STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOL EDUCATION AND THE PUBLIC AND CORPORATE SECTORS

by

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Melbourne

March 2000

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# Table of Contents

List of Tables ................................................................................................................................. ii
Declaration ....................................................................................................................................... iv
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................................... v
Abstract ............................................................................................................................................... vi

## Chapter 1: Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
Purpose ............................................................................................................................................. 1
Background ....................................................................................................................................... 1
Research Questions .......................................................................................................................... 3
Definition of Key Terms .................................................................................................................. 4
Methodology ...................................................................................................................................... 4
Delimitations and Limitations ........................................................................................................ 6
Significance of the Study ................................................................................................................... 7
Summary of Chapters ....................................................................................................................... 10

## Chapter 2: Literature Review and Related Theory and Research ................................................ 11
Leadership ......................................................................................................................................... 11
Strategic Leadership ....................................................................................................................... 17
Summary of Literature .................................................................................................................... 35

## Chapter 3: Methodology ................................................................................................................ 36
Hermeneutic Phenomenology .......................................................................................................... 37
Procedure ......................................................................................................................................... 41
Delimitations and Limitations ........................................................................................................ 51
Validity and Reliability (Trustworthiness) ..................................................................................... 54
Participant characteristics .............................................................................................................. 57

## Chapter 4: Findings Part A: Direction-setting ............................................................................. 62
The Leaders Vision .......................................................................................................................... 62
Summary of Vision ........................................................................................................................... 89
Futures Thinking .............................................................................................................................. 89
Summary of Futures Thinking ......................................................................................................... 100
Factors Influencing Vision and Futures Thinking ........................................................................ 102
Summary of Factors Influencing Vision and Futures Thinking ..................................................... 110

## Chapter 5: Findings Part B: Implementation ................................................................................. 113
Planning ........................................................................................................................................... 113
Summary of Planning ...................................................................................................................... 130
Working With People ..................................................................................................................... 132
Summary of Working With People ............................................................................................... 142
Chapter Six: Summary, Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusion ............... 146
Summary ........................................................................................................... 146
Discussion ........................................................................................................ 155
Recommendations .......................................................................................... 171
Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 175
Bibliography .................................................................................................... 176
Appendix: ......................................................................................................... 182
List of Tables

Table 1: Types of Vision of Leaders................................................................. 88
Table 2: Kinds of Futures Thinking of Leaders................................................. 101
Table 3: Factors Influencing Vision and Futures Thinking.............................. 111
Table 4: Aspects of Leaders' Planning Practice............................................... 131
Table 5: Leaders' Practices in Working with People....................................... 143
Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for any other degree in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by any other person except where due reference is given in the text.

P. K. Dettmer

Signature:
Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the support and collegiality of the staff and students involved in the D.Ed program at the University of Melbourne.

In particular, I express gratitude to Prof. Brian Caldwell for his thoroughness, perceptiveness and caring throughout the project and to Prof. Hedley Beare for his encouragement and interest.

Sincere appreciation goes to the eight participants in the study, all of whom held demanding professional positions but gave of themselves generously and openly.

Finally, special thanks go to my family for their patience and moral support, and to some special friends.
Abstract

Today's schools operate in a climate of great change, along with increased responsibility and accountability for their own futures as a result of the move towards self-management. This has resulted in calls for a new kind of leadership, called strategic leadership, at the school level. The essential features of strategic leadership are its future orientation and its concern with both the external and internal environments of the school. Strategic leadership is usually associated in policy documents with the role of the principal.

Information on the exercise of strategic leadership and the development of relevant capacities was gathered from eight outstanding strategic leaders from the school education, public and corporate sectors, who were identified through a peer-group nomination process. A hermeneutic phenomenology methodology was used, which consisted chiefly of the collection of lived-experience accounts of the participants, and the interpretation of these by the researcher. Information was collected through in-depth interviews over a period of four years.

A body of information was produced, not only through areas of similarity and difference between the eight individual participants, but through comparison and contrast of education with non-education, public sector with private sector, and to a more limited degree, male with female.

Outstanding strategic leaders in schools were found to be strongly involved in a values-based personal journey, but at the same time to be grounded in current realities through the constant collection and interpretation of information to determine outcomes. They exhibited several levels of vision and a complexity of futures thinking across a range of areas, the most prominent of these being technology and the change process. Their planning reflected a move from traditional strategic planning towards a more dynamic and fluid approach based on values. In working with people, emphasis was placed on empowerment, professional development, mentoring and appraisal.
The leaders saw themselves generally as energetic, restless, risk-taking, strong in decision-making, hard-working and sensitive. Major factors in the development of their strategic leadership capacities had been early exposure to a mentor either at university or the workplace, reading broadly, involvement in personal development programs and, for women, the family.

The study confirmed indications in the literature that approaches to strategy formulation have changed. The approach used by these leaders borrowed from several current concepts, but most closely resembled the 'heroic quest,' with the addition of the interest in data. The way in which strategic leadership was exercised tended not to change with changes in time and context.

The study suggested areas for further investigation in terms of the leader-follower dynamic, the leader’s involvement in school culture, the effects of the leader’s adrenalin-fed behaviour, the effects of context, and gender difference.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Purpose
The aim of this research was to illuminate the phenomenon of strategic leadership, for which there has been a growing need in schools within the context of self-management and continuous environmental change. The study involved interviews over a four year period with eight outstanding strategic leaders, five from the school education sector and three from the public service and corporate sectors.

Background
The last decade has seen schools in many countries, such as Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States of America, exposed to major and rapid change. Faced simultaneously with the tension of self-management, involving power for resource allocation against increased accountability, and continuing upheaval in the external environment, schools have been subjected to a steep learning curve.

The new demands on schools and their leaders, in the context of self-management, were recognised by Caldwell and Spinks (1992) as requiring new kinds of leadership, amongst them 'Strategic Leadership.' Strategic leadership is a concept adopted and adapted from the business world, where the use of strategy by leaders had long been a focus of interest as market forces dictated the necessity for long-term thinking about organisational action within a changing environment. It is concerned with being proactive, with looking ahead in order to identify opportunities to be taken advantage of and threats to be avoided, and then devising appropriate action, rather than waiting in reactionary mode for whatever eventuates. The essence of strategic leadership is its future orientation.

Early indicators from some sites of self-management suggested that schools did not readily adapt to the new proactive role and that leaders needed assistance in developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes associated with successful strategic leadership. These needs were
exemplified in the United Kingdom, where the 'grant-maintained (GM)' schools represented an early and quite extreme case of self management in which schools could opt out totally from government control and have immediate recourse to the full resources allowed to them. In the case of these schools, considerable weight of opinion existed (eg. Halpin, Power and Fitz, 1991:419; Times Education Supplement, 15/1/93) that the first few years of self-management, since inception in 1988, saw a conservative backward movement rather than a great leap forward. In an exploratory study by this researcher (Dettman 1993a), of their strategic leadership behaviours, sixteen principals of the grant-maintained schools indicated that they generally felt inadequately prepared at a personal level for the strategic role and, in addition, felt constrained in the process by certain processes and confusion over roles.

A second exploratory study by Dettman (1993b) took the form of a case study of a single successful strategic leader. The school principal concerned and twelve staff members were interviewed at length about the extent to which the principal focused on strategic leadership relative to other aspects of leadership, and about the ways in which strategic leadership was manifested by the leader. Although the study was of a single case only, the outcomes seemed well enough defined to point to the desirability of further research of this kind.

Given the advent of large-scale self-management of schools in Victoria, Australia, by way of its Schools of the Future program (Caldwell and Hayward, 1998), it was deemed useful to further investigate the exercise of strategic leadership. This study was therefore set up to investigate the successful practice of strategic leadership in different sectors of enterprise in order to determine common characteristics, processes and contextual conditions, an understanding of which might be expected to enhance the practice of strategic leadership within the school environment.

A study of eight outstanding strategic leaders was carried out. These leaders, representing education, both state and independent, the public
sector and the corporate sector, were nominated by their peers within the relevant sector of enterprise as being outstanding strategic leaders according to a given description of the term, which was adapted from the work of Caldwell and Spinks (1992). Each case study consisted of two in-depth interviews with the subject, with follow-up discussions where necessary for clarification or elaboration. The study took place over the period of four years. The research methodology used for analysis of the data was hermeneutic phenomenology, which involved the collection of the first hand accounts of participant experience, and the interpretation of these by the researcher.

The study took place in Melbourne, the capital city of the State of Victoria in Australia. Melbourne is a large and geographically dispersed city with a reputation for being highly ‘livable,’ with a focus on cleanliness, gardens, modern technology, and cultural and sporting activities. It has an extensive commercial and manufacturing base. It has a population of over three million people, with considerable ethnic diversity. The school education system consists of primary schools from preparatory to year six (ages five to twelve) and secondary schools from year seven to twelve (ages twelve to eighteen). The majority of students complete thirteen years of schooling and achieve the Victorian Certificate of Education. There are government schools, free or very low-fee, catering for 70% of the population, and non-government schools, either low-fee, which cater for 20%, or high-fee, which cater for the remaining 10% of the population. The strategic leaders in this study represented both the government and the independent sectors of education, and the corporate and public service sectors of enterprise.

Research Questions

Two research questions guided the investigation.

1. For outstanding strategic leaders in school education and the public and private sectors,
   a) How is strategic leadership exercised, and does this change with changes in time and context?
b) How has the capacity for strategic leadership been developed?
c) What similarities and differences exist in the strategic leadership of the education / non-education groups?

2. How may the capacity for strategic leadership be developed for school leaders?

Definition of Key Terms

Several key terms need to be defined in order to facilitate understanding of the processes followed in this study. They are the following:

**strategic leadership:**
that kind of leadership which is particularly concerned with driving an organisation forward through a turbulent external and internal environment in such a way that opportunities are maximised and threats minimised. Strategic leadership involves a scanning of the context in which the organisation operates to identify trends and issues, analysis of these trends and issues to determine areas of significance to the organisation, assessment of current capacity to deal with potential alternatives, construction of a course of action and, throughout, gaining the commitment of others to the process. Strategic leadership has a long-term perspective, is national and international in scale and focuses on the institution rather than component programs.

(adapted from Caldwell and Spinks, 1992)

**outstanding strategic leaders:**
those identified by their peers within the same sector of enterprise as being outstanding in the exercise of strategic leadership as described above

**education sector:**
comprising schools, both primary and secondary, state and independent. Catholic schools sampled within the independent sector.

**corporate sector:**
comprising all institutions essentially concerned with profit-making as their raison d’etre.

**public sector**
comprising all bodies or institutions offering service to the general population on a not-for profit basis

Methodology

As strategic leadership was a newly-identified function for school leaders, seemingly lacking a broad base of experience from which information could be drawn, it was decided that the most appropriate approach was to gather
in-depth information from a restricted number of sites, involving participants who were recognised by their peers to be outstanding practitioners of the phenomenon under investigation.

Following Lincoln and Guba's (1985:39) discussion of the essential features of naturalistic research, this was selected as the appropriate approach for the current study. It allowed for purposive sampling in order to identify a small number of 'experts,' it allowed for the researcher to be the instrument of data collection in order to enhance the elicitation of complex information, and it allowed for the rich experience of unique individuals to be explored. Most importantly, given the absence in the literature of any suitable a priori theory to give shape to the investigation, it allowed for the research design and the guiding substantive theory to emerge from the data rather than be preordinately constructed.

The specific methodology selected was that of hermeneutic phenomenology. According to Tesch, (1990:59), this is appropriate where the interest is in the comprehension of the meaning of thought, behaviour and action through language. The methodology involves the discerning of themes (phenomenology) in the lived-experience account, and interpretation (hermeneutics) through engagement with the researcher's own experience. The task is not to draw empirical generalizations or to create rule-like statements, but to enable a reader to appropriate meanings in a personal way, through interaction with the text and an understanding of the position of the researcher.

Data collection was undertaken through in-depth interviewing, with two interviews conducted with each respondent, four years apart. The interviews were conducted in semi-structured format, proceeding on the basis of some set questions, but following lines of inquiry as they suggested themselves. The researcher had considerable experience of school leadership and was familiar with the demands of strategic leadership in a school setting. She had undertaken preliminary research projects in the same area of
interest and had worked as a graduate research assistant within a university institute for social program evaluation.

Interviews were tape-recorded, with prior agreement of participants against assurances of anonymity and the right to view and amend the full transcripts of the interviews, or to withdraw from the study at any time.

Analysis followed a procedure devised by Tesch (1990: 92-113) and exemplified by Gurr (1996). This consisted of a deep reading of the data, a delineation of meaning units, grouping of the meaning units into themes, checking of the themes established against the original transcripts in order to identify further themes, and the providing of some contextual material that might help to illuminate the text.

Report writing utilised three kinds of phenomenological writing (van Manen, 1990: 168-173). These were the 'thematic,' as it used emerging themes as generative guides, the 'analytical,' as it examined systematically the themes revealed by the narratives, and the 'exemplificative,' as it utilised first-hand accounts from the participants themselves to allow the reader to rework the material in order to personally appropriate whatever might seem meaningful.

Delimitations and Limitations
Delimitation is concerned with the boundaries which define the parameters within which the research matter is located, while limitation is concerned with the generalisability of the findings.

Delimitations
The major delimitations of this research are that:

i. it is concerned with the phenomenon of strategic leadership
ii. it is concerned with the strategic practice of a small number only of individuals who are considered by their peers to be 'outstanding' in this field
iii. the boundaries of the research are determined chiefly by the perceptions of the subjects whose practice is being investigated
iv. the contextual material included is concerned as much with the personal background and characteristics of the subjects as it is with the complexity of discrete sites
Limitations
The major limitation of this research lies in its lack of generalisability. The study involved only a small number of eight participants and, in addition, these were people who were deemed to be outstanding in the particular field and therefore not typical. The research also took place within a particular time-frame and one in which the field under investigation was seen to be new and not widely practised. For these reasons, the findings of the research are not intended to apply to all strategic leaders in all sectors.

Significance of the Study
Education reforms around the world in the last decade may have taken slightly different paths and been characterised by varying levels of intensity, but taken overall, they reflect a powerful movement towards the self-managing school. Caldwell and Spinks (1998:4) describe the self-managing school as "a school in a system of education to which there has been decentralized a significant amount of authority and responsibility to make decisions related to the allocation of resources within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, standards and accountabilities." According to Caldwell and Spinks (1998), self-management as a structural reform is now well established in Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, China and, increasingly, the United States.

The purpose of self-management is essentially to improve the learning and teaching that is the core business of schools, by locating a great deal more decision-making power at the site of the action. Self-management provides a school with greater control over its own future. Used to effect, it allows a school to define itself as a distinctive organisation and to achieve for its students the particular type of learning experience that best suits its mission. This new scenario of self-management places pressure on a school to look to the future in a way that was not previously necessary. The reactive mode of implementing directives from the centre must give way to the proactive mode of mapping out one's own direction. The individual school must adopt strategies that will maximise perceived benefits and minimise
the effects of deficiencies, in relation to the type of context in which it expects
to be operating and the type of clientele that it continues to serve. An
element of competition is likely to appear, as Marginson (1997) suggests,
with schools allocating resources not just in ways that enhance teaching and
learning, but in ways that are likely to improve their market position and
allow them to attract a higher level of resources.

Compounding the implications of self-management for schools is the
increasing rate of environmental change. Technology allows for many
exciting possibilities in education delivery, but also brings the threat of
competition in greater on-line provision from alternative suppliers and a
likely rise in home-schooling rates. Globalisation may bring major change in
curriculum. Demographic swings create upheaval in supply and demand
and in the rate of resource allocation at different sites. Political, economic
and social movements bring enormous challenges. All of these forces impact
on the individual school, and the self-managing school has the responsibility
for incorporating them into the way it operates.

The new conditions prevailing in schools have considerable
implications for school leadership, since leadership has been identified by
many as impacting on the success or otherwise of organisations. Sarros
(1993), for instance, wrote of the ‘immense impact’ that leaders have on
social and cultural systems, while West-Burnham (1997) concluded that
although the nature of leadership was still the subject of debate, there was an
‘overwhelming consensus’ that leadership was linked to the success of
schools. While some (eg Lakomski 1995, 99, Gronn 1996) suggest that
leadership should be viewed as a shared or distributed activity, it is to be
noted that policy documents in various countries have, from the beginning,
usually located responsibility for the new kind of leadership with the formal
leader (eg Hammer and Stanton 1995, Bolam 1997). This research therefore
focuses on the role of the formal leader, normally the principal.

The term ‘strategic leadership’ entered education parlance through
Caldwell and Spinks’ (1992) seminal work Leading the Self-Managing
School, which first drew attention to the particular leadership needs of schools as they gained increasing powers to determine their own futures. Caldwell and Spinks (1992) described five key operations of leaders through which strategic leadership is manifested in schools. Others (e.g., Kotter 1990, Davies and Ellison 1999, Slaughter 1994) have approached the subject in slightly different ways, but the message is the same. A new leadership mindset is needed in schools that relates emerging environmental patterns to the work of the school, in terms of what it does and how it does it.

Exactly what kind of person a strategic leader is, however, is unknown. Whilst the tasks required of the strategic leader can be outlined, this is inadequate for the purposes of understanding how the leader best carries out the role and in which conditions, or how the knowledge, skills and attitudes to do it are developed. A review of leadership literature reveals little information about the characteristics of successful strategic leaders and their practice. As early as 1992 Leithwood, Begley and Cousins (1992:27), after examining the current state of knowledge about school leadership in light of the needs of future schools, called for more research that focused on the ‘internal processes’ of school leaders, in order to illuminate the development of desired capacities. Similarly, in 1996, Gronn (1996:25) asked for “a new world order in the study of headship,” which he saw as necessitating “longitudinal, naturalistic and biographical investigations” to ascertain what leadership looks like.

This research serves the purpose of illuminating the processes involved in strategic leadership, as well as of identifying some external factors affecting it. Findings from the research serve several purposes. First, they help to improve practice by providing insights into the ways in which outstanding strategic leaders exercise their strategic function. The elaboration of the knowledge, skills and attitudes of successful strategic leaders, and of the way in which these are developed, should prove valuable in enhancing professional development activity and should aid in appointment and promotion processes. Second, the research contributes to
knowledge of leadership, especially in terms of the leader/follower debate and the transactional/transformational issue. Third, it suggests new areas for research to further clarify the concept of strategic leadership.

**Summary of Chapters**

Chapter one has described the purpose, significance and background of the study, drawing attention to the need for enhanced understanding of successful strategic leadership to serve the needs of self-managing schools, which are becoming increasingly responsible for their own futures. The significant role of the school leader and the lack of current knowledge about the development of the strategic leader have been discussed. An overview of the methodology has been given and the research questions articulated. The defining terms used in the study have been described. Chapter two provides a review of literature pertaining to leadership and to strategic leadership and its related concepts. This serves to highlight the researcher's understanding of current knowledge and to provide the basis for later discussion of contributions made by the study. Chapter three presents the methodology. It describes the broad paradigm of naturalistic inquiry and then explains and justifies the choice of the specific methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology. Data collection and analysis methods are described and illustrated. Delimitations and limitations of the research are discussed, with consideration given to standards for trustworthiness of the findings, and the process of selection of the participants is detailed. Chapter four presents the first part of the results, which deals with Direction-Setting, allowing the participants to speak for themselves through a large amount of direct quotation, and then providing critical comment on this. Chapter Five gives similar attention to the second part of the results, which deals with Implementation. Chapter Six summarises the findings and then discusses them in light of the existing literature in order to identify the contribution that the study makes to knowledge and the implications thereof for improving practice, for theoretical knowledge, and for research methodology. Then follows a simple set of recommendations and a concluding statement.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND RELATED THEORY AND RESEARCH

This chapter presents trends in literature relating to leadership and to strategic leadership in particular. It has two parts. The first part briefly discusses the importance attached to leadership, and the nature and dynamics of leadership, including its complexity, and some major conceptualisations of the phenomenon. The second part acknowledges the call for a new kind of future-oriented leadership which has been labelled 'strategic leadership' and which has been largely connected to the role of the formal leader in policy statements. It makes reference to some views on associated research needs and then presents several of the concepts associated with strategic leadership.

Leadership

Importance of leadership

Literature reflects an acknowledgement of the importance of leadership to institutions. Bass and Stogdill (1990), for instance, noted that leadership made 'the critical difference' in the success or otherwise of organisations across the whole spectrum of life: education, church, business, military, politics and the government. Sarros (1993:52), on the basis of a summary of leadership hints from executives, business leaders, academics and entrepreneurs, stated that "...leadership is a powerful tool in building a confident and committed workforce and a strong and resilient organisational culture. Leaders have immense impact on social and cultural systems..."

In relation to education, Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1989:99) pointed out that "outstanding leadership has invariably emerged as a key characteristic of outstanding schools" and recommended that the development of potential leaders be given high priority. Further support for this view came from studies by Valentine and Bowman (1991) and Rothberg and Pawlas (1993). West-Burnham (1997:137) concurred that:

Irrespective of any problems of definitions, identification, development and sustainability, there does appear to be an overwhelming consensus about the relationship between leadership and effective, successful or improving schools.
Nature and dynamics of leadership

Complexity

Perspectives on leadership abound, reinforcing Stogdill’s early comment (1974:259) that “there are almost as many definitions as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept.” A few examples will illustrate this. Greenfield (1984:166), for instance, in a study of ‘willfulness and non-natural order in organisations,’ concluded that organisations are contexts for the expression of individual willfulness, in which people group together around sets of values and the leader becomes an ‘entrepreneur for values’; “those who cannot readily be recruited to the moral structure for which the leader stands must be sold into it by persuasion, calculation, guile, persistence, threat or sheer force.” Sergiovanni (1987:2) viewed leadership as “the process of persuasion by which a leader or leadership group (such as the state) induces followers to act in a manner that enhances the leader’s purposes or shared purposes.” Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1989:123) took the view that leadership was concerned with “gaining commitment to a set of values, statements of ‘what ought to be,’ which then become the heart of the culture of the school.” Starratt (1993 : 136) talked of the role of leaders as being to influence others in the way they see themselves and the way they see their role;

This means raising questions, challenging assumptions, asking for another opinion, looking beyond tomorrow’s solutions to the larger challenge. The leader must become something of a Socratic gadfly, bothering people enough until they begin to think things through more thoroughly, discuss them together, take the time to appreciate the significance of what they are doing. The new leader must orchestrate a more intense and thorough-going group-think.

(Starratt, 1993:148).

Daft (1999:5), meanwhile, suggests that “leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their shared purposes.”

The multiplicity of views about what constitutes leadership has led some to conclude that the study of leadership is in difficulties. Howe (1994:3277), for instance, found that:
The study of leadership has been fraught with contradictions, conflicting results, seemingly irreconcilable disciplinary perspectives, and an inability to agree upon a definition or a general description of the phenomenon.

West-Burnham (1997:137), in the same vein, stated that "It would appear that while leadership is incontestably significant, the nature of what leaders actually do is highly contested." Similarly, Bhindi and Duignan (1997:118) found that:

Environmental complexities and turbulence have brought to the forefront fundamental issues and tensions relating to leadership, organization structures, culture and management practices. These changes, which appear to be worldwide phenomena, have placed leadership, its basis and function, under critique.

More recently and most radically, Lakomski (1999:1) recommended abandoning leadership studies altogether, on the basis that their underlying assumptions are flawed, and attending instead to a broader examination of 'how an organisation learns.'

