

# Independent Review Student First Support Fund

Final Report 3rd March 2017

Dahle Suggett  
John McCarthy  
Barbara Watterston

## Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Part 1</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Review findings and Discussion</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<u>1.1 Review requirements</u> .....	8
<u>1.2 Methodology</u> .....	8
<u>1.3 Structure of report</u> .....	9
<b>2. Students First Support Fund Purpose and Funding</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<u>2.1 National Priorities</u> .....	10
<u>2.2 SFSF funding</u> .....	11
<u>2.3 Context: Structural differences between NGRBs</u> .....	12
<b>3. Program Content and Delivery</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<u>3.1 Have NGRBs addressed the five government priorities?</u> .....	14
<u>3.2 How do NGRB's operate?</u> .....	16
<b>4. What has the SFSF Delivered?</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<u>4.1 Measures of success</u> .....	21
<u>4.2 Other areas of value gain</u> .....	23
<u>4.3 Value for money</u> .....	24
<b>5 Options for Improvement</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<u>5.1 What levers have worked best in driving improvement?</u> .....	26
<u>5.2 What would NGRBs like to improve in their model of operating?</u> .....	28
<u>5.3 A model for coherent and effective system implmentation</u> .....	29
<u>5.4 Alternative options for the SFSF</u> .....	32
<b>Part 2</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>Student First Support Fund Programs and Key Features</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>1. NGRB Summaries of SFSF Activity</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>2. Additional SFSF Data</b> .....	<b>54</b>
2.1 SFSF Funding tables and charts.....	55
2.2 Delivery models by NGRB - .....	60
2.3 SFSF Documents provided to PTR.....	67
2.4 Interviews with principals .....	69

# Executive Summary

## Review requirements

Students First Support Fund (SFSF) provides \$165 million over 2014–17 to 16 organisations approved by the Federal Minister for Education and Training as non-government representative bodies (NGRBs) under Section 89 of the Australian Education Act 2013. Funding is provided under Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between the Government and the NGRBs to represent non-government schools and support them in the implementation of national reforms priorities and school improvement.

The national reform priorities in summary are:

- quality teaching
- quality learning
- empowered school leadership
- meeting student need
- transparency and accountability.

The Department of Education and Training (DET) commissioned PTR Consulting to undertake an independent review of the SFSF to consider whether the Australian Government has achieved value for money and whether the fund has facilitated the implementation of government policy priorities.

## Context

SFSF MOUs were finalised with Associations of Independent Schools (AISs) and Catholic Education Commissions (CECs) as NGRBs by July 2014.

There is wide variety in NGRBs. They vary not only in size and resources but in how they execute their roles – in part due to the structural and governance differences between the Independent and Catholic sectors.

In the spirit of reducing the regulatory burden and removing red-tape, the requirements stated in the MOUs were simplified compared with past programs that had multiple specific measures and more detailed reporting requirements. The more simplified SFSF implementation and reporting requirements left decisions on program objectives, design, indicators of success and reporting to the individual NGRBs. The inherent differences among NGRBs influenced how they used the SFSF.

Three-year work plans (2014-2017) were approved by the Department and annual reports from 2015 containing summary outcomes and work undertaken were submitted. Many NGRBs initially continued existing programs related to the national reform priorities (which are consistent with prior objectives) and modified them as time progressed. The reporting required was a summary of outcomes and work undertaken to support the priorities.

This Review was conducted in December 2016 and January 2017. It encompassed a review of 2014 NGRB work plans and annual reports submitted to DET; consultations with NGRB executives; and interviews with principals of schools nominated by DET.

The wide variation in how NGRBs have implemented the SFSF and reported on activities and outcomes has limited the extent of the comparative analysis of activities and outcomes. To ensure there is a full picture of NGRBs' approaches, the report includes profiles of the SFSF activities of all NGRBs where their key programs, use of SFSF funds and outcomes are summarised.

## **Key findings**

Overall the Review findings point to a mixed quality of outcomes from SFSF. On the one hand the SFSF has been a positive stimulus for enhancing the school improvement support infrastructure and the capability of NGRBs to address national priorities. There are some impressive initiatives and lessons for the future and many NGRBs now have the foundation to sustain their school improvement activities. On the other hand, there are shortfalls and challenges - the implementation and impact of SFSF activities across the five national priorities is uneven; some NGRBs did not fully embrace the reform opportunity and absorbed the funds into their base business; the intersection with state and territory priorities was unclear; and most did not identify, track and evaluate SFSF outcomes.

The Government's design of the program is a contributor to the mixed results. The wide scope of the five national reform priorities, the absence of a common outcomes framework and the 'light touch' accountability and reporting framework did not provide adequate strategic direction and a structure through which NGRB achievements could be easily assessed.

Looking at the value for money for the Australian government and future options for improving Australia's performance in non government schools, there are some deep seated challenges to overcome so as to achieve 'system'<sup>1</sup> best practices, particularly program coherence and economies of scale in achieving national priorities.

## **Benefits**

Firstly, SFSF has been a significant stimulus for most NGRBs to implement an integrated set of school support strategies – many have established a systems approach to supporting schools through linkages and relationships among priorities and strategies and across schools. This has been a distinctive feature of some smaller NGRBs but is also evident in some larger organisations. They have established new structures, boosted their expertise and have an explicit school improvement 'theory of action'. These changes should be sustainable.

Secondly SFSF has mainly advanced implementation of two of the five national reform priorities – quality teaching and quality learning. These two priorities received the highest proportion of resources and activities were driven by the need to implement professional standards for teachers and the Australian Curriculum. These priorities are well-known and have a wide reach into all schools.

The national priorities have been advanced primarily through extensive professional learning opportunities; consultancy advice direct to schools; and coaching and mentoring services for schools. These more school-centred developmental strategies are strongly endorsed by principals and in general are seen as an improvement on past practices. There are some impressive initiatives that should be more widely shared among NGRBs.

Overall, in many NGRBs there is commitment to further development of their school improvement support activities along the lines established to date.

## **Shortfalls and challenges**

These SFSF strategies and impacts are not universal and the overall impact of the SFSF is uneven. Complex governance in the Catholic sector; competing or blurred priorities at a jurisdictional level; differences in theories of school improvement; and varied relationships

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<sup>1</sup> 'System' in the context of this review refers to the way structures, components and activities in an NGRB interrelate in providing a service to schools; in a systems approach the impact of the sum of the parts is greater than the contribution of the individual parts.

between NGRBs and autonomous schools all contribute to a wide diversity of objectives, program design and delivery. Arguably, this has had a negative impact on the quality of national outcomes from SFSF resources.

The Government's design of SFSF is a further contributor to the mixed results. The five national priorities were comprised of an estimated 21 individual priorities to be addressed over four years; an SFSF outcomes framework was not developed nor a sufficiently detailed monitoring or reporting process; and the congruence or differences between state and territory priorities and national priorities were not addressed.

In a number of cases SFSF resources are productively leveraged by funds from other sources and the allocations and accountabilities are transparent. However, the financial allocations by some NGRBs are more opaque and SFSF funds have been absorbed into existing initiatives rather than allocated in the spirit of co-investment.

Some NGRBs have used SFSF to add an additional layer of support services; to service committees where this might be regarded as part of the base business; or have used the additional resources to fill a gap in their provision of services. While these may be appropriate uses of SFSF funds, it is hard to assess the rationale and value without further substantive details.

A shortfall for all NGRBs is being able to account for outcomes that matter relative to their context. Their work plans mostly contain ambitious success indicators in terms of meeting government objectives and boosting student outcomes. However, the majority of annual reports do not carry through and report on these indicators – either because they are the wrong indicators or too hard to report on or not relevant at the level of individual initiatives.

Moreover, the majority of NGRBs are not formally evaluating their initiatives. Only a few NGRBs provide an account of a comprehensive evaluation strategy and how these have generated improvement in activities.

Past national programs incentivised collaboration at the jurisdictional or geographic level. They also provided greater visibility for federal priorities and initiatives. Currently, the pattern is mixed but overall, sector collaboration occurs sporadically rather than systematically. Some NGRBs are primarily guided by state government priorities and take part in state committees and the like but in general there are few opportunities for sectors sharing approaches to implementing the national priorities and comparing school improvement results.

Most NGRBs would welcome more cross sector engagement on priorities, implementation approaches and evaluation. There are promising models being developed for supporting school improvement and opportunities for consolidating a shared strategic direction for longer term gain.

### **Options for the future of SFSF**

The Australian Government as the funder of the SFSF needs to carefully consider how best to target its resources so that it has confidence that the national priorities are being addressed and it is receiving value for money.

### **Lessons for school support by 'systems'**

All NGRBs are able to describe the initiatives that work best in their environment. There are four levers for 'making a difference' that NGRBs regard as the most successful and should underpin their approaches going forward.

'System' strategies that work include:

- taking a developmental approach to standards and government requirements
- professional learning that is anchored in the whole school
- in-school coaching using high quality expertise
- facilitating formation of self-managing networks.

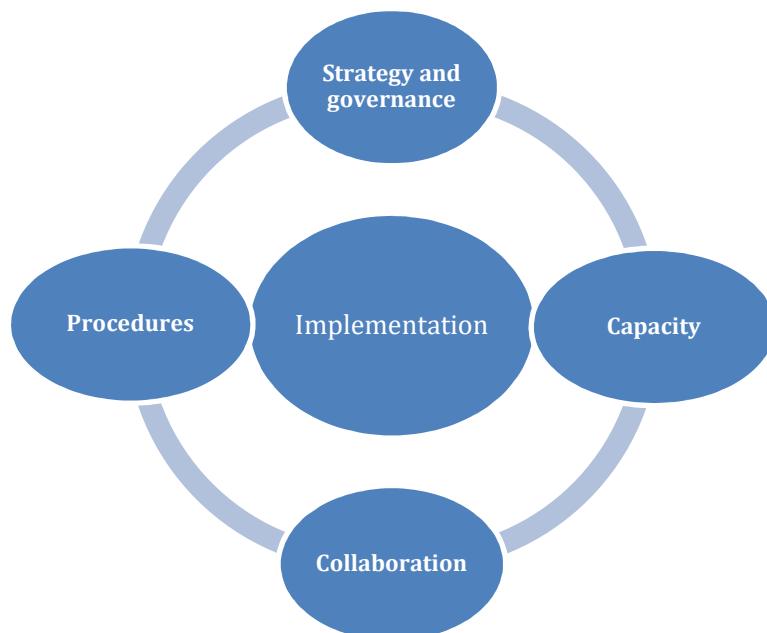
These school support strategies are having an effect because they

- embed the skills and infrastructure for longer term change
- make the school context the centre point
- build whole school commitment, and
- adopt a shared approach to improvement – with and among schools and experts.

### **A model for improving implementation of national priorities**

NGRBs nominated a range of improvements they would like to see in how SFSF is structured and operates. One option is to build on the positive start by many NGRBs in implementing a more integrated approach to the priorities and school improvement. This applies irrespective of the funding mechanisms. Many NGRBs are reflecting on the nature of their role and would welcome a discussion of their support strategy at this 'system' level.

The diagram below represents a set of factors that comprise a proposed strategy for NGRB support.<sup>2</sup> Most were suggested by NGRBs as discrete elements and they have been assembled in a model to indicate how to enhance the national impact of SFSF.



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<sup>2</sup> Derived from OECD (2013) *Synergies for Better Learning: An international Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment*, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, OECD Publishing, Paris.

### *Strategy and governance*

- A vision for a 'system' role for NGRBs in context with school autonomy and State and Territory jurisdictional roles
- An explicit 'line of sight' between national priorities, measures, resources and actions.
- Relative stability in the priorities and indicators of success.

### *Procedures*

- An outcomes framework with both longer term and interim outcomes
- A national approach to collecting qualitative information on programs and impact
- Stronger reporting requirements

### *Capacity*

- Build an evaluation culture: Enhanced national evaluation expertise that supports systems' and schools' needs
- Facilitate exchange on system strategies for school improvement

### *Collaboration*

- Incentivise cross sector collaboration in implementation
- Facilitate sharing expertise

### **Alternative funding levers**

There is an argument that current SFSF arrangements support many activities that are core business for NGRBs and that these activities should not be the beneficiary of direct Government support in the future. SFSF could instead target those priorities that warrant specific development before they become routine for NGRBs.

Alternative options for future approaches to SFSF funding include:

- SFSF funds are allocated to state and territory authorities for distribution to the non-government sector according to national priorities and state and territory contexts
- Australian Government conducts open tenders for the provision of specific initiatives with non-government schools
- Australian Government repurposes SFSF funding on a project basis with a strong outcomes framework
- SFSF lapses at the conclusion of the current funding period 2014-2017.

The first three of these options have the potential to provide the Australian Government with tighter direction and accountability over any future SFSF funding especially in a constrained resource environment.

Each also has issues that largely go to the relationship between NGRBs and the national and state authorities and would require significant negotiation between these parties to ensure an effective and efficient program or replacement is implemented.

**Part 1**  
**Review Findings and Discussion**



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Review requirements

Students First Support Fund (SFSF) provides \$165 million over 2014-17 to organisations approved by the Minister for Education and Training as non-government representative bodies (NGRBs) under Section 89 of the Australian Education Act 2013.

Department of Education and Training (DET) has commissioned PTR Consulting to undertake an Independent Review of the SFSF to consider whether the Australian Government has achieved value for money and whether the fund has facilitated the implementation of government policy priorities.

The Review assesses current arrangements for NGRBs and activities undertaken with the funding.

Specifically the review brief is the following.

- Examine how the non-government representative bodies have used the funding to improve student outcomes and support the implementation of government policy priorities.
- Assess whether the funding has delivered improved student outcomes and supported the implementation of policy priorities.
- Assess the awareness of the Fund and associated services among member schools, the level of take-up and perceptions of services offered.
- Consider the appropriateness of the annual reporting and accountability arrangements.
- Consider whether the Fund investment has delivered value for money.
- Consider whether the Fund should be maintained, with or without changes, based on the evidence gathered during the review.

## 1.2. Methodology

Based on the NGRB documentation provided to the review by DET and interviews with NGRBs and school leaders the review has attempted to assess the nature, intent and quality of the activities provided by NGRBs using the SFSF funds. The review has sought to address the following questions through desk-top analysis of documentation, consultation with executives of NGRBs and interviews with school leadership.

### **Desk-top analysis, consultation and interviews**

#### **SFSF priorities and use of funds**

##### ***Program content and delivery***

- Have bodies implemented government priorities?
- How have funds been applied to priorities- what are the delivery models?
- How do they operate; are there 'theories of action'?

##### ***Quality assessments***

- Have progress and quality been evaluated?

#### **Achieving outcomes**

##### ***Value gain***

- Outcomes: what have funds delivered?
- What levers have worked best in driving improvement?
- What are the levels of awareness of national priorities in schools?

##### ***Options for improvement***

- What has been learned about system support for school improvement?
- What change is desirable and possible?

### **Review of 2014 Work plans and 2014, 2015 Annual Reports from 16 NGRBs bodies provided by DET**

Note

- Analysis has focused particularly on the 2015 activities as reported to DET in March 2016).
- Some NGRBs reports contain extensive detail and a clear picture of the rationale for allocation of SFSF funds; and some are more cursory with respect to SFSF allocations and outcomes.
- Evaluations of program components are attached to a number of the NGRB reports for approximately 20 percent of initiatives.

### **Consultation December 2016 with executives in all NGRB and national bodies**

Questions encompassed:

- clarification of operating model (use of funds, staffing, and integration into existing structure and programs )
- rationale or 'theory of action' for SFSF strategy/projects
- assessment of impact of funds as allocated
- discussion of the key success factors
- lessons from SFSF program design
- ways to improve

### **Interviews December 2016 with school principals nominated by DET (30 contacted; input received from 19 schools)**

Questions included:

- awareness of Australia Government education priorities
- awareness of the role of the relevant NGRB
- extent of participation in their activities for schools
- awareness of the SFSF fund and the services/ programs offered by the NGRB
- rate of accessing SFSF services and their relevance/impact
- assessment of the most and least valuable SFSF activity /service
- how the NGRB has assisted implementation of national reforms.

## **1.3. Structure of report**

This report is structured as follows:

### **Executive summary**

#### **Part 1 Review findings and discussion**

- Students First Support Fund
- Program content and delivery
- Quality assessments
- Achieving outcomes/ Value gain
- Outcomes: what have funds delivered?
- Options for improvement

#### **Part 2 SFSF programs and key features**

- NGRB SFSF activity profiles: summary of features and activities
- Patterns of expenditure
- Delivery models
- Principals' perspectives

## **2. Students First Support Fund Purpose and Funding**

### Key Findings

- SFSF funding is provided on an annual basis and totals \$154.67m over the period 2014-17 to support the implementation of five national priorities.
- The quantum of resources provided differs between Catholic (35.3%) and Independent (64.7%) sectors.
- SFSF has been a major stimulus for change in the support work done by most NGRBs but there are significant differences in approaches to planning and implementing SFSF, partly influenced by structural factors and partly due to the very broad scope of the government's requirements.
- NGRB size is a significant limitation on the scope and depth of support activities that can be offered across the five national priorities.
- Governance and the nature of the relationship between the NGRB and its schools also influences the approaches adopted e.g.
  - The matrix governance arrangements of some Catholic Education Commissions provides challenges for planning, evaluating and reporting the impact of SFSF
  - NGRBs for Independent schools have had the challenge of moving from a member service to one focused on supporting schools achieve broad educational outcomes with a voluntary association.

The Students First Support Fund (SFSF) provides funding to the non-government representative bodies (NGRBs) via Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to represent non-government schools and support them in the implementation of national reforms and school improvement.

### **2.1 National Priorities**

The five priorities are:

- improving quality teaching, including but not limited to implementing relevant national standards, frameworks and charters developed by the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)
- improving quality learning, including but not limited to providing comprehensive literacy and numeracy support, increasing focus on the teaching of science, technology, engineering and mathematics and providing greater access to foreign language education
- empowering school leadership, including but not limited to implementing relevant national standards, frameworks and charters, increasing parent and community engagement and conducting objective assessments of school performance and practices to inform improvement planning and ongoing monitoring
- meeting student need, including but not limited to conducting specific activities to support Indigenous students and students with a disability
- improving transparency and accountability, including but not limited to supporting improvements to school governance arrangements, financial management practices, record keeping, data quality and public accountability.

The AIS NGRBs interpreted these five priorities as comprised on 21 separate components, all of which the MOUS implied would be implemented.

## 2.2 SFSF funding

Funding is provided on an annual basis to each NGRB for the period 2014-17. Total funding over this period is \$154.67m<sup>3</sup> Table 1 and Figure 1 show the annual amounts for each NGRB and the percentage of their sector's allocation.

The quantum of resources provided differs between Catholic (35.3%) and Independent (64.7%) sectors.

