australia. The term 'secular' was taken in the restricted sense to mean the denial of state aid to Church schools.

In the 1960s this tradition was overthrown. Barcan believed that the origins of the great reversal may be traced to the 1955 split in the Australian Labor Party when its Federal leader Dr H. V. Evatt, denounced the activities of the Catholic Action

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163 Ibid pp.35-36.
movement within the party. A breakaway group, many of them Catholic, established the Democratic Labor Party.

An important policy item of the Democratic Labor Party agenda was state aid. The existence of this party, along with the growing needs of Catholic schools, and the growth of a new middle class, contributed to the success of the Catholic school system. This meant that for the first time in nearly 50 years a sizeable Catholic vote was available to non-Labor parties if they were prepared to shift their political position.\textsuperscript{168}

Many Catholics had moved into the middle, professional and white collar classes. The growth of Catholic secondary education further encouraged this trend. The close alliance of religion, race, social class and education, which had long exacerbated social tensions, was passing. Public opinion, if not clearly in favour of state aid, was certainly no longer strongly opposed to it.\textsuperscript{169}

Partridge considers the reappearance of state aid as either a political party manoeuvre to pick up votes, or as a way of meeting immediate accommodation problems of the schools.\textsuperscript{170} In his view it was unlikely that any state government would decide to hold back the growth of its own system for the sake of helping the churches to increase and expand their schools whereas the Commonwealth government had no financial responsibility in terms of primary and secondary education.

Therefore, any investment it makes in education at this level is supplementary, in the nature of a bonus, this being so, it is perhaps politically easier for the Federal Government to offer financial assistance to independent schools for specific purposes, since, by this means fewer complications are introduced into the established structure of educational control and finance.\textsuperscript{171}

Santamaria saw the 1963 federal election when Menzies allocated the funds for the provision of science blocks as a watershed in the history of financial relationships

\textsuperscript{169} Ibid p.319.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid pp.115-116.
between governments. The inclusion of the private schools in the program was crucial as it marked the acceptance of the principle that private schools had an entitlement to a share of public funds.

Tannock has a slightly different perspective. He considers that there were two campaigns running in parallel in Australia in the 1960s. The first campaign was run by the Labor government and the Unions to get the Federal government to put money into government schools. The second was the state aid campaign run by the Catholic school authorities and various lobby groups clearly wanting support for their constituents. In providing science laboratories, Menzies was adroitly able to please the interests behind both campaigns. Little wonder there was no electoral backlash.

The state premiers would have made their own assessment of the reasons for the Commonwealth's entry into the provision of state aid. Most of the commentators believe that Menzies calculated—correctly as it turned out—that there was political advantage to be gained by accommodating the interests of Catholic voters. Presumably this lesson was not lost on Premier Brand.

State aid in other states

On the 3rd October 1963 Western Australia's Director General of Education Dr Robertson wrote to his fellow Director Generals in all the Australian states. Robertson requested that each of the state governments provide detailed information under certain headings regarding funding to non-government schools. The Director Generals were requested to give details and costs for the financial year 1962/63. These are the questions for which Robertson sought answers.

A. What assistance is given to non-government schools as such

1. For non-subsidised (direct grants) equipment and supplies, including Departmental publications, stationery, school stocks, etc.

2. For subsidised equipment,

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(a) Projectors
(b) Radio, radiograms, etc.
(c) Pianos
(d) Library books
(e) Others

3. For buildings, or other capital works.

4. For special services, including medical, psychological, etc.

5. For any other purpose.

B. What assistance is given to students at both Government and non-Government schools? (Please give total cost for all students with separate figures for non-government school students.)

1. For scholarships and bursaries.
2. For boarding or living away from home allowances.
3. For textbooks and stationery.
4. For transport.
5. For any other purpose.  

The analysis of responses to the state aid survey was not completed until early August 1964. There are several conclusions to be drawn from the analysis of the results. First, all states provided aid to private schools on a broadly similar basis. In almost every category of Robertson’s survey instrument each state was contributing some form of assistance.

Second, Robertson initiated the survey, no doubt wanting to be forearmed in his dealings with the Minister and the Premier. He must have seen the way the tide was turning across Australia. Robertson must also have learned from this exercise that producing nationally comparable data on school matters was a nearly impossible task as each jurisdiction had its own definitions and regulations. Hence, it is not possible to precisely aggregate the different forms of assistance and compare the costs. However, it does seem that Queensland and Western Australia provided slightly higher levels of assistance than most of the other states.

Third, assistance was more extensive for government and non-government students living in rural areas. This may be partly due to the higher costs of providing services

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175 A summary of the replies from the other Director Generals are found in Appendix 4.
outside the metropolitan area. The pattern of assistance to private schools may also
reflect a government view that there were real savings from having students from
rural Australia educated by private providers and that they therefore deserved to be
more highly subsidised. The political influence of rural constituencies might also
have been a factor. Whatever the reasons, all of the states were involved in
subsidising the education costs of rural families.

It would be fair to conclude that by 1963 all states provided subsidies for country bus
travel, text books and stationery, scholarships, teaching bursaries and matriculation
allowances, hostel allowances, and fee subsidies. However, these direct payments
were usually restricted to particular subsections of the student population, for
example, scholarship winners and potential teachers. Hence these payments differ
from the across-the-board per capita funding initiated by Brand in 1965. This point
can be illustrated by reference to the actions of the Queensland government.

The Queensland Statutes176 record in The Education Act of 1964, under the heading
of Scholarship and Allowances, the following provision:

The Minister may, in accordance with regulations made in that behalf,-
(a) provide scholarships to be competed for by students attending approved
secondary schools;
(b) pay allowances in respect of students attending approved secondary schools and
whose parents are, in the opinion of the Minister, domiciled in that State.

The scholarships were in effect a direct subsidy. The important phrase in this
amendment was that they were ‘to be competed for by students’. Clearly not every
student received this scholarship. However it was not until January 1967 that the
state paid direct to each approved non-state secondary school an allowance for each
student enrolled. That was two years after the Brand initiative.177

The ‘Goulburn Incident’

Perhaps the most symbolic and politically powerful event shaping national opinion on state aid prior to 1965 was the temporary closure of Catholic schools in the New South Wales town of Goulburn. It occurred a few months after March 1962 elections in New South Wales. The ‘Goulburn Incident’, as the whole affair became known, began as a dispute over an ostensibly trivial matter: the ablution facilities at Our Lady of Mercy Preparatory School in Goulburn.

Our Lady of Mercy Preparatory School was threatened with loss of its Department Education Certificate of Efficiency unless its toilet facilities were improved. A meeting of Catholic parents expressed ‘bitter disappointment at the failure of state governments to recognise the justice of the claims of Catholics to a fair share of the public purse for its education system’. All Catholic schools in Goulburn closed in protest and 640 of Goulburn’s 2070 Catholic school children enrolled in state schools. After a week the Catholic schools reopened.178

This bold move by the Bishop of Goulburn drew national attention to the reliance of taxpayers on the contribution of Catholics to maintain their schools. The closure was short-lived but the impact lived on and was observed from afar in Western Australia.

The events in Goulburn received sympathetic coverage in the media. Miller comments that this highly political act was designed to prove that it was cheaper for the states to subsidise Catholic schools than to have them close down.179 Between 1961—1964 the Australian media played an active role in whittling away a century of opposition to state aid.

The changing politics of state aid

Education historian Alan Barcan posed the following question: ‘How was it that state aid in the 1960s was introduced so easily when it had been abolished in the

nineteenth century and the abolition had occasioned so much public debate and controversy? Barcan contends that state aid was unmistakably a religious matter because the vast majority of non-State schools were associated with particular Churches. Indeed he viewed it as being a predominantly Roman Catholic matter.

Diminished ideological vigour since the 1950s had lessened the anti-Catholic feelings. As a result, much of the sting was taken out of sectarianism. Two decades of prosperity and full employment had weakened the class and sectarian rivalry, so making state aid economically feasible. Barcan argued that, in terms of their political allegiance, after the rise of the DLP in 1956 a sizeable Catholic vote had become detached from its traditional allegiance to Labor and that this had encouraged politicians to bargain about state aid. He viewed this detachment as more than political. He also saw it as being social.180

Whether it was the outcome of social or political change, the 1955 split in the Australian Labor Party meant that for the first time for nearly 50 years the Catholic vote was open to capture by other parties. Many Catholics who broke with the ALP supported the DLP, whose policies included the re-establishment of state aid to Church schools. The 1957 Federal Conference of the ALP deleted a clause in the party platform that seemed to favour state aid to non-state schools.

This development gave the Liberal Country Party coalition in New South Wales an opportunity to attract former Catholic supporters of the ALP. In 1959 the Country Party committed itself to a policy of interest-free state loans for non-state school construction. At the March 1962 state election, the Liberal Party refused to join its junior partner, the Country Party in advocating state aid. At these elections the Labor Party was returned with an increased majority.181

When the question of state aid resurfaced in New South Wales in 1963, Bolton links this with the State Labor Government being mindful and concerned of the precarious

hold that it had on rural seats such as Goulburn. In addition Bolton believes that the Labor government found itself in a situation of reflecting a strong desire to modify the party’s traditional ban on such subsidies. However this had been firmly vetoed by the Federal executive. Smart holds a similar view. He attributes the election outcome to the fallout from the Goulburn incident and the intransigence of the traditionally Protestant NSW Liberal opposition that resisted adoption of a state aid platform even though a mere two per cent swing was all that was needed to remove Labor. The ALP was returned with an increased majority.

The lesson was not lost on the New South Wales government. In September 1963, after winning in New South Wales, the new Labor government introduced state aid to non-state schools by providing scholarships for pupils in the last four years of their non-state secondary schooling and for pupils in state secondary schools who were living away from home. The money was to be paid to the parents, not to the school. Many, though not all, welcomed the move because aid to non-state schools was to be given in an indirect way. But this did not meet the needs of the Catholics, for whom the major problem was one of capital expenditure for school extensions and facilities.

Robert Menzies, a master politician, would have read very closely the voting trends in the state elections. The challenge for Menzies was to secure the Catholic vote but avoid ongoing commitments to fund government schools. Some of this thinking can be recognised in the politics of the science laboratory program.

Smart also points out that after the Wyndham secondary education reforms in New South Wales, science was made a compulsory subject. The Catholic schools were then obliged to offer science courses and so were forced to build and equip the laboratories. This educational reform contributed to the mobilisation of Catholic parents groups, which in Smart’s view, had failed to make much impact—except in

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Western Australia. He believed that the groups were encouraged by the shift in the Gallop polls of the time, and so began to make bolder public statements.

By the middle of 1964 both NSW and the Federal government had adopted a policy of state aid to non-government schools. However they were not yet ready to extend it to all students attending schools in the non-government sector.

Conclusion

Although there is no record of what Brand was thinking when he approved his Party's election manifesto in 1965. It can safely be assumed that the 1963 federal election and NSW election had demonstrated to him that state aid could be an election winner if handled properly. But no government, federal or state, had publicly mooted a flat per capita payment to all students in private schools. The safer position was to provide scholarships on the basis of need or merit, or to provide facilities on a one-off basis.

Brand had observed Menzies closely at the Premiers Conferences. He would also have been exchanging views with his counterparts from the other states. Further, Brand was in possession of Robertson's survey of state government assistance to private schools.

It must have also been clear that the state aid tide was running in the same direction in all states and at the Commonwealth level. All political leaders wanted the Catholic vote. The emergence of the DLP meant that it was not a foregone conclusion that working class Catholics would vote Labor. For its part, Labor had to deal with ideological opposition to state aid from within its own ranks. In Western Australia, Chamberlain was a vigorous and powerful opponent within Labor of state aid.

Hence, based on what was happening elsewhere in Australia, Brand's decision to raise the stakes on state aid and go to the polls with a promise of recurrent per capita funding could be seen as a brilliantly conceived master stroke.

CHAPTER 7

ON THE BRINK OF A MAJOR POLICY SHIFT

Introduction

This chapter resumes the West Australian narrative from 1963 when the government must surely have believed that everything was moving along peacefully on the state aid front. The letters still flowed from the activists—polite, though possibly a little more demanding than was previously the case, but nothing to cause the government any anxiety. The stratagem used by the government was to give as little ground as possible and continue to promise to discuss the matter in cabinet.

Three major events are described in this chapter. The first is correspondence from Mr Mahoney the President of the Parents and Friends Federation to the Premier in which Mr Mahoney plainly outlines the political consequences for the government if it failed to address the concerns of Catholic voters. The second takes place in early 1964 at the tenth Annual General Meeting of the Parents and Friends Federation. At this meeting the Minister spoke without notes, and somewhat carelessly. He was to regret his off-the-cuff remarks. The third key event occurs towards the end of 1964 when the gist of Lewis’s replies to state aid activists abruptly took on a more positive tone. This shift occurred four months prior to the state election.

Ramping up the pressure

By 1963 Brand had already fought two elections. They were led to believe that the government was sympathetic but the means of providing the support was just out of reach. To this point in time there had been a number of deputations made to the government by Catholic activists, the Archbishops of the Catholic and Anglican Churches, and the DLP. And of course numerous letters had been written by representatives of these groups.

186 Appendix 5 & 6. (Appendix 5 lists the positions in the government from 1955–1965. Appendix 6 lists all the Cabinet positions just prior to each of the elections.)
However the letters were beginning to take a different tone: the comments were more politically astute and were somewhat threatening. In July 1963 Mr Mahoney wrote to Acting Premier Nalder. (Premier Brand at this particular time had been away for a number of weeks.) Mr Mahoney made reference to Brand’s meeting with the Anglican and Catholic Archbishops the year before. The Premier had pointed out that if the government provided funds for non-government schools the State could suffer adversely under the present financial arrangements between the states and Commonwealth, and specifically under the Grants Commission. Mahoney then made reference to the Policy Speech made by Mr Brand and Mr Watts (the leader of the Country Party) before the last election that brought them into office for their second term. According to Mahoney, in these speeches both men had expressed their intention of doing something for the non-government schools.¹⁸⁷

Further on in his letter Mahoney commented on the press reports from the New South Wales Labor Conference that indicated that there could well be a change in policy favouring the financial provision for non-government schools. He warned that any such move by the ALP in Western Australia would have a great impact on the Parents and Friends Federation membership, many of whom had formerly been supporters of the ALP, but had, in recent years voted for the Liberal Country Party Coalition. Mahoney concluded his letter with a question.

This Federation would be interested to know if the friendly attitude of the present government is likely to be expressed in any practical way in the near future. We would appreciate your comments on the matters raised, as will the members of the one hundred and twenty associations which form the Federation.¹⁸⁸

The implication in this letter was far more threatening than any other letter to date. It appears that Mahoney was now taking a tougher stance. The leadership of the Parents and Friends Federation was becoming more political and more determined. It is also important to remember that the Federation had been engaged in this debate with the government for many years, and their expectations had not been met for all those years, despite the number of promises that had been made to them.

¹⁸⁷ Private schools—government subsidy. Education Department, file 2002-61. SROWA Cons 3097, p.120.
¹⁸⁸ Ibid p.120.
Lewis and the ‘vexed question’

Less than a week later the Minister for Education, Mr Lewis, wrote a memorandum to Dr Robertson in which he made reference to the state aid issue. He stated that as far as he could recollect there had been no reference at the recent Ministerial Conference about this ‘vexed question’. Robertson’s response was that the Council of Ministers would not be the appropriate place to raise this ‘question’. Robertson felt that the Premiers Conference would be the proper body to bring this matter forward. Robertson suggested that the Minister should seek the views of the Under Treasurer, as he had been working on this problem. Robertson always gave the impression that this problem should be kept ‘in house’.