Some major concepts in leadership
In the absence of any a priori theory of strategic leadership to guide the current research, the following draws attention briefly to some aspects of the leadership debate which may potentially illuminate, or be illuminated by, this research. These include the more historical 'leader trait' and 'situational' approaches, the 'transactional/transformational' differentiation, leading to a growing emphasis on the role of the follower, and the 'leadership/management' distinction.

i. Leader trait
This approach derives from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century belief that a leader is born with innate 'heroic' capacities or traits. Early studies aimed at identifying these leadership traits were focused on comparisons of the personalities and behaviours of leaders and non-leaders; these reflected little consistency. A narrower focus on the traits of effective leaders, however, (Beare, Caldwell and Millikan, 1989:102) revealed a number of traits which consistently characterize more effective leaders. These include:
• sense of responsibility;
• concern for task completion;
• energy;
• persistence;
• risk-taking
• originality
• self-confidence
• capacity to handle stress
• capacity to influence
• capacity to co-ordinate the efforts of others in the achievement of purpose.

Although this list of traits had potential use in the identification and development of leaders, it provided little concrete assistance in the development of behaviors.

ii. Situational contingent
The trait theories did not take into account the different situations in which leadership is exercised, thus ignoring time, place, group behaviours, relationships and other contextual variables. Situational theories of leadership developed that sought to match leadership styles or leadership behaviours with the different situations in which leadership might occur (eg. Hersey and Blanchard, 1982). Attempts to develop theories aimed to show that there is no one best way to lead in all situations, but that in any particular situation one approach may be more effective than another.

iii. Transactional/Transformational
A distinction made by Burns (1978), between the ‘transactional’ leadership of the past and ‘transformational’ leadership encouraged a move towards more participatory practice. Burns saw transactional leadership as being concerned with individuals within an organisation negotiating their individual interests with the leader, to their mutual satisfaction, while transformational leadership was concerned with “an exchange among people seeking common aims, uniting them to go beyond their separate interests in the pursuit of higher goals” (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988:198).

The notion of transformational leadership has been well utilised, as in work by Bass and Avolio (1994), Leithwood, Begley and Cousins (1992), and
Caldwell and Spinks (1992). Recently, however, it has come under challenge as it is seen by some (e.g. Gronn, 1995; Lakomski, 1995, 1999; and Crowther, 1996) to continue a reliance on strong, visionary leadership, thus promoting the traditional dependence on hierarchical positioning rather than multiple locations for decision-making. Gronn (1999:5) explains that:

Leadership is an ascribed or attributed status, which means that the decision as to whether persons merit being deemed leaders resides in the hands of the other abstracted party in the formulaic dyad within which discussions of leadership are typically cast: followers.

Gronn (1999:5) sees leadership as a form of influence and suggests that “because sources of influence do not wholly reside at the apex of organisations like schools, leaders (and leadership) are to be found, potentially, at any level and in any sphere...”

Lakomski (1999:9) goes somewhat further, to say that leadership is not only part of a leader-follower relationship, but is part of the broader network of distributed cognition that is an organisation. She makes the point (1999:10) that “there is no sharp boundary to be drawn between inter-individual and cultural cognition” and that therefore we cannot make simplistic assumptions about direct causal relationships between what a leader does and particular outcomes.

iv. Leadership/Management
Another approach to describing leadership has been to contrast it with management, since the two terms were traditionally linked, though not necessarily exclusively, to the role of senior personnel within an organisation.

Kotter (1990) provides a lengthy comparison of leadership and management, taking care to point out that the two are of equal value and complementary, yet very different. Leadership, he says (1990:5), is do to with constructive or adaptive change, which is achieved through the following three sub-processes:

1. Establishing direction - developing a vision of the future, often the distant future, along with strategies for producing the changes needed to achieve that vision
2. **Aligning people** - communicating the direction to those whose cooperation may be needed so as to create coalitions that understand the vision and that are committed to it achievement

3. **Motivating and inspiring** - keeping people moving in the right direction despite major political, bureaucratic, and resource barriers to change by appealing to very basic, but often untapped, human needs, values and emotions

In contrast, Kotter (1990:4) says, management is to do with producing a degree of consistency and order. The change is achieved through different processes, as follows:

1. **Planning and budgeting** - setting targets or goals for the future, typically for the next month or year; establishing detailed steps for achieving those targets, steps that might include timetables and guidelines; and then allocating resources to accomplish those plans

2. **Organizing and staffing** - establishing an organizational structure and set of jobs for accomplishing plan requirements, staffing the jobs with qualified individuals, communicating the plan to those people, delegating responsibility for carrying out the plan, and establishing systems to monitor implementation

3. **Controlling and problem solving** - monitoring results versus plan in some detail, both formally and informally, by means of reports, meetings, etc; identifying deviations, which are usually called "problems"; and then planning and organizing to solve the problems.

Limerick, Cunnington and Crowther (1998), meanwhile, in presenting a similar outline of major functions to be carried out by persons of influence within an organisation, use the term *strategic management* as all-inclusive. Their use of the word 'strategic' integrates the processes of 'vision and identity management', which Kotter would see as aspects of leadership, with the more customary management processes of planning and implementation.

Sawatski (1997:145) takes the view, however, in relation to Kotter's analysis, that

In this era which is high on complexity and rate of change, there is a need for significant levels of both leadership and management in striving to develop and maintain world class organisations. Hence, there is little point in debating the virtue of one versus the other, or even bothering to dwell greatly on defining the difference between them.
Strategic Leadership

Change Affecting Schools

Societal Change

Irrespective of the continuing debate about the nature and dynamics of leadership, it is clear that for several years there has been a growing awareness of the need for a new kind of leadership function that will not just cope with, but optimise, the effects of the rapid changes in modern society.

Drucker (1995) discussed the major transformation of modern society to a knowledge society and the implications of this for schools.

Knowledge is fast becoming the sole factor of production, sidelining both capital and labour (Drucker, 1995:20)...As knowledge becomes the resource of post-capitalist society, the social position of school as "producer" and "distributive channel" of knowledge, and its monopoly, are both bound to be challenged. And some of the competitors are bound to succeed. What will be taught and learned; how it will be taught and learned; who will make use of schooling; and the position of the school in society - all of this will change greatly during the ensuing decades. Indeed, no other institution faces challenges as radical as those that will transform the school.

(Drucker, 1995:209).

Leadbeater (1999:iv) similarly draws attention to knowledge as the main resource of today's society.

Economic growth is driven by the creation of better and better recipes to combine our valuable resources in more and more efficient, innovative ways. That is why the generation, application and exploitation of knowledge is the driving force of modern economic growth.

In Lepani's (1994:6) words:

...one of our core challenges is to develop a perspective, a mind set, which enables us to...see the new emergent patterns which are reshaping our familiar world of national economies, distinct knowledge disciplines, clear institutional boundaries between government and industry and between the world of education and the world of work. In particular we need to understand how this is reshaping the structure and functions of schools; likely career paths and work futures for our students; career path planning for our teachers; and the cultural evolution of Australian society.

Townsend, Clarke and Ainslow (1999:361-362) list several changes which might characterise the move from second to third millenium schools:
amongst these are, that the control of the learning experience moves from the teacher to the learner, that a school becomes a learning community in which every person is both a learner and a teacher (depending on circumstances), and that people have continual access to a variety of sources, only some of which will be schools.

**Changes in school governance**

Another major influence on school leadership since the late 1980s has been the politico-economic move towards self-management of schools. Although reforms in the governance of education in different locations may have taken different paths, they seem to have led to a common destination. In the United Kingdom, Canada, China, Australia and, increasingly, the United States, the large central bureaucracy with generalised powers has given way to a 'duality,' in which a leaner central authority takes responsibility for setting goals, priorities and frameworks for accountability, whilst schools are given responsibility for decision-making in resource allocation. Such moves towards self-management have usually been attributed to belief in the market mechanism, through which the consumer exerts control through choice, to attempts to improve efficiency and effectiveness in delivery, and to general empowerment through devolution.

Glatter (1999:256) highlights some inherent problems for schools in this situation, in his discussion of the incompatibility of the centralist performance-based approach of recent UK governments with the explicit policy goal of choice and diversity at the school level. He welcomes the very recent arrangement for Education Action Zones (DfEE, 1998:3) to operate a set of "testbeds for innovation" as a perhaps overdue measure to allow for "broader macro-environmental developments and their implications for educational leadership and management." Glatter (1999:257) suggests that the Report *Redefining Work* (Bayliss:1998), contains significant implications for leaders in that it "gives substance to the truisms about the constancy of change and about educators and learners facing a more turbulent, complex and fluid future." He agrees (Glatter:256) with Hargreaves (1997:11) that
the discontinuity and pluralism endemic in (post)modern society will render the notion of a distinctive and coherent state-managed system meaningless within a relatively short time, to be replaced by polymorphic or much more variegated educational provision, loosely coordinated and monitored from the centre.

In Australia, increasing competition between schools has also been recognised as an outcome of self-management. As Marginson (1997:201) reports,

The marketisation of government schools extended competition between schools to all schools, at all year levels, in both public and private schools. By universalising competition, it also universalised the positional dynamic, so that even the choice of government primary schools carried a potential positional significance.

Fidler (1996:12), taking a somewhat similar view in relation to the United Kingdom, reports “There has been an embryonic realisation of the importance of some explicit overall direction for the school that now assumes increasing importance in an era of choice and diversity.” Fidler suggests (1996:10) that even for public sector organisations such as schools, which might not basically see themselves as competitive, strategy aids differentiation which in turn allows organisations “to tease out what their basic strengths are, both to inform their clients and also to give a sense of pride to the organisation”.

The need for strategic leadership
Several leadership writers have incorporated the above issues into their notions of what a leader should do. Sarros (1993:48), for instance, takes the position that “leadership is about the future, about envisioning what is to come and then putting into place the processes and people in order to achieve the vision.” Leithwood, Begley and Cousins (1992:73) state that “having a relatively clear, comprehensive picture of one’s school in its future, ideal state is a powerful leadership tool. Indeed without such a picture in mind it is difficult to imagine what would be the basic focus of leadership in a school”. Bennis (1996:149) reaffirms his long-time focus on the two basic leadership attributes of having a strong vision and being able to share that vision, but says that for future leaders, extra skills will be required. “Tomorrow’s leaders will have to learn how to create an environment that actually embraces change, not as a threat but as an
opportunity." Bhindi and Duignan (1997:118) propose that leadership for the new century requires authenticity, intentionality, spirituality and sensibility; intentionality seems of particular interest here since it reinforces the importance of vision, both in facilitating clarity of purpose and direction for organisational members, and in acting as a 'shared energy field' that energises a group and helps drive them forward together into an unpredictable future.

The several ideas concerning a new kind of leadership linking the school's future to the wider context are brought together in Caldwell and Spinks' (1992:91) notion of 'strategic leadership' for leaders in self-managing schools. They saw strategic leadership as a kind of thinking about the future which is made on the basis of an understanding of the full range of factors, internal and external to an organisation, which might impinge upon future action, followed by decision-making about that action.

Strategic leadership is distinguished from ongoing, routine, day-to-day leadership on three dimensions: time, scale of issue and scope of action ... strategic leadership is more concerned with the longer term than the shorter term. Issues tend to be national and international as well as local in their scale. Scope of action tends to be more school-wide than program-focused ... outcomes are strategies for action, being more at the policy level.

In the school situation, according to Caldwell and Spinks (1992:92) strategic leadership manifests itself in five key operations of leaders, namely:

- keeping abreast of trends and issues, threats and opportunities in the school environment and in society at large, nationally and internationally; discerning the 'megatrends' and anticipating their impact on education generally and on the school in particular
- sharing their knowledge with others in the school's community and encouraging other school leaders to do the same in their areas of interest
- establishing structures and processes which enable the school to set priorities and formulate strategies which take account of likely and/or preferred futures; being a key source of expertise as these occur
- ensuring that the attention of the school community is focused on matters of strategic importance.
- monitoring the implementation of strategies as well as emerging strategic issues in the wider environment; facilitating an ongoing process of review.
Kotter's (1990:5) work on leadership/management processes, as described earlier, remains useful to a consideration of what strategic leaders might actually do, in exercising strategic leadership. Indeed, it may well be that his notion of leadership subsumes the notion of strategic leadership and that the latter is therefore not separately articulated, for certainly his emphasis within 'direction-setting' on the big picture and longer time-frames indicates a focus on strategy.

The work of Limerick, Cunnington and Crowther (1998) on approaches to strategic management, is also very useful in understanding the range of tasks of a strategic nature that must be undertaken within a complex organisation. Leaving aside their focus on new organisations and network organisations, and their avoidance of the term 'leadership' due to overtones of elitism, their model of 'meta-strategic management' provides an excellent base for understanding what processes are necessary in taking an organisation into the future. Indeed, their 'phases of metastrategic management' line up quite closely with the processes of leadership and management as developed by Kotter. Where Kotter (1990:7) talks of establishing direction, aligning people, and motivating and inspiring, Limerick, Cunnington and Crowther (1998:161) talk of vision and identity, and the sharing of values and mission. Where Kotter lists his management functions of planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, controlling and problem solving, Limerick, Cunnington and Crowther talk of creating a configuration design involving strategy, structure and culture, and establishing systems of action. The essential differences between the two lie not so much in the tasks involved in developing and carrying out strategy, but in the extent to which the actions are seen to be the role of the individual leader versus the role of the participating group, and the relatively greater significance attached by Limerick, Cunnington and Crowther to values, especially in terms of establishing culture.

Hambrick (1989:6), in discussing the domain of strategic leadership within business, suggest that it has four defining features. The first of these
is a concern with both the external and internal spheres, with aligning the organisation with the current and expected external environment, in areas such as market forces, technology and competitor actions, and with developing an internal organisation that has an adaptive capacity and is itself aligned with the strategic thrusts of the organisation. Second, the strategic leader is ‘embedded in ambiguity, complexity and information overload.’ Third, the strategic leadership task is multi-functional, crossing the boundaries of many activities such as marketing, finance, personnel and operations, and thus giving the strategic leader a complex integrative role. Fourth, the strategic leader’s task largely involves managing through others who attend to daily affairs.

Association of ‘strategic leadership’ with formal leader
Since the emergence of strategic leadership as a phenomenon relevant to schools, it has clearly, though not necessarily, exclusively, been associated with the role of the formal leader in the school, normally the principal. Hammer and Stanton’s views in The Reengineering Revolution (1995:34), might help to explain this. Hammer and Stanton state that

It is an unalterable axiom of reengineering that it only succeeds when driven from the topmost levels of an organization. No matter how hard they try, people on or near the front lines are in no position to launch and sustain such a major venture. First, they lack the breadth of perspective needed to see entire processes from start to finish rather than from their own narrow expertise and purview...

Beare (1993:19), in discussing the changing context in which school leaders operate, drew attention to the consequent changes in roles and directions for those leaders:

... a new model for managing education is already with us... What has emerged is a way of administering school and educational services which is a clear break from past practices, and which has made problematical many of the features about schooling which in the past were unquestioned and taken for granted.

Bolam (1997:271), discussing the ‘extensive and radical’ changes in the roles and responsibilities of British headteachers since 1988 and more particularly since 1993, draws attention to the fact that “headteachers are now required to have strategic leadership...skills.” Indeed, the capacity to
"determine strategic direction and development of the school" is the first of five task areas listed in the newly established National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) in Britain (Bolam:277).

Bush (1999:243) also reports, in relation to the changing educational management scene in the United Kingdom, that

While the merits and demerits of self-management may be subject to continuing debate, there is little doubt that it has transformed the working lives of principals, headteachers and senior staff. Together with governing bodies, they now have responsibility for many aspects of school and college management that were previously the preserve of the LEAs. These include the management of finance and staff, as well as an enhanced responsibility to preserve and enhance the reputation of their institutions in a competitive or 'wild' environment.

In relation to the situation in Australia, Evans (1993:1), writing for the Department of Education, Employment and Training in Canberra, emphasised the "increasingly pivotal role of principals in systemic schools." She suggested that "In the present climate of educational reform and movement towards self-managing schools, the role and functions of principals are evolving in new directions." Underscoring the need for training in strategic leadership were the statements by Evans (1993:4) that leadership must provide vision and have a future orientation and (Evans, 1993:10) that principals require knowledge of national and global issues and the skills "to interpret and articulate social, economic and environmental trends and issues and relate them to school needs and practices."

Current EducationVictoria policy documents relating to the appointment of principals continue to place importance on capacities relating to strategic leadership. The Principal Class Handbook (EducationVictoria, 1999:12) calls for a person appointed to the principalship to exhibit "an awareness of and involvement in...vision and future directions." The person should show evidence of being a "forward thinker," which involves being "flexible and creative" and a "vision sharer."

Clearly, then, much responsibility has been laid at the feet of formal school leaders in relation to the strategic leadership function required in today's schools. This is not to imply that the formal leader has sole
responsibility, but to point out that his or her role is significant. In the words of Caldwell and Hayward (1998:172),

Given the scope of reforms like Schools of the Future, we believe that a starting point in the exercise of strategic leadership by principals and other leaders is a capacity to locate these reforms in the broader context of global change, generally within society as well as in school education. This is not easy, given the uncertain and contentious nature of many changes. However, we cannot feel confident that a school community can be aligned and committed to a sense of direction unless these people can take the lead...

Concerns
The call for strategic leaders in schools is, therefore, quite clear. There is cause for concern, however, in the results of some studies of school leaders which show that attitudes, beliefs and capacities might limit their ability to respond to change. Hallinger, Murphy and Hausman (1992:348), for instance, describe their study of principals' perceptions of fundamental educational reform which led them to the following conclusion:

Aside from the predictable impediments to reform represented by entrenched bureaucracies, resistant organisational cultures and competing political interests, this study highlighted the potentially crucial role played by the belief systems of those professionals charged with implementing educational reform. It suggests that even professionals who view themselves as supporters of fundamental reform may be severely limited by their own experience, training and beliefs in bringing about a new order of schools.

In similar vein, Levin (1993:9), in exploring how schools and administrators come to understand their organisation's environment, points to three constraints operating, namely, the complexity of the world, human limitations in processing complex information, and the effects of established organisational forms and practices. Levin states that in all the work that has been done concerning change in schools, little attention has been paid to people's thinking about the environment in which their organisations exist. He draws attention to the uncertainty about how environmental influences enter the organisation's system and exact their respective pressure.

Similarly, Leithwood, Begley and Cousins (1992:11) suggested that expectations of the role of the principal had changed at a sufficiently rapid rate to create incompetence among some of those with long tenure in the
role. They took the view that the development of leaders for future schools ought to be considered a problem at two levels, the first being the determination of the qualities associated with such leaders, the second being the determination of means to assist people to acquire such capacities or qualities. In particular, they recommended (1992:29) that future studies pay attention to the ‘inner processes’ of leaders as they approach their role.

Gronn (1999:xii) follows this line in arguing that a heavily biographical approach is needed if we are to fully understand leadership development.

The field is well overdue for people to take seriously the documented experiences of people as they go about acquiring a sense of themselves as leaders and to pass on the benefits of those insights to those coming up behind them.

**Related concepts and practices**

The foregoing draws attention to the need for increased understanding of the exercise of successful strategic leadership, in order to provide the type of leader needed for future schools. The following deals with some ideas related to this phenomenon, which may assist in the illumination of the successful practice thereof. These are: vision, futures thinking, strategic planning, strategic intent, strategic thinking, strategic architecture, strategic conversation and heroic quest.

**Vision**

Vision is to do with establishing an image of a preferred future, towards the achievement of which organisational action might be directed. The foregoing discussion of leadership, in its frequent reference to vision, highlights the common view that having a vision is a key role of the person or persons in leadership positions.

Early recognition of the importance of vision to an organisation came from a study by Bennis and Nanus (1985) of 90 transforming leaders from various backgrounds. They saw vision as:

a mental image of a possible and desirable future state of the organisation...as vague as a dream or as precise as a goal or mission statement...a view of a realistic, credible, attractive future for the organisation, a condition that is better in some important ways than what now exists (Bennis and Nanus:89).
Much discussion of vision attributes to it an element of core values. Ramsay and Clark (1990:57) suggest the following:

Educational vision...is about the need to reflect on, and plan for, the future, rather than merely reacting to, and fretting about, the past. It is about the power of dreams, the might of metaphor and the almost super-human potential unleashed by a unification of values and purpose.

No matter how it is expressed, vision is about a future sense of direction and purpose. It is also founded upon a bedrock of fundamental values and beliefs about the nature of man and what is important in life.

Starratt (1993:144) also sees vision as being grounded in core meanings.

These core meanings may include courage and loyalty, freedom and individual rights, the sacredness of the law, the practice of healing, or simply the idea of excellence. The leader sees the profound relationship of those core meanings to their expression in institutional form, such that they shape the sensibilities, motives and actions of the members of the institution.

Starratt (1993:145) also ponders where the vision of a present-day leader comes from, suggesting that it will have multiple sources such as parents and other influential persons from childhood, successful and difficult life experiences, education, religion and socialisation, along with the pressure of postmodern realities such as feminism, multiculturalism and environmental concerns.

Sheive and Schoenheit’s (1987:97) study of ‘Vision and the Work Life of Educational Leaders’ shows that two types of vision typically operate amongst successful school leaders, these being organisational vision, which aims for organisational excellence, and universal vision, which “centers on an issue of equity that encompasses the entire educational scene.”

Greenfield, Licata and Johnson (1992:65), working towards ‘measurement of school vision’, tested hypotheses raised in previous research on the effective principal. Principals who proved effective in advancing a school were perceived by teachers to not only articulate a vision for their schools, but to persuade others to internalise it and encourage them to make sacrifices towards its realisation.
Duignan and Macpherson (1991) suggest that educational change is brought about by a leader's articulation of vision, values and theories.

...the change process is essentially a learning process and it is through this learning process that improvement occurs over time (1991:8). ... One of the crucial challenges for the educative leader is to make proposed changes understandable and meaningful for those who are expected to implement the changes. ... Educative leaders must play a crucial role by establishing and maintaining the conditions necessary for reflection, critical analysis and experimentation (1991:10).

**Futures thinking**

The notion of futures thinking appears to have developed from an expanding concept of vision and is therefore frequently, but not always, viewed as part of vision. It is concerned more with ideas than with values. Futures thinking is concerned with understanding aspects of the environment that impact on the organisation, in order to exert control over the environment rather than be controlled by it. Such dimensions of the environment, according to Hall (1996:211) include the technological, legal, political, economic, demographic, ecological and cultural.

Bennis and Nanus (1985:89) viewed this aspect of vision as a significant part of leadership.

If there is a spark of genius in the leadership function at all it must lie in this transcending ability, a kind of magic, to assemble - out of images, signals, forecasts and alternatives - a clearly articulated vision of the future that is at once simple, easily understood, clearly desirable and energising.

Slaughter (1994:1) underlines the need for futures-thinking in schools, on the grounds that education, unlike commercial operations, is inherently futures-oriented. He reminds us that the futures we are looking at in the mid-1990s are exceptionally challenging.

Schools are complex, intense and exacting places to work in. Educators therefore tend to focus inward. Yet both are embedded in a process of dynamic global change. In order to fulfil their responsibilities to individuals and society, they need to address that context and to develop an informed view of the early 21st Century. This is the context in which today's students will live.