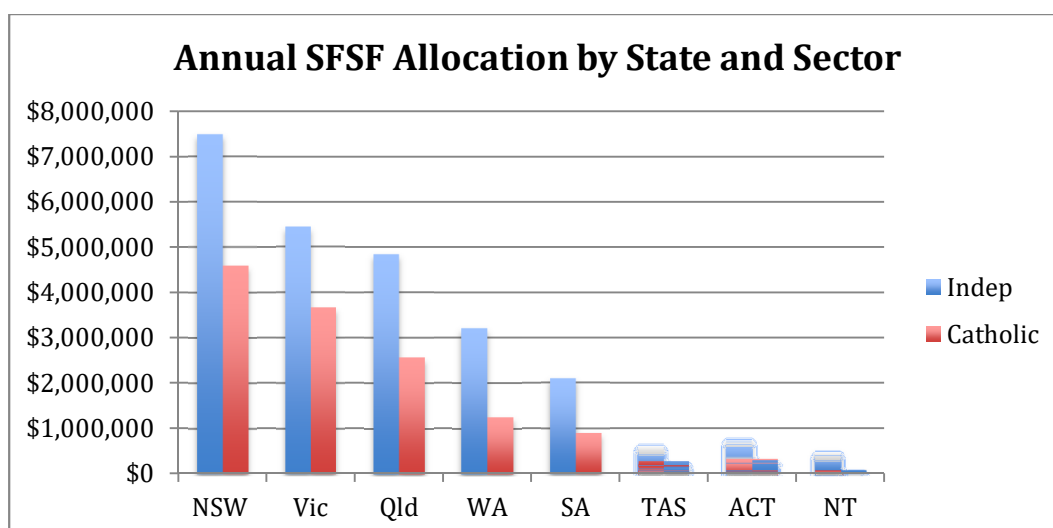
(The National Catholic Commissions funding as NGRBs with SFSF accountabilities is supplementary to funding for their role as approved authorities for relevant Catholic schools with responsibilities for e.g. compliance with the Act.)

**Table 1: Annual SFSF Allocation by State and Sector**

	Independent		Catholic	
<b>NSW</b>	\$7,485,668	29.9%	\$4,594,418	33.6%
<b>Vic</b>	\$5,444,491	21.8%	\$3,670,155	26.9%
<b>Qld</b>	\$4,833,513	19.3%	\$2,567,447	18.8%
<b>WA</b>	\$3,207,197	12.8%	\$1,252,891	9.2%
<b>SA</b>	\$2,093,598	8.4%	\$898,993	6.6%
<b>TAS</b>	\$640,380	2.6%	\$271,789	2.0%
<b>ACT</b>	\$784,219	3.1%	\$324,938	2.4%
<b>NT</b>	\$510,933	2.0%	\$86,032	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	\$24,999,999		\$13,666,663	

Note: Independent sector allocations include a base for the 3 smallest jurisdictions.

**Fig 1: Annual SFSF Allocation by State and Sector**



<sup>3</sup> The SFSF fund also includes a \$10m allocation to the ACT which is out of scope for this review

## 2.3 Context: Structural differences between NGRBs

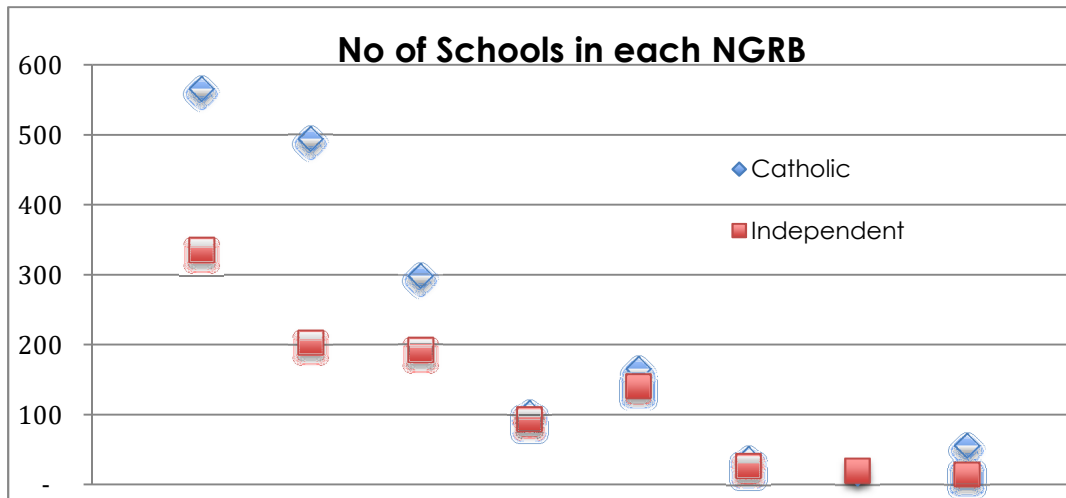
The SFSF has been a major stimulus for change in the structure of some NGRBs and in the scope of their activities but there is wide variation in the approaches adopted for implementing the five national priorities.

Differences can have structural roots. Size is one factor as is the different ways the Catholic and the Independent sectors are structured.

### Size

Each of the NGRBs in Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the ACT have 60 schools or less compared with NGRBs in NSW (Catholic – 566 and Independents - 336), Victoria (Catholic - 494) and Queensland (Catholic -299).

Fig 2: No of schools in each NGRB 2015



The larger NGRBs particularly in the Independent sector provide a wide and sophisticated range of professional learning opportunities for teachers, school leaders and governing bodies and are seeking to gain from economies of scale – the Queensland Independent NGRB provided 324 professional learning opportunities in 2015 attended by 9,500 participants (funding for these activities was not solely from SFSF funds).

Smaller NGRBs tend to have more of a focus on working with their schools case by case to understand their context and develop responses that build sustainable change. A greater proportion of their time is also absorbed by engagement in committees and governance.

### Differences between Catholic and Independent NGRBs

There are structural differences between the Catholic and Independent systems that impact on how the two sectors are able to plan and implement programs to support their schools including those funded by SFSF to address national reform priorities.

Governance of Catholic education in Australia has a number of layers with Catholic Education Commissions in each state and territory as well as a number of dioceses within each state and territory with prime local responsibility for education in their area e.g. Queensland has 22 Catholic schooling authorities – five diocesan Catholic Education Offices and 17 Religious Institutes.

For the purposes of the Commonwealth the Commissions are designated as the NGRB for their state or territory as well as serving their main role as approved authorities for their

schools. The Commissions vary in their role and ability to plan and implement programs across their schools – and acknowledge this challenge.

NSW and Queensland have quite complex matrix structures of governance. This puts a limitation on fully understanding their allocation of SFSF to national priorities, the objectives of services or projects, the rationale for their design and outcomes. Whereas in Western Australia and Victoria governance is more straightforward and a line of sight back to the federal government and its priorities is easier to assess

These structural issues manifest in different ways of operating. In the case of Queensland the 17 authorities gain access to per capita funding – authorities then have the flexibility to target funds. By contrast, in the case of Victoria the two programs funded by SFSF were chosen in part because they were seen as being able to meet common needs and address key issues across the four dioceses in that state.

The National Catholic Education Commission sees the diversity of states' and authorities' approaches as an asset and strength – their foundation principles are that they want to strengthen local responsiveness as the main lens for reform.

Independent school associations operate on a voluntary membership basis and do not have sub layers of governance between the designated NGRB and their schools and are able to plan accordingly. They are however faced with the challenge of moving from a traditional member services (governance, compliance, HR) model to one that is more focused on support for sustainable improvement in educational outcomes.

### **3. Program Content and Delivery**

#### Key Findings<sup>4</sup>

- The lack of consistency in the structure of SFSF reports and detail in acquittal processes make it difficult to provide robust statistical analyses and comparisons of all NGRBs' SFSF funded activities and the extent and impact of the implementation of national priorities.
- As an estimate, the implementation of the 5 national priorities has been uneven:
  - 12 of the 16 NGRB's expend over 50% of the SFSF funds to support the first two reform areas – Quality Teaching and Quality Learning.
  - The Transparency and Accountability Reform area receives the least amount of attention at around 10%.
- Program characteristics are on a continuum from specific curriculum or service focus to a broader based more holistic school improvement agenda.
- On the positive side, most NGRBs are moving from being conduits for government funds to using SFSF Funds to build capacity and capability to work more effectively with their schools on national priorities and school improvement.
- However, the larger CECs have existing infrastructure and ways of working with their administrative layers and schools. The SFSF activity appears to have been added to that as a new layer rather than used as a stimulus for change.

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<sup>4</sup> A note on language: As seen above the language used in the MoUs and program guidelines is one of support for "national reforms..." and the five areas identified above are used by most but not all NGRBs in their planning and reporting documents. The terms of this review asks whether the SFSF has been used to "...support the implementation of government policy priorities." For the purposes of this review the reform areas and policy priorities are taken to be identical.

NGRBs are required to present annual reports of their activities under the SFSF. The reviewers have had access to these reports as well as to the work plans of the NGRBs. The Commonwealth has not mandated any format for these reports and work plans or placed any requirements on NGRBs to structure their reports in a common manner.

In some cases, apart from a general statement that the NGRB's work covers the five reform areas in the SFSF policy, there is no explicit categorisation of activity against those reform areas. As a consequence, analysis of the reports both against the reform areas and in comparison with other NGRBs is difficult and subject to interpretation.

This lack of consistency also applies to the documentation of expenditure against the reform areas as in some cases NGRB's have reported expenditure against projects in their plan without explicitly linking those projects to the reform areas.

The reports do however contain rich information on a wide variety of initiatives. To ensure there is a full picture of NGRBs' approaches, despite the limitations on comparative analysis, the report includes profiles of the SFSF activities of all NGRBs where their key programs, use of SFSF funds and outcomes are summarised. (See Part 2, 1. NGRB SFSF Activity Profiles.)

The analysis below should be read with these caveats in mind.

### **3.1 Have NGRBs addressed the five government priorities?**

The SFSF has advanced implementation of the five national reform priorities, particularly Quality Teaching and Quality Learning, which have had the largest resource allocation and have the widest reach into schools.

The national reform agenda has been relatively consistent and well supported by research over the last several years. Many NGRBs have had approaches to supporting their schools in place over that time that parallel the five areas identified for SFSF or at the least address the majority of them. In part this work was supported by previous Commonwealth programs (National Partnerships, Targeted Programs), state and territory funding or funds generated from their schools.

There was a brief hiatus between the introduction of the SFSF program and the conclusion of the previous National Partnerships – particularly for Catholic systems. As a result when the SFSF was announced and MoUs were negotiated there was a tendency for NGRBs in the first year to extend support for existing programs or to those schools who had previously been receiving funding or support.

It is apparent that after the first year of SFSF funding many NGRBs took the opportunity to rethink their approach and develop longer-term initiatives focused on achieving sustainable improvements in the reform areas.

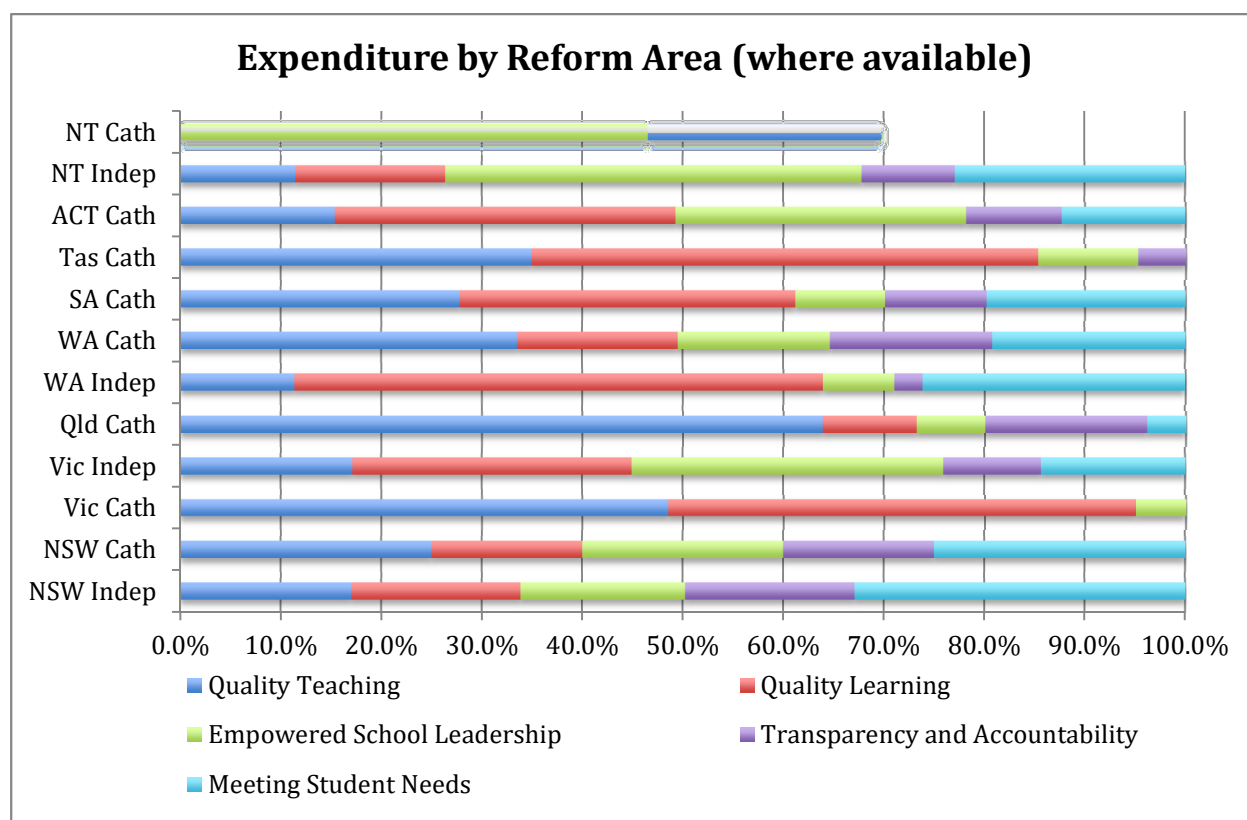
Additionally the period of the SFSF has coincided with the maturation of specific national reforms such as the Australian Curriculum, the National Professional Standards for Teachers and the Australian Professional Standard for Principals, which provide both a vehicle, and a lever for NGRB's to work with their schools in the heart of the reform agenda.

From the evidence available to this review it is clear that, allowing for the different modes of operation (see below), the work of the NGRB's funded through the SFSF has addressed the five reform areas – albeit in varying degrees of depth and impact.

Figure 3 and Tables in Part 2 provide an estimate of NGRB's expenditure across the five reform areas. Data have been obtained directly from NGRB planning documents or reports and in two cases inferred by the reviewers based on project descriptions.

(The figures need to be treated as indicative due not only to the nature of the reporting but also as many of the activities and initiatives have purposes and outcomes that overlap across reform areas.)

**Fig 3: Assessment of expenditure across reform areas – percentage**



**Notes:**

NT Catholic system allocates 30.3% of SFSF for General Improvement and provides in kind support for the reform areas where no breakdown is given.

NSW Independent and Victorian Catholic provide budget information on a project-by-project basis. Assignment to reform areas is based on an assessment of project descriptions.

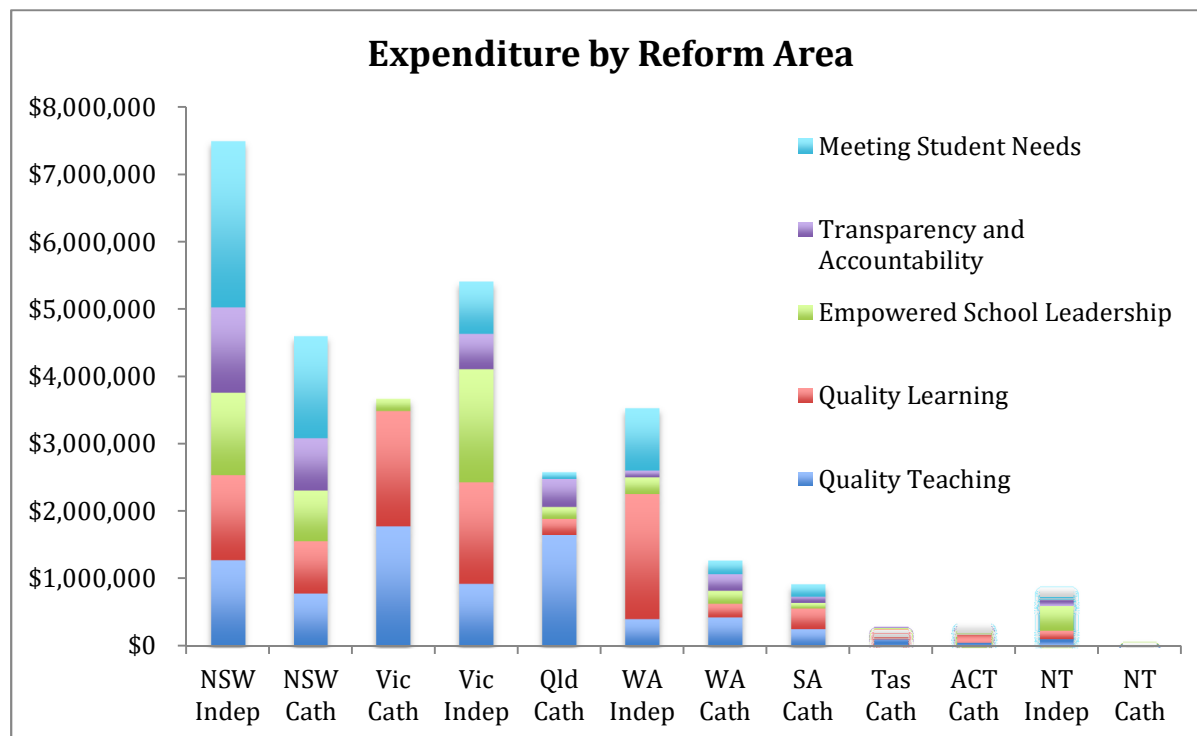
In four cases obtaining a breakdown across the reform areas was not feasible due to the mode of delivery adopted by the NGRB or the way the activities have been reported:

Queensland Independent	Documents indicate each activity supports all reform areas
South Australia Independent	Significant expenditure on staff costs. Budget not broken down by activity
Tasmania Independent	SFSF budget rolled into a global budget including other sources to fund full program. SFSF provides 70% of funds
ACT Independent	Budget provided for 4 projects in 2014 work plan but not subsequently. One project is business as usual



Figure 4 shows this expenditure in dollar terms with the same exceptions as above

**Fig4: Assessment of expenditure across reform areas – \$s**



Notes:

NT Catholic system allocates 30.3% of SFSF for General Improvement and provides in kind support for the reform areas where no breakdown is given.

NSW Independent and Victorian Catholic provide budget information on a project-by-project basis. Assignment to reform areas based on an assessment of project descriptions

Based on this analysis, 12 of the 16 NGRB's expend over 50 per cent of the SFSF funds to support the first two reform areas – Quality Teaching and Quality Learning.

The Transparency and Accountability Reform area receives the least amount of attention at around 10 per cent.

### **3.2 How do NGRB's operate?**

The following sections describe the SFSF activities conducted by NGRBs and indicate their key characteristics and main patterns of activity. The subsequent section gives an account of the benefits and limitations of how SFSF priorities were addressed.

#### **NGRB program characteristics**

There is a diversity of delivery models and activities provided by NGRBs. One relatively simple classification of program characteristics is a continuum that ranges at one end from a focus on a specific area of the curriculum or function of schools to a broad or more comprehensive school improvement agenda at the other end.

While the choice of mode is partly a reflection of the NGRB size and context, the continuum does suggest a framework for decision making – what balance is desirable between the two perspectives; what has the widest reach to schools; which will build sustainability?

For example, at one end the CECV determined that it would use the funds to support two specific curriculum programs – *Leading Languages Learning in Catholic Schools Initiative* and *Auspiced Training and Industry Partnership*. These two programs were chosen in part because they were areas of need but also because they were programs that applied across the 4 dioceses in Victoria and avoided duplication.

The other end of the continuum is where NGRB's have implemented broad approaches to school and system improvement.

For example AISSA has utilised 80 per cent of the SFSF funds in the employment of staff to work closely with leadership teams in schools focusing on school improvement in the context of individual schools. Support is also given for national reforms such as the AITSL Performance and Development Framework but the emphasis is on longer-term engagement with teams at the school level.