The Director General was well aware of the growing pressure on the government from the Catholic activists. In a reply to Lewis he observed:

... reference is made to the policy speeches made by Mr Brand and Mr Watts in which both expressed their intention of doing something for non-government schools. It could be claimed that something had been done while your government was in office, in that the subsidy scheme had been widened. This of course is a very small contribution but it is ‘something’. I doubt whether this is the kind of thing the Federation has in mind.

In the absence of the Premier, there was an evident air of uncertainty. It would appear that Robertson was aware that the caretaker might be more adventurous or capricious about this matter. As a result the Director General seemed to be more expansive in giving his advice than was his custom. He appeared to be more willing to express his opinion, with the view to ensuring that nothing would happen while the Premier was away. Of course it was not long before the Premier returned and the ‘status quo’ was restored.

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189 This memorandum was written on 17th July 1963. (Ibid p.121.)
190 Ibid p.122.
191 Ibid p.122.
The policy remains unchanged

On his return the Premier became concerned that his government should be ready for any questions in parliament on the matter of state aid. The Premier felt that questions could be asked in relation to the deputation that the government had received from representatives of the Anglican and Catholic Archbishops. Brand wanted the government to be prepared so he wrote to the Under Treasurer asking for his advice. This document was undated but the filing date indicates mid 1963.

With regard to aid for private schools as you are aware no decision was made, but I would be glad if you would ensure that this matter is discussed in Cabinet, and that ... the Minister for Education ... (is) prepared with a written answer which I suggest be along the lines that the policy of the Government has not changed in respect to this matter. Because I believe that this question will be asked it may be a good idea for the Cabinet decision to be made on the proposals put forward by the Archbishops which were in fact a request for capital aid for building of schools. I regret that the decision was not made before I left, but I do believe it is important enough to draw attention to this matter, and as I am dictating this note to you. I would be very pleased if you would pass this information on so that no one is caught unawares.192

The recorded notes and memorandums of that time did give an impression that those in control, most specifically the Acting Premier, might have been willing to make some changes while the Premier was away. These comments suggest therefore, that the Premier might well have been the person who was the one who made sure that the situation did not change. This is the inference I made while reading the files.

While it is interesting to read the Hansard of this period, there is very little information to be gathered from it that helps explain the introduction of recurrent funding to private schools. Hansard leaves the impression that the members of parliament were really not interested in the matter of state aid.

Letters from the Parents and Friends Federation kept the Premier on his toes; often the questions asked from this source were far more searching and challenging. On

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192 This document is not dated, but by the place of the document in the file it would be some time in July 1963. (Ibid p.123.)
the 10th December 1963, Mahoney made the Premier aware of meetings that the Federation had been holding to which their parliamentary representatives had been invited. At these meetings the Parents and Friends Members pleaded for equality in education endowment and made reference to the special financial problems that they were experiencing. The Federation believed that these parliamentary representatives were not adequately informed about the extent of the problems that Catholic schools were facing. The Federation felt that the responses of the parliamentary representatives to the issues raised at these meetings had been most encouraging. In addition, Mahoney mentioned a number of significant political developments in the other states.

Despite known opposition from the ALP Executive the two Labor Governments (NSW and Tasmania) announced their intention of giving some financial assistance to students in Independent Schools. Victoria responded with a vastly expanded scholarship system with the same end in view. We would draw particular attention to the fact that the first move was made in Tasmania which, like Western Australia is a 'claimant' state. These developments show two states as lagging—South Australia and our own state. This situation is the more remarkable in that no where else in Australia is public opinion so well disposed; no where else has there been a joint approach by the two principal Church leaders; no where else is there a section of the Education Act providing for subsidies (however limited). As you yourself indicated to Parliament, the charges and proposed charges in 'standard' states could effect our position in a case to the Grants Commission. We submit, with all due respect, that, with the special circumstances obtaining, even if your Government went well beyond other states it would probably not be penalised by the Federal government in respect of Grants.

Mahoney mentioned the changes that Menzies had made and assured the Premier that this was very much along the lines of the type of assistance that parent groups wanted. They stated once again their hope for a discussion in the New Year and concluded with a reference to what had been expressed five years before, prior to the previous election, and the sympathetic reception given just twelve months ago.

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93 Private schools—government subsidy. Education Department, file 2002-61a. SROWA Cons. 3097. pp.61-62
94 Ibid pp.61-62.
This powerful letter from Mahoney had been closely read—the copy on file had sections underlined. There was a handwritten note at the end of the letter to the Minister of Education from the Premier, ‘For your information and later discussion’. This comment was dated 23rd December 1963.

On 30th December Lewis forwarded the letter to the Director General of Education asking, ‘Have you any comment?’ Robertson’s comment was—as were all his comments—very brief. ‘I have no further comment to offer on this matter.’ Robertson felt that the letter had changed nothing and the Minister was well aware of his views. It raised matters that were clearly political and therefore not officially the business of the Director General.

White writes that towards the end of Robertson’s career the campaign by the private school interests, particularly the Catholic activists, appeared to test Robertson’s patience. Robertson would have found Lewis rather trying, too. For Robertson the state aid issue should be dealt with on principle. Another view of Robertson was made by a colleague at an address made in his honour.

I believe that while most of the initiatives came from the Director, the respective governments were quite willing to back him with the necessary resources.

Robertson had served as the Director General for eight years prior to Brand becoming premier in 1959. His experience would have been clearly evident to Brand. Moreover, given Brand’s leadership style, he would have wanted to avoid conflict with his senior education public servant. It would not have been easy for either the Minister or the Premier to act against Robertson’s advice.

\[195\] It is difficult to be absolutely certain that this comment from Robertson relates to the letter from Mahoney with the comments from the Premier and the Minister, however it did seem to be the case. (Ibid p.59.)


\[197\] These comments were made at the Retired Teachers Association Annual Luncheon Monday 4th November 1991. The address was made by Cyril Skinner in honour of Dr Logan Robertson. The document was unpaginated.
The Tenth Annual General Meeting

It is now clear that 1964 was to be a momentous year in terms of recurrent funding for Western Australia. Yet for the first part of the year it would not have been apparent to the major players, and definitely not to the Minister for Education.

On the 24th May, 1964, the Minister for Education Mr Lewis attended the tenth Annual General Meeting of the Parents and Friends Federation. As already stated the Minister spoke without referring to any notes. It appeared that the Minister was unaware of the significance of his presence and his words at the meeting. The Parents and Friends members were hoping for an announcement for some direct funding. What the Minister brought was a subsidy for band instruments.

During his off the cuff presentation Lewis sought to dampen the expectations of those attending, that the government was about to accede to their requests. He candidly confided that ‘it may be ten years, it may be more’ before the Federation members got the level of assistance that they were seeking. The words seemed to have rolled off his tongue. Had he planned to use those words? Had he given this speech much thought?

To those who were present at the meeting Lewis’s speech brought total dismay, it was especially upsetting because the members of the Federation were beginning to feel that the Commonwealth and other state government’s had started to realise that government had responsibilities with respect to contributing to the education for all children.

It was understandable that state aid was not financially possible at that time, but to use the words he did, ‘In a few years time—it may be ten, it may be more.’—this they found insufferable. Direct funding was not even on the horizon. In political time, ten years means not in the next political term, not the next, not the next and maybe not even the next. In political ‘time’ ten years meant never. It showed a complete lack of awareness with regard to the needs and hopes of the group. It also showed that the Minister had seemingly not put any thought into what he was about to say, certainly he was not aware of the impact that his words would have.
That meeting was to haunt the Minister for many months. So began a period when the Minister received and wrote many letters attempting to explain his unfortunate choice of words at the Annual General Meeting of the Federation on that dismal Sunday in May of 1964. From this point the Minister spent a lot of time defending his words and trying to explain what he had really meant.

The great pity is that the whole of my speech was not considered. I am not antagonistic to independent schools: in fact I mentioned my keen interest in the education of all children, as the future of the State depends on the quality of education, both State and Private, which is given today. The statement, 'may be in a few years time—it may be ten years or more', was obviously a guess and would undoubtedly be influenced by capital funds available from year to year for education. This in turn would be influenced by the amount of Commonwealth assistance and the rate of expansion of the State. It is not true to say that almost all State governments, as well as the Federal Government, are assisting in this matter. I admit that the Commonwealth has recently agreed to assist both State and independent schools, and I share with the latter in rejoicing over this move. New South Wales is a standard state and more prosperous than this state. Tasmania is a claimant state. The rate of development in this state in all fields, from Wyndham to Esperance, has been staggering—particularly in the last few years. As a result, there has been a very severe strain on Loan funds and there is never sufficient for the desired development of harbours, water supplies, hospitals, houses, roads, schools, electricity, industries, land settlement, and so on. It is no reflection on the Government that it has pushed ahead with this development, which must in turn be of great benefit to the State and ultimately lead to that prosperity now enjoyed by New South Wales and Victoria. In the meantime, we must be patient. Many of our classrooms are more crowded than desired: they may need replacement. New schools are needed in new housing areas. We cannot keep up with this programme for the reason stated—hence my statement to the conference.\footnote{Private schools—government subsidy. Education Department, file 2002-61a. SROWA Cons 3097. p.73.}

The Minister's explanation makes sense. However he must surely have wished he had given his speech more thought.
The letters that followed were undeniably part of a letter writing campaign and they unquestionably were to have an impact on the minister. Many writers wanted to know if this was a reflection of the Minister's personal opinion? Was this the policy of the Brand government? Was this the Country Party's official opinion? Did the Minister get the job because he was a friend of Brand's? What was the attitude of the government towards this insufferable state of affairs? Other comments expressed concern that this iniquitous situation had been deferred for ten years or more. The writers stated that the financial burden was becoming unbearable. One correspondent stated that the association could not accept the position that it may be ten years or more. Some simply stated that they wanted justice and enunciated their terrible disappointment. Others questioned how much greater would be the shortage if there were no independent schools. These letters and questions continued for many months.

The speech was quoted back to Lewis in a letter from the secretary of St Phillips Parents and Friends Association, dated 9th June 1964. This was to be the first of many occasions that his speech was to be quoted back to him.

It has been reported to this association, that at the opening of the Tenth Annual General Meeting of the Parents and Citizens Federation ... you made the following statement. 'I regret it is not just financially possible at the present time—but with the aid that they are to get from the Commonwealth—and if it continues year by year we will be able to do some of the things that we were not able to do before — and who knows, maybe in a few years time — it may be 10, it may be more—but when we are able to catch up on this backlog of buildings and so on which of necessity we have had to defer, then we may be able to have another look at this question of State aid to independent schools. This is just the position as I find myself in at the moment.'

The writer of the letter, Mr. Epps, claimed that the Minister's statement had been viewed with great dismay by the Federation in that there was no help to alleviate the increasing burden under which a quarter of the population are paying double for the

199 These are a sample of comments made by many writers showing their upset about the Ministers speech. (Ibid pp.72-187.)

200 This is the version of the speech as recorded by Mr. Epps, the Secretary of St Phillips Parents and Friends Association, Tuart Hill. (Ibid p.72.)
education of their children. Epps went on to question the Minister, asking him if he did not feel that the education of youth was of the utmost importance for the strengthening and advancement of Australia. Mr Epps stated that the association found the statement that the backlog of buildings could take ten years or more to catch up on to be 'intolerable'. He commented on the woeful attitude of successive governments in not giving education the propriety that it should receive. He questioned the minister about this much quoted statement. Was this his personal opinion or was this the attitude of the government towards this 'insufferable state of affairs'?

In reading these exchanges it is noticeable that as the Minister responded to the many letters he received his confidence began to decline. Robertson's role seemed to become that of supporter, even to the point where the roles of Minister and Director General almost appeared to be reversed.

On 24th June 1964 Mr Mahoney wrote to the Minister.201 He began by stating his appreciation at the Minister's attendance at the AGM and for his words of congratulation and encouragement. However he then went on to register his consternation at that one section of the Minister's speech. His concern was related to the words, 'perhaps in ten years or more the government would be able to look at the question' of assistance for non-government schools.

He was also concerned with the inference that the backlog of building for department schools had to be overcome before anything could be done for non-government schools. He noted the announcement that the government proposed to extend the school leaving age to fifteen. All these matters caused a level of disquiet. He recalled comments made by the Premier, in reply to a question regarding how far the new provisions in standard states would modify his statement on the application of the Grants Commission formula for assistance to non-government schools. He assumed that the government would have another look at the whole matter but surely Minister Lewis did not mean in ten years time?

201 Ibid p.150.
The whole question of sharing in the distribution of public funds for education on a basis of equality becomes all the more urgent by reason of developments: your announcement that the government proposed to extend the leaving age to 15, and the recent announcement that in the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Perth (about 2/3 of the State total enrolments) increased by only 12 enrolments in 1964. These two were related: the second indicates that without financial support our schools cannot cater for the increasing numbers of Catholic children and the overflow must be educated entirely at the states expense; the position only aggravated by the extension of the leaving age.

... Perhaps the most disturbing feature of your speech was the implication that nothing could be done for a quarter of the children or for a quarter of the schools of this state until the full requirements of the other three quarters had been met. We know that this policy is advocated by the left wing of your political opponents—hence perhaps their inability to win recent elections—but most members of the present government have made it clear to us that such a policy is inimical to the interests of WA. We would be encouraged by your expressed interest in the education of all WA children, and hope that the implication of the passage from your speech is not an indication of policy.\textsuperscript{202}

Mahoney's letter was probably the most calculating of any that had been written. Mahoney concluded by wanting to know was this the Minister's opinion, or that of the government?

The Minister responded. He began by saying that as he did not speak from notes he could only rely on his memory. On the more difficult matter of assisting with the capital cost of buildings, the Commonwealth was helping with science buildings and technical schools. In relation to the question of when some help with the capital cost of buildings might be possible, he said to the effect: Who knows? Perhaps in a few years maybe ten years or even more, obviously 'one cannot estimate accurately how soon this would be'. As for assistance with scholarships and subsidies, he noted that these were paid out of consolidated revenue. The amount spent in this area was limited by the total amount spent by the State under the heading of social services.

\textsuperscript{202} Ibid p.150.
This area naturally took in other fields besides education. And of course the total of social services expenditure was limited by the dictates of the Grants Commission if the State Treasury was not to be penalised in some other direction. He then offered an olive branch. The Cabinet had approved a subsidy towards school bands on a pound for pound basis, with a limit of a Government contribution of £100. He concluded by reiterating that the assistance that could be offered, particularly in the capital spending areas, was severely limited but that it would be increased when practicable.203

It is not difficult to imagine how this letter with its offer of a subsidy for trumpets, triangles and drums at a rate £100 every three years would have been received. It is interesting to speculate: did the Minister have any idea how disastrous his efforts over the last brief period had been and what impact it had on the Catholic schools?

Not surprisingly, harsh words continued to flow to the Minister. A letter from a Mr B. L. Read, Secretary of the Parents and Friends from Corpus Christi, Myaree began in an almost supportive manner. But the tone very quickly changed.

