



Australian Government

Department of Education, Science and Training

Parents' Attitudes to Schooling

**Surveys and Workforce Analysis Section
Skills Analysis and Quality Systems Branch**

May 2007

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Executive summary

This report discusses the results of a national telephone survey on parents' attitudes to schooling. The survey was conducted by the Department of Education, Science and Training during January and February 2007 using a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) survey method. The survey collected responses from 2025 parents of school age children.

The report discusses:

- the aims of the project;
- how the survey was conducted; and
- the project findings.

Where possible, it also contrasts 2007 results with results derived from a 2003 national telephone survey on attitudes to schooling.

Key findings

The study reveals that the majority of parents of school aged children were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the *quality of their eldest child's education* (75.1 per cent) and with the *quality of teaching* at their eldest child's school (72.2 per cent). Parents were less satisfied in 2007 than in 2003.

However, when asked about their general impressions of the current quality of school education, parents' responses were less positive. Over half (58.3 per cent) rated the current quality of primary school education in their State or Territory as 'good' or 'very good', compared to 39.9 per cent for secondary education. Again, results in 2007 indicate that parents' general impressions of schooling in their State/Territory were less favourable in 2007 than in 2003.

Over half the parents surveyed (57.4 per cent) indicated that there were aspects of their eldest child's education that they would like to see improved, with the top three being the 'quality /content of the curriculum', the 'standard of teaching' and 'school facilities and resources'.

Less than half of the surveyed parents believed that students were leaving school with adequate skills in Science (46.7 per cent), Numeracy (39.8 per cent), Literacy (37.5 per cent), Job-related skills (31.8 per cent), Australian History (23.9 per cent), and Democracy (23.2 per cent). The majority (70.9 per cent), believed that students were leaving school with adequate ICT skills.

Almost two-thirds of parents indicated that their eldest child's last school report was presented in an A to E format. Around three-quarters were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the communication from their eldest child's school (e.g. school reports, newsletters, information about subjects, child's attendance, etc.).

The majority of parents were aware that their eldest child's school had policies to deal with issues such as preventing and discouraging bullying and drug use; and ensuring full attendance.

In most instances, parents felt that their eldest child's school was dealing well or very well with issues such as 'manners', 'attendance', 'providing physical activity programmes in school', 'bullying' and 'drug use'. Parents were less positive about the school's response to providing career guidance, development and support. Parents of non-government school students were more positive about their school's performance in handling these issues than parents of government school students.

Almost two-thirds of parents felt they knew 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' about the curriculum at their eldest child's school and over half indicated they had received 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' of information about the curriculum offered. Parents whose child attended a non-government school considered themselves more knowledgeable and better informed about the curriculum offered than parents whose child attended a government school.

The vast majority of parents (91.0 per cent) believed that there was certain content that all children should learn at school during the compulsory years of their education. They particularly highlighted 'Grammar, spelling and punctuation' and 'Mathematics', with 83.5 per cent and 81.1 per cent respectively, indicating that these were 'very important'. Parents of non-government school children rated core content areas as more important than parents of government school students.

Parents regarded the most important factors related to choosing a school as the 'Quality of teachers' (rated 'important/very important' by 91.3 per cent of respondents); 'Secure environment' (90.7 per cent); 'Discipline' (86.1 per cent); 'Values' (86.5 per cent); 'Facilities' (82.3 per cent); 'and Academic reputation' (81.2 per cent). Similarly, in 2003 parents nominated 'quality of teachers' first and also nominated other similar areas to 2007 results.

When asked about areas of schooling they would like to see improved, parents whose eldest child was in secondary school rated 'quality/content of the curriculum' and the 'standard of teaching' the highest compared to 'school facilities and resources' for parents whose eldest child was in primary school.

The majority of parents of secondary school aged children expected their child would complete year 12. The proportion was higher for parents of children from non-government schools (95.4 per cent) compared to government schools (89.0 per cent). This result was similar to 2003 results.

There was a similar trend in respect of post school expectations, with 67.6 per cent of parents of children in non-government schools wanting their eldest child to attend university compared to 53.3 per cent of parents of children in government schools. Other popular responses from parents included 'start an apprenticeship' and 'take a VET course', with parents of children at government schools more likely than parents of children at non-government schools to indicate each of these responses. A slightly lower proportion of parents wanted their child to go to university, start an apprenticeship and join the workforce in 2007 than in 2003, but a slightly higher proportion of parents wanted their children to take a VET course.

Parents of secondary school aged children who indicated that they would encourage their child to consider undertaking an apprenticeship in a traditional trade provided the following reasons as being 'important' or 'very important' in this decision – 'apprentices learn useful skills' (84.8 per cent), 'there are good career opportunities' (80.1 per cent) and 'apprentices learn in the classroom and on the job' (78.4 per cent). A much higher proportion of parents in 2007 (54.3 per cent) indicated that they would encourage their children to undertake an apprenticeship in a traditional trade compared to 2003 (41.0 per cent).

Over one quarter of parents (26.7 per cent) indicated that their eldest child in secondary school participated in VET in schools. The result was similar for parents of children in government and non-government schools. Of those, the majority (82.3 per cent) thought that VET in schools was helping their eldest child gain useful employment skills.

As with a similar survey conducted in 2003, parents saw national consistency issues as important, with the majority regarding the following issues as 'important/very important':

- National standards for teachers and school leaders (93.0 per cent)
- Standard process for recognising skills of students when they move from one State or Territory to another (88.0 per cent);
- Model curriculum across all States and Territories (86.1 per cent);
- Standard tertiary entrance requirements for VET and higher education across all States and Territories (86.2 per cent):
- Standard school leaving age across all States and Territories (76.3 per cent); and
- National eligible school starting age (68.2 per cent).

Overall, parents placed more importance on these issues in 2007 than in 2003. Also, parents' views on national consistency were similar for parents of children who attended government and non-government schools.

Introduction

This report discusses the results of a national telephone survey of parents' attitudes to schooling. The survey on which this report is based was conducted by the Department of Education, Science and Training during January and February 2007.

Some of the issues covered in the 2007 Parents' Attitudes to Schooling Survey are comparable to questions in the 2003 Parents' and Community Members' Attitudes to Schooling Survey.¹ Where appropriate, this report draws on comparative results from the 2003 survey.

The report discusses:

- the aims of the project;
- how the survey was conducted; and
- the survey findings.

Aims of the project

The survey project was developed to enable the Australian Government to gain a broad understanding of parent attitudes to schooling and relevant school education issues.

The survey aimed to collect data on the following:

- the key drivers that influence parents' decisions to choose one school over others;
- what involvement parents have with their child's education and how they feel about communication with the school;
- improvements parents would like to see to their child's education;
- parents' views on core skills;
- how well the school deals with issues such as bullying, drug use, manners and attendance; and
- whether issues of consistency (e.g. school starting and leaving ages, national curriculum, national school qualifications, uniform tertiary entrance requirements) are important to parents of school-aged children.

How the study was conducted

The Department carried out the telephone survey during January and February 2007. The study sought the views of 2,025 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,

¹

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/parents_and_community_members_attitudes_to_schooling.htm

using temporary staff. A copy of the study questionnaire is attached at Attachment A to this report.

The survey questionnaire was pilot tested on 20 members of the general public who fell within scope. Participants were randomly selected from the White Pages telephone directory.

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”. In all instances, responses have been sought on the basis of parents’ experiences during 2006.

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 2006. 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 a range of factors in parents’ choices of schools (such as academic reputation, cost, facilities, prestige, teacher quality, values and discipline);
- Respondents’ views on the importance of areas of national consistency in education (such as a national eligible school starting age, standard school leaving age across all States and Territories, model curriculum across all States and Territories and standards for teachers and school leaders);
- Respondents’ views on how well their eldest child’s school deals with a range of issues such as bullying, drug use, attendance and physical activity; and
- Characteristics of respondents (such as age, level of education, occupation, attendance at government/non-government schools).

Survey sample size

The sample size of the survey was 2,025. This is regarded as a stable sample size for a large population. (The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) considers a population of 100,000 as large.) The relative standard error (RSE) for a sample of this size is 2.22 per cent. RSE is a measure of sampling error. It does not take into account any kind of non-sampling error. Sampling error reflects the difference between an estimate derived from a sample survey and the “true value” that would be obtained if the whole survey population were surveyed. For example, if the survey showed that 50 per cent of parents are satisfied, we could be 99 per cent confident that the “true value” for the population would be between 47.14 per cent and 52.86 per cent.

Study findings

Actual numbers surveyed

Survey participants were selected at random from the White Pages telephone directory. National and State sample sizes were calculated using data from the ABS Family Characteristics Survey (2003), Catalogue number 4442.0. The ABS provided customised data on families with dependent children aged 5 – 18 years.

Table 1

Families with dependent children aged 5 to 18 years - Family type by State ('000)									
Family Type	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	AUST
Couple families with dependent children aged 5 - 18	444.7	336.9	266.9	92.4	143.8	31.3	11.0	21.0	1348.1
One parent families with dependent children aged 5 - 18	125.0	86.2	79.0	32.5	33.1	10.7	3.4	7.0	376.9
Total	569.8	423.1	345.9	124.9	176.9	41.9	14.4	28.1	1725.0

Source: Family Characteristics Survey, June 2003 (Cat. No 4442.0), ABS

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

- New South Wales, 33.0 per cent (compared to 33.0 per cent as calculated using the ABS Family Characteristics Survey data);
- Victoria, 24.7 per cent (compared to 24.5 per cent);
- Queensland, 20.0 per cent (20.1 per cent);
- Western Australia, 10.4 per cent (10.3 per cent);
- South Australia, 7.1 per cent (7.2 per cent);
- Tasmania, 2.4 per cent (2.4 per cent);
- Australian Capital Territory, 1.6 per cent (1.6 per cent); and the
- Northern Territory, 0.9 per cent (0.8 per cent).

Average number of school-aged children

Parents had an average of 2.3 school-aged children attending school. Almost two thirds (65.8 per cent) of the school-aged children of survey respondents attended a government school in 2006 (compared with 66.7 per cent in the 2003 survey). The vast majority of children were attending co-educational schools (91.3 per cent). The eldest child of just over half of respondents was in secondary school (53.9 per cent), while the eldest child 45.6 per cent of respondents was in primary school. Parents of home schooled children made up 0.2 per cent of total survey respondents.

Parent profile

Parents were asked a variety of questions about their own schooling, occupation, age, income and highest level of education.

Charts 1 and 2 below show the type of school the survey participant and the participant's partner attended, as well as the type of school that their eldest child was attending. The majority of parents who had children attending government schools had attended a government school themselves (76.6 per cent). For parents of children at non-government schools, the distribution was more even. Only 33.8 per cent of parents of children at non-government schools attended a non-government school themselves, while 51.4 per cent of these parents attended a government school. Similar results can be seen in Chart 2 regarding the type of school attended by the participant's partner.

Chart 1

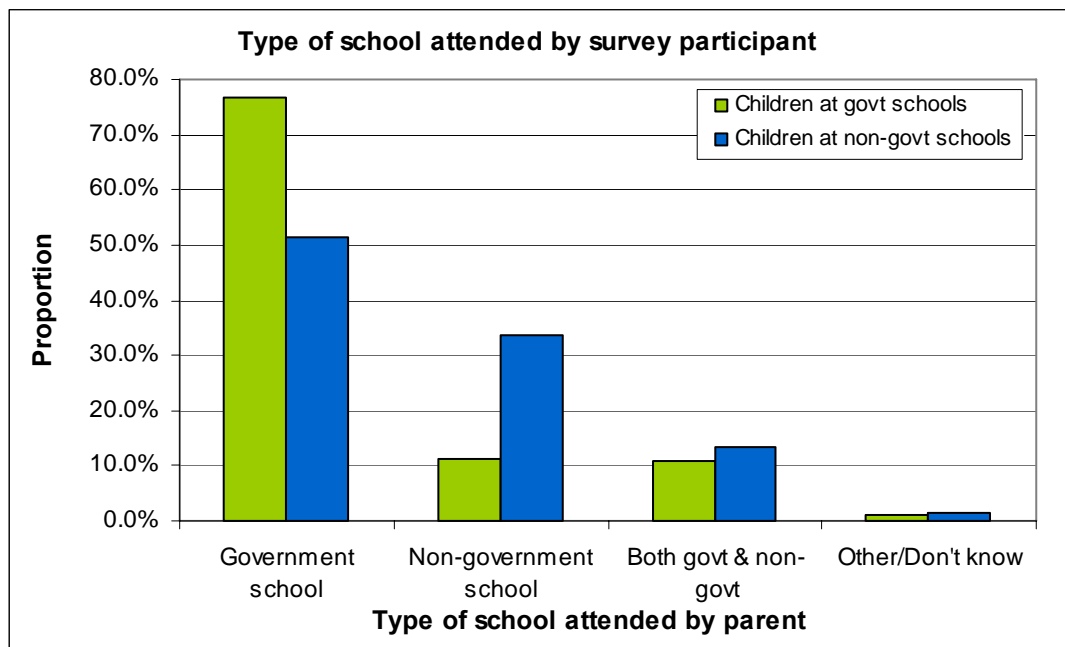
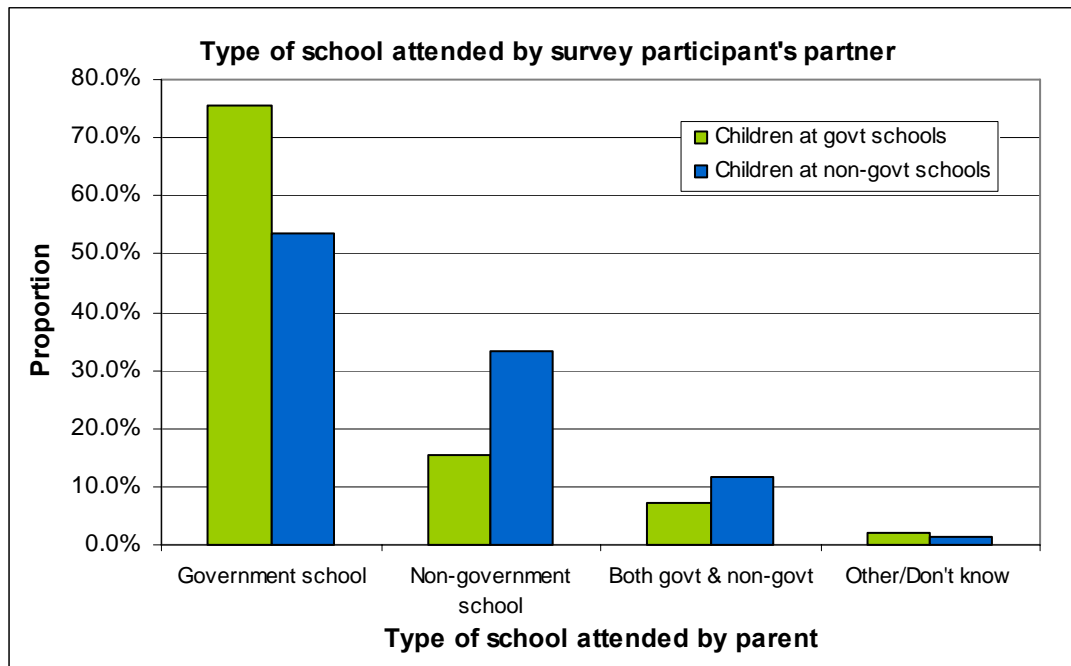


Chart 2



Survey participants were asked to name the occupations in which they and their partner were currently working. These occupations were classified into groups according to two-digit Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) with the most common professions for each sex shown in Table 2 and Table 3 below. Almost a quarter of female participants (23.5 per cent) identified homemaker as their primary occupation while 17.7 per cent of male survey participants had female partners who were homemakers. Educational professionals, the majority of whom were teachers, also constituted a large proportion of female respondents (11.6 per cent). On this basis, female teachers may be over-represented in the sample, bringing with them a potentially greater understanding of, and interest in, education issues.