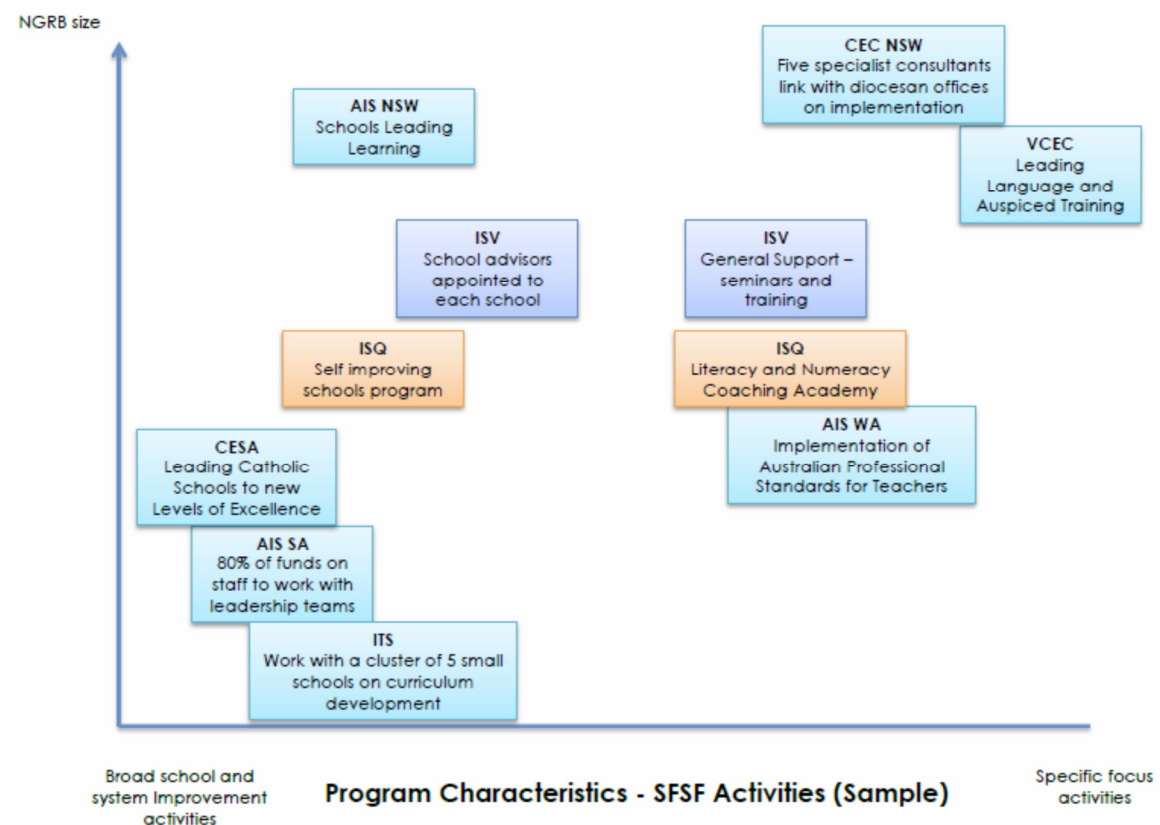
A number of other jurisdictions also operate along the AISSA lines either as their main approach (ITS) or as a part of their operation (e.g. ISV, AIS NSW, ISQ).

In an example of an emphasis on system change and improvement CESA identified three priorities after 2014 one of which was *Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence* - which included moving Year 7s to secondary schools (ahead of the government system), a new funding formula and a review of Catholic Education provision.

Some initiatives sit midway between the two ends of the continuum- such as the ISQ Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Academy. Larger NGRB have the capacity to offer a range of initiatives along the continuum; smaller NGRB have to make a choice and would be advised to concentrate their resources in a narrower band of programs.

Figure 5 illustrates where a sample of NGRB activities are placed on this continuum.

**Fig 5: Program Characteristics - SFSF activities**



## **NGRB capacity and capability**

A major focus for NGRBs was on building their capacity and capability for implementing SFSF initiatives. (The NGRB profiles in Part 2 provide details of the NGRB staff that support SFSF initiatives.)

NGRB's indicated they have become increasingly selective about the characteristics they sought when employing staff with educational expertise a premium selection criterion in most cases.

In a large number of cases NGRB's changed the number or expertise of their staff in response to having access to SFSF funds. In some cases this doubled the number of staff working with schools – NTAIS, AISACT (all small NGRBs). Re-assignments of existing staff or new appointments are evident in most NGRBs (e.g. staff assigned to SFSF activities are 23 (FTE) in AIS NSW and 22 (FTE) in ISQ).

Not all NGRBs increased staff however – AISSA went from 40 staff down to a more highly skilled 28.

Some small jurisdictions also saw benefit in employing staff for other roles e.g. the AIS NT employed two additional staff – one with communications expertise and one with business and governance expertise; Tasmania CEO employed a team leader within their office to ensure coordination of their activities and across staff (literacy officer, data analyst, education officers) and provide coaching for education officers. Both NGRBs indicated that these staff changes had improved their effectiveness in working with their schools.

The Review did observe SFSF resources were used for staff to service committees and meetings across jurisdictions and with the Australian Government and to bridge functions in CECs matrix governance. The larger CECs have existing infrastructure and well-established ways of working with their administrative layers and schools. The SFSF activity appears to have been added to that as a new layer of roles rather than used primarily as a stimulus for change. This use of SFSF resources is problematic.

## **School improvement strategies**

NGRBs deployed a range of school improvement strategies. The following Box 1 contains in priority order the most common strategies used by NGRBs – professional learning; consultancy services; coaching and mentoring; and the more routine function of providing support and advice. (A sample of these is described in more detail in Part 2, 2.1 Delivery Models)

The SFSF resources are allocated to employment of expert people for the activities (as indicated above) and to support teachers' or principals' attendance (e.g. materials and facilities); teacher relief coverage and grants to schools are relatively rare. Many activities are conducted in schools and out of school teaching time.

The first three approaches listed below reflect what would be on offer in most leading systems internationally. The function of providing support and advice, including attending committees and the like is a routine function of NGRBs and perhaps should not feature as a prominent use of SFSF funds.

### Box 1. Prominent SFSF school improvement strategies (priority order)

<i>Professional Learning</i>	Includes provision of professional learning activities both centrally and school-based; often focused on implementation of national priorities such as teacher standards and the Australian Curriculum.  A trend by some is to develop more interactive 'learning by doing' sequences and to encourage free forming professional learning communities to grow out of more structured sessions.
<i>Consultancy Advice</i>	Expert advice at the school level provided on educational issues that could involve planning and brokering services. In some cases officers of the NGRB would be attached to individual schools as an advisor or through service agreements.  A common need is to ensure the advice available when it is needed – often after school hours.
<i>Coaching and Mentoring</i>	One-on-one or small group advice and support services usually provided to principals or leadership teams on a skill or process for school improvement. This could be provided by NGRB staff or contracting of outside expertise including experienced principals.
<i>Support and Advice (including committees and liaison)</i>	General support and advice to schools usually on teaching and learning but could also include advice on governance and accountability (although some NGRB's fund that advice from non SFSF funds). Can include vehicles such as committees that develop and recommend materials and processes.

Other less common modes in priority order are in Box 2 below. Some of these are inherently of a smaller scope but are valuable strategies – such as research initiatives involving practitioners; others (e.g. producing kits and guidelines) are being replaced overtime by more effective strategies; and others will grow in the future (e.g. on-line tools). These strategies are not resource intensive.

### Box 2. Less common SFSF school improvement strategies (priority order)

<i>Resource provision</i>	The production of explanatory guidelines, kits, how-to handbooks on key themes.
<i>Research practitioner</i>	Teacher funded as a researcher; usually linked with a university or central body where a teacher or group of teachers develop an enquiry to respond to a key professional or research question.
<i>Research academic</i>	Resources provided to an academic institution or person to enquire into a professional research issue and make results available.
<i>Awareness and information</i>	Information campaigns on new policies and programs

### Rationale for delivery models

As indicated above some NGRB's have changed their approach to the use of SFSF funds over the course of the program – driven partly by evaluations of programs e.g. the TAS CEO discontinued support for an Indonesian immersion program in part because little 'value' was added to the system but also as a result of the time and certainty provided by knowing that funding was available to 2017; AIS NSW has refined and extended nine projects; ceased

one, the ICT Review and Support Project; and added an initiative for Consistent Collection of Data on students with a disability. ISQ has also reduced the number of projects in 2016 so as to sharpen their focus.

In many cases these changes not only reflected feedback on the effectiveness of individual activities but were also influenced by rethinking by the NGRB of the principles underpinning their general approach both to the use of SFSF and to their operation as an NGRB.

Hence each NGRB's approach to the use of SFSF funds is influenced by both their vision of their own mode of operation and a vision as to what can best support their schools to achieve sustainable improvement.

NGRBs also operate within a number of constraints. Chief among constraints, particularly for the independent sector, is that they work with autonomous schools and do not operate in a top down way.

NGRB approaches to working with schools generally have the following positive features:

- Increasingly working with school leadership teams within a school context
- A move away from one off professional learning activities to more regular and sustained interaction
- Analysis and benchmarking of data to inform school improvement issues
- Coaching for principals and teachers both for leadership and pedagogy

In some cases this broad approach is formalised and supported through structural arrangements e.g. service agreements in the TASCEO; and assignment of school improvement advisors to each school (ISV), or embodied in a comprehensive program such as School Leading Learning in AIS NSW.

More generally, NGRBs are moving from being largely conduits for Commonwealth grants to utilising research based frameworks and school improvement processes. They explain their activity as building professional capability for the longer term both organisationally and in their schools, (especially in leadership) and establishing advisory and brokering services that take advantage of economies of scale to deliver benefits for their schools.

## **4. What has the SFSF Delivered?**

### Key Findings

- There is a mix of benefits and challenges

### Positives

- SFSF has provided tangible support for the promotion, development and implementation of national priorities Principals, while mostly not recognising the SFSF fund as such, universally value the access to advice for the delivery of national policies (e.g. Aust. Curriculum); and smaller jurisdictions and non-metropolitan schools value school improvement support tailored to their needs.
- Success is mostly reported in terms of *outputs* from initiatives such as participation rates in professional learning and satisfaction results. Results are positive for all NGRBs. Many schools have engaged in the SFSF funded initiatives and most report very good responses from participants.
- A few NGRBs have a comprehensive suite of project evaluations and these give the best insight into program effectiveness with strong findings in support of the value of school centred coaching initiatives and tailoring consultancy support to

the precise needs of schools. These views are endorsed by principals.

- Other 'system' gains from SFSF are the productivity benefits from using SFSF funds to leverage other resources so as to build a coherent strategy; and the long term benefits of establishing a robust and efficient infrastructure to support schools in what they need.

#### Challenges

- SFSF has assisted NGRBs to support their schools to address the five reform areas but the broad nature of the priorities and the lack of coherence in planning and reporting make it difficult for Government (as the funder of SFSF) to know what is working best or if the funding could achieve similar results if used in a different way.
- While short and longer term *outcomes* (e.g. greater awareness and adoption of standards) have been signaled in initial plans, few are assessed and reported in subsequent documentation.
- Many NGRBs do not appear to have the data collection and analytical capability for impact and outcomes analysis. NGRBs refer to observational and anecdotal evidence of success.
- In a number of cases SFSF resources are productively leveraged by funds from other sources and the allocations and accountabilities are transparent. However, the financial allocations by some NGRBs are more opaque and SFSF funds have been absorbed into existing initiatives rather than allocated in the spirit of co-investment.

## **4.1 Measures of success**

All work plans included success indicators and some annual reports followed through on these – but often in relatively shallow terms. Measurement of success is mostly about outputs such as attendance and shorter term outcomes such as satisfaction levels. The results at this level are consistently positive. But overall, longer term outputs or outcomes from the national priorities for school improvement are not addressed. Even if the time period is too short for analysing the deeper impact of initiatives ways of addressing this, by interim outcomes for example, should be signalled.

### **Outputs – what was done and who was reached**

The output indicators are in the order of numbers participating in professional learning and information sessions activities; volume of on-on-one advice on government requirements and the application of new standards; take-up of coaching opportunities; functionality of websites; and participant satisfaction with the activities.

Results at this level are positive and have often exceeded expectations. Particularly in independent schools, the rates of engagement are high and the willingness to accept experts and consultants into schools to work alongside principals and teachers is pleasing to the associations. NGRBs for Independent schools and some Catholic NGRBs have provided precise numbers and hours of engagement for their main initiatives. In the smaller jurisdictions the rate of involvement for many SFSF funded activities has been near 90-100 per cent. A few conduct regular surveys of members and results show growing and sometimes

high levels of satisfaction with the role played by their NGRB.

## Outcomes – short and longer term results

Outcome indicators and results are more challenging for NGRBs. Outcome indicators have mostly been included in the early work plans for 2014 but fewer than 40 per cent have continued to report on progress for these up to 2016.

Most include indicators for meeting state and Australian government requirements such as the adoption of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers in schools' performance and development frameworks; adoption of principal appraisal; completion of school improvement plans; and depth of implementation of the Australian Curriculum. Some estimates of results are provided and show progress but these outcomes are also generated in conjunction with other initiatives, particularly in the larger Catholic jurisdictions and attribution to SFSF is not possible

Other outcomes are more for aspirational purposes and would require complex data gathering techniques including more robust base level data from which to estimate improvement.

Some of the outcome indicators at this level include growth in the analysis of performance data in schools for monitoring school improvement; growing awareness and adoption of strategies for inclusive education to meet diverse student needs; improved teacher skills for language teaching; and changed behaviours and practices for early career principals. Some plans also refer to improving student outcomes as indicated by NAPLAN results.

Some offer observational results and anecdotal information for these outcomes but data analysis at this level of outcome is mostly not available. Even where NGRBs are large they are often also in complex management structures and achieving economies of scale in system level data analysis is challenging.

## Program/project evaluation results

Some NGRBs have evaluated their key projects or strategies; however, the proportion of total activity that has been evaluated is very small at around 20 per cent.

A few bodies have made available a suite of evaluations (e.g. AIS NSW; AIS Queensland; CE WA; and ACT AIS) and have shown how their strategies and programs have been adjusted according to research findings.

Key commonalities in evaluation findings include

- the value of and demand by schools for expert coaching in specific practices (e.g. literacy and numeracy) and the positive results in improving teacher skills and changing classroom practices
- the value of in-school consultancy and group professional learning versus attending external events
- improvements that arise from equipping teachers with data analysis skills and facilitating use of benchmarks from similar schools
- the value of and demand for principal leadership development including for early career principals.

These are useful findings that should be shared and tested by others to extend the evidence base for how NGRBs can most effectively work with schools to support school improvement.



## What principals see as the main value of the SFSF

Most principals cannot differentiate activities delivered by their NGRB that are funded by SFSF from the general presence of that NGRB. However, SFSF support has been made explicit in some cases e.g. the CESA entered into MoUs with their principal associations to deliver professional learning for principals. These MoUs specifically referenced SFSF support for that activity.

The national priorities that SFSF activities address are also not readily identifiable by school principals. They recognise them as key areas when prompted but do not generally refer to them as a guiding the nation's strategic direction in education. Principals on the whole do not readily differentiate between state or national priorities.

Irrespective of knowledge of the source of funds, there is strong endorsement in many jurisdictions of the depth and relevance of SFSF NGRB activities. This applies particularly where a school centred approach is the central mode of operating and the activities are explicitly responsive to schools needs.

Engagement in the support offered by an NGRB appears more extensive in non-metropolitan areas and in smaller schools. Principals from large and mature schools tend to assess the best value from NGRBs as arising from information and advice on implementing government requirements than from more general school improvement strategies. They mostly have internal structures for school improvement and are not seeking generalised support. (See Part 2, 2.4 for further details of principals' views.)

## 4.2 Other areas of value gain

The productivity and sustainability the NGRB SFSF operating models are two aspects that are important to estimating the gains from SFSF.

### Productivity and leverage

NGRBs differ in the proportion of SFSF funds allocated to initiatives. A few initiatives and, at least in one NGRB, all initiatives are funded exclusively by SFSF funds but in the main SFSF resources are leveraged by funds from other sources with the intention they are used to better advantage. This is positive and lays the foundation for more productive use of scarce resources in meeting national priorities.

In most AISs, the proportion of SFSF funds allocated to an objective and/or initiative is transparent and other sources are acknowledged (e.g. other Australian Government program funds, State government sources or user pay contributions). NSW AIS is an example of where the total allocation to national priorities is provided along with the breakdown of other funding sources so as to maximise the advantage gained from the aggregated funds.

In some CEC/CEOs the allocation of SFSF funds and relationship to other funds is clearly shown (e.g. Victoria, Western Australia; ACT) but in others, (e.g. NSW) possibly due to more complex governance, the purpose and the actual application of the funds to achieve outcomes are harder to discern.

NGRBs agree that establishing a coherent approach to supporting schools pursue national priorities to improve student outcomes should be a priority. This requires funding to be



allocated where it has the best effect and it is logical that funds are integrated for maximum advantage and greater productivity.

Some NGRBs are transparent and effective in their approach to leveraging advantage from SFSF funds in combination with other sources. This is in the spirit of co-investment. Transparent and strategic co-investment should be an expectation of all NGRBs.

### **Sustainability of support infrastructure**

A further outcome identified by numerous NGRBs is that SFSF has enabled a system infrastructure to be built and skills acquired that should enable school improvement support to be sustainable into the future. The use of SFSF funds to build system capability to work with schools is different from allocating funds directly to schools.

The economies of scale in setting up structures and systems to support schools have been significant for independent schools, particularly in the smaller jurisdictions (e.g. AIS ACT).

CEC/CEOs on the other hand have existing system infrastructure and there is not a common pattern for how the SFSF resources are applied in relation to the core staffing establishment. Some CEC/CEOs have identified the benefit for their overall capability of using the SFSF to better target improvement in their capability; in others that are larger and have existing infrastructure that gain is not so apparent.

Positive strategies pursued by NGRBs to establish more robust and sustainable system supports for schools include the following.

- Fewer but more skilled consultancy staff with a perspective on future priorities (e.g. AIS SA)
- Sharing resources and tools across NGRBs (e.g. access by others to AIS Queensland Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Academy)
- Cascading skills development by accessing superior advisory skills in the NGRB so as to boost mentoring capability in schools (e.g. CE WA)
- Refinement of the role and accountability of consultants to schools (AISV).

A number of NGRBs highlighted the inefficiencies of not using the economies of scale from sharing across organisations and building sustainable support structures for schools for the future.

### **4.3 Value for money**

From the information provided to this review it is apparent that NGRBs have used the SFSF to improve their operations in support of their schools.

Does this approach to SFSF provide value for money? The answer is dependent on whether any alternative approaches for the use of the SFSF funds will deliver significantly greater outcomes. In addition to the option that the funds cease to be available, what alternatives are there for the funds to be repurposed and restructured?

Anecdotal comparisons are made by NGRBs with previous programs – National Partnerships and the earlier targeted programs. But any systematic analysis of this type is a large task and, given the lack of consistency identified earlier with SFSF reporting and documentation, not one that is easily undertaken in the scope of this review.

It is clear feedback that in comparison with previous programs many NGRBs feel there is greater value in the current approach that allows for national reforms to be addressed at the school level within their local context as well as through building system capability.

From a Government perspective however, the structure of the program – broad reform areas and “light touch” accountability and reporting is problematic for assessing impact and planning for the future of the program.