Caldwell (1993:29) suggested that the planning frame for principals should be something like twenty years, given that children entering primary school at that time would not enter the workforce until the year 2010 or later. He concluded that:
Many aspects of this workplace, as well as the nature of society itself and of places of learning and training, are likely to differ from those at present in dramatic fashion. Leaders in schools must nurture a capacity for foresight along these lines.

Davies and Ellison (1997:75) state that

"The continued and increasingly rapid changes in both the educational and the global environment require that schools must think ahead about the type of organisations which they wish to be in ten years' time and that those who lead each school must be able to take it in the right direction."

They go on to discuss the merits of 'futures thinking' as a means of moving beyond simple incremental thinking to engaging in radically different approaches to considering the school's future. Strategic planning as a more systematic analysis of the school and its environment comes after this more visionary process.

Hamel (1996:91) points out that the existing hierarchy in most organisations is a hierarchy of experience and not a hierarchy of imagination. "If you want to create a point of view about the future, if you want to craft a meaningful strategy, you have to create in your company a hierarchy of imagination." To Hamel, this means giving voice to the people who are typically disenfranchised from the strategy-making process, particularly the young and those far removed from the centre.

Holbrook (1992), however, in relation to school personnel, cautions against the simple assumption that people generally are capable of a future orientation. She takes the view that not all individuals are capable of temporal extension, even with respect to personal goal-setting, and that special training is necessary to meet the demands of futures-thinking. There is a potential problem here for schools. While the current literature (Evans, 1993:5) calls for school leaders who have, amongst other qualities, a 'future orientation', it would appear that not everyone can be expected to have such an orientation.

**Strategic planning**

'Strategic Planning' theory was for a long time the major contributor to the concept of the long-term perspective in the leadership and management of
organisations. Strategic planning, according to Boisot (1995:33) reflected a belief that "with enough of the right kind of data and a judicious application of the appropriate analytical tools, the strategic environment can be adequately grasped and strategic planning can be used to give a sense of direction to corporate endeavours."

Hamel and Prahalad (1989) suggested that most strategic planning failed to produce originality in decision-making.

Creative strategies seldom emerge from the annual planning ritual. The starting point for this year's strategy is almost always last year's strategy. Improvements are incremental. The company sticks to the segments and territories it knows, even though the real opportunities may be elsewhere.

Mintzberg (1994:13), took issue with the rationality in the typical strategic planning process, claiming that

The key, if implicit, assumption underlying strategic planning is that analysis will produce synthesis: decomposition of the process of strategy making into a series of articulated steps, each to be carried out as specified in sequence, will produce integrated strategies. This...is the old "machine" assumption, the one that underlies the design of the manufacturing assembly line. If every component is produced by the machines as specified and assembled in the order prescribed, an integrated product will appear at the end of the line. This analogy underlies some of the most important thinking in the field of planning, and has proved to be patently false.

Mintzberg (1994:17) argued that the accepted notion of strategic planning contained several fallacies. In his view the typical fascination with elaborate processes only serves to strangle innovation, the reliance on 'hard data' (such as written reports) excludes the very useful 'soft data (as in informal communications),' and effective strategists do not isolate themselves from daily detail but immerse themselves in it. Most significantly, Mintzberg argued, "Strategy is not the consequence of planning, but the opposite; its starting point."

Handy (1996:22-23) more recently added his feelings about the implications of rapid environmental and organisational change for planning.

These days almost nothing is certain. In the old days, when organisations were younger, there was a feeling that we would in due course arrive at some sort of scientific law about organisations. Companies would succeed because they would be able to predict the
future and be able in some sense to even manage the future. So back then we designed and constructed our organisations on the basis of planning, predictability and control. We used words like plan, operate, control, measure. But in my view, all those words are now wrong. They are not terribly useful in a world which is flowing rather than standing still. All we can really do now is go with the flow and try to steer things a little... We’ve got to learn to live with chaos and uncertainty, to try to be comfortable with it and not to look for certainty where we won’t get it.

Prahalad (1996:69) discusses several companies that failed to optimise their opportunities because their strategic planning became simply a financial exercise. “It never provoked these deeper debates about where the company wanted to be in ten years’ time. Instead, it became an exercise in positioning the company in a given industry space.”

The limited research available into the outcomes of strategic planning in schools also reflects little value being placed on the process. Conley (1993:25), for instance, providing a profile of strategic planning practices in American school districts, concludes the following:

The difficult task of carrying through the lofty goals and sentiments expressed in the mission and core beliefs to the objectives and strategies appears to be one that has not yet been mastered ... There is evidence to suggest that districts operationalise strategic planning in incremental terms, that as the planning becomes more specific and closer to the operational level, the responses come to resemble more closely existing practices and methods, and to operate within existing structures. Therefore, an ambitious goal such as preparing students for a changing world becomes operationalised as a curriculum review project, or new textbooks. These responses are within the current world view of the organisation, and allow it to adapt incrementally to strong external pressure for rapid change.

**Strategic intent**

Perhaps bringing the element of vision from the leadership literature, to provide a synthesising element to the very rational and analytical strategic planning process, Hamel and Prahalad (1994) made much of the notion of strategic intent.

Strategic intent must take primacy over the realpolitik of planning. Although strategic planning is billed as a way of becoming more future oriented, most managers admit that their strategic plans reveal more about today’s problems than tomorrow’s opportunities. Plans seldom do more than project the present forward incrementally. The goal of strategic intent...is to fold the future back into the present (1994:159).
(Strategic intent) conveys a sense of direction...it conveys a sense of discovery...it implies a sense of destiny. These are the attributes of strategic intent (1994:142).

Boisot (1995:38) further developed the notion of strategic intent. In a model of strategic management he illustrated the effects of the interplay between environmental turbulence and management's understanding thereof on management's strategic response. According to the model, when turbulence is low, the response can be either emergent strategy, when understanding also is low, or strategic planning, when understanding is high. When turbulence is high, the response can be either intrapreneurship, when understanding is low, or strategic intent, when understanding is high. Since environmental turbulence has become a fact of life for most institutions over the last few years, this is helpful in explaining the transition away from the once highly valued strategic planning response to the more flexible strategic intent response.

Strategic intent describes a process of coping with turbulence through a direct, intuitive understanding, emanating from the top of a firm and guiding its efforts. A turbulent environment cannot be tamed by rational analysis alone so that conventional strategic planning is deemed to be of little use. Yet it does not follow that a firm's adaptive response must be left to a random distribution of lone individuals acting opportunistically and often in isolation as in a regime of intrapreneurship. Strategic intent relies on an intuitively formed pattern or gestalt - some would call it a vision - to give it unity and coherence.

(Boisot, 1995: 36)

Caldwell and Spinks (1998) move, however, from a discussion of strategic intent as a capacity derived from insight or intuition, to a discussion of specific strategic intents resembling goals, so that 'intent' appears to refer to a discrete item rather than the gestalt itself, such as 'vision'. Perhaps the significance of the intent lies in the fact that there is no concern with relevant detail, but rather with gaining commitment to the notion or value espoused therein.

Davies and Ellison (1999:48) built on the work of Hamel and Prahalad (1989, 1994) and Boisot (1995) in demonstrating how strategic planning and strategic intent might coexist in a school, the former as being appropriate for
the 'determinable' aspects of medium-term planning, and the latter as a 'more appropriate way of signposting the future of the school for the less predictable aspects of provision.'

_Strategic thinking_

Mintzberg (1995) saw 'strategic thinking' as 'seeing; seeing ahead, seeing behind, seeing above, seeing below, seeing beside, seeing beyond, and above all, seeing it through.' This is reminiscent of De Pree's (1990:1) view of leadership as the task of 'defining reality'.

For Drucker, (1995:96) part of the solution to current uncertainties is for an organisational leader to 'be data literate; know what to know.' This seems interesting, given that the collection and use of detailed information was a strong part of the somewhat debunked strategic planning exercise. The difference, it appears, is in the type of information to be used. The signals to be attended to, according to Drucker, are not those from within the market situation as it currently exists, but those from all areas that might impact on the organisation.

The organisation ...has to become information-literate. For what a business needs the most for its decisions - especially its strategic ones - are data about what goes on outside of it. It is only outside the business where there are results, opportunities and threats...When it comes to non-market information - demographics; the behaviour and plans of actual and potential competitors; technology; economics; the shifts signalling foreign exchange fluctuations to come and capital movements - there are either no data at all or only the broadest of generalizations. Few attempts have been made to think through the bearing that such information has on the company's decisions.


Garratt (1995:2) views a capacity for strategic thinking as fundamental to strategic leadership.

'Strategic thinking' is the process by which an organization's direction-givers can rise above the daily managerial processes and crises to gain different perspectives of the internal and external dynamics causing change in their environment and thereby giving more effective direction to their organization. Such perspectives should be both future-oriented and historically understood. Strategic thinkers must have the skills of looking both forwards and backwards while knowing where their organization is now, so that wise risks can be taken by the direction-
givers to achieve their organization’s purpose, or political will, while avoiding having to repeat the mistakes of the past.

Porter (1996:51), in a discussion of ‘pitfalls in strategic thinking’, gave reminders of the essence of good strategy. First, he said, “a good strategy is concerned with the structural evolution of the industry as well as with the firm’s own unique position within that industry,” such that “the true leaders will be those that don’t just optimise within an industry, but that actually reshape and redefine their industry.”

**Strategic architecture**

Hamel and Prahalad (1994:141) developed the notion of strategic architecture to build on to the notion of strategic intent.

Strategic architecture is basically a high-level blueprint for the development of new functionalities, the acquisition of new competencies or the migration of existing competencies, and the reconfiguring of the interface with customers....Strategic architecture is not a detailed plan...Creating a detailed plan for a ten-to-fifteen-year competitive quest is impossible. Planning assumes a degree of exactitude... that is impossible to achieve when one looks out beyond the next two or three years. Insisting on such exactitude before embarking on a new strategic direction is a recipe for inertia and incrementalism.

Strategic architecture is viewed by Hamel and Prahalad as a broad ‘opportunity approach’ plan which is the essential link between today and tomorrow and between the short term and the long-term. It remains dependent on ‘strategic intent’, which they see as ‘the heart’ to strategic architecture’s ‘brain.’ “A strategic architecture may point the way to the future, but it’s an ambitious and compelling strategic intent that provides the emotional and intellectual energy for the journey (1994:141).” This distinction between the two terms is useful, however, in that it indicates perhaps that strategic intent, whilst essential, is not sufficient in itself to enable an organisation to flourish in turbulent times, but requires a more cognitive element alongside.
Strategic conversation

Van der Heijden (1997:xi) introduces the notion of the strategic conversation, through which varying scenarios can be developed. Scenarios he sees as being like "test conditions in a windtunnel for designing strategic success."

In the end success derives from being different. It requires an original invention. ...Blending invention into the logical language of strategy is an art, the art of strategic conversation. (Van der Heijden, 1997:viii)

An important aspect of this approach is that space must be found for the informal conversation, so that views can be exchanged and scenarios imagined outside of the pressure of immediate decision-making (Van der Heijden, 1997:ix).

Wilson also, as far back as 1978, promoted the use of scenarios to help managers to visualize a range of alternative futures. He utilized (Wilson, 1978:225) a borrowed definition of a scenario as 'a hypothetical sequence of events constructed for the purpose of focusing attention on causal processes and decision points.' Scenarios, he suggests (1978:228):

Attempt to integrate individual analyses of trends and potential events into a holistic picture of the future ("weaving the threads into a pattern"); in this process, to provide for, and describe, the interaction of these trends and events; and ultimately, to explore the possible course of alternative futures.

Scenarios are seen to be useful because they allow the construction of multiple possible futures which can then be brought into play as circumstances unravel.

Heroic quest

A somewhat different concept related to strategic leadership is that of the Heroic Quest. As described by Caldwell and Spinks (1998:204), this is concerned with the leader's involvement in 'inner' personal events rather than 'external' events, such as societal changes. It is concerned with freeing oneself from imposed constructions of reality, in order to fully engage with new circumstances and conditions and so embark on a personal journey of exploration and self-discovery.
Covey (1996:43) hints at a similar process when he suggests that Tomorrow's successful leaders will value principles more than they value their companies...they will be people who are deeply involved on a continuous basis in personal and professional development. They will be constantly expanding their competence, developing new skills, reading, training, listening to others, learning and growing, sharpening the saw.

**Summary of Literature**

This chapter examined some of the literature relating to leadership and to strategic leadership in particular. First, it drew attention to the importance ascribed to leadership and to the current difficulties involved in the leadership debate; it then outlined some of the major concepts found in leadership literature: namely, the traditional 'leader trait' and 'situational contingent' theories, the transactional/transformational distinction and the leadership/management distinction. It then proceeded to a consideration of the changes impacting on schools and the consequent need for a new kind of future-oriented leadership. It showed how this leadership (labelled 'strategic leadership') is frequently, though not exclusively, attached to the role of the formal school leader, and drew attention to some of the research needs relating to strategic leadership. Finally, it introduced several concepts related in the literature to strategic leadership, these being vision, futures thinking, strategic planning, strategic intent, strategic thinking, strategic architecture, strategic conversation and heroic quest.

Ideas and concepts discussed in this chapter will be re-visited in Chapter Six, (Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations), in relation to findings arising from the current research that illuminate, or are illuminated by, present knowledge.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents a description of the broad paradigm of naturalistic inquiry and the specific methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology, along with a justification for the use of this methodology in the study. Data collection and analysis methods are described and illustrated. Delimitations and limitations of the research are discussed, with consideration given to standards for trustworthiness of the findings. The process of selection of the participants is then detailed.

The underlying purpose of this research was to determine ways of enhancing strategic leadership in the schools of several countries, as this became a required function of leaders working within the new parameters of school self-management and in a turbulent environment. As strategic leadership was a newly-identified function for leaders, the knowledge and experience base from which to draw research information regarding success in this area appeared to be of necessity rather narrow. If, for instance, the study had been concerned with identifying the strategic leadership needs of a large number of principals in the early stages of self-management, then a positivistic methodology might have been employed that focused on measuring perceptions, attitudes and behaviours already identified through research as meriting exploration. It would then have been appropriate to use such instruments as questionnaires, structured interviews or attitude scales, which would readily allow for generalisation across many sites. Since, however, the study was concerned with illuminating outstanding practice in a new field, it was considered important to focus on the 'inner processes' of a small number of respondents identified as experts in the field, which pointed to the need to gather in-depth information from a restricted number of sites.

Furthermore, a study of the leadership literature failed to highlight particular theories of strategic leadership practice to be tested. Although several ideas for investigation presented themselves, there was little school-based research from which to derive a priori conceptual categories to guide
the exploration. Thus it was decided that a methodology was needed which would also allow the study to unfold as new directions presented themselves. A form of naturalistic inquiry would satisfy both the major research issues.

**Hermeneutic Phenomenology**

This research was designed to investigate the practice of strategic leadership, in order that improved understanding of this phenomenon might enhance its provision in the newly established self-managing schools of Australia and other countries. Two major research questions guided the investigation, as follows:

1. For outstanding strategic leaders in school education and the public and private sectors,
   a) How is strategic leadership exercised, and does this change with changes in time and context?
   b) How has the capacity for strategic leadership been developed?
   c) What similarities and differences exist in the strategic leadership of the education/non-education groups?

2) How may the capacity for strategic leadership be developed for school leaders?

As the concept of strategic leadership in schools was relatively new, it was decided that the investigation should centre on a small number of participants considered to be expert in the area. The need to gather in-depth information from a small number of participants led to the selection of the naturalistic research paradigm for the study.

Naturalistic inquiry is described by Tesch (1990:67) as the label for an entire knowledge-producing paradigm, intended as one response to positivism. The essential features of naturalistic inquiry, according to Tesch (1990:50-51), are that the researcher is the research instrument and that the focus is on understanding the meaning that people give to their experiences.

Lincoln and Guba (1985:37) present five axioms to highlight points of contrast between the positivist and naturalist positions. The positivist they see as reflecting a single, tangible and fragmentable reality, an independence between knower and known, the possibility of time- and context-free
generalizations, a concern for describable causal linkages, and inquiry that is considered to be value-free. In contrast, they see the naturalistic as reflecting multiple, constructed and holistic realities, an inseparability of the knower and the known, necessary time and context frames for working hypotheses, the impossibility of distinguishing cause from effect due to constant mutual shaping and, finally, inquiry that is value-laden.

In similar vein, LeCompte and Preissle (1993:24), discussing the origins of qualitative design, provide a contrast between the positivistic and the interpretive as a particular kind of qualitative or naturalistic. The positivistic approach, they say, sees the researcher as detached and objective, with the researched as a passive informant, while the interpretive approach sees the researcher as involved and subjective, with the researched as an active collaborator. They see the positivistic approach focused on observable behaviour, measurement and quantification, and the control of variance and bias, with the interpretive approach focused on elicited meanings for behaviour, intersubjective understanding, and the explaining of variance and bias. In particular, the concern of positivistic inquiry is seen as what is happening outside individuals, as in structures or settings, while interpretive inquiry is viewed as being concerned with what happens within and between individuals.

In operation, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985:39), naturalistic inquiry exhibits fourteen characteristics that follow from the axioms. These are:

- a focus on natural settings,
- humans as the primary data-gathering instruments,
- legitimation of the researcher’s tacit knowledge,
- primacy of qualitative methods,
- purposive sampling,
- inductive data analysis,
- grounded theory,
- emergent design,
- negotiated outcomes,
- use of case studies for reporting,
- idiographic interpretations,
- tentative applications of findings,
• emergent-focus determined boundaries
• special criteria for trustworthiness.

These features led to the selection of naturalistic inquiry for the present study on several grounds. Amongst others, it allowed for purposive sampling in order to identify a small number of ‘experts,’ it allowed for the researcher to be the instrument of data collection in order to enhance the elicitation of complex information, it allowed for the rich experience of unique individuals to be explored and, in its provision for case study reporting, it allowed for the description of the multiple realities encountered at a given site. Most significantly perhaps, given the absence, revealed in the literature review, of any suitable a priori theory to give shape to the investigation, it allowed for the research design and the guiding substantive theory to emerge from the data rather than be preordinately constructed or established.

Within the naturalistic paradigm, the specific methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology was selected as most appropriate for this study. This follows the work of Tesch (1990:59) who provides a most useful outline of the types of qualitative/naturalistic research that involve words (as opposed, for instance, to film, drawings, music) as data, as is the case with the current study. According to Tesch, where the research interest is, for instance, in the characteristics of language per se, the appropriate methodology will be in the area of content analysis or ethnoscienc. Where the interest is in the discovery of regularities in language, the methodology might be qualitative evaluation or action research. Where the interest, as in the present study, is in the comprehension of the meaning of thought, behaviour and action through language, the methodology will involve the discerning of themes (phenomenology) and interpretation (hermeneutics) through the lived-experience account (often case study) and through some engagement with the researcher’s own life experience. A step beyond this would be where the interest is in reflection which is informed largely by intuition, and the thoughts of the researcher take precedence over the thoughts of the researched.
Thus, in addition to reasons given above for the use of naturalistic inquiry in the present study, there is now justification through Tesch’s work for the use of the specific methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology. First, this is a study which, by necessity, is totally dependent on language, or text, as the medium for the communication of complex inner processes of humans. Second, the focus is on meanings derived from the lived experience of the subjects as unique and particular persons, and whilst reflection is a key activity of the researcher, such reflection is to be informed largely by that experience rather than by the researcher’s own introspective contemplation. Third, the researcher’s own life-experience will come into play, particularly as the researcher is the sole instrument of data collection.

Tesch (1990:68) states that, in the hermeneutic phenomenological school of thought, scholars “apply the interpretive tradition ...to the empirical world by likening the world to a text which must be read”. For Tesch, this methodology involves describing the essence of the subjective experience (1990:51) and providing an interpretation of it to elucidate and make explicit our understanding (1990:40).

In van Manen’s (1990) view,

Hermeneutic phenomenological research ...encourages a certain attentive awareness to the details and seemingly trivial dimensions in our everyday lives. It makes us thoughtfully aware of the consequential in the inconsequential, the significant in the taken-for-granted (van Manen, 1990:8)... The aim is to construct an animating, evocative description (text) of human actions, behaviours, intentions, and experiences as we meet them in the life-world (van Manen, 1990:19).

Van Manen (1990:39) talks of hermeneutic phenomenology as the study of essences.

A good description that constitutes the essence of something is construed so that the structure of a lived experience is revealed to us in such a fashion that we are now able to grasp the nature and significance of this experience in a hitherto unseen way...the phenomenological inquiry is not unlike an artistic endeavour, a creative attempt to somehow capture a certain phenomenon of life in a linguistic description that is both holistic and analytical, evocative and precise, unique and universal, powerful and sensitive.
While phenomenology is seen as a systematic attempt to uncover and describe the meaning structures of experience, it is hermeneutics that provides the interpretation both of themes that emerge or of unique experience.

Hermeneutics is concerned with ways to explain, translate, and interpret perceived reality. In contemporary research, a concern with hermeneutics is a concern for interpreting and recounting accurately the meanings which research participants give to the reality around them (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993:31).

Madison (1988:29-30) suggests that several principles ought to be followed in interpretation in order to satisfy quality concerns. These include:

- coherence and comprehensiveness,
- sufficient penetration to bring out an underlying intention of the researched,
- thoroughness in dealing with all questions raised, due regard for context,
- agreement between the interpretation and what the researched actually says,
- provision of suggestions for further lines of inquiry,
- a capacity for its implications to be extended into the future.

The task for the hermeneutic phenomenological researcher is therefore one of creating text which describes and interprets the lived experience of the researched in regard to the particular area being investigated and does so with a concern for quality. The task is not to draw empirical generalizations or to create rule-like statements, but to enable a reader to appropriate meanings in a personal way, through interaction with the contextual and experiential elements of the text and an understanding of the position of the researcher.

**Procedure**

This section is concerned with the procedure followed in conducting this research investigation. It details the steps taken in the collection of data, the analysis of the data, and in the report writing.

**Data Collection**

Phenomenological inquiry allows for a range of data collection methods. Van Manen (1990:53-76), for instance, lists:
obtaining experiential descriptions or protocol writing from others,
interviewing,
observing,
using descriptions from literature or biographies,
diaries, journals or logs,
using phenomenological literature or art.

The current research used interviewing which, in van Manen’s terms, serves two main purposes in hermeneutic phenomenology:

1. as a means for exploring and gathering experiential narrative material that may serve as a resource for developing a deeper and richer understanding of a human phenomenon.
2. as a vehicle to develop a conversational relation with an interviewee about the meaning of an experience.

(van Manen, 1990:66)

**Interviewing**

For the current study, both of the above purposes were significant, with two interviews conducted with each respondent. The first served not only to open a dialogue about the phenomenon of strategic leadership as experienced by the respondent, but also to collect an amount of information related to life history, from which some data analysis on personal background could proceed separately. The second interview, along with the return to respondents of both first-interview and second-interview transcripts for verification of meaning, and in two cases interim telephone conversations for the same purpose, served essentially to continue the dialogue about the phenomenon under investigation.