Table 2

Occupation	Female Participants	Female Partners
Homemakers	23.5%	17.7%
Education Professionals	11.6%	10.8%
Intermediate Service Workers	8.8%	7.1%
Health Professionals	7.9%	10.4%
Intermediate Clerical Workers	6.5%	8.0%
Business and Information Professionals	5.3%	9.0%
Elementary Sales Workers	4.0%	5.2%
Social, Arts and Miscellaneous Professionals	3.1%	5.7%
Farmers and Farm Managers	2.5%	1.2%
Managing Supervisors	2.0%	1.9%

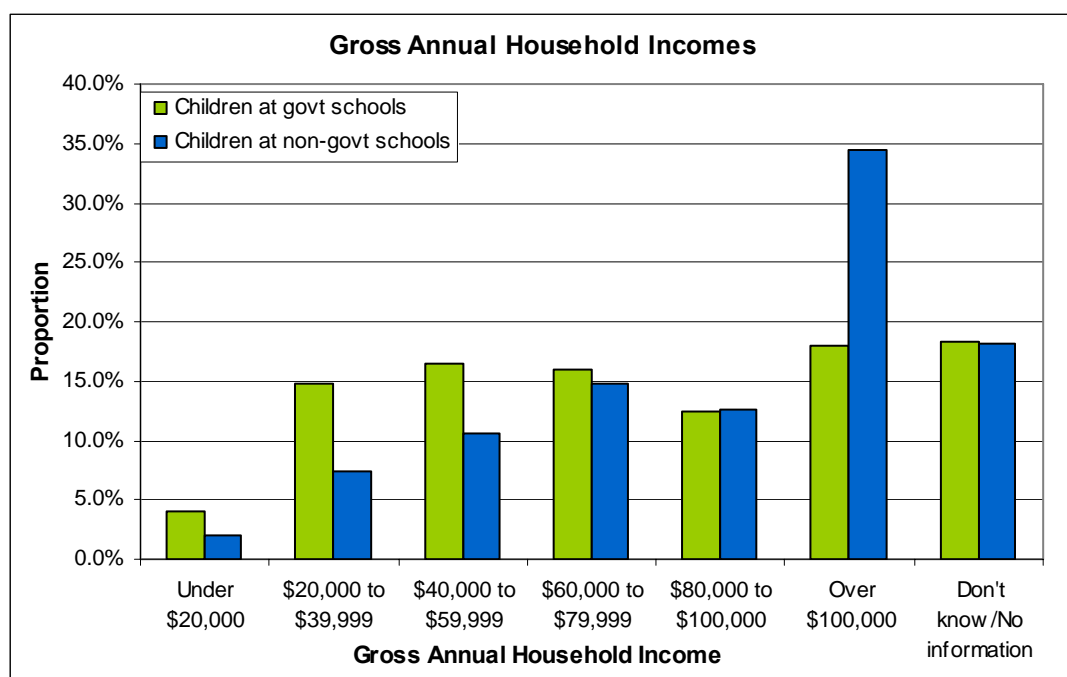
The most common work for males was as a business and information professional with 12.7 per cent of male survey participants and 8.1 per cent of male partners of female survey participants working in an occupation in this field. Other occupations with high proportions of male workers include construction tradespersons, specialist managers, farmers and farm managers and science, building and engineering professionals.

Table 3

Occupation	Male Participants	Male Partners
Business and Information Professionals	12.7%	8.1%
Construction Tradespersons	5.3%	8.6%
Specialist Managers	3.5%	5.7%
Farmers and Farm Managers	3.5%	5.0%
Science, Building and Engineering Professionals	3.1%	5.2%
Education Professionals	7.2%	3.7%
Social, Arts and Miscellaneous Professionals	6.2%	3.9%
Self Employed	4.1%	4.3%
Managing Supervisors (Sales and Service)	2.5%	4.7%
Road and Rail Transport Drivers	3.5%	3.6%

As shown in Chart 3, parents of children at government schools tended to earn less on average than parents of children at non-government schools. Almost two-thirds (62.0 per cent) of parents of children at non-government schools had a gross annual household income of over \$60,000 while 46.4 per cent of parents of government schooled children earned over \$60,000. As this question was optional in the survey, a large proportion of respondents (18.1 per cent) chose to not provide information.

Chart 3



The responses received to other demographical questions included:

- Over three quarters (76.0 per cent) of survey respondents were female;
- A total of 71.6 per cent of respondents were aged between 35 and 49 years while only 11.9 per cent of respondents were aged between 25 and 34;
- Less than 5 per cent (4.7 per cent) of respondents identified themselves as Indigenous Australians;

- For 96.5 per cent of parents, English was the main language spoken at home; and
- The majority (78.9 per cent) of respondents were born in Australia while 92.7 per cent of the eldest child of respondents were born in Australia.

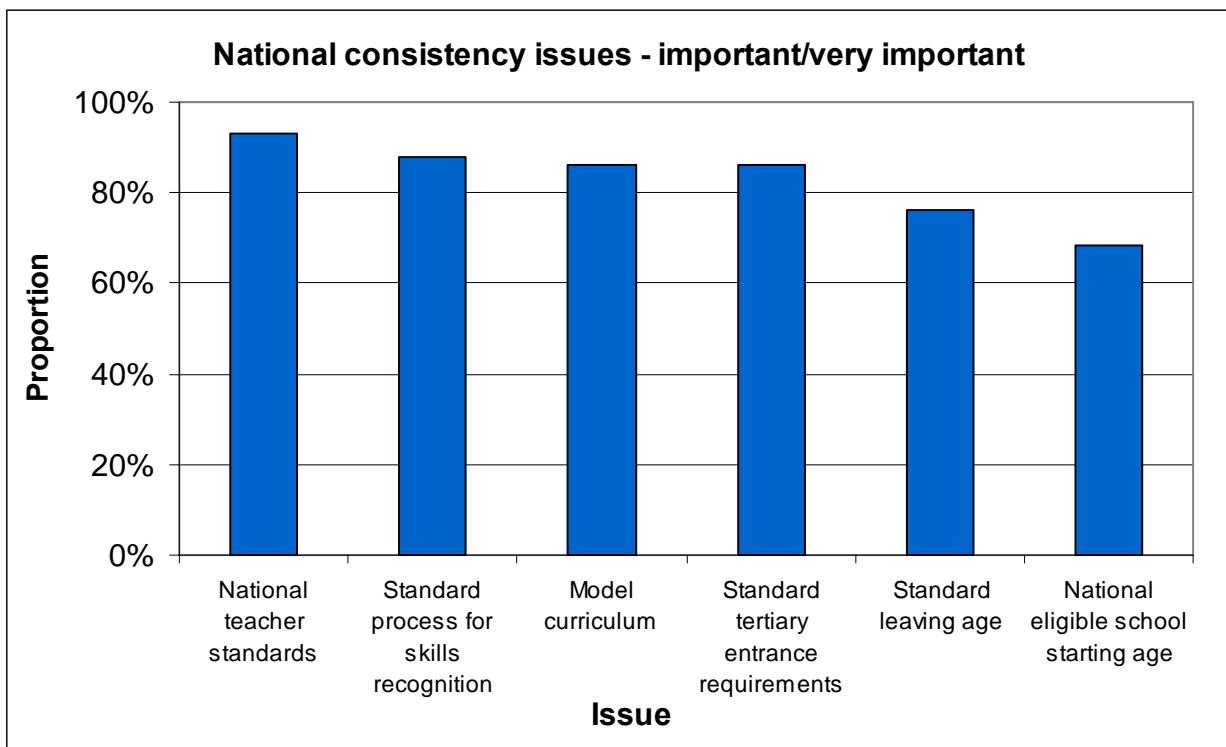
National schooling issues

Respondents were also asked to rank the importance of several national education issues on a one to five scale where 1 was 'not at all important' and 5 was 'very important'. Each issue was ranked important or very important by the majority of respondents, with high proportions of respondents ranking issues as 'very important'.

In order of importance, parents viewed the following issues as 'important/very important':

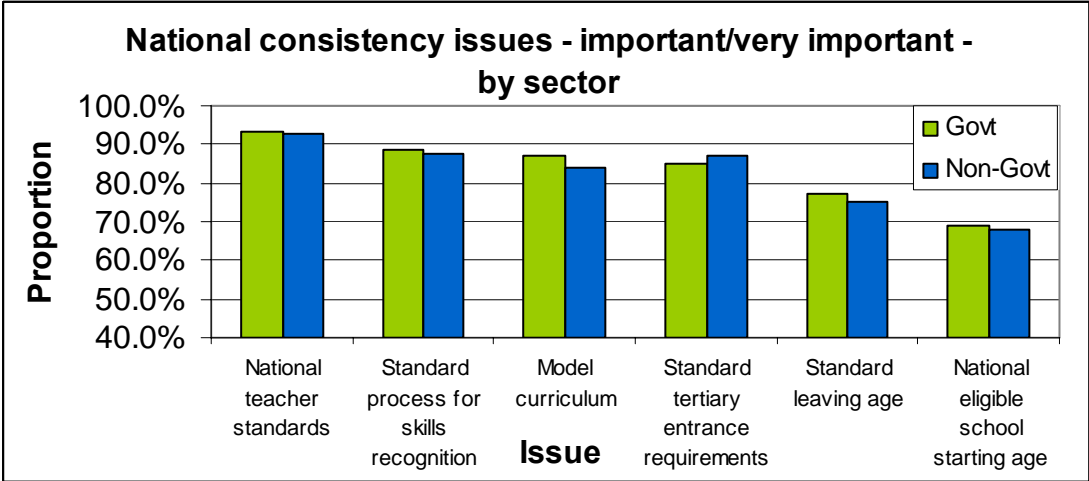
- National standards for teachers and school leaders (93.0 per cent);
- Standard process for recognising skills of students when they move from one State or Territory to another (88.0 per cent);
- Model curriculum across all States and Territories (86.1 per cent);
- Standard tertiary entrance requirements for VET and higher education across all States and Territories (86.2 per cent);
- Standard school leaving age across all States and Territories (76.3 per cent); and
- National eligible school starting age (68.2 per cent).

Chart 4



As shown in Chart 5 below, parents' views on national consistency issues were very similar, regardless of whether their children attended government or non-government schools. Parents of children attending government schools generally assigned slightly higher levels of importance to these issues than parents of non-government school children. The exception was 'standard tertiary entrance requirements', rated 'important/very important' by 87.2 per cent of parents of non-government school students, compared to 85.2 per cent of parents of children attending government schools.

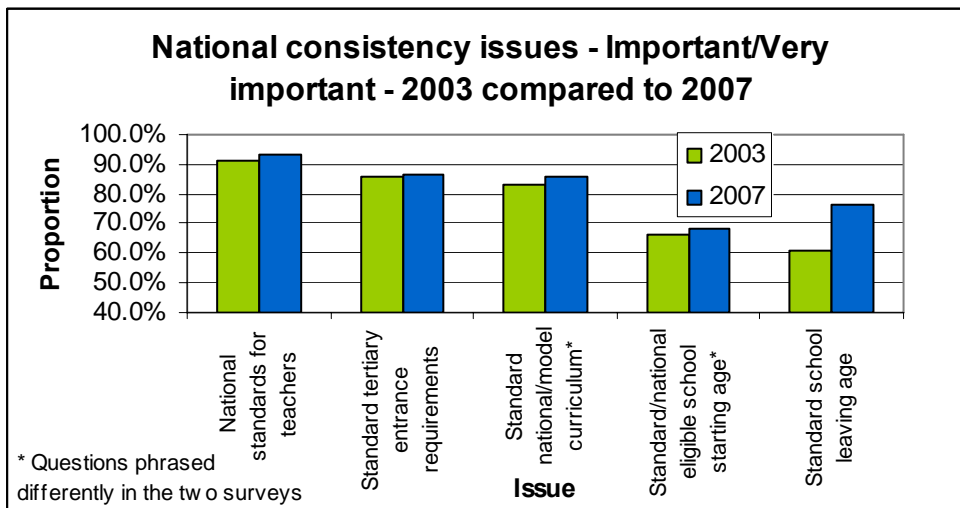
Chart 5



Parents were asked to rank the importance of a similar set of issues in the 2003 *Parents' and Community Members' Attitudes to Schooling Survey*. As Chart 6 shows, below, in the 2007 survey, parents assigned slightly higher levels of importance to the issues. In both surveys, the highest levels of importance were assigned to 'national standards for teachers and school leaders' and 'standard tertiary entrance requirements'. A much higher proportion of parents ranked 'standard school leaving age' as important in the 2007 survey (76.3 per cent) compared to the 2003 survey (61.0 per cent).² National consistency issues have gained more public attention since 2003, which may help to explain the higher levels of importance assigned to the issues in 2007.

² It should be noted that in the 2003 survey, parents were asked to rate the importance of 'standard national curriculum' and 'standard school starting age'. In 2007, the similar options were phrased as 'model curriculum' and 'national eligible school starting age'.

Chart 6



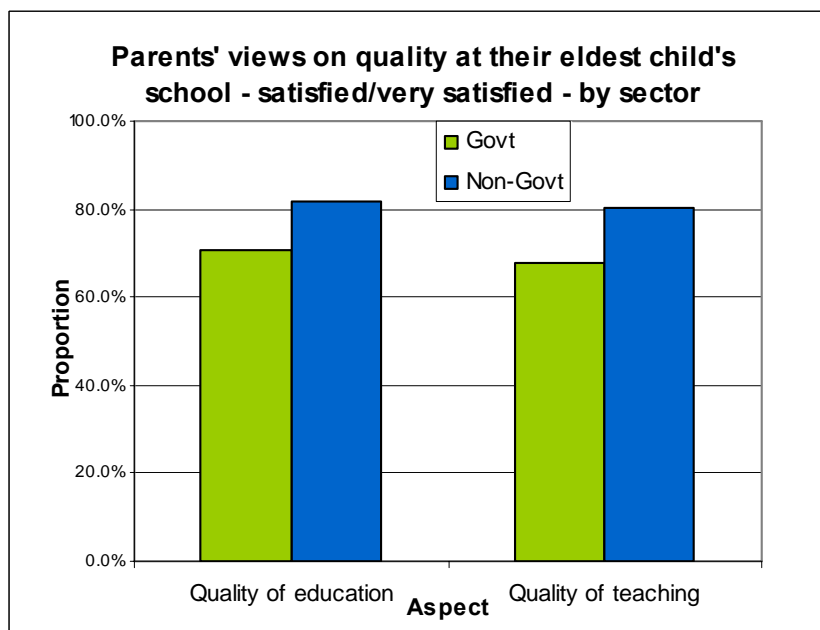
Views on schooling

Level of satisfaction with the quality of their eldest child's education and teaching

The majority of parents (75.1 per cent) indicated they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the quality of their eldest child's education. Just over one-third of parents indicated that they were 'very satisfied'. Parents' views on the quality of teaching at their eldest child's school were similarly positive, with 72.2 per cent giving the top two ratings of 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'. Just over one-quarter (27.9 per cent) were 'very satisfied'.

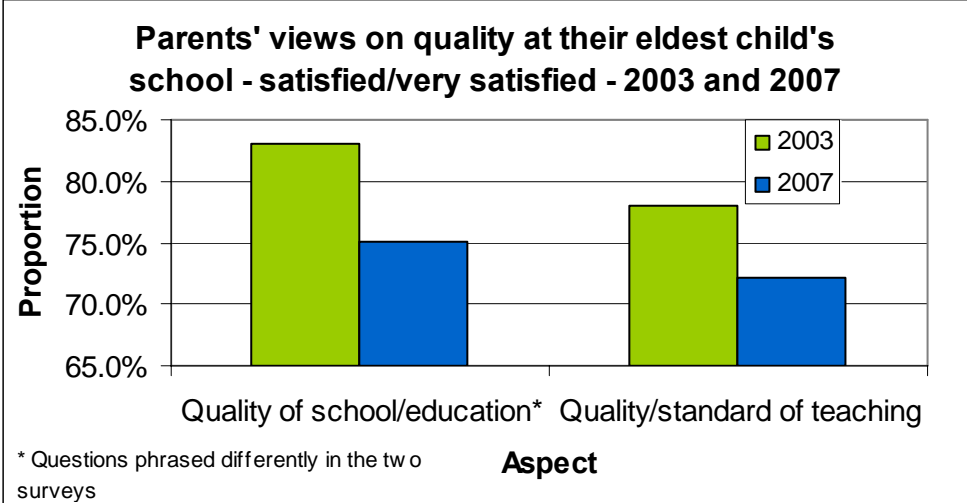
Parents whose eldest child attended a non-government school indicated higher levels of satisfaction with the quality of education (82.0 per cent compared to 70.9 per cent) and the quality of teaching (80.2 per cent compared to 67.6 per cent) than parents whose eldest child attended a government school.

Chart 7



To a similar question in the 2003 survey, 83 per cent of parents indicated that they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their child's school (44 per cent 'very satisfied' and 39 per cent 'fairly satisfied'). On the issue of the standard of teaching at their child's school, 78 per cent of respondents from the 2003 survey were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' (36 per cent 'very satisfied' and 42 per cent 'fairly satisfied'). Overall, parents were much less satisfied with their eldest child's school in 2007 than in 2003.³

Chart 8



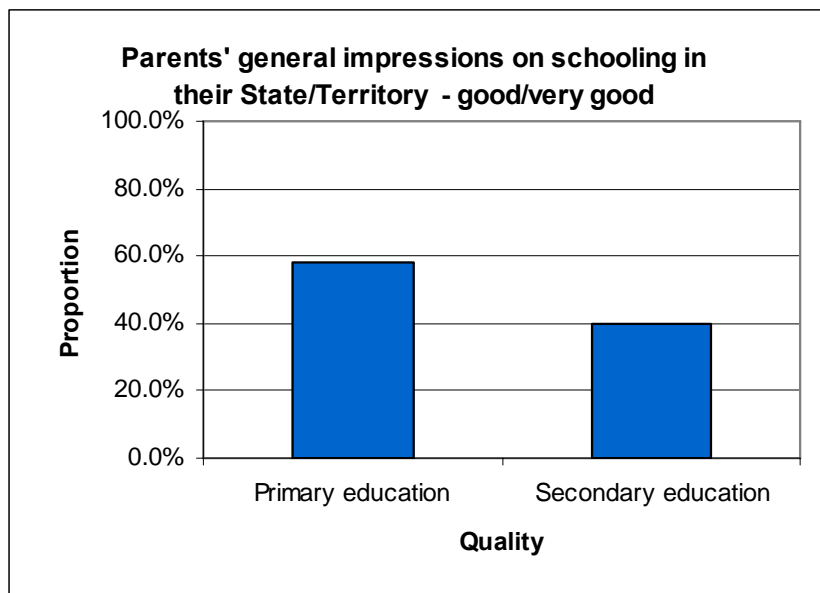
³ In the 2003 survey, parents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction 'with their child's school' and 'with the standard of teaching at the school'. In 2007, parents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with 'the quality of their child's education' and 'the quality of teaching' at their eldest child's school.

