Parents' and Community Members' Attitudes to Schooling

REPORT ON SCOPING STUDY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report discusses the results of a scoping study on parents' and community members' attitudes to schooling. The scoping study was conducted by the Department of Education, Science and Training between May and June 2003 using a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) survey method. The survey collected responses from 1,500 community members and 1,359 parents of school age children.

The report discusses:

- how the study was conducted; and
- the study findings.

Key findings

The scoping study of parents of school-aged children and members of the community has indicated that they are broadly satisfied with the standard of schools and the standard of teaching. For example, the majority of parents of school-aged children were satisfied with their child's school and around three-quarters were satisfied with the standard of teaching at that school. A majority of parents (79.3 per cent) rated 'quality of teachers' as very important in choosing a school.

The survey also drew attention to the importance of quality teaching for quality schooling, especially in an environment where most parents desire their children to complete Year 12 and attend university.

Parents expressed a desire that schools be a secure environment, with appropriate facilities both in the classroom and in the broader school grounds.

Parents emphasised the need for schools to not only develop academic skills (literacy and numeracy) but also for schools to have a role in developing students' life skills. Both parents and community respondents regarded it as 'very important' that schools assist children in developing literacy (parents, 90.4 per cent; community, 89.6 per cent), numeracy (parents, 85.4 per cent; community, 77.9 per cent) and life skills (parents, 67.0 per cent; community 59.0 per cent).

Parents were commonly involved with their children's schooling, from actions such as choice of school (87.5 per cent) to assistance with day-to-day schoolwork (56.4 per cent).

Parents also saw national consistency issues as important, with the majority of respondents regarding the following issues as 'important' or 'very important':

- National standards for teachers and school leaders (91.5 per cent of respondents);
- National school qualifications (88.4 per cent);
- Standard tertiary entrance requirements across Australia (85.9 per cent);
- Standard national curriculum (83.3 per cent);
- Standard school starting age across Australia (66.5 per cent); and
- Standard school leaving age across Australia (61.0 per cent).

The majority of school-children wear school uniforms, a policy supported by the majority of parents. Some 94.3 per cent of parents of school-aged children responded that their children wear school uniforms and 95.4 per cent of parents supported the wearing of school uniforms.

Data from the study indicates that as at 2003, parents of children at government schools spent an average of $1,573 per year on expenses associated with their eldest child's schooling. By comparison, parents of children at non-government schools spent an average of $6,053 on their eldest child's education.

Some 73 per cent of parents had made voluntary contributions to their child's school. The main contributions were fund-raising activities/donations (49.4 per cent), canteen help/library help/helping out in class (43.7 per cent) and membership of school board/ P&C (12.5 per cent).

Introduction

This report discusses the results of a scoping study on parents' and community members' attitudes to schooling. The scoping study was conducted by the Department of Education, Science and Training between May and June 2003.

The report discusses:

- how the study was conducted; and
- the study findings.

How the study was conducted

The scoping study was developed to provide a broad understanding of parent and community attitudes to schooling. The Department carried out the study in May and June 2003, using a telephone based survey. The study sought the views of 1,500 members of the community and 1,500 parents of school-aged children selected at random from the White Pages telephone directory.

The survey questionnaire was designed by Departmental staff, including the development of a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) system. The survey was conducted in-house, using temporary staff. A copy of the study questionnaire is attached at Attachment A to this report.

The study was divided into two parts:

- parents of school-age children; and
- members of the community who did not have school-age children.

In the context of this research, reference to "parents" means "parents of school-aged children who responded to the survey". Similarly, reference to "children" means "school-aged children of parents who responded to the survey".

Parents were asked a series of general questions about the schooling arrangements of their children. They were then asked a series of more detailed questions, which they were asked to answer in relation to their eldest school-aged child. In the context of this report, unless otherwise stated, reference to a "child" means "the eldest school-aged child of the respondent".

The survey collected data on:

- Respondents' views on the importance of areas of national consistency in education (such as starting and leaving ages, consistency in curriculum, consistency in school qualifications, standard tertiary entry requirements, and standards for teachers and school leaders);
- Respondents' views on the importance of a range of factors in parents' choices of schools (such as academic reputation, cost, facilities, prestige, tradition, teacher quality);

- Respondents' views on the importance of commonly identified skills being developed in school education (such as literacy and numeracy skills, IT knowledge, life skills, interpersonal skills); and

- Characteristics of respondents (such as age, level of education, occupation, attendance at government/non-government schools).

Survey sample size

Based on advice received from the Australian Bureau of Statistics a sample size of 1,536 would achieve a 95 per cent confidence interval of (0.475,0.525) assuming that 50 per cent of parents are satisfied (this is the most conservative basis on which the Australian Bureau of Statistics could prepare its estimates). This would facilitate a Random Standard Error (RSE) of 2.5 per cent. The Australian Bureau of Statistics advises that this is a fairly stable sample size for any population sizes between 2 million and 8 million. For an RSE of 3.5 per cent, the sample size would need to be 683, and for a 5 per cent RSE, the sample size would be 100.

The surveys of 1,359 parents of school-aged children and 1,500 community members therefore achieve almost these levels of statistical reliability. It should be noted, however, that these data would only be reliable at the national level.

Study findings

Characteristics of study respondents

Actual numbers surveyed

Survey participants were selected at random from the White Pages telephone directory. The sample was selected to approximate State population sizes (see below).

Overall, 66.8 percent of respondents were female; 62.4 per cent of *community* respondents were female and 71.7 per cent of *parents* were female. The high proportion of female respondents may reflect home patterns of telephone answering, i.e. a higher proportion of women than men may normally answer home phones.

The highest proportion of community members who responded to the study were aged over 60 (21.8 per cent). This is consistent with pre-study expectations, in as much as older persons represent the majority of the adult population not having school-age children. Some potential younger respondents may also have been precluded because a substantial proportion of phone interviews took place during working hours. The highest proportion of parents who responded was in the 40-44 age group (28.2 per cent) while only 5.4 per cent of community members were in this age group.

Considered by State, the distribution of study participants was as follows:

- New South Wales, 36.6 per cent (compared to 33.7 per cent of the national population);
- Victoria, 21.8 per cent (compared to 24.8 per cent of the national population);
- Queensland, 17.7 per cent (18.9 per cent);
- Western Australia, 9.8 per cent (9.8 per cent);
- South Australia, 6.5 per cent (7.7 per cent);
- Tasmania, 4.2 per cent (2.4 per cent);
- Australian Capital Territory, 1.9 per cent (1.6 per cent); and the
- Northern Territory, 1.5 per cent (1.0 per cent).

The distribution of respondents was hence broadly similar to that for population shares. The study was also broken down into metropolitan and non-metropolitan elements. Some 52 per cent of respondents came from metropolitan regions, while 47.8 per cent came from non-metropolitan regions.

Average number of school-aged children

Parents of school-age children had an average of 1.8 children attending school. The eldest child of 587 respondents (43.2 per cent) was attending primary school, while 754, or 55.5 per cent, were attending secondary schools.

School grades attended by children of respondent parents were broadly spread across all years of study. Most children[1] were attending co-educational schools (87.6 per cent). Information was also sought on whether the children of parents who participated in the study attended government or non-government schools. The majority – 66.7 per cent – were attending government schools.

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1 'Children' in this context means the eldest school-aged child of the respondent

Parent profile

Parents of children attending non-government schools were higher income earners than parents of children at government schools. About 45 per cent of parents of children at non-government schools responded that their gross annual household incomes were more than $60,000.

Charts 1 and 2 below show that the vast majority of parents of children at government schools attended government schools themselves (about 78 per cent for participants and about 67 per cent for their partners). Around one in three parents of children attending non-government schools and their partners attended non-government schools themselves (32 per cent for participants and 31 per cent for their partners).

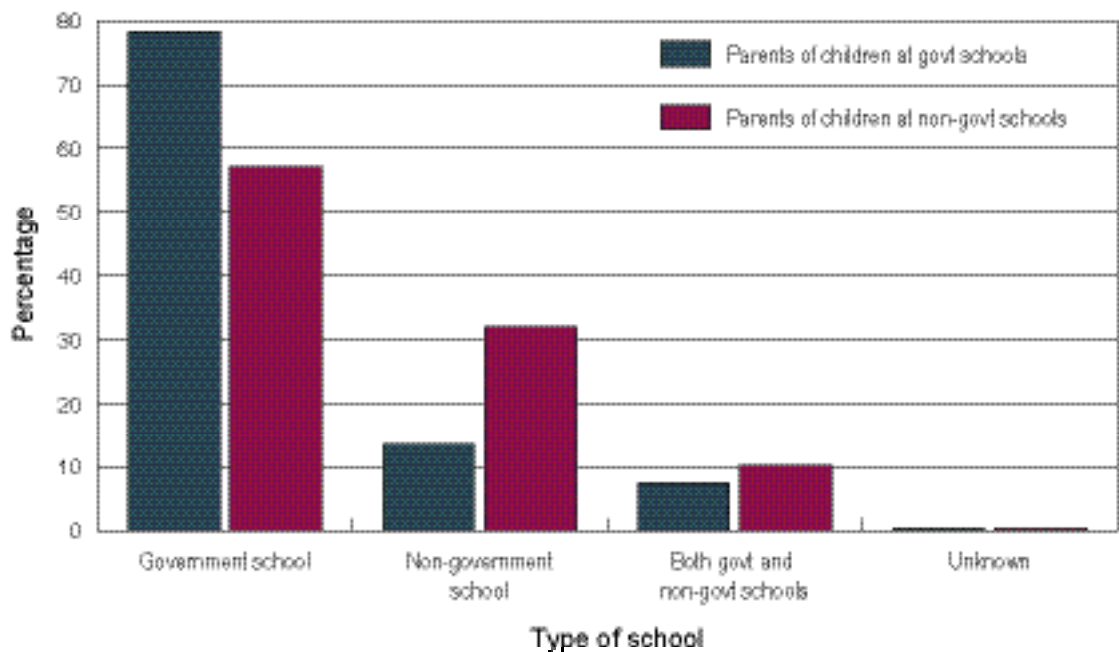Chart 1   Type of school attended by survey participant