The interviews were conducted in semi-structured format. Lincoln and Guba (1985:269) suggest that the structured interview is the mode of choice when the interviewer has a clear understanding of the type of information that he or she wishes to elicit, whilst the unstructured interview is utilised when the researcher does not know what it is that he or she does not know and is reliant on the respondent to tell him or her. In the present case, whilst a literature review had not led to the development of any a priori conceptual framework to guide the interview process, the researcher was sufficiently familiar with a number of ideas and themes from the literature to be able to
follow lines of inquiry that suggested themselves from an interviewee’s responses. In addition, the researcher had considerable experience of school leadership and was very familiar with the demands of strategic leadership in a school setting. She had undertaken preliminary research projects in the same area of interest. She had also worked for some time as a graduate research assistant within a university institute for social program evaluation.

There were eight participants in the study; the selection of these eight will be described later. For the first interview, there were four focus questions to be covered, as follows:

1. Can you describe the things you do to be a strategic leader?
   Do you have a mental picture of where you would like the organisation to be in ten years, and to what extent do you think the future of the organisation is something determined by you?
2. What would you say are the personal characteristics and skills that enable you to be successful in this area?
3. Can you identify any events or influences from your personal background that had an impact on the way you think in this area?

The second interview, conducted four years after the first, sought to determine whether participants’ perspectives on the area of investigation had changed along with changes in time and context, particularly in relation to planning time-frame, and if so how and why. The focus questions asked in the second interview were as follows:

1. As a strategic leader, do you now do things differently? If so, is this a result of
   - a different environment
   - change in the organisation
   - a different you
2. What would you now say is the time-frame for your strategic leadership thinking? If that has changed, then how?

Prior to the conduct of the second interview, participants were given an edited transcript of the first interview to remind them of their views and feelings at that earlier time, and to highlight those aspects which the researcher had identified as most significant for follow-up. None of the original language had been altered, but excerpts consisting of superfluous or
irrelevant illustration had been omitted, to indicate those sections which the researcher was likely to use for first-hand accounts. These formed the basis of the second interview. After the second interview, both full transcripts were presented to each participant for further verification and amendment. A few amendments were requested where participants felt that their intended meaning had not been clear, but in general the required amendments concerned only ‘untidy’ verbatim language which the respondents wished to modify.

The interview technique consisted of the interviewer asking a broad opening question and then listening analytically to the response in order to follow up with more probing questions to obtain clarification or elaboration if desired. Minichiello et al (1990:101) refer to the researcher’s need to participate in the interaction yet at the same time maintain a ‘critical inner dialogue’. This inner dialogue involved focusing on the direction of the informant’s response, identifying the central ideas, considering which aspects might be useful in relation to the research problem, and deciding whether more information was needed to further illuminate a particular area. In some cases it was not necessary to ask all the planned interview questions, since many responses were all-encompassing. Attention was given to van Manen’s (1990:66) reminder that “it is important to realize that the interview process needs to be disciplined by the fundamental question that prompted the need for the interview in the first place.”

Recording of interviews

Each interview was tape recorded, with prior agreement of the participant, and the tape subsequently transcribed in full. Minichiello et al (1990:99) suggest that the tape-recorder might inhibit interaction due to feelings of vulnerability, especially in relation to potential later misrepresentation. In the current case all informants were accustomed to being interviewed, usually within the public domain, and furthermore, assurances had been given, in writing, of the anonymity of participants, their right to view and amend the full transcripts of the interviews, and their right
to withdraw from the study at any time. The benefits of tape-recording, on the other hand, were immense, as access to the participants was difficult to obtain due to their high profile roles, thus limiting the opportunity for further visits, and also as, being considered ‘experts’ in the field, they each had a great deal of thoroughly-considered opinion to impart. Tape-recording ensured a full and accurate record and freed the researcher to concentrate on the direction of responses.

**Data analysis**

The following describes the way in which the subject interviews, which were the only sources of data collected, were analysed. Examples from the study are used to illustrate the process. The procedure followed was that outlined by Tesch (1990:92-113) for ‘interpretational analysis,’ where the interest is in the comprehension of the meaning of language, which, as previously discussed applies to hermeneutic phenomenology. Gurr’s (1996) adaptation of Tesch’s work, in his study of the leadership role of principals, provided a useful example of such analysis, though departing somewhat from the model both in including first-hand language generally as appendix rather than main text, and in conducting no analysis until interview completion, thus choosing not to feed analysis back into the data collection process.

Analysis in interpretive methodology consists of the segmentation of data and the categorization of those data segments according to an organizing system that is predominantly derived from the data themselves (Tesch 1990:96). “Material that belongs together topically is assembled conceptually and physically in one place.” In this research the unit of categorisation was the theme, which was an aggregation of data segments in which meanings were focused on a common concept. The main intellectual tool was comparison, with the goal being “to discern conceptual similarities, to refine the discriminative power of categories, and to discover patterns.”

The procedure outlined by Tesch (1990:92-113) and followed in this research consisted of several steps.
Reading of the entire data set

This reading was more than a casual taking note of the content. Rather, it involved the researcher immersing herself in the data, reading and re-reading and 'dwelling with the data,' to achieve a sense of the whole and to begin to understand some of the discrete elements contributing to the whole.

Delineation of 'meaning units'

A meaning unit is described by Tesch (1990:116) as a 'segment of text that is comprehensible by itself and contains one idea, episode or piece of information'. Whilst one approach here would have been to delineate all meaning units within the text and then decide which were meaningful to the research questions, this was considered to be uneconomical, particularly since the researcher was familiar with ideas from the literature and had some sense of which material was or was not pertinent to the research, and particularly also as the data contained some superfluity of illustrative exemplifying material. Accordingly, the procedure followed was that of identifying material that was relevant to the research objectives and then bounding the meaning units that contained that material. The following example is taken from Leader 1, Page 1 of the transcript, identified as (1:1)

As far as looking at schools is concerned I believe we’re in a position of having to reconceptualise what schooling’s about; part of that is trying to come to terms with putting rhetoric into practice. When you first look at strategic leadership you can tell what good leaders do in terms of their models and what they develop and basically how they put it in place and it can be seen as a linear function of looking at what the school needs and doing an external analysis of those needs and looking at the internal responses from the environment within the school and putting it together with a set of mission objectives and an action plan to lead to results with an evaluation...but I don’t believe that’s dynamic enough in terms of looking at institutional requirements of the school. I think we have to reformulate what schooling’s about and basically it goes back to looking at what children are doing in classrooms and how teachers are teaching children.

Three meaning units can be perceived in this passage. The first, highlighted in bold, has to do with change in schools, with the respondent's view that change is necessary but difficult. The second, shown in italics, provides a reflection on the limitations of current processes for planning for change in schools. The third, underlined, picks up on the first theme but
provides a value position to suggest what should be done; in some studies it might be considered an extension of the first meaning unit, but for the purposes of a study on strategic leadership, it is seen as a separate meaning unit since the notion of values is frequently associated with strategic leadership.

**Grouping of the meaning units into themes**

As can be seen from the above example, a respondent can return from time to time to the same conceptual focus; alternatively, a concept might arise only once. The meanings, whether singular or recurrent, contribute to the themes of the interview protocol. Although each interview protocol was treated individually so that themes could be identified in relation to the whole of a single respondent’s experience, it was important to compare across protocols in order to establish the range of themes vis-a-vis one another, since although different respondents expressed material in different ways, underlying meanings might be the same.

Following this, the approach might have been one of linking all the themes from one interview protocol to create a ‘specific’ description of one person’s experience or, alternatively, of comparing all the specific descriptions but with a concern instead for the transsituational, to create a ‘general’ description (Tesch, 1990:93). The latter process was selected as it was more likely to lead to the identification of the fundamental structure of the phenomenon under investigation if such existed, or alternatively, to provide an indication of the individualisation of practice within the phenomenon.

Across the eight protocols, several themes were identified. The meaning units were then taken from across the eight protocols and clustered around these themes, before being further grouped into sub-themes and, in some cases, even further grouped into specific aspects of the sub-themes. This is demonstrated in the following example detailing the steps in the treatment of the first meaning unit listed above, which went as follows:
(Example of meaning unit)

As far as looking at schools is concerned I believe we’re in a position of having to reconceptualise what schooling’s about; part of that is trying to come to terms with putting rhetoric into practice.

First, the meaning unit was identified by the researcher, on the basis of her experience and reading in the field of ‘Strategic Leadership,’ as being pertinent in some way to the findings of the study.

Next, it was seen to belong to the very broad category of DIRECTION-SETTING, as opposed to the very broad category of IMPLEMENTATION, the two of which were, in the final analysis, labelled PARTS A and B of the Findings and formed Chapters Four and Five respectively.

Comparing all meaning units within ‘Direction-Setting,’ there were then seen to be three main areas, namely:

The Leader’s Vision

Futures Thinking, and

Factors Influencing Vision and Futures Thinking.

This particular meaning unit clearly did not belong to the third category and was assigned to the area of ‘The Leader’s Vision’ rather than ‘Futures Thinking’ because, in its reference to ‘putting rhetoric into practice,’ it indicated a values-related desire to bring about improvement.

Finally, within the area of ‘The Leader’s Vision,’ this meaning unit was further categorised under the heading of ‘Whole-Industry’ vision, rather than ‘Organisational,’ ‘Universal,’ or ‘Personal,’ as it referred to changing schooling across the board, rather than in the one organisation, and did not refer to specific universal or personal values.

Thus the various levels of categorisation may be seen, perhaps, as representing varying degrees of specialisation within, or narrowing of, the conceptual foci represented.

*Checking of the themes established against the original transcripts in order to identify further themes, whether common or unique*

Each part of the text must be considered and reconsidered in relation to the whole (Tesch, 1990:94). This necessitated a re-reading of the interview protocols to ensure that all conceptual foci pertinent to the research
questions, whether common across sites or unique, had been accounted for in the themes.

*Providing contextual material that might help to illuminate the text*

Hermeneutic phenomenology is about the interpretation of accounts of lived experience. This lived experience is best understood when placed in some sort of context, perhaps political, economic or social. In this research report, contextual description emerges chiefly from the accounts of the participants. In addition, at the end of this chapter, a brief statement is made about each participant. Brevity was essential here as most respondents were in roles that were unique and high to very high in profile, yet assurances of anonymity had been given. Similarly, while the full transcripts of the interviews are provided (See Appendix 1) in order to enhance the trustworthiness of the data, identifying features have been removed in order to preserve both the anonymity of respondents and the confidentiality of identifying information. The information given is considered to be sufficient to allow the reader to make his or her own judgements as to the meanings contained in the raw data and the conclusions reached by the researcher.

**Report Writing**

*Writing of results*

In van Manen’s terms, in which he describes six kinds of phenomenological writing, the report of this study utilised three; the ‘thematic,’ as it used emerging themes as generative guides, the ‘analytical’, as it examined systematically the themes revealed by the narratives, and the ‘exemplificative,’ as it utilised first-hand accounts from the participants themselves to allow the reader to rework the material in order to personally appropriate whatever might seem meaningful (van Manen, 1990:168-173). The following excerpt from Chapter Four illustrates all three kinds of writing.

*(Example from Findings)*

*Universal vision manifested itself chiefly through a concern for other people and for making their lives better, and was alluded to in the above statements of*
several leaders about improving their industry. The following statements reflect a high level of commitment by several of the leaders to a wider purpose in their work, to something beyond the benefit to the organisation or to the industry.

Leader One

Unless the student outcomes change we are wasting our time in terms of planning (1:1). If we were to change we needed to involve people in those changes (1:2). Part of it is to involve people in taking ownership (1:2).

Leader Two

My vision is nothing at all unexpected, really... enabling all our students to achieve what they want to do at the end of their schooling and, almost invariably, that means going on to university (2:5).

Leader Three

I’ve always been interested in making people’s lives better, so there’s something a bit sort of evangelistic (3:4). I feel I’ve got a fundamental connection with what people are on about anyway to go and say OK we are all wanting to make a difference in this community and have the best opportunities we can for our kids and see them grow as much as they can possibly grow and in all the different ways, so what are our priorities here (3:14).

Leader Four

I suppose it’s also about ... trying to get in touch with oneself and assuming some sort of universality, so that if I feel put down by something, why wouldn’t a student feel put down by it... and inviting teachers to feel what it’s like on the other side and inviting administrators to feel what it’s like on the other side, so having the Twisting experience was significant, being in a large group and saying what it’s like to be without a voice in a large group, what it’s like to be in assembly when the only people who speak are on a platform, what it’s like to be in a small group when someone else is dominating it (4:2).

Leader Five

I don’t think there is any more important role, apart from parenting, than working with young people in schools. And I think society has got itself a real problem, in terms of permitting various things to have devalued teaching (5:4).

Leader Six

I believe that for the larger purpose of society we do have good services in this area. I also believe that we have to have them at a cost that won’t bankrupt us or the next generation (6:2).

Thus some sort of universal vision was expressed by all the school principals and by the public sector CEO. Each of these people expressed an aim of somehow making life better for others in terms of an issue of equity, such as equipping young people to make life choices, or to understand the mutual interdependence of humans. Leaders Seven and Eight did not raise such issues. Although Leader Eight referred to
both empowering the workforce (8:5) and inducting young people into principles and ethics (8:5), he did so from the perspective of organisational efficiency, with the view of avoiding industrial relations problems.

The above excerpt thus illustrates the use of three kinds of writing, in van Manen's terms. First hand accounts are provided, allowing the leaders to speak for themselves (exemplificative), these accounts are grouped according to the conceptual focus or theme of universal vision (thematic), and the final paragraph provides an explanatory comment (analytical) which provides justification for inclusion in, or exclusion from, the grouping.

In addition, several tables were constructed in order to facilitate cross-site comparison across several themes and sub-themes. This involved the display of data in much reduced form, either in words or through a tick or cross, in order to highlight similarities and differences between the sites and thereby facilitate the "discovery of patterns (Tesch, 1990:96)," particularly between the education/and non-education groups. The data thus summarized were not intended to represent the full complexity of the information, but rather to provide indications as to a respondent's position on a given theme.

Connection with Literature
The final part of the research procedure was to connect the interpretations or findings with the literature on strategic leadership within schools, within the broader parameters of school leadership, as discussed in Chapter Two. According to Minichiello et al (1990:70-73), using the literature allows for connections to be made with past knowledge, locates the research within current understandings in the field in question, broadens knowledge and makes the new information more comprehensible. Thus connections with previous research findings were made wherever possible, and new ideas were presented with recommendations for further research.

Delimitations and Limitations
All research is subject to delimitations and limitations. Delimitation is concerned with the boundaries which define the parameters within which
the research matter is located, while limitation is concerned with the restrictions and qualifications that can be placed on the findings. Much of the discussion concerning the delimitations and limitations of the current study arises through the use of a qualitative methodology which, according to Miles and Huberman (1984:15-16), offers certain benefits and problems as set out below.

The major delimitations of this research are that it is concerned with the phenomenon of strategic leadership and that the boundaries of the research are determined solely by the perceptions of the subjects whose practice is being investigated. It is further delimited in its focus on a small group of eight leaders from three sectors, people considered to be outstanding and therefore not typical, and in the time at which it took place, that is, near the end of the twentieth century. The findings of the research may have applicability outside of these boundaries, but no such implication follows from the research.

Another delimitation is that the research is descriptive and interpretive rather than experimental and theory-oriented. In this study the phenomenon of strategic leadership was described by the leaders, this was interpreted by the researcher, and from this emerged a number of findings which were compared to existing knowledge and led to some implications, recommendations, and suggestions for further research directions. The research is not designed to test a particular theoretical position, nor is it designed to establish causal relationships between perceived individual behaviours and leadership.

The major limitation of this research lies in its lack of generalisability. Limitations often arise from delimitations, and that is the case in this study. The boundaries described above limit what can be said in relation to the findings. The research involved a small group of eight participants only, from three sectors, these being participants who could not be considered typical, and at a particular time near the end of the century. The intention was not to generalise by drawing conclusions about all leaders in all schools.
Rather, the intention was to discover something about the phenomenon of strategic leadership. This has been done, with some implications and recommendations drawn and suggestions made for further research.

Miles and Huberman (1984:15-16) suggest that there are particular benefits and problems usually associated with qualitative research methodology, as follows:

**Benefits**

1. It provides rich descriptions and interpretations of social phenomena.
2. It can lead to 'serendipitous' findings and new research integrations, as researchers can go beyond initial preconceptions and frameworks.
3. The findings, expressed in a rich variety of words, are often more meaningful and persuasive than numbers.

**Problems**

1. There are serious time and financial demands in the collection and analysis of data.
2. The limited degree of sampling means that generalisability is often questionable.
3. There may be increased chance of researcher bias due to reliance on the researcher's interpretation.
4. The methods of qualitative data analysis are not always clearly formulated. This may lead to a lack of guidelines on data collection and analysis that make it difficult for the research to be replicated.

The benefits listed above can all be applied to the current research. Indeed, a qualitative methodology was utilised so that a rich description of strategic leadership would emerge, so that the study would follow the leads given by the group of outstanding leaders rather than the framework of a predetermined theoretical position, and so that the complexity of perceptions could be fully captured through the subtle nuances of language.

The problems listed above can also be applied to the current research. With regard to the first point, although financial demands were not great, time demands were serious, with a very large amount of time taken in the transcription and analysis of the large amount of raw data. The second problem, concerning the lack of generalisability that follows from the limited
degree of sampling, has been discussed. The aim of the study was not to
generalise across leaders, but to discover something about the phenomenon
of strategic leadership. The remaining two problems, concerning researcher
bias and formulation of methods of analysis, are related to the concepts of
'validity' and 'reliability', and will be discussed below.

Validity and Reliability (Trustworthiness)

In their promotion of naturalistic research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest
ways of overcoming the traditional claim that such research lacks standards
for rigour. They put forward a set of concepts to be used to establish what
they refer to as the "trustworthiness" of findings derived from qualitative
research. The level of "trustworthiness" refers to the extent to which the
findings are "worth paying attention to, worth taking account of (1985:290)."

The concepts proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) are; "credibility"
rather than internal validity as a standard for truth value, "transferability"
rather than external validity as a standard for applicability, "dependability"
rather than reliability as a standard for consistency, and "confirmability"
rather than objectivity as a standard for neutrality (1985:300). Each of these
will be discussed in turn in terms of its relevance to the current study.

Credibility

This is concerned with the extent to which the findings and
interpretations are seen to be credible by those who were the sources of the
data (Lincoln and Guba:296). This can be enhanced in several ways, as
follows:

1. Prolonged engagement: the investment of sufficient time to know
the situation well, to overcome distortions and to build trust.
2. Persistent observation; to improve capacity to identify what is and is
not salient.
3. Triangulation: the use of multiple and different sources, methods,
investigators and/or theories.
4. Peer debriefing: use of a critical, disinterested peer to explore
aspects of the inquiry.
5. Negative case analysis: a process of revising an hypothesis until it
accounts for all cases.
6. Referential adequacy: setting aside a part of the raw data as archival material for later testing of findings.

7. Member checking: the use of participants to check the data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions.

For the current study, the main methods of enhancing credibility were prolonged engagement and limited member checking. The study took place over a period of four years. Some preliminary analysis occurred after the first round of interviews, and modified interview transcripts highlighting the areas the researcher deemed to be of most significance were returned to the participants as a starting point for the second round of interviews. Thus participants were able to respond to the researcher’s early analysis, as well as to verify the full transcripts of both interviews. Furthermore, the interviews were only semi-structured, so that the discussion unfolded in an interactive manner and the respondents could understand the researcher’s direction of thought and respond to it. In addition, the continuity of the one researcher over that time, coupled with the researcher’s own known role as the leader of an organisation, assisted in building a climate of trust. Finally, several telephone calls occurred towards the end of the study, so that the researcher could clarify areas where meanings were not clear or fully enough explained.

Transferability
This is concerned with the provision of a “thick description” or data base of the time and context of the study, to allow others to judge whether the findings might be applied to other sites. The researcher’s task is to provide sufficient data to make transferability judgements possible on the part of potential appliers (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:316).

In this study the notion of context is a little different to that in, say, a typical case study of a leader’s work within a school. In the latter, the reader requires thick description of many aspects of school life in order to determine the similarities and differences between that situation and his or her own, and thereby ascertain the likelihood that the phenomenon under investigation is transferable. In the present study, however, the phenomenon
under investigation was the strategic leadership practice of a group of people considered to be outstanding in this field. The context in which they operated was therefore seen to consist not only of a particular organisation in which they were currently located, but of the background of knowledge, experience, characteristics and behaviour which led to the development of their capacity for strategic leadership. Thus this study provides two types of contextual material. The first, a brief description of the participants and their organisational contexts at the beginning of the study, is included at the end of this chapter (under Selection of Participants). This description is necessarily limited due to the guarantee of anonymity given to these participants, several of whom had a very high public profile and would be readily identifiable. The second type of contextual material, concerning personal background, is provided throughout the study as it explores the many factors that come into play in the development of strategic leadership capacity.

**Dependability and Confirmability**

Dependability is concerned with judgement about the extent to which the findings are grounded in the data and would be repeated with similar participants in similar contexts. Confirmability is concerned with the extent to which the findings are attributes of the participants and context and not the researcher.

Both of these can be satisfied through the use of the so-called Halpern algorithm (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:319). This involves an 'audit' consisting of the examination of, first, the process of the inquiry (fairness of representation, accuracy of records) to determine its acceptability or dependability and, second, the product, (internal coherence of data, findings, interpretations and recommendations,) to determine its confirmability. The two major steps involved are the keeping of records which can be used to provide the evidence required, and the engagement of an independent person to conduct the audit.
In this research, the audit procedure suggested for the assessment of dependability and confirmability was not used in its entirety, but several elements of it were present. First, records of raw data were kept, both in tape recordings of the interviews and in verbatim transcripts, with only minor identifying sections eliminated (See Appendix). Transcripts reflecting early categorisation into meaning units were kept, along with the edited transcripts, reflecting early analysis, which were returned to participants as a basis for the second-round interviews. A clear description was provided of the process of selection of participants, and of the data collection and analysis procedures. During the data analysis phase of the study, the researcher met regularly with her supervisor to review decisions about themes and categories that were being developed. Finally, a large amount of first-hand account was included in the thesis writing to give the reader direct access to the data. These procedures counter the problems raised above by Miles and Huberman (1984:15-16) in relation to researcher bias and clarity of formulation of methods of analysis.

Participant characteristics

Selection
Eight participants were selected on the basis of a peer-group nomination process. Five of these represented the education sector (three public and two private), one represented the corporate sector and two represented public services. For each sector, the initial nomination process was conducted through a letter survey of a large number of leaders in that sector. Those receiving the highest number of nominations were then approached by letter and asked to participate.

Education Sector
The initial nomination process consisted of 34 letters of request being sent to principals of Independent schools and another 52 to District Liaison Principals in the State sector. These letters, which provided a working description of strategic leadership, requested nominations of all those, male and female, whom a respondent considered to be “outstanding strategic
leaders" in the relevant field of either independent or state education. This worked well for the independent sector, with 25 responses (including six nil responses) from the 34, that clearly identified two individuals. Within the State sector, however, despite a sound response rate of 32 (including one nil response) out of 52, responses were given on a district, rather than systemic, basis, so that no individuals were clearly identified above others. The request was then referred to the Head Office of the Department for Schools Education, where a panel of senior personnel with a system-wide perspective undertook the task and produced a list, in no particular order, of ten outstanding strategic leaders from the State of Victoria. From this list three were selected by the researcher to provide both gender balance and some primary/secondary balance within the education sector. The final sample of five included:

three male, two female
three State, two Independent
one primary, two primary/secondary, two secondary

A letter was sent to these five principals explaining that they had been nominated by their peers as "outstanding strategic leaders" and requesting their participation in the study. All five agreed.