We realise that as Minister of Education you face an overall problem on a state wide scale and that you are answerable to the government on your decision which are in turn dictated by Party Policy. However our concern is in your statement during your speech that you considered it impossible for assistance to be given to independent schools for perhaps another ten years. ... recent Gallop Polls have indicated that the majority of Australians favour full state aid to independent schools. This fact coupled with the religious tolerance that exists throughout Australia today should influence the present Government in this state to show the way to the rest of the Commonwealth and, beginning with this financial year to make substantial grants that will help ease the financial burden that Catholic parents, in particular have to shoulder at present.204

Mr Read continued by commenting that the individual begins to learn in childhood. He argued that the primary years are of paramount importance, and that to allow one quarter of the children in the State to receive an inferior education because of lack of

204 Ibid p.166.
funds would surely be a calamity. His appeal was to make the provision of funds possible so as to achieve equality in education. He then concluded with a dramatic appeal to the Minister.

Mr Lewis, few men in Australia hold a position so important to the future of the nation as do you. What Australia becomes in the next ten, twenty, or thirty years depends on the children of today who must take over. Your responsibility is to see they have the ability by providing, not promising, monetary aid from the Government. It is your duty to the Nation, not the Party, which must be your guide in filling such a high office.205

Brother Albert from the Marist Brothers College, Dunbury wrote expressing a similar opinion and asking a question that the Minister had certainly heard before. He questioned:

How much greater would be the shortage in the State schools, of teachers and classrooms if it were not for the independent schools?206

In his letter his anger is apparent. He concluded by stating, ‘we are not asking for a handout, we want justice’.207

Robertson then wrote a brief memorandum to the minister. He expressed the view that the letter from the Marist Brothers appeared to him to consist of nothing more than a series of statements, and so he suggested that the letter merely be acknowledged.208 The Minister disregarded the Director General’s advice. He replied with a letter similar to his standard letter but with a little more detail. It appears that the Minister was beginning to feel the strain.

205 Ibid p.166.
206 Ibid p.185.
207 Ibid p.185.
208 Ibid p.191.
The continuing demands on the education budget

In Chapter 4, I described the economic pressures on the Australian states at the beginning of the 1960s. The document produced by the Ministers for Education—‘A Statement on some aspects of Australian Education’—became the reference point used by Ministers to assess their current economic and demographic condition. In mid-1964 Western Australia continued to experience difficulties in providing teachers and classrooms. 209

Western Australia has the same difficulties as other States in meeting the demands of Education. This is clearly illustrated in that the report shows that since 1948 there has been an increase in the schools population of 93 per cent whereas in our State there has been an increase of 108 per cent. 210 We still find it necessary to make use of improvised accommodation on verandas and in halls for classrooms pending the provision of proper facilities. Although we have gradually been able to reduce the number of large classes the position is not satisfactory. In primary schools 47 per cent of the classes have enrolments of over 40 and in secondary schools 48 per cent of the classes have enrolments of over 35. To reduce class sizes to the number set out in the Statement we need 440 additional classrooms and 450 additional teachers.

In order to provide for increased enrolments and raise the standards of education to those detailed in the Statement an average annual increase in running costs of 2 million pounds over the next four years is required. Over the same period 20.7 million pounds would be required for building. To expend this sum over the next four years an additional 2.5 million pounds per annum above our current levels of expenditure would be required. 211

These observations seemed to form the draft of a speech that Premier Brand was to present at the 1964 Premiers Conference. However, the speech was not presented. It

209 Some of this information had appeared at a previous Premiers Conference. I made the assumption that this was a speech as it was the same as others that were later given as speeches at the Premiers Conference. The document does not give any indication as to where it originated, however it is attached to a document from the Director General of Education, so I make the assumption that the author was Dr Robertson. (Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers—proceedings. Premiers Department file 1964/1. SROWA Cons 6082.) Unpaginated inclusion in file.

210 Appendix 7—Shows data of student numbers in Western Australia in government and non-government sectors between 1954–1970.

Appendix 8—Data showing the changing per cent and numbers between the government and non-government sector between 1954–1970.

211 Ibid. Unpaginated inclusion in file.
is interesting to speculate as to why the Premier did not make this speech. The tone is certainly confronting. It is also interesting to speculate what the Director General must have thought when he found out that these data had not been passed on at that particular Premiers Conference. This assumes that the Director General was aware of the document. If the Director General was in fact the author of the document then the degree of annoyance could have been even greater.

More subsidies miss the mark

On the 7th August 1964 the Education Act, 1928–1929 was amended. Amendments were made in relation to the raising of the school leaving age to the end of the year in which the child turned 15 years of age. Provision was also made for the purchase of brass or pipe band instruments to all schools deemed efficient. There were other items included; television sets, duplicators, record-playing equipment for use in music rooms and physical education equipment. It is interesting and perhaps understandable that the Minister thought fit to add a number of extra items to the already promised band instruments. Was this a case of the Minister feeling the heat? In any event the Minister had made good his promise of the funding for band instruments. However it seemed that no one was really interested in this proposal or in the subsidy.

The letters were still arriving from the non-government school sector. A letter from the St. Pius X Manning school stated:-

   ... apparently our reply was a roneoed copy and it missed the chief questions which were not answered. Does this represent the Policy of the Brand government? Was this the Country Party official opinion?212

The Minister replied that the government continued to extend, where ever possible, the subsidies already given to independent schools.213 He then reminded the

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212 Private schools–government subsidy. Education Department, file 2002-61a. SROWA Cons 3097. p.228.
213 Ibid p.228A.
correspondent that it was not possible to extend this assistance to capital expenditure, that is, to the provision of buildings. He then restated that his official information clearly showed that, with the exception of the recently announced Commonwealth policy in regard to science buildings, there were no governments that were assisting in this capital spending field. He noted one exception, the Commonwealth Government's assistance to the Australian Capital Territory. The Minister carefully made no reference at all to the funding that the schools were in fact desperate to receive—direct funding.

Towards the end of 1964 the Minister replied to a letter forwarded to him by H W Crommelin MLA. His remarks focussed very much on the speech he had made at the Parents and Friends Annual General Meeting, all those months ago in May.

... I mentioned my keen interest in the education of all children, as the future of the State depends on the quality of education, both state and private, which is given today. It is true I was very frank in pointing out the hard cold facts as regards finance. Nevertheless my statement that it may be in a few years time—it may be ten years or more, (italics added) (before we could look at the question of state aid), was obviously a guess and would undoubtedly be influenced by capital funds available from year to year for education. This, in turn, would be influenced by the amount of Commonwealth assistance and the rate of expansion of the State.214

By now Lewis was justifying his earlier slip-up by explaining that he was only being very frank in pointing out the hard cold facts. The reason there was no more funding for state aid was that the State was now fully taxed, meeting the costs of the economic development it had launched: harbours, water supplies, hospitals, houses, road, schools, electricity and other industries. This had put a very severe strain on loan funds. He contended that this was no reflection on the government. He predicted that the prosperity experienced by NSW and Victoria would ultimately be enjoyed by Western Australia. However:

In the meantime we must be patient. Many of our classrooms are more crowded than desired, many need replacement: new schools are needed in new housing areas. We

214 Ibid p.236.
cannot keep up with this programme for the reason stated; hence my statement at the conference.\textsuperscript{215} (… not for ten years or more.)

The Minister regains his composure

In late October, 1964 the Minister replied to the letter written by a J Burke of Parents and Citizens Association of St Pius X. In this reply for the first time in many months the Minister appeared to be in control. It was almost as if Minister Lewis was aware that a change was about to take place. In this letter he refers to comparative statistics between the other states, he discusses the additional items that the independent schools were about to receive. There was a subtle and intriguing change in the language being used by the Minister.

I refer to your letter inquiring whether aid could … be provided by my [italics added] government to students attending independent schools as is being done in several of the other states. … I can assure you that the government is not unmindful of the difficulties being encountered by some parents in sending their children to independent schools and is considering reviewing the position. Even now consideration is being given to how this aid can be extended.\textsuperscript{216}

The tone of this letter was quite different to previous letters. The defensive stance is missing. The Minister, rather grandly refers to the government as my government. His confidence is high and his ego seemed to have been restored. The final sentence cited above—\textit{even now consideration is being given to how aid can be extended}—appears to be the reason. He continued, commenting that overall WA is no less generous than her sister states. The Minister made the comment that in some states the living-away-from-home allowance is higher than WA, but that in those states recipients are means tested. He noted that in Western Australia all students who are required to leave home to attend a secondary school are entitled to receive an allowance. He added that proposals for an increase in the allowance are currently under consideration. Finally, he lists all the items on which subsidies were now being paid.

\textsuperscript{215} ibid p.236.
\textsuperscript{216} Private schools—government subsidy— Policy and general (excluding interest on loans). Education Department, file 1215-65. SROWA Cons 1606. p.13.
Conclusion

It would seem that by late 1964 the persistence of the Catholic activists was about to pay off. The government knew that the flow of correspondence and the persistent questioning at meetings was not about to let up. There was a shared sense that something had to happen; the point had been reached when it was clear that the Catholic community could not be ‘bought off’ with a further subsidy on some other item of equipment.

Political events elsewhere in Australia were beginning to have an impact in Western Australia. The Catholic activists were able to use these events to their advantage. Mahoney it seems was an able tactician. He dealt with the Premier, rather than the Minister and his reminder that the Catholic vote in Western Australia was ‘up for grabs’ must surely have struck a chord with the cautious Brand. Mahoney’s baiting of the Premier, suggesting to him that the door would be open for Labor to acquire the Catholic vote if Brand spurned their requests, was a masterful piece of lobbying.

With an election looming the government appears to have changed its position on state aid four months prior to the election. Lewis, whose earlier candour had got him into trouble, took on a much more optimistic position in relation to state aid. Lewis’s shift would clearly have been contrary to the advice of his Director General who had sought to steer the government away from resuming direct finding of private schools.

The question remains as to whether Brand initiated recurrent funding of private schooling solely in response to the pressure from the Catholic lobbyists and to a lesser extent, advocates from the Protestant churches. What about the cost of the provision? In 1964 the population growth was continuing and the government was genuinely hard-pressed in providing teachers and classrooms for its government schools, especially its secondary schools. Did the decision make economic sense?
CHAPTER 8

ECONOMIC PRAGMATISM

Introduction

This chapter addresses five major topics. The first is the Grants Commission which over the years had been invoked by the West Australian premiers as constituting the major obstacle to state aid.

The second topic is how the Under Treasurer’s views on state aid changed to the point that they appear completely the reverse of his earlier position. The position of the Under Treasurer is considered alongside that of the Director General of Education, for the two had appeared to work hand in hand.

The third topic of this chapter covers the period leading up to the election. It is notable for one event, the surprising appearance early in 1965 of a Cabinet briefing document that costed proposals for the extension of state aid.

The fourth topic is an analysis of the policy speech made by Brand and the history-making political amendment to education policy that occurred under the Liberal Country Party Coalition.

The final topic covers the period of the aftermath of the election with reference to how the per capita funding policy was implemented.


During the late fifties and early sixties the Under Treasurer advised Cabinet members that as Western Australia was, by the definition of the Grants Commission, a ‘claimant state’ that meant that the State would be financially penalised if it provided any new financial assistance to non-government schools. As described in earlier chapters this ‘excuse’ was used repeatedly as a way of fobbing off the lobbyists who
were petitioning the government. However, the excuse of financial penalty was real. The Grants Commission had extensive powers and the spending of the states was closely examined by that body.

During the early part of the twentieth century it was apparent that the financially weaker, less developed and less populated states faced difficulties that necessitated the granting of special assistance to them by the Commonwealth Government. The Grants Commission was established to review the claims submitted by the states. The 'claimant states', as they were called, argued that their financial difficulties came from the inadequate fiscal provisions that were made at the time of Federation and that the special grants were therefore a legitimate redistribution of Commonwealth revenues. Western Australia along with South Australia and Tasmania were claimant states.

Western Australia was in the weakest position. It was the largest state with the lowest population density, and its citizens had the lowest levels of personal income. The distribution of the population of the state required heavy outlays in terms of transport, water supply and general social services. This included schooling.

The fear that the Grants Commission would reduce the financial assistance to the State was always paramount in the thinking in any fiscal discussions and decisions. The Grants Commission had to be vigilant to ensure that its support was limited so that the citizens in the claimant states did not have better government services than those in the other states. In the case of Western Australia, the special grants ranged from 5.6 per cent to 21 per cent of its budget. There were occasions when the Grants Commission made unfavourable adjustments to the following year's special grant because the state had not complied with the terms of the assistance.

219 Ibid p.58.
A potential conflict over state aid could arise if Western Australia provided a better education service to private schools than was being provided by the non-claimant states. The latter could argue that this was unfair and that their revenues should be returned to them to spend on their own citizens. Hence, it was safer for Western Australia to follow the lead of the non-claimant states than raise the benchmark for education service provision.

The special grants from the Grants Commission could be varied each year. In effect, it was a tribunal that considered the detailed economic arguments put forward by state treasurers and under treasurers. Western Australia had to be careful to show that its increased spending on education was necessitated by growth and dispersion, of its population rather than the desire to provide qualitative improvements to services. Such improvements could trigger a reduction in its special grant the next time round.

Hence, the warnings of the Under Treasurer about risking a penalty from the Grants Commission by providing certain forms of state aid were to be taken seriously. In any event, the deliberations of the Grants Commission were so complex and the economic circumstances of the state so variable, that only the Under Treasurer could confidently provide advice on the matter.

Jones noted that in the period 1949-50 state taxes had been raised but the rise was not sufficient to offset the overspending on education. The Under Treasurer requested that the Director General for Education prepare the Department’s statement for the Grants Commission; in it attention would be drawn to the unfavourable adjustments incurred due to the State’s excessive spending on education.220 The Under Treasurer reminded the Director General of Education that the high expenditure on education had been the major cause of unfavourable adjustments incurred by Western Australia when the Grants Commission determined the State’s Special Grant allocation. He suggested that the Director General set out to justify the high cost of education in Western Australia, in order to show that the services provided were not superior to the non-claimant states.221

220 Ibid p.155.
221 Ibid p.156.
Change of opinion by the Under Treasurer

During the 1960s a subtle change occurred in the correspondence in the Department files. These unfavourable Grants Commission adjustments were no longer given as a rationale for the lack of aid. In fact, the Under Treasurer stopped mentioning the Grants Commission and a quite different line of argument is found in the files. This change is evident in the memoranda forwarded to the Premier and Cabinet by the Under Treasurer.

In July 1963, when the Under Treasurer responded to the Acting Premier regarding the requests made by the Archbishops of Perth takes a slight change in tack with regard to the Grants Commission.

It has been advanced by representatives of the Independent Schools that they are saving this State about one million pounds a year in running costs but in fact this is not correct although it would be true in NSW and Victoria. ... A similar decrease in Western Australia would decrease our expenditure but this would be offset by a reduction in our special grants and accordingly our budget would not benefit. In other words the method employed by the Grants Commission allows us, at no real costs to the State, to cater for all the children enrolled at the State Schools and as far as running costs are concerned the state is not benefiting financially through the existence of the Independent Schools. It would therefore be illogical to assist the Independent Schools with their running costs under present circumstances particularly as any such assistance would increase the revenue deficit financed from loans which are already inadequate for the capital needs of the State.222

The Under Treasurer went on to state that it would be undesirable to broadcast this fact. This was because the Commonwealth Treasury did not agree that the allowance to Western Australia for greater difficulties should be loaded in the State’s favour as at present on account of the greater proportion of ‘our children of school age attending state schools’. Townsing added that the Commonwealth Treasury was in fact pressing the Grants Commission to ignore the fact that Western Australia was

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servicing a higher proportion of children of school age than was the case in NSW and Victoria and as a consequence reduce the allowances.