Chart 2   Type of school attended by survey participant's partner

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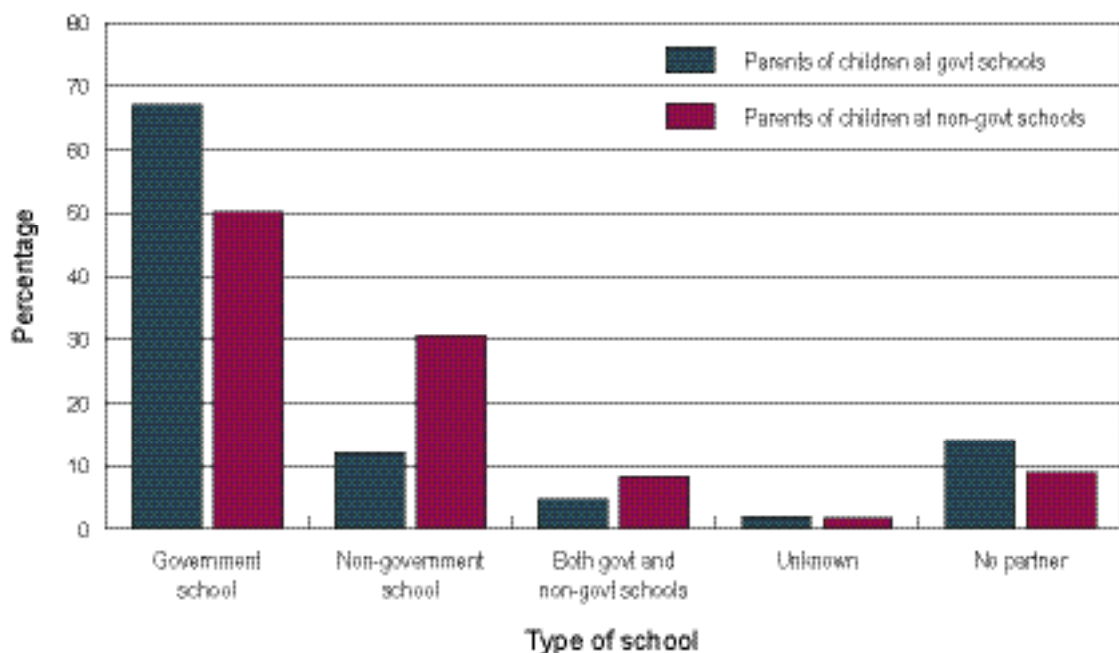
National schooling issues

Respondents were also asked to rank the importance of several national education issues on a one to five scale. Each issue was ranked important or very important by the majority of respondents, with high proportions of respondents ranking issues as 'very important'. The outcomes, with respect to issues viewed as 'important/very important' by respondents, are shown in Chart 3 below.

Chart 3   National consistency issues that parents and community members viewed as 'important/very important'
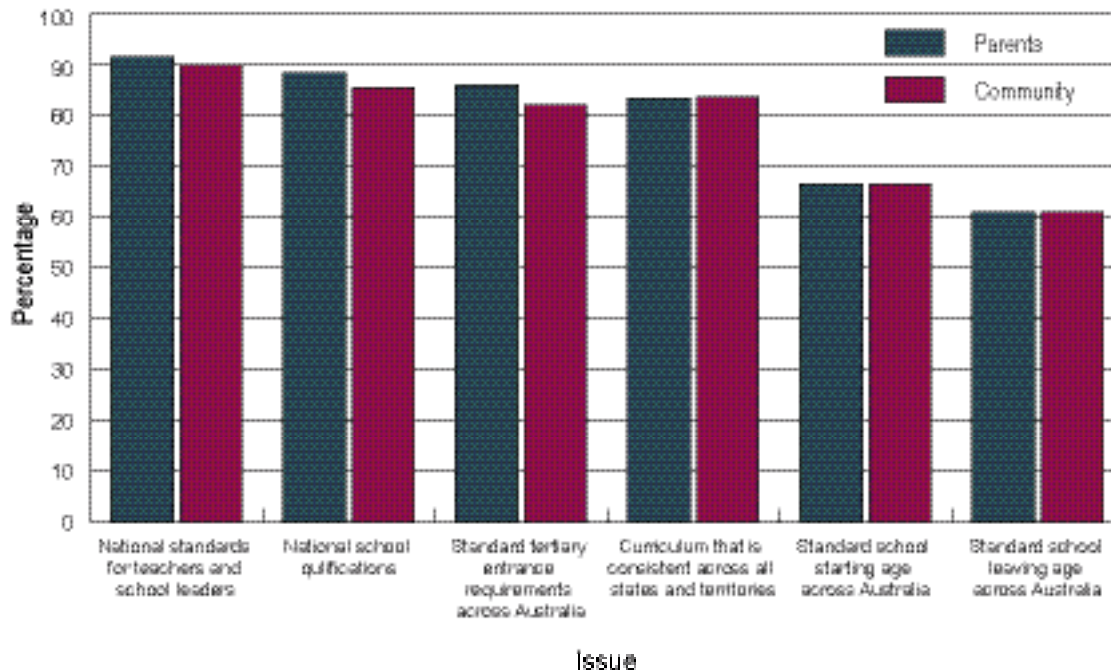
In order of importance, parents viewed the following issues as 'important/very important':

- National standards for teachers and school leaders (91.5 per cent of respondents);
- National school qualifications (88.4 per cent);
- Standard tertiary entrance requirements across Australia (85.9 per cent);
- · Standard national curriculum (83.3 per cent);
- Standard school starting age across Australia (66.5 per cent); and
- Standard school leaving age across Australia (61.0 per cent).

Community members generally agreed with these views, although they valued standard national curriculum settings as slightly more important than standard tertiary entrance requirements across Australia.

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Views on schooling

Level of satisfaction with school and standard of teaching

Parents were then asked about their level of satisfaction with their child's[2] school, and with the standard of teaching at the school.

Chart 4 shows that about 44 per cent of parents were 'very satisfied' with their child's school and 39 per cent responded that they were 'fairly satisfied'. On the issue of the *standard of teaching* at their child's school, 42 per cent of parents responded that they were 'fairly satisfied' and 36 per cent responded 'very satisfied'.

Chart 4   Level of satisfaction with school and standard of teaching
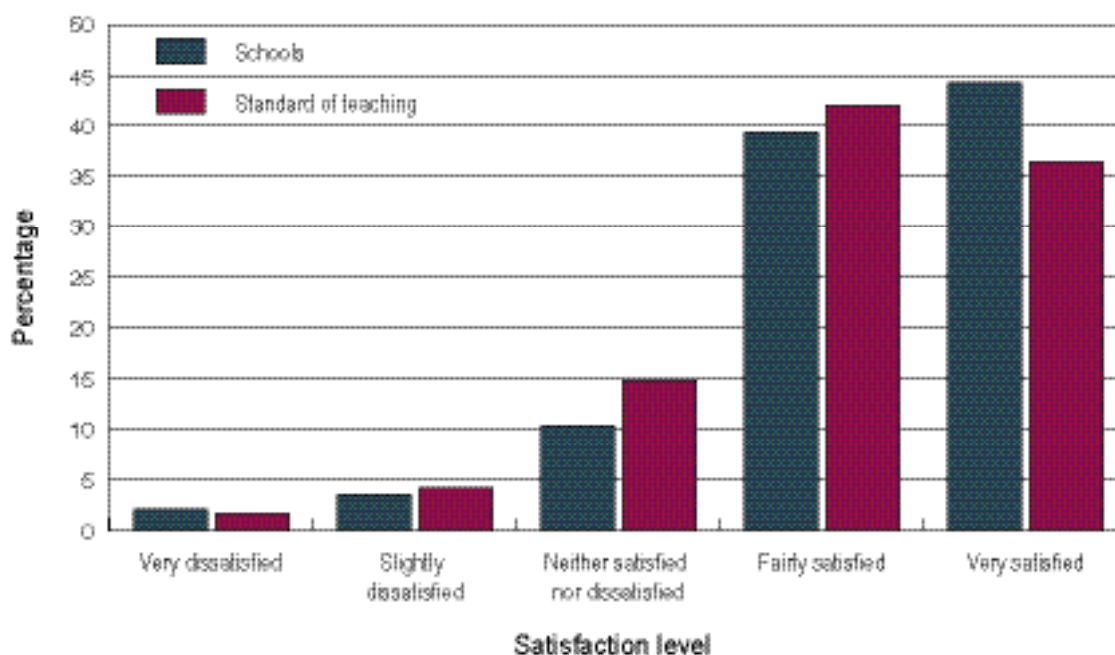
Impressions of schooling

Community members and parents were also asked about their general impressions of the current standards of *primary school education*. Chart 5 shows that less than half of community members reported positive responses to this question (43.5 per cent), with 39.4 per cent responding neutrally and 17.0 per cent responding negatively. The majority (61.7 per cent) of parents were more positive about the current standards of primary school education.