Public Services Sector
This second sector targeted the "non-education, non-corporate" bodies, and included a wide range of organisations such as The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, The Cancer Institute, the Australian Chamber of Manufacturers and a range of Public Service Departments, large and small. Thirty five letters of request for nominations were sent. Twenty positive responses were received, along with five "nil responses". Although a large number of individuals were nominated, two were clearly identifiable, one male and one female. The follow-up letter was sent to each and both agreed to participate.
Corporate Sector

For this third sector, a copy was obtained of The Australian Financial Review "Shareholder", Stafford Williams, Sixth Edition, March 1994, which included a listing of the top 150 companies in Australia by market capitalisation as of November 1993. Letters requesting peer nomination of "outstanding strategic leaders" were sent to the Chief Executive Officers of the top 30 of these organisations based in Victoria. Similar letters were sent to the most senior personnel at The Australian Institute of Management, the Business Council of Australia and the National Industry Education Forum. The response rate from the corporate sector was in general extremely low, being six only with nominations, plus eight "nil responses" from the total of 33. Two "nil responses" included letters expressing regret at the leader's inability to assist due to an overwhelming work schedule. Two "nil responses" stated that they were unwilling to nominate people because those considered at one point to be good strategic leaders were sometimes found later to be working beyond the normal rules of the Law. From the few responses received, however, four leaders were clearly identified. The most highly ranked was unable to assist, due to work commitments, but the next most highly ranked person, a male, agreed to participate in the study.

Description of participants

The total sample of eight outstanding strategic leaders thus included five males and three females. There were three males and two females from the education sector, one male and one female from the public sector and one male from the corporate sector. During the course of the study several of these participants changed their employment base, but in only one case did this involve a change between sectors: this was in the case of the female public service CEO who moved into the corporate sector. This leader, (identified as Leader Seven) was thus referred to in the study as 'public service turned corporate'.

The following provides a brief description of each of the organisational leaders in turn, with some elaboration of the organisations in which they
were located at the time of the commencement of the study. Any identifying information about either the leaders or their organisations has been withheld due to the guarantee of anonymity that was given.

**Leader One**

Male, approximately 45 years of age at the beginning of the study. Principal of a large public primary school (approximately 600 students) for 7 years at that point. Changed employment to a central advisory position during the study.

**Leader Two**

Male, approximately 50 years of age at the beginning of the study. Principal of a large public secondary school (approximately 1700 students) for 8 years. Resigned late in the study to undertake self-employment.

**Leader Three**

Female, aged approximately 50 at the beginning of the study. Principal of an inner suburban public high school (approximately 900 students). In this position for 4 years prior to the study. Changed place of work twice during the study, first to a central advisory position and then to self-employment.

**Leader Four**

Male, approximately 55 years of age at the beginning of the study. Principal of a large inner-suburban independent primary and secondary school (2200 students). In this position for 17 years prior to study. Moved to a similar position in another school during the study.

**Leader Five**

Female, approximately 55 years of age at the beginning of the study. Principal of a large outer-suburban independent primary and secondary school (1200 students). In this position for 12 years at the beginning of the study. Did not change place of employment during the study.
Leader Six
Male, approximately 50 years of age at the beginning of the study. Chief Executive Officer of a very large public service department of approximately 20,000 employees. In this position for 2 years at the beginning of the study. Changed place of employment twice during the study, both times to similar positions.

Leader Seven
Female, approximately 45 years of age at the beginning of the study. Was then Chief Executive Officer of a very large public service department of approximately 25,000 employees. In that position 4 years prior to the study. Changed place of employment twice during the study, first to a similar public service position as CEO and then to a similar position in a multi-national corporation.

Leader Eight
Male, approximately 55 years of age at the beginning of the study. Chief Executive Officer of a very large multi-national corporation, with approximately 25,000 employees. Had been in the company all his working life, including the last 20 years as CEO. Retired during the study.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS PART A: DIRECTION-SETTING

Chapter four presents Part A of the findings, which deals with direction-setting. Following the methodology described in chapter three, the results allow the participants to speak for themselves through a large amount of direct quotation. At the same time, however, critical comment draws attention to points of similarity and difference between the leaders, taking into account their education/non-education status, and other sub-group differences, and considering the findings in relation to pertinent literature.

Direction-setting is divided into three sections. Section one deals with some notions about the leaders vision, including the importance attributed to it by the leaders, the question of whether the vision is a shared vision, and the nature of the vision exhibited. Section two deals with futures thinking, while section three describes the range of factors influencing the leaders as they engage in direction-setting.

The Leaders Vision

The first section deals with the leaders’ vision. It is concerned with the importance that leaders attach to their own vision, the extent to which the vision appears to be shared, and the types of vision that they exhibit, which include the organisational whole-industry, universal and personal.

Importance attributed by leaders

All participants in the study expressed their belief in the importance of a leader’s vision. Consider the following:

Leader One

I believe the Principal carries a vision that’s a set of signposts that can provide people with a view of what it could be like further on. It is always the Principal as leader who has to carry the torch and, along with others in the leadership team, strategically position the school (1:1).

Leader Two

Vision to me is absolutely critical and that’s what I find lacking most amongst the other principals that I meet (2:6). I’m the sort of person who likes to float a lot of ideas and get critical feedback to it, and that helps me to process which of these ideas I’m going to fly with (2:3).
Leader Three

I think all leaders no matter where they are ought to have a view of evolution and an ongoing world that we are all a part of and want to make a contribution to that evolutionary process (3:13). (In my last job) the pressure for the strategic leader was coming from the staff, even parents, students; you are the leader, you have the answers, you set it all down. You just tell us, so that there are no uncertainties and we’ll set the direction and get geared up and go there (3:16).

Leader Four

The strategic notion is, if I want to make schools better, then how do I do that? That’s when you start thinking about tomorrow, next year and a few years away. And the leadership part of it is very complex. I’m sure I have a big determination in terms of the future, but it’s not in terms of ‘we shall do this and this and this’. It’s about one person expressing their view and encouraging others to express it (4:2).

Leader Five

I tend to initiate these things, and I wrote all the material we needed for the planning weekend. I could write you where I want to have the school in ten years time and say there it is and put it into practice, but the school would probably shut the next day because the ideas need a lot of explanation (5:2).

Leader Six

Translating the politically defined objective into something that gives meaning to the working lives of troops, makes them see how what they’re doing contributes to a larger purpose which they can believe in, is a big part of my task and that’s why I write and talk a lot about that sort of thing, because giving meaning is part of the role (6:2).

Leader Seven

A part of my job has been to articulate the vision for the organisation, both internally and externally (7:1)

Leader Eight

I regard getting the strategic direction of the company right as the number one thing that I do, and spend a lot of time thinking about it. That’s what a chief executive’s all about; if you cannot get the vision for your company right and make that meaningful and bring your people along with you, if you leave that stuff to someone else or some consultancy, it doesn’t work (8:3).

Clearly, then, all leaders felt that having a vision and espousing it was critical to their role. In addition, when asked specifically about the extent to which they felt the future of the organisation was determined by themselves, there was strong acknowledgement that that would be the case, though not by all and not without qualification by several. Most leaders paid some attention to the need to have others in the organisation involved in direction-setting.
Throughout the interviews, however, the issue of whose vision and ideas set the direction for the institution proved to be fundamental to an understanding of the meaning of strategic leadership, and with this in mind the issue of shared vision will be explored in detail in regard to each leader in turn.

A shared vision?
The following examines a range of statements by each leader in order to illustrate feelings and opinions on their own role vis-à-vis that of others in the organisation in setting the direction for future action.

Leader One
Leader One, a government school principal, stated his view that

If schools are the product of the people and the culture, I would believe that everybody has part of that strategic intent. The kids and parents or customers, if you want to put it in those terms, have a view about the way that they want to see their school and they should be involved. Staff the same (1:9).

This principal was particularly pleased that staff had managed to engage the parents in the school in 54 different ways, and indeed the parents had been invited to meetings to discuss such subjects as children's needs over the next few years, what type of schooling would need to be offered at that time, the meaning of life-long learning, and changes in society and technology. (1:1) The principal had also encouraged teachers to visit other organisations and to consider ideas from literature of various kinds, in order to have them thinking about change. "They have to own and shape it; they have to share in the development of this school and what it will become (1:2)."

At the same time, however, this principal admitted, "I try not to frighten people because within my own staff they're concerned that I'm going out and growing myself and I'm going to keep coming back and dropping yet another idea on them (1:3)." In addition, the principal felt that staff were under enormous pressure because of the Schools of the Future program, which "has produced a climate of unexpected pressures and they're all colliding (1:5)." This leader saw himself as "the navigator (1:3)"
and made statements such as “I have to be the catalyst and instigate a lot of the change (1:3),” “teachers are going to have to take the scales off the eyes and see things differently (1:3), and “I wouldn’t say I’ve got troglodytes here, but... (1:3).” Thus there seems almost to be a recognition on the part of this principal that even though he wants others to be involved in the thinking process about vision for the organisation, the task essentially falls to him to maintain and develop the focus on the future. He concludes, “None of us can argue that we are the sole proprietor of the vision or the dream; we are the carriers of those dreams; but sometimes the leader has to be out in front, coping, managing through it and helping lead them through it (1:1).”

Leader Two
Leader Two, another state school principal, is much clearer about the importance of the vision of the leader in particular and quite adamant that the lack of such vision can cause major problems in a school.

You’ve got to have a vision for the future of the school which to me means the way in which the school is going to cope with change...I think my greatest criticism of many principals would be that they have a very narrow vision. They don’t seem to be able to look at the potential of the changes that are occurring and they are hankering after the past all the time (2:1).

When this study had begun, the principal was concerned about the extent to which the vision was shared by all stake-holders.

I want rather than expect staff to look at the big picture as much as possible. It’s become more difficult, I think because the big picture has expanded so rapidly and at a time when their morale has been so damaged by the large cuts to education (2:3).

I don’t hold that the vision of the college is only my vision, but I wouldn’t hold that it’s a universally held vision by any means at the moment (2:3). We’ve been through an amalgamation and one of the complexities is getting people from different backgrounds to share the same vision. We’ve brought in a management consultant to work on ensuring that we had a common vision and we’ve made major progress. I’d say there’s been a big shift in the attitudes of the assistant principals. They’re certainly coming more on-line in terms of general vision of the college, because they’ve been basically put in place by me. We are progressively working with the staff to do this and there’s been quite a significant shift this year, but next year, as far as you could expect it to happen, there’d be a common vision and it wouldn’t just be mine... My vision and the school council’s would never have been very divergent at all; we can go back to when I was appointed; they must have seen something in me that they wanted and they liked (2:4).
Four years later, this principal stated that "I would say I have changed in myself to having less need to be in control. That doesn't worry me because we have basically got most of our senior people now sharing the same vision and therefore I'm much more comfortable now with delegation than I used to be (2:8)." This principal's comments reflect an understanding of the notion of shared vision that is related to somehow getting everyone working from the same set of overt and established goals. His suggestion that senior staff would have the same vision as he himself because he had appointed them, and that he would have the same vision as the council that appointed him, may well have some validity since appointments might be made on the basis of perceived commonalities, but nevertheless these statements highlight his expectation that somehow vision filters down from the top, or is actively spread from the top, of the organisation. A further comment might be seen to confirm this. "Getting to shared vision has been a four year process; partly through the appraisal process and through an ongoing process of having information for them (2:8)." The connotation perhaps in this is that appraisal was related to the way in which an individual had adopted the 'party line,' as it were. Certainly, this is borne out by his statement that "(what) I would see of strategic leadership is setting a vision and trying to get people to agree with that vision (2:1)."

Leader Three
Leader Three, another government school principal, also exhibited early reluctance to involve staff in direction - setting, and again, ostensibly because of their being overloaded due to demands of the Schools of the Future program.

I think the vision that guides the school largely comes from the principal though it gets modified a bit perhaps ... You can't get your staff involved too far into the future. They simply can't deal with it, they are so busy dealing with the incredible burdens of the day to day that to move them too far into the future is just very confusing perhaps and alienating. The incredible culture change that's going on in state schools has people stunned. They really are lost in themselves and trying to find out where they are, and that is a very difficult climate that we are working in at the moment. Now when I talk too far into the future, I don't spend a lot of time dwelling on it; I simply try and brush-stroke a direction into the future and have it happening perhaps only here and
there because I think I would just end up with a greater sense of anxiety amongst the staff. So I've got my head into that direction but I doubt that other people would know what's in my head ... in fact my two assistant principals say to me sometimes 'what's in your head?' because I'll perhaps say something or come in with some planning and they're not fully aware of where it's coming from ... part of that is that we don't have time to sit down sufficiently and talk about it, because I think it is important; the more people you can get inside your head the better (3:2).

The final line of this statement is particularly interesting, however, as it seems to highlight a belief that it is the leader's views that must be understood. Although this principal exhibited serious concern for "a collaborative approach, involving as many groups as possible (3:3)," the following statements were also made.

It (introducing ideas) has to come from the staff base, not me articulating, though I think me articulating is increasingly important (3:3).

I'm very interested and always have been in how you change people...You've got to come down from your plan and involve the people and skill the people and resource the people to come with you (3:1).

I am impatient where I want to take the school to (3:8)

Again, then, it seems that there is a tension for the leader in perhaps wanting to involve staff in direction-setting but feeling unable to do so because of the demands of their roles at the time. There appears also, however, to be a prevailing determination regarding the importance of the leader's view. This leader also had not changed her views on this after four years.

**Leader Four**
The views of Leader Four, a non-government school principal, exhibit perhaps the greatest tension in respect to this issue. From the beginning of the study, Leader 4 talked a great deal about involving the staff in direction-setting, as in the following:

It's about allowing certain things to happen, getting strong people into the community and creating an environment where alternative futures are acceptable. So that I don't feel I've got any more insight into what's going to happen tomorrow than anyone else, but I do feel that I've got some insight into people issues and value issues. It's about valuing
people and ideas. It's about maybe R. S. Peters' concept that there are
some things that are worthwhile and some that are not (4:1).

It is a complex of other people's views, my views, the views of the
literature, and there is a sense of trying to say that it has to be a voice
from within a city, rather than a voice in the wilderness, or a voice from
the top of a mountain (4:4).

Towards the end of the study, this leader expressed his views similarly:
Leadership isn't about dreaming up something in private and working
out how you can convince people that it is correct. It is nearly like public
dreaming and I think it actually begins with sharing of personal
experiences, personal stories, finding that which is common and being
daring to do something about that (4:4).

It is a two way sharing. Very important that. The setting, it's from the
setting emerges the ideas, not from a person. So yes, I'm sharing and in
my sharing I am hoping and encouraging others' sharing. Or, let's face
it, sometimes it's from their sharing that leads to my sharing that leads
to the result. You know there is a trap to all this, it's the stumble
principle. That's about listening to or hearing others, seeing that in the
strategic sense; "that's what I've been looking for" or "yes I believe
that". It's never "why didn't I think of that either." It's "yes, yes, yes"
and moving that thing on, that ideal (4:6).

It became clear, however, that the inclusiveness suggested by this
principal in terms of direction – setting might not be as visible in reality as
he thought.

My sense of leadership...I want to hold a number of possible scenarios
in my mind. I don't want to take just one and work on it in depth and
so there is a sense in which I might have someone working in detail on
an idea that won't get through because I have also been working on a
conflicting one and maybe even assign a different person to work on the
detail of that. So I see my leadership role as very much playing with the
ideas, the philosophies, the values, those ideas that give us leverage to
move the students, the institution, forward, so if I allow myself to slip
back into those details, that I think shortchanges the school because no-
one else has the chance to stand out so far and look over the top like a
principal does (4:5).

(The vision) probably becomes concrete when the community is
accepting it, and to a certain extent when the community has accepted it
and owned it then I have at that stage moved on to something else
because that is no longer where I am at - I am on the creative edge
rather than the implementation edge. So it is a problem for some people
working with me, particularly if they are much more focused on trying
to get something done, then they are likely to be caught up in "what has
happened to this idea? I thought it was a good idea. And this was what
you thought was a good idea and this is what you wrote, etc., etc". Yes,
this is true. But what was the date on that? So the movement is
obviously another factor of it all and because I play with ideas there is
no perfect solution. The best will be an approximation and the next one
a better approximation and the next a better approximation again (4:5).
These statements give a very clear indication that whilst the principal includes others in discussions of ideas and invites them to put forward their views, the direction that is taken is that selected by the principal. The ideas of others, which sometimes appear to those others to have been at least tacitly agreed upon, can be left by the wayside as the principal moves on to something different and does not let people know that this has happened.

**Leader Five**

Leader Five, a non-government school principal, appears to be relatively inclusive of others in the direction-setting process. Families and staff are included through widespread surveys and focus groups designed to ascertain views about the school and suggest possible courses of action. Responses are taken very seriously, summarized and reported back to the community for further discussion. Staff groups hold wide-ranging discussions dealing with the feedback (5:1).

Yet even this leader, who appears to be quite collaborative, suggests that a future area of concern for principals is to “try and work with our colleagues, insofar as we are able to assist them to change attitudes and perceptions and the way they do things, so that they can cheerfully cope with a redefinition of their role (5:3).” Furthermore, while the principal suggests that the group processes lead to greater adoption of the vision than a statement produced by herself alone, she says, nevertheless, that those group processes are unlikely to lead to a significantly different product since she actually does all the background work and research and provides the ideas covered (5:2).

Interestingly also, this principal had sent two staff members to undertake a program at a human resources institute because they needed a “change of career or change of attitude within their career.” In addition, another staff member had just had her employment terminated, which the principal justified on the grounds that “you can do an enormous amount to bring people along and tolerate a huge range of different approaches to
things, if the values are right, if everybody is centred in the same values (5:5).”

Thus in Leader Five we see a person who acts in a collaborative manner but clearly retains control of direction-setting both by being the main information - supplier to all constituents, and as a qualified town planner at that, and exerting influence on staff who do not conform.

Leader Six
Leader Six, as the CEO of a large public - sector organisation, was in the position of having to both accept general parameters of direction from an elected government and provide strategic direction within the organisation to keep it healthy and powerful. He viewed his role therefore as one of "translating" a politically defined objective into "something that gives meaning (6:2)." Although one could not say that this CEO had the ultimate responsibility for all the directions taken by the organisation, his approach to direction-setting is nevertheless informative.

Asked if he felt the future of the organisation was determined by himself, this leader replied

No. But I do try to impart an ethos - a way of thinking which expresses itself as a group thing. We think, talk and debate hard; it’s a robust internal environment. It’s a group way, but it doesn’t mean a bunch of clones...it is a way of processing a lot of information through a lot of eyes, and coming up with a conclusion about what we do (6:8).

We talk a lot; we’re very organic...People see us as a fairly heavy outfit that marches together, but it’s more because we’re bound by a common spirit, like Collingwood (football team) or something, rather than by a discipline thing of “this is what you do” (6:4).

On the other hand, the following statements also were made.

What I probably do most of alone is thinking along in terms of the big picture (6:4).

I look for situations where there are large things to be done and easy gains by picking the right thing out of the range of the possible and going about it. I have a short attention span; I like to get quick results and get them bedded down and move on. I enjoy the early phases of coming to terms with a new situation, so I look out for jobs where I can do the things I’m good at. I avoid like the plague the jobs where I know I won’t be good. I start getting restless, bored and disruptive when I don’t have that kind of thing to keep me amused (6:1)...I like the big thrills and spills and drama of being able to pick the mode that gets you
through... in a week rather than six months, to be able to pull the surprises, to see what others haven’t, to see the openings and go through them. And then to tell people I’ve done it; I advertise my successes. I think I’m also reasonably open about my failures. I get a lot of kicks from games of skill and chance, and I love that aspect of it (6:4).

To increase the realm of the possible, this year, next year, in two or three or five years down the track, I certainly look at the larger picture. I publish on those things and I certainly work on the external environment to make sure that what I write gets noticed (6:2).

Again these statements reflect some tension between the desire to include people in direction setting and the desire to satisfy one’s own needs or values. In this case, although it is clear that a great deal of discussion occurs between the leader and different groups within the organisation, it is also apparent that the leader makes at least some decisions according to whatever best suits his personal modus operandi, including a tendency to become bored quickly and a preference for action and drama. He also mentions the pleasure he receives at times from surprising people with what he has done.

**Leader Seven**

Leader Seven also had been CEO of a large public sector organisation at the commencement of the study but in the meantime had moved first to a similar public sector position and then to a commercial business, as equal second-in-command. Even in the last of these positions, however, it was clear that, with direct responsibility for well over 20,000 employees, strategic leadership skills were an essential part of the role. “I’m responsible for a number of areas, both for the day to day issues and for the more strategic issues such as, “Is this the sort of business this organisation wants to be in and how do we want to modify or change it (7:5)?”

With this leader we again see a somewhat mixed picture regarding direction-setting behaviour. On the one hand, like others, the leader talks of sharing that role.

I’ve always taken the view that in terms of selling yourself as an organisation and taking responsibility for its successes and failures, that’s something that stops with me, but that most of what I’ve mentioned, and some of the tough decisions that we’ve had to take, have certainly been recommended by me, but it’s been very much a team effort, in particular the top team, working reasonably closely
together, not always agreeing, but the path down which we’re going both in terms of the planning which we’re putting together and where we have been has been very much a team effort...it’s been a synthesis of views, a group of people who like working together and who get on well, occasionally arguing about directions, and I think it’s hard to work out what’s been my contribution compared to the rest of the team (7:3). One of the things I think’s very important is building on the strengths of the people who are here because changes can be achieved through them (7:1).

These statements indicate that the leader places considerable importance on the views of others as to which directions should be followed. On the other hand, however, the following statements also were made, that reflect the significance of the leader’s own intent:

There’s been a fair focus on the external world, whether it’s through speeches or talking to the media or a radio program I have once a week, in sending out messages about the sort of organisation you want it to be and changing people’s perceptions both internally and externally about that organisation (7:1).

(In this third job) it’s still doing the same; scanning the environment, taking the best advice you can, hiring the best people you can to advise you on these issues, but in the end making the decision (7:5).

Thus Leader Seven appears overall to achieve some balance in terms of involving a very small number of colleagues in the direction-setting process, but it is interesting to note where their ideas for development come from. "The specific source is our strategic planning group who are responsible for everything, for collating information and researching everything, through to looking at future trends, and so a lot of what I am conscious of comes from the internal processes here (7:2)." "When you are leading an organisation as large as this you have a range of skills that you can draw on (7:3)". Thus, like Leader Six, Leader Seven alludes to the availability of ‘corporate services’ to aid in direction-setting inter alia, whereas the school leaders, in each case, considered themselves to be the only person in the organisation to have the opportunity to develop a world view concerning that organisation.

**Leader Eight**

A study of Leader Eight will perhaps illuminate this issue. Leader Eight was, of all the participants, most clear about the direction-setting responsibility of the role, describing it as “the number one thing” that he does, and stating
that "if you leave that stuff to someone else or some consultancy, it doesn't work (8:3)."

My job has been essentially about change, trying to create the future (8:1).

The worst thing about strategic plans is if they are done by somebody outside, by people who live in the clouds, and you don't get the commitment (8:2). A lot of the strategic planning and consultancy stuff, particularly management consultant stuff, even done by the best of them, I've found often very ineffectual and not particularly relevant to the core activity, the heart of what it was all about.