In a context of constrained resources Government needs to ensure that funding is driving improvement through implementation of its priorities. Additionally non-government schools and NGRBs operate in a multi layered context that includes not just the Commonwealth government but State and Territory government priorities, national and local authorities with responsibility for curriculum and teacher quality as well as their own guiding philosophies.

Whilst there is relatively speaking good alignment and agreement on priorities through these layers the Australian Government needs to carefully consider how best to target its resources to its priorities and what arrangements to put around this funding so that it has confidence that the priorities are being addressed and it is receiving value for money. Some options for this are explored below.

## **5 Options for Improvement**

### Key findings

#### Options for improvement

1. NGRBs approaches driving improvement should inform future ‘system’ activity – irrespective of SFSF

- Developmental approach to standards and government requirements
- Professional learning that is anchored in the whole school
- In-school coaching and easy access to expertise
- Facilitating formation of self-managing networks.

They are having an effect because they embed the skills and infrastructure for longer term change and make the school context the centre point

2. Program design: Improved implementation would be guided by the following model

- Coherent vision for change – strong and simple messages
- Line of sight from priority to objectives, measures and outcomes
- Fewer priorities and greater stability
- An outcomes framework – interim and long term
- Capability supported
- Cross sector collaboration on evidence and models that work.

3. Alternative options for future SFSF funding to better target Government priorities and ensure value for money in a tight fiscal environment - options are not mutually-exclusive.

- Allocate SFSF funds to state and territory governments for NGRBs to ensure focus and collaboration
- Tender for delivery of services for specific national priorities
- Repurpose SFSF funding on a project basis – case by case design
- SFSF to lapse at the conclusion of the current funding period 2014-2017.

The following discussion of the future options for the SFSF and whether the fund should be maintained or modified has four components: what has the SFSF demonstrated as good 'system' led school improvement practices (that could be continued irrespective of the future of SFSF); what do NGRBs want to be changed in the structure of SFSF; an implementation model to guide government; and options for alternative funding levers and administration.

### **5.1. What NGRB approaches best drive school improvement?**

As many NGRBs have placed an emphasis in their SFSF work on meshing the national priorities with broad school improvement efforts it is useful to assess how these NGRB approaches are working in their own terms as drivers for improvement. These lessons can be applied to the implementation of national priorities irrespective of the funding environment.

The Review has identified the following four themes as the most influential levers for change in the NGRBs' implementation of national priorities and use of SFSF funds. Review consultations indicated they are most valued by NGRBs and by principals. They are also generally regarded in international best practice as the bedrock of good 'system' practice.

They are seen as successful levers for 'making a difference' because they

- make the school context the centre point
- attempt to build whole school commitment
- adopt a shared approach to improvement – within and among schools
- embed the skills and infrastructure for longer term change

#### **Taking a developmental approach to standards and government requirements**

The requirements from Australian and state governments for schools to implement the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, the principal standards and the Australian Curriculum (plus other requirements) have been the major stimulus for school engagement with NGRBs. Schools have readily sought information, advice and support on implementation. This is reflected in the volume of NGRBs' activities supporting the national priorities of Quality Teaching and Quality Learning.

The challenge for NGRBs working effectively with schools to address these priorities has been on two fronts. Firstly, they need to manage the relationships between national and state or territory authorities' requirements and expectations; and secondly, they need to offer support that is attractive and meaningful for schools that goes beyond the provision of information.

Some NGRBs have successfully navigated this space and are engaged in cross sector consultation; and at least one state has common targets between government and non-government sectors. Principals would welcome more commitment by governments to alignment – for priorities to be expressed as consistent messages and improvement initiatives to be aligned across governments and their authorities.

Best practice engagement with schools on their implementation of standards and requirements is evident in a number of NGRBs. Initiatives such as on-line self-assessment tools and rubrics; school-based expert consultancy services; and offering certification services are strategic and developmental supports for schools that go well beyond information sessions and large conferences.

The opinions of principals and their feedback to NGRBs are strongly supportive of NGRBs' activities that take a developmental and school centred approach to supporting implementation of the professional standards and Australian Curriculum.

### **Professional learning that is anchored in the whole school**

Professional learning in many forms has been a focal point in the use of SFSF resources. This is to be expected. Considerable resources are allocated by all education systems to building the professional skills of teachers and leaders so as to improve leadership and classroom practices for overall school improvement.

However, evidence shows that professional learning resources are not always effectively used. International and Australian evidence consistently points to the imperative for professional learning to be structured so that participants are provided with both theoretical and practical knowledge and evidence and that the school setting from which they come is organised to leverage off their learning. A whole school commitment behind change for whatever the focus is (e.g. STEM, Literacy and numeracy, an instructional model or improving leadership) is an essential foundation for professional learning to be effective in school improvement.

NGRBs are progressing in their application of best practice in professional learning and many believe their approach is increasingly effective. A positive trend has been to provide professional learning directly in schools or with groups of like schools; to ensure school leadership is engaged; to link one-off information sessions with more customised school level implementation advice; and to build a sequence of professional learning activities.

Some projects such as leadership development have 'packaged' professional learning opportunities with other activities, such as practitioner research, coaching and peer networking.

### **In-school coaching and easy access to expertise**

One NGRB saw their most effective role as being a '*broker of knowledge and expertise*'. This is an expression of the changing demand from schools for customised advice and support. It needs to be available when they need it, in an appropriate and convenient form with the guarantee that it is the highest quality.

The growth of expert consultants in NGRBs and the development of teams of in-school coaches are a response to this demand. This has required NGRBs to significantly improve their expertise and this is becoming recognised by their schools. (The take up of the ISQ Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Academy is a significant example of this change.)

While not all consultants and coaches employed by SFSF resources are school centred, many are seen as meeting this requirement and are the levers for significant change.

A strong finding, particularly in independent schools, has been schools' support for structured in-school assistance in preference to large conferences or a predominance of externally run professional learning. This is consistent with the traditions of the Independent school sector but it also reflects the trend for autonomous schools seeking to tailor their school improvement strategies closely to their needs and priorities.

For many SFSF supported projects, consultants and coaches have been available out of regular teaching hours, avoiding the cost of teacher relief and emphasising the professional growth responsibilities of teachers and leaders.

Many principals confirm this and on numerous occasions the view was expressed that the quality and availability of consultants to support schools has significantly improved.

### **Facilitating formation of self-managing networks**

Networks among schools are long standing but in recent years their role has become more important as education systems and bodies seek to support wider capability for change at all levels in and among schools.

Some NGRBs have been strengthening peer support, facilitating partnerships, and encouraging information and data sharing networks.

This is a mechanism particularly valued by smaller jurisdictions and those in regional or remote locations. For example,

- The principal of a Catholic College in Rockhampton whilst expressing satisfaction with the role of his Catholic education authority in delivering professional learning, also indicated that there are successful activities organised in Rockhampton across government, independent and catholic secondary schools – a principal association and professional learning for teachers that is self-organised and funded and not supported by SFSF funds.
- The Tasmania independent NGRB has worked with a cluster of 5 small schools on curriculum development through a monthly session with key people from each school. These sort of approaches are essential for cross school sharing and building sustainability
- The AIS WA has encouraged networks to form following a suite of projects to support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

## **5.2 What would NGRBs like to improve in their model of operating?**

NGRBs have reflected on their delivery models and outcomes and have made suggestions for future approaches. These are essentially suggestions on how education systemic bodies can use discretionary funds to better support reforms for school improvement. They build on the prior section that discusses the levers for change that are seen as the most effective.

There are differences that arise from the governance of Catholic and Independent schools and the role and size of NGRBs but in general their thoughts are similar. Indeed their suggestions are similar to what would be proposed in many government systems and are consistent with OECD advice to education systems on the characteristics that underpin high performance.

NGRBs generally advocate a shift to

- fewer programs and objectives at the individual NGRB level - concentrate on the priority needs and keep a strategic focus
- more emphasis on on-going school-based support that responds to demand within a local context
- always engaging schools leaders as well as building their capability

- ensuring coaches and consultants have the highest expertise – quality control needed
- facilitating shared use among schools of expertise for boosting quality in teaching and learning; include strategic partnerships with academic institutions
- enhanced real-time data gathering as a condition of support – also seek more regular and open feedback from schools
- using funds as an incentive – not to fully subsidize activities but use as a lever to secure commitment and buy-in
- build sustainability by developing expertise and deep understanding on schools needs

A contested but important theme is whether to establish a clearer agreement with schools on outcomes to replace more open-ended grants (might include some non-negotiables - such as involvement of principals) versus leaving the specification of measures to the school.

The challenge for government is to enable NGRBs to interpret the needs of their schools and to offer the support that works best for them but within a context of national and state priorities.

### **5.3 A model for coherent and effective system implementation**

Education strategies have to take account of increasing complexity. Education in Australia, as in most countries, is characterised by multi-level governance, multiple reform priorities, diverse accountabilities and areas that are fluid and open to negotiation.<sup>5</sup> Australian education has the added urgent pressure to improve students' performance and collectively agree how that is best achieved.

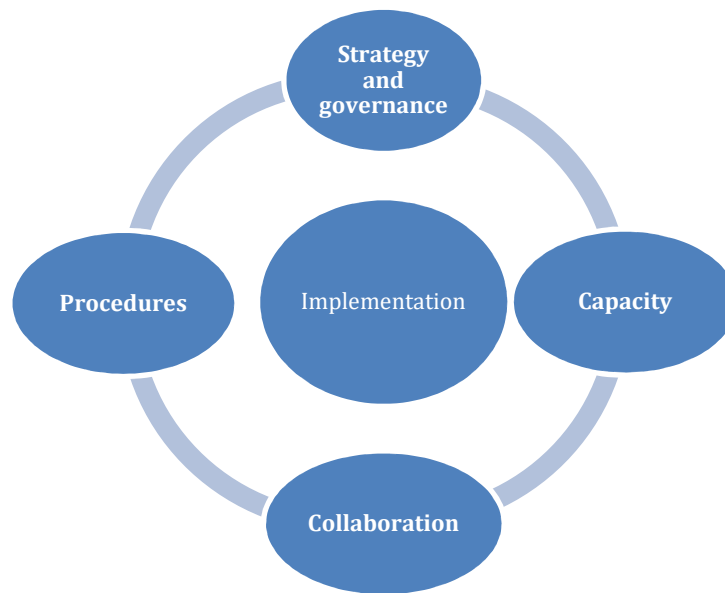
The SFSF is part of the Australian Government's strategy for school improvement. While the Review has identified some impressive initiatives there is a strong case for a more coherent and outcomes focussed approach to implementation of priorities. Many NGRBs are reflecting on the effectiveness of their role and would welcome a discussion of their support strategy at this 'system' level.

The diagram below represents a set of factors that comprise a proposed strategy for NGRB support.<sup>6</sup> Most were suggested by NGRBs as discrete elements and they have been assembled in a model to indicate how to enhance the national impact of SFSF.

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<sup>5</sup> Burns, T., and Köster, F. (eds.) (2016) *Governing Education in a Complex World*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

<sup>6</sup> Derived from OECD (2013) *Synergies for Better Learning: An international Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment*, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, OECD Publishing, Paris.



This model provides a coherent systems approach to implementing national reform priorities to achieve school improvement.

### Strategy and governance

- *A vision for a 'system' role for NGRBs in context with school autonomy and State and Territory jurisdictional roles.* Schools are mostly unaware of the origins and import of national priorities and how they relate to NGRBs. This suggests a more coherent reform narrative is warranted, particularly in relation to the national priorities.
- *Clearer line of sight between national priorities, measures, resources and actions.* There is wide diversity in how the NGRBs have interpreted and applied the SFSF to achieve the national priorities. While this reflects highly legitimate local differences, there is a need for a tighter focus in the high level objectives and clearer expectations for what is expected to be achieved and reported. NGRBs should be able to forecast relevant and realistic outcomes.
- *Fewer priorities and relative stability in the priorities and indicators of success.* NGRBs have interpreted SFSF priorities in different ways – one of the most noticeable differences is the breadth of projects that are being conducted to respond to the five national priorities. Most indicate that generating multiple projects with small resource allocations is not a productive and effective use of resources. An improvement would be to nominate two or three top priorities and leave others as discretionary. The top priorities should be a logical progression from current priorities. Stability of priorities and indicators enables efficient data collections systems to be built and for feedback to schools to have impact.

### Procedures

- *Strengthened accountability and feedback.* There is a wealth of practices underway but very few mechanisms to draw out findings and clarify lessons. There is a case for more structured accountability for the use of SFSF funds. This should not to place greater administrative burdens on NGRBs but ensure that reporting of activities across NGRBs has some common basis and facilitates assessment and sharing of what works nationally.



- *An outcomes framework with both interim and longer term outcomes.* Most annual reports do not contain success indicators, their measures and outcomes – most ‘results’ are expressed as simple outputs such as attendance or satisfaction. The capacity to analyse performance results and report outputs and outcomes could be enhanced through more guidance on what outcomes are expected and expressed as interim as well as longer term outcomes. This could also include advice on performance monitoring tools. There is considerable potential for the Department or a national body to offer expert advice and support on how ‘systems’ assess their effectiveness.
- *Allow for continuity and development time.* Certainty of funding and constancy of directions and priorities are consistent and strong messages from the NGRBs. As previously identified a number of NGRBs have used the four year period of their funding to rethink and restructure their approaches to working with their schools. (Future funding arrangements may also need to articulate the methodology behind the allocations.)

### Capacity

- *Making use of system-level information on school improvement.* A national approach to collecting qualitative information on programs and impact is warranted. The Commonwealth in conjunction with the NGRBs should consider how best to facilitate the shared learnings from the sometimes significant evaluations conducted by NGRBs into their programs. Whilst it is likely that some of this sharing occurs within the national discussions of each sector a greater emphasis could be placed on cross sectoral sharing
- *Support an evaluation culture in NGRBs:* The development of enhanced national evaluation expertise that supports systems’ and schools’ needs is a priority. There is a role for the Department or a national body to support student improvement through the curation of best practice measurement and evaluation tools and the transmission of evidence across sectors.

### Collaboration

- *Incentivise cross sector collaboration in implementation* Cross sector collaboration could also be fostered through a renewed and revamped SFSF. This could be particularly relevant to rural and provincial areas where local efforts are already underway to varying degrees. Collaboration among schools when appropriate was an expectation of the National Partnership and it has now mostly ceased.
- *Facilitate sharing ‘system’ support expertise.* Collaboration and networks are valued in all sectors. Whilst collaboration happens informally, there may be scope for more formally structured exchange, for instance, sharing professional expertise on best practices in school support.

These suggestions arise from analysis of NGRBs SFSF activities and impact, views of the efficiency and effectiveness of the SFSF, including from principals, and best practice themes in education and public administration.



## **5.4 Options: Alternative funding models for the SFSF**

As mentioned previously the Australian Government as the funder of the SFSF needs to carefully consider how best to target its resources to its priorities so that it has confidence that the priorities are being addressed and it is receiving value for money. The current structure of the SFSF has pushed the majority of NGRBs to think more broadly about their role and to develop approaches that see them assume a 'system leader' role and address the Australian Government's priorities through that lens. This role has been valued by their schools and a future SFSF could continue to assist with the further development of NGRB's along this trajectory – see previous sections.

However, a key issue is whether this activity is one that Government should be funding as a separate function or whether it is in fact core business for NGRBs and hence should be part of their general operation i.e. activity that is funded through their standard business model – user pays, affiliation fees etc.

The key question here is whether Australian Government funding should be used (within the non government sector) to support a wide definition of school improvement efforts or to drive more specifically the implementation of national priorities.

As an alternative to the current SFSF approach the Australian Government could consider a number of different options for achieving its goals. Decisions on other options could be predicated on the following assumptions:

- The SFSF has helped NGRBs to mature their provision of services and they are now in a position to move to a user pays or business as usual approach for these services
- The Australian Government may wish to be more specific about the directions supported by the SFSF – a future program should have the flexibility to address broad reform areas as well as specific priority initiatives such as NAPLAN On Line
- Provision of services to schools via Australian Government funding should be outcomes driven and to some extent contestable.

Some alternative approaches are explored below. These are not mutually exclusive.

### **SFSF funds are allocated to state and territory authorities for work with non government sector on national priorities**

#### *Key Features*

- Commonwealth would allocate SFSF funds to the state and territory authorities
- Funding to be used by states and territories to support non government schools in areas of national priority
- States and territories to reach agreement with NGRBs on the use of SFSF with their schools and this agreement to be endorsed by the Australian Government.
- Flexibility within the program to implement joint initiatives across sectors
- States and territories accountable to the Australian Government for delivery
- NGRBs may access SFSF funding through their state and territory government

#### *Pluses*

- Allows for the integration of Australian Government and state priorities in a way that could reduce confusion for schools
- Potential to foster cross sectoral cooperation and learning
- Clear accountability at the level of state and territory government

### Issues

- Potentially alienates some NGRBs who do not have a good relationship with their state and territory department and who have traditionally looked to the Australian Government as a buffer against state incursions into the operation of their schools
- On the other hand some state and territory governments may not wish to engage in this way with their non-government school sector
- NGRBs may move to a more user pays environment that results in some non-government schools opting out of engagement with outside school improvement activities
- Government school agendas dominate at the expense of non-government school issues.

### **Australian Government conducts open tenders for the provision of specific initiatives with non-government schools**

#### Key Features

- Australian Government determines specific activities to be supported by SFSF rather than broad reform areas
- Conduct of these services is put out to open tender – either as a national activity or in appropriate geographic groupings or on a sector basis
- Accountability is through contracts with a provider
- State and territory and NGRB authorities are eligible to tender for the provision of services

#### Pluses

- Puts the Commonwealth in a position to provide tight direction and receive direct accountability via a provider
- Clarity of purpose and message to schools
- Tender process has the potential to cap costs and provide better value for money
- Time limited
- Allows for tailoring of initiatives to size and sector characteristics i.e. small to large, Catholic or Independent

#### Issues

- Potentially bypasses state and territory authorities with a program conducted in their jurisdiction
- Similarly for NGRBs
- It is not clear how many priorities would be suitable for this approach requiring as it would the delivery of a specific service in a limited time frame.

### **Australian Government repurposes SFSF funding on a project basis**

#### Key Features

- Australian Government identifies key educational projects to address identified delivery or research priorities
- Priorities and/or projects could be agreed with the Education Council
- Project methodology is determined on a case-by-case basis appropriate to nature of the project and could include the funding options above or the current approach of funding the NGRBs.

### *Pluses*

- Amount and duration of funding fitted to specific projects
- Ability to directly support national priorities
- Potential to utilise SFSF as a lever to improve national evidence base
- Potential to involve NGRBs and State and Territory governments in agreement on a program of national education projects with a delivery or research focus

### *Issues*

- Fundamental tensions between the Australian Government's role in education compared with states and territories makes it difficult to develop key projects without overlap and confusion with existing local initiatives
- NGRBs may see this approach has little relevance to their schools especially if they are not involved in decision-making or delivery.
- Could lead to a proliferation of small programs that do not fit coherently together to support national reforms

## **Australian Government determines that SFSF will lapse at the conclusion of the current funding period 2014-2017**

### *Key Features*

- The Australian Government SFSF, which has provided \$165 million over 2014-17 to NGRBs to advance implementation of five national priorities in non-government schools, now lapses.
- Subsequent national priorities will be advanced through alternative support strategies for NGRBs such as – enhanced system-level information on school improvement; facilitating shared learnings from significant evaluations; incentivising cross sectoral sharing; and supporting the growth of an evaluation culture in NGRBs.