... it would not be to our advantage to announce that the present methods of the Grants Commission discourages us from assisting the Independent Schools with their running costs. I think we should stick to their previous line of argument which was that as a claimant state we are not in a position to grant financial aid to Independent Schools for the purpose of assisting with running costs until such time as NSW and Victoria move into the field [of assisting non-government schools]. The situation with aid in the form of capital grants is different from that which exists with financial assistance with running costs. In the case of the former the Independent Schools are assisting to keep down the cost to the State of new Schools buildings and there is a case here for granting some aid.223

So with respect to the State's claimant position Under Treasurer Townsing was eager 'to stick to his previous line of argument'. The previous line of argument being that to assist the non-government schools would be to their disadvantage in terms of the Grants Commission. The Under Treasurer went on to comment about the two financial methods of assisting the Independent schools. The first method, which involved making grants to cover the interest payments on capital borrowed from commercial institutions, had some appeal. However he felt that the amount involved could be considerable if the concessions were extended to all secondary school buildings.

He also felt that it would be desirable to confine this to the residential needs as distinct from classrooms. It would be extremely difficult to even hazard a guess at the likely cost of granting the limited amount of aid. The second method, where the request was for low interest rate loans to be repaid over 25 years, was viewed as impractical in the light of the scarcity of loan funds. Townsing explained the difficulty by giving these examples.

... assuming that loans for accommodation of students will average £100,000 per annum over the next 20 years and that grants were made on the basis of the

Government meeting the interest charge up to 5 per cent per annum for a term of 20 years, then the cost to the government would be £5,000 in the first year, raising by £5,000 per annum thereafter to a maximum of £100,000 per annum after 20 years. ... The cost of the proposal would find its way into social service costs and accordingly we would be financing this expenditure in the end result from loans funds. However the sum involved should not be formidable. The advantage of the proposal is that the Government would not be entering the field of granting aid to Independent schools in any major way and it could describe the financial assistance as a means of assisting the Schools to provide for the residential needs of school children particularly those from the country. 224

The Director General agreed that the Under Treasurer's comments were to be submitted to the Cabinet by the Minister for Education. As was often the case with these decisions it appeared that time stood still and the issue seemed to vanish. It would be some time before this information would be brought to light again. Three weeks later, Mr Keogh received a letter from the Acting Under Secretary stating that the Under Secretary had been directed to advise him that this complex matter had been under close examination, and that it was hoped that a decision would be reached at an early date. 225 This no doubt had the desired effect of preventing the activists from having their regular contacts with the government. Dr Prendiville, the Catholic Archbishop of Perth and the Archdeacon of the Anglican Church received similar reassuring letters from the government. It is interesting to speculate as to what the impact of these letters would have been. It must have seemed to the recipients that their requests would never meet with success.

Holding the line into 1964

A three-page document is filed in the Education Department folder prior to the 1965 change to the Act. The document is headed, ‘Aid to Non-government Schools’. In this document, the following statement is made:

The Treasury Department has requested that the Education Department consider certain suggestions made in connection with the many requests for aid to non-government schools. Several documents have been prepared in recent months setting out the position in WA and in other states. From these comparisons it can be seen that in several respects the assistance given in WA goes beyond that provided in NSW and Victoria, states which for purposes of the Grants Commission are regarded as the ‘standard’.

Some of the suggestions to which assistance is requested are far reaching, in particular those based on direct subsidies of an amount per child ... It is assumed that this kind of provision would constitute a direct break in the overall policy of the government ...

The document compares NSW and Victoria with Western Australia. In NSW scholarships and living away from home allowances were available to parents in both Government and private schools; these were subject to a means test. The living away from home allowance was worth £21 per annum for the third, fourth and fifth years, and there was a scholarship of £9 per annum for the first and second years. In addition 350 bursaries were made available each year, from a competitive examination given in the sixth grade.

In Victoria a third of the population of secondary students received scholarships, valued at £7–17 per annum for pupils in government schools and £32–42 for pupils in non-government schools. A boarding allowance was also available for approximately 500 indigent students. At that time Western Australia gave 100 scholarships valued at £40 per annum to country students who lived away from home and received a boarding allowance. Although there was variation between the states,

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226 It is not clear who wrote this document, however by the first sentence it does appear to be as a response to a request from the Treasury. There is no date on the document, however the document filed previously was dated 29th October 1964. (Ibid p.22-20.)

overall the states were providing assistance or benefits for pupils at non-government schools. The observation was made that the effects of Commonwealth scholarships should be monitored before any adjustments were attempted in Western Australia.

The second focus of the document was on assistance in terms of capital expenditure given by the states. The Treasury noted that neither NSW nor Victoria gave any assistance of this kind.

The main suggestion to be examined is that submitted by the Under Treasurer in 1963, when it was proposed that the state might meet interest payments on borrowings by approved schools. An estimate by the Under Treasurer suggests that under the conditions proposed, the maximum cost to the state would be £7000 in the first year rising to £150,000 over 20 years.

An innovation of this kind would represent something quite new throughout Australia in the provision of assistance to non-government schools. The amount involved would be considerable and must surely be taken into account by the Commonwealth Grants Commission in considering the special grant for WA. It seems likely, therefore, that an unfavourable adjustment against WA would be made if this provision was implemented. One of the reasons for the measure was that the extension of private school capacity would relieve pressure on government schools. It is difficult to see this objective being attained if the matter is viewed realistically. A decision by the non-government school to expand its accommodation would not depend in the main on its interest being covered by the government.\(^\text{228}\)

The report listed some items provided by the state to schools in terms of equipment. The report comments that it should be noted that while no such grants were made in NSW or Victoria, in both states some departmental publications were supplied at cost.

The Western Australian Education Department was reluctant to support any increase in the amount of equipment supplied directly to non-government schools. However it was seen as possible to supply to non-government schools equipment that was already supplied to government schools and which could be purchased through the

\(^{228}\) Ibid pp.20-22.
government stores. The government of Western Australia believed that it was already more generous than the other states. The government felt that it had to watch the impact on the Grants Commission of any increase of expenditure on education, as an increase in expenditure on education could result in an unfavourable adjustment to the grant to the state.

It was also noted that the Commonwealth Government had already commenced movement into two major areas of assistance, namely scholarships and capital works. The Western Australian government felt that it should therefore not commit itself to these areas. The final paragraph indicated that it was important that if any future finance was to be committed to the area of education, then it should be spent on government schools. It was felt that while deficiencies still existed in such matters as the size of the classes, the level of equipment provision and conditions of teacher training in this sector the diversion of money to non-government schools could not be justified. This appears to be an unusual statement, especially as it was made so close to a major and dramatic change in educational funding.

A memorandum from the Minister for Education to the Acting Director-General of Education, Mr Dettman appeared to cause a lot of interest. It was dated the 9th November 1964.

At the direction of the Hon. Premier, officers of the Treasury Department have been discussing with the Education Department various possibilities by which aid to non-government schools may be extended. ... In particular you will note that one of the suggestions that is made in the statement concerns the availability of facilities for non-government schools to purchase through Government Stores. You will recall that this matter was raised separately by Senator Gorton in connection with the supply of science equipment under the Commonwealth plan.229

A number of individuals initialled this memorandum: this was unusual. It is difficult to understand why this particular memorandum was written especially so close to the momentous announcement. It almost seems that the Acting Director General of Education was not aware of what was about to take place; either that or the future

229 Ibid p.23. (9th November.)
announcement had not even been thought of at this point. Although the Minister had, on the 27th October, alluded to the aid that was being considered, was it the Minister linking the aid to the brass band instruments?\textsuperscript{230} When reading these letters the one on 27th October (from the Minister) and the one on 9th November (from the Acting Director General)—in sequence and ignoring the rather large gap in time between them, the question arises as to what the Minister actually knew. Reading the first letter from the Minister alone gives the impression that the Minister was aware of the events that were to take place in early January 1965. However when the two letters are considered in tandem, the second letter from the Acting Director General gives the impression that he (the Acting Director General) was not aware of what was about to take place. The statement that 'aid to non-government schools may be extended' could simply have been referring once again to the band instruments. The Acting Director General also makes reference to 'the availability of facilities for non-government schools to purchase through Government Stores.' One is drawn to the inference, therefore that neither man knew about the plan for direct funding.

**Treasury's new interest in the introduction of state aid**

The file headed Cabinet Minutes and Decisions, 5.1.1965 to 8.6.1965 provided important information about the major change that was about to take place.\textsuperscript{231} In the Premiers Department, Cabinet Minutes and decisions a crucial document is filed. The document was a note to the Hon. Treasurer dated 12th January 1965 from the Under Treasurer, K.L. Townsing. This document comprises a detailed discussion of aid to independent schools. It is the first indication that the aid, so desperately fought for over so many years, was about to be granted.

The Under Treasurer estimated that the costs for subsidies to teaching aids and the boarding and driving allowances for independent schools would total £20,000. For the cost of access to government stores, or as the Treasurer called it, free stationery, the estimated cost was £18,350 for the financial year 1963/64. He also pointed out that the independent primary schools had a good case for further aid, and that a list of

\textsuperscript{230} Ibid p.13. (27th October.)

\textsuperscript{231} Premier's Department Cabinet Minutes and Decisions from 5.1.1965- 8.6.1965, file 217-65.

SROWA Cons 1819. Pages unpaginated.
free supplies should be extended and brought more into line with the issues made to
government schools. The Under Treasurer proposed that a number of items be listed
in the Annual Requisitions and Inventory and should include schools stationery,
duplicating supplies, cleaning materials and first aid equipment. He cites an amount
of £15,500 as an estimated cost.

The most important section of the document was the section headed, ‘Tuition Fee
Subsidy’. It shows that thought had been given to ways and means of assisting
parents to meet the costs of educating children in independent schools. It suggests
that this could best be achieved by paying a government subsidy in respect of each
child who is a resident of Western Australia and is undergoing a secondary school
course for which tuition fees are prescribed provided that the child is not in receipt of
a Commonwealth scholarship, bursary or like award.

The subsidy proposed was £15 per annum for the first, second and third years of
secondary school education and £18 per annum for the fourth and fifth years. These
subsidies were payable in instalments in respect of each term, commencing with the
1965 school year. It was proposed that payment be made direct to schools at the end
of each term on the basis of students enrolled in secondary classes with two caveats.
The first an undertaking that the government subsidy would result in a reduction of
the prescribed tuition fee and second that this should be shown as such in accounts
rendered to parents.\textsuperscript{232}

The Under Treasurer then mentioned that the proposed scheme would be extended to
University students, and commented that, of course, the parents of the children
attending these schools would be the main beneficiaries. It was noted that such an
extension would also help to allay the criticism, which was being levied in some
quarters, regarding the rise in university fees that had taken place over recent years.
The Under Treasurer’s estimate for 1965 were:

\begin{quote}
... that enrolments ... in the first three years of secondary schooling in independent
schools will be 10,200 and at the cost of the 15 pounds per head the cost of bursaries
would approximate £153,000 in this current calendar year. It is estimated that
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{232} ibid unpaginated.
enrolments for 1965 in the fourth and fifth year classes (will be) 3050 of whom 590 would qualify for Commonwealth scholarships. The cost of paying £18 per annum in respect of the remaining 2,460 would be approximately £45,000. ... The total cost in 1965 of the proposed tuition fee subsidy embracing 13,360 full time students would approximate £213,000. (This final figure includes an amount of £15,000 for an estimated 700 university students at a cost of £21 per annum.)

The second area for financial expenditure was the interest subsidy. The Under Treasurer noted that he had commented on this area on a previous occasion.

... as the independent schools are assisting to keep down the cost to the State of new school buildings there was some case for granting aid on this account. It was suggested at the time that it would be desirable because of costs to limit any assistance to the meeting of interest on loans raised for the provision of additional residential accommodation for students as distinct from classrooms.

It is extremely difficult to even hazard a guess at the likely costs of granting the limited aid ... But assuming that loans raised for the accommodation of students will average £100,000 per annum for the next 20 years and that grants were made on the basis of the Government meeting the interest charges up to 5 per cent per annum for a term of 20 years, then the cost to the government would be £5,000 in the first year, rising by £5,000 per annum thereafter to a maximum of £100,000 per annum over 20 years.

Total cost for independent school £238,500 for the first year of operation.

Many significant decisions were made regarding education in the Cabinet Meeting of the 12th January 1965. The most interesting comment made by the Under Treasurer was a reference to the granting of aid to the independent schools on account of the way that these schools had in fact assisted the State by keeping the costs down so that interest on loans should be met. Also under the section entitled 'Tuition Fee Subsidy' it was noted that this was a way of assisting parents to meet the cost of

233 Ibid unpaginated.
234 Ibid unpaginated.
educating their children that would best be achieved by a payment of a subsidy. The Under Treasurer had made a major turn around.

The 1965 Election

The Honourable David Brand MLA, Premier of Western Australia, delivered the 1965 policy speech on behalf of his party in his electorate in Geraldton on 2nd February 1965. On the same day Brand’s policy speech was broadcast by TVW Channel 7 that evening in Perth. Brand was seeking a third term in office and education was very much the focus of this policy speech.

Brand began the section of his speech that referred to education by stating that ‘we should always remember that sound development depends on sound training and education, and no other government had done more for education than the Western Australia government’. Brand asserted that during his term in government nearly 80 schools had been built and more than half of them had been in the country. Moreover, he drew attention to the doubling in number of students going on to complete their secondary education.

This is a healthy response to the rising demand for better qualifications. ... we (are) encouraging our teachers also ... More and more of them are taking University degrees. ... we are engaged in a strong drive to reduce class sizes. We take pride in the standard of our education system, which compares favourably with the best in the world. ... We will continue to broaden the range of education available to our children ... we will increase the opportunity for learning languages ... we will foster the interest in a higher standard of education by raising the school-leaving age to 15 years next year. 235

He then went on to make the announcement for which many had been waiting more than a decade, a period that included the two terms of Brand’s government.

We will introduce a tuition fee subsidy for full time secondary schools and first-degree University students for whom tuition fees are paid. The subsidy will be £15 a

235 Policy Speech made by David Brand MLA Premier of Western Australia, it was delivered for the first time at Geraldton, 2nd February 1965.
year for the first, second and third years of secondary education; £18 for the fourth and fifth years; and £21 a year for first-degree students at University.

Payment will begin this year, and will be made direct to the school or University - provided the fees paid are reduced by the amount of the subsidy. This will cost the Government £310,000 this year. Naturally this subsidy will not apply to children in receipt of Commonwealth or State Government scholarships or similar awards. We will also pay interest on loans raised by independent schools for the provision of residential accommodation for students. This will apply to the residential accommodation included in new schools, and to accommodation added to existing schools.

There were a number of other measures in the package for parents with children attending non-government schools. Brand continued:

We will increase the subsidy for library books, and pay new subsidies for sound amplifying and record-playing equipment, television sets, physical education equipment, duplicators, and both brass and wind band instruments.

We will allow independent schools to purchase scientific equipment through the Government stores department.

We will extend the list of free supplies to independent primary schools—to include school stationery, duplicating supplies, cleaning material and first-aid equipment—to bring them more into line with the issues made to State Primary Schools.