In being strategic, the one thing I would not do is get some outside consulting group in to tell us what our business is, and a lot of my peer group will do that, and I regard that as their weakness and our strength, and the proof of the pudding is there. A lot of people seem to think that this subject (strategic leadership) is somehow different and needs a lot of outside input. What those consultants generally do these days is, they have matrix or computer-based programs to do it all for them. I've seen some terrible outworkings of that sort of process (8:3).

The view being expressed here is essentially that direction-setting should be an in-house affair. When Leader Eight talks of keeping the strategic role to himself, he is clearly talking about keeping it within the organisation as opposed to contracting it to outside bodies. The issue remains, however, as to the extent to which, and the way in which, he himself is involved in that function vis-à-vis others within the organisation.

Well firstly, we don't treat strategic planning as a regular annual event. It's an exercise that we tend to revisit on a once-off basis every two or three years. About three or four years ago it was time to really give it a hit again. We took one of our senior people, we took two other young fellows from around the organisation, we actually recruited an ex-Kinsey consultant, and we locked them away for six months, and they came up with one of the better sort of documents on the strategic plan. The way they went about it was to go out and involve the people down in the (constituent) businesses. And what they really did was trigger a lot more interest in that process down there. We're just in the process of revamping the strategic plan documents. And this time we've got a lot more of that strategic planning vision down in the businesses and it's come upward, and now we've got the job of bringing it all together at the top (8:2).

The interesting point in this appears to be that when the CEO claims that setting future directions is his responsibility, he is adopting the perspective firstly, that decisions are his rather than those of outside experts, and secondly, that he is the chief decision-maker regarding the ideas that
have been brought forward from the constituents and the planning group. He maintains this view till the end of the study when, in reporting (8:6) a recentralising trend in his company, with a reassertion of the power of the corporate centre, he still talks (8:7) of "the strategic development...that is dependent on the CEO and his people." This fits very closely with the role adopted by Leader Seven and to an extent with the role adopted by leader Six who, despite his highly individualized decision-making style, had access to the advice provided by corporate services and to a senior management team who had daily work-front exposure that he acknowledged he did not. All three cases, but especially those of Leaders Seven and Eight, differ from the cases of the school principals who, when seeing themselves as the chief direction-setters, were thinking not just of the decision-making role, but of the dreaming, innovating and creating that lay behind it and became the 'vision'.

Thus the original question of the extent to which direction-setting was shared by leaders with others in the organisation probably has differentiated answers. It would appear that all leaders took upon themselves the role of decision-making with regard to future directions for the organisation and considered that to be a major and significant part of their role. It also appears, however, that the corporate leaders and, to some extent, the public service leader, having access to corporate services and being somewhat reliant on these due to the size of their organisations, made their decisions in light of possibilities presented to them by either external consultants or by insiders appointed to the strategic task. The school leaders, on the other hand, and again to some extent the public service leader, felt themselves generally to be responsible for the more creative aspects of the strategic process that preceded the decision-making.

Nature of vision
In describing the visions they held for their organisations, the leaders appeared to exhibit, to greater or lesser degrees, four different kinds of vision. The literature is helpful in providing a framework for the
consideration of these. First, the work by Sheive and Schonheit (1987:93), on
the vision of successful school leaders, contributes the notions of
‘organisational’ vision, which aims for organisational excellence, and
‘universal’ vision, which is more concerned with an issue of equity that
would encompass the entire educational scene. Second, Porter’s (1996:51)
work on strategic thinking contributes the notion of ‘whole-industry’ vision,
which allows leaders not only to optimise within an industry, but to reshape
or redefine the parameters of the industry itself. This appears to sit between
the two types of vision outlined by Sheive and Schonheit, as it extends
beyond the particular organisation to the whole-industry, but not necessarily
to an issue of equity. The final type of vision is one not yet readily apparent
in literature, but glimpsed in Caldwell and Spinks’ (1998, Chapter 10)
discussion of ‘Leadership and the Heroic Quest,’ which concerns essentially
the personal journey of the leader. The ‘personal’ vision, as it is called for the
purposes of this study, alludes to an aspect of vision in which the work life
and the personal life appear to be inseparable or intertwined. The work life
is expected by the leader to provide the vehicle for the leader to explore and
develop aspects of the self, particularly in relation to nature and
achievements.

The following discussion considers the four types of vision as they
were exhibited by the eight leaders. It then presents a summary of these
along with a comparison and contrast between the education and non-
education groups.

Organisational vision
Organisational vision was exhibited by all leaders, usually in relation to a
quest for excellence in the organisation, as the following examples show.

Leader One
Leader One wanted his government school to provide “the best education in
Victoria (1:4)” and to be “state of the art (1:5),” and frequently referred to the
‘effective schools’ literature (1:2, 1:1).’
Leader Two

Leader Two wanted his government school to demonstrate "best practice (2.1)" and to acquire as many resources as possible.

It's using the system and the resources to do that (ensuring students' success). That means we must have a very large school to get the resources, and that's the way we're moving. Also it means getting maximum value (not the last drop of blood) out of every resource we've got, and the most important resource is teaching staff. Therefore my vision is having a very large school which will have access to the widest range of resources to achieve maximum success for its students (2:1).

Leader Three

Leader Three, from the government sector, also had strong ideas about what should be done to enhance the organisation.

We've been reviewing curriculum for the last three years (3:3). The technology stuff for example, girls and science and technology; you know I have a vision of integration, of science happening not only in a science classroom, but somewhere where there is a coming together of the scientific and the mathematical and the technology in a learning centre and I've just had a conversation, because we've gone through allocating positions of responsibility for next year, I've had a conversation with the person who didn't actually want that position, but he's the only one really who can do it, and I said, "Look, we have a future that's a very different future... and I'm looking to you to take us there through that curriculum area... and you'll get a lot of support in that... but we really have to try and imagine a very different future (3:2).

Leader Four

Leader Four, from the private school sector, preferred to think beyond the confines of the school itself, but was conscious that the inward focus was necessary to satisfy the immediate needs of other stake-holders. For example, he explained,

This notion of what a school should be doing isn't just about a Tertiary Entrance Rank score, but if you don't focus on T.E.R you don't exist. You actually have to deal with the person who knocks on the door and says "My daughter didn't get a high enough score; she got a C+ and I wanted a B+", or something, so you can't walk away from it, so I guess I start from the assumption that school's about the growth of people; it must be broader than any assessment, but you can't ignore the assessment (4:1).
Leader Five
Leader Five, also from the private school sector, was equally conscious of the basic need to maintain an organisation that fulfilled obvious market demands.

The schools that have powered ahead (in the last few years) have been the very large comprehensive co-eds, at least as far as this State is concerned. To be fair, there has been a consolidation of a number of the boys' schools, and three or four of the girls' schools have maintained themselves, grown slightly, and are very strong. But in planning the future, I thought very strongly that to be able to educate the whole family was crucial, because we have a number of people who want their whole family educated under the one school umbrella. So we have moved strongly in that direction (5:7).

Leader Six
Leader Six, from the public service, sought to have a very efficient organisation, always ready to perform and in a cost effective way.

The government I work for was elected with well-defined fiscal policies in this area and very clear fiscal parameters. They had to get the State deficit under control and so forth (6:2)...I have a pretty dogmatic, cut and dried view of the way organisations work (6:2). I think, when you strike a pocket of resistance you've got to be able to focus on that, so all the rest has to be on auto. Structure is important; systems are important (6:5).

Leader Seven
Leader Seven, throughout the three positions held during the course of the study, seemed to be focused on efficiency and rationalisation. For example, in relation to the first position, she said:

I was employed to turn around an organisation that was in financial difficulties and that's an understatement, and which was hidebound with corporate practices...an organisation in difficulty not only because of its finances, partly because of its politics but also because of its fairly rigid work practices; and so for the past four and a half years what I've been doing, both with the short-term plan and, simultaneously a longer-term plan, is turning this organisation around (7:1).

Leader Eight
Leader Eight had a strong organisational vision, which was that the company would be a focused company within its product range, very clear about the sort of products that it would and would not make and how it wanted to spread the products around the country, and with a planning matrix against which new possibilities could be quickly assessed (8:2).
Thus all eight leaders demonstrated organisational vision which essentially related to establishing or maintaining the broad parameters of the organisation’s work. The non-education leaders differed to the education group in their stronger emphasis on efficiency, tight definition and financial accountability of the organisation.

**Whole-industry vision**

Whole-industry vision, which reflected a desire to reshape or redefine the industry rather than just the organisation, was evident in the statements of almost all of the leaders.

**Leader One:**

We have to reformulate what schooling’s about (1:1) We need to be open, we need to set aside our beliefs and suspend them if we really, truly are going to look at what a school could be like (1:2). If we’ve got a vision of what schooling’s about, we’ve got to stop thinking about what we know and think about what could be (1:3).

**Leader Two**

We have many different teachers and principals and administrators from other schools here, (to see our technology). The teachers do a three day practicum and the leaders a one day practicum. To give you an example; W. Secondary College had an enormous amount of trouble, wracked by internal strife, the union getting involved, and so on. The principal came here, then started to send his teachers through. They’ve borrowed just about everything that they possibly can from this school including our teaching and learning charter; we’ve encouraged them to do so, and they tailored it to their own school and they are really turning it around (2:6).

**Leader Three**

I always feel very comfortable with making connections between education and the business sector, the corporate sector, which a lot of educationalists don’t, because they somehow feel that that’s a corruption of the educational world (3:1). The work practices and change processes and what we’re doing here with students are similar to what you would do in a big corporation in trying to service clients’ needs (3:1). ...planning and moving through change processes and understanding the psychology, I suppose, of people and groups within an organisation...I’m just interested in all of that sort of stuff at that level (3:1).

**Leader Four**

I would start off by believing that schools still aren’t good enough...not reaching enough students and not reaching them in the broadest possible sense. So I would want to try and focus, or focus the school, on broader issues; they represent a chance for students to get more control of their learning. So when you put that together the strategic notion is, if I want to make schools better, then how do I do that? That’s when you start thinking
about tomorrow, next year and a few years away (4:1). In one sense it’s as far as you can see; it’s saying that young people, older people, anyone, might have more control of their own lives...because they don’t today. So in that sense it’s forever away. There’s a tension that you live with, the tension of tomorrow and today and you try and bind those things together (4:1).

Leader Five

There’s no doubt that the silicon chip has changed every facet of life. It’s changed it through a rearrangement of how we communicate. No more can one go into a classroom with the textbooks for the year and a piece of chalk, etc. One of the last bastions of change it seems to me is the school timetable and the school day and the school year. And I’m not convinced that we serve our young people well by continuing to try and pour the new wine of technology and communication, what is a learner, what is a teacher, into the old bottle of the constant constraint of the comfort zone of current timetabling (5:2).

Leader Six

I’ve been very active in promoting a national re-think of inter-governmental arrangements in this area (6:2).

Leader Seven

(In the first job) We had been, both publicly and behind the scenes, an important part of the talking, more to the then opposition than to the government, about the need for change in local government, and we’ve played a role in the local government reform process. And so I’d certainly see my role, as have the other managers, as being in the local government industry, as well as in this organisation (7:1).

(In the current position) In talking to journalists, and I’ve talked to 2 today, in talking to politicians, and I’m in Canberra next week, (there’s) an opportunity to talk about not just the day to day issues but what are the global pressures on this industry and just engaging them in the debate (7:9).

Leader Eight

Leader Eight, CEO of a very large corporation, did not talk about changing the industry. He did talk about the creation of new products, but appeared to do so more from the perspective of enhancing his company’s market advantage than of enhancing the industry per se.

We took a business that was pretty much on its backside and created one of the most successful organisations on the globe in the space of ten or twelve years; we’ve taken some big risks and we’ve got there. If a new idea appeals to me about a product or process and I think there’s something in it, and that’s what I get paid to decide, I suppose, I will probably take the trouble to send it to a research laboratory out there and they will give me a view about it (8:4). We’re accessing one way or another the global trends in our industry, and we have people who are out there, moving around the world, seeing if products are likely to become obsolete, assessing the life-cycle thing, what’s mature and what’s in the early stages, because if you approach it in conventional westernised terms, you might miss what’s happening (8:3).
Thus although Leader 8 sought to go beyond the existing parameters of the established industry of the time, his motivation appears not to be related to improving the industry as a whole, but solely to improving his company’s prospects. He does not appear to exhibit industry-wide vision in the same way as the other leaders, who seemed concerned to spread some kind of message about how the industry in which they worked could be generally improved, through changes in either substance or process.

**Universal vision**

Universal vision manifested itself chiefly through a concern for other people and for making their lives better, and was alluded to in the above statements of several leaders about improving their industry. The following statements reflect a high level of commitment by several of the leaders to a wider purpose in their work, to something beyond the benefit to the organisation or to the industry.

**Leader One**

Unless the student outcomes change we are wasting our time in terms of planning (1:1). If we were to change we needed to involve people in those changes (1:2). Part of it is to involve people in taking ownership (1:2).

**Leader Two**

My vision is nothing at all unexpected, really... enabling all our students to achieve what they want to do at the end of their schooling and, almost invariably, that means going on to university (2:5).

**Leader Three**

I’ve always been interested in making people’s lives better, so there’s something a bit sort of evangelistic (3:4). I feel I’ve got a fundamental connection with what people are on about anyway to go and say OK we are all wanting to make a difference in this community and have the best opportunities we can for our kids and see them grow as much as they can possibly grow and in all the different ways, so what are our priorities here (3:14).

**Leader Four**

I suppose it’s also about... trying to get in touch with oneself and assuming some sort of universality, so that if I feel put down by something, why wouldn’t a student feel put down by it... and inviting teachers to feel what it’s like on the other side and inviting administrators to feel what it’s like on the other side, so having the Tavistock experience was significant, being in a large group and saying what it’s like to be without a voice in a large group, what it’s like to be in assembly when the only people who speak are on a platform, what it’s like to be in a small group when someone else is dominating it (4:2).
Leader Five

I don’t think there is any more important role, apart from parenting, than working with young people in schools. And I think society has got itself a real problem, in terms of permitting various things to have devalued teaching (5:4).

Leader Six

I believe that for the larger purpose of society we do have good services in this area. I also believe that we have to have them at a cost that won’t bankrupt us or the next generation (6:2).

Thus some sort of universal vision was expressed by all the school principals and by the public sector CEO. Each of these people expressed an aim of somehow making life better for others in terms of an issue of equity, such as equipping young people to make life choices, or to understand the mutual interdependence of humans. Leaders Seven and Eight did not raise such issues. Although Leader Eight referred to both empowering the workforce (8:5) and inducting young people into principles and ethics (8:5), he did so from the perspective of organisational efficiency, with the view of avoiding industrial relations problems.

Personal vision

The final area examined was that of personal vision, which was a different kind of vision exhibited by several leaders. As defined earlier, personal vision involved an expectation by the leader that the work situation would provide the vehicle for the leader to explore and develop aspects of the self, particularly in relation to nature and achievements. Personal vision was also frequently and significantly involved in the leaders’ decision-making with regard to changing their work situations, and this connection is discussed here.

Leader One

Part of my vision would be that I am able to equip myself with a number of ideas that are taken from a range of settings and I can move into those settings in either my professional life or my private life and feel comfortable (1:5). Part of the task is to try and provide leadership conceptually, as well as demonstrate the model (1:4). I don’t want to be remembered as someone who was very good at handling all the bikes and things and the bells. If I’m going to be significantly remembered it’s because we’ve changed. (1:5).

It appeared that, for Leader One, the meaning extracted from work was strongly related to the meaning of life. This was perhaps borne out when the
frustrations of the work situation began to preclude fulfilment from the task and the principal began to consider whether he was where he should be, for his own good.

There have been events outside my control that have impacted upon me and my health in the last five years that have made me question the reason why I want to be in a primary school and whether this is the best place; but once again all I needed was time for a bit of refreshing and rethinking what I was about. So this is where I want to be at this moment in my career (1:6).

The frustrations remained, however, as evidenced in earlier references to teachers as being akin to “troglodytes” and having to “take the blinkers off.” He clearly felt frustrated by the insularity he perceived in teachers and other principals who had been “cloistered” by going from school to university and back into school (1:5). He felt overloaded by the demands of the Schools of The Future program, which “has taken me away from my first love, that’s being with children and teachers” and, to a degree, disillusioned by the program, despite enjoying some early benefits such as the right to select staff.

Change is expected to bring our budget and our personnel function in line with some genius in the Rialto (central office). That’s been an absolute ‘con’ because if you’re going to introduce any change you have to support it with infrastructures to make it work, and those infrastructures that have been put in place have been pretty small and bad in design (1:6).

Despite his decision to stay in the position, however, Leader One did in fact change jobs shortly after this interview, after a five year stint, going to a central advisory office in which the frustrations just described were not present and in which the development and application of a very broad perspective on education was a key function.

**Leader Two**

With Leader Two, the personal vision was not so clearly evident, but interestingly had been identified by external management consultants who did not view it as a positive character trait of the principal.

I’ve got a very high desire to achieve, to make things happen. Hay-McBer (management course) says it’s very personal, rather than through the school (2:2).
Towards the end of the study, in announcing his impending retirement, the principal stated:

No. (I don’t have to go yet). I just judge the time is ready. I think that what has kept me going and kept me relevant is the incredible level of change that has occurred. It has been like being the Principal of three different schools over the past twelve years or so. I don’t think I have outstayed my welcome so far but if I kept going for much longer I would. I think I might have been pretty instrumental in setting the direction but actually where it’s going now I am not having a great deal of influence on. I am finding that the agenda is moving so fast in relation to technology, teaching and learning that I’m struggling now to keep up (2:10).

These statements appear to reflect a decision by Leader Two to move out of the particular work position because what he wanted to accomplish as a leader was no longer possible and therefore his life did not have the same meaning. He was therefore taking an early retirement after twelve years in the position and planning to engage in consultancy work.

*Leader Three*

Leader Three presented a very strong example of personal vision.

Well, at a simple level, I’ve always served people. I was a trained nursing sister before I entered education, so I was in that world and made a choice about where I was going to go, and I’ve always been interested in making people’s lives better, so there’s something a bit sort of evangelistic. I don’t mean it to sound like that, but I have always been in that sort of mode of...wow, there’s a world out there and we’re here, so we can move closer...so when you identify things that even as a child you saw as somehow being interesting, I mean it mightn’t be when you get into it, but at least it’s something to be explored, so there is something about the imagination taking you into the world of others and letting you sort of plod around there to sort of see what it’s like a bit. And the energy that goes with it...it’s just the real thrill of change processes (3:4).

I think what I’m articulating is, that your journey as a leader is your own journey as a person and you are constantly confronting your own values and what am I on about and is what I’m doing and thinking best for this place? For these people? It is your personal journey....yes, a lot of the vision for your school and wanting to make a better society (3:13).

But my vision is tied up with the industrial ... if the industrial scene reverts back to as bad as it’s been, it’s the one thing that would make me want to be somewhere else. I don’t have much patience with a bureaucracy that ties your hands with “thou shalt” and doesn’t let you get on with things. I must get liberated out of the tortuous staff situation or I will have to find another direction for myself. I am impatient where I want to take the school to (3:8).
In Leader Three, therefore, we see a leader who, whilst seeking to make life better for other people, does it very much through activities or challenges that fulfil her own needs for change and for testing herself, or perhaps more accurately, for proving herself, since she does not readily accommodate major obstacles but will walk away from them or work around them. She appears quite intent on pursuing her own ‘personal journey’ to see what sort of contribution she can make to the world through her own ideas, values and actions.

A latecomer to education, Leader Three changed her work situation twice during the four years of the study. Immediately after the first interview she was selected to attend an international business executive development program where she was the only educator in attendance and where she was not only highly stimulated by the business environment, but much affected by the notion of “constantly finding environments where your own growth can happen (3:9).” Offered an alternative position on her own return, Leader Three accepted it.

I’d been four years at that school. I’ve never been more than five years in one position. I was on my way to a meeting and listening to someone on the radio interviewing the CEO of a big corporation and they were having a discussion about the life of a CEO in terms of the maximum impact positively the CEO can have on an organisation and they were talking about four years and it was like the voice of God talking to me (3:9).

The new position, in a central advisory role, was accepted on the basis of a five-year contract, but again the Leader left, this time after 18 months, to take on private consultancy in leadership and related areas. About the 18 months, she later reflected “So that is another direction and just on the personal journey of a leader I found it very exciting, very challenging, hard, a different kind of work for the time I was there. Particularly for that first year when ...was being established and you knew you were making directions (3:10).” Thus we are left with a picture of Leader Three as a person who, whilst exhibiting a vision concerned with improving the lives of others, nevertheless does this very largely for her own fulfilment, and when this
falters, moves on to find another situation that will provide that positive reinforcement.

Leader Four
Leader Four, similarly, showed himself as being strongly driven by a personal vision.

From my Christian faith, the notion of, some things are more valuable than others, and there aren’t necessarily clear absolutes on that...well there are some absolutes but they’re not the absolutes that tomorrow we must all wear a tie or we must all study mathematics. It’s much broader and more general...more philosophic absolutes. It’s also valuing people and ideas; it’s not an emptiness, it’s not about a market competitiveness in a vacuum. It’s about maybe R.S. Peters’ concept that there are some things that are worthwhile and some things that are not worthwhile and that it’s about looking and trying and making people justify why it’s worthwhile (4:2).

The leadership is essentially a personal journey for me and so some of the things that happen in my work life also happen in my private life... I don’t see things in simple terms like “This is a nicer ice-cream than that”. I see them in the complexity of...who am I? who are these other people?, what is my sense of tomorrow?, what is my sense of values I am now valuing and where do I go with all this, so I am in a conflict situation with lack of clarity where I go up and down and that is not dissimilar to my memory of school issues where you have this fantastic idea, this enthusiasm, you convey the enthusiasm, you are off and running, then the opposition starts and then you go into yourself and say “why did I think of this, why did I initiate this, this is hopeless, do I really believe in it, do I believe in it enough to take all this garbage?...and then you don’t pursue it. If you work past that yourself, if you do believe, then the next stage is to help other people to believe and take them through it. So I see a lot of similarity in the public and private life (4:5).

Leader Four, after approximately twenty years of successful leadership in the one school and now able to retire in comfort, chose instead to move to yet another position that was extremely challenging and caused some difficulties, at least initially. This occurred half way through the present study.

Leader Five
Leader Five presented a very clear case of the work situation providing the meaning of life for a leader.

Having been brought up as a good Methodist girl, I realised that salvation came not only through faith, but also through good works. One had to earn one’s passage in life...if I want to have meaning in life, I have to do something that is of value, and value means for mankind, for personkind (5:4).

Leader Five had been in the same position for approximately eight years and had remained in it through the duration of the study. She had,
however, given serious thought to the issue of her tenure of this position and spontaneously stated that she had stayed there for such a lengthy period, despite many other job offers, because of the symbolism of the role.

I am led to believe, and I can see it, that there is a certain symbolism in the style and quality of the principalship as it's been established here. I would think that anyone who establishes a particular style and stamp...has a responsibility always to regard that as an important aspect of what's going on (5:6).

Clearly Leader Five was deeply connected with her work situation and used it to explore and establish many of her own values.

Leader Six
Leader Six also explained the importance of the job at the personal level.