Impressions of schooling

Parents were also asked about their general impressions of the current quality of primary school and secondary school/secondary college education, using the scale of 1 to 5 where 1 was 'very poor' and 5 was 'very good'. Over half (58.3 per cent) the respondents rated the current quality of primary school education in their State or Territory as 'good' or 'very good'.

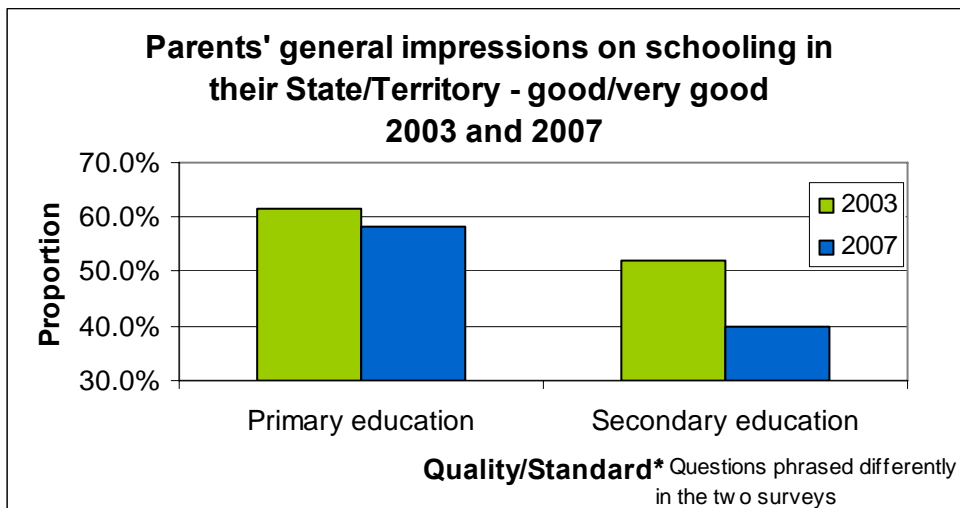
Parents were less positive about the quality of secondary education in their State or Territory, with less than half (39.9 per cent) rating it as 'good' or 'very good'. These results, compared to those offered by parents about their satisfaction with the quality of education and teaching at their eldest child's school, suggest that parents' general impressions may have been adversely influenced by external sources such as the ongoing public debate on schooling issues such as teacher shortages, student behaviour, declining standards, controversy about curriculum, building maintenance, etc.

Chart 9



Results to similar questions in the 2003 survey showed disparity as well, with 61.7 per cent of parents rating the *standard of primary school education* as 'good' or 'very good', while 51.9 per cent rating the *standard of secondary school education* as 'good' or 'very good'. Overall, parents in 2007 were less likely to rate the schooling in their State/Territory as good/very good compared to 2003.

Chart 10



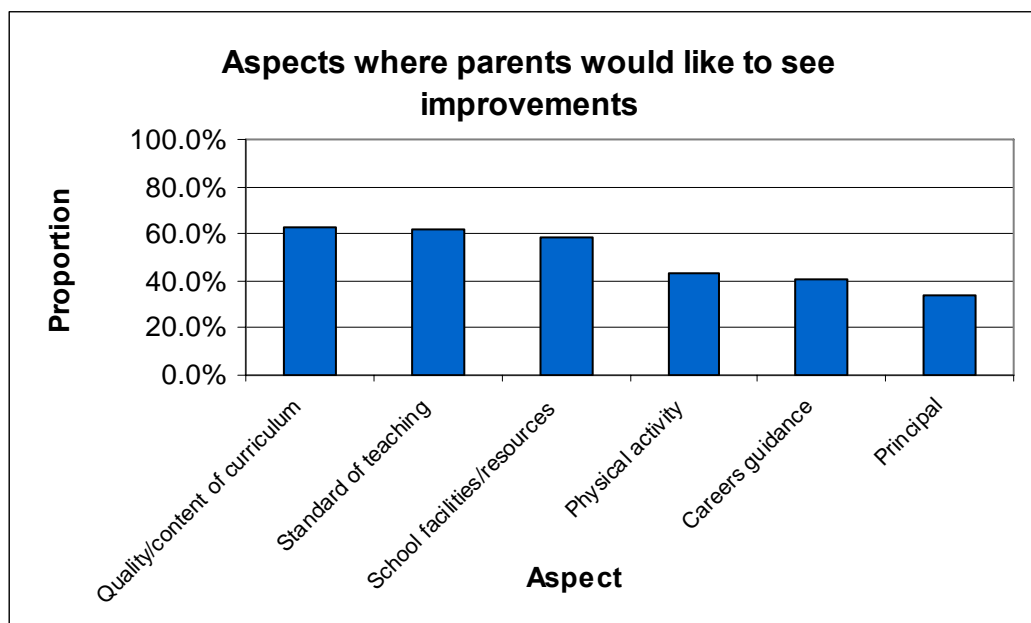
Improvements to aspects of children's education

Parents were asked whether there were any aspects of their eldest child's education that they would like to see improved. Over half (57.4 per cent) of the respondents answered "Yes", while 6.8 per cent were unsure and 35.7 per cent answered "No".

The respondents who answered "Yes" or "Don't know" were then asked to consider a range of areas in which they might like to see improvements, and to offer any suggestions on other aspects of their eldest child's education they would like to see improved.

Almost two-thirds of parents (63.0 per cent) who would like to see aspects of their eldest child's education improved, or were not sure, agreed that they would like to see improvements in the 'quality/content of the curriculum'. Similar proportions agreed that they would like to see improvements to the 'standard of teaching' (61.6 per cent) and 'school facilities and resources' (58.2 per cent). Less than half of the parents seeking improvements to aspects of their eldest child's education felt that 'adequacy and quality of physical activity programmes offered during school hours' needed to be addressed (43.4 per cent). A similar proportion indicated they would like to see improvements to the 'quality of career guidance and support' (40.4 per cent). In the case of 'quality of school principal', about one-third (34.3 per cent) of parents thought this needed to be addressed.

Chart 11



The differences in results relating to areas of improvements were not generally large when compared by sector. However, a larger proportion of parents whose eldest child attended a government school sought improvements to each of the aspects, compared to parents whose eldest child attended a non-government school. The largest difference occurs on the issue of 'school facilities and resources' where 61.4 per cent of government school parents sought improvements, compared to 53.5 per cent of non-government school parents.

Table 4

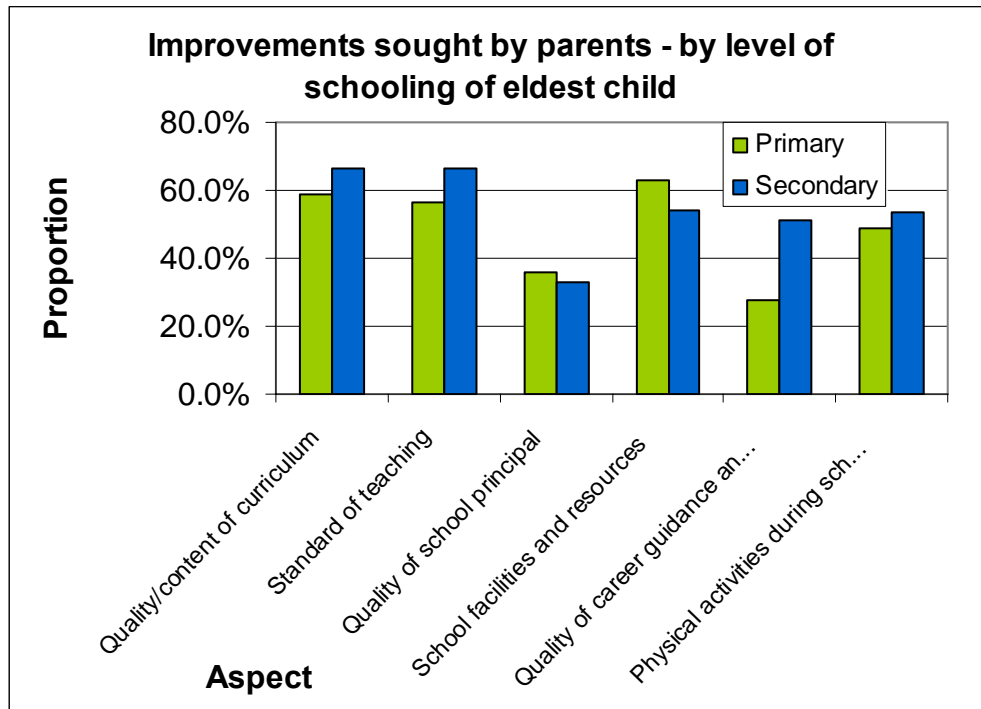
Improvements sought by parents - by school sector of eldest child

Aspect	Govt	Non-Govt
Quality/content of curriculum	64.8%	60.4%
Standard of teaching	63.4%	57.7%
Quality of school principal	34.9%	34.6%
School facilities and resources	61.4%	53.5%
Careers guidance and support	41.8%	37.5%
Physical activity	45.0%	41.8%

Chart 12, below, shows the differences between the proportions of parents who agreed that they would like improvements according to the level of schooling of their eldest child. A larger proportion of parents of secondary-aged children sought improvements in the 'quality/content of the curriculum' (66.6 per cent compared to 58.7 per cent) and the 'standard of teaching' (66.3 per cent compared to 56.4 per cent) than parents of primary-aged children. Understandably, a larger proportion of parents whose eldest child was in secondary school sought improvements on the aspect of 'career guidance and support' (51.1 per cent), although this was not one of the strongest affirmations. Over half (58.2 per cent) of the parents of secondary children agreed that improvements were needed in the 'adequacy and quality of physical activity programmes offered during school hours'.

Parents whose eldest child was in primary school were more likely to agree that improvements were required to 'school facilities and resources' (62.9 per cent compared to 54.2 per cent) than parents whose eldest child was in secondary school. Much lower levels of parents (approximately one-third) felt that improvements were required to the 'quality of the school principal'.

Chart 12



Parents were also offered the opportunity to nominate other aspects of their eldest child's education in which they would like to see improvements. These free-text responses were then classified into major categories to aid analysis. The top ten categories of other aspects of education in which parents would like to see improvement were:

- *Meeting needs of the individual* (including gifted students, students with disabilities, students who were struggling, and those with other needs, etc. Parents also suggested that senior high school students need to be treated as 'young adults' rather than children.) - 15.4 per cent;
- *Basics* (the 'Three R's' – including mathematics, multiplication tables, writing, spelling, grammar, punctuation, holding a pencil properly) - 11.8 per cent;
- *Subject options* (including the range of subjects available, specific suggestions on subjects that should be taught, etc. Parents in non-metropolitan schools were especially concerned about the lack of options available to their children.) - 9.9 per cent;
- *Communication* (between parents, teachers, school and students) - 7.8 per cent;
- *Teacher standards* (including consistency in standards for teachers to be allowed in schools, competence of inexperienced teachers – and old teachers) - 6.4 per cent;
- *More teachers and smaller class sizes* (a number of parents were concerned by their children's lack of one-on-one interaction with teaching staff) - 6.3 per cent;
- *Staffing* (parents were concerned about the lack of stability in their children's schooling with large turnover of staff and relief staff) - 5.2 per cent;

- *Funding* - 4.3 per cent;
- *Discipline* - 4.1 per cent; and
- *Well-being of students* (including addressing issues such as bullying, sun protection, physical fitness, meeting the needs of quiet or shy children) - 4.1 per cent.

Communication with parents

Parents were asked several questions about communication from their eldest child’s school. Almost two-thirds of parents (64.6 per cent) indicated that their eldest child’s last school report was presented in an A to E format. The proportions were similar for government and non-government schools, with 63.0 per cent and 68.1 per cent respectively reporting that their eldest child’s last school report was in an A to E format.

The vast majority of parents (94.1 per cent) believed it was ‘important’ or ‘very important’ that their child’s report was easy to understand. Some parents indicated they would prefer to get information about their child’s progress during discussions with the teacher.

Nearly three-quarters (73.8 per cent) of parents were ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with the communication from their eldest child’s school (e.g. school reports, newsletters, information about subjects, child’s attendance, etc.).

Chart 13

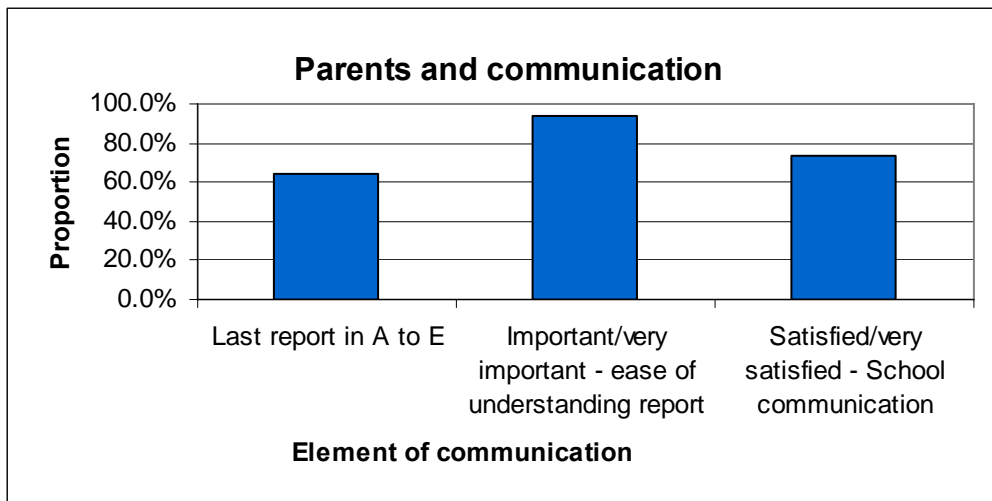
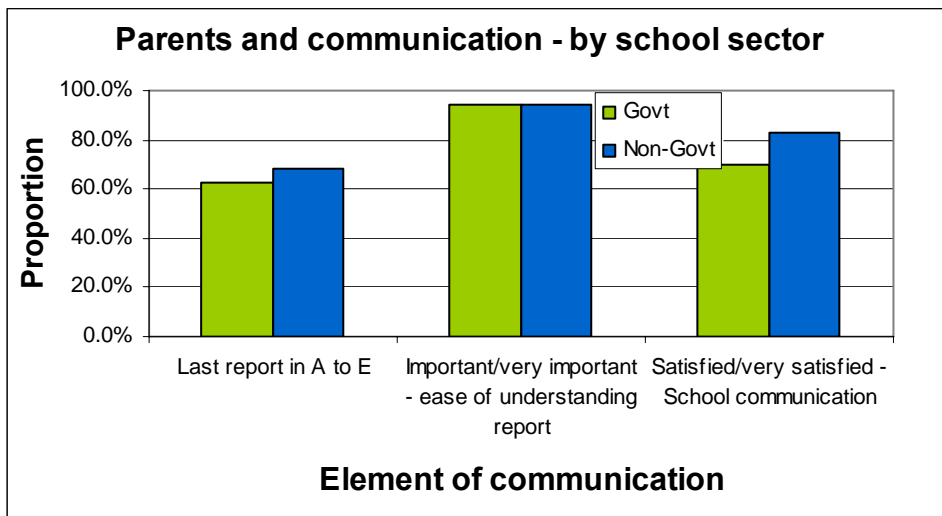


Chart 14, below, shows that parents assigned similar levels of importance to the need for their child’s school report to be easy to understand, regardless of whether their child was attending a government or non-government school. A slightly higher proportion of parents whose children attended non-government schools reported that their last school report had been in an A to E format (68.1 per cent compared to 63.0 per cent from government schools). Parents of children at non-government schools recorded higher levels of satisfaction with the communication from their child’s school compared to parents of children at government schools (82.9 per cent compared to 69.7 per cent).