We will raise the building grant to kindergartens from 500 to 1,500 pounds—and treble the allocation for assistance to needy kindergartens. 236

The Premier promised to continue the government’s support for the Country High Schools Hostels Authority, stating once more that a sound education for all the State’s children was one of the keys to its future. Another feature of the policy speech was the provision of an increase in boarding allowances. Brand recognised the heavy burden that boarding fees placed on parents who sent their children to be educated in a distant town or city. Brand also promised driving allowances, so as to

236 Ibid unpaginated.
minimise any possible hardships. The government added a special allowance for handicapped children; this was in addition to the boarding allowance.

The next morning Premier Brand's policy speech made headlines in The West Australian newspaper. The banner headline was 'Brand Promises Aid for All Schools'. The estimated cost for the education initiatives was cited as being £213,000. This was at variance with figures stated in the policy speech. The difference could have been the amount being paid to university students, although the figures do not match. The interest payments on loans, student accommodation and other subsidies were mentioned and, of course, the main focus of the policy, tuition fee subsidy, was mentioned first. The election date of 20th February was also announced.

The next day the evening newspaper the Daily News commented on the offer made by the opposition Labor Party.

The Labor Party is expected to offer free text books for primary school children—including those attending non-State schools. ... Such a scheme would be a counter-offer to the education promises made by Premier Brand on the Monday night. Today neither Opposition Leader Hawke nor Mr Chamberlain would comment on the report. Mr Chamberlain would only say that Labor's election policy would be made known when Mr Hawke delivered the party's policy speech in Northam on Friday night.

The Daily News pointed out that the Premier had promised that if his party was returned the government would help students with a tuition fee subsidy and that the government would undertake to pay interest on loans raised by independent schools to build student residential accommodation. The newspaper commented that Brand's promise constituted 'a significant form of direct aid to non-state schools'.

On the same day The West Australian editorial made favourable observations in relation to Premier Brand's past six years in government. In the period 1959–1965

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237 The West Australian. 3rd February 1965.
239 Ibid p.3.
The editorial had focussed on the proposed change in education policy that had been announced.

A sign of a new air of independence in the Treasury is Mr Brand's decision to give direct financial aid to the private schools. It will break the 70 year old policy established by Forrest that public money should go only to the state-school system.\(^{240}\)

On the 11\textsuperscript{th} February an advertisement was placed in The West Australian, the only advertisement of its nature for the entire campaign.\(^ {241}\) The advertisement was placed by the Liberal Party. The headline was 'Education' and it set out five points. All five points were associated with education. Each point gave brief details from the Policy speech made the week before.

On the same day the Catholic weekly newspaper, The Record headlined the impending change in policy. It commented that for the first time all major political party leaders had included in their policy speech some form of assistance to parents of children in independent schools. The paper then gave a very brief account of what had taken place in terms of both the state and the Commonwealth with regard to state aid.

The Hawke Government in 1955 made history as the first Australian State Government in nearly a century to legislate and assist independent schools. There have been various other measures of assistance added to the statute book since. The last was the admission of independent schools to most subsidy benefits enjoyed by the State Schools Parents and Citizens' Associations by the Brand Government in the 1964 session of Parliament. The significant advance in the present electoral policies is that party leaders have empathised in their policy speeches and subsequent publicity that benefits which they propose will be enjoyed by independent schools. This follows the pattern set in last year's Federal Elections

\(^{240}\) The West Australian. 4\textsuperscript{th} February 1965.

\(^{241}\) The West Australian. 11\textsuperscript{th} February 1965.
when Sir Robert Menzies promised science aid grants and Mr Calwell promised increased secondary school scholarships.242

The article then outlined the Government’s policy, which included the subsidies of £15 and £18 to non-government school students. The article mentioned the interest to be paid on loans, and the other subsidies that would be included on a number of items. The Record also mentioned the Labor Party’s scheme for free text books for all children attending both the State and independent schools and an increase in the number of scholarships to be made available to all students. The DLP’s policy was that there should be equity in education for all children in all schools, and that the DLP would support an inquiry into the whole educational structure.

In the week prior to the election, a feature article appeared, in The West Australian announcing that school aid could be a significant factor in the coming poll.

The extent to which the question of State aid to the church schools will influence the strong Roman Catholic community in Bunbury is one of the intangible factors clouding the contest in this seat. It is not likely to become an issue, but the topic may run silent and deep. The Bunbury contest seems certain to be one of the most closely fought of the election.243

The government went on to win the election, the education pledges were therefore put into action and the required legislation drafted.244

The election aftermath

The government issued a press statement on the 27th March 1965.245 It was headed ‘Private School Aid to be Retrospective’. The article made it clear that the tuition-fee subsidy promised in Premier Brand’s policy speech would be retrospective to the start of the 1965 school year.

242 The Catholic Record. 11th February 1965.
243 The West Australian. 16th February 1965.
244 Appendix 7. (There was a shift to the Liberals of three seats and a shift away from the ALP of three seats. The Nationals maintained their eight seats.)
245 The West Australian. 27th March 1965.
Education Minister Lewis said ... that subsidies to government and non-government schools were now available. He said that legislation providing for the tuition-fee would be introduced as early as possible in the next sitting. One the amending bill was passed, the government would be able to provide tuition-fee subsidies for about 13,000 non-government secondary school pupils.246

On the 26th March 1965, the Director General of Education, Dr Robinson sent a memorandum to the Minister for Education, Mr Lewis.247 It began: 'In accordance with the Premier's desire to give wide publicity to the Government's proposal for providing further assistance to schools and pupils, I have prepared the attached statement'. And so with this Press Statement the extent of the financial assistance to education became public.248 Headed 'Financial Assistance to Education' it read that it was announced by Mr Lewis, today, that the Government's proposals for giving financial assistance to pupils and schools would be put into operation as soon as possible.

The proposals for increasing the range of subsidies to government and non-government schools had been gazetted and could be acted upon immediately. Subsidies were now available for the purchase of projectors, library books, radios, and sound amplifying equipment, pianos, physical education equipment, duplicators, brass and pipe band instruments, record playing equipment for music rooms in secondary schools and television sets for secondary classes. Government schools could now claim subsidies for buildings and swimming pools and related projects, ground improvements, power plants and refrigerators for home science centres. ...

The new boarding, driving and supervision allowance would be gazetted in the near future and all claims submitted for the 1965 school year would be paid at the new rates.

The other assistance promised by the government cannot be made available until amendments are made to the Education Act. A bill to provide these amendments will be introduced into parliament as early as possible in the next sitting. Once the amended bill is passed the government will be able to provide tuition fee subsidies

246 Ibid p. 11.
248 Ibid (Press Statement.) 26.3.65. p. 82.
for pupils in non-government secondary schools; it will supply duplicating, cleaning and first aid equipment as part of the free stock issues to non-government schools; it will provide a subsidy of 25 per cent (maximum £1,000) on cost of a swimming pool and pay up to 5 per cent of the interest on loans raised by non-government primary schools for residential facilities. Mr Lewis stated that although none of this assistance will be available until the Education Act is amended, the Government would honour its promises to provide the assistance for this year and all those concerned with the financial proposals could rest assured that payments would be made retrospective to cover the 1965 school year.

On the 27th July 1965, the changes promised at the last election were submitted to Cabinet by the Minister for Education Mr Lewis. The submission was discussed and agreed to. The Premier signed the document on that date. So Amendment No 17 to the Education Act, 1928–1964 came into being. The submission read:

In your policy speech prior to the last general election you indicated that this government proposed to extend its aid to independent schools in certain directions. However, statutory authority is required to implement these proposals and the attached draft amendments to the Education Act have therefore been prepared. The amendment provides for:

1. Subsidising the cost of erecting swimming pools. Regulations at present assistance for government schools at 25% of the total cost of the pool up to a maximum subsidy of 1000 pounds. This regulation will also apply to independent schools.
2. The supply of additional free stock such as duplicating, cleaning and first aid materials.
3. A tuition subsidy in the following amounts:
   - Secondary scholars first to third years £15 p.a.
   - Secondary scholar fourth to fifth years £18 p.a.
   This will be retrospective to the 1st January 1965.
   Authority is also sought for the power to make regulations to administer the subsidy.
4. Assistance in the payment of interest on loans raised for the provision. The rate and time of repayment are to be determined from time to time by the Treasurer. I understand that initially the maximum assistance will be 5 per

249 Ibid p.82.
cent per annum with the loan being paid off by equal instalments over a maximum period of 20 years.
Loans raised since 1st January 1965, will be eligible for this assistance.
Cabinet approval is recommended and, if granted, the printing of the attached draft bill be authorised.\(^{250}\)

So Amendment Number 17 of 1965 was drafted and became law.

**Amendment No 17 of 1965**

The amendment to the Education Act, 1928–1964, received Royal Assent on 1st October 1965. It was known as Amendment No 17 of 1965.

The principal Act is amended by adding after section nine A, the following sections—

9B. (1) The Treasurer of the State shall in every year, commencing with the year nineteen hundred and sixty-five, place at the disposal of the Minister, in addition to the moneys referred to in section nine A of this Act, such moneys as will enable the Minister to pay to efficient schools at which fees are payable for tuition of its scholars, the amount specified in subsection of this section in respect of scholars who, being residents of the State, are engaged in taking a course of secondary education at that schools but who are not in receipt of any scholarship, bursary or award the value of which exceeds forty pounds per annum.

(2) The amounts payable pursuant to the provisions of subsection (1) of this section shall be in the case of a scholar to whom that subsection applies and who is in the first, second or third year of a course of secondary education, the sum of fifteen pounds per annum; and in the case of a scholar to whom that subsection applies and who is in the fourth and fifth course year of a course of secondary education, the sum of eighteen pounds per annum, and those amounts shall be every year, commencing with the year nineteen hundred and sixty-five, be paid to efficient schools at such times, in such manner and subject to such conditions as the Minister determines from time to time by regulations made by him under this Act.\(^{251}\)

\(^{250}\) Cabinet Meetings and Decisions from 5.1.65 to 8.6.65, File Number 217-65, SROWA Cons 1819, pages unpaged.
In March 1966 Mr HW Dettman, the deputy Director General of Education, wrote a memorandum to the Director General of Education. In it Dettman informed the Director General that he had received a letter from a Mr J.W. Manning, with a request for an extension of the system of per capita subsidy and a subsidy for primary school children.252 Dettman noted that the per capita subsidy for secondary school students already cost the government an estimated £550,000 annually.

It was not until 24th November 1967 that the Education Act Amendment Act (No. 2) received assent. This amendment gave the sum of ten dollars to primary school students, and converted the money being paid to secondary students to dollars; so $30 to students in first, second and third year of secondary school and $36 to students in their final two high school years. Of course the phrase ‘paid to efficient schools’ was included in the legislation. The legislation also stated that this was to come into operation on the 1st January 1968.253

‘Pandora’s Box’ had well and truly been opened.

Conclusion

The truly surprising aspect of Brand’s change in education policy on state aid is the time span. There had been years and years of inaction and procrastination—letters written, deputations made meetings held and promises to discuss the matter in the Cabinet—made.

Of course a first hint given that a change might be in the air had been given when Lewis wrote to one of the parents and citizens associations at the end of October. In this letter he stated that consideration was now being given as to how aid could be extended. Of course it is not clear what he was referring to; perhaps he had in mind the brass band instruments?

253 The Statutes of Western Australia 1967. pp.551-553.
It was not until the Under Treasurer prepared the submission to Cabinet dated 12th January 1965 that there was an explicit statement on the written record that a major policy change was in the offing. Of course there would have had to be some discussion prior to the 12th January memorandum. But if so, there is no evidence of what transpired. It was not until the public announcement at the policy speech on 2nd February that the public were made aware of this change. This occurred 21 days after the cabinet meeting.

It seems that the Under Treasurer played a key role in the development of Brand’s policy. However, it seems unlikely that he was the instigator. If, as it appears likely, the Treasurer, that is Brand instructed him to prepare a briefing document on the costs of the state aid package, as a public servant he would have been duty bound to follow the direction to the best of his ability.

Presumably, Brand’s decision to go ahead with the recurrent funding component of the package was based on advice from Townsing that Townsing thought it unlikely that the Grants Commission would impose a penalty. If it was not so based, Brand was taking a huge risk. He could not afford to accrue the ongoing additional costs of extra provision for private schools while at the same time taking a cut in the special grants from the Grants Commission.

Brand must have known that technically his aid to private schools could not exceed the provision of NSW and Victoria without risking a penalty from the Grants Commission. However, NSW and the Commonwealth had recently upped the ante following their election wins. It is possible that the area was now quite muddied and that it was unlikely that the Grants Commission would have defined the aid as qualitatively different from that provided by the Commonwealth and NSW.

It is entirely speculative but quite possible that Townsing had received informal advice from officials in the Grants Commission that the per capita grants could be represented in such a way that they avoided a penalty. Investigating the Grants Commission archives for any evidence of this speculation is unfortunately beyond the scope of this study.
It is also possible that Brand was prepared to take the risk, believing that the political advantage of the Catholic vote and the return of his government at the forthcoming election were worth the risk. However, this line of thinking seems out of character for the normally cautious Brand.

This account is reliant on the official record. However, much of the sensitive business of government is conducted off the record. One can only fill in the gaps by making informed judgments that are consistent with other events and the characters of the major protagonists.
CHAPTER 9

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BRAND'S POLICY INITIATIVE

History as theatre

At one level of analysis the introduction of recurrent funding in Western Australia can be explained by the action of individuals—their personalities, ambitions, and capacity to make things happen. The change in policy on state aid required a decision to be made and in the end only the Premier and his circle of ministers and advisers had the authority to make it. Who initiated and planned the funding reform? Why? The explanation could be read as the script for the final scene in a political drama.

There were four leading political players of interest who could have had a major impact on those events over forty years ago. They were the Premier, the Minister for Education, the Director General of Education and the Under Treasurer. The four men—Brand, Lewis, Robertson and Townsing—leave quite different impressions. What do the documents reveal about the involvement of each of these men?

The most likely prime 'suspect' would be Edgar Lewis, the Minister for Education. As Minister for Education, changes to policies on school funding ought to be his prerogative. However the documents tell a different story. Lewis had been the minister for a number of apparently uneventful years. Uneventful that is, until he made a speech at the Tenth Annual General Meeting of the Parents and Citizens Federation on Sunday 24th May 1964. There he made an announcement that upset not only those present at the meeting but also most of those individuals who were seeking more government assistance who heard of the event later.

In his speech, Lewis poured cold water on any prospect of state aid. After that meeting Lewis received many letters that were critical of him and the government's position. These letters continued for many months and, as was stated previously, it became apparent that Lewis became very despondent as he attempted to weather the storm. It was also apparent that Robertson was protective of his minister, and Lewis
certainly needed that protection and support. However, there were times when Lewis did not always heed the advice given to him by Robertson.

The files reveal on October 27th 1964 the first indication of the possibility of an impending change. At this point not only the contents of Lewis’s letters change but also his mood. The change in mood is signalled when Lewis refers to my government —his confidence had obviously been elevated. This is the first point in the files that suggests that some new development is about to take place.

What Lewis actually knew about the impending policy change is not indicated in the files. My feeling is that he was not party to what was being planned; all he was aware of was that the funding status quo might possibly change, rescuing him from further abuse from the letter-writing public. The letter he wrote on that day was quite different from those he had previously written; there was a discernable lift in tone. The relief Lewis expressed in the letter is almost palpable. My view is that this was an outcome of ‘good’ news brought to him by the Premier. This is an inference as I have no documentary evidence for this statement. Another noteworthy point is that even well into in 1964 Lewis was still expressing the view that the social services expenditure of the government was being limited by the dictates of the Grants Commission and that the state would still be penalised for over-spending.

