

AN ANALYSIS OF ENROLMENT TRENDS IN NON-CATHOLIC,
NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS.

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FIELD STUDY REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION
AT THE CANBERRA COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION.

December 1977.

ABSTRACT.

Enrolment trends in non-Catholic, non-Government schools since 1962 show various interesting features. Overall the percentage of students enrolled in such schools today is about the same as it was in 1962, but this percentage has fluctuated in the intervening period. It contrasts notably with the trend in Catholic schools which is one of a sustained decline.

Further analysis reveals that the number of boarders in non-Catholic, non-Government schools as a percentage of total enrolments in such schools has declined markedly, and during this decade has declined in absolute terms. This fall appears to relate to declining rural incomes and to rural-urban migration. The drop occurs despite the fact that increases in boarding fees are less than increases in tuition fees, the former relating closely to trends in the consumer price index, the latter to movements in the gross national product per capita.

The masculinity level for All Schools and for non-Catholic, non-Government schools is about 105 in each case. However, in All Schools there has been a notable decline to reach this point, whereas in non-Catholic, non-Government schools there has been a steady increase in masculinity over the last fifteen years to arrive at the same point.

Since 1962 Undenominational Schools have increased their enrolments at a considerably faster rate than have other religions.

Presbyterian schools have lost ground, reflecting, perhaps, their interest in non metropolitan boarding schools, a sector which has been adversely affected in recent years, and also, perhaps, reflecting some inertia resulting from the impending union into the Uniting Church.

In non-Catholic, non-Government schools a ratio of about 2:1 between secondary and primary enrolments seems common. Enrolments within these two sections seem to be affected by somewhat different factors, but a balance has been maintained at this level.

Trends noted are not the result of particular variables but of a large number of interrelated factors. Relationships can be noted but not causality. Many interesting paths appear, often paths which cannot be followed in this field study. Nevertheless, there are various questions which beg further research. For example, why it is that New South Wales (including the Australian Capital Territory) with the highest per capita income of any state has the lowest percentage of school students attending non-Catholic, non-Government schools?

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