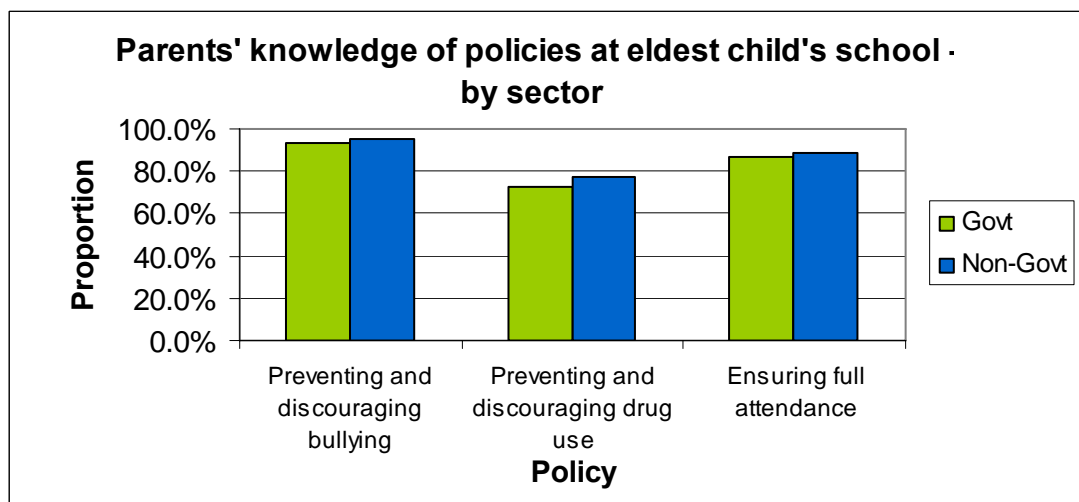
Chart 14



School action on current school community issues

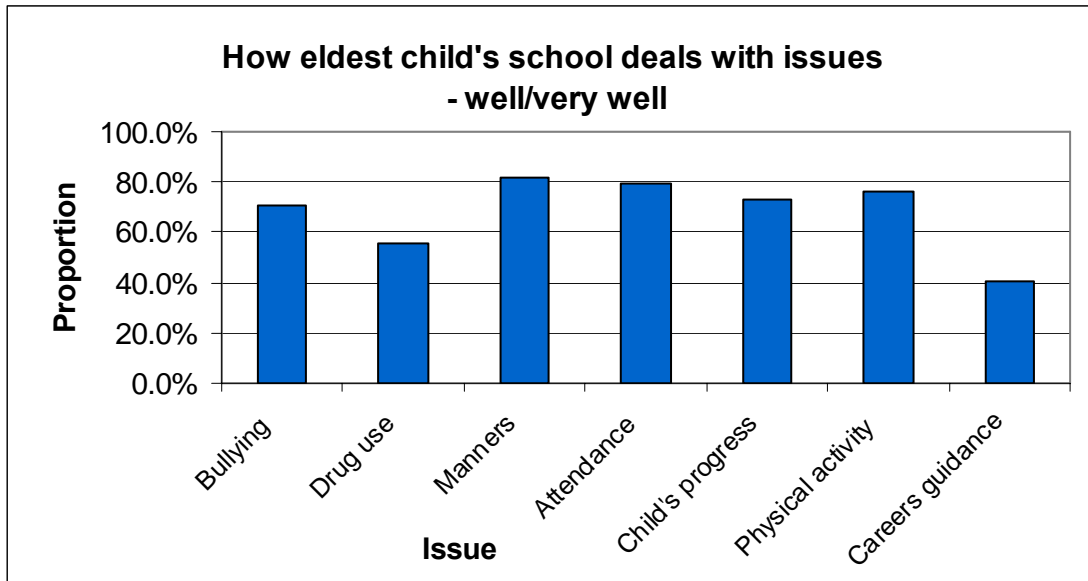
Parents were asked whether they were aware of their eldest child’s school having policies on preventing and discouraging bullying and drug use and ensuring full attendance. The majority of parents were aware that their eldest child’s school had policies to deal with the issues (preventing and discouraging bullying - 94.2 per cent; preventing and discouraging drug use - 74.6 per cent; and ensuring fully attendance - 87.8 per cent). Slightly more parents whose eldest child was attending a non-government school knew that the school had such policies.

Chart 15



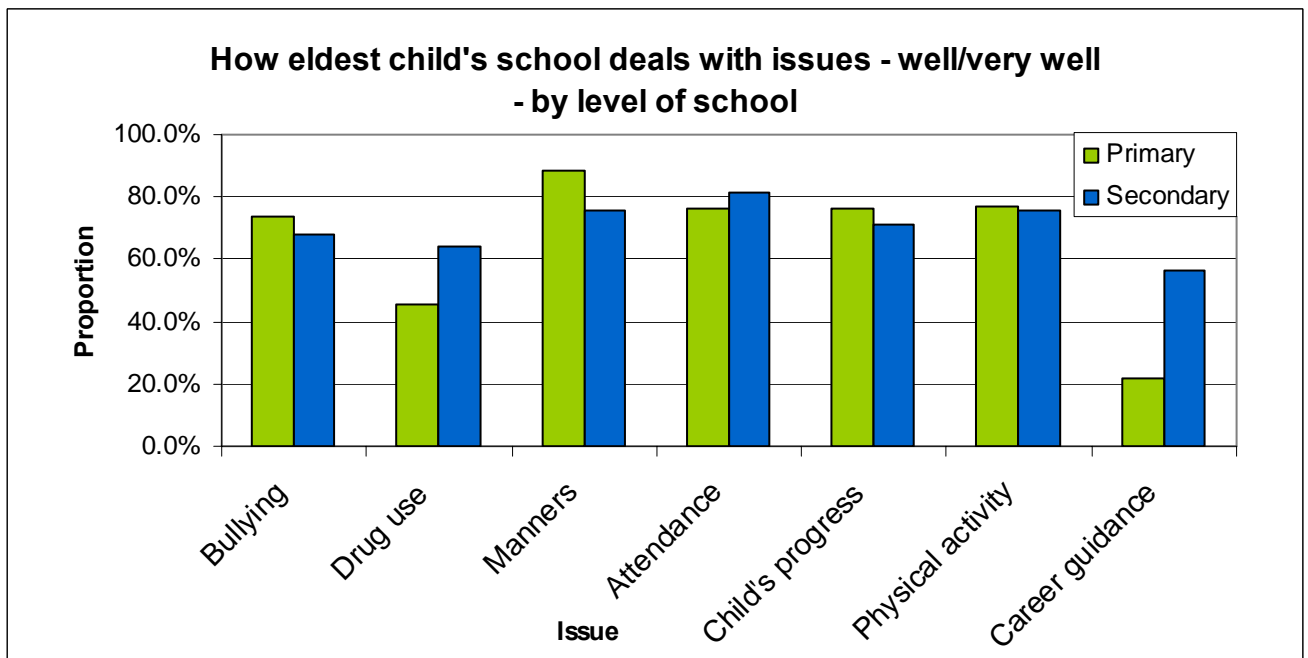
In most instances, parents felt that their eldest child’s school was dealing well or very well with issues such as ‘manners’ (81.6 per cent), ‘attendance’ (79.1 per cent), ‘providing physical activity programmes in school’ (76.0 per cent), ‘bullying’ (70.5 per cent) and ‘drug use’ (55.6 per cent). Parents were less positive about the school’s response to providing career guidance, development and support (40.4 per cent).

Chart 16



Less than half (45.5 per cent) of parents whose eldest child attended primary school felt their school dealt 'well' or 'very well' with the issue of drug use, with a similar proportion (46.0 per cent) answering 'don't know/not applicable'. Almost two-thirds - 63.5 per cent – of parents whose eldest child was in primary school answered 'Don't know/not applicable' regarding 'careers advice, development and support'.

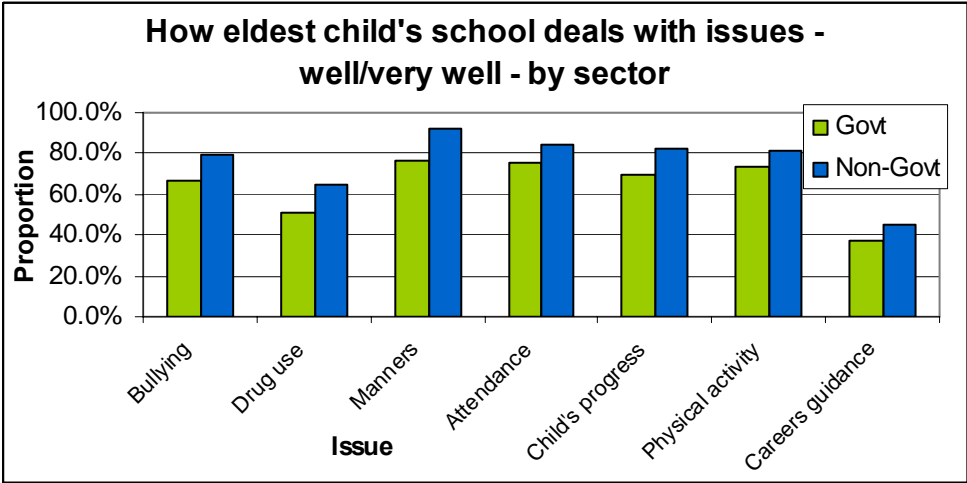
Chart 17



As Chart 18 shows, below, parents of non-government school students consistently ranked the performance of their eldest child's school higher in dealing with school community issues compared to parents whose children attended government schools. There was a difference of over ten percentage points between the positive rankings of the performance of government

and non-government schools on four of the issues ('bullying', 'drug use', 'manners' and 'child's progress'). The largest margin was 15.7 percentage points on the issue of 'manners', with parents of non-government school students regarding their school's handling of these issues more highly than parents of government school students.

Chart 18

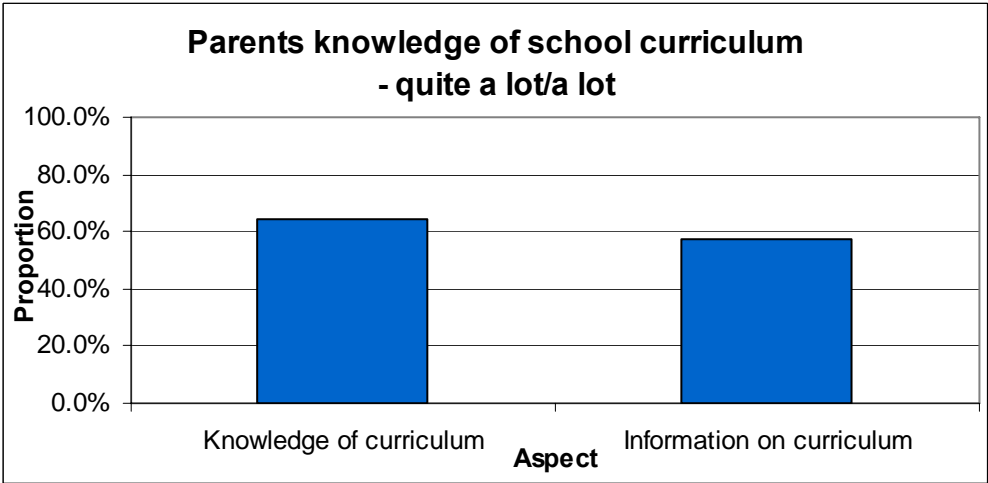


School curriculum

Parents were asked to rate their knowledge of their eldest child's school curriculum on a scale of 1 to 5. Almost two-thirds of parents (64.1 per cent) felt they knew 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' about the curriculum at their eldest child's school.

Over half of the parents surveyed (57.6 per cent) indicated they had received 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' of information from their eldest child's school about the curriculum offered.

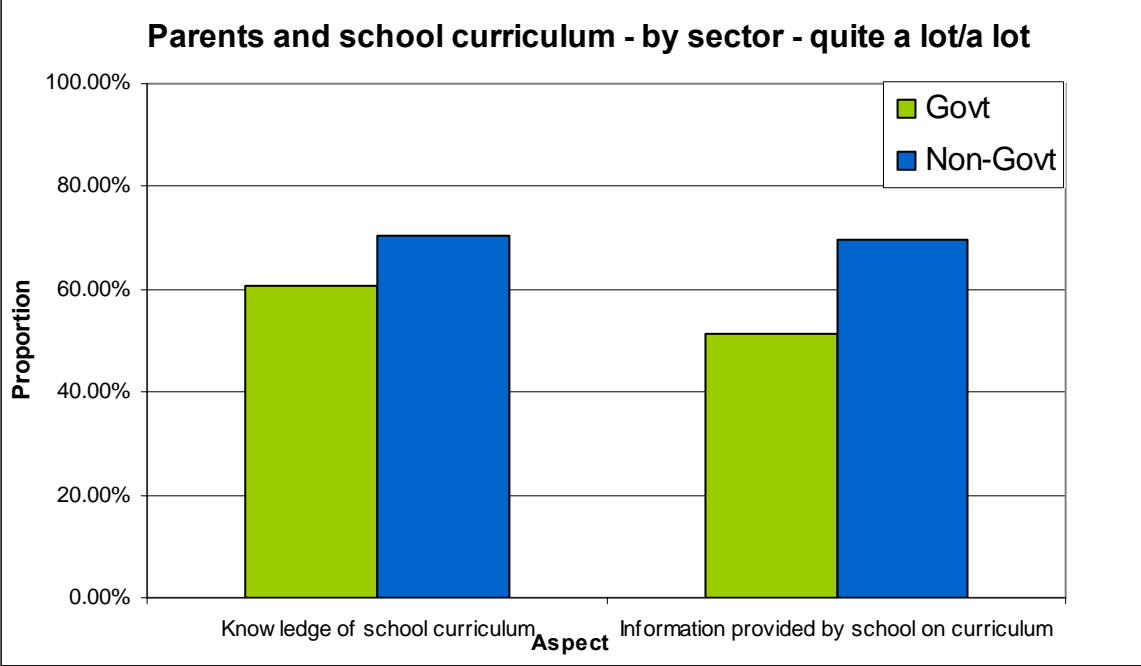
Chart 19



Parents whose eldest child attended a non-government school generally indicated higher levels of knowledge (knew 'quite a lot/a lot') about their child's curriculum, compared to those whose eldest child attended a government school (70.2 per cent compared to 60.6 per cent). Parents

whose eldest child attended a non-government school seemed to be better informed about the school’s curriculum than those whose children attended government schools: over two-thirds (69.6 per cent) had received ‘quite a lot/a lot’ of information from the school about the curriculum offered compared to just over half (51.5 per cent) of parents whose eldest child attended a government school.

Chart 20



When parents’ assessment of their knowledge of their eldest child’s curriculum is compared to the amount of information they say they received from the school on the curriculum, it is clear that there is a link between level of knowledge and information provided. As shown in Table 5 below, 47.6 per cent of all respondents felt they knew ‘quite a lot/a lot’ about their eldest child’s school curriculum and had also received ‘quite a lot/a lot’ of information about the curriculum from their child’s school.

Table 5

Parent's knowledge of eldest child's school curriculum by information received from school

Knowledge of school curriculum	Information received on school curriculum						Totals
	Nothing	Not much	A little bit	Quite a lot	A lot	Don't know /not applicable	
Nothing	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.0	1.7
Not much	2.0	3.4	1.8	1.1	0.3	0.1	8.7
A little bit	2.4	4.4	9.8	6.3	1.9	0.2	25.0
Quite a lot	0.8	3.1	8.0	20.0	8.3	0.2	40.4
A lot	0.7	0.9	2.7	5.8	13.5	0.1	23.7
Don't know/not applicable			0.1		0.1	0.1	0.4
Total	6.7	12.2	22.6	33.3	24.3	0.8	100.0

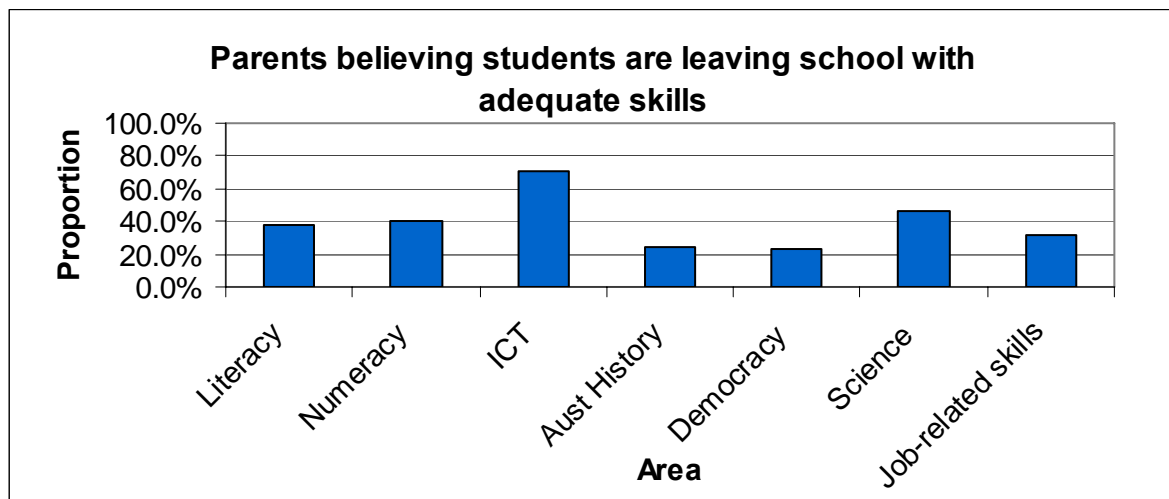
Core skills *Skills of children leaving school*

Parents were asked whether they thought children were generally leaving school with adequate levels of skills in a range of areas:

- Literacy/Reading and Writing;
- Numeracy/Mathematics;
- Information and Communications Technology (ICT);
- Australian History;
- Understanding our democracy;
- Science; and
- Skills related to getting and keeping a job.