Lewis may well have been a party to the discussions but, I suspect, only in a superficial way and only because he was minister. His record would indicate that he was unlikely to have come up with the idea himself. During the year leading to the 1965 election Lewis had appeared out of his depth and for him the change in policy would have come as a complete godsend. His troubles were over. He was now in a position to impart ‘good news’, (although there is no formal record of any comments made by Lewis to this effect). This would have been a change for the better for Lewis: instead of delivering repetitive, defensive and apologetic messages, as he had been doing for so many months, his message would be positively received.

254 Private schools—government subsidy. Education Department, file 2002-61a. SROWA Cons 3097. p.75.
What role did the Director General of Education Robertson play in the process? Robertson was a man of power and influence, capable of initiating nationally significant shifts in educational policy. He knew exactly what he believed in and he knew the reasons for his belief. He was very involved in the running of the Education Department. He had reached the position of Director General because of his intelligence, knowledge, overseas experience and ability. A tall and imposing man, people were somewhat in awe of him. Robertson was certainly capable of drafting a far reaching policy on state recurrent funding of private schools.

When reading the files of this period it was always easy to read between the lines and to know when Robertson was angry or disagreed with what had been said. It was not that Robertson left much of a trail. But from the few words that Robertson did leave on the record it is easy to discern where he stood on every issue.

Robertson, I believe, would have been aware of what was about to take place but he would not have agreed, much less authored the proposal for recurrent funding of private schools. Robertson was a man of few, well-chosen words. His aversion to privilege has been documented by his biographer Michael White; and he was, after all, the custodian of public education. Nevertheless, once the decision had been taken by the Government, Robertson would have felt compelled to support it.

The longest and most detailed memoranda about state aid are written by Townsing, the Under Treasurer. This is to be expected given his area of responsibility and seniority in the public service. The memorandum written by Townsing in mid-1963 projects a ‘conflicted’ view. Townsing’s dilemma is evident when he comments on a claim by the representatives of the private schools that they are saving the State about one million pounds in running costs by funding their schools from private sources. Townsing had stated that this claim was incorrect, although he allowed that it would be true for NSW and Victoria, where a decrease in the number of school children attending the government schools would result in a savings in their budget. This difference arose because of the complex revenue sharing rules of the Grants Commission. For Western Australia a decrease in the expenditure on government schools would be offset by a decrease in funding from the Grants Commission, so there would be no net gain in state revenues.
Townsing therefore felt that it would be illogical to assist these schools. However in his next statement he casts some doubt, when he states that they should stick to their previous line of argument almost making the link with the Grants Commission invalid. The claimant state argument has been made by others, so its validity would appear to be correct. However it is almost as if Townsing does not believe the link, or the link has in some way changed. He concluded by observing that the government should stick to its previous line of argument. This was that as a claimant state Western Australia was not in a position to grant aid. Townsing uses the phrase 'line of argument' which gives the impression that there may well have been another position that might have been taken. In my view there is always a doubt that Townsing really believed in the position that he was putting forward. However, his advice appeared to be accepted without challenge. There is no evidence of any dissent. After all, the Under Treasurer was the expert.

Townsing would have had a macro view of government services and their costs; he was aware of the 'big picture' of all the departments. As Under Treasurer he held the purse strings. During the early years of the campaign for state aid very few documents were written by Townsing with regard to education. It was not until 1963 that more detailed documents written by him begin to appear in the files. In these he commented on many of the requests that were made by the private school activists and costed them.

The most important document that Townsing wrote regarding the introduction of recurrent funding was a memorandum dated the 12th January 1965. This was when all the details were being laid out as to what was to happen for the election. The document was written for the Treasurer—the Premier, David Brand. I believe that the Under Treasurer was very aware of the considerable significance of this document, that it could become the icing on an election cake for the government that could deliver them the election victory.

Now, during the lead up to the election, Townsing seems to have almost changed his mind entirely. He suggested that the proposed scheme could be extended to university students and that the aid to independent schools, would in his opinion
assist the same students. Independent school students would also be the main beneficiaries of such assistance at the tertiary level. This would in turn allay the increasing criticism about the rising university fees. He then repeated a comment that he claimed that he had made on previous occasions when he suggested that independent schools had contributed savings to the state, so there was some case for granting aid on this account. Where this complete change in sentiment came from is difficult to say. Was it from discussions he had with influential members of the government? What had happened to the oft-repeated statement about Western Australia being a claimant state, and the consequent loss of funds from the Grants Commission? Were his comments a result of a discussion with the Premier (that is, the Treasurer) about how this comprehensive change was to be managed?

The memorandum dated 12th January 1965 was tabled at the cabinet meeting just before the election, so it is almost certain that the proposals would have been discussed by the Treasurer and the Under Treasurer before the memorandum was drafted.

The last of the four men is the Premier himself. Very little has been written about Brand. He grew up on a farm and left school after grade seven. White describes him as a ‘low key’ leader however this is not much to go on. A leader can still exercise control while appearing to be relaxed and easy-going. It is unclear whether Brand dominated cabinet or allowed ministers to run their department without interference.

Brand had run a consistent line in relation to state aid deputations that he met with. For years he was able to keep them happy by leading the activists to believe that there would be a discussion in the cabinet meetings and that he would get back to them. Of course there is no record of the cabinet discussions and it often took months and a reminder to get a reply. At that time there were generally no record of any discussions, the way this is known is through letters where the activists are told that this matter has not yet be discussed. In relation to any discussion in Cabinet this applied to both the Catholic and the Anglican deputations and of course the DLP had to wait as well.
The official files suggest Brand did not hold any strong private convictions about the merit of state aid for the non-government schools. In fact, there is no evidence at all on file indicating that Brand had any particular interest in state aid for the non-government sector. But for Brand something changed just prior to the 1965 elections, just what can only be speculated upon.

Fading memories

In some respects it is surprising that the paper trail relating to the decision to commence recurrent funding of private schools is so incomplete. It is also surprising that no-one has subsequently claimed or been assigned credit for the decision. Were there any living participants or witnesses to these events?

In a way it is easy to understand that so few people have any memory of this event. These events took place over forty years ago. Further, state aid was a topic in which only very few would have been passionately interested. In addition, the Luttrell interviews indicate that the locus of the national debate on state aid was on the east coast of Australia. Of the many people Luttrell interviewed, not one really remembered, or knew, what had happened in Western Australia. Possibly the correct questions were not asked of them, but many had the opportunity to comment and did not.

Of those interviewed by Luttrell between the years 2001–2003, the only person who made reference to the events of 1965 in Western Australia, was Monsignor James Nestor, the former West Australian Director of Catholic Education. He recalled the famous policy speech by Menzies with regard to the funding of science, and then he referred to the per capita grants in Western Australia.

But I think also that before that in Western Australia there was a per capita grant for the education of children – it may have been elsewhere too, but I am inclined to think that it started in Western Australia. It grew out of that subsidy on tape recorders and other learning equipment.\^{255}

Luttrell did not, or could not interview major Catholic activists like Bill Mahoney, Paul Donnelly, Ivan Keogh and Brian Peachey. These men could have provided a body of knowledge that was so lacking, especially with reference to the Western Australian narrative. Most of these men had died by the time Luttrell began his interviewing project. One key activist, Brian Peachey, was simply not asked.

The only member of the 1965 Cabinet that I was able to contact in 2004 was Sir Charles Court. He was very helpful though did not remember the event. However, at the time his portfolio included Industrial Development, Railways and the North-West, a large and important portfolio. The cost of school fees was a long way removed from his ministerial responsibilities.

Sir Charles referred me to Mr Peter Jones who became a highly regarded Minister for Education several years after Lewis and, like Court he was more than helpful but could not recollect what had happened. I interviewed the distinguished education historian, Dr David Mossenson, in 2004. He commented that, in his view, there would have been a considerable number of people who would have been indifferent to the outcome. Children are at school for such a short time and once they have left the concern for assistance goes with them.

In the view of Brian Peachey, one of the prominent Catholic activists whom I met in 2002, the Under Treasurer would have found it much cheaper to give the independent schools financial assistance than fully fund the government schools. Mossenson was also inclined to allow the possibility that the economics of educational provision were behind the decision; he surmised that Townsing would most likely have played an important role. Mossenson considered that the advice from the Treasury should be examined closely.

Hence, there does not appear to be any living person who actually participated in the decision-making process and was able to recall what happened. Historians are therefore reliant on written records.
The answer to the puzzle

The four men whom I consider as being the most important actors in this 'drama' are Robertson, Lewis, Brand and Townsing. Robertson would definitely not have been the author; he was philosophically committed to public education. Lewis, as I have pointed out, was almost certainly not a decisive player; he had his own problems at the time. This leaves Brand and Townsing.

The 12\textsuperscript{th} January memorandum was written by Townsing and headed 'To the Treasurer'. However looking at the cabinet, Brand not only held the position of Premier, he was also Minister for Tourists, and more importantly, he was the Treasurer. The workload would have been taxing even in those days. The Premier would have been receptive to a highly competent and loyal senior bureaucrat. Townsing was the man behind the plan: he ran fiscal policy. He understood the complexities of the Grants Commission, being perhaps the only senior official inside the Government with the technical understanding to advise cabinet members on such matters. The lack of educational infrastructure, the massive growth in student numbers, all of these problems would have been well within his grasp. The evidence suggests that the details in the plan had been assembled by Townsing.

However, the about-turn in policy on the eve of an election is more likely to have been Brand's idea, either that or a political associate who put the proposition to Brand. Public servants in those days did not usually involve themselves in the political process. There is no evidence in the cabinet papers that it was an idea that emerged after lengthy consideration inside Cabinet. The Premier, on that basis, ought to be credited with the genesis of the idea.

So it seems likely that the Treasurer requested that the Under Treasurer draft the memorandum for the Cabinet meeting. The Premier's reason for the initiative would have been to avoid any drift of students from the non-government sector into government schools, thereby exacerbating the pressures on government school infrastructure.
Is it the ‘Townising Plan’? After all he assembled it. Or is it the ‘Brand Plan’? As Premier, even if he did not initially propose it, he steered it through the political process until it became the major electoral issue. These days the answer to these questions would be straightforward. The kudos would be assigned to the political leader while the bureaucrat at least can take only vicarious and anonymous pleasure in its success.

Brand’s initiative can be regarded as a considerable political and administrative master stroke. It contributed to his election triumph as the Liberal-Country Party Coalition won a third term with an increased majority.256

The national significance

On the basis of the evidence presented in earlier chapters, it could be argued that Western Australia has been the bellwether state in regard to school funding. It could be further argued that the orthodox narrative of Australian school funding needs to be challenged; it was constructed without any obvious regard for events far removed from the Melbourne-Sydney-Canberra triangle.

Table 4 shows the chronology of progressively permissive state aid and Federal government policies on state aid. Western Australia’s introduction of direct funding pre-dates all other States and Territories.

256 Appendix 2.
Table 4. *Commonwealth and State government involvement in aid to the non-government education sector*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Gifts to non-government schools for building purposes to be claimed as Commonwealth tax exemptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Subsidies on projectors, radio equipment, stationary and government publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>The government undertook to make loans raised by independent schools with the ACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>£5 million for science buildings and science facilities, honoured in May 1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Scholarships for students in last four years of secondary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Liberal party promised 10,000 scholarships for pupils in both state and non-state secondary schools, of an amount up to 100 pounds per annum for books and fees for a period of 2 years. Libraries funded by Commonwealth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Scholarships to be competed for by approved secondary schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Direct funding of £15 and £18 for secondary school students, Assented on 1st October 1965, backdated to 1st January 1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Free text books offered by ALP at election, ALP successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>More bursaries and subsidies on interest payment offered by Liberals at election, Liberals were successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>An allowance for each student paid directly to each approved non-state secondary school student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Subsidies for each primary and secondary schools student, paid via Educational grants. Paid in two instalments. First instalment $5 to primary and $10 to each secondary student, second instalment $10 to each secondary school student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>$20 to each secondary student and $10 to each primary student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Secondary payments converted to dollars and primary students received $10.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of course, a counter-argument could be advanced namely, this argument might be that if the events in Western Australia had no bearing on any other Australian jurisdiction, then they deserve to be no more than a footnote in the annals of the history of Australian education. There is no evidence that Brand’s election success was noted with any great interest or surprise by political pundits in the other states and that they as a consequence adopted Brand’s policy on private school funding when they in turn geared up for their elections. Nor is there evidence that Brand was particularly aware that he was setting a national precedent. However, one would be inclined to think that the activists in other states would have drawn the West Australian election outcome to the attention of education ministers and opposition spokespersons on education matters. Unfortunately, a systematic review of the records in archives in other states is beyond the scope of this study.

Until such evidence is uncovered it must be assumed that the West Australian experience did not constitute a seminal event in Australian political history. By way of hypothetical analogy, the importance of Brand’s funding initiative is not unlike the chance discovery of papers revealing that an obscure scientist had uncovered the theory of relativity a decade ahead of Einstein’s discoveries; the papers remained in an attic for a century and had no bearing on twentieth century science. Of what significance is the work of the unknown scientist? Perhaps there is a genre of history that records events that nearly—but not nearly enough—shaped events in some part of the world or some field of endeavour.

What seems indisputable, however, is that the Brand government established a precedent for the State of Western Australia that enabled the escalation of funding for private schools in his own state. Given the parlous financial condition of the non-government sector, had his government been more cautious then there might have been a calamitous spate of closures that would have set the non-government sector back for decades to come.

By most criteria the Brand initiative of recurrent per capita funding of private schools can be regarded as an unmitigated success. Once adopted it was never challenged. The initial payments gradually escalated. Changes in government made no difference. Whether Brand was the real author of the policy, and whether he
navigated the draft policy through difficult channels, is still unknown. What is known is that under his aegis, the policy was put before the electors and he received their mandate, thereby changing the face of West Australian school education.

Economic pragmatism

The real problem faced by the government school sector was the recurrent funding required to expand the number of teachers and build more classrooms. The issue that the private schools had to address was how to find the funding needed to pay their teachers at the end of each fortnight. For both school sectors, the main costs were teachers’ salaries. Brand’s initially modest commitment of funding to private schools held the promise of further increases and the restoration of state aid onto a regular footing. Per capita payments can simply be increased and indexed against other costs. The costs of incidentals and the other forms of assistance were, until the funding of science laboratories, intentionally a more hidden form of assistance.

The term that might apply to the motive behind Brand’s school funding initiative was economic pragmatism. However economic pragmatism might be a more appropriate term. Western Australia was facing financial difficulty; the thin spread of schools over the largest Australian state makes it easy to understand where this financial pressure came from. The private schools were also experiencing problems since they were largely dependent on school fees. Changes were taking place in all areas of education.

There was also a political motive. If Brand had only wanted to use his government’s resources more effectively he could have introduced the changes at any point in his three terms in office. The fact that he went to the polls in 1965 with private school funding as the main ‘promise’ meant that he expected there to be political advantage. And he was proved correct. Of course it is interesting to note that once the initial funding came into place in 1965, the speed at which the next increase in recurrent funding occurred suggests that Brand knew he had picked a winner.

It can be argued that demographics also played a key part in the decisions surrounding the introduction of recurrent funding. Confronted with growing student
numbers in the post-war years, and the consequential shortages of teachers and classrooms, governments looked to the private school sector to help out. It would be ironic if the baby boomer generation that precipitated further radical change in recurrent funding of private schools to their own benefits, be the same generation that begins to require and demand more of the fiscal cake in their retirement and old age.