### *Pluses*

- The SFSF 2014-2017 has been successful in strengthening NGRBs' capacity and capability to support their schools and has laid the foundation for sustainability of the most valuable support mechanisms.
- AISs have the capacity to develop their membership services/user pay schemes and that would ensure support that is most relevant to their schools is sustained.
- CECs routinely allocate funds according to their needs and priorities and 'system' level school improvement support would continue as an important part of that allocation, irrespective of SFSF lapsing.

### *Issues*

- The capacity of NGRBs to provide support services for schools may diminish.
- Smaller NGRBs' support for their schools may be jeopardised.
- Removing the SFSF may weaken the visibility of national priorities and NGRBs commitment to them.
- Without the SFSF the government may lose an important avenue for relationship building with NGRBs.

The Australian Government could consider these alternative approaches especially in the context of a (likely) constrained resource environment.

## **Part 2**

# **Student First Support Fund Programs and Key Features**

## **1. NGRB SFSF Activity Profiles**

The following are NGRB SFSF programs profiles that summarise the key features drawn from documentation and consultation.

NSW Independent (AIS NSW)  
NSW Catholic (CEC NSW)  
Victoria Independent (ISV)  
Victoria Catholic (CECV)  
Queensland Independent (ISQ)  
Queensland Catholic (QCEC)  
South Australia Independent (AISSA)  
South Australia Catholic (CESA)  
Western Australia Independent (AISWA)  
Western Australia Catholic (CE WA)  
Tasmania Independent (IST)  
Tasmania Catholic (TAS CEO)  
Northern Territory Independent (AIS NT)  
Northern Territory Catholic (CENT)  
ACT Independent (AISACT)  
ACT Catholic (CE ACT)

## NSW Independent

Schools	Students	Teaching Staff	SFSF \$
346	161,307.8	15,791	\$7,485,668

### Key features of approach

- Strong belief in the efficacy of improvement projects that directly engage leaders in their own environments on the whole school issues in the National Priorities.
- Thirteen school improvement projects are funded by SFSF (\$29.9m) and that has leveraged funding (NSW Govt. \$6.4m and AISNSW \$8.3m, the latter incl \$3m on consultants for SWD using accumulated funds) to enable the projects to operate over four years with sufficient intensity to have an impact.
- There is a clear demarcation between the school improvement and developmental projects in SFSF and the core association services (e.g. advice and support for governance and regulatory compliance).

### Predominant mode of delivery

Delivery model		Delivery model	
<i>Professional learning</i>	✓	<i>Research practitioner</i>	✓
<i>Consultancy advice in schools</i>	✓	<i>Research academic</i>	
<i>Coaching and mentoring services</i>	✓	<i>Support and advice</i>	
<i>On-line tools</i>	✓	<i>Awareness</i>	
<i>Resource provision</i>	✓		

### Sample programs

- *Schools Leading Learning* –comprehensive design of school based professional learning for whole school improvement; consultants work alongside schools to equip them for data driven self-evaluation and whole school planning; targets low SES schools to provide teacher release for those that may not previously have had access to these services. The first cohort was 28 schools for three years; second cohort starting in 2016 has 23 schools.
- *STEM K-12*: - Designed to lift uptake, engagement and achievement. All Independent schools in NSW and ACT were invited to apply for up to \$10,000 and access to consultancy support to introduce a 12 month STEM project. The first round had 28 schools and subsequent two rounds similar numbers. Outcomes were shared in a STEM Symposium.

### Funding – how used?

- SFSF leverages support from other sources e.g. *Schools Leading Learning* has \$8.2m available over four years, including approx. \$3.8m from SFSF.
- SFSF funds approximately 23 consultants
- Other resources are applied to teacher relief (a major component) and to the development of resources.

### Monitoring success

- Comprehensive evaluation program for all initiatives and results made available.
- Program success measured by participation and satisfaction along with more ambitious evaluations of impact (e.g. changed practices, enhanced teacher skills.)
- Eight projects have been modified and extended and one ceased following evaluation

### Issues and implications

Evaluations show that economies of scale matter and some small initiatives can be phased out. Demand is increasing for support schools implement the Government's agenda and there is significant demand to support students with a disability.

## NSW Catholic

Schools	Students	Teaching Staff	SFSF \$
592	255,625.10	16,957.0	\$4,594,418

### Key features of approach

- Governance is an integrated matrix model (eleven Dioceses and 588 systemic schools and 44 Independent schools). While the SFSF funds sustain necessary infrastructure at CECNSW and diocesan levels it is not possible for the CECNSW to disaggregate SFSF funding to the level of specific projects and delivery model.
- Five CECNSW coordinators are funded by two thirds of the SFSF funds: VET, student well-being, assessment and early learning, special needs, and Aboriginal education. Their work supports SFSF priorities and links with Diocesan offices
- Reform initiatives are mostly integrated with NSW wide initiatives and link to NSW government bodies as they implement national and state priorities.

### Predominant mode of delivery

Delivery model		Delivery model	
<i>Professional learning</i>	✓	<i>Research practitioner</i>	
<i>Consultancy advice in schools</i>	✓	<i>Research academic</i>	
<i>Coaching and mentoring services</i>		<b>VET teacher training &amp; special education behavior management training</b>	
<i>On-line tools</i>		<b>DDA compliance, HSC analysis, literacy support</b>	
<i>Resource provision</i>	✓		

### Sample programs

- *Implementation of Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework Schools and the NSW Government's Great Teaching Inspired Learning (GTIL) reform, comprising trial implementation models, networks, communication and conferences (25% SFSF budget).*
- *Action plans for students in need: Indigenous, those with disabilities and vulnerable children – interactive data base for students with a disability; committee engagement; resources and on-line professional learning modules (25 % SFSF budget). NCCD compliance involving 44,680 students K-12.*
- *VET Teacher Training- 130 new teachers each year and 1200 teachers whose training is being maintained. Also, support for RTO Managers in diocesan offices.*

### Funding – how used?

- Of the SFSF allocation (approximately \$4.6 m a year) two thirds is retained by CEC NSW for five state coordinator positions and one third is distributed to Diocesan offices for integration into their implementation of national priorities.
- Funds are mainly used for provision of networks, committees, diocesan professional learning, and resources and tools for schools.
- Professional development for special education and VET teachers, incl. online.

### Monitoring success

- All program components in the five national priorities identify indicators of success. Results are not available.
- The indicators of success factors are predominantly compliance, input and some output factors such as: adherence to required planning processes; participation of teachers; and commitment to reporting on activities.
- While results are not specific, the CECNSW gives an account of a vibrant and productive sector that is in transition.

### Issues and implications

In a complex matrix governance environment it is not possible to attribute activity or outcomes to a discrete initiative such as SFSF.

## Victoria Independents

Schools	Students	Teaching Staff	SFSF \$
203	131,834.60	12,267.2	\$5,444,491

### Key Features of Approach

- General approach is to roll SFSF funding into ISV's range of support for schools in two categories – General Support available to all independent schools and Customised in school support.
- Each Victorian Independent school is allocated a School Improvement Advisor. No of advisors rose from 5 to 7 in 2015. ISV Development Centre" plays a large role in delivering programs to teachers and leaders supplemented by a team of advisors.

### Predominant Modes of Delivery

Delivery model		Delivery model	
<i>Professional learning</i>	✓	<i>Research practitioner</i>	
<i>Consultancy advice in schools</i>	✓	<i>Research academic</i>	
<i>Coaching and mentoring Services</i>	✓	<i>Support and advice</i>	✓
<i>On-line Tools</i>	✓	<i>Awareness</i>	
<i>Resource provision</i>	✓		

### Sample of Key Programs

- General Support was offered to all Independent schools by way of briefings, professional learning seminars and workshops across the Reform Areas including sessions on pedagogy, school leadership and governance
- Customised Support was offered to all Independent schools depending on the specific needs of the school, and to build capacity. Discussions with the Principal guide the support to be provided across each of the five Reform Areas.

### Funding – how used?

- Funds from the Students First Support Fund are used to subsidise the costs of seminars and workshops and to employ advisers at ISV

### Monitoring Success

- Indicators of success are largely outputs e.g. activities and number of participants under General Support and numbers of schools, hours spent by advisors for Customised Support.

### Issues and Implications

- Indicated that the broad nature of SFSF is a significant advantage. Allows for the building of a community across a range of independent schools to interact with each other not restricted by a target group of schools
- Without SFSF subsidizing professional learning activities some schools would not attend or in many cases 1 person instead of a team might attend (not best practice)
- SFSF funding has allowed ISV to become a provider and broker of knowledge and expertise - gaining more acknowledgements from their schools for this.
- The fund also helps gain entry to schools to engage schools on issues such as the Australian Curriculum and compliance requirements.



## Victoria Catholic

Schools	Students	Teaching Staff	SFSF \$
494	206,450.50	14,733.1	\$3,670,155

### Key Features of Approach

- CECV have put their effort into two major programs:
  - Leading Languages Learning in Catholic Schools Initiative 2014-2016. A Primary school focused approach to language learning, providing professional support for teachers to drive better language pedagogy.
  - Auspiced Training and Industry Partnership (ATIP) designed to support schools to deliver skills creation VET onsite (up to and including Certificate III programs).
- Choice of programs influenced by the fact that they run across Catholic schools in Victoria i.e. they straddle the 4 dioceses within Victoria

### Predominant Modes of Delivery

Delivery model		Delivery model	
Professional learning	✓	Research practitioner	
Consultancy advice in schools		Research academic	
Coaching and mentoring Services		Support and advice	✓
On-line Tools		Awareness	✓
Resource provision	✓		

### Sample of Key Programs

- Leading Languages Learning includes:
  - four day Professional Learning Program for school teams to develop a whole school Languages Implementation Plan.
  - qualification upgrade courses, designed by CECV and facilitated by University of Melbourne
  - Languages Partnership Grants for schools.
- Auspiced Training and Industry Partnership(ATIP) includes:
  - seminars and workshops were held for participants from ATIP schools and RTO partners
  - teachers/trainers qualifications upgrade to the TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment
  - support for participation in Teacher Industry Placements.

### Funding – how used?

- Funds used to support participation in professional learning programs and teacher qualification upgrades
- Prior to 2017 untied grants provided to primary schools for Language support – tied to Language development but not to specific professional learning activities. Changing to tied grants for 2017.

### Monitoring Success

- 2015 report indicates number of participants and activities for each of the two initiatives. Each program has a budget for evaluation.

### Issues and Implications

CECV is predominantly an administrative and regulatory entity and the 4 dioceses operate largely independently within the CECV. For both these programs they have working parties across the 4 dioceses.

Recognition of SFSF by schools would not be strong compared with previous programs such as the Commonwealth Teacher Quality Program that required use of a logo.

## Queensland Independent

Schools	Students	Teaching Staff	SFSF \$
192	116,571.20	8,670.2	\$4,833,513

### Key features of approach

- Twenty nine projects across the five priorities are funded by SFSF and supplemented by other funds from past Commonwealth initiatives and the state government.
- Strong offering of professional learning opportunities are a centrepiece –in 2015 there were 324 professional learning opportunities with 9,500 participants.
- Professional learning communities are flourishing linked to SFSF projects–Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Academy, Teachers as Researchers in Languages and Science, Technology, Engineer and Math (STEM). Supporting schools on site in their own school improvement strategies is the core objective.

### Predominant mode of delivery

Delivery model		Delivery model	
Professional learning	✓	Research practitioner	✓
Consultancy advice in schools	✓	Research academic	
Coaching and mentoring services	✓	Support and advice	✓
On-line tools	✓	Awareness	
Resource provision			

### Sample programs

- *Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Academy* – builds teacher capacity for peer coaching by developing school based coaches (with 25 schools a year) through 10 intensive workshops and on-line opportunities. Results show improved coaching capacity, a school culture that supports peer coaching and expertise in pedagogy. Schools also create research teams on coaching and measuring its impact on student achievement. In 2016 this included other curriculum areas
- *Self-improving Schools Program* – leadership and management of school review and school improvement activities. Eighty-nine schools in the 2015 Program. A consultant was available to the school to facilitate. Seven consultants and four staff facilitated the SIS Program to assist schools with the development, implementation and evaluation of strategies for improvement in selected focus areas.

### Funding – how used?

- SFSF contributes approximately \$2.5m per year to salaries and \$.5m to administration; no longer provide grants to schools
- This supported 25.2 staff to develop and deliver the SFSF action plan.
- Distribution is over 29 projects, some where SFSF makes a small contribution such as \$25,000 to supplement a \$400,000 budget. Some rationalisation in 2016.

### Monitoring success

- 70% of projects incorporate evaluation, many of which are undertaken independent external reviewers. Projects are modified according to evaluation outcomes e/g 2016 extended some projects and modified others.
- Indicators of success closely match the objectives of the projects and include: awareness and impact on school leadership; growth in coaching capacity; and changes in teaching practices

### Issues and implications

The future direction is not to give top-down advice – provide instead frameworks, and processes. Activities must be data and evidence driven. Teachers as Researchers; and Teachers a Researcher for STEM – enhanced capacity for innovative teaching and learning in ESL, LOTE and gifted and talented children through facilitated professional learning on site, cross team collaboration, on-line collaboration for 25 schools a year. For STEM, nine centres of excellence were established for collaborative research and professional development.

## Queensland Catholic

Schools	Students	Teaching Staff	SFSF \$
299	145,460.30	9,818.7	\$2,567,447

### Key Features of Approach

- Catholic education in Queensland has a number of elements - 22 Catholic schooling authorities – five diocesan Catholic Education Offices and 17 Religious Institutes. Each authority accesses funding through addressing criteria and objectives – authorities have the flexibility to target funds.
- Documentation covers a large range of activities under the five reform areas with the caveat that “not all Catholic schooling authorities will undertake all the activities listed in the implementation plan and not all success indicators are relevant to all Catholic schooling authorities...”.
- Broad emphasis on Quality Teaching activities – more than 50% of budget

### Predominant Modes of Delivery

Delivery model		Delivery model	
<i>Professional learning</i>	✓	<i>Research practitioner</i>	✓
<i>Consultancy advice in schools</i>		<i>Research academic</i>	
<i>Coaching and mentoring Services</i>	✓	<i>Support and advice</i>	
<i>On-line Tools</i>	✓	<i>Awareness</i>	
<i>Resource provision</i>	✓		

### Sample of Key Programs

- Implement teacher performance & development framework(s) to enhance collaboration and improve teaching and learning
- Implementation and use of national professional standards (NPST) to inform annual professional goal setting and learning plans
- Increased opportunities for parent and community engagement through online environments.

### Funding – how used?

- Funding distributed on a per capita basis across the authorities. There are some system wide initiatives; some authorities have particular schools that are trialling resources, e.g. data analysis. One authority has allocated funding to schools for local, rather than system-wide, initiatives.

### Monitoring Success

- Documents provide assessment of outcomes of activities. Generally qualitative rather than quantitative performance indicators: participating numbers are provided, plus a large number of qualitative assessments e.g.
  - significant development in collaboration in sharing ways to improve pedagogy
  - more support for the professional learning needs of teachers through clearer and better defined leadership structures

### Issues and Implications

- Takes time to develop and embed initiatives. Ideally broad objectives are continued to ensure continuity of effort and learning
- There may be room for some increased guidance e.g. a template to help guide people, common language consistent with other areas e.g. AITSL
- Funding – transparency and equity between sectors and knowledge of funding future as early as possible.

## South Australia Independents

Schools	Students	Teaching Staff	SFSF \$
94	46,987.7	3,630.1	\$2,093,598

### Key Features of Approach

- Approach based on the belief that change/improvement requires long term effort and commitments, an understanding of the school context and high quality support particularly for the leadership team at the school.
- AISSA has employed fewer but more highly skilled staff (down to 28 from 40) and has attached a Senior Education Consultant (SEC) to each school to provide support based on the needs of the school, as identified by the principal, through consultation with the SEC.

### Predominant Modes of Delivery

Delivery model		Delivery model	
<i>Professional learning</i>	✓	<i>Research practitioner</i>	
<i>Consultancy advice in schools</i>	✓	<i>Research academic</i>	
<i>Coaching and mentoring Services</i>		<i>Support and advice</i>	✓
<i>On-line Tools</i>		<i>Awareness</i>	✓
<i>Resource provision</i>	✓		

### Sample of Key Programs

- In-school support using the AITSL Performance and Development Framework in areas such as classroom observation, coaching, mentoring, professional learning teams and effective feedback (line manager, peer and student). AISSA encourages and assists schools to link the Performance and Development Framework to the school's strategic school improvement goals.
- Development of a High Impact School Improvement Tool, which includes research, strategies and resources to support school leaders in their school improvement journey
- Program with workshops and presentations to improve school leadership capacity

### Funding – how used?

SFSF provides 50% of AISSA's funding with the rest coming from member subscriptions. SFSF funds provide the majority of the educational support to their schools.

80% of SFSF funds used to cover staff salaries, accommodation, travel and professional development. Documents do not allocate funds across projects.

### Monitoring Success

Measures provided in planning documents and reported on each year. Measures largely numbers of workshops, numbers of schools supported. An independent company did a survey of schools' experiences with the support provided through SFSF. The result was overwhelmingly positive.

### Issues and Implications

Previous programs (targeted programs, NPs) required work with specific schools on specific issues. SFSF program allows Government priorities to be addressed but within a school context and a general approach to school improvement.

Previously difficult for schools to fund this work or be aware of what was available. AISSA role (enabled by SFSF funding) as a broker and link addresses these issues. AISSA indicates that schools are aware of their work and that funding comes from Commonwealth but may not be aware of SFSF

## South Australia Catholics

Schools	Students	Teaching Staff	SFSF \$
103	47,835.70	3,256.0	\$898,993

### Key Features of Approach

- Changed approach after 2014 – established three higher level, longer term (3 year) priorities focusing largely on system wide issues and support:
  - Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence□
  - Continuous Improvement□
  - Student Need

### Predominant Modes of Delivery

Delivery model		Delivery model	
<b>Professional learning</b>	✓	<b>Research practitioner</b>	
<i>Consultancy advice in schools</i>	✓	<i>Research academic</i>	
<i>Coaching and mentoring Services</i>	✓	<i>Support and advice</i>	✓
<i>On-line Tools</i>	✓	<i>Awareness</i>	
<i>Resource provision</i>			

### Sample of Key Programs

- System level reform including support for moving Year 7s to secondary schools, new funding formula and a review of provision
- Implementation of Continuous Improvement for Catholic Schools Framework, support for school leaders including rural principals, support for school governance, school improvement plans and reporting
- Grants to schools to meet the specific needs of ATSI students, students with disabilities and other groups of disadvantaged students including refugees and new arrivals, case management for those at risk of leaving school

### Funding – how used?

Funding used for

- professional learning programs for schools, school leaders and councils,
- system strategy and resource development and grants to schools
- MoUs with principal associations to provide professional learning for clusters of principals on specific domains of the Continuous Improvement for Catholic Schools Framework.

### Monitoring Success

A range of measures are reported on including:

- Completion of strategy and resource development
- Schools and school leaders participation measures

### Issues and Implications

SFSF funds enable longer-term approach to system improvement to be adopted.

Difficulties in acquitting on an annual basis for a three year plan.

Schools will be aware in a general sense that these activities are supported by the Commonwealth but may not be able to specifically identify SFSF although it is referenced in MoUs with principal associations.