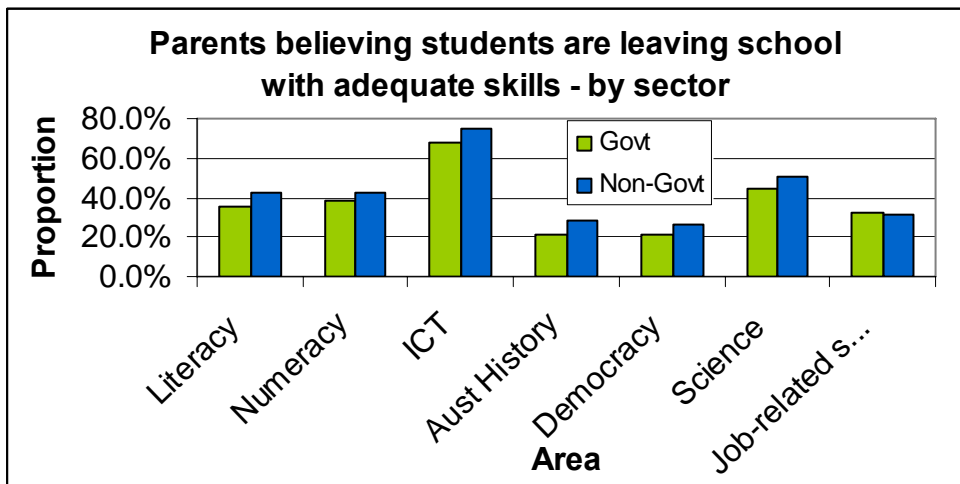
With the exception of ICT skills (70.9 per cent), less than half of the surveyed parents believed that students were leaving school with adequate skills in the nominated areas (Literacy 37.5 per cent, Numeracy 39.8 per cent, History 23.9 per cent, Democracy 23.2 per cent, Science 46.7 per cent and Job-related skills 31.8 per cent).

Chart 21



As shown in Chart 22 below, parents whose children attended non-government schools were generally more likely to believe that children were leaving school with adequate skills than parents of government school children. A larger proportion of parents of government school children believed that children were leaving school with adequate 'job-related skills' (32.2 per cent compared to 31.4 per cent.)

Chart 22



Importance of certain content

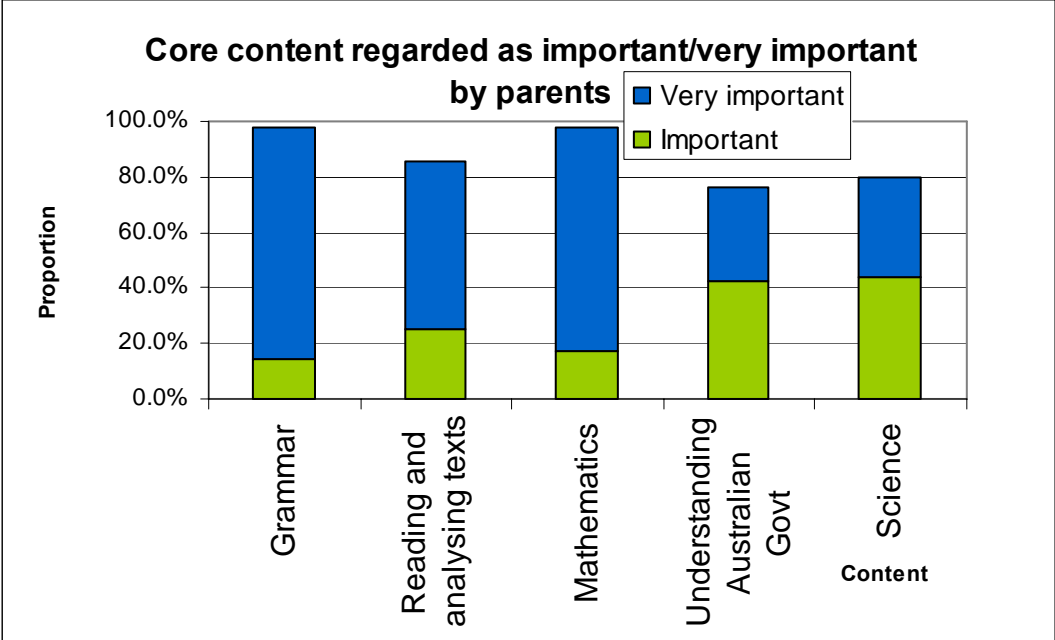
The vast majority of parents (91.0 per cent) believed that there was certain content that all children should learn at school during the compulsory years of their education.

Parents were asked to rate the importance of children learning the following content:

- Grammar, spelling and punctuation;
- Reading and analysing a range of texts including classic literature;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding the system of Government; and
- Science.

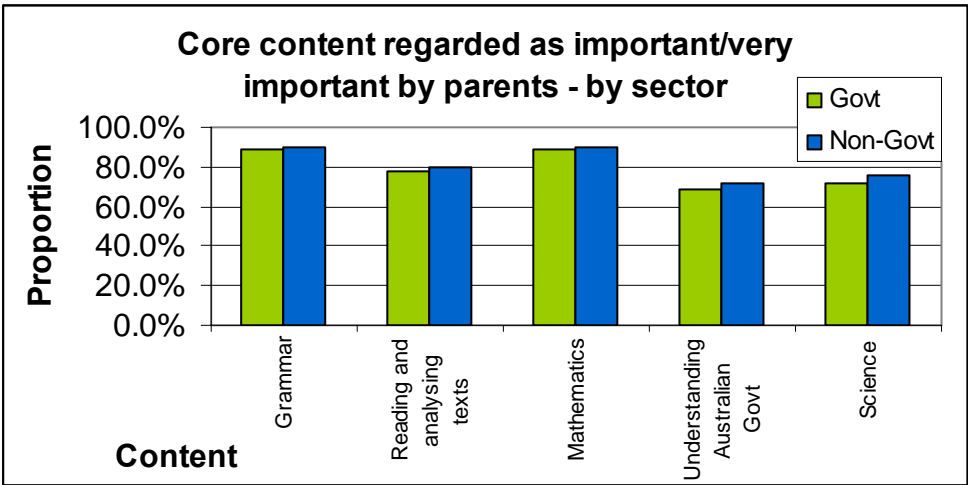
As Chart 23 shows below, the majority of parents regarded all these content areas as 'important/very important', but parents particularly highlighted 'Grammar, spelling and punctuation' (83.5 per cent) and 'Mathematics' (81.1 per cent) as 'very important'.

Chart 23



A larger proportion of parents of non-government school children (between 0.7 and 4.7 percentage points higher compared to parents of government school children) rated each of the suggested core content areas as 'important/very important'. The largest difference was in 'science' as core content, where 76.1 per cent of parents of non-government school students regarded it as 'important/very important' compared to 71.8 per cent of parents whose children attended government schools.

Chart 24



Other compulsory content areas suggested by parents

Three-quarters of parents (74.4 per cent) believed there were other content areas that should be included for all students during their compulsory years of schooling. Suggestions offered by parents were then classified into major categories. The top ten categories of compulsory content suggested by parents were:

- *Practical life skills* (including budgeting, personal finance, taxation, superannuation, maintaining a household, cooking, defensive driving, using tools, etc.) – 22.8 per cent;
- *Communication and interpersonal skills* (including public speaking, getting along with people, maintaining relationships, etc.) - 11.5 per cent;
- *Australian history* - 10.3 per cent;
- *Manners, respect and tolerance* - 10.0 per cent;
- *Studies of society and the environment* (including Aboriginal studies, culture of other countries, world history, geography, environmental studies, politics, etc.) - 8.9 per cent;
- *Physical well-being* (including sex and drug education, hygiene, nutrition, maintaining physical fitness, etc.) - 6.9 per cent;
- *Workforce skills* (including career options, applying for and keeping a job, succeeding in a work environment, customer service, teamwork, meeting deadlines, etc.) - 5.9 per cent;
- *Information and Communications Technology* (ICT – including using computers, keyboarding skills, etc.) - 5.3 per cent;
- *Responsibility, self-awareness and motivation* - 3.4 per cent; and
- *Arts* (including music, drama and art) - 3.4 per cent.

Parents and schooling

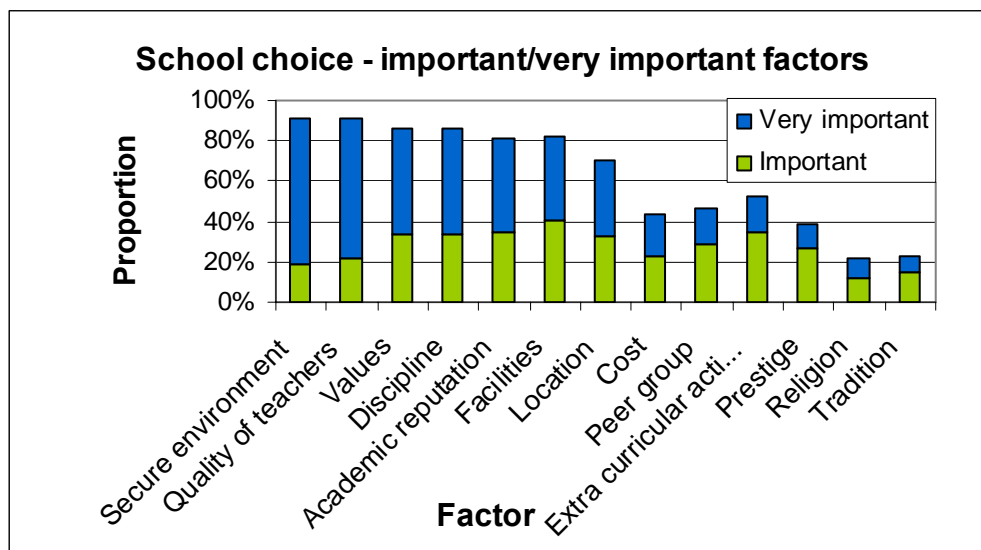
Factors associated with choosing a school

Parents were also asked about the significance of factors in their choice of school for their eldest child.⁴ Their views were sought on factors including the academic reputation of the school; cost of schooling; location; facilities; school's prestige and values; discipline; extra-curricular activities; whether the school offered a secure environment, and the quality of teachers.

Other factors canvassed included whether family members had previously attended the school ('tradition') and the importance of children's peer groups in choices of whether to attend a particular school.

Parents regarded the most important factors related to choosing a school as the 'Quality of teachers' (rated 'important/very important' by 91.3 per cent of respondents); 'Secure environment' (90.7 per cent); 'Discipline' (86.1 per cent); 'Values' (86.5 per cent); 'Facilities' (82.3 per cent); 'Academic reputation' (81.2 per cent); 'Location' (70.4 per cent) and 'Extra-curricular activities' (52.3 per cent). The remaining factors ('Peer group for child', 'Cost', 'Prestige', 'Tradition' and 'Religion') were not rated as 'important/very important' by the majority of parents overall.

Chart 25



A similar question was asked during the 2003 survey, when parents nominated the most important factor involved in choosing a school as the 'quality of teachers' (rated as important/very important by 94.6 per cent of parents), ahead of 'secure environment' (91.6 per cent), with a drop to other factors such as 'discipline', 'values', the 'academic reputation of the school', 'school facilities', 'location' and 'cost'. In both the 2003 and 2007 surveys, parents gave 'tradition' and 'religion' the smallest proportions of 'important' ratings.

⁴ 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.

Chart 26

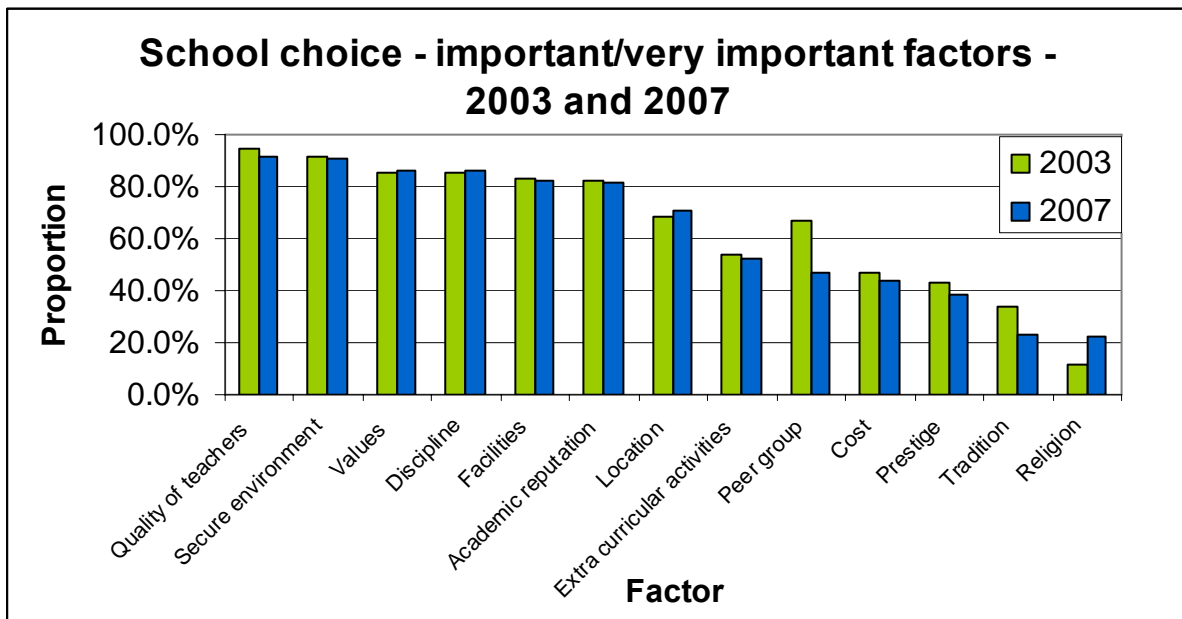
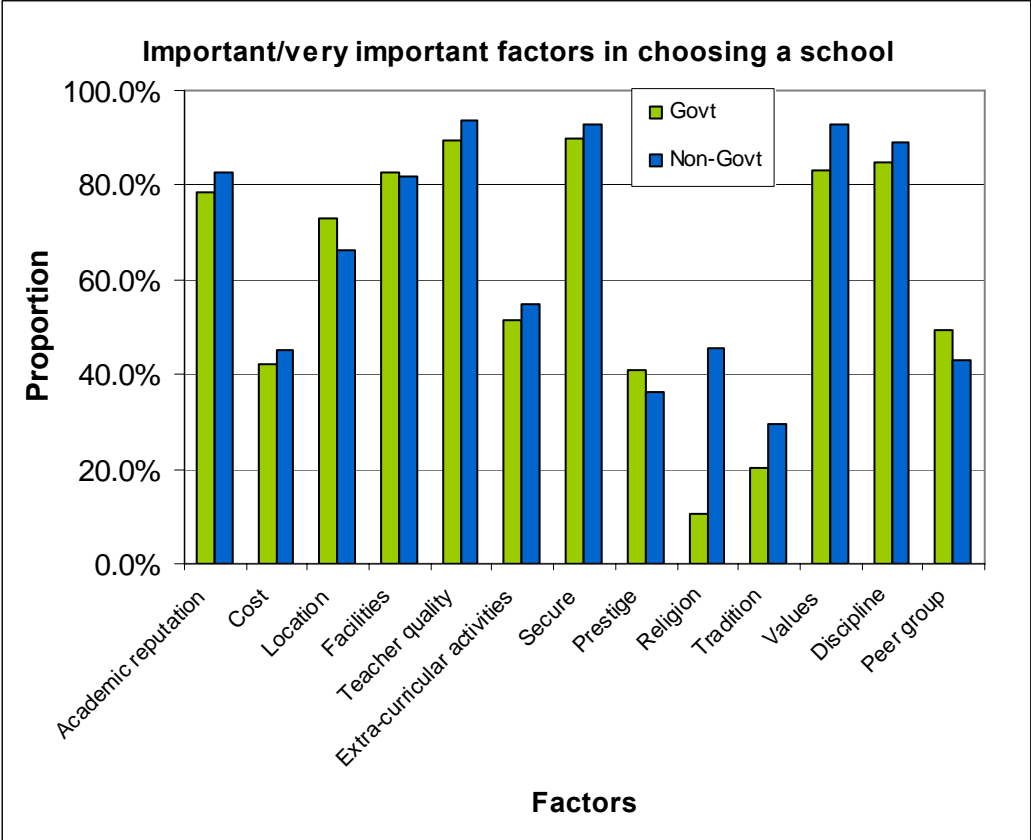


Chart 27, below, shows the breakdown of these results according to the sector of the eldest child's school. The results are very similar for the most important factors, with less than five percentage points difference. The exception is 'Values', where the difference was 9.9 percentage points in favour of parents whose eldest child attended a non-government school (93.0 per cent for non-government school parents compared to 83.1 per cent for government school parents). There was quite a distinction in the results for factors rated less important, with non-government school parents assigning higher levels of importance to the issues of 'Religion' (45.5 per cent compared to 10.6 per cent) and 'Tradition' (29.6 per cent compared to 20.2 per cent).