The few scholarly accounts of extension of state aid in Western Australia during the 1960s, principally the works of Gallagher and Colebatch, explain the introduction of recurrent funding as the triumph of Catholic activism. This study shows that the Catholic lobbyists were indeed a significant force as they stubbornly applied pressure on the Brand government to substantially increase state aid. However, there is no evidence that the Catholic activists hatched the plan that Brand announced prior to the election. They would most likely have been satisfied with other forms of state aid that were of lesser long-term significance. While Brand was almost certainly attempting to mollify the Catholic community and gain an electoral advantage, 'the plan' clearly was assembled by Treasury officials and took account of the economic calculus of maintaining a school system for all West Australian children as well as the political calculus of winning a new term in office. At a relatively small initial cost, the Catholic school system was boosted and massive school closures avoided, thereby avoiding the displacement of Catholic students to government schools.

The post-1965 expansion of per capita funding

Until the Brand Government initiative in 1965 state aid trickled into private schools on a piecemeal basis. Even the Menzies initiative in 1963 in providing science laboratories, while constituting a tangible and substantial form of aid, benefited only the secondary school sector, and mainly the academic elite preparing for university. Teachers and students in primary schools, a considerably larger proportion of the school sector, were untouched.

The Brand government was returned to office in 1965 and wasted no time in following through with its promise of state aid. Amendment 17 of 1965 was even made retrospective to the 1st January of that year. Within a very short time period—
three years to be exact—the number of students to receive payments had been increased.257

It is interesting to note that the 1965 introduction of recurrent funding in Western Australia barely received a mention in the national accounts of government funding for non-government schools, whereas the Commonwealth science initiative was considered to be of monumental significance. The omission of the West Australian initiative in historical texts is all the more remarkable as it commenced a program of change that was to continue over many years and reach considerable dimensions of magnitude and spread.

Once Western Australia introduced per capita funding, over the next few years the other states and territories followed suit. The amount of funding by the states and territories was significantly escalated after the Commonwealth began funding private schools in 1973. Currently, the states and territories fund approximately 18.8 per cent of the total Catholic school income, averaging $1,553 per student.258 The amounts for the other independent schools are slightly lower, $1,348 per student accounting for 11.4 per cent of this sector’s total income. Although states and territories employ a variety of mechanisms to assist non-government schools, most of the support is channelled to schools via recurrent per capita payments. In most jurisdictions, the level of funding is indexed to the cost of living or is reviewed from time to time, thereby providing the schools a degree of financial stability.

In 1973, the Australian Schools Commission, a statutory body established by the Whitlam Government, set in train a massive program of recurrent funding for private schools. By that time the political rhetoric had changed. The funding was not referred to as ‘state aid’; rather, it was provided for all schools, government and non-government, indexed to agreed indicators of a school’s need. The index was known as the Education Resource Index (ERI).

257 The initial payment was back dated to the 1st January 1965 and the second payment did not come into operation until 1st January 1968.
The data for 2004 are the most recent published by MCEETYA.
In 1999, the ERI system of funding was replaced by a new system in which the Commonwealth's recurrent funding to schools was tied to measures of the socio-economic status of the families whose children attended a school. The per capita payments in 2006 were $989 and $1,277 per student for the least disadvantaged primary and secondary schools whereas the corresponding per capita payments for the most disadvantaged schools were respectively $5,052 and $6,524. The Commonwealth Government now provides nearly 30 per cent of total private school income.

Clearly over the past four decades there has been a massive increase in government per capita funding of private schools. In 2004 for Catholic schools 72.1 per cent of all income came from Commonwealth and state governments; the per cent for independent schools was 40.8 in that year.

There are five significant points to be drawn from these figures. First, the Commonwealth assumed the mantle of principal government supporter of private schools after 1973. Because of the superior revenues collected by the Commonwealth, the states could not match the Commonwealth effort—even if they had wanted to do so—without bankrupting the government schools system. Progressively over the years the Commonwealth strengthened this position, casting the states and territories governments as the providers of public education while the Commonwealth government championed the private sector. In historical terms, this is an ironic outcome given the earlier initiatives of the states.

Second, the quantum of funding now received by some private schools must be beyond the wildest dreams of the Catholic activists of the 1950s and 1960s. It is the Catholic sector that has fared the best. Some Catholic schools are almost totally funded from the public purse. And, no government is likely to have the temerity to cut back the funding without risk of losing office. The normalisation of funding of private schools can be seen as an extraordinary victory for the Catholic interest groups.

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240 MCEETYA, 2004. Ibid.
Third, because of the difference in the scale of support from the Commonwealth and the states, it is understandable why many historians have given considerable weight to the role of the Commonwealth in restoring state aid. While it seems likely that the Commonwealth would have introduced recurrent funding of private schools whatever the prior actions of the states, this can only be supposition, especially if there had been a negative reaction to the funding by state governments.

The watershed in thinking by Federal leaders occurred during Menzies' term as Prime Minister. An adroit politician, he initially opposed involving the Commonwealth in school funding; and yet later, with the same political dexterity as shown by Brand, Menzies pulled the rabbits of school science laboratories and libraries out of the Commonwealth's hat. These initiatives set the scene for recurrent funding by the Whitlam government a decade later. By the time the Schools Commission began its recurrent funding of private schools, most were already receiving state recurrent funding: the ground had been broken already by the states, led by Western Australia.

Fourth, in 1973 Commonwealth funding was based on a principle of 'maintenance of effort'. That is, private schools would receive Commonwealth government funding providing they demonstrated that they maintained the level of fundraising through fees, donations and other form of fund raising. This condition has now fallen by the wayside. Commonwealth support for private schools has shifted as it now promotes a more explicitly libertarian funding policy of 'user pays'. That is to say those who have the means of doing so should pay for services and these services should preferably be provided through the private sector rather than by governments. As a result the Commonwealth has funded the private sector at a higher rate than the government sector.

Finally, it should be noted how far the wheel has turned. Whereas in the 1960s private schools were seen as the indigent party, by 2000 most were experiencing better times with buoyant enrolments and relatively strong resource bases. Government schools increasingly constitute the schools of second choice. The sector is perceived to be facing gradual decline and possible 'residualisation', providing
mainly a safety net service for families unable to afford a private education for their children. Government subsidies have brought the possibility of a private education to all but the poorest families.

Though a cliché, it is well to remember that ‘history repeats itself’. One of the principal factors that led to a termination of state aid to private schools in the 1890s was the parlous state of public education. The Government at that time felt compelled to cease state aid and boost public education. Now, the position of the government and non-government schools in 2007 is not unlike the situation in the 1890s. It is unclear what lies ahead of the dual system now in place. No contemporary Australian government is brave enough to publicly enunciate its vision.

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APPENDIX 1

Australian School's Student Population from 1911 to 1962

I have included these figures as they give a more clear view as to what took place between the years 1911-1962, and although the graph shows the pattern, I find the actual figures more interesting.

These figures are the ones used to graph the growth of the student population from 1911-1962.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Student numbers</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Student Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>584 000</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>879 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>597 000</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>874 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>617 000</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>864 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>647 000</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>844 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>668 000</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>825 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>683 000</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>826 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>715 000</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>832 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>733 000</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>833 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>733 000</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>841 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>735 000</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>861 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>765 000</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>879 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>785 000</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>920 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>791 000</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>973 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>807 000</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>1 023 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>820 000</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>1 099 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[261\] Premiers' Conferences June 1961, Supplementary File SROWA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Student numbers</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Student numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>835 000</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>1 162 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>849 000</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>1 223 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>869 000</td>
<td>1955</td>
<td>1 286 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>879 000</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>1 355 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>922 000</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>1 425 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>943 000</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>1 496 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>938 000</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>1 559 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>932 000</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1 612 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>928 000</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>1 663 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>923 000</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>1 713 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>918 000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>899 000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2

Western Australian Election Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>ALP</th>
<th>LIB</th>
<th>NAT</th>
<th>OTH</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>ALP%</th>
<th>Lib/Nat%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 3

Barcan’s key events: Introduction of state aid by the Federal and state governments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>Country Party came out in favour of state aid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1962 | NSW    | Liberal Party refused to join in advocating direct aid  
        |        | State ALP won these elections |
| 1962 | Goulburn | Goulburn Crisis brought matters to a head |
| 1963 | NSW    | State ALP provided scholarships for pupils in last four years of secondary school for non-government schools and those that lived away from home for government schools |
| 1963 |        | The document produced by 6 state Ministers of Education in 1960, was presented to the Commonwealth government |
| 1963 | Federal | Menzies promised scholarships and £5 million for buildings and science teaching in secondary schools |
| 1965 | WA     | Liberal Party offered direct funding to non-state schools and won the election |
| 1965 | SA     | Offered text books to all students and won election |
| 1965 | NSW    | Legislated for more bursaries and direct grants |
| 1967 | Victoria | Offered subsidies $10 for primary students and $20 for secondary students and won the election |
| 1967 | Tasmania | Introduced a per capita subsidy for non-state school students |

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APPENDIX 4

Summary of the responses from the Directors General to the questions posed by Dr Robertson.264

Section A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Assistance to non-government schools 1962-63.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Direct grants, equipment and supplies:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Stationery, publications, rolls, forms, educational and psychologic al tests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Subsidies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Projectors, radios, radiograms, pianos, library books. 50% subsidy within certain limits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Buildings and or capital works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advice from Superintendents, specialist staff, teacher training for service in Non govt. schools. 20 students @ 200 pounds each.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Special Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching aids at cost, free swimming instruction, students may attend Trade and Domestic Science rooms if available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Other assistance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tasmania Assistance

Govt. 600 pounds.

Non Govt. 2,275 pounds.

None.

25% on projectors, radios, tape recorders and other visual aids.

700 pounds.

Nothing is recorded.

NSW Govt. 160 pounds Non Govt. 152 pounds.

None.

Syllabuses, rolls forms etc. supplied

None.

Medical and dental services, film library services and educational tests etc.

Film strips at cost. Special readers and work books at cost. Equipment and stationery at contract rates via.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Assistance Description</th>
<th>Govt. Stores. Dept.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>50% subsidy on projectors, radios and radiograms. 1055 pounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Inspectors, in-services, film library services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Endowment to Grammar schools, pupils may attend vocational Training Centres for manual training, where accommodati on available. 72,200 pounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>None. Parents in necessitous circumstances as for Govt. schools, some texts supplied.</td>
<td>None. Guidance and psychological services, medical and dental services. Teachers attend vocational schools for trainee infant Teachers' Certificate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Departmental publications at cost. Courses of study for teachers at cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>None. Teacher training for services in Non-government schools. Normal fee and this fee often remitted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at the data for Section A of the requested funding by the States for non-government schools, Queensland and Western Australia recorded the most generous amounts to the non-government schools. However when the data is calculated for section B, it is more difficult to assess. The amounts were often not recorded in terms of the division between government and non-government Schools. Queensland's recorded assistance at this point far out striped the other states. The amounts recorded for NSW and Victoria are almost inconsequential at this point. However it is necessary to take into account Section B to get a clearer indication. South Australia, at this point records practically zero, Tasmania is slightly more generous.

Section B looks at the assistance given to both the government and non-government students, and a request was made for the states to provide the total costs for both groups under each category. Some of the states did this while others did not record the data in this manner. The possibility could be that the departments did not
differentiate between their students, and did not see them as two distinct groups. The first item in Section B that was considered are the scholarships and bursaries.

**Section B**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Western Australia</th>
<th>Secondary schools scholarships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Year 50 scholarships @ 30 pounds p.a. Govt. Schools only, 1,500 pounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Year 50 scholarships @ 60 pounds p.a. Govt. and non-govt. 3,000 pounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government Schools 3,000 pounds. Non-government schools 1,500 pounds.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Teacher Training Bursaries | 4<sup>th</sup> Year up to 350 Teacher Training Bursaries @80 pounds p.a. (Av. of 100 p.a. in 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> year for non-govt. schools. |
| Govt. 40,000 pounds. Non-govt. 16,000 pounds. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasmania</th>
<th>Junior Bursaries.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50 pounds p.a. Govt. schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65 pounds p.a. Non-govt. schools. Approx. 50 p.a. awarded for 4 years on special examination results to students under 13 years, who live away from home to attend secondary school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Govt. 600 pounds, non-govt. 2,275 pounds.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Senior Bursaries | 50 pounds p.a. at Govt. schools. |
|                 | 70 pounds p.a. at non-govt. schools. |

| Govt 2,200 pounds and non-govt. 1,290 pounds. |
| Approx 50 p.a. awarded for 1 year on special examination results under 17 years. |
| Teaching bursaries 50 pounds p.a. at government or non-government schools. Awarded to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year secondary students. |
| Probationary Studentships. 5<sup>th</sup> year, 30 pounds p.a. and 6<sup>th</sup> year 50 pounds p.a. at government and non-government schools. Awarded to 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> year secondary students intending to be teachers. |
| Tasmania had War and Special Bursaries, for Govt. schools only, the value determined for each case and no level set for commencement award. |

| New South Wales | Means test applied to all bursaries. 300 p.a. plus 50 p.a. specials for children in remote areas. (Approximately 140 in non-government Schools. Awarded on results of 6<sup>th</sup> grade Bursar examination. |
|                | 1<sup>st</sup> yr 18 pounds |
|                | 2<sup>nd</sup> yr 18 pounds |
|                | 3<sup>rd</sup> yr 33 pounds |
|                | 4<sup>th</sup> yr 75 pounds |
|                | 5<sup>th</sup> yr 75 pounds |
| Intermediate examination bursaries (Govt. and non-govt.) 440 p.a. plus replacements for relinquished secondary Schools bursaries. (67 awarded in 1962) Awarded on result of intermediate examinations for 5<sup>th</sup> year. As above. The amount was not stated. |

<p>| Queensland | State scholarship to Govt. and non-govt. awarded to all who pass Scholarship examination at end of yr 8, most students do pass. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Govt. schools 18 pounds for first two years, non-govt. 16 pounds. p.a.</td>
<td>Extension scholarship (govt. and non-government schools) Awarded on results of Junior Examination at the end of Grade 10. Free tuition, non-govt 20 pounds.</td>
<td>Junior teacher scholarship, gov. schools 1st &amp; 2nd years 20 pounds, the same for non-govt. schools.</td>
<td>Scholarship government &amp; non-government 292,492 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>Junior government scholarship (1964) to Govt. and non-govt. awarded at end of yr 8. (There is a comment that 17,770 awarded, and it appears that it had something to do with the population, either as a third or fifth, cannot be read. Given at the end of Grade 8.) Form III at government schools 7 pounds, and non-government 32 pounds.</td>
<td>Form IV at government schools 7 pounds, and non-government 32 pounds.</td>
<td>Form V at government schools 8 pounds, and non-government 33 pounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Form VI at government schools 17 pounds, and non-government 42 pounds.</td>
<td>Additional Junior Scholarships awarded at end of grade 10 and grade 11 to replace those who relinquish Junior scholarships and keep the figure at 17,700.</td>
<td>Additional Junior Scholarships awarded at end of grade 10 and grade 11 to replace those who relinquish Junior scholarships and keep the figure at 17,700.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Bursaries (government and non-government students) Bursary holders may also hold Junior Government scholarships.</td>
<td>1100 Leaving bursaries awarded at end of grade 10.</td>
<td>1100 Leaving bursaries awarded at end of grade 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1000 Matriculation Bursaries awarded at end of grade 11.</td>
<td>400 Technical Bursaries awarded at end grade 9 and 10.</td>
<td>300 Technical Bursaries awarded at end grade 9 and 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All bursaries at government and non-government schools 50 pounds. No data regarding actual costs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>Awarded on results of Intermediate Examination, after 3 years secondary schooling. 25 pounds for 4th year, 30 pounds for 5th yr. 600 awarded each year.</td>
<td>Intermediate Technical Exhibitions government and non-government 60 awarded each year, 32,300 pounds for government and 4,000 pounds for non-government.</td>
<td>Bursaries to government and non-government students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bursaries to government and non-government students.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leaving Honours 12 awarded, Leaving Certificate 48 awarded and Leaving Technical 6 awarded, all at the value of 40 pounds p.a. plus an allowance up to 75 pounds. Plus the remission of most University fees where courses done at University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaving Honours 12 awarded, Leaving Certificate 48 awarded and Leaving Technical 6 awarded, all at the value of 40 pounds p.a. plus an allowance up to 75 pounds. Plus the remission of most University fees where courses done at University.</td>
<td>Value. Government 3,554 pounds and 4,311 pounds non-government.</td>
<td>Leaving Student who will become teachers, 55 pounds p.a. and 80 pounds p.a. boarding allowance if living away or for financial hardship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching Scholarships</td>
<td>Teaching Scholarships</td>
<td>Leaving Honour Teaching Scholars, who will become teachers, 65 pounds p.a. plus 100 pounds p.a. boarding allowance for leaving home or subject to financial hardship.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this category, Western Australia was spending the largest amount on Teacher Training Bursaries, the greatest amount being targeted at the government sector, over
seventy per cent in fact going to this sector. In the area of secondary schools scholarships the government sector received 50 per cent more than the non-government sector. In terms of the numbers attending the non-government sector this probably meant that this sector was not receiving its fair share.