## West Australian Independent

Schools	Students	Teaching Staff	SFSF \$
141	65,430.80	5,360.2	\$3,207,197

### Key features of approach

- Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and Principal Standards; the Australian Curriculum; support for schools with very diverse populations (SWD, learning difficulties, Low SES and a range of social and cultural backgrounds) and related requirements of schools are strong drivers for their initiatives and schools' engagement. The focus is to understand the requirements and to be able to implement at the school level.
- Model of operation centres on expert and peer consultancy services to teachers, principals and schools, from 1:1 support to in-school workshops; 'schools really like consultants visiting and being available for in depth discussions'. Consultants often work over a number of days with teachers.
- Approximately 30 consultants; many are curriculum specialists, including for literacy and numeracy intervention; five are working with schools to cater for Students with a Disability; and 5 support Indigenous schools. No teacher relief funding - most activity occurs outside teaching hours.

### Predominant mode of delivery

Delivery model		Delivery model	
Professional learning	✓	Research practitioner	
Consultancy advice in schools	✓	Research academic	
Coaching and mentoring services	✓	Support and advice	✓
On-line tools	✓	Awareness	✓
Resource provision	✓		

### Sample programs

- *Implementation of the Australian Curriculum* – with workshops, consultancy services, information sessions and on-line resources. For professional learning sessions, modules are sequenced and schools send more than one representative to group sessions. Outputs are documented curriculum and the formation of teacher networks.
- *Implementation of Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and Principal Standards* – consultancy services and advice for e.g. certification, inclusion of the standards in performance and development processes, professional development and job descriptions.
- *Principals as Numeracy Leaders* – four days over a semester: covering leadership, essential numeracy content for leaders and using data with ongoing mentoring support to schools.
- *Future Footprints Program* that supports over 300 Aboriginal Boarding students across 16 schools.
- *Support for schools catering for Students with a disability* – working with school leaders and teachers on strategies for inclusion and support for SWD.

### Funding – how used?

- Over 90% of the SFSF budget is allocated to the projects/activities described in the SFSF Plan and projects allocations are available.
- Some projects are supplemented by small user pay contributions.
- Budget mostly allocated to employment of consultants to work on site with schools.

### Monitoring success

- Close monitoring of activity and engagement levels take up – mostly exceeded expectations; governance activities were particularly strong.
- Evaluation of participant satisfaction consistently high.
- Changed practices and improved compliance observed e.g. data analysis frequency; school improvement planning.

### **Issues and implications**

Activities are predominantly shaped by the needs in schools. Schools in WA are increasingly seeking support from AIS WA to assist them do their work in new ways. Demand for advice on inclusion is very strong and growing.

## West Australian Catholic

Schools	Students	Teaching Staff	SFSF \$
163	76,791	12,518	\$1,252,891

### Key features of approach

- A coherent program across WA; The Catholic Education Commission of WA has delegated to the CEO WA to implement SFSF.
- Major focus is on teacher quality through building Standards into the preparation of early career and more experienced teachers, mentoring principals and supporting those teaching in Indigenous settings.
- Main mode of delivery is use of consultants and peer advisors and mentors coupled with professional learning opportunities to support schools to build teacher and principal capacity.
- FTE equivalent 8 consultants

### Predominant mode of delivery

Delivery model		Delivery model	
<i>Professional learning</i>		<i>Research practitioner</i>	
<i>Consultancy advice in schools</i>	✓	<i>Research academic</i>	
<i>Coaching and mentoring services</i>	✓	<i>Support and advice</i>	
<i>On-line tools</i>		<i>Awareness</i>	
<i>Resource provision</i>			

### Sample programs

- *Support for newly graduated teachers* – comprehensive suite of supports comprising consultant visits, network opportunities, liaison with universities, trained mentors in schools and increased focus by schools on the needs of new graduates. Approximately 70 % of targeted teachers have been engaged.
- *Implementation of a regional school support model* – closer proximity of seven advisors and consultants to provide assistance for regional and isolated schools; focus on supporting school improvement planning in showing positive results in improvement in the quality of planning.
- *Support for Kimberley schools* – adopted a senior secondary focus and provided Kimberly based consultant to support for training for principals and employment of more Aboriginal staff. Results are positive with increased enrolment and completions. This program is complemented by others in this region. e.g. skilling aboriginal teacher Assistants.

### Funding – how used?

- Explicit use of system co-investment for most programs; SFSF partly funds consultants and some teacher relief and workshop delivery.
- Quality teaching is the priority funded area followed by meeting student needs.

### Monitoring success

- Clear specification of success indicators for initiatives- Evaluations being conducted for major initiatives Close monitoring of activity and engagement levels take up – mostly exceeded

### Issues and implications

They have had to make transition from the focus on National Partnership activities to SFSF. Priority is now to build capacity of the organisation to provide superior support for schools; have to avoid just re-inventing the wheel because priorities change. They would welcome a sharper set of priorities e.g. STEM or using NAPLAN on demand.



## Tasmania Independents

Schools	Students	Teaching Staff	SFSF \$
27	9,210.20	851.0	\$640,380

### Key Features of Approach

- Reviewed previous initiatives such as Targeted Programs, Literacy and Numeracy, Special Learning Needs programs and developed an approach to SFSF in consultation with their schools
- SFSF effort is focused on school specific programs with officers working with schools on a needs- based assessment and planning the offering suited to that school taking into account– cultural, location, SES, educational needs.

### Predominant Modes of Delivery

Delivery model		Delivery model	
<i>Professional learning</i>	✓	<i>Research practitioner</i>	
<i>Consultancy advice in schools</i>	✓	<i>Research academic</i>	
<i>Coaching and mentoring Services</i>	✓	<i>Support and advice</i>	✓
<i>On-line Tools</i>		<i>Awareness</i>	
<i>Resource provision</i>	✓		

### Sample of Key Programs

- A range of professional learning programs e.g. professional standards for teachers – role of the principal, Australian Curriculum, early years educators
- In school programs including Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, National School Improvement Tool and use of data to improve student outcomes
- Work on nationally consistent data for SWD where IST support was essential in schools being able to supply high quality assessments according to the national framework compared with other states and sectors.
- Worked with a cluster of 5 small schools on curriculum development – monthly session with key people from each school whom then work back within that school.

### Funding – how used?

Funding used to deliver professional learning programs and in school support. Funding was also used to support teacher release and contracting of external expertise.

### Monitoring Success

- IST assesses both quantitative data – attendance at professional learning, % of school staff at professional learning, NAPLAN data and qualitative data - feedback on professional learning, satisfaction surveys
- Relies on feedback - models teacher and leadership processes e.g. AITSL

### Issues and Implications

- Note current funding includes a base for Tasmania, ACT and NT – then a per capita (base around \$250k). Agreed by ISCA.
- Significant funding for their sector and comfortable with level of accountability would not like to see small sectors have to report in great detail a la NSW – horses for courses

## Tasmania Catholics

Schools	Students	Teaching Staff	SFSF \$
37	14,900.90	986.7	\$271,789

### Key Features of Approach

- Established Service Agreements with schools including some non-negotiables – e.g. attendance at network meetings, Key Teacher position, Key Teacher part of leadership team
- Use of relevant national AITSL Teacher and Principal Standards Frameworks and Charters to support school leaders and teachers

### Predominant Modes of Delivery

Delivery model		Delivery model	
<i>Professional learning</i>		<i>Research practitioner</i>	
<i>Consultancy advice in schools</i>		<i>Research academic</i>	
<i>Coaching and mentoring Services</i>		<i>Support and advice</i>	
<i>On-line Tools</i>		<i>Awareness</i>	
<i>Resource provision</i>			

### Sample of Key Programs

- Leadership programs including aspiring and beginning leaders and Principal Induction and Mentor programs to support Principals in their first three years of Principal-ship.
- Professional Learning sessions for school leadership teams and staff covering understanding of the AITSL Teaching Standards and effective pedagogical practices
- School effectiveness tools e.g. a tool tracking teacher self-assessment of pedagogical effectiveness.
- Development of a Literacy Initiative following system wide data analysis

### Funding – how used?

Funding used for

- resources for schools – participation in professional learning and some network meetings.
- conduct of professional learning programs for school teams and school leaders
- central staff - employed a Team leader within the office to coordinate activities and staff (literacy officer, education officers) and provided leadership and coaching for education officers.

### Monitoring Success

Reports provide a range of quantitative measures (participation, completion) and qualitative discussion of the effectiveness of the approaches adopted. Indicates that prep outcome data (PIPS testing) has improved significantly over the last two years.

### Issues and Implications

- Benefit is to see SFSF as a 4 year program and plan accordingly – enables coordination and focus of support. Broad nature of SFSF is also positive compared with previous programs e.g. NPs, too many projects, spread too thin.
- Some differences in how non systemic schools are involved.
- Indicated SFSF funds were not seen as significant

## Northern Territory Independent

Schools	Students	Teaching Staff	SFSF \$
20	6,537.00	533.7	\$510,933

### Key Features of Approach

- Intent is to impact quality of teaching (particularly through Professional Learning), as well as governance, curriculum issues and compliance
- Employed 2 staff (out of 4 total) – one with communication expertise, one with business and governance expertise.

### Predominant Modes of Delivery

Delivery model		Delivery model	
<i>Professional learning</i>	✓	<i>Research practitioner</i>	
<i>Consultancy advice in schools</i>	✓	<i>Research academic</i>	
<i>Coaching and mentoring Services</i>		<i>Support and advice</i>	✓
<i>On-line Tools</i>	✓	<i>Awareness</i>	
<i>Resource provision</i>			

### Sample of Key Programs

- Provides a range of Professional Learning activities in the form of information sessions, consultancy advice and support.
- Specific activities include support for the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, the Principal Standards and the Performance Development Framework and Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers, use of data leading to better tailored strategies to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Australian Curriculum

### Funding – how used?

- Funds used to support participation in professional learning programs and employment of staff

### Monitoring Success

- Success indicators focused on recording meetings, forums and workshops; numbers of publications distributed; improved functionality of website
- Reports improved and supportive communication including via a communication officer

### Issues and Implications

- SFSF funding has enabled the Association to learn and improve how it conducts its support for schools including professional learning activities.
- The way the funding is distributed is an issue for small systems. Perhaps some weighting of distributions for future allocations
- Existence as an Association would be in jeopardy without this funding. SFSF also enables the work done on behalf of DET

The SFSF provides the opportunity for flexibility so school needs are met in context. Indicated that if funding disappeared schools would notice even if they don't know this is formally SFSF

## Northern Territory Catholic

Schools	Students	Teaching Staff	SFSF \$
17	5,134.00	403.4	\$86,032

### Key Features of Approach

- SFSF and other funds support professional learning and CENT consultancy advice and support with a focus on
  - Literacy and numeracy
  - Teacher and leadership capacity
  - Students with disabilities
  - Collection of data

### Predominant Modes of Delivery

Delivery model		Delivery model	
<i>Professional learning</i>	✓	<i>Research practitioner</i>	
<i>Consultancy advice in schools</i>	✓	<i>Research academic</i>	
<i>Coaching and mentoring Services</i>		<i>Support and advice</i>	✓
<i>On-line Tools</i>		<i>Awareness</i>	
<i>Resource provision</i>			

### Sample of Key Programs

- Enhance community engagement through initiatives such as the Catholic Indigenous Leadership Team (CILT) and school-based initiatives. CILT is a collective of 5 schools in the most remote areas in the country.
- Implementation of the CENT School Improvement and Renewal Framework
- Implemented the Teacher Registration Board NT adoption of Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and expanded workforce understanding of Professional Standards and their use to inform teacher development.

### Funding – how used?

- Consultancy support for schools including
  - to develop and Implement School Improvement Plans and meet accountability requirements
  - to develop professional learning for principals and school leaders and to lead CENT's External Validation processes
- Consultancy fees to review processes and undertake Appraisals for Principals\* and Deputy/Assistant Principals
- Support professional learning particularly for Aspiring Leaders Programs and Professional development for Principals – leadership development

### Monitoring Success

- Success indicators focused on delivery, implementation and compliance with a range of policies e.g. principal appraisal, completion of school improvement plans, implementation of Australian Curriculum and number of participants in programs where appropriate.

### Issues and Implications

- Funding is valuable for a small sector - assists with looking at ways of improving things e.g. SFSF funding has enabled CENT to review status and then target upper/middle leaders to develop their skills.
- The amount available to small jurisdictions is an issue but funding over a number of years is a plus.

## ACT Independent

Schools	Students	Teaching Staff	SFSF \$
16	9,275.00	787.4	\$784,219

### Key features of approach

- The association has used SFSF funds to build their capacity for engagement and support of their 18 schools. Staff has grown from 1.5 to 5 staff, where 3.5 are funded by SFSF. The level of impact has changed accordingly and well received by schools.
- The association is committed to establishing a high level of responsiveness to schools' long term needs and they see value in supporting schools to build relationships within the sector and cross sector.

### Predominant mode of delivery

Delivery model		Delivery model	
<i>Professional learning</i>	✓	<i>Research practitioner</i>	
<i>Consultancy advice in schools</i>	✓	<i>Research academic</i>	
<i>Coaching and mentoring services</i>	✓	<i>Support and advice</i>	✓
<i>On-line tools</i>	✓	<i>Awareness</i>	
<i>Resource provision</i>			

### Sample programs

- *Architecture for high quality professional learning* – this is the major project that signals a new way of supporting schools by systematically building capability through, among other activities, the Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Academy, communities of practice in other curriculum areas and an annual leadership colloquium.
- *Students with Disability Network and other similar networks* – an advisory service to support schools have a common understanding of the needs of students with a disability; how to report data; access to on-line teaching resources, and professional learning on building relationships with families.

### Funding – how used?

- SFSF effectively leveraged by partnerships with other associations (Queensland and NSW) through access to their expertise and materials.
- Predominantly used to employ expert consultants to schools.

### Monitoring success

- Principals' satisfaction with services is measured and the association responds accordingly (all schools can have two members on the Board).
- The augmentation of services since 2014 is highly valued in terms of the spread of services from both regulatory to teaching and learning support.
- Seven evaluations have been conducted for professional learning initiatives -all show a high level of usefulness and implications for transfer to schools practices.

### Issues and implications

The association did not previously have the capacity to support schools beyond a base level of engagement. Hence activities that are routine in other jurisdictions (e.g. advice on Industrial relations and regulations) are funded through SFSF in ACT. Further, provision of programs focused on literacy & numeracy, coaching, leadership and differentiated teaching are now able to be offered and are enthusiastically engaged with by member schools.

## ACT Catholic

Schools	Students	Teaching Staff	SFSF \$
30	18,063.50	1,183.8	\$324,938

### Key features of approach

- The rationale for the initiatives is to build educational leadership capability and assist with governance improvements that sustain reform into the future rather than be reactive and offer short term initiatives. There are 14 projects conducted under the 5 national priorities.
- Quality Learning and School Leadership are the national priorities that receive the highest allocation of SFSF.
- They are seeking to establish sustainable support for their 56 schools through building a support infrastructure with skilled experts, tools and strong advisory services.
- There are 56 schools serviced by the CEACT

### Predominant mode of delivery

Delivery model		Delivery model	
<i>Professional learning</i>	✓	<i>Research practitioner</i>	
<i>Consultancy advice in schools</i>		<i>Research academic</i>	
<i>Coaching and mentoring services</i>		<i>Support and advice</i>	✓
<i>On-line tools</i>	✓	<i>Awareness</i>	
<i>Resource provision</i>			

### Sample programs

- *Archdiocesan Catholic School Parent Body* – SFSF was critical to supporting the establishment of this new body that supported parents to engage in the development of schools' strategic plans and advise on engagement with their parent body. The funds enabled consultation, expert advice and the infrastructure for the body to meet.
- *Teacher performance and development* – SFSF was also critical to the web-based 'My Performance and Development (MyPAD) application has been developed and used for individual learning plans and goal setting consistent with the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework.

### Funding – how used?

- SFSF funds around one third of the cost of the initiatives reported on with the CEO funding the balance.
- Most expenditure is for CE ACT staff and provision for professional learning.

### Monitoring success

- School participation, CEO ACT activities and change in schools' practices comprise the major success indicators. Results are not available

### Issues and implications

They are seeking to build sustainable system infrastructure to support schools. Biggest issue is to avoid the band-aid solutions that can arise from short term initiatives. 'We need certainty to build mature system'.

## **2. Additional SFSF Data**

2.1 SFSF Funding tables and charts

2.2 Delivery models by NGRBs

2.3 SFSF Documents provided to PTR

2.4 Interviews with school principals

## 2.1 SFSF Funding Tables and Charts

Table 1: Annual SFSF Allocation by State and Sector

	Independent		Catholic	
<b>NSW</b>	\$7,485,668	29.9%	\$4,594,418	33.6%
<b>Vic</b>	\$5,444,491	21.8%	\$3,670,155	26.9%
<b>Qld</b>	\$4,833,513	19.3%	\$2,567,447	18.8%
<b>WA</b>	\$3,207,197	12.8%	\$1,252,891	9.2%
<b>SA</b>	\$2,093,598	8.4%	\$898,993	6.6%
<b>TAS</b>	\$640,380	2.6%	\$271,789	2.0%
<b>ACT</b>	\$784,219	3.1%	\$324,938	2.4%
<b>NT</b>	\$510,933	2.0%	\$86,032	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	\$24,999,999		\$13,666,663	

Note: Independent sector allocations include a base for the 3 smallest jurisdictions.