Chart 27

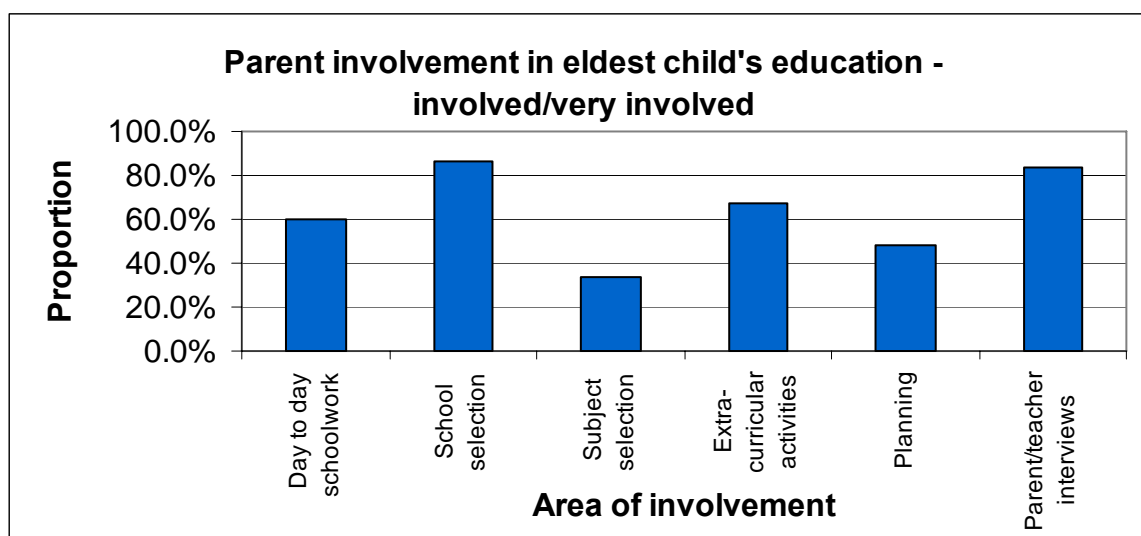


Level of involvement with child's education

Parents were also asked about their level of involvement with their eldest child's education - in their child's day-to-day school work, school selection, subject selection, extra-curricular activities and planning of post-school options.

Parents were most involved ('fairly involved/very involved') in the selection of their eldest child's school (86.5 per cent) and 'Parent-teacher interviews' (83.8 per cent). Smaller proportions of parents regarded themselves as 'fairly/very involved' in the remaining categories – 'Extra-curricular activities' 66.9 per cent, 'Day-to-day schoolwork' 59.8 per cent, 'Post-school planning' 48.0 per cent, and 'Subject selection' 33.7 per cent.

Chart 28



More than half of the parents whose eldest child was in primary school regarded 'Subject selection' (58.0 per cent) and 'Post-school planning' (55.8 per cent) as 'not applicable' to their experience. Significantly more parents whose eldest child was in primary school reported that they were 'fairly/very involved' in their child's 'Day-to-day schoolwork' than parents whose eldest child was in secondary school (72.8 per cent compared to 47.9 per cent). A similar level of disparity was recorded for involvement in 'Extra-curricular activities', with 74.6 per cent of primary parents being 'fairly/very involved' compared to 60.5 per cent of secondary parents.

When the level of involvement is examined by school sector, there is some disparity in the results. Higher proportions of parents of non-government school children report they are 'very involved' in 'Parent-teacher interviews' (72.5 per cent compared to 61.7 per cent of parents of government school children), and 'School selection' (79.5 per cent compared to 66.4 per cent). On the other hand, higher proportions of parents of government school children report they are 'very involved in their eldest child's 'Extra-curricular activities' (44.5 per cent compared to 41.3 per cent).

A similar question was asked during the 2003 survey, when parents' highest reported level of involvement ('involved/very involved') in aspects of their eldest child's education was in 'school selection' (86.8 per cent). With the exception of 'extra-curricular activities' (2003 – 46.9 per cent

compared to 2007 – 66.9 per cent) parents reported similar levels of involvement in both surveys. The option ‘parent-teacher interviews’ was not included in the 2003 survey.

Chart 29

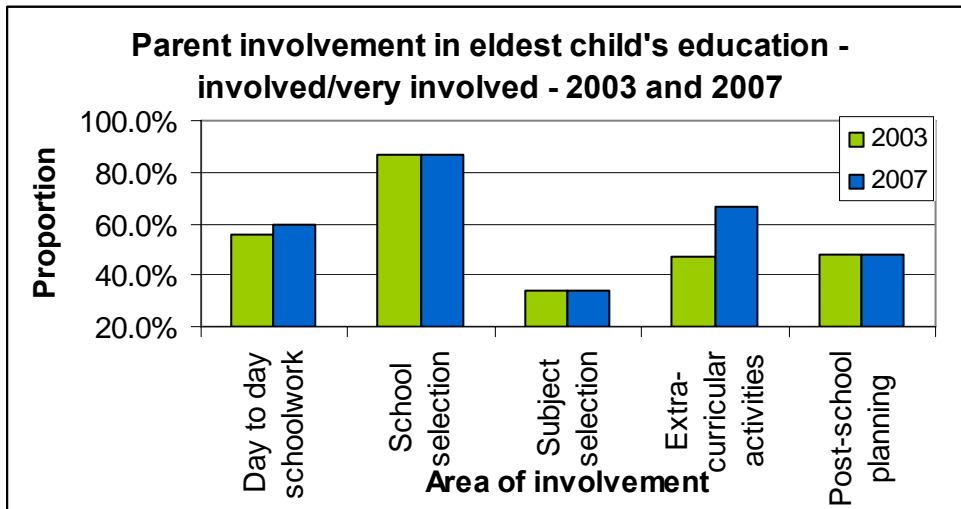
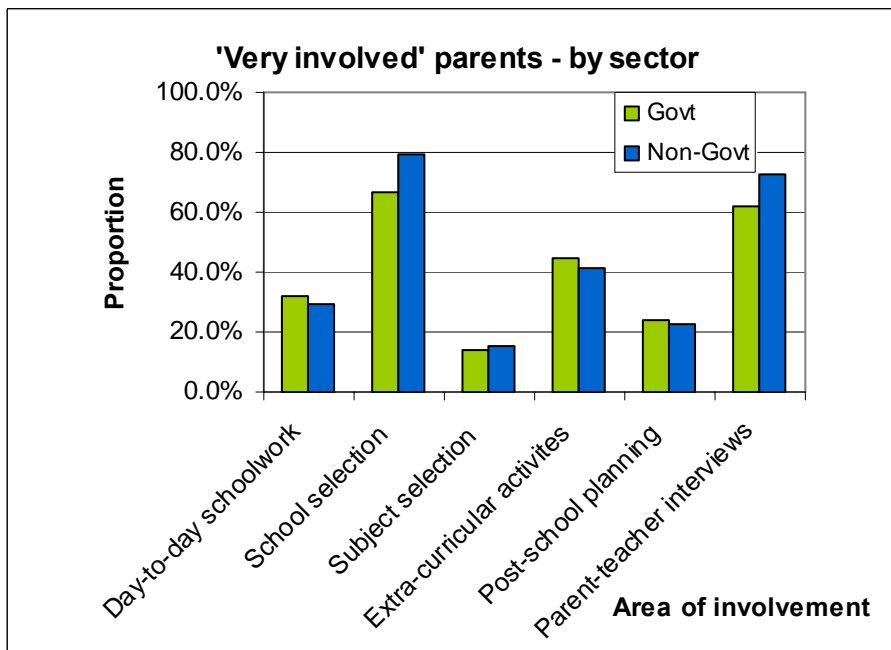


Chart 30



Parents' views on post-school options

When parents expected their eldest child to leave school

Parents of secondary school aged children were asked when they expected their eldest school aged child to leave school. The majority of parents of children from both government schools (89.0 per cent) and non-government schools (95.4 per cent) expected that their child would leave school at the end of year 12.

Table 6

Expected school leaving age of eldest child	Parents of children at govt schools	Parents of children at non-govt schools
Before the end of Year 10	0.8%	0.0%
At the end of Year 10	4.2%	2.3%
At the end of Year 11	3.0%	1.4%
At the end of Year 12	89.0%	95.4%
Don't know	3.0%	0.9%

When the answers to this question were compared with the 2003 survey, the responses were almost identical. In 2003, 91.8 per cent of parents of secondary school aged children expected their eldest child to leave at the end of year 12 compared with 91.3 per cent in 2007.

When asked about a range of options that they wanted their eldest child to pursue after leaving school (parents were able to select more than one option), the majority of parents responded 'go to university'. As shown in Chart 31 below, a slightly higher proportion of parents of children in non-government schools (67.6 per cent) than parents of children in government schools (53.3 per cent) wanted their eldest child to attend university. Other popular responses from parents included 'start an apprenticeship' and 'take a Vocational Education and Training (VET) course', with parents of children at government schools more likely than parents of children at non-government schools to indicate each of these responses.

Chart 31

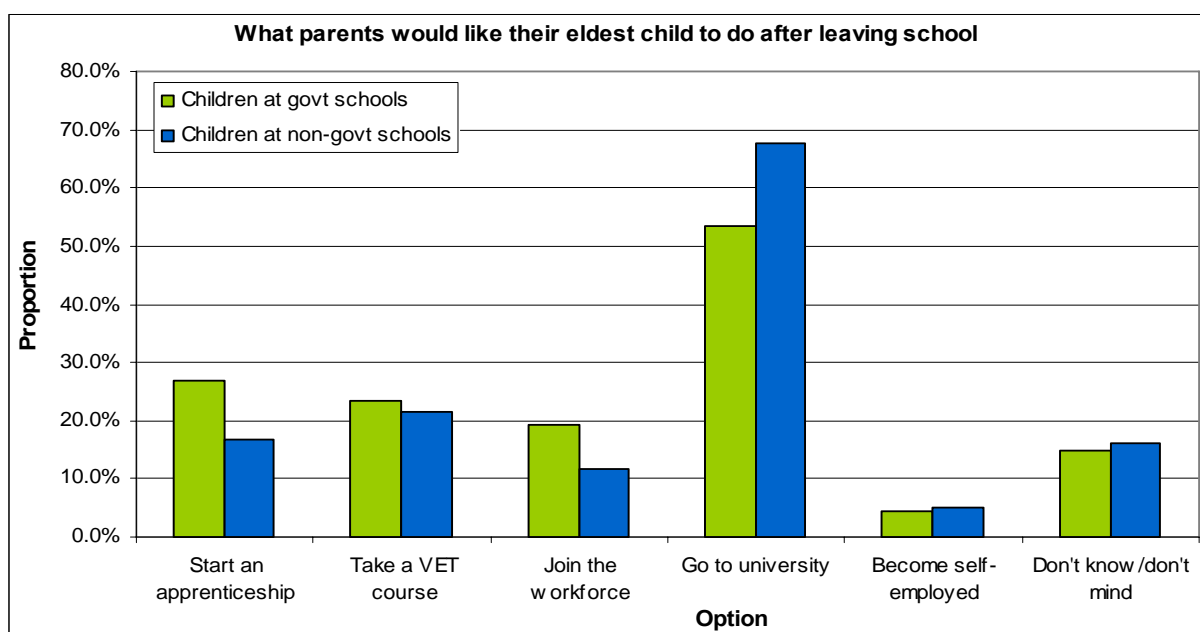


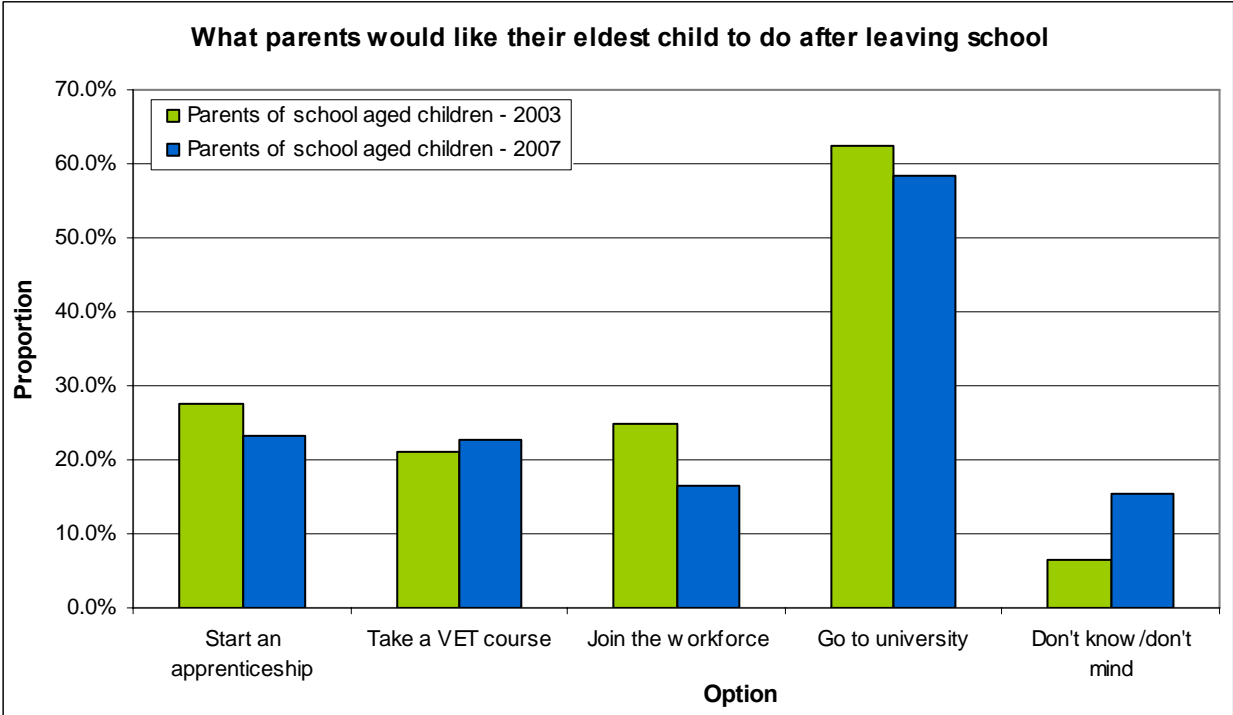
Table 7 shows how parents views on their eldest child’s future career paths are matched with the parents own highest level of education. Just under three quarters (74.4 per cent) of parents who had completed a degree or higher indicated that they would like their eldest child to attend university when they finish school. Strong responses were received for ‘go to university’ from all other qualification categories except those parents whose highest level of education was ‘other (i.e. less than Year 10)’, who favoured their child starting an apprenticeship or taking a VET course.

Table 7

Participant's Qualification	Go to university	Join the workforce	Start an apprenticeship	Take a VET course	Become self-employed
Degree or higher	74.4%	11.0%	15.9%	20.1%	5.2%
Trade certificate	61.4%	27.3%	25.0%	18.2%	9.1%
Year 12	56.3%	23.3%	26.1%	22.2%	5.7%
TAFE qualification	55.6%	14.6%	22.0%	23.4%	5.4%
Other post school qualification	53.6%	17.9%	21.4%	21.4%	3.6%
Year 10	49.6%	20.8%	28.4%	23.2%	2.4%
Other (i.e. less than Year 10)	25.0%	11.5%	46.2%	28.8%	5.8%
Don't know	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Chart 32 below shows the comparison of respondent answers to this question in 2003 and 2007. Slightly less parents wanted their child to go to university, start an apprenticeship and join the workforce in 2007 and slightly more parents wanted their eldest child to undertake a VET course in 2007. The option “become self-employed” was not in the 2003 survey.