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2   'Child' in this context means the eldest school-aged child of the respondent

Chart 5   General impressions of the current standards of primary school education
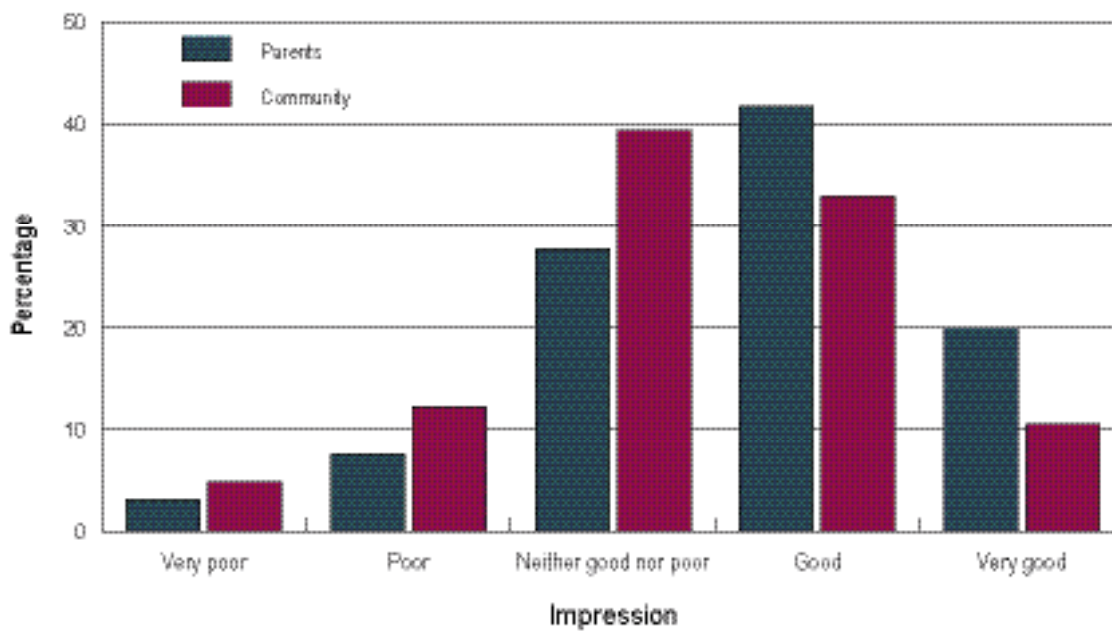
When community and parent respondents were asked about their general impressions of the current standards of secondary school or secondary college education, more than half (51.9 per cent) of parents responded that they were 'Good' or 'Very good'. By comparison, about one-third (36.3 per cent) of community respondents regarded the standard of secondary schools as 'Good' or 'Very good' (see Chart 6).

Chart 6   General impressions of the current standards of secondary school education
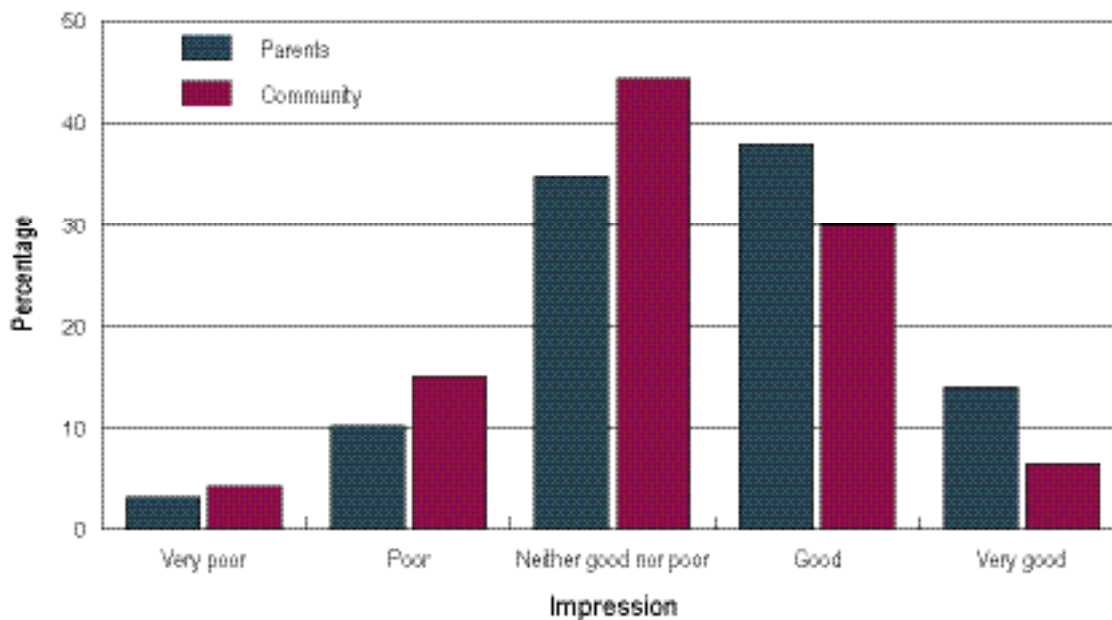
Importance of development of certain skills within schools

Both parents and community members were asked to rank on a scale from one to five how important it was to them that schools assist a child to develop certain commonly identified skills. The relative rankings of the skills regarded by parent and community members as 'very important' are shown in Chart 7 below:

Chart 7   Skills that parents and community members viewed as 'very important'
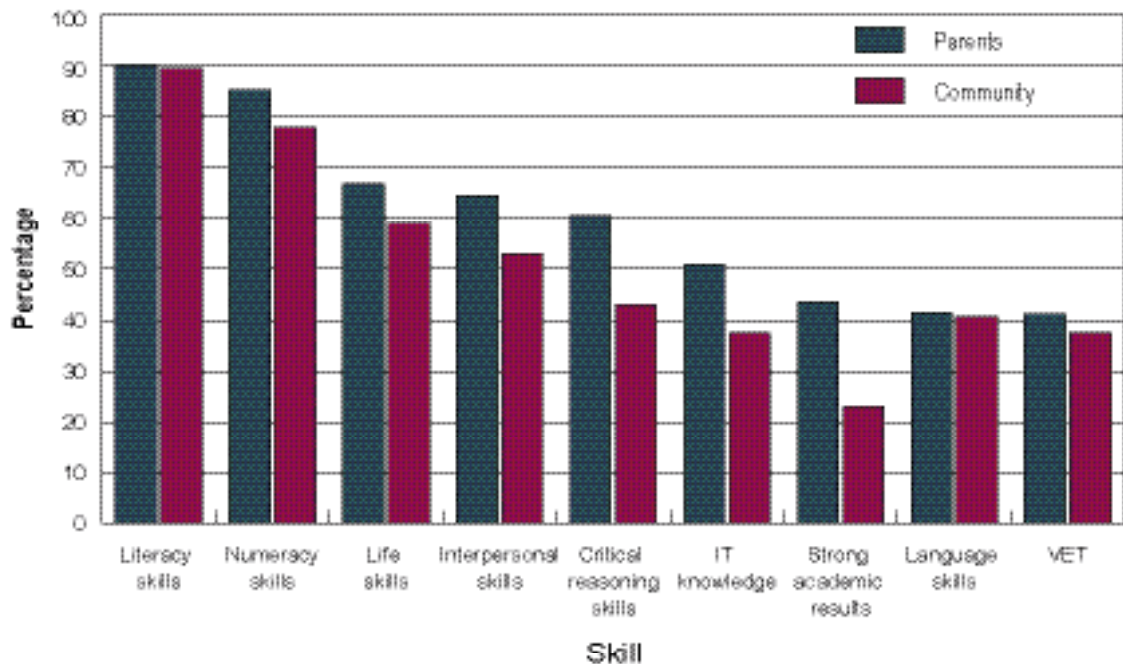
Both parents and community members ranked literacy, numeracy and life skills ahead of the other skills.

Parents and schooling

Factors associated with choosing a school

Parents were also asked a series of questions about factors that were important to them in choosing a school.[3] Opinions were sought on factors including the academic reputation of the school they had chosen for their eldest child; cost of schooling; location of school(s); the scale and nature of facilities offered by the school; social factors such as the school's prestige or tradition; extra-curricular activities offered by the school; whether the school offered a secure environment, and the quality of teachers.

Other factors canvassed included whether the parents had themselves attended the school; the importance of children's peer groups in choices of whether to attend a particular school; the importance of school leadership; and the nature and extent of homework set by the school. Chart 8 shows the factors that participants considered most important when choosing a school.

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3   Respondents were asked to rate the importance of these factors on a 1–5 scale, where a 1 response indicated the issue was not important, and a 5, where respondents considered the issue very important.

Parents considered the most important factors involved in choosing a school included the quality of teachers (79.3 per cent), secure environment (70.7 per cent), the academic reputation of the school (52.1 per cent), school facilities (44.9 per cent), school location (36.3 per cent), social factors (28.1 per cent), the cost of schooling (25.8 per cent) and the availability of extra-curricular activities (19.8 per cent). The degree of importance placed on these factors varied slightly between parents of children at government and non-government schools.

Parents of children at non-government schools ranked 'quality of teachers' slightly higher (80.5 per cent) than government school parents (78.7 per cent). Conversely, government school parents ranked the importance of all other factors ahead of non-government school parents.

Chart 8   Broad factors associated with choosing a school, rated 'very important'
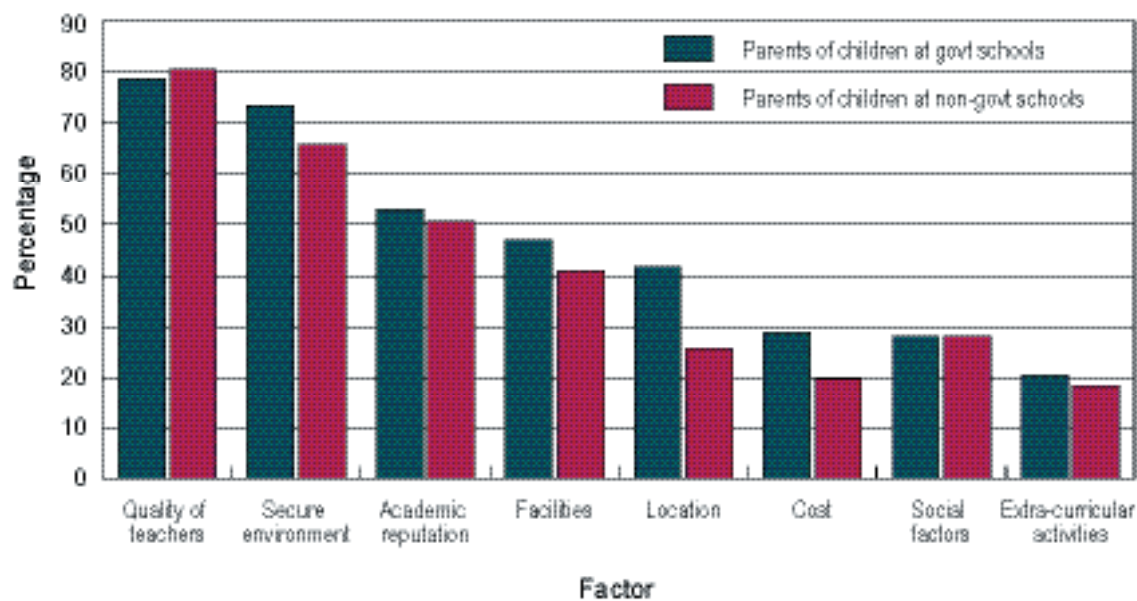
Study participants were then asked more detailed questions on the factors that were important in choosing a school. For example, they were asked to rate the importance of various types of *school facilities* such as library facilities; technology facilities – computers or Internet access; sports facilities; playgrounds; shade; school halls or auditoriums and science laboratories.