Tasmania in this category had a situation where the bursaries and living away from home allowances were linked, so the figures became difficult to separate. New South Wales gave a detailed account of the bursaries. However they did not separate the two sectors. The Queensland response did not separate the figures for the two sectors, giving only one figure. Victoria gave a detailed account also, but once again the divisions between the two groups were not recorded. The figures for South Australia were difficult to separate between secondary school and university, as there was a division between the two groups. So although there was a lot of information and it was difficult to compare what was taking place between the two sectors.

The second question relating to part B was requesting information for boarding and living away from home allowances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Western Australia</th>
<th>Available to all secondary students.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1st - 3rd year students South-West 30 pounds p.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1st - 3rd year students North-West 80 pounds p.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 4th - 5th year students South-West 50 pounds p.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 4th - 5th year students North-West 80 pounds p.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Government schools 64,673 pounds
Non-government schools students 17,000 pounds

| Tasmania | Matriculation Allowance Government schools only. From 1964 awarded to students studying for matriculation 30 pounds p.a. provided combined income of parents less than 25 pounds per week. Hostel allowance for Govt. schools only 10/- per week. Paid directly to Hostel. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New South Wales</th>
<th>The Bursary for those living away from home, include extra, so the amount is...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1st yr 78 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2nd yr 78 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 3rd yr 84 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 4th yr 150 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 5th yr 150 pounds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A means test was applied to all bursary awards. 300 p.a. + 50 p.a. specials for children in remote areas. (Approximately 140 in non-government schools).

| Queensland | Means test for living away from home allowance. Combined incomes of both |

---

Some data in this section is conflicting, so the accuracy is doubtful.
parents must not exceed basic wage plus 50 pounds per independent child.

Living allowance at home for State schools 16 pounds p.a. Extension scholarship 20 pounds p.a. & the same for Junior Teacher School plus 1 pound per week, & second year 110.0 per week. Living allowance away for State School 65 pounds.

Extension Scholarship 82 pounds & 104 pounds p.a. In 2nd year. Junior Teacher School 1st year 82 pounds p.a. plus 1 pound per week, second year 104 pounds p.a. and 210.0 per week.

Living allowance government, 77,914 pounds and non-govt, 41,275 pounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>Indigent students, 475 in 1963 in government and non-government schools, receive a living away from home allowance of 52 pounds. Living away from home allowances for all others was 20 pounds p.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>Available to all students living away from home to attend nearest approved secondary school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years 1,2,3 of secondary school 75 pounds per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaving Year 75 pounds per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaving Honours Year 100 pounds per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government 38,748 pounds Non-government 42,110 pounds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in this section revealed that all states were heavily involved in subsidising students in the country. Western Australia was far more involved in the area of government schools than the non-government sector. Tasmania did provide parents with some assistance, however there was a form of means testing, and the amounts were paid directly to the hostels. New South Wales paid living away from home allowances to 140 non-government students and these amounts were subjected to means testing. Queensland also means tested and by far the greater amount was paid to the non-government sector. In South Australia the reverse was true. The non-government sector received the greatest share.

The third point in Section B was involved with government spending on textbooks and stationery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Western Australia</th>
<th>Textbooks and Stationery on the same scale as in government schools. No cost given.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>Government schools 11,837 pounds. Non-government schools 1,145 pounds. This appears to be for indigent students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| New South Wales   | Book Allowances
|                   | 1st yr 1,10.0 p.a. Special remote areas.                                                                 |
|                   | 2nd yr 1,10.0 p.a. 2nd year 50 pounds p.a.                                                     |
|                   | 3rd yr 1,10.0 p.a. 3rd year 75 pounds p.a.                                                    |
|                   | 4th yr 2,10.0 p.a. 4th year 75 pounds p.a.                                                     |
|                   | 5th yr 2,10.0 p.a.                                                                           |
|                   | The comment is difficult to understand, a figure of 10,280 pounds this appears to be for government and non-government. (In brackets included in 160,152 pounds.) |
| Queensland        | Textbooks and Stationery is stated as Nil, however in another section on the same            |

163
The data for some states was once again difficult to understand. Western Australia stated that the allowance given was the same for both the government and non-government schools. Tasmania gave by far the largest amount to the government schools. The data for Queensland appeared to give conflicting views. The comment was that the amount was nil, however there was a comment that 10 pounds was given across the board. In Victoria it was only indigent students that received a book allowance. South Australia on the other hand was very generous in this category.

The fourth point under section B looked at the provision and cost of transporting students to school.
Rail or public bus service up to 25 pounds p.a.
Private conveyance on a mileage basis.
Government 41,736 pounds, non-government 1,895 pounds.
Children attending non-government schools in country areas may use bus service where routes established for government schools, provided no additional cost is involved.

In this category all the states were very involved in this area and the financial costs to the state were indeed high.

In the final category in Section B, which was for all other purposes, all states except Queensland and Victoria stated 'none'. However Queensland subsidies from 1964 listed Fees Subsidy, giving amounts but not totals for the two groups. It appeared that this was listed in this section because it was a new financial commitment. Victoria listed the indigent maintenance allowance of 39 pounds for 3,700 government school students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Western Australia 1962-63</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania 1962-63</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales 1962-63</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland 1964</td>
<td>Other Assistance 1964 situation. Fees subsidy, non-govt. schools only. Forms 2, 3, 4, 18 pounds p.a. Forms 5 &amp; 6, 20 pounds p.a. Must have passed 5 subjects at Junior Examination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria 1963</td>
<td>1963, indigent students 3,700 in government schools received maintenance allowance 39 pounds p.a. (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia 1962-63</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 5

Western Australia Government - Premier, Deputy Premier and the Minister for Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Ministers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1955 | ALP             | Premier Hon. A.R.G. Hawke  
Deputy Premier Hon. John Tonkin  
Minister for Education Hon. William Hegney [266] |
| 1956 | ALP             | Premier Hon. A.R.G. Hawke  
Deputy Premier Hon. John Tonkin  
Minister for Education Hon. William Hegney [267] |
| 1957 | ALP             | Premier Hon. A.R.G. Hawke  
Deputy Premier Hon. John Tonkin  
Minister for Education Hon. William Hegney [268] |
| 1958 | ALP             | Premier Hon. A.R.G. Hawke  
Deputy Premier Hon. John Tonkin  
Minister for Education Hon. William Hegney [269] |
| 1959 | Liberal Coalition | Premier Hon. David Brand  
Deputy Premier Hon. A.F. Watts  
Minister for Education Hon. A.F. Watts [270] |
| 1960 | Liberal Coalition | Premier Hon. David Brand  
Deputy Premier Hon. A.F. Watts  
Minister for Education Hon. A.F. Watts [271] |
| 1961 | Liberal Coalition | Premier Hon. David Brand  
Deputy Premier Hon. A.F. Watts  
Minister for Education Hon. A.F. Watts [272] |
| 1962 | Liberal Coalition | Premier Hon. David Brand  
Deputy Premier Hon. C.D. Nalder  
Minister for Education Hon. E.H.M. Lewis [273] |
| 1963 | Liberal Coalition | Premier Hon. David Brand  
Deputy Premier Hon. C.D. Nalder  
Minister for Education Hon. E.H.M. Lewis [274] |
| 1964 | Liberal Coalition | Premier Hon. David Brand  
Deputy Premier Hon. C.D. Nalder  
Minister for Education Hon. E.H.M. Lewis [275] |
| 1965 | Liberal Coalition | Premier Hon. David Brand  
Deputy Premier Hon. C.D. Nalder |

[266] Hansard, Western Australia. Vol. 141. p. v  
[268] Hansard, Western Australia. Vol. 146. p. v  
[269] Hansard, Western Australia. Vol. 149. p. v  
Minister for Education Hon. E.H.M. Lewis

APPENDIX 6

Western Australian Ministry's from 1960-1965

Ministry at December 1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D Brand</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD Nalder</td>
<td>CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWM Court</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD Nalder</td>
<td>CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF Griffiths</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS Bovell</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Hutchinson</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA Logan</td>
<td>CP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Premier, Treasurer & Minister for Tourists
Dep. Prem., Min. for Ed. & Attorney General
Min. for Ind. Dev., Railways & the North-West
Min. for Agriculture
Min. for Works & Water Supplies
Min., for Mines & Housing
Min., for Lands, Police, Lab. & Native Welfare
Chief Secretary & Min. for Health & Fisheries
Min. for Loc. Govt., T/Plan & Child Welfare

Ministry at April 1962

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D Brand</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD Nalder</td>
<td>CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWM Court</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EHM Lewis</td>
<td>CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WF Griffiths</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS Bovell</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Hutchinson</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA Logan</td>
<td>CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JF Craig</td>
<td>CP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Premier, Treasurer & Minister for Tourists
Deputy Prem., Min. for Ag. & Electricity
Min. for Ind. Dev., Railways & the North-West
Min. for Education & Native Welfare
Min. for Works, Water Supplies & Labour
Min. for Mines, Housing & Justice
Min. for Lands, Forests & Immigration
Chief Secretary & Min. for Health & Fisheries
Min. Loc. Govt., T/Planning & Child Welfare
Min. for Transport & Police

The Ministry at August 1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D Brand</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD Nalder</td>
<td>CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWM Court</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EHM Lewis</td>
<td>CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WF Griffiths</td>
<td>CL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS Bovell</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Hutchinson</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA Logan</td>
<td>CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JF Craig</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RJ O'Connor</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC MacKinnon</td>
<td>LCL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Premier, Treasurer & Minister for Tourists
Deputy Prem., Min. for Ag. & Electricity
Min. for Ind. Dev., Railways & the North-West
Min. for Education & Native Welfare
Min. for Mines & Justice
Min. for Lands, Forests & Immigration
Min. for Works & Water Supply
Min. Local Govt., T/Planning & Child Welfare
Min. for Transport
Min. for Health Fisheries & Fauna

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276 Hansard, Western Australia. Vol. 170, p. 5.
277 Western Australian Year Book 1962
278 LCL - Liberal Country League, CP - Country Party
279 Western Australian Year Book 1964
280 Western Australian Year Book 1965
APPENDIX 7

Data showing student numbers in Western Australia in the government and non-government sectors.281

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Govt. students</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>% Increase</th>
<th>Non-govt. students</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>% Increase</th>
<th>Catholic students</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>% Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>89034</td>
<td>5849</td>
<td>28407</td>
<td>20800</td>
<td>4929</td>
<td>7.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>94883</td>
<td>5851</td>
<td>30174</td>
<td>22290</td>
<td>4471</td>
<td>6.49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>100734</td>
<td>4851</td>
<td>31922</td>
<td>23737</td>
<td>25202</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>105585</td>
<td>4851</td>
<td>33742</td>
<td>25202</td>
<td>25202</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>111126</td>
<td>5541</td>
<td>34763</td>
<td>25948</td>
<td>25948</td>
<td>7.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>115852</td>
<td>4726</td>
<td>36144</td>
<td>26849</td>
<td>26849</td>
<td>7.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>119788</td>
<td>3936</td>
<td>37201</td>
<td>27717</td>
<td>27717</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>124632</td>
<td>4844</td>
<td>38761</td>
<td>28116</td>
<td>28116</td>
<td>8.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>129455</td>
<td>4823</td>
<td>39097</td>
<td>28649</td>
<td>28649</td>
<td>8.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>133783</td>
<td>4328</td>
<td>41563</td>
<td>29657</td>
<td>29657</td>
<td>8.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>137573</td>
<td>3790</td>
<td>42539</td>
<td>30224</td>
<td>30224</td>
<td>8.34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>140951</td>
<td>3378</td>
<td>44208</td>
<td>31099</td>
<td>31099</td>
<td>8.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>146888</td>
<td>5937</td>
<td>45451</td>
<td>31418</td>
<td>31418</td>
<td>8.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>154335</td>
<td>7447</td>
<td>47459</td>
<td>32315</td>
<td>32315</td>
<td>8.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>160746</td>
<td>6411</td>
<td>48557</td>
<td>32861</td>
<td>32861</td>
<td>8.78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>168195</td>
<td>7449</td>
<td>50244</td>
<td>33088</td>
<td>33088</td>
<td>8.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>174024</td>
<td>5829</td>
<td>52145</td>
<td>33700</td>
<td>33700</td>
<td>8.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Year
2. This column shows the number of students enrolled in the government sector.
3. This column shows the increase in the number of students.
4. This column shows the percentage change from the year before in enrolments.
5. The number of students in the non-government sector.
6. This column shows the increase in the number of enrolments.
7. This column shows the percentage increase in the number of students from the year before.
8. This column shows the number of students in the Catholic sector.
9. The increase in the number of students that particular year.
10. This column shows the percentage increase over the year before.

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281 Western Australian Year Books from 1954-1970.
APPENDIX 8

Data showing the number of students and the changes in the number of students in Western Australia in both sectors.232

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Percentage in Govt. sect</th>
<th>Non-government</th>
<th>Percentage in non-govt.</th>
<th>Total in WA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>89034</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>28407</td>
<td>24.18</td>
<td>117441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>94883</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>30174</td>
<td>23.93</td>
<td>126057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>100734</td>
<td>75.9</td>
<td>31922</td>
<td>24.06</td>
<td>132656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>105585</td>
<td>75.7</td>
<td>33742</td>
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1. The year.
2. Numbers in the government sector.
3. Percentage in the government sector.
5. Percentage in the non-government sector.
6. Total of students in the schooling sector.

From what I can see in both of the lists of data is that there was a change which began to take place but it was not in the Catholic schools but in the Protestants schools where the change was initially apparent.

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