Chart 32

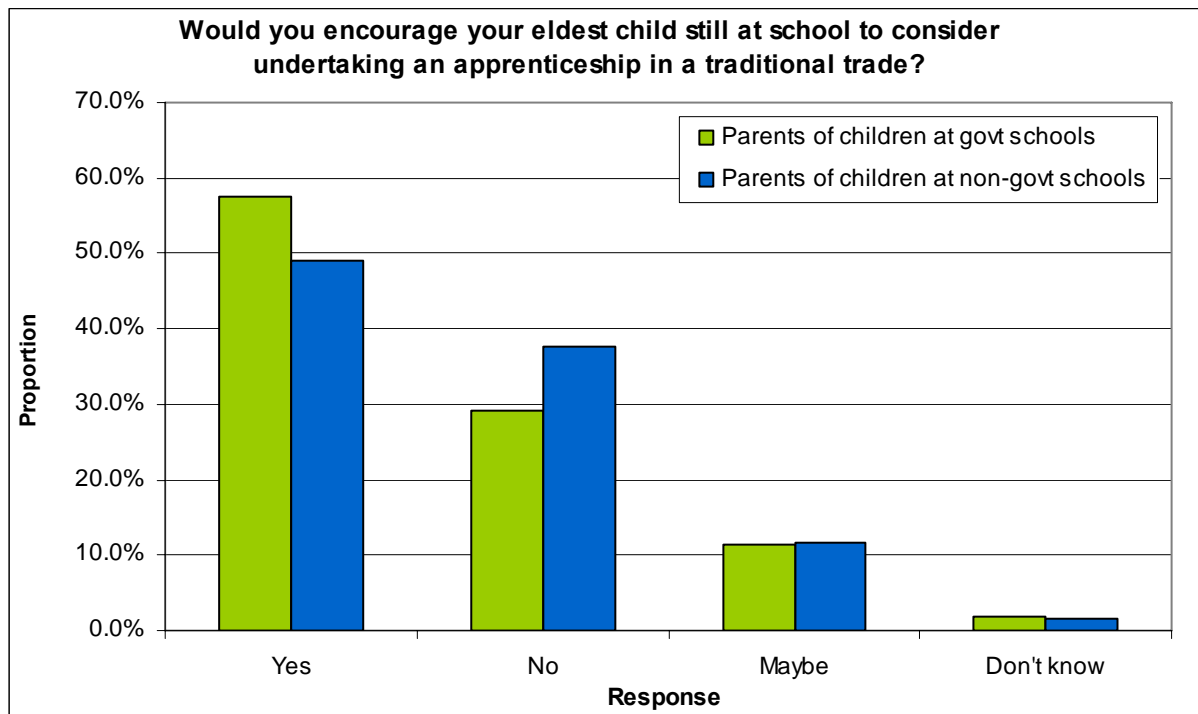


Parents' attitudes to apprenticeships in traditional trades

Study participants of secondary school aged children were asked whether they would encourage their eldest child to consider undertaking an apprenticeship in a traditional trade (e.g. motor mechanic, electrician, hairdresser etc). Almost twice as many parents of children at government schools indicated that they would encourage their child to consider undertaking an apprenticeship (57.4 per cent) compared to those parents who said they wouldn't (29.2 per cent).

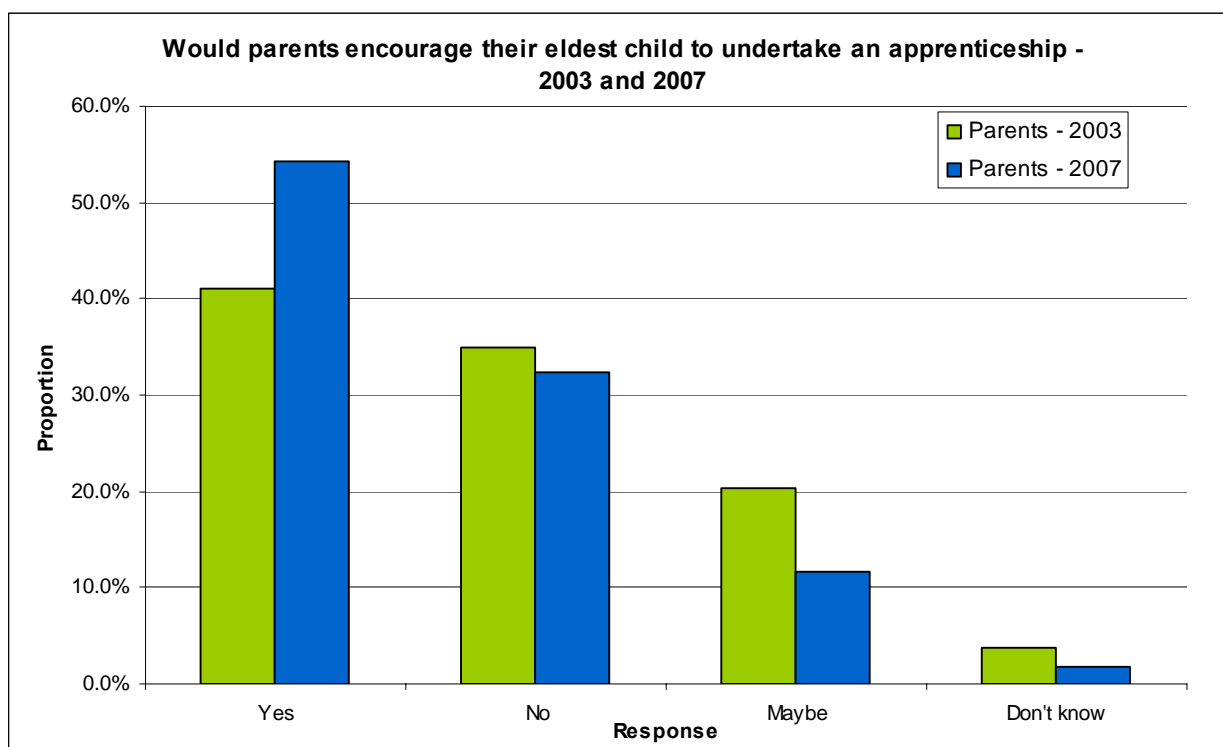
For parents of children at non-government schools the responses were more even. Almost half (49.0 per cent) of these parents indicated that they would encourage their child to consider an apprenticeship in a traditional trade while 37.6 per cent indicated that they wouldn't encourage their child to consider this option.

Chart 33



Compared with results from the 2003 survey, the number of parents of secondary school aged children who would encourage their eldest child to undertake an apprenticeship in a traditional trade increased from 41.0 per cent to 54.3 per cent.

Chart 34



Parents of secondary school aged children who indicated that they would encourage their child to consider undertaking an apprenticeship in a traditional trade were then asked to rate the relative importance of a series of reasons as to why they might encourage their child to do so. Table 8 shows the proportion of parents who responded 'important' or 'very important' to the various possible reasons for encouraging their child to consider an apprenticeship in a traditional trade. The reasons most highly rated by parents were 'apprentices learn useful skills' (84.8 per cent), 'there are good career opportunities' (80.1 per cent) and 'apprentices learn in the classroom and on the job' (78.4 per cent). Of less importance to parents were 'fees to learn a traditional trade are less than to attend university' (40.4 per cent) and 'my child's skills are more suited to a traditional trade than to other options' (46.2 per cent).

Table 8

Reasons why parents encourage their eldest child to consider undertaking an apprenticeship in a traditional trade	Rating of 'important' or 'very important'
Apprentices learn useful skills	84.8%
There are good career opportunities	80.1%
Apprentices learn in the classroom and on the job	78.4%
Apprentices can easily get a job after they finish training	69.2%
My child wants to learn a trade	64.6%
Tradespeople earn good money	59.1%
My child may be able to start an apprenticeship while still at school	55.0%
My child's skills are more suited to a traditional trade than to other options	46.2%
Fees to learn a traditional trade are less than to attend university	40.4%

The responses received on reasons why parents might encourage their child to undertake an apprenticeship are categorised by the eldest child's school type in Table 9. In each category,

parents of children in government schools were more likely to rate each reason as 'important' or 'very important'.

Table 9

Rating of 'important' or 'very important'		
Reasons why parents encourage their eldest child to consider undertaking an apprenticeship in a traditional trade	govt	non-govt
Apprentices learn useful skills	87.7%	81.3%
There are good career opportunities	84.0%	75.8%
Apprentices learn in the classroom and on the job	81.8%	74.9%
Apprentices can easily get a job after they finish training	70.5%	68.9%
My child wants to learn a trade	66.5%	62.1%
Tradespeople earn good money	60.4%	58.9%
My child may be able to start an apprenticeship while still at school	57.3%	53.4%
My child's skills are more suited to a traditional trade than to other options	48.8%	45.7%
Fees to learn a traditional trade are less than to attend university	44.1%	37.9%

Parents of secondary school aged children who indicated that they would encourage their child to consider undertaking an apprenticeship in a traditional trade were also asked whether they would like their eldest child to start an apprenticeship while still at school. Of these parents, almost two-thirds of parents of children at government secondary schools (59.7 per cent) said that they would like their eldest child to start an apprenticeship while still at school. By comparison, 45.7 per cent of parents of children at non-government schools answered that they wanted their child to start an apprenticeship at school and 29.2 per cent said they didn't.

Chart 35



Parents of secondary school aged children who indicated that they would not encourage their child to consider undertaking an apprenticeship in a traditional trade were asked to rate the

importance of various reasons why they might not encourage their child to undertake an apprenticeship. Parents regarded 'my child is not interested in a traditional trade' (78.1 per cent) as the most important reason for not encouraging their child. Other reasons highly rated by parents were that there were better options available for their child and that their child's skills were not suited to a traditional trade. Less than one-fifth indicated that important reasons for not encouraging their child were that apprentices weren't paid enough, working conditions in traditional trades were poor and apprenticeships were lengthy and did not lead to good career opportunities.

Table 10

Reasons why parents would not encourage their eldest child to consider undertaking an apprenticeship in a traditional trade	Rating of 'important' or 'very important'
My child is not interested in a traditional trade	78.1%
There are better options for my child	69.1%
My child's skills are not suited to a trade	60.1%
Apprentices are not paid enough	19.2%
Working conditions are poor in a traditional trade	16.6%
Apprenticeships do not lead to good career opportunities	14.6%
It takes too long to complete an apprenticeship	6.7%

The reasons why parents would not encourage their child to consider undertaking an apprenticeship are split into type of school sector in Table 11 below. In contrast to the results seen in Table 9, for every category below, parents of children at non-government schools were more likely to rate each of the below reasons as important or very important.

Table 11

Reasons why parents would not encourage their eldest child to consider undertaking an apprenticeship in a traditional trade	Rating of 'important' or 'very important'	
	govt	non-govt
My child is not interested in a traditional trade	76.0%	81.8%
There are better options for my child	66.3%	75.0%
My child's skills are not suited to a trade	57.7%	64.4%
Apprentices are not paid enough	17.7%	20.5%
Working conditions are poor in a traditional trade	12.6%	21.2%
Apprenticeships do not lead to good career opportunities	10.9%	18.2%
It takes too long to complete an apprenticeship	5.1%	6.1%

Vocational Education and Training in schools

All parents of children in secondary schools were asked whether their eldest child participated in vocational education and training (VET) in schools. Over one-quarter of parents (26.7 per cent) indicated that their eldest child did participate in VET in schools.

Chart 36

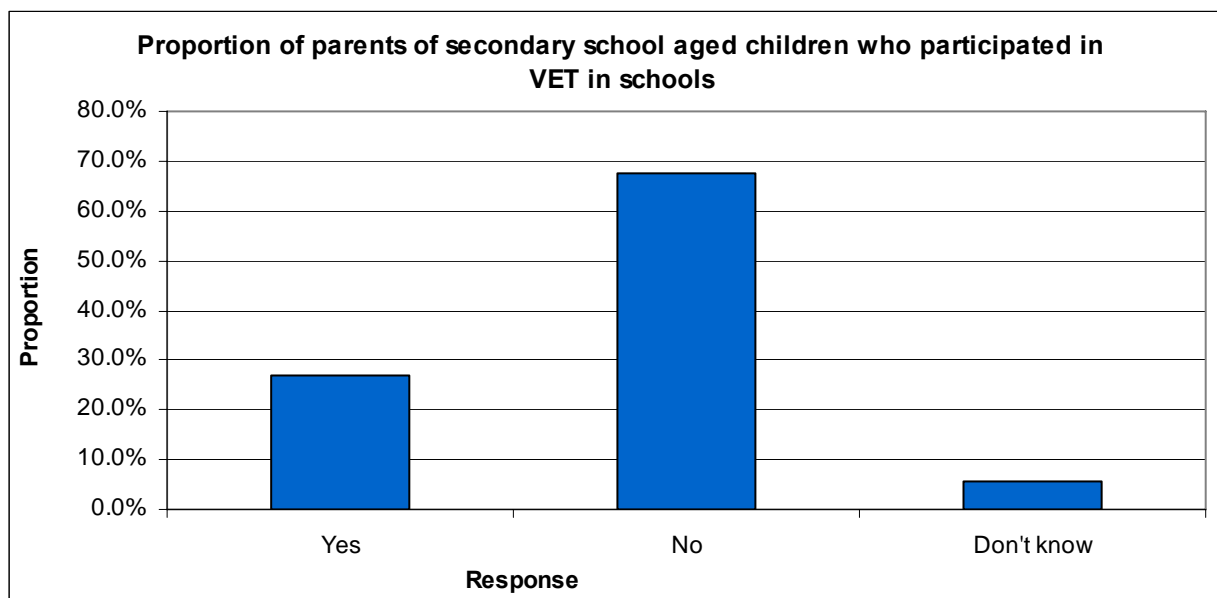
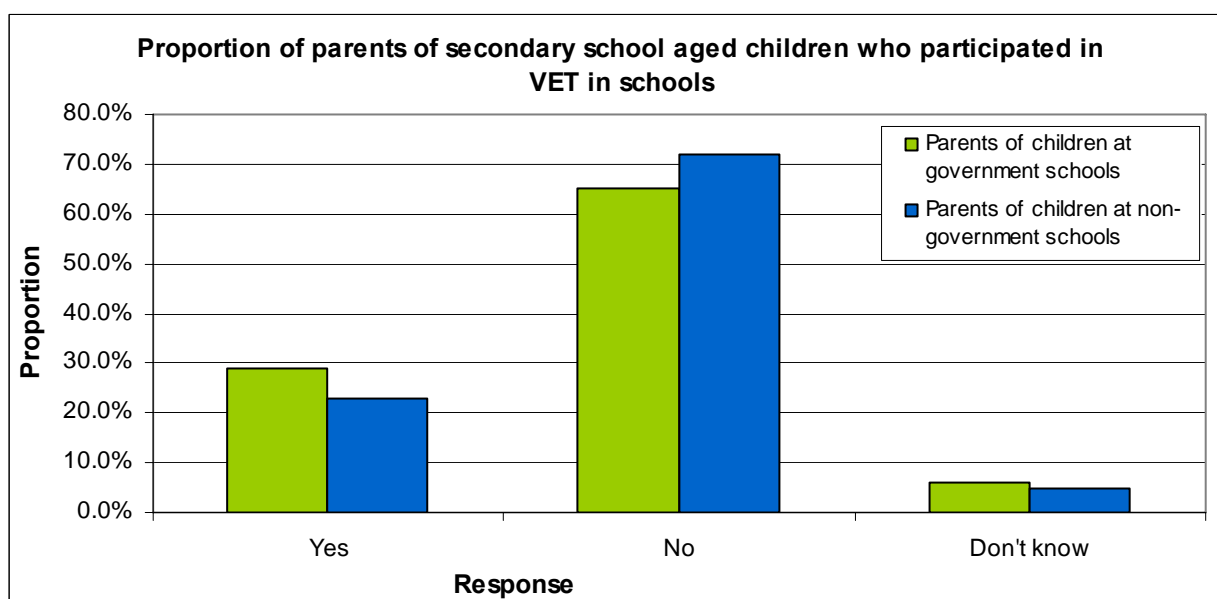


Chart 37 shows the responses classified by the type of school that the respondents' child was attending. While parents of children at government schools were slightly more likely to have their eldest child participating in VET in schools, there were no significant differences between parents of children in government and non-government schools.

Chart 37



Those parents who had children participating in VET in schools were then asked whether they thought that VET in schools was helping their eldest child gain useful employment skills. The

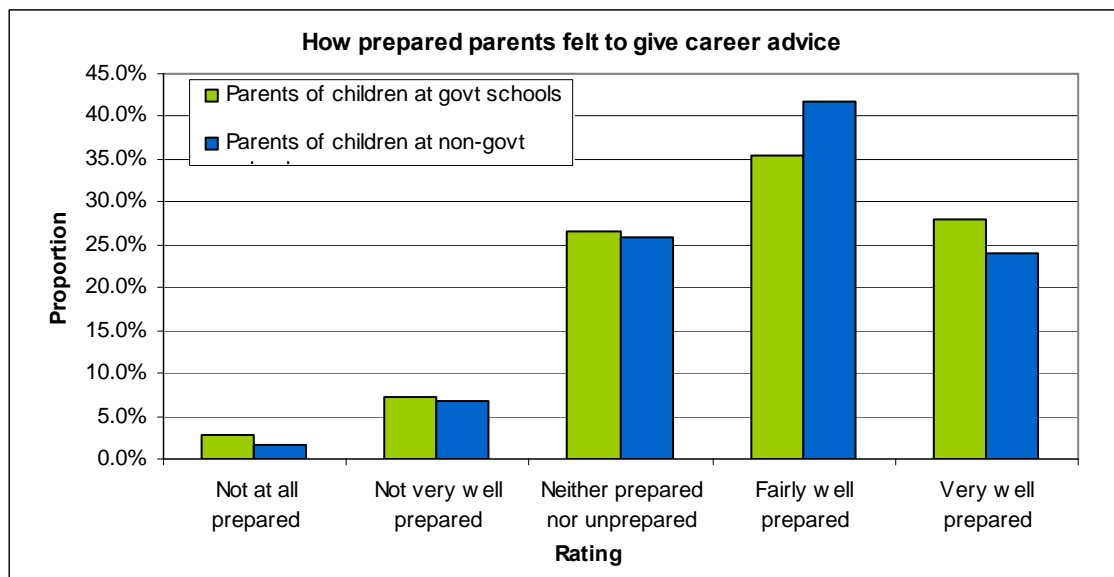
great majority of parents (82.3 per cent) were positive about the employment skills that their child was gaining through VET in schools.