Over 50 per cent of parents of children at government schools viewed library resources, technology facilities and the availability of shaded areas as 'very important'. Results were slightly different for parents of children at non-government schools, with about 48.9 per cent regarding technology facilities as 'very important' followed by library resources (45.1 per cent) and the availability of shaded areas (37.7 per cent) (see Chart 9).

Chart 9   Types of school facilities that were 'very important' when choosing a
school
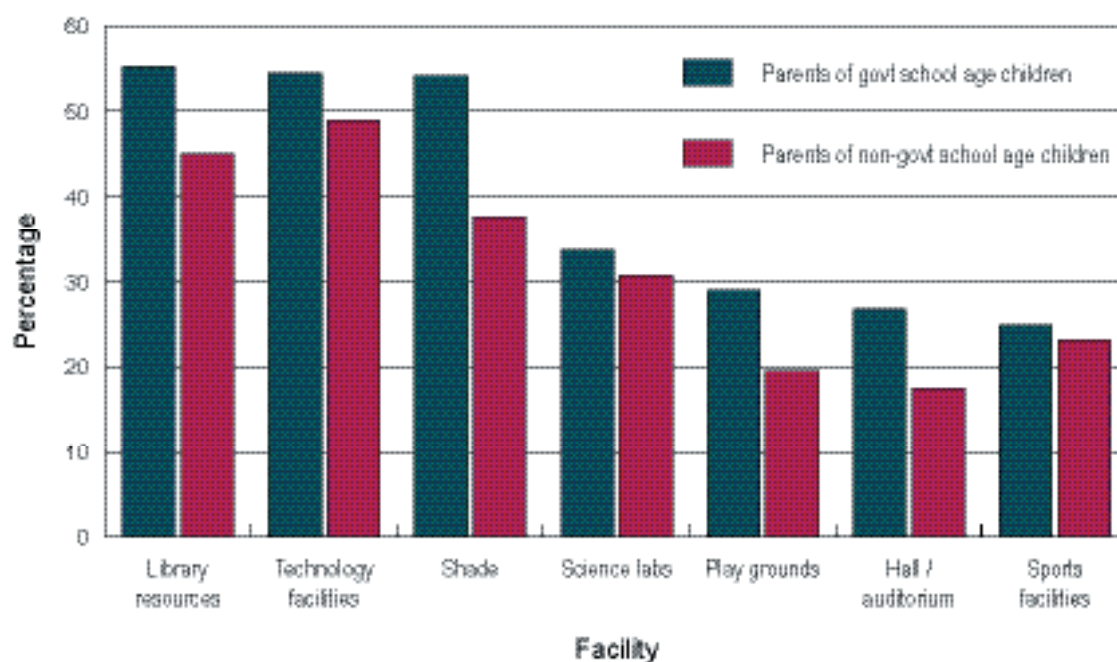
Similarly, study participants were asked more detailed questions about the *social factors* that were important in choosing schools. These factors included: the prestige, or image of the school; the school's traditions; the religious affiliation of the school; the school's values; the perception that the school has a sound record on discipline issues; and whether the school facilitated peer groups for their son or daughter.

The most important social factors for parents of children at *government* schools were discipline ('very important' to 53.0 per cent of respondents); values (44.9 per cent); peer group for son or daughter (37.3 per cent); prestige of the school (16.7 per cent); tradition (10.6 per cent); and religion (5.5 per cent). By comparison, parents of children at *non-government* schools regarded the most important social factors as values (62.3 per cent); discipline (61.2 per cent); peer group for son or daughter (33.9 per cent); religion (27.1 per cent); prestige of the school (14.4 per cent); and tradition (14.1 per cent) (see Chart 10).

Chart 10 Social factors that were 'very important' when choosing a school
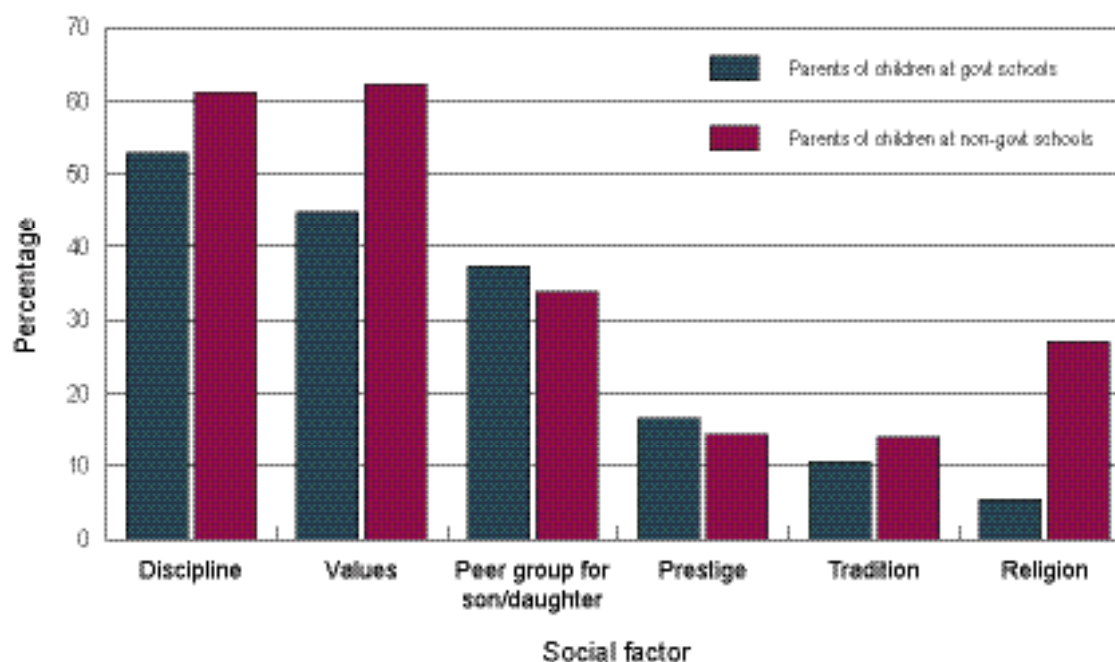
In addition, parents were asked to rate the importance of the availability of types of *extracurricular activities*, including music, languages, sport, debating and drama, in making decisions about schools.

Most respondents did not believe that the availability of extra-curricular activities were very important in making a decision about schools. The extra-curricular activities viewed as most important included sport ('very important' to 22.4 per cent of respondents); music (18.7 per cent); and languages (15.2 per cent of respondents).

Next, parents were asked whether their children were required to wear school uniforms, and whether they supported this policy. Some 94.3 per cent of school children wear school uniforms and 95.4 per cent of parents supported the wearing of school uniforms.

Parents used a variety of sources of information in making decisions about which school their children would attend. The main sources of information utilised by respondent parents were advice from friends, family and members of the school community, and information from schools (such as brochures and Open Days). About 27 per cent of parents responded that both sources of information were 'important' and over 32 per cent responded that they were 'very important'. Only 3.2 per cent of parents responded that newspaper articles were a 'very important' source of information.

Change of school

Parents were also questioned about whether their children had changed schools and the major reasons for their children's latest change of school. Approximately 55 per cent of respondents' children[4] had changed schools. While most changes reflected a move from primary to secondary school (54.2 per cent), and changes in place of residence (21.9 per cent), dissatisfaction with the previous school was also a significant factor (12.9 per cent) in movements as shown in Chart 11.

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4   'Children' in this context means the eldest school-aged child of the respondent

Chart 11   Major reason for the latest change of child's school
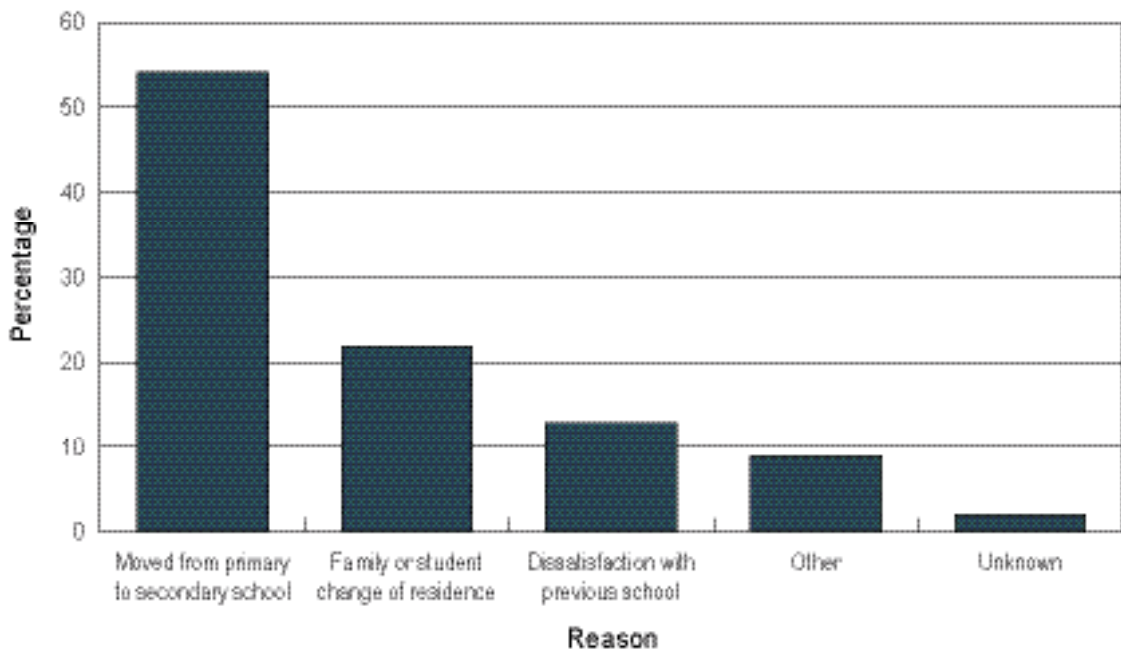
Questions were also asked about the type of change, for example from government to non-government schools, in respect to each child from particular family units. For an eldest child, the majority of changes were 'from government school to government school' (57.6 per cent). Changes from government to non-government schools accounted for 19.9 per cent of school changes (see Chart 12).