Fig 1: Annual SFSF Allocation by State and Sector

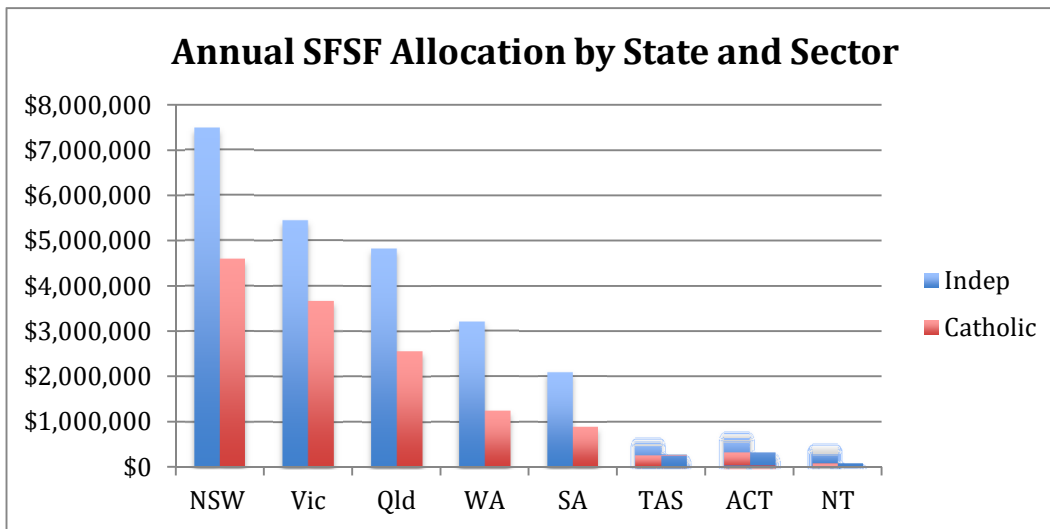


Fig 2: Annual Percentage of SFSF Allocation by State and Sector

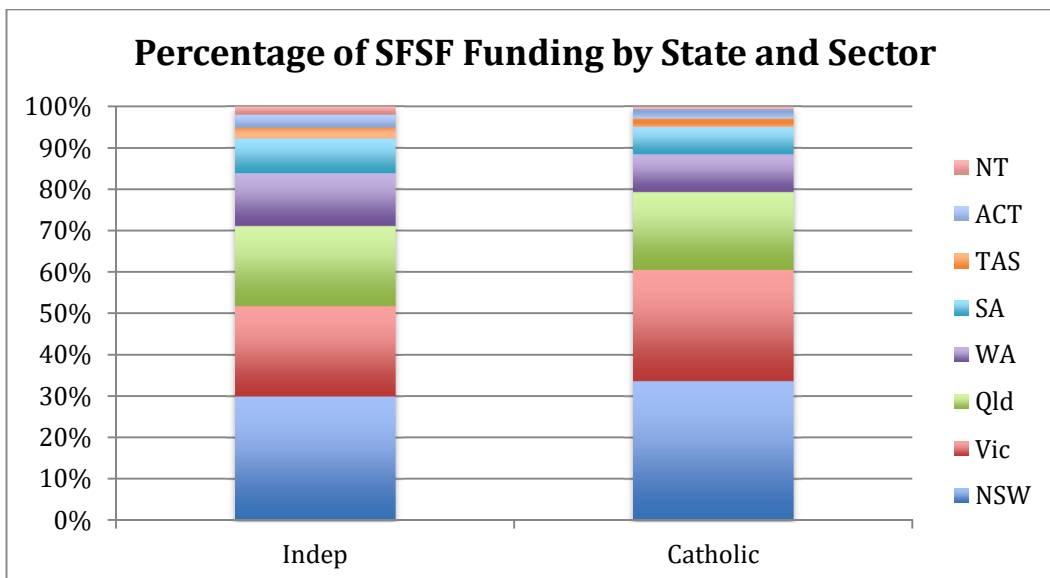
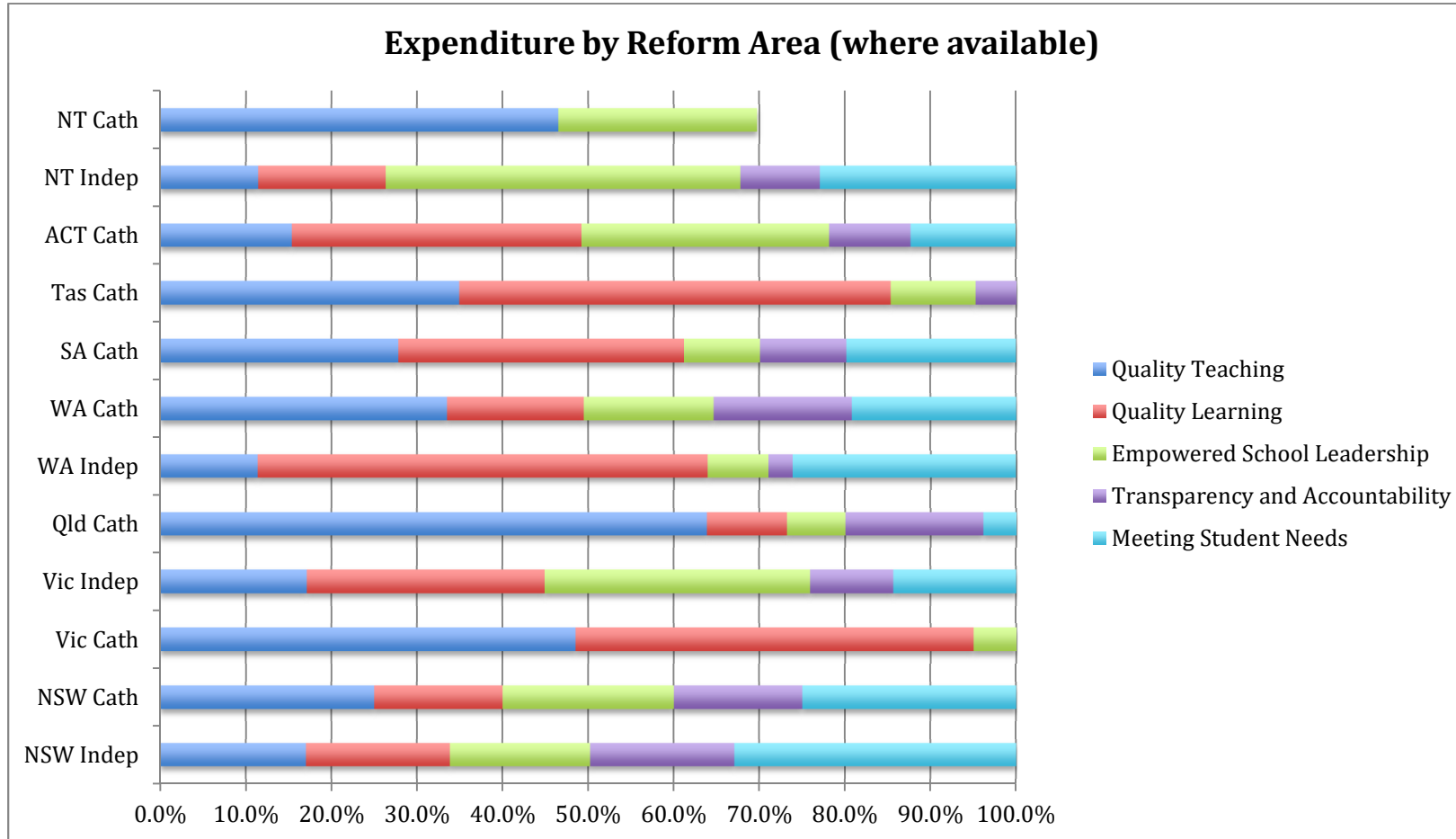




Table 2: Assessment of expenditure across reform areas – percentage

Jurisdiction	Quality Teaching	Quality Learning	Empowered School Leadership	Transparency and Accountability	Meeting Student Needs	Notes
NSW Indep	17.0%	16.8%	16.4%	16.9%	32.9%	Provides budget on a project-by-project basis. Assignment to reform areas based on project descriptions
NSW Cath	25.0%	15.0%	20.0%	15.0%	25.0%	
Vic Indep	17.1%	27.8%	31.0%	9.7%	14.4%	
Vic Cath	48.5%	46.5%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	SFSF funding supports two programs: <i>Leading Languages Learning in Catholic Schools Initiative</i> and <i>Auspiced Training and Industry Partnership</i> . Assignment to reform areas based on project descriptions
Qld Indep	Large number of projects. Documents indicate they support all reform areas					
Qld Cath	63.9%	9.3%	6.8%	16.1%	3.9%	
WA Indep	11.4%	52.6%	7.1%	2.8%	26.1%	Taken from 2014 plan. No budget information in subsequent reports
WA Cath	33.5%	16.0%	15.2%	16.2%	19.2%	
SA Indep	Significant expenditure on staff costs. Budget not broken down by activity					
SA Cath	27.8%	33.4%	8.9%	10.1%	19.8%	2014 figures. 2015 - QT 10.0%, QL 10.0%, SL 10.0%, TA 50.0%, SN 20.0%
Tas Indep	SFSF budget rolled into a global budget including other sources to fund full program. SFSF provides 70% of funds					
Tas Cath	34.9%	50.4%	9.9%	4.8%	0.0%	2015
ACT Indep	Budget provided for 4 projects in 2014 work plan but not subsequently. One project is business as usual					
ACT Cath	15.4%	33.8%	28.9%	9.5%	12.3%	
NT Indep	11.5%	14.9%	41.4%	9.3%	22.9%	
NT Cath	46.5%	0.0%	23.2%	0.0%	0.0%	Plus 30.3% of SFSF for General Improvement. 0% means in kind support.

Fig 3: Assessment of expenditure across reform areas – percentage



**Notes:**

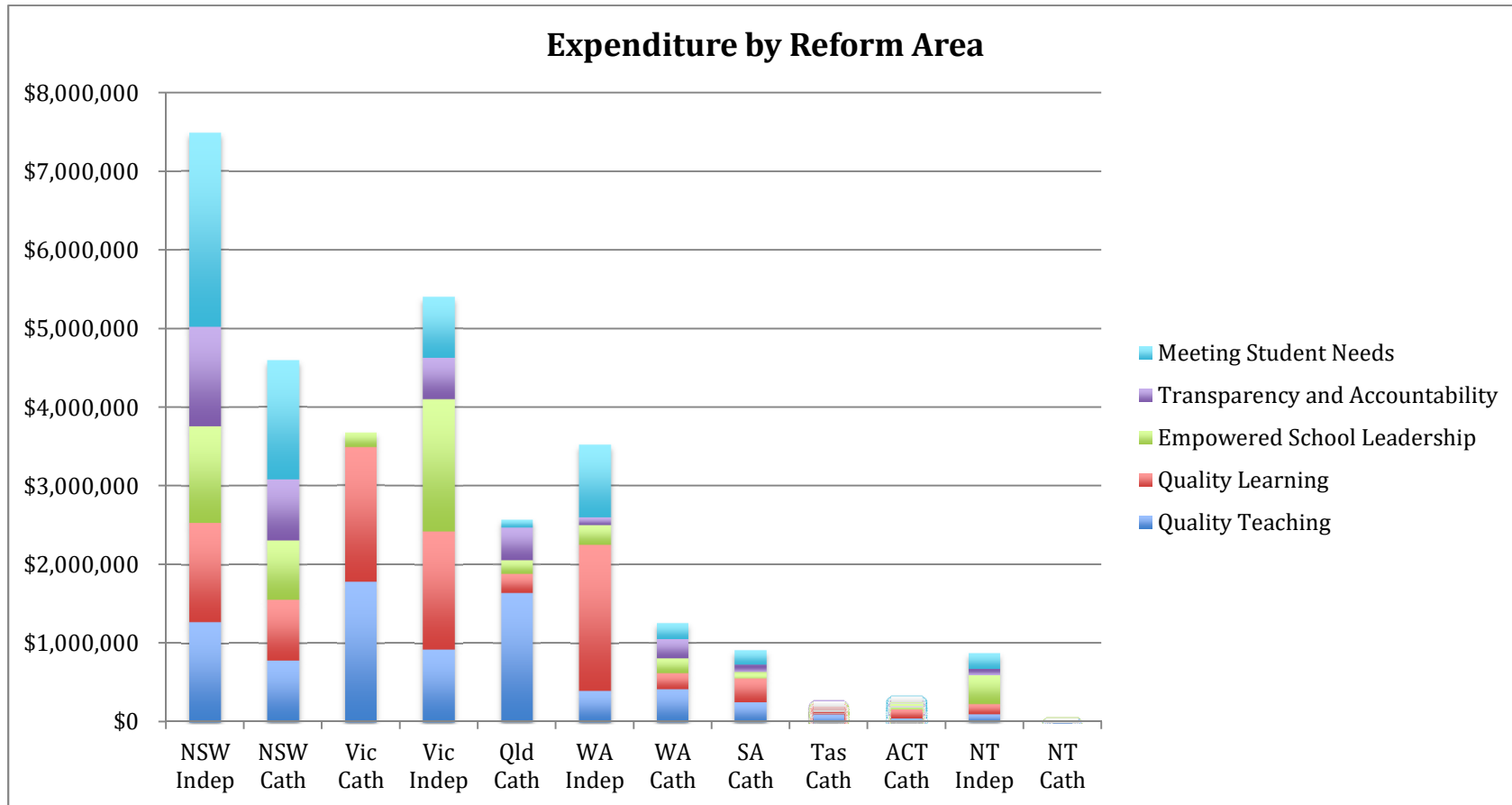
NT Catholic system allocates 30.3% of SFSF for General Improvement and provides in kind support for the reform areas where no breakdown is given.

NSW Independent: Provides budget on a project by project basis. Assignment to reform areas based on project descriptions

Table 3: Assessment of expenditure across reform areas – \$s

Jurisdiction	Quality Teaching	Quality Learning	Empowered School Leadership	Transparency and Accountability	Meeting Student Needs	Total	Notes
<b>NSW Indep</b>	\$1,275,662	\$1,258,324	\$1,225,559	\$1,262,511	\$2,463,610	\$7,485,668	Provides budget on a project-by-project basis. Assignment to reform areas based on project descriptions
<b>NSW Cath</b>	\$1,148,605	\$689,163	\$918,884	\$689,163	\$1,148,605	\$4,594,418	
<b>Vic Indep</b>	\$925,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,675,000	\$525,000	\$775,000	\$5,400,000	
<b>Vic Cath</b>	\$1,780,209	\$1,706,439	\$183,508	\$0	\$0	\$3,670,155	SFSF funding supports two programs: <i>Leading Languages Learning in Catholic Schools Initiative</i> and <i>Auspiced Training and Industry Partnership</i> . Assignment to reform areas based on project descriptions
<b>Qld Indep</b>	Large number of projects. Documents indicate they support all reform areas						
<b>Qld Cath</b>	\$1,640,000	\$240,000	\$175,000	\$413,000	\$100,000	\$2,568,000	
<b>WA Indep</b>	\$400,000	\$1,850,000	\$250,000	\$100,000	\$920,000	\$3,520,000	Taken from 2014 plan. No budget information in subsequent reports
<b>WA Cath</b>	\$420,000	\$200,000	\$190,000	\$240,000	\$202,891	\$1,252,891	
<b>SA Indep</b>	Significant expenditure on staff costs. Budget not broken down by activity						
<b>SA Cath</b>	\$250,000	\$300,000	\$80,000	\$90,993	\$178,000	\$898,993	2014 Figures
<b>Tas Indep</b>	SFSF budget rolled into a global budget including other sources to fund full program. SFSF provides 70% of funds						
<b>Tas Cath</b>	\$95,000	\$137,000	\$27,000	\$13,000	\$0	\$272,000	
<b>ACT Indep</b>	Budget provided for 4 projects in 2014 work plan but not subsequently. One project is business as usual						
<b>ACT Cath</b>	\$50,000	\$110,000	\$94,000	\$31,000	\$40,000	\$325,000	
<b>NT Indep</b>	\$100,000	\$130,000	\$361,608	\$81,209	\$200,000		
<b>NT Cath</b>	\$40,000	In-kind	\$20,000	In-kind	In-kind	\$60,000	Plus \$26,032 of SFSF for General Improvement.

Fig 4: Assessment of expenditure across reform areas – \$s



Notes:

NT Catholic system allocates 30.3% of SFSF for General Improvement and provides in kind support for the reform areas where no breakdown is given.  
 NSW Independent: Provides budget on a project by project basis. Assignment to reform areas based on project descriptions

## 2.2 Delivery models by NGRB

The seven delivery models represent the modes of delivery that are discernable in the annual reports; the predominant modes in each NGRBs are shaded. This is not definitive but illustrates the nature of the most significant activities.

Delivery model	<i>AIS NSW</i>	<i>CEC NSW</i>	<i>AIS VIC</i>	<i>CECV</i>	<i>AIS QLD</i>	<i>Q CEC</i>	<i>AIS SA</i>	<i>CESA</i>
<i>Professional learning</i>	<p><i>Quality Teaching</i> e.g. Schools Leading Learning: Consultants work in a common model for school based prof. learning for whole school planning</p> <p><i>Quality Learning</i> e.g. Elevate: networks at different levels to share on boosting high ability students</p>	<p><i>Quality Teaching</i> e.g. Implementation of the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework – conferences, networks and communication</p>	<p><i>Quality Teaching</i> e.g. Curriculum – Pedagogy, Literacy (and EAL), Numeracy: ICT (including STEM and robotics) [aligned to AITSL Professional Standards for Teachers, and the Australian Curriculum]</p>	<p><i>Quality Teaching</i> e.g. four day Professional Learning Program for school teams to develop a whole school Languages Implementation Plan</p>			<p><i>School Leadership</i> e.g. Leadership capacity will be developed by AISSA through a program with workshops and presentations including: A workshop series for recently appointed principals High Impact School Improvement – a series of nine workshops</p>	<p><i>School Leadership</i> e.g. Support will be provided to SA Catholic Primary Principals’ Association (SACPPA) and the Association of Principals of Catholic Secondary Schools (APCSS) to provide professional learning for <i>clusters of principals</i></p>
<i>Consultancy advice for schools</i>			<p><i>Quality Teaching</i> e.g. support for teachers, by developing Professional Learning Teams, analysing data, differentiating the curriculum to improve individual learning needs and introducing appropriate ICT to cater for individual</p>		<p><i>School Leadership</i> e.g. Self-improving Schools project – supports schools assess effectiveness and plan for improvement; supported by consultants with experience in school leadership and school improvement</p>		<p><i>Quality Teaching</i> e.g. AISSA will offer to assist schools to identify the professional learning priorities of their teachers and to address these priorities</p>	<p><i>School Leadership</i> e.g. Schools will be supported to undertake the Diagnostic Inventory of School Alignment in collaboration with University of Southern Queensland as part of Framework Domain 5: High Quality Teaching and Learning and</p>

Delivery model	AIS NSW	CEC NSW	AIS VIC	CECV	AIS QLD	Q CEC	AIS SA	CESA
			differences.					Domain 6: Effective Use of Data
<i>Coaching and mentoring Services</i>			<p><i>School Leadership e.g.</i> coaching and mentoring for Principals and school leaders, assistance with analysing data and developing strategic plans and assistance with the development of School Improvement Plans. [SEP]</p> <p><i>Quality Teaching</i> direct support to teachers, by modelling best practice, coaching,</p>		<p><i>Quality Teaching</i> e.g. Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Academy – school coaches are trained for intensive in-school coaching</p> <p>School Leadership Development – executive coaching for early career principals as main part of leadership program</p>	<p><i>Quality Teaching</i> e.g. Provided staff with professional coaching courses and mentor training to support colleagues, including early career teachers ☒</p>		<p><i>School Leadership e.g.</i> Participants will be provided with face-to-face personal coaching sessions in rural leadership through the partnership established between CEO and the Queensland Education Leadership Institute (QeLI)</p>
<i>On-line Tools</i>	Early Literacy, resources – a screening tool and prof learning modules					<p><i>Quality Learning</i> e.g. Developed tracking mechanisms and an online ACER Q-Central in Mathematics and English tool to enhance pre and post testing ☒</p>		<p><i>School Leadership e.g.</i> Leadership Profiling Project collates existing paper and electronic records for all principals and deputy principals into a single coherent data base that includes tenures, appraisals, professional development undertaken, school improvement plans and other entitlements.</p>

Delivery model	<i>AIS NSW</i>	<i>CEC NSW</i>	<i>AIS VIC</i>	<i>CECV</i>	<i>AIS QLD</i>	<i>Q CEC</i>	<i>AIS SA</i>	<i>CESA</i>
<i>Resource provision</i>		<i>Quality Learning</i> e.g. numerous state wide curriculum, teaching and learning Australian and NSW Government priorities – resources and support for teachers	<i>School Leadership</i> e.g. a survey and benchmarking service called <i>LEAD</i> (Listen, Evaluate, Act, Deliver) - a suite of seven stakeholder opinion surveys that provide a robust tool to assess and improve school performance. ☑		<i>Transparency and Accountability</i> e.g. resources and on-line tools used in professional learning for governance support of Boards	<i>Quality Teaching</i> e.g. Resources to support teachers in the areas of: Australian Curriculum–Digital Technologies and Health and Physical Education (suite of videos)	<i>School Leadership</i> e.g. Develop and release a High Impact School Improvement Tool, which will include research, strategies and resources to support school leaders in their school improvement journey. It will be developed in conjunction with schools	
<i>Research practitioner</i>	<i>Student Need</i> e.g. Whole School Practices for Inclusive Schooling –action research, in 3-4 schools a term  <i>Quality Teaching</i> e.g. Education Research – schools funded for school based research and symposium					<i>Quality Teaching</i> e.g. implemented teacher performance and development frameworks which enabled teachers to conduct inquiry projects/action research involving teacher collaboration, analysis of data, research and reflection		

Delivery model	<i>AIS NSW</i>	<i>CEC NSW</i>	<i>AIS VIC</i>	<i>CECV</i>	<i>AIS QLD</i>	<i>Q CEC</i>	<i>AIS SA</i>	<i>CESA</i>
Support and advice, <i>(including committees)</i>		<i>Student Needs</i> e.g. implementation of national agreements and action plans for students in needs-indigenous, students with a disability, vulnerable children	<i>Quality Learning</i> e.g. assisting teachers to analyse data, differentiate the curriculum and cater for students with individual needs.	<i>Quality Learning</i> e.g. Continued to build understanding and knowledge related to compliance requirements for the delivery of VET through a third party arrangements		<i>Student Needs</i> e.g. AISSA will support school leadership build stronger connections between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families and student learning		<i>Student Needs</i> e.g. Grants will be provided to schools to participate in programs and initiatives designed to meet the specific needs of ATSI, students with disabilities and other groups of disadvantaged students including refugees and new arrivals that are currently not being met by other programs.