Parents’ perceived ability to provide career advice

All survey respondents were asked to rate how well prepared they thought they were to provide career advice and support to their child. In the case of parents whose eldest child was in primary school, the respondent was asked how prepared they would be to give career advice when their eldest child was in secondary school.

Almost two-thirds (64.2 per cent) felt prepared to give career advice to their child. About two-thirds (63.5 per cent of parents of children at government schools and 65.7 per cent of parents of children at non-government schools) rated themselves ‘fairly well prepared’ or ‘very well prepared’ to give career advice to their child. In comparison, only 9.9 per cent of government school parents and 8.5 per cent of non-government parents believed they were ‘not at all prepared’ or ‘not very well prepared’.

Chart 38



Conclusion

The study of parents of school-aged children has indicated that the community is broadly satisfied with the quality of education and the standard of teaching at their child's school, with approximately three in four parents indicating that they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'. This same level of satisfaction, however, did not carry through to parents' general views of the school system: less than two in three rated the current quality of primary school education in their State or Territory as 'good' or 'very good', and just over one in three rated secondary education as 'good' or 'very good'.

Over half the parents indicated that they would like to see improvements in the quality /content of the curriculum, the standard of teaching and school facilities and resources.

While the majority of parents believed that students were leaving school with adequate ICT skills, less than half believed that students were leaving school with adequate skills in science, numeracy, literacy and job-related skills. Less than one-quarter believed students were leaving school with adequate skills in Australian history and understanding democracy.

The survey also drew attention to the importance of values and discipline in choosing a school. The majority of parents were aware that their eldest child's school had policies to deal with issues such as preventing and discouraging bullying and drug use; and ensuring full attendance, and in most instances they felt the school was dealing well with these issues.

Compared to a similar survey in 2003 there has been a slight decline in the proportion of parents who expect their children to attend university. This, however, is still the expectation of the majority. Many parents indicated they would encourage their children to consider an apprenticeship or a VET course because of the employment and skills benefits they provide.

Over one-quarter of parents indicated that their children participate in VET in schools and the majority of these thought this was helping them gain useful employment skills.

As with the 2003 survey, parents saw national consistency issues as important. There was strong support for national standards for teachers and school leaders, and for standard processes and models across all States and Territories for issues such as recognising skills of students, curriculum, tertiary entrance requirements, and school starting and leaving ages

Attachment A: Questionnaire

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

Male	Female

Q 2. How many SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN do you have?

(Please write number)

Additional Information for interviewer :

Another name for a Government school is a **Public or State** school;
 Another name for a Non-government school is a **Private** school.
 'Non-government' includes independent and Catholic schools.

Q 3. Did your school age children attend GOVERNMENT or NON-GOVERNMENT school(s) last year? Can you tell me how many attended each type of school?

Note to Interviewer: record the number of children attending Government or Non-government schools, and in the 'don't know' category.

	Number of children attending	
(1) Government		Go to Question 5
(2) Non-government		Next question
(4) Don't know		Go to Question 5

Q 4 What type of NON-GOVERNMENT school did your children attend last year?

	Number of children attending
(1) Catholic	
(2) Independent	
(4) Don't know	

Q 5. Were your children in PRIMARY or SECONDARY school last year? Can you tell me how many attended each level of school?

Note to Interviewer: record the number of children attending each level of school, and in the 'other' category.

Please record manually on your notepad if the respondent has children in Secondary school, as you will need this information at Question 22.

	Number of children attending
(1) Primary	
(2) Secondary/Secondary College	
(3) Home education	
(4) Distance education	
Other (please specify)	

Q 6. Did your children attend SINGLE SEX or CO-ED schools last year? How many attended single-sex and how many co-ed?

Note to Interviewer: record the number of children attending each type of school, and in the 'don't know' category.

	Number attending
(1) Single sex school	
(2) Co-ed school	
(3) Don't know	

Note to interviewer – For the following questions, select the *eldest child still at school in 2006 as the subject of the study*

*The following questions relate to your **eldest** school age child.*

Q 7. 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 'not at all important' while 5 means 'very important'. (Interviewer to read out options)

Scale

- 1 = Not at all Important
- 2 = Not Important
- 3 = Neither Important nor Unimportant
- 4 = Important
- 5 = Very Important
- 6 = Don't know/no response

(1) Academic reputation	
(2) Cost	
(3) Location	
(4) Facilities	
(5) Quality of teachers	
(6) Extra-curricular activities (e.g. weekend sporting teams, music, drama, etc.)	
(7) Secure environment (<i>i.e. your children are safe in the school grounds</i>)	
(8) Prestige (or image of school)	
(9) Religion (<i>i.e. school has a religious affiliation</i>)	
(10) Tradition (<i>e.g. other members of family have attended</i>)	
(11) Values	
(12) Discipline	
(13) Peer group for son/daughter (<i>i.e. their friends go to the school</i>)	

Q 8. In general, how satisfied are you with the QUALITY of your eldest child's education? How would you rate your satisfaction, on a scale of 1 to 5. 1 means 'very dissatisfied' and 5 means 'very satisfied'.

(1) Very dissatisfied	
(2) Slightly dissatisfied	
(3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	
(4) Fairly satisfied	
(5) Very satisfied	
(6) Don't know	

Q 9. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the QUALITY OF TEACHING at your eldest child's school? How would you rate your satisfaction, on a scale of 1 to 5. 1 means 'very dissatisfied' and 5 means 'very satisfied'.

(1) Very dissatisfied	
(2) Slightly dissatisfied	
(3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	
(4) Fairly satisfied	
(5) Very satisfied	
(6) Don't know	

Q 10. Is there any aspect of your eldest child's education that you would like to see improved?

(1) Yes	Go to next question
(2) No	Go to Question 13.
(3) Maybe	Go to next question.
(4) Don't know	Go to next question.

Q 11. Would you like to see IMPROVEMENTS to any of the following aspects of your eldest child's education? (*Interviewer to read out each option. Respondent to respond to each option with Yes or No.*)

(1) Quality/content of curriculum (<i>curriculum is what your child is learning at school</i>)	Yes	No
(2) Standard of teaching	Yes	No
(3) Quality of school principal	Yes	No
(4) School facilities and resources (<i>e.g. school buildings, computers, library books</i>)	Yes	No
(5) Quality of career guidance and support	Yes	No
(6) Adequacy and quality of physical activity programmes offered during school hours	Yes	No

Q 12. Is there any **other** aspect of your eldest child's education which you would like to see improved?

Q 13. Was your eldest child's LAST SCHOOL REPORT presented in an A to E format?

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

Q 14. How important is it that your child's SCHOOL REPORT is EASY TO UNDERSTAND? How would you rate this importance, on a scale of 1 to 5. 1 means 'not at all important' and 5 means 'very important'.

(1) not at all important	
(2) not important	
(3) neither important nor unimportant	
(4) important	
(5) very important	

Q 15. Does your eldest child's school have POLICIES on the following issues? (Interviewer to read out each option and respondent to answer Yes/No, Don't know.)

(1) Preventing and discouraging bullying	Yes	No	Don't know
(2) Preventing and discouraging drug use	Yes	No	Don't know
(3) Ensuring full attendance	Yes	No	Don't know

Q 16. How WELL does your eldest child's school deal with the following issues? Please rate each of the issues on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 means 'very poorly' and 5 means 'very well'.

	1. Very poorly 2. Poorly 3. Neither poorly nor well 4. Well 5. Very well 6. Don't know
(1) Preventing and discouraging bullying	
(2) Preventing and discouraging drug use	
(3) Promoting respect and good manners	
(4) Ensuring full attendance	
(5) Ensuring that you are fully informed about what's happening in your child's school	
(6) Providing effective physical activity programmes in school	
(7) Providing career guidance, development and support	

Q 17. How INVOLVED would you say you are with your eldest child's education. For the following items, please let me know your level of involvement. 1 means that you are not at all involved. 5 means that you are very involved. (Interviewer to read out options.)

1. Not at all involved
2. Not very involved
3. Somewhat involved
4. Fairly involved
5. Very involved
6. Don't know/no response

- (1) Your child's day-to-day school work
- (2) Selection of your child's school
- (3) Selection of your child's subjects
- (4) Out of school hours (extra-curricular) activities – e.g. sport, music, etc.

- (5) Planning your child's post-school options, offering career advice
- (6) Parent/teacher interviews

Q 18. How much do you know about the SCHOOL CURRICULUM – that is, the things your child is learning at school? Please rate your knowledge on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means 'nothing' and 5 means 'a lot'.

Additional Information for Interviewer
 The curriculum is the set of subjects offered by the school and the content of these subjects.

(1) Nothing	
(2) Not much	
(3) A little bit	
(4) Quite a lot	
(5) A lot	
(6) Don't know/no response	

Q 19. How MUCH INFORMATION have you received from your eldest child's school about the CURRICULUM offered? Please rate the amount of information you have received on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means 'nothing' and 5 means 'a lot'.

(1) Nothing	
(2) Not much	
(3) A little bit	
(4) Quite a lot	
(5) A lot	
(6) Don't know/no response	

Q 20 How satisfied are you with the COMMUNICATION FROM YOUR ELDEST CHILD'S SCHOOL (e.g. school reports, newsletters, information about subjects, your child's attendance, etc.)? Please rate your level of satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means 'very dissatisfied' and 5 means 'very satisfied'.

(1) Very dissatisfied	
(2) Slightly dissatisfied	
(3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	
(4) Fairly satisfied	
(5) Very satisfied	
(6) Don't know	

Questions 21 through 28 are targeted at PARENTS OF SECONDARY STUDENTS only. If you have manually recorded at Q5 that the respondents' child/children attended Secondary School/College in 2006, please ask these questions. Otherwise, skip to Q30.

Q 21. When do you expect your eldest 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	

Q 22. When your eldest child finishes school, what would you like him/her to do next?
 You can select more than one (*Interviewer to read out options*).

Additional information for interviewer:
 Vocational and Technical Education or Vocational Education and Training refers to education & training which provides people with work-related knowledge and skills, usually undertaken at TAFEs or vocational colleges.

(1) Start an apprenticeship	
(2) Take a Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) course	
(3) Join the workforce	
(4) Go to university	
(5) Become self-employed	
(6) Other (please specify) 	
(7) Don't know/don't mind	

Q 23. Would you encourage your eldest child still at school to CONSIDER UNDERTAKING AN APPRENTICESHIP IN A TRADITIONAL TRADE (examples – motor mechanics, electricians, hairdressers, etc.)?

(1) Yes	Go to next question.
(2) No	Go to Question 26.
(3) Maybe	Go to next question.
(4) Don't know	Go to Question 27

Q 24. When you said that you MIGHT 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 nor Unimportant 4 = Important 5 = Very Important 6 = Don't know/no response
(1) Apprentices learn in the classroom and on the job	
(2) Tradespeople earn good money.	
(3) There are good career opportunities	
(4) Apprentices learn useful skills	
(5) Apprentices can easily get a job after they finish training.	
(6) My child wants to learn a trade.	
(7) My child's skills are more suited to a traditional trade than to other options.	
(8) Fees to learn a traditional trade are less than to attend university	
(9) My child may be able to start an apprenticeship while still at school	
(10) Other reasons? (please specify)	

Q 25. Would you like your eldest child to START AN APPRENTICESHIP while still AT SCHOOL?

(1) Yes		Go to Question 27
(2) No		
(3) Maybe		
(4) Don't know		

Q 26. When you said you would NOT 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).

	<u>Scale</u>
	1 = Not at all Important
	2 = Not Important
	3 = Neither Important nor Unimportant
	4 = Important
	5 = Very Important
	6 = Don't know/no response
(1) Apprentices are not paid enough.	
(2) Apprenticeships do not lead to good career opportunities.	
(3) Working conditions are poor in a traditional trade.	
(4) There are better options for my child.	
(5) My child is not interested in a traditional trade.	
(6) My child's skills are not suited to a trade.	
(7) It takes too long to complete an apprenticeship.	
(8) Other reasons? (please specify)	

Q 27. Does your eldest child participate in VTE in Schools (sometimes called VET or vocational education and training in schools)?

Interviewer: VTE in Schools is vocational and technical education & training offered to students, usually in Years 9-12, through the school.

(1) Yes	Go to next question
(2) No	Go to Question 29
(3) Don't know	Go to Question 29

Q 28. Do you think that VTE in Schools is helping your eldest child to gain useful employment skills?

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

Q 29. How well prepared do you feel to give career advice and support to your child?

(1) Not at all prepared	
(2) Not very well prepared	
(3) Neither prepared nor unprepared	
(4) Fairly well prepared	
(5) Very well prepared	

Q 30. Do you think children are LEAVING SCHOOL WITH ADEQUATE SKILLS in the following areas? (*Interviewer to read out options*)

(1) Literacy/Reading and Writing	Yes	No	Don't know
(2) Numeracy/Mathematics	Yes	No	Don't know
(3) Information and Communications Technology	Yes	No	Don't know
(4) Australian History	Yes	No	Don't know
(5) Understanding our democracy	Yes	No	Don't know
(6) Science	Yes	No	Don't know
(7) Skills related to getting and keeping a job (<i>e.g. communication, team work, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning & organising, self-management, learning, and technology</i>)	Yes	No	Don't know

Q 31. Do you think there should be certain content that all children should learn in school in the compulsory years?

(1) Yes	Go to next question.
(2) No	Go to Question 35.
(3) Don't know	Go to Question 35.

Q 32. How important is it that children learn the following content? Use a scale from 1 to 5 again

	Scale
	1 = Not at all Important 2 = Not Important 3 = Neither Important nor Unimportant 4 = Important 5 = Very Important 6 = Don't know/no response
(1) Grammar, spelling and punctuation	
(2) Reading and analysing a range of texts including classic literature (e.g. <i>Shakespeare, Jane Austen, etc.</i>)	
(3) Mathematics (e.g. <i>addition, subtraction, multiplication, division and fractions</i>)	
(4) Understanding the Australian system of Government	
(5) Science	

Q 33. Do you think there are ANY OTHER CONTENT AREAS that all children should learn in the compulsory years?

(1) Yes	Go to next question.
(2) No	Go to Question 35.
(3) Don't know	Go to Question 35.

Q 34. Can you give one example of ANOTHER CONTENT AREA that all children should learn in the compulsory years? (*Interviewer to type in first example mentioned by respondent.*)

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Q 35. What are your general impressions of the current QUALITY of PRIMARY school education in your State or Territory? Use a scale from 1 to 5 again, where 1 is 'very poor' and 5 is 'very good'.

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

Q 36. What are your general impressions of the current QUALITY of SECONDARY school or SECONDARY COLLEGE education in your State or Territory? Use a scale from 1 to 5 again, where 1 is 'very poor' and 5 is 'very good'

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

Q 37. 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)*

	<p style="text-align: center;">Rating</p> <p>1 = Not at all Important 2 = Not Important 3 = Neither Important or Unimportant 4 = Important 5 = Very Important 6 = Don't know/no response</p>
(1) National eligible school starting age <i>(the age at which your child is eligible to start school)</i>	
(2) Standard process for recognising skills of students when they move from one State or Territory to another <i>(e.g. if a student completes Year 9 in one State, they should be given credit for this and be eligible to commence Year 10 in another State)</i>	
(3) Standard school leaving age across all States and Territories <i>(i.e. the minimum age at which your child is eligible to leave school)</i>	
(4) Model curriculum across all States and Territories <i>(i.e. all Australian children would be taught the same core subjects and core content).</i>	
(5) Standard tertiary entrance requirements for VTE and higher education across all states and territories	
(6) National standards for teachers and school leaders <i>(i.e. statements describing what teachers and school leaders should be able to do).</i>	

May I ask a few general questions about you and your partner if you have one...

Q 38. Can I ask you what OCCUPATION you and your partner work in (please specify).

Participant.....

Partner.....

No Partner (Interviewer – Please tick this box if no partner)

Q 39. Next, may I ask about your own and your partner’s highest LEVEL OF EDUCATION?
Have you or your partner completed - ... (Interviewer to read out options and tick the appropriate box)

Qualification	Participant	Partner
(1) Year 10		
(2) Year 12		
(3) Trade certificate		
(4) TAFE qualification – eg <i>Certificate, Diploma, Advanced Diploma</i>		
(5) Degree or higher (<i>i.e. University qualification</i>)		
(6) Other post school qualification		
(7) Don't know		
(8) Other (<i>i.e. less than Year 10</i>)		

Q 40. May I ask what TYPE OF SCHOOL 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		
(5) Other (<i>i.e. Home school</i>)		

Q 41. In which COUNTRY or COUNTRIES were you, your partner and your eldest child BORN?

Participant.....

Partner.....

Your eldest child

Q 42. What main language do you speak at home?

Q43 Do you identify as an Indigenous Australian?

(1) Yes	
(2) No	
(3) Don't wish to answer	

Q 44. Could I ask approximately HOW OLD you are?

(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	

Q 45. 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	