Chart 12   Description of child's latest change of school
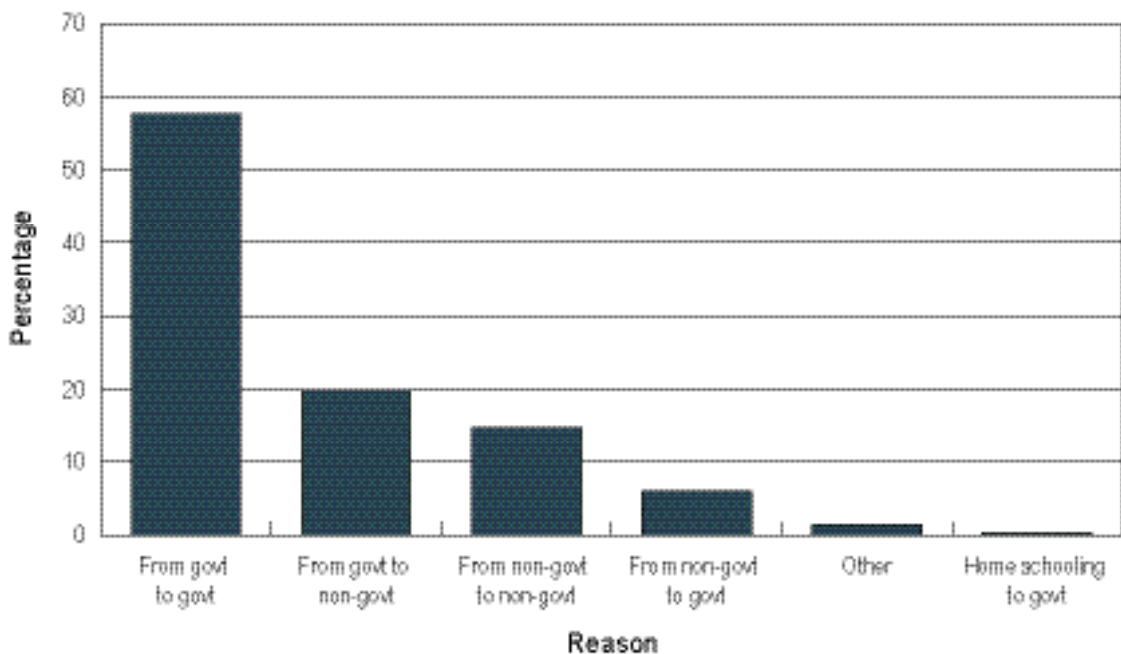
Level of involvement with child's education

Parents were also asked about their level of involvement with their child's[5] education, such as day-to-day work, selection of schools, selection of subjects, extra-curricular activities and post-school planning.

Over 87 per cent of parents responded that they were either 'very involved' or 'fairly involved' in selection of schools for their child. Parents' responses as to their type of involvement, with respect to those parents who were either 'very involved' or 'fairly involved' in their child's day-to-day work, post-school planning and extra-curricular activities were 56.4 per cent, 49.0 per cent and 47.5 per cent, respectively. Only 34.3 per cent of parents responded that they were either 'very involved' or 'fairly involved' in selection of subjects (see Chart 13).

Chart 13   Level of involvement with child's education, rated 'very involved' or 'fairly involved'
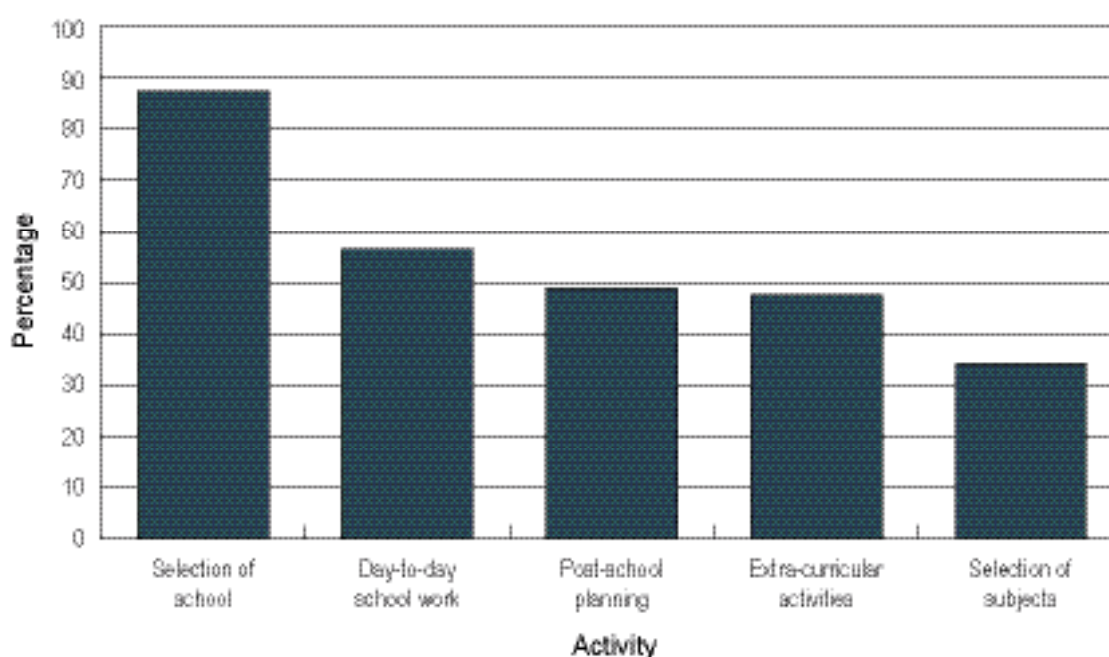
Parents' expenditure on education

Parents were also asked about their expenditure per year on a variety of expenses in respect to their child[6] at school. These expenses included: school and tuition fees; excursion fees; transport; before- or after-school care; books and stationery; clothes, shoes and uniforms; school lunches; and school-related sports costs. The results are shown in Table 1 below:

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5 'Child' in this context means the eldest school-aged child of the respondent
6 'Child' in this context means the eldest school-aged child of the respondent

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Table 1: Parents' school expenditure patterns

	Parents of govt school-age children	Parents of non-govt school age children	Parents of govt and non-govt school age children
School/tuition fees	$177.50	$4,333.43	$1,625.59
Excursion fees	$155.60	$213.04	$174.55
Transport	$121.05	$241.48	$160.78
Before-/After-school care cost	$146.46	$55.34	$116.40
Books/Stationery	$193.99	$275.27	$220.80
Clothes/Shoes/Uniforms	$292.25	$422.89	$335.34
Lunch	$364.68	$386.33	$371.82
School-related sport fees	$84.03	$66.22	$78.15
Other costs	$37.88	$59.30	$44.95
Total costs	**$1,573.45**	**$6,053.30**	**$3,128.38**

On average, data from the study indicate that as at 2003 parents of children at government schools spent an average of $1,573 per year on their child's schooling. By comparison, parents of children at non-government schools spent on average of $6,053 a year on their child's education.

For parents of children attending government schools, the most significant expenditure items were: school lunches; clothes, shoes and uniforms; followed by books and stationery, as shown in Chart 14 below:

Chart 14 Annual expenditure on government school education
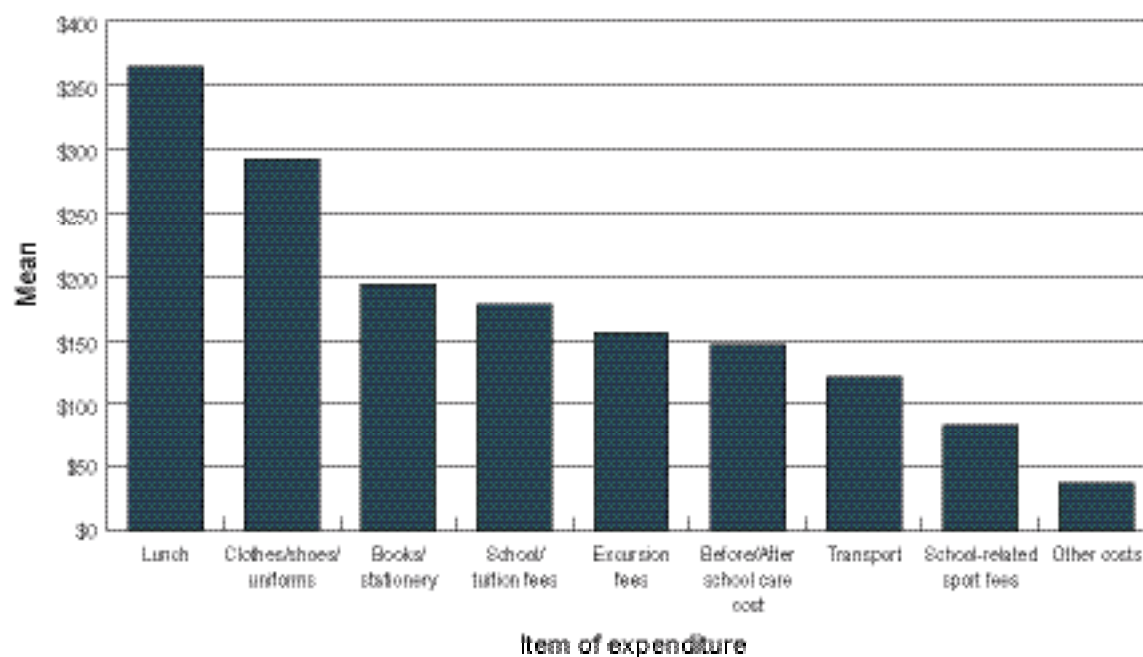
By contrast, for parents of children attending non-government schools, the most significant expenditures were: school or tuition fees; clothes, shoes and uniforms; and school lunches (see Chart 15).