It means organising it (the organisation) as well as you can and being as clear as you can about what you're doing for whom and all that kind of thing, and I think it's all worthwhile. I think I can go to my grave feeling I've done something if I've done that a little better than it was before I started (6:2).

I don't think you can just separate organisational life from the rest of life, and I don't think you come to work as a different person from what you are at home (6:5).

Neither Leader Seven nor Leader Eight expressed the sort of sentiments that might be classified as personal vision in the sense of the foregoing examples. They did not appear to think of their work life as a 'personal journey' which allowed them to explore and develop aspects of themselves as they worked towards greater self-understanding and self-development. Rather, they talked more in terms of there being a distinction between the work life and the non-work life.

Leader Seven
Leader Seven, for instance, made the following comments:

(At the beginning of the study): I think I'm able to keep things in perspective. This is an important job and I enjoy it, but it's not the world's most important job (7:3).

(At the end of the study): My approach is to spend time at the beginning of an assignment (researching the organisation's needs carefully) because I never see myself going into organisations for the long run (7:6).

I've got some people who basically only turn their mobile phone off for about 6 hours a day; they feel that the job is such that they have to be constantly on call. Now I don't do that because I want a life (7:9).

Leader Seven had in fact changed jobs in 1990, 1995, and 1998 but this appeared to be more as a result of the particular short-term task of downsizing for which she was always recruited, rather than as a function of
a desire to perhaps find out more about herself through changes of role. She described her role as one of "internal critic" to the organisations (7:7), which in essence meant "you need to understand the culture but not necessarily be part of it (7:8)." She made the point rather strongly, however, that job changing was increasingly influenced by factors other than the leader's own motivation.

My predecessor at (X organisation) was there for 10 years, his for 25, and my successor was barely two. So it went 25, 10, 5, and 2. Now I'm not suggesting it becomes 6 months, that would be ridiculous, but I think we are going through a cycle where the pressures are enormous and the intensity is at a point where people say other things in life are important...Whether you're in the public sector or the private sector, there is much more focus, not necessarily rightly, on short term performance, and much less tolerance of mistakes. I don't see any let up in the pace of change for the people leading organisations (7:6).

**Leader Eight**

Leader Eight also changed jobs during the study, but only through retirement which then led into Board memberships, after being in the one corporation all his working life and being CEO of that organisation for over 20 years. Clearly he had felt enormous loyalty to that organisation and had achieved much of his personal growth through his experience there. However, he also did not speak in terms of his work life being a 'personal journey.'

You have to make hard decisions about what's right for the shareholders of the company; you can never let your personal issues confuse you about what has to be done (8:4).

The kinds of vision exhibited by the eight leaders are summarized in Table 1. The table displays in brief those responses that best encapsulate each leader's meanings in terms of the particular kind of vision being exemplified. As the table shows, the five educators and the public service CEO exhibited all four kinds of vision, namely, the organisational, the whole-industry, the universal and the personal. The leader who had begun in the public service but was now in the corporate sector exhibited organisational and whole-industry vision, but not the universal or personal. The long-term corporate leader exhibited only organisational vision.
### Table 1: Types of Vision of Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader Nature of Vision</th>
<th>State Education 1</th>
<th>State Education 2</th>
<th>State Education 3</th>
<th>Independent Education 4</th>
<th>Independent Education 5</th>
<th>Public Service 6</th>
<th>Public Service ➔ Corporate 7</th>
<th>Corporate 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industry Wide</td>
<td>Reformulate schooling.</td>
<td>Share ideas with other schools.</td>
<td>Making connections between education and business.</td>
<td>Make all schools better by giving students more control over learning.</td>
<td>Need to reconsider what is a learner, what is a teacher.</td>
<td>Promoting a national rethink of intergovernmental relations.</td>
<td>Talking to politicians about global pressures on the industry.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>Involve people as partners.</td>
<td>Enable students to achieve desires.</td>
<td>Make people's lives better.</td>
<td>Give voice to people.</td>
<td>Working with young people is extremely important.</td>
<td>Provide services that won't bankrupt the next generation.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Vision

All of the leaders had adopted the role of chief decision-maker with regard to vision-formulation and saw that as an essential part of their role. Although they talked about the importance of having others in the organisation involved in vision-formulation, they also indicated that they strongly asserted their own views and their own wills in this regard. Thus, there was little evidence to support the view that direction-setting was a shared role, at least in the sense of people working to create something together, as opposed to having the leader create a vision and then somehow disseminate it through the organisation. The education leaders from both the public and independent sector appeared to have a particularly strong sense of ownership of the vision, relative to the public service and corporate leaders. A high rate of job turnover amongst all public sector leaders, education and other, appeared to be related to a desire for greater independence to pursue the personal journey.

The nature of the vision was quite complex, with four different strands being identified, namely the organisational, the whole-industry, the universal and the personal. This time the public service leader was aligned with the five education leaders in exhibiting all four kinds of vision, where the two corporate leaders were much more focused. The topic of vision, the sharing of it, and the nature of it, will be considered again in Chapter Six, which summarises the findings.

Futures Thinking

Importance

A common theme in the interviews of the eight leaders was their practice of keeping themselves very well informed about the large range of factors and trends that might potentially impact on their organisations or be utilised by their organisations in a proactive manner. The various means by which the leaders did this and the influences that led them to do so will be discussed in the next section of this chapter, while the kinds of futures thinking will be discussed below.
Nature of futures thinking

Broadly speaking, the ideas in which leaders seemed most interested can be classified into five categories, namely those dealing with aspects of the external environment, those dealing with changes in their core business, those emanating from organisation theory, those from leadership theory and those relating to 'change' per se. Whilst these could all be seen to overlap to varying degrees and to be mutually interdependent in the work contexts of the leaders, the distinction seems helpful as a basis of discussion.

External Environment

All leaders kept themselves well informed about trends in the wider environment. In particular they looked for broad movements of a political, economic, technological, societal or physical nature that might impact on their organisations. Consider the following examples:

Leader One

We wanted to say “what’s the type of child we’re looking at for the year 2000 (six years away), what type of schooling needs to be offered. We talked about Peter Ellyard’s work on schools of the future in terms of life-long learning, the creative individual, work within a team, that our children will probably work within Asia and will need to be bilingual, and we were able to get a composite together of what schools will have to respond to, in terms of technology and change (1:1).

Leader Two

Well for one thing you’ve got to try to make yourself as aware as possible about what the trends are, which direction society’s going in, what is actually changing, what are the developments, so you’ve got to be up to date with the developments in technology, the developments in government policy, the general directions in government policy, to do that you’ve got to think beyond Australia, you’ve got to look to see what happens in the rest of the world because it’s almost inevitable that Australia will follow what’s happening in other parts of the world. You’ve got to be aware of things like the Asian crisis and the potential implications of that for Australia for education for instance. It’s a matter of processing that and trying to work out what you think is the most likely direction (2:7).

Leader Three

The Internet thing is just one example without going overboard about the technology because I think there is a balance that’s needed, but how will we even in five years, it might be as early as that...certainly in ten years’ time, those of us who don’t understand how to access computers, probably won’t be able to shop as readily as somebody else, so it’s just the need I think to be aware of a future that’s just so different to what we’ve come out of in the past (3:2).
Leader Four

First, there’s government policy and that includes the amount of money going to schools like ours. Then technology, insofar as it could mean we have a different paradigm with which we are working. New players, such as Telstra and so on, will be developing materials directly for students and bypassing schools. Another variable is the success or failure of the government school system (4:7).

Leader Five

Now if we’re going to really acknowledge the fact that our students need to be prepared for the world of the future, the world that is in existence now, whether you look at the silicon chip, or whether you look at the changes in the structure of employment and where people work and so on, then we have to find ways of managing a redefinition of learning and what is a learner (5:3).

Leader Six

In terms of a fuzzy kind of general direction I look a long way ahead. I’ve been very active in promoting a national re-think of intergovernmental arrangements, because things we’re doing here are already impeded by intergovernmental factors (6:2)...we need to invest heavily in records and IT and training, to make sure our people go into the field as well equipped as possible (6:5).

Leader Seven

Some changes are already happening, such as the move towards larger organisations which this State Government has implemented. I think, though, that there’s a number of other trends that will happen,...the extent to which shopping from your television at home will impact on the major retailers... and in terms of national demographics the migration north means that our population growth and probably economic growth will not be the same as Sydney and Brisbane and that has major implications for our future funding as well as provision for future services, so there’s a number of impacts, some of them likely to be felt by all big cities around the world, others probably confined to Melbourne (7:2).

Leader Eight.

The globalisation process is affecting every business because of this opening up of markets, because of this information technology revolution. Increasingly today it’s the era of these globalised companies that are setting their roots down all over the world and that’s impacted enormously on Australian businesses that once had a domestic monopoly to their activities. The buyer in Australia, the customer in Australia, he’s got a huge amount of information now at his fingertips. So it’s the instant knowledge about the market place and pricing behaviour and costs, reinforced by the changes in information technology that are having huge impacts. Today it’s not possible to just develop a domestic strategy; you actually have to find your place in the global scene (8:7).

The above statements indicate that all of the eight leaders kept themselves informed about the environment external to the organisation and possible ways in which events or conditions in that environment might have
an impact on the organisation or might be used to the organisation's advantage. The substantive issue raised most frequently was that of technology, with all leaders drawing attention, either directly or indirectly, to its impact on their organisations.

**Core Business**

Leaders also paid attention to trends within the substantive area of their own industry.

**Leader One**

In terms of exceptional children...I’ll give an example. We ran a program called ‘Bright Sparks,’ where last year we had a child here who was an eight year old, doing Year 10 maths, but trapped in the body of an 8 year old. So that provided a challenge for the whole staff to start working in the area of multiple intelligences. I compiled a submission, revisiting Bloom, which was taken up and now there’s a cluster of schools exploring that. It’s opened up the mind for teachers to be able to teach in different ways (1:1).

**Leader Two**

The issue of the teaching and learning is the biggest single issue and the number one priority for next year. There is a clear link between the strategic and the educational because my view of the future is to do with the quality of the output of the college. Now we must zero in on the classroom...And of course we’re currently building our $6.9 million dollar technology building (2:5).

**Leader Three**

The technology stuff, for example, girls and science and technology, with science happening not only in a science classroom. It’ll take three years to get people’s heads together in different areas to really shape the curriculum and use a room and set up a room that allows some of those things (to happen) that I guess the futurists are on about (3:2).

**Leader Four**

It’s more about philosophic absolutes. The contribution probably won’t be that we built a...school or introduced..., but that person X was able to influence some thinking, that person Y was able to influence some thinking...and so the setting allows people to be different, but in a context that says you’ve got to justify it in terms of, it’s good for the students and it’s good for the school...and the students could well be five years away or ten years away, but the school’s got to be today as well as tomorrow (4:2).
Leader Five

We are now no longer there just to regurgitate content, and all the usual things we think of, because our role has been redefined in terms of what children have available to them. An enormous number of families at our schools have their computers and CD-ROMS and everything else. So when you say, "now let's talk about dinosaurs," Junior can rush home, pop in the CD-ROM and up will come the pictures and the 3-D interactive and the voiceovers on the dinosaur. So, you've got to look at a different way of teaching (5:3).

Leader Six

I keep on reading quite a lot in the ...area (of 2 jobs back). I read a lot and wrote a lot in the last job, and there are quite a lot of analogies between those two systems; both are valuable goods produced at high cost, but given away to the final consumer for nothing (6:7).

Leader Seven

It's not yet clear exactly how it will happen, but the move to work from home rather than in offices as we currently do certainly puts a question mark over a lot of the office accommodation in the city. There's already a significant rate of vacancy, and if the trend for working from home continues and if they build to the extent that people envisage then that has major implications for the central city as a place to work that has spin-offs to all of our other services in the city...the retailers, the professional services, the public transport system and there are a number of doomsayers who say that central cities such as these are not likely to be as relevant as they were in the past (7:2).

Leader Eight

My secretary was typing something this morning about a new way to make paper replace polystyrene. Now, the way I work I'll have to make a decision. Is it something we should follow up or we shouldn't? And if it's a technical matter out of our industry or some new process, there's a 99% chance it's an absolute waste of time, but if it appeals to me and I think there's something in it. I will probably take the trouble to send it out to a research laboratory and they will give me a view about it (8:4).

Clearly all leaders thought a great deal about future directions in their core business, whether that involved a human-services or a manufacturing industry. In some cases they tested or explored ideas from other providers within the given industry; in other cases they developed an idea brought forth from within their own ranks, or by themselves personally. The non-education leaders were from different types of organisations, so it is understandable that their thoughts in this area were diverse, but it is to be noted that amongst the five education leaders, technology was again of considerable significance. Indeed, leaders one and four, for whom other issues seemed to take precedence as the core business, demonstrated elsewhere a major commitment to technology.
Organisational

The interviews reflected a great deal of thought by the leaders about different aspects of their organisations.

Leader One

It could be that I close my school down at four o’clock and open it up as another school till 10 o’clock, having a different clientele, children from other areas, children from this area plus parents. Maybe I have to look at structuring technology within the school to help reflect that, so that adult-learning can continue. I can set up the hall so that we have 500 people, within an ITV network, and we can bring Michael Fullan in from the US (1:3).

Leader Two

You’ve got to focus all your resources. In my mind if you look at the way schools have traditionally operated, I liken it to a scattergun approach. Somebody gets a good idea and you let them run with it, and that’s great till you have one program that’s going really well and that teacher either loses interest or moves on, and you might have had a good program for a short period of time and you’ve wasted a lot of resources in building it up. So, what we have done is to have a strategic focus document. We use the focus first to do our budget, then to focus our human resources...at the moment we are mandating about a couple of goals (2:8).

Leader Three

But I was interested in (X’s) talking with a group of principals and he was talking about the Sigmoid Curve. I haven’t read it. It’s on my list for the holidays, because what’s being articulated there, is the need to go into an organisation and...not go in because it’s run-down and you’ve got to move it, but going into an organisation that is successful in what it’s doing, but moving people out and forward, because if you don’t at that time, it just becomes more and more difficult to get the change happening because you’re on a downhill thread rather than an uphill one (3:1).

Leader Four

I want the school to be personal, focussing on the individual as a learner and as a person, if we can distinguish between those two features. I also want to focus on the teacher as a learner and as a person and provide for that person’s growth. So the structure I am looking for is one in which people can take personal authority, they have space, they have goals and they have forums. As well, we need to be able to make decisions and so there has to be a structure for this (4:7).

Leader Five

We floated the idea at meetings that our school and (the other one) would merge and become one large school in the area; we also put out to our community that we could stay a girls’ school, but restructure our secondary area...and that we would have a senior college concept, and that would involve timetabling and responsibility (5:1).
Leader Six

The Tavistock Institute, the Hawthorn Experiment, that tradition of human relations in industry, group behaviour, analysis of group dynamics and leadership as a group function rather than the great person and the dynamics of group life...it's ingrained in the way I think about situations and read situations. And it's one of the reasons I have so many women in the place as well, because women are very focused on reading what's going on within a group context, much more than men are, and I think they have an edge in management in many situations for that sort of reason (6:6).

Leader Seven

There have been a large number of departures from here, and you know that in some of those cases a number of those people will end up unemployed as a result of those decisions, but the organisation was in financial crisis...and tough medicine to deal with the over-staffing and the work practices we had was necessary...Probably the biggest concern in what I do at the moment is, ensuring that the tenders we're putting through are competitive and they're driving some savings for us; using those successes and so far they have been successes, to convince the business community that this is an organisation worth being a part of (7:3).

Leader Eight

Where I would have changed in the last four or five years is, there is certainly a need to have more resources available to you at the centre to deal with the complexities of the global market place; it's great fun going out as Aussies and buying businesses and doing things, but if you're going to build a long-term platform for added value and shareholder wealth, then you really have to focus on where you can add value around the world, so there is in our company and a lot of other companies a real sorting out if you like of the businesses that we want to stay with and the businesses in which we can't build or create shareholder value in the long term (8:8).

The above examples show first that all leaders thought a great deal about how to maximize the potential of their organisations. Perhaps more interesting, however, is the range of approaches that they took in doing this. The various strategies included: being more creative with current resources, being more focused in the use of resources, getting the timing of change right, getting strong people into the organisation, including the entire community in decision-making, making use of small groups and women in management, rationalising the resource base, and focusing on core business.

While it is clear that all leaders used a multiplicity of strategies to enhance their organisations, the above examples were selected because they appeared to reflect most strongly the emphasis of the individual leader as exhibited through the interviews. So that, for instance, where Leader 4 is generally
known to be a leader in technology and the interviews reflected this interest to a degree, in his own mind the thrust was not to get technology happening but rather to allow for individual learning (largely through technology), so that is the thinking that is recorded above.

**Leadership/Strategic Leadership**

Although the topic under investigation was ‘strategic leadership,’ respondents often used the shorter term of ‘leadership’ instead, sometimes because they felt the strategic aspect to be subsumed under the more general umbrella term, sometimes because they considered all leadership to be strategic in nature, and sometimes inadvertently. Where a specific intention in use was made clear, this is stated.

**Leader One**

I think leadership has changed in terms of strategic planning. There has to be some strategic intent in looking into the future. The strategic leadership is positioning yourself with your staff alongside you, with your values at the front (1:7)…Expert leadership indicators are that expert leaders are very good at being able to develop connections. They are able to solve problems, and often multiple problems at the same time. They draw from a large exponential and knowledge base that connects the theory and practice and that’s what makes them effective (1:11).

**Leader Two**

Leader Two did feel towards the end of the study that he was using the terms ‘leadership’ and ‘strategic leadership’ synonymously, which he had not done earlier.

Nowadays I don’t see much distinction…as far as I’m concerned I really am just talking about leadership overall. To me it involves developing a vision for a school which is necessary to achieve to make the school successful and to meet the challenge of the future…It’s coping with the rapid increase in technology…and then you’ve got to have an implementation plan which actually enables you to achieve the vision and values that to me is a really critical thing (2:6).

**Leader Three**

I think for me the strategic leader is one who is really tuned in to the externals, and all the things that are happening out there…It’s being able to make connections between those things and to create an environment where you move forward nevertheless through the pain, (3:11)…the strategic leader for me is someone who pares it all right down to fundamental truths if you like about why we are here and what does that mean in terms of our values and how in God’s name do we dig them out and that’s the hard bit (3:11). Context is important; sometimes it can be very difficult, but I think some of it
is about personal courage, personal confidence, faith in yourself,...and trying to help people also be connected to their own journey (3:12).

**Leader Four**

It’s deeper than competitive advantage. If you take Senge’s stuff, which is very much about competitive advantage, this is very much about pursuing something you believe in and then trying to make that into a competitive advantage, not doing it the other way around (4:1). And it’s the way you do it. You’ve got to model vulnerability as well as willingness to take a view. Vulnerability is all about being open. It’s allowing the possibility of failure and not seeing the failure as devastating, being open as opposed to being safe and closed (4:3).

Changing schools has unsettled me, has refocused me, has made me think some more about a whole range of things. As I have got older, daring becomes harder. So that makes the task harder and I can understand why some organisations are looking for younger people so they are not going to be so afraid, they don’t bring so much baggage, but on the other hand they don’t bring the overview, the complexity, the experience (4:4).

**Leader Five**

I think principals need to be in their schools and part of their schools, and while they should not interfere too much in the day-to-day they should be around, because the responsibility is ours and we need to be there to know and understand (5:5)... It means taking that (all the necessary developments in education such as literacy movements), blending it together so that the present school’s organisation and outcomes for young people are extraordinarily positive and being able to project into the future to see how best to maintain the quintessential quality and values and purpose of the school (5:10).

**Leader Six**

I think of myself as a general purpose manager, and strategic leadership is part of the role, but only part of it, and I don’t distinguish between leadership and management. I don’t think there’s an argument for a useful distinction to be made there, so I think that people who run organisations have to have a range of skills... I expect people to be competent thinkers and doers and I’m a strong believer in the doctrine that thought without action is dangerous and action without thought is dangerous (6:1). There’s no set of absolutes, it’s very situational, so that the skills needed for one situation are different to another (6:1).

**Leader Seven**

It’s having a vision for the organisation, articulating that vision, both internally and externally, it is empowering the people to make the changes, and it is working with various stake-holders to make the changes that are necessary to see us continue as a viable, well-regarded organisation(7:1). Context is important. I think for people for whom it’s kind of some management tricks that they have learned I think you’re very quickly exposed in another environment. Really unless it’s a similar kind of organisation in a similar state it rarely works (7:7).
Leader Eight

Strategic leadership is a very practical process; it’s not something you’ll find in the textbooks. I’ve had a look at a fair number of them over the years, and I’ve been through a lot of phases in my career where you have the latest fad and it runs for a while...usually what you find is the original principle being dressed up each time. (8:5). Also, I have always believed it’s important to succeed in one’s primary discipline (I’m an accountant), but it is equally important to move away from that discipline as you assume the mantle of general management.

These responses indicate that all leaders thought a great deal about the meaning of strategic leadership, whether in its own right or as an aspect of leadership. Two significant themes emerged. The first of these was ‘values,’ with all five education leaders, but no non-education leaders, stressing the importance of values to the leadership role. The second was ‘context,’ with four of the eight leaders saying that strategic leadership was affected by the situation in which it was located, and expressing the view that what worked in one situation did not necessarily work in another. Other themes mentioned by just one or two respondents were: that expert leaders are good at making connections and problem solving; that leaders (of schools) need to be in their organisations a great deal; that they should be competent thinkers and doers; that the pragmatic and generalist function is desirable and, finally, that part of the role is to help others along on their personal journey. Comments made in relation to the leading/managing relationship will be discussed in connection with ‘Planning’ in Chapter Five.

Change

The last aspect of Futures Thinking to be discussed is that of ‘Change,’ which received attention in one way or another from all of the respondents. Most were concerned not just with a particular substantive area, although keeping up one’s technology skills was mentioned by almost everyone, but more in general terms of being able to cope, or to maximise opportunities in a changing world.

Leader One

You have to be able to cope with change; we live in a world of chaos; schools are just neat little packages but it’s a world of chaos and constant change. I see change as continuous; I see it as part of every day and therefore change doesn’t frighten me (1:6).
Leader Two

Many principals don’t seem to be able to see beyond what they have always done in the past. They don’t seem to be able to look at the potential of the changes that are occurring and they are hankering after the past all the time. They are not prepared to let go (2:11).

Leader Three

The only way you take care of your future is to be constantly looking at what you’re doing and looking for improvement and generating that awareness amongst people that you really have to all the time be looking at the change process (3:1). As part of our vision in the future we have to learn to be able to change with as little damage to ourselves as possible, to be able to contemplate and implement change with the sense of commitment and optimism rather than “I’m the victim again.” I’d rather see the attitude that change is really inevitable and it’s really quite exciting (3:17).

Leader Four

No-one wants change for other people’s reasons; we only want it for our own reasons, so therefore change has to relate to the needs that people have, so if you want to achieve change then you have to go to the context of what individuals want (4:2).

Leader Five

This is the area of the future, I think, for principals, where we need to try and work with our colleagues, insofar as we are able to assist them to change attitudes and perceptions, so that they can cheerfully cope with a redefinition of their role...I’ve got a couple of people going on programs at an outside Institute because they’re unable to face change and they desperately need either a change of career or a change of their attitude within their current career (5:3)...the hard thing is to move in a profession that looks backwards rather than forwards, which is highly unionised and therefore protects a status quo through a structure that is really fast becoming less useful for doing all the things that we need to do within it (5:3).