Delivery model	<i>AIS WA</i>	<i>CE WA</i>	<i>IST</i>	<i>TAS CEO</i>	<i>AIS ACT</i>	<i>CE ACT</i>	<i>AIS NT</i>	<i>CENT</i>
<b>Professional learning:</b>	<p><i>Quality Teaching</i> e.g. information on Aust. Prof Standards for Teachers.</p> <p><i>Quality learning</i> e.g. Aust. Curriculum workshops; literacy and numeracy options</p>	<p><i>Quality Teaching</i> ( e.g. mentoring capability; Aboriginal assistant skilling)</p>	<p><i>Quality Teaching</i> e.g. A range of professional learning programs including professional standards for teachers, Australian Curriculum, early years educators</p>	<p><i>Quality Teaching</i> e.g. Professional Learning sessions for school leadership teams and staff covering understanding of the AITSL Teaching Standards and effective pedagogical practices</p>		<p><i>Quality teaching</i> e.g. University to Classroom where professional learning enables compliance with the Teacher Quality Institute; and Current and Aspiring Leaders program with conference and tools.</p>	<p><i>School Leadership</i> e.g. Professional learning to assist schools in aligning the teacher registration processes, probation and induction with the Australian Professional Standards for Teaching</p>	<p><i>School Leadership</i> e.g. A Principals professional development program including support for new principals, termly network meetings and a structured professional learning program around pedagogy</p>
<b>Consultancy advice for schools</b>	<p><i>Quality Learning</i> High volume of school visits for Aust. Curriculum; high engagement of literacy and numeracy consultants)</p>	<p><i>Quality Teaching</i> (e.g. Implementation of Aust. Prof Standards for Teachers)</p> <p><i>Quality learning</i> (e.g. Reading Recovery training; data analysis skills)</p> <p><i>Student Need</i> ( e.g. support for Kimberly schools)</p>	<p><i>Student Need</i> e.g. Work on nationally consistent data for SWD where IST support was essential in schools being able to supply high quality assessments</p>	<p><i>School Leadership</i> e.g. The TCEO has employed a data analyst, who regularly analyses NAPLAN and other CEO data as required. Data analysis is given to schools to inform annual planning and the Principal's PDR conversations with Heads of School Services.</p>		<p><i>Quality Learning</i> e.g. early years literacy and numeracy with Collaboration in Student Achievement (COSA) officer and project</p>	<p><i>Quality Learning</i> e.g. Provide consultancy to NT independent schools regarding the implementation of the Australian Curriculum into specific school contexts</p>	<p><i>School Leadership</i> e.g. Principal Consultant and External Consultants supported schools in monitoring school performance, refining Strategic and Annual Plans, and 2014/2016 School Annual Reports</p>

Delivery model	<i>AIS WA</i>	<i>CE WA</i>	<i>IST</i>	<i>TAS CEO</i>	<i>AIS ACT</i>	<i>CE ACT</i>	<i>AIS NT</i>	<i>CENT</i>
<i>Coaching and mentoring Services</i>		<i>Quality Teaching</i> (e.g. support for new graduates; use of principal advisors) <i>Student Need</i> (e.g. training for CARE Schools)	<i>Quality Teaching</i> e.g. Worked with a cluster of 5 small schools on curriculum development – monthly session with key people from each school whom then work back within that school.	<i>School Leadership</i> e.g. Principal Induction and Mentor programs to support Principals in their first three years of Principal-ship.				
<i>On-line Tools</i>		<i>Quality teaching</i> (e.g. embed Standards in development and appraisal)				<i>Quality Teaching</i> (e.g. tool for Performance and Development. framework )	<i>Quality Teaching</i> e.g. Further enhance the website to improve its functionality and targeted content	
<i>Resource provision</i>		<i>School Leadership</i> (e.g. refine leadership programs)  <i>Transparency/Accountability</i> (e.g. senior secondary data analysis and benchmarks)	<i>Quality Teaching</i> e.g. Provision of resources and assistance with the implementation of the National Teacher Performance and Development Framework	<i>Quality Teaching</i> e.g. School effectiveness tools e.g. a tool tracking teacher 'self' assessment of pedagogical effectiveness		<i>Quality Learning</i> e.g. Australian Curriculum implementation through a cross sectoral group producing guidelines and advice		
<i>Research practitioner</i>								

Delivery model	<i>AIS WA</i>	<i>CE WA</i>	<i>IST</i>	<i>TAS CEO</i>	<i>AIS ACT</i>	<i>CE ACT</i>	<i>AIS NT</i>	<i>CENT</i>
<i>Support and advice</i>			<i>School Leadership</i> e.g. Provision of resources and assistance with development of annual school improvement plans	<i>Quality Learning</i> e.g. Following an in-depth data analysis of Systemic English Literacy results, a Literacy Initiative was developed in 2014. A Literacy Project Officer was employed to research and develop a Literacy project. The CEO partnered with ACU to ensure that information and processes that were developed are best practice and research based.	<i>Quality Learning</i> e.g. support for key teachers and individual teachers in digital literacies as identified by schools.	<i>School Leadership</i> e.g. Archdiocesan Catholic School Parent Body to engage parents in strategic planning	<i>Student Need</i> e.g. Provide ongoing support for the development of individualised personal learning plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	<i>School Leadership</i> e.g. Enhance community engagement through initiatives such as the Catholic Indigenous Leadership Team (CILT) and school-based initiatives. CILT is a collective of 5 schools in the most remote areas in the country.

## 2.3 SFSF Documents provided to PTR

The following documents are the foundation of the review  
Format of reports vary; budget details vary, evaluation reports are included for some initiatives.

### AISs

	Documents	Content
NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014 Report</li> <li>• 2015 Report</li> </ul>	Reports are on AIS NSW Partnerships in Education not only SFSF Report includes expenditure by project from SFSF but notes projects supported by other funds. Provides detailed evaluation reports
VIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014 Work Plan</li> <li>• 2014 Report</li> <li>• 2015 Report</li> </ul>	Reports organised under <i>General Support</i> and <i>Customised school support</i> within each reform area. Indicative budget provided
QLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014 Work Plan</li> <li>• 2014 Report</li> </ul>	Budget information detailed against each project including SFSF and other funds
WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014 Work Plan</li> <li>• 2014 Report</li> <li>• 2015 Report</li> </ul>	Indicative budget in work plan but not reports
SA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014 Work Plan</li> <li>• 2014 Report*</li> <li>• 2015 Report*</li> </ul>	Budget statement acknowledges it is not feasible to allocate a budget for each activity. Mixed account of activities
TAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014 Work Plan</li> <li>• 2014 Report</li> <li>• 2015 Report</li> </ul>	Plan includes detailed descriptions of professional learning opportunities under each reform area. SFSF budget rolled into a global budget including other sources to fund full program
ACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014 Work Plan</li> <li>• 2014 Report</li> <li>• 2015 Report</li> </ul>	Budget provided Provides additional information – member satisfaction survey results, professional learning feedback
NT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014 Work Plan</li> <li>• 2015 Work Plan</li> <li>• 2015 Report</li> <li>• 2016 Work Plan</li> </ul>	Plans include high level budget breakdown across reform areas Report has budget report including funds carried forward

### CEC/CEOs

	Documents	Content
NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014 Report</li> <li>• 2015 Report</li> </ul>	Not detailed with respect to SFSF- more an account of delivery of national priorities Budget information given as percentages
VIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014 Work Plan</li> <li>• 2014 Report</li> <li>• 2015 Report</li> </ul>	Very clear priorities. Plan consists of two projects - Leading Languages and Auspiced Training and Industry Partnership Budget provided including CECV contribution
QLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014 Work Plan</li> <li>• 2014 Report</li> <li>• 2015 Report</li> </ul>	Budget detail varies. QCEC is an umbrella organisation and the local Dioceses will choose what comprises their local plans

WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014 Work Plan</li> <li>• 2014 Report</li> <li>• 2015 Report</li> </ul>	Notional budget plan and details across 5 reform areas provided in reports
SA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014 Work Plan</li> <li>• 2014 Report</li> <li>• 2015 Report</li> </ul>	Includes budget information and 2015 report
TAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014 Work Plan</li> <li>• 2014 Report</li> <li>• 2015 Report</li> </ul>	Includes budget information; priorities and projects included
ACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014 Work Plan</li> <li>• 2014 Report</li> <li>• 2015 Report</li> </ul>	Budget information included; priorities and projects included
NT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014 Work Plan</li> <li>• 2014 Report</li> <li>• 2015 Report</li> </ul>	Budget information including "in kind" support priorities and projects included

## 2.4 Interviews with principals

December 2016 and January 2017. Thirty principals were contacted; 19 agreed to respond to these questions. They received the questions by email and contact was by phone- with four by email.

<p>Q. Are you aware of Australian government priorities such as the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on Schools Students with a Disability?</p>
<p>No difference evident among size of sector or location</p> <p>Not a strong pattern of recognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most commonly mentioned NAPLAN Aust. Curriculum, Melbourne Declaration, Students with a disability and school improvement plans</li> <li>• Typical answers: <i>Yes- but not specifically aware – we are more driven by where our needs are which is currently accessing the right services for our students individually and collectively; the national priorities are very distant thread to what we think about; Yes , but mainly through legislative requirements</i></li> </ul>
<p>Q. Are you aware the NGRB is funded to represent non-government schools and assist them in the implementation of national education policy and priorities?</p> <p>Q. Are you aware of the services or programs they supply?</p>
<p>For those engaged with their NGRB, yes, they very aware because the role of an NGRB, particularly an AIS, is the main interface with governments. For others the awareness of the NGRB services are very much in relation to the needs of the school</p> <p>Some typical responses in metro locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Yes – their role is 'absolutely invaluable ' in progressing the government priorities</i></li> <li>• <i>Schools are too busy at the coal face to be on top of the 'technical' issues e.g. disability; translation of AITSL standards to suit the state requirements so I depend on them to alert us</i></li> <li>• <i>Yes closely engaged, AIS is exceptionally helpful – we also have another head office however they target different things – therefore we get the benefit of both</i></li> </ul> <p>Typical in regional or rural:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>CEC/CEO mainly offers information and advice on government requirements- IR/EB negotiations; VET rules; tertiary entrance changes; disabilities. They have been very helpful in assisting prepare for registration</i></li> </ul>

- *Yes I'm aware but we don't really distinguish among sources of funds*
- *Not really- my contact is more in connection with my area of specific interest.*
- *The AIS has been extremely helpful in its advice, guidance, and provision of quality programs that have assisted the College.*

Q. Have you accessed any of these services or programs?

Q. What is the nature of these services or programs?

Q. Does your school pay for these services or programs?

Interviewees generally indicated there is a high take-up of services and that the nature of them is traditionally advice on system requirements but that has now extended to more school improvement oriented activities

There was a slight difference between jurisdiction/ sector sizes.

Smaller – typical comments included the value and use of a wide range of services:

- *As a principal I particularly value the networking events; we generally pay; some are a mix of user pay and subsidised events*
- *The ones we have engaged in more recently are where more than on teacher is sponsored to be part of a professional development program – such as inclusion support or middle management development*
- *The CEO Services are directive in some ways – they set out what is needed and provide advice on how to develop key ideas and proceed*
- *Yes – I have regular access to the advisory services provided by AIS consultants – no cost to schools*
- *Responsive and expert – consultants at best are 'critical friends'*
- *A leader these days cannot be across everything so the services are critical for me.*

Larger - typical comments implied that there was selective attendance, on the basis that large schools can service their own development needs, Typical comments included

- *They particularly assist with industrial relations, governance and executive issues, cluster meetings with school executive, announcements; they are our voice for feed -back to government*
- *Payment for services is a mix of our member fee and costs of teacher relief and AIS pays for materials, some transport cost, and venues*
- *Yes we access the service; we do not pay but our CEC/CEO mandates attendance so there is a cost for us*
- *My involvement is more about compliance issues e.g. weekly phone calls on IR; other practices like accessing templates for employment offers*
- *Yes, we are aware. There is frequent correspondence and their website is checked regularly by our staff.*

- *The most recent program was fully funded, with grants delivered to schools. We applied, and received a grant that had a positive impact on delivery of education*
- *Their regular PD is very well planned and authentic e.g. principal preparation; teaching indigenous children*
- *Also engage in the committees they facilitate e.g. learning support, marketing , IR – individuals attend and they operate as professional networks*
- *The services are mainly those concerned with compliance- an enormous task to understand requirements and to report accordingly.*

Q. How do you receive information about Australian government priorities, policies and reforms- through the NGRB or others sources?

The above questions indicate that schools access new information through principal meetings; regular bulletins and, increasingly web sites. Delivery of information from governments to schools is a fundamental function of NGRBs.

Q. Are you aware of the Students First Support Fund?

Q. Are you aware of the programs and/or services provided by the NGRB under the Student First Support Fund?

Q. Are you aware of the role the NGRB (name) plays in the administration and delivery of that fund?

There were mixed responses- not so much dependent on size or location- more probably an attitude by the principal. However, large Catholic systems are already active in this space and do not distinguish the source of funds.

Some typical comments:

Positive and knowledgeable

- *Yes very aware; greater access to many programs e.g. literacy and numeracy and learning styles*
- *Yes and we have been significant recipients since 2014 in the school improvement initiative and 3 other programs for mentoring and languages*
- *The main programs that have been hugely successful for us have been the train the trainer model (as in literacy and numeracy coaching) - key staff attend and then coach and mentor others – this has been a unique opportunity This has really snowballed*
- *Teachers working with other teachers is vital and this continues to develop and have an impact*
- *Online learning programs have been important - big thing for our teachers really valuing and using the 'connect and learn modules'*
- *Yes, we are aware mainly because we receive around \$20,000 from the fund for our teacher quality/ peer reflection initiatives*



Not aware

- *Not especially; School improvement is not a service I use; we are a mature schools and an experienced principal ( should ) have no need of generalised advice*
- *The Students First Support Fund is not a familiar term, but it is our understanding that this fund was the basis for programs we have accessed*
- *Not by name – I don't look for where the funding originates*

Q. If you have accessed any services provided or auspiced by the NGRB; what has been most valuable for you? Why? What has been least valuable for you? Why?

Q. Were those services supported or funded through the SFSF to your knowledge? Have these programs and/or services been identified as funded by the Commonwealth under the Student First Support Fund?

Q. If you do not access these services why not?

Principals are very articulate about what they see as the most valuable support – and it is a consistent story about school centeredness and being responsive to particular needs.

Typical comments in as small system/ sector

- *Yes the SFSF has made a real difference in enabling ease of access to support; in the past it was too complex; now there are priorities and programs to tap into*
- *Consultation and support around compliance – in the form of curriculum and policy in particular have been extremely valuable.*
- *The most valuable services provided are by AIS consultants who understand our needs and context.*
- *We find in general that workshops aimed at larger groups and a variety of schools are less valuable as every school is on a different path and at a different stage.*
- *The most valuable are on what the school sees as priorities*

Larger system comments

- *AIS targets very well – they continuously look for feedback, ask if something is missing – not just present what they think we need*
- *Very consultative and responsive; nothing has been of no value*
- *Some of the reforms they have assisted with are –revaluating school structures, differentiation in mathematics teaching; consistency in teaching across the school*
- *Without this funding we would have struggled to move our mindsets into more engaging and collaborative ways of teaching and learning and deeply reflecting on what we offer and why based 21 C skills*
- *A fantastic stimulus impacting on professional growth and delivery of differentiated programs for students.*

- Yes we access numerous programs; even for a large school it is hard to plan a comprehensive program for professional learning so we use the NGRB to help us advance planning for our 1000 staff
- This program has been very valuable as it let us fund a program specifically targeting the improvement of our HSC teaching practices. But it did highlight the need for ongoing funding in the areas of Professional Development for teachers. In simple terms, more funding would have been extremely useful
- The main one is literacy and numeracy coaching – highly valuable phase. Valuable because it is relevant and the process is easy
- Their contribution is highly valued because they respond quickly to what schools need to know about e.g. student data use.

Q. Are you aware of any evaluation of the programs and/or services provided by your NGRB under the SFSF?

No one was able to mention and evaluation

Q. What sort of services would be most valuable for you to access in the future? What role do you see for your AIS/CEC in delivering/auspicing those services?

The strongest and most typical response was:

*We find in general that workshops aimed at larger groups and a variety of schools are less valuable as every school is on a different path and at a different stage.*

Similar comments in metro locations were:

- *We must be able to access the best experts- I expect that of the NGRB*
- *The more recent flexible initiatives are the best we have had- we need more of these. The same combination of a resource that can be applied at the school level and supplemented by the school – makes a relevant impact.*
- *Support must be strategically targeted to your school –*
- *Long term research based projects aimed at really seeing change*

Regional or rural comments:

- *Their role is a plus; I'd like to see an enhanced professional learning focus on teacher quality, capability building in an ongoing way.*
- *What is most successful is intensive support at the outset, followed by sustained school driven change. We want a comprehensive approach to any change – principals' involvement, resources, PD and staff networks.*
- *The main need I have is for concrete and immediate experience in running a new school in a remote location*
- *We really need to push through online and connectivity regional/remote schools feel a part of everything that is going on.*

Q. Has your AIS/CEC changed the focus or range of services provided since 2014, when they became a NGRB? If so, in what ways?

Many of the comments above were offered again for this question and changes have been apparent in recent years.

A few strong observations

- *Much more collaborative, consistent informed teacher engagement and enhanced pedagogical practice*
- *Real emphasis in discussion around QT and QL and how this is impacting culturally on practice for sustainability*
- *The availability of consultants to work directly with my school is fantastic.*

Q. If so, are new services complementary to those provided as an AIS/CEC (i.e. basic information services, provision of training)?

Nothing in particular was mentioned.

Q. How has the AIS/CEC assisted you to implement national reforms (such as the Australian Curriculum or the Australian Professional Standard for Teachers)?

All mentioned a similar parcel of activity – this has been a strong area of activity across the spectrum from information services to more complex professional learning opportunities

- *Professional support through consultancy and training through the development of our pedagogical framework.*
- *Assistance in working through updates to the Australian Curriculum, most recently mathematics and technologies. The assistance we have received has been specific to our context and ongoing, meaning that we can best capitalise upon the time offered.*
- *On line PD available for a number of requirements*
- *Being brought up to date with government requirements*
- *Early career mentoring, specialist programs in relation teacher evaluation and appraisal, did a significant project in our sector*
- *AIS consultant has been superb, at the end of the phone, accessibility to key people who are keeping you updated*
- *Curriculum change – getting middle managers really comfortable – encourage, cajole.*