Chart 15   Annual expenditure on non-government school education
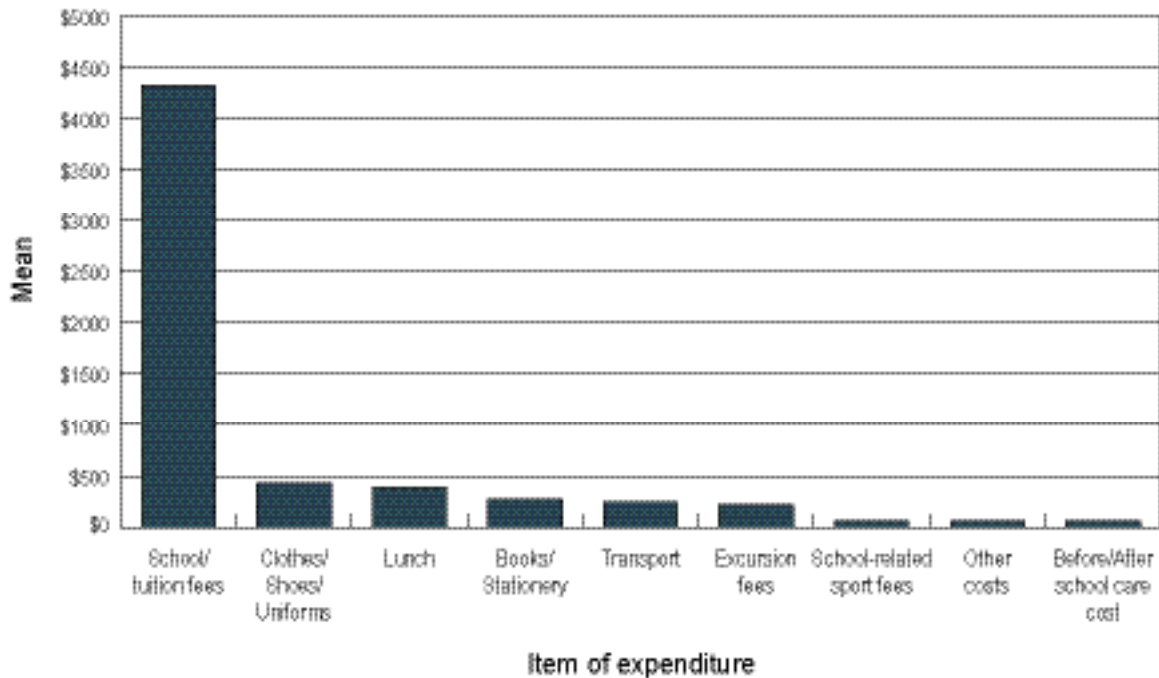
While for most expenditure types the level of expenditure was higher in respect of children attending non-government schools, expenditures on before- and after-school care for these parents was surprisingly low (see Chart 16).

Chart 16   Annual expenditure on before-/after-school care cost
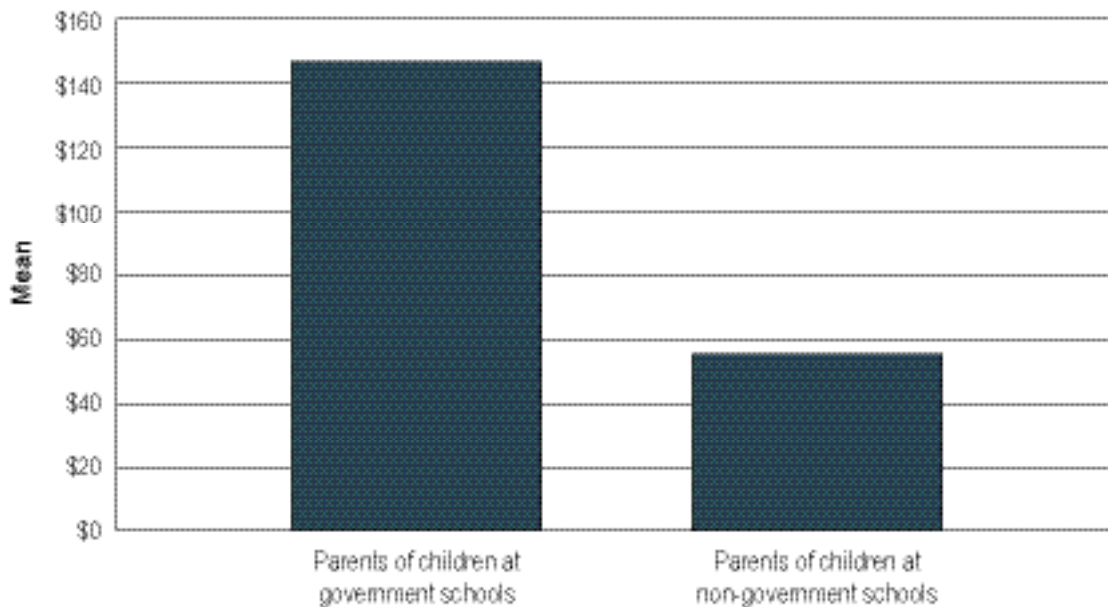
This is partially explained by data in Table 2. A larger proportion of children[7] were attending government *primary* schools (47 per cent) compared to children attending non-government schools (35.9 per cent). This suggests that more government school children could be needing to access before- and after-school care.

Table 2: Level of School by Type of School Attended by Oldest Child

	Government School (%)	Non-government School (%)
Primary	47.0	35.9
Secondary/ Secondary College	52.0	62.6
Other	1.0	1.6

Voluntary contributions to school

Parents were also asked whether they had made voluntary contributions to their child's[8] school, the extent of their contributions if they did make voluntary contributions, and what motivated them to contribute. Some 73 per cent of parents had made voluntary contributions. The main contributions were fund-raising activities/donations (49.4 per cent), canteen help/library help/helping out in class (43.7 per cent) and membership of school board/P&C (12.5 per cent).

The main factors which motivated parents to contribute included:

- 'School asked me to' (30.0 per cent of respondents);
- 'Other parents are doing so' (9.2 per cent);
- 'Child wants me to' (20.9 per cent); and
- 'Other specified reasons' listed by parents were self-motivated and accounted for 49.4 per cent of responses.

Parents' attitudes to post-school paths and traditional apprenticeships

Parents were then asked about the age at which they expected their child[9] to leave school; what they would like their child to do after leaving; whether they would encourage their child to undertake a traditional apprenticeship; and the reasons they would encourage their child to undertake a traditional apprenticeship.

Overwhelmingly, 94.8 per cent of parents of children attending non-government schools and 88.9 per cent of parents whose children attended government schools responded that they expected their child to leave school at the end of Year 12.

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7   'Children' in this context means the eldest school-aged child of the respondent

8   'Child' in this context means the eldest school-aged child of the respondent

9   'Children' in this context means the eldest school-aged child of the respondent

Table 3:   Expected school leaving age for eldest school age child

	Parents of children attending government schools (%)	Parents of children attending non-government schools (%)
Before the end of Year 10	0.6	0.0
At the end of Year 10	4.9	1.6
At the end of Year 11	1.3	1.1
At the end of Year 12	88.9	94.8
Unknown	4.4	2.5

The following chart shows that over 70 per cent of parents of children at non-government schools responded that they would like their child to go to university, and 67.9 per cent responded that what they do after leaving school is their child's choice.

By comparison, 60.7 per cent of parents of children at government schools responded that they would like their child to go to university and 68.1 per cent responded that what they do after leaving school is their child's choice (see Chart 17).

Chart 17: What parents would like their eldest child to do after leaving school
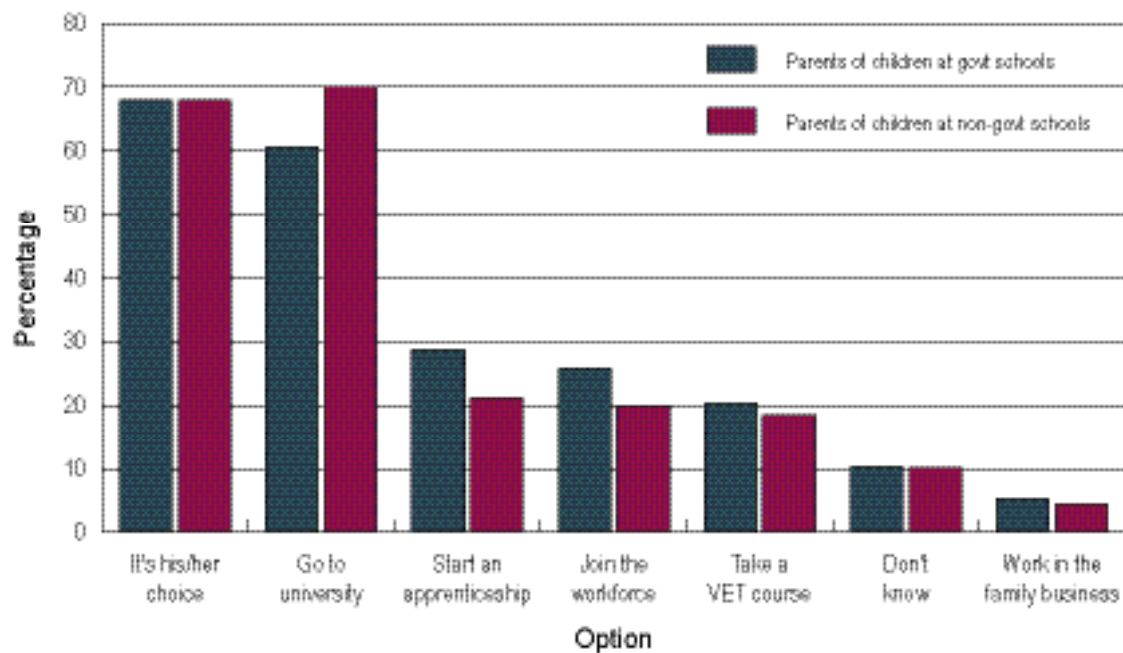
About 48.3 per cent of parents of children attending government schools and 33.9 per cent of parents of children attending non-government schools, responded that they would encourage their child to undertake a traditional apprenticeship, as shown in Chart 18 below:

Chart 18: Would parents encourage their eldest child to undertake an apprenticeship
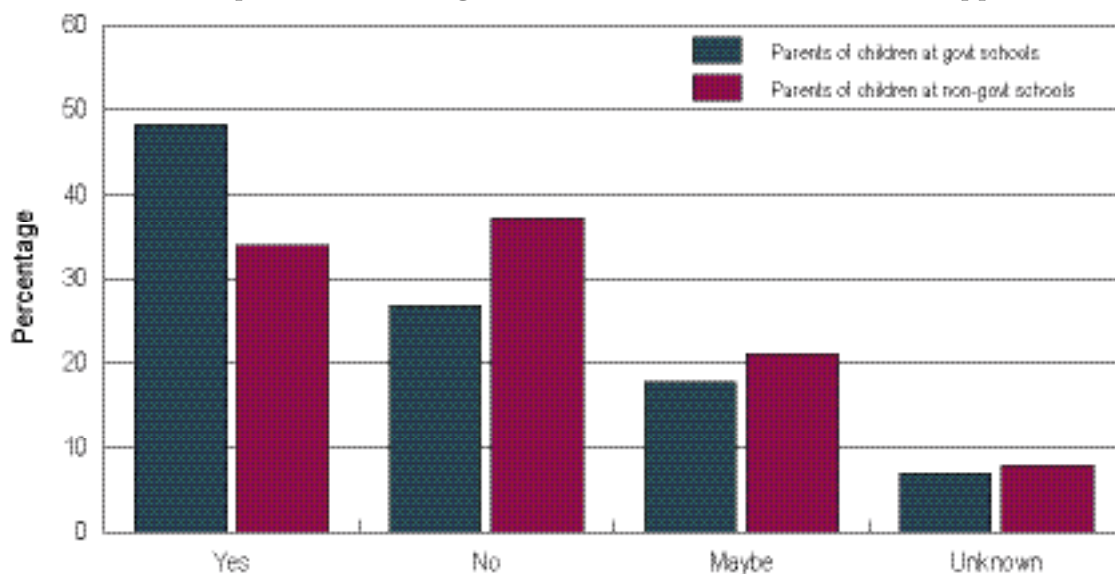
Factors seen as 'very important' by parents in encouraging their child to undertake a traditional apprenticeship are shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Factors associated with encouraging eldest child to undertake an apprenticeship, rated 'very important'

	Parents of children at Govt schools (%)	Parents of children at Non-govt schools (%)
My child's interests, skills and ambitions	54.4	49.3
Training combines formal learning with learning on the job	40.2	29.2
Career progression opportunities	39.1	27.1
There are better options for my child	38.9	33.4
The ease of getting a job after training is completed	37.9	30.5
Skills that apprentices learn	36.4	24.0
Amount of training	35.3	28.0
How apprentices are treated at work	29.4	23.5
Physical environment at work	28.8	24.2
Income and other benefits that tradespeople get	25.9	16.6
Pay	16.8	10.1

Conclusion

The scoping study of parents of school-aged children and members of the community has indicated that they are broadly satisfied with the standard of schools and the standard of teaching. The survey also drew attention to the importance of quality teaching for quality schooling, especially in an environment where most parents desire their children to complete Year 12 and attend university.

Other factors canvassed included whether the parents had themselves attended the school; the importance of children's peer groups in choices of whether to attend a particular school; the importance of school leadership; and the nature and extent of homework set by the school.

Parents expressed concern that schools be a secure environment, with appropriate facilities both in the classroom and in the broader school grounds.

Parents emphasised the need for schools to not only develop academic skills (literacy and numeracy) but also for schools to have a role in developing students' life skills.

Parents were commonly involved with their children's schooling, from actions such as choice of school to assistance with day-to-day schoolwork.

Parents also saw national consistency issues as important, with parent respondents regarding following issues as 'important/very important':

- National standards for teachers and school leaders (91.5 per cent of respondents);
- National school qualifications (88.4 per cent);
- Standard tertiary entrance requirements across Australia (85.9 per cent);
- Standard national curriculum (83.3 per cent);
- Standard school starting age across Australia (66.5 per cent); and
- Standard school leaving age across Australia (61.0 per cent).

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QUESTIONNAIRE

PARENTS AND COMMUNITY STUDY

COVER SHEET

Respondent Name : Mr/Ms..
Telephone Number : (   )..
State/Territory : ....
(e.g. NSW, VIC, QLD, WA, SA, TAS, NT, ACT)

Postcode **: |_____|_____|_____|_____|**

Details of call table for interviewer :

	1st Call	2nd Call	3rd Call	4th Call	5th Call
Date of call (dd/mm/yy)					
Time of call (am/pm)					
Interview commencing time					
Interview completion time					
Time taken for the Interview (in minutes)					

Hello, is that Mr/Ms xxxxx. Mr/Ms xxxxx, my name is …….. I am calling from the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training.

I am calling to ask you to participate in a national study. The study is intended to give the Department a better understanding of what the Australian community wants and expects from our education system.

We have drawn your name at random from the White Pages phone directory. I will be asking you questions about you and your family as well as questions relating to experiences that you and your family may have had with our schools and the education system.

Information you provide will be used only for the purpose for which you provided it, and we will not disclose it without your consent, unless where authorised or required by law.

I will be taking notes of your responses, and the information will be entered into a database. However, I stress that no data from individual responses will be kept beyond the duration of the project. They will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project. We are only interested in the overall picture.

Would you be prepared to participate in the study?

Is now convenient, or should I ring back at another time more convenient to you, or would you prefer to ring us back on toll free number (1800 XXXXXXXX)?

Thank you.

May I speak to Mr/Ms xxxxx ?

Note to interviewer - When speaking to a respondent, introduce yourself and remind the purpose of study again (use the above First Contact as a reference) then continue.

1. (Interviewer - Is the respondent male or female?) (Please tick the appropriate box)

Male	**F**emale

2. Are you a PARENT / GUARDIAN of school age children? (Please tick the appropriate box)

(1) Yes		⟶ Continue to next question
(2) No		⟶ Go to **Question 31** on page **12**

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Note to interviewer - Select the **eldest child still at school** as the subject of the study.

*Following questions related to your **eldest** school age child.*

3. Considering some of the broader factors involved in choosing a school, could you please rate the significance of the following issues on a scale of 1 to 5. 1 means it is not at all important while 5 means it is very important (Interviewer to read out options).

	Rating 1 = Not at all Important 2 = Not Important 3 = Neither Important or Unimportant 4 = Important 5 = Very Important 6 = Don't know/no response
3.1. Academic reputation	
3.2. Cost	
3.3. Location	
3.4. Facilities	
3.5. Social factors (e.g. Prestige, tradition, values, etc)	
3.6. Extra-curricular activities	
3.7. Secure environment	
3.8. Quality of teachers	

Can you think of any OTHER factors not mentioned above that were important or unimportant to you in choosing a school using a scale from 1 to 5 again?

(Note to interviewer : Do not read out below OTHER options. Record a rate if any of them mentioned by a respondent**)**

3.9. Other - Parent(s) attended the school	
3.10. Other - Peer group	
3.11. Other - Leader/Principal	
3.12. Other - Parents & friends rate school highly	
3.13. Other - Homework	
3.14. Other (please specify)	

4. Can you tell me, on AVERAGE per YEAR, how much do you spend on each of the followings for your ELDEST child still at school? (Interviewer to read out options)

	Amount ($)
4.1. School/tuition/ fees	
4.2. Excursion fees	
4.3. Transport	
4.4. Before/After school care cost	
4.5. Books/Stationary	
4.6. Clothes/Shoes/Uniform	
4.7. Lunch	
4.8. School related sport fees	
4.9. Other (please specify) ……………………………………………………………… ………………………………………………………………	

5. What TYPES OF SCHOOL FACILITIES are important or unimportant to you in choosing a school using a scale from 1 to 5 again? (Interviewer to read out options)

	Scale 1 = Not at all Important 2 = Not Important 3 = Neither Important or Unimportant 4 = Important 5 = Very Important 6 = Don't know/no response
5.1. Library resources	
5.2. Technology facilities - Computers/Internet services	
5.3. Sports facilities	
5.4. Play grounds	
5.5. Shade	
5.6. Hall / auditorium	
5.7. Science laboratories	
5.8. Other (please specify) …………………………………………………………………… ……………………………………………………………………	

6. Could you tell me how important or unimportant each of the following factors was to you in choosing a school for your eldest child? (Interviewer to read out options)

	Scale 1 = Not at all Important 2 = Not Important 3 = Neither Important or Unimportant 4 = Important 5 = Very Important 6 = Don't know/no response
6.1. Prestige (or image of school)	
6.2. Tradition	
6.3. Religion	
6.4. Values	
6.5. Discipline	
6.6. Peer group for son/daughter	

7. Could you tell me how important or unimportant each of the following EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES was to you in choosing a school? (Interviewer to read out options)

	Scale 1 = Not at all Important 2 = Not Important 3 = Neither Important or Unimportant 4 = Important 5 = Very Important 6 = Don't know/no response
7.1. Music	
7.2. Languages	
7.3. Sport	

Can you think of any OTHER extra-curricular activities not mentioned above and how Important or unimportant it is to you using a scale from 1 to 5 again?

(**Note to interviewer :** Do not read out below OTHER options. Record a scale if any of them mentioned by a respondent)

7.4. Other - Debating	
7.5. Other - Various clubs (dance, drama, film, etc)	
7.6. Other (please specify) ………………………………………………………………… …………………………………………………………...…	

8. Do your eldest child at school have to wear a SCHOOL UNIFORM?

(1) Yes	
(2) No	
(3) Don't know	

9. Do you support this POLICY?

(1) Yes	
(2) No	
(3) Don't know	

10. What SOURCE OF INFORMATION have you used when choosing a school for your eldest child still at school - In order of importance? (Interviewer to read out options)

(1) Views of friends, relatives, other parents and/or other children attending the school	
(2) Newspaper articles	
(3) From school – open days, advice, brochures and prospectus	
(4) Other (please specify) …………………………………………………………………………………………………… ……………………………………………………………………………………………………	

11. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your eldest child's school?

(1) Very dissatisfied	
(2) Slightly dissatisfied	
(3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	
(4) Fairly satisfied	
(5) Very satisfied	

12. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the standard of teaching at your eldest child's school?

(1) Very dissatisfied	
(2) Slightly dissatisfied	
(3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	
(4) Fairly satisfied	
(5) Very satisfied	

13. I'm going to ask you about YOUR INVOLVEMENT with your eldest child's education. For the following items, please let me know your <u>level</u> of involvement. 1 means not at all involved so that you leave it up to your child, and that you don't get directly involved. 5 means that you are very involved. (Interviewer to read out options)

	Scale 1 = Not at all Involved 2 = Not Involved 3 = Neither Involved or not Involved 4 = Fairly Involved 5 = Very Involved 6 = Don't know/no response
13.1. Day-to-day school work	
13.2. Selection of school	
13.3. Selection of subjects	
13.4. Extra-curricular activities	
13.5. Post-school planning	
13.6. Other (please specify) ……………………………………………………………….… …………………………………………………………....	

I would like to ask you about your voluntary contributions to your eldest child's school. Examples of contributions are canteen help, library help, member of school board, gardening, fund-raising activities, help out in class, etc.

14. Have you ever made any voluntary contributions to your eldest child's schools? (Please tick the appropriate box)

(1) Yes		⟶ Go to **Questions 15 then 16**
(2) No		⟶ Go to **Question 17 on next page**

15. If answered **Yes …** Could you DESCRIBE the contribution(s) that you made? (respondent may choose more than one)

(1) Canteen help/ Library help/ Helping out in class	
(2) Member of school board	
(3) Fund raising activities/Donation	
(4) Other (please specify) ……………………………………………………………... ……………………………………………………………...	

16. What MOTIVATED you to contribute? (respondent may choose more than one)

(1) School asked me to	
(2) Other parents are doing so	
(3) Child wants me to	
(4) Other (please specify) ………………………………………………………….. …………………………………………………………..	

17. When do you expect your eldest school age child will leave school?

(1) Before the end of year 10	
(2) At the end of Year 10	
(3) At the end of Year 11	
(4) At the end of Year 12	
(5) Don't know	

18. When your eldest child finishes school, what would you like him/her to do? You can select more than one (Interviewer to read out options).

(1) Go to university	
(2) Start an apprenticeship	
(3) Take a Vocational Education & Training (VET) course	
(4) Join the workforce	
(5) Work in the family business	
(6) It's his/her choice	
(7) Other (please specify) …………………………………………………………… ……………………………………………………………	
(8) Don't know	

19. Would encourage your eldest child still at school to consider undertaking an apprenticeship in a traditional trade (examples – motor mechanics, electricians, hairdressers, etc) ?

(1) Yes	
(2) No	
(3) Maybe	
(4) Don't know	

20. When you answered the last question about whether you would encourage your eldest child to consider undertaking an apprenticeship in a traditional trade, how important or unimportant were the following reasons using a scale from 1 to 5 again?

	Scale 1 = Not at all Important 2 = Not Important 3 = Neither Important or Unimportant 4 = Important 5 = Very Important 6 = Don't know/no response
20.1. Amount of training	
20.2. Training combines formal learning with learning on the job	
20.3. Pay	
20.4. Physical environment at work	
20.5. How apprentices are treated at work	
20.6. Career progression opportunities	
20.7. Income and other benefits that tradespeople get	
20.8. Skills that apprentices learn	
20.9. The ease of getting a job after training is completed	
20.10. There are better options for my child	
20.11. My child's interests, skills and ambitions	

Are there any other reasons that I have not mentioned?

20.12. Other (please specify) ……………………………………………………………………..…… …………………………………………………………………….…	

Thank you for that information.

21. How many SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN do you have?

(Please write number) …………………………………………………………………………..

22. Are your school age children attending GOVERNMENT or NON-GOVERNMENT school(s)?

	1st Child	2nd Child	3rd Child	4th Child	5th Child
(1) Government					
(2) Non-government					
(3) Both govt and non-govt					
(4) Don't know					

23. & 24. Can you tell me the SEX and AGE of your school age children?
(Interviewer to record sex and age of 1st Child, 2nd Child, etc…)

25. Do your children attend a PRIMARY or a SECONDARY school or a SECONDARY COLLEGE?

	1st Child	2nd Child	3rd Child	4th Child	5th Child
(1) Primary					
(2) Secondary / Secondary College					
(3) Home education					
(4) Distance education					
(5) Other (please specify)					

26. And can you tell me what SCHOOL GRADE(S) / YEAR(S) your children are in?

	1st Child	2nd Child	3rd Child	4th Child	5th Child
(1) Kindergarten / Prep					
(2) Year one					
(3) Year two					
(4) Year three					
(5) Year four					
(6) Year five					
(7) Year six					
(8) Year seven					
(9) Year eight					
(10) Year nine					
(11) Year ten					
(12) Year eleven					
(13) Year twelve					
(14) Don't know					

27. Do your children attend SINGLE SEX or CO-ED schools?

	1st Child	2nd Child	3rd Child	4th Child	5th Child
(1) Single sex school					
(2) Co-ed school					
(3) Don't know					

28. Have your children ever CHANGED schools?

(1) Yes	⟶ Go to **Questions 29 then 30**
(2) No	⟶ Go to **Question 31 on next page**
(3) Don't know	

29. If answered **Yes in Question 28**….. May I ask what are the MAJOR REASONS for your children's LATEST change of school? (Interviewer to read out options)

	1st Child	2nd Child	3rd Child	4th Child	5th Child
(1) Moved from primary to secondary school					
(2) Family or student changed place of residence					
(3) Dissatisfaction with previous school					
(4) Other (please specify)					

30. Which of the following best describes your children's LATEST change of school? (Interviewer to read out options)

	1st Child	2nd Child	3rd Child	4th Child	5th Child
(1) From Government to Government					
(2) From Non-government to Non-government					
(3) From Government to Non-government					
(4) From Non-government to Government					
(5) Home schooling to Government					
(6) Home schooling to Non-government					
(7) Other (please specify)					

31. I'm going to read out a list of commonly identified skills. For each one, could you tell me how important or unimportant it is to you that schools assist a child to develop these skills using a scale from 1 to 5. 1 means it is not at all important while 5 means it is very important (Interviewer to read out options).

Additional information for interviewer:
31.3. VET provides people with the vocational training required by employers, enterprises and industry bodies.
31.7. Life skills – examples are health and personal developments, safety, managing personal finance, etc.

	Scale 1 = Not at all Important 2 = Not Important 3 = Neither Important or Unimportant 4 = Important 5 = Very Important 6 = Don't know/no response
31.1. Literacy skills	
31.2. Numeracy skills	
31.3. Vocational Education & Training (VET)	
31.4. Strong academic results	
31.5. Information Technology (IT) knowledge	
31.6. Critical reasoning skills	
31.7. Life skills (e.g. how to do banking)	
31.8. Interpersonal skills	
31.9. Language skills	

32. How important or unimportant is each of the following issues to you. Could you please provide a rating from 1 to 5. (Interviewer to read out options)

	Rating 1 = Not at all Important 2 = Not Important 3 = Neither Important or Unimportant 4 = Important 5 = Very Important 6 = Don't know/no response
32.1. Standard school starting age across Australia	
32.2. Standard school leaving age across Australia	
32.3. Curriculum that is consistent across all states and territories	
32.4. National school qualifications	
32.5. Standard tertiary entrance requirements across Australia	
32.6. National standards for teachers and school leaders	

33. What are your general impressions of the current STANDARDS of PRIMARY school education?

(1) Very poor	
(2) Poor	
(3) Neither good or poor	
(4) Good	
(5) Very good	
(6) Don't know	

34. What are your general impressions of the current STANDARDS of SECONDARY school or SECONDARY COLLEGE education?

(1) Very poor	
(2) Poor	
(3) Neither good or poor	
(4) Good	
(5) Very good	
(6) Don't know	

Thank you. That has been very helpful.

35. Can I ask you what OCCUPATION you and your partner work in (please specify).

35.1. Participant……………………………………………………………………………

35.2. Partner…………………………………………………………………………

35.3. No Partner ………☐ (Interviewer – Please tick this box if no partner)

36. Next, may I ask about your own and your partner's LEVEL OF EDUCATION.
Did you and your partner … (Interviewer to read out options and tick the appropriate box)

Qualification	Participant	Partner
(1) Degree or higher		
(2) Paraprofessional qualifications (e.g. TAFE qualifications)		
(3) A trade certificate		
(4) Other post school qualifications		
(5) Other		
(6) Don't know		

37. May I ask what TYPE OF SCHOOL did you and your partner attended?
(Interviewer to read out options and tick the appropriate box)

	Participant	Partner
(1) Government School		
(2) Non-government School		
(3) Both government & non-govt schools		
(4) Don't know		

38. In what COUNTRY were you and your partner BORN?

38.1. Participant……………………………………………………………………………

38.2. Partner…………………………………………………………………………….

39. Could I ask approximately HOW OLD you are? (Interviewer – Do **not** read out age ranges)

(1) 15-24	
(2) 25-29	
(3) 30-34	
(4) 35-39	
(5) 40-44	
(6) 45-49	
(7) 50-54	
(8) 55-59	
(9) Over 60	
(10) No Information	

40. Last, could I get a rough idea of your GROSS ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME.
(Please tick the appropriate box)

(1)	Under $10,000	
(2)	$10,000 to $19,999	
(3)	$20,000 to $29,999	
(4)	$30,000 to $39,999	
(5)	$40,000 to $49,999	
(6)	$50,000 to $59,999	
(7)	$60,000 to $69,999	
(8)	$70,000 to $79,999	
(9)	$80,000 to $89,999	
(10)	$90,000 to $99,999	
(11)	Over $100,000	
(12)	Don't know/No information	

That's the end of the study. Thank you very much for your time.