Leader Six

I have a pretty dogmatic, cut and dried view of the way the world works and the way people work and the way organisations work and the way political parties work, (but) I’m always looking for information that suggests to me that I’ve got to change some of those assumptions, because I don’t want to get out of date (6:2).

Leader Seven

When (the organisation) is going through life changes I think the main message is the need for constant communication...and when you get sick of it you’ve probably barely scratched the surface, in terms of, people have a whole wealth of other messages day in and day out and might really not focus on your message

Leader Eight

I won’t necessarily accept the compliment (of being an outstanding strategic leader), but I would put it down to always being focused on the change process and adapting to change. There’s absolutely no doubt that one’s
approach to managing large organisations - strategically - depends on responding to the changes all around you...and we're seeing the pace of change, both in a globalised sense, in a technology sense, changing enormously. And it'll be those companies that can adapt to that change that will do the best (8:9).

Thus all of the eight leaders took the view, though from different perspectives, that coming to terms with change as a fact of life was essential if individuals and/or organisations were to flourish. While they were focused variously on peers, their staff, or themselves, they all felt that the capacity to cope with change and optimise its effects was necessary in today's environment.

Summary of Futures Thinking

As Summarized in Table 2, five categories of futures thinking were identified. 'External environment' referred to a kind of thinking that was concerned with developments in the environment external to the organisation, as in political, economic, demographic and technological trends. 'Core business' referred to thinking about likely or potential developments in the particular industry in which an organisation functioned. 'Organisational' referred to thinking about ways of enhancing the organisation as an organisation: that is, in terms of improvements in structures and processes. 'Leadership/Strategic leadership' referred to thinking about the best role for leaders to adopt in order to optimise the future of the organisation. 'Change' referred to thinking about the process of change per se, as a phenomenon separate from other substantive issues and meriting treatment as such.
Table 2: Kinds of Futures Thinking of Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Futures</th>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>State Education</th>
<th>State Education</th>
<th>State Education</th>
<th>Independent Education</th>
<th>Independent Education</th>
<th>Public Service → Corporate</th>
<th>Corporate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational</td>
<td>Restructure services</td>
<td>Focus resources.</td>
<td>Sigmoid Curve: timing of change.</td>
<td>Getting strong people into the community.</td>
<td>Restructure the organisation.</td>
<td>Human relations in industry.</td>
<td>Economic rationalism.</td>
<td>Reasserting importance of core business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership/Strategic leadership</td>
<td>Should be more leadership with values</td>
<td>Bringing staff and resources to a common goal of values.</td>
<td>Look at externals. Make connections with values.</td>
<td>Pursuing something you believe in: values.</td>
<td>Maintain quintessential quality and values of school.</td>
<td>Be a competent thinker and doer.</td>
<td>Articulating a vision for a well-regarded institution.</td>
<td>Conceptualising, and being a practical generalist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>The world consists of continuous change</td>
<td>Principals need to accept change.</td>
<td>Organisations need to plan for change.</td>
<td>Change has to be personal.</td>
<td>Leaders must help people to change.</td>
<td>I must remain open to change.</td>
<td>Leaders must help people to accept change.</td>
<td>Leaders must focus on change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each of the leaders exhibited all of these kinds of futures thinking. Indeed, the examples given above illustrate in each case a leader with a very wide knowledge base and a keen desire to exchange ideas and keep himself/herself up-to-date. Whilst much of the thinking was pertinent to the specific organisations in question, there was much that was common across all leaders. In particular, the issues of technology and change affected all leaders in much the same ways, with respondents acknowledging that technology was affecting the way things were done and might be done in their organisations, and also acknowledging that ways had to be found to enable people to live in a climate of constant change.

A further significant pattern was the identification by all of the education leaders, but none of the non-education leaders, of the importance of values within the leadership role. Where the education leaders each stated that strategic leadership should involve some sort of action in relation to values, the non-education tended to be a little more concrete about the role, as in creating an organisation of competent ‘thinkers and doers’ or articulating the vision for a well-regarded institution, or being pragmatic. This difference will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

Factors Influencing Vision and Futures Thinking

This research study seeks to investigate not just how strategic leadership is exercised by outstanding strategic leaders, but how their capacity to do this is developed. Given the clear importance of the leader’s own vision and futures thinking in the direction - setting function of strategic leadership, it is therefore important to the study to determine which factors might combine to influence these. Accordingly, this section deals with the personal attributes, background influences and current influences that the leaders themselves perceive to have impacted or to continue to impact on their capacity for strategic leadership.

Personal Attributes

The leaders were asked to identify the personal characteristics and skills that they thought enabled them to be successful as strategic leaders.
Leader One

I believe innovation and change should be part of the characteristic of our personality, otherwise we die (1:3). I’ve always had a love of learning and you can lose me in a bookshop for days (1:4). Maybe I’m not sequential enough for people, maybe not logical enough, but perhaps because I’m creative I can look at divergent ways of looking at the same question and it makes me flexible in my thinking and it makes me a problem solver (1:11).

Leader Two

I would say intense. I would say quite sensitive, and I set very high standards for myself. Also, I think I have a willingness and an ability to really work hard and to suffer as much as everybody else suffers...certainly people would see me as out there leading from the front, (2:4). I’ve always been a high achiever in many parts of my life but I’ve tended to be an individualist rather than a group person. Many of my pursuits have been quite solitary ones, even in private life (2:5). And...some people like change and some people don’t like change. I love it (2:11).

Leader Three

I’m a bit of a gobbler upper of experiences (1:9) I need high stimulants in terms of my own development (3:4). I have an enormous amount of energy and imagination...it’s just the real thrill of the change processes (3:4). I think it’s to do with not being satisfied with where you’re at, and yet within my own private life there is an incredible stability, so it isn’t related to moving on, it is sticking things out and seeing things through. There is something basically that excites me about contemplating how things can be better and trying to move into that improved situation (3:4).

Leader Four

...a sense of vulnerability, openness, exploration, restlessness, unhappiness, all those sorts of words. I think I’m sensitive, thoughtful, purposive and hard-working, and I’d like to be seen by others as “restless, still pursuing something” (4:6). Being a ‘can do’ person as opposed to one who is afraid of change (4:7).

Leader Five

I like to begin every Monday morning with the work done, so I guess I’m organised. I’m reliable in that sense; the letters are written, the work’s done (5:5). I get enormous enjoyment from being part of a school, and always have done. I do get very enthusiastic about things. And, I’ve been told that when I want to be determined about something and when something must be done and when I realize something’s unjust, I don’t necessarily go off the deep end or lose my temper or whatever; I merely phosphoresce (5:6).

Leader Six

Some of it’s innate; I’ve always had an instinct for trouble; if you like, high risk, high gain (6:6). Some of my people would say, I think, that I’m much more intuitive than the usual style of senior official, or CEO or what have you. Much more into absorbing environmental influences and trying to work out what they mean (6:4).
Leader Seven

I think in terms of personal characteristics, I'm usually decisive about something. I don't spend endless hours agonizing over decisions; I make them for better or worse, then get on with it...I can deal with the big picture but I can also take in a lot of detail which this job involves and synthesize that as well (7:3). I can't imagine myself working in a small organisation because I don't think there's enough dynamics to actually provide the challenge, so it's the intellectual challenge. It's the stimulation of working with people who think outside the square and are doing interesting things (7:8).

Leader Eight

Speaking personally, I've always been someone who's had no difficulty with conceptualising what the issues and the problems are and balancing the long term with what's needed to live every day. I'm not a person who lives in the clouds...I mean strategic planning can only be of value if it's pragmatic (8:1).

It is difficult, perhaps, to find many strong patterns across these responses, but there seem to be a few common threads. For all but Leader Eight, the responses convey a sense of energy, of restlessness, of desire for stimulation, and of a degree of preparedness for risk taking; Leader Eight exhibits a more pragmatic character. All leaders show strong decision-making capacity. There is a sense also of sensitivity, intuitiveness, and of willingness to share with others in the pain of change. Finally, there is a thread of the hard-working, reliable, well-organised individual with high standards. The first and third of these are interesting for their apparent potential contradiction, as it might be thought that those engaged in seeking the 'thrill of change' might not be content to be still enough to be well-organised.

Background Influences

Respondents were asked if they could identify any events or influences from their personal background that had impacted on their thinking in relation to strategic leadership.

Leader One

My background is in the area of innovation and change. So, that's Curriculum...in my Master's Degree. I have an Honours Degree in Sociology, and that was a significant watershed in my life because I met people who were involved in the environmental movement, people who were involved in family work, people who were doing their research work in esoteric fields, like one girl who was doing a Ph.D. on prostitutes in St Kilda, and one of my beliefs would be that teachers and principals are insular through being cloistered. You're a part of every person you've ever met (1:4).
Leader Two

Having a couple of principals who allowed me to be a self-starter...I put up propositions to them and they let me do it (2:5). Can't say much for any of my academic training. I have a Degree in Economics (2:3).

Leader Three

I was a trained nursing sister and a young mother and I went back to do a Degree for teaching as an adult. I was studying, working, and being a wife and mother. And the energy rolled on (3:4). I did a Grad. Dip. in Business, which took me out of the educational environment. I came late to education anyway, so I was already never totally socialised into the educational setting; I always feel very comfortable with making connections between education and the business sector. (3:1).

Leader Four

Reading was important, having a sense that things were not right and could be improved and trying to find a way to do that (4:7). I have a Degree in Mathematics and a Master's in Education, with a large part of that in Philosophy.

Leader Five

My family loved me and cared for me and only ever wanted me to be happy. But I never knew which side of the fence to fall on to make them happy, so I learnt very early in life, that I had to be adaptable, yet I had to find my own centre and be true to myself. Then there was Sydney University. I'm not a great scholar; I achieved average and mediocre results, but in terms of three years of philosophy and the impact of the liberal theologians, with whom I was being challenged, it left an indelible mark. Incredible (5:5).

Leader Six

I think I was very lucky in my parents who were on politically different sides of the spectrum, but had a strong doctrine of self-reliance and personal responsibility and - you are what you make of yourself (6:6). There's a lot of growing up to do as well. You know, a couple of marriages, a lot of friends, some make-ups and breakups, heartbreaks and important loves, that's all part of it (6:6)...I have a Doctorate in Economics and I think as an economist, even though these days I work as management broadly. I think economic theory is a very useful way of viewing the world (6:6). Also, in my undergraduate career, Herbert Simon had a book called "Administrative Behaviour", an absolute classic, which shaped the way I thought about organisations as an equilibrium structure: that what it produces translates into the rewards it can offer its members, and therefore success breeds success, etc. That has never left me (6:6).

Leader Seven

I think parental influences, in particular my mother who was herself denied a good education...simply because she was a woman and 'women get married.' I went to a Catholic Girls' school; it was a strong supportive educational, intellectual environment, despite their ambivalence about our roles as women. I have a supportive family... I did a BA Honours and then started a Ph.D. which I never finished. What was called Government 2 at Sydney University gave a practical yet rigorous insight into how politics really operates. I think
my Law Degree from Melbourne was useful; I don’t call myself a lawyer, but in this job it’s been useful in seeing potholes that perhaps legally untrained people need a lawyer to tell them about on issues like conflict of interest and the like (7:3).

Leader Eight

I was fortunate that I came into this company, (as an Accountant), as an Honours Graduate from Melbourne University...From a very early age I was exposed to a fair bit of that longer-term thinking and I was fortunate to spend a lot of my time early in my career close to the top (of this organisation) and we were a company that taught the young people what was expected of them, principles, ethics, and I think I would have been somewhat different and deficient, if I hadn’t had that exposure from the period 20 to 30 if you want me to put a figure on it (8:5).

These responses indicate a variety of background influences in the development of the respondents’ strategic leadership capacities. As professionals they all had tertiary qualifications, but these were in quite disparate areas. Whilst the education leaders all had Education qualifications (of necessity), their substantive or additional areas ranged from Curriculum/Sociology through Economics, Business, Mathematics, and Geography/Philosophy. The three non-education leaders were qualified in Economics, Political Science/Law, and Accounting. Thus it is difficult to perceive any strong patterns in the academic backgrounds of these people except to say that all but Leader 8, the long-term corporate executive, had undertaken more than one basic academic qualification.

A major thread in terms of influence was the impact of certain individuals, whether university academics, workplace mentors, or writers presenting new philosophies. Almost all of the leaders continued to be affected or guided by messages learnt long ago from particular people whom they found inspirational. There was, however, no over-riding pattern to this, although prominent thinkers at university appeared to predominate.

One discernible pattern in response concerns the four leaders who discussed family as an influence on their development as strategic leaders. The three women in the study all drew attention to the importance of their family in providing stability and/or encouragement, as did Leader 6, a male who claimed to “read the world...more as a woman than most men” and to appoint many women to the organisation because of their intuitive style. None of the other four men mentioned family as an influence on them.
Current Influences

In order to elaborate on the behaviours that might be practised in order to improve some aspects of strategic leadership, this section examines the ways in which the outstanding leaders kept abreast of developments to service their direction-setting. This section highlights a range of activities in which they engaged in order to ensure that they were up-to-date with information and with current directions of thought across the five major areas outlined above under “Futures Thinking”.

Leader One

I have a very good principals’ network of very close friends (1:4). I also believe that we’ve got a lot to learn from outside the school fence and I like visiting places like B.P.; A number of people in this particular school are associated with managerial positions and so they’ve opened up doors for me to be able to walk into B.P. I’m also a great reader (1:4).

Leader Two

I do not read much in the way of journal articles at all. I just read anything I see that interests me. I find that by going to meetings you pick up very quickly what you should read anyway (2:4). I would probably say that I’m somewhat of a pariah, in the sense that I tend to get my ideas from synthesizing input from almost anywhere I can get it from really. I wouldn’t claim to be a real original thinker. I really look around for what I think is best practice throughout the education system, private and government and outside education (2:1). I’ve been on the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board (VCAB) for a few years, which provides a wide range of contacts, particularly through the universities, an important source of information. (2:2). I would also speak very highly of the Caldwell-Sawatski and the Hay-McBer programs (2:3).

Leader Three

Literature is very important. My favourite reading is really very good literature, poetry, plays and novels. It’s creative, it sets the mind going, stimulating your imagination all the time… it’s always visionary, it’s always internal and connected to a great big life, it’s universal (3:5). I like reading leadership stuff, I especially liked De Pree’s notion of the leader as server, also the notion that an organisation can’t stand too much change. Then there’s the curriculum material. A fairly eclectic approach really, other people pass on keynote papers, a little drip happening here and there. These little bits just keep on reminding you of that direction that’s out there that you’ve got to be moving towards. I haven’t read much by the futurists, but must pay attention to it, it’s very pressing (3:4). The Hay-McBer program was interesting (3:5)...Then a six week advanced management program (3:9).

Leader Four

I must say a lot of the energy is coming from my own coping with (personal) change, reflecting on this and relating it to the environment. There has also
been a fair amount of reading and experiential work in the area of the unconscious of the organisation ... There was Tavistock ...(4:2). Agreeing to speak at meetings (and writing things) is also valuable as it makes me think through the issues. Perhaps there are also the friendships I have which keep me on the ball too (4:7). With respect to books, I listened to what others are reading, read reviews, and buy far more than I can ever read.

Leader Five

I glean these ideas, by reading, by talking, by looking, by listening to people like Hugh McKay, history teaches a lot, by the sort of people I meet through my husband's work, and he's always been at the cutting edge with computer technology and so on. So there's nothing magic about it. It's a constant matter of talking and discussing, I guess, and making sure that I'm reading things that interest me. It's not always educational areas. I find the 'Economist' a great stimulus as a journal; I find that very, very interesting, because you often read things there that might seem a long way from education, but very stimulating. I read biographies, newspapers, etc, but often what's written educationally is very predictive/predictable (5:4).

Leader Six

I get seized by an idea and then I start reading in that field and so on, sometimes not even things that are directly useful to me (6:4). I don't read systematically for anything. I tend to read in fads, so I have been through phases where I've read nothing but all the Japanese stuff in the mid-seventies, for example. I got very interested in military history and theory in the late seventies, early eighties, and that informed my thinking quite a lot. I read a lot of junk. I read all the thrillers etc for recreation reading, so I'm not trying to suggest I'm some kind of intellectual digesting new bodies of knowledge and adding to it, that would be far more suggestive of a systematic pattern than there is (6:3). The Tavistock Institute... it's ingrained in the way I think about situations and read situations (6:6).

Leader Seven

I do a fair amount of reading, not as much as I used to. I do a reasonable amount of listening to our key specialists about everything... There's a fair amount of dialogue in this organisation, and it's probably a synthesis of all those things (7:2)... reading from The European to The Far Eastern Economic Review, rather than specific pieces of research (7:2). It's a range of things; what we learn from what other organisations are doing, companies that you think are best practice in our areas. We are constantly talking to our providers and potential providers. People in this organisation have pretty good networks with people externally. I'm not a big fan of the formal conferences, more the informal networks (7:5).

Leader Eight

It's largely the result of a fair bit of training and exposure that one has all the time. I pick out the outside activities that I attend very carefully, normally this week or next week I'd be in Switzerland for what I think's one of the most outstanding sort of global conferences, it's the World Economic Forum or something. I'm not going this year, I didn't feel like another summer in the snow. I think if you go too often you lose it, but I get involved with the
Australian Research Institute, I could spend all my life working, but I'm very selective in what I do (8:3).

Again the respondents identified several influences impacting on them, some of which were common across all cases and some of which were unique to an individual. The major influence was clearly reading, with all leaders except Leader Eight indicating that they were avid readers and Leader Eight stating that he read some business related materials. Some patterns were evident, with the education leaders and the public service leader showing little interest in material related to their core business, but significantly more in leadership and organisation-related material, and very much more in reading across a wide range of materials, from poetry and plays to military history and thrillers or social/psychological material. The corporate and public service turned corporate were more focused on global / financial related materials, though one publication drawing fairly common interest across the sectors was ‘The Economist.’

Formal conferences were less popular amongst respondents than informal networks, with leaders in all sectors maintaining contact with colleagues in other organisations in order to keep up their knowledge about ‘best practice.’ Four of the five school leaders and the public service leader mentioned either the Hay-McBer leadership program or the Tavistock personal development program as having been helpful to them; neither of the corporate leaders drew attention to such programs, although the long-term corporate CEO spoke highly of the ethics training that he had received as a new recruit to the organisation many years before. One leader enjoyed working with university lecturers, another gained a great deal from her spouse's work in information technology, another from friends, and another worked a good deal with the Australian Research Institute. Thus we are left with perhaps three strong patterns in terms of current influences on the leaders; these are: reading, informal networking and, to a slightly lesser degree, leadership and personal development programs and workshops. The leaders appear also to have other more individualised ways of keeping themselves up-to-date.
Summary of Factors Influencing Vision and Futures Thinking

As summarized in Table 3, several factors influenced the vision and futures thinking of the leaders. Table 3 deals with the personal attributes, background influences and current influences that the leaders themselves perceive to have impacted or to continue to impact on their strategic leadership capacity.

There were a few common self-perceptions in terms of personal attributes. The first involved a sense of energy, restlessness and willingness to take risks in all leaders except the more pragmatic Leader Eight, the second a sense of strong decision-making, the third a sense of the self as sensitive and/or intuitive, and the fourth a sense of being hard-working, thorough and reliable. In terms of background influences, the respondents all had university qualifications, with the long-serving corporate CEO having perhaps the lowest qualifications and the public servant the highest. There was a sense of a very strong impact having been made on all leaders by certain key individuals at some point in their lives, with university staff or workplace mentors being most commonly mentioned in that role. All of the females in the study, plus the male who claimed to "read the world... more as a woman than most men," mentioned family as a major influence, where none of the other four men did. Finally, in terms of current influences, reading was by far the most significant, with leaders tending towards material of a very wide interest range including some that was leadership and organisation-related. Informal networks and self-development programs or workshops were also popular, with many other individualised pursuits also seen to be valuable.
Table 3: Factors Influencing Vision and Futures Thinking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Leader 1 State Education</th>
<th>Leader 2 State Education</th>
<th>Leader 3 State Education</th>
<th>Independent Education 4</th>
<th>Independent Education 5</th>
<th>Public Service 6</th>
<th>Public Service 7 Corporate</th>
<th>Corporate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
This concludes Chapter Four, or PART A of the Findings, which dealt with the direction-setting aspects of the leaders' strategic leadership practice. The major sections were: The Leaders' Vision, Futures Thinking, and Factors Influencing Vision and Futures Thinking. These findings will be further discussed in Chapter Six, in conjunction with the findings from Chapter Five, or Part B, which deals with the leaders' approach to Planning and Working with People.
CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS PART B: IMPLEMENTATION

Part B of the findings deals with ‘implementation’ and has to do with what the leaders do to ensure that the organisation moves towards achieving the selected future. It has two sections. The first section deals with the leaders’ approach to planning, which takes into account their time-frames, approach to strategy, their own involvement in the process vis-à-vis that of others in the organisation, the importance they ascribe to outcomes and the use of data, and their conceptualisation of their role in leadership/management terms. The second section deals with the ways in which they work with people, as in motivating them towards change, organising them for the change experience, and using control mechanisms.

Planning

This section deals with the various ways in which the strategic leaders work with ideas and information in the more abstract form, that is to say, not in terms of what is involved directly in working with people. Planning is to do with the identification and elaboration of the discrete tasks that need to be carried out in order for the established vision to be achieved. It is concerned with such issues as structures, timing, sequencing and the allocation of resources. The study also addressed the question of whether the respondents’ approach to planning changed with changes in time and context. Each leader’s situation will be discussed separately in its full complexity, before commonalities and differences are drawn out.

Leader One

From the first interview in 1994 it was clear that Leader One thought a great deal about the long-term future of his school, since he instituted community processes to discuss “the type of child we’re looking at for the year 2000(1:1).” This was in addition to organising the three year charter process required by the central authority, which was designed to provide details of goals, processes and accountability measures. He believed in formalised processes and had been a user of traditional strategic planning methods, involving the entire school community in conducting a SWOT analysis of the
school. He was, however, beginning to have doubts about the efficacy of this approach.

You can tell what good leaders do in terms of their models and what they develop and basically how they put it in place and it can be seen as a linear function of looking at what the school needs and doing an external analysis of those needs and looking at the internal responses from the environment within the school and putting it together with a set of mission objectives and an action plan to lead to results with an evaluation...but I don’t believe that’s dynamic enough in terms of looking at institutional requirements of the school(1:1)...we’ve been trapped a little bit in our systems thinking and in our move towards strategic planning and that we use total quality management as a basis for schools(1:3). Unless the student outcomes change we are wasting our time in terms of planning; we’re going through a whole-school planning exercise, but we’re not pinning it to the results that would come out(1:1). There has to be some strategic planning related to how operational target setting can be put in place, but...I think leadership has changed in terms of strategic planning (1:7).

Over the four years of the study this leader found some answers to his dilemma. He was particularly influenced by a school of thought which suggested that the starting point for planning should be a statement of values, rather than the traditional SWOT analysis, which led usually to incremental creep rather than major change.

Previously what we’ve done is really put together a very orchestrated view of the external environmental influences on planning and then documenting a plan from that when in fact they (X) are saying start with the values first and see what’s important in terms of what you are planning to do because your values are your covenant and signpost for the way that you look at the world (1:6).

Indeed, where this leader had previously been an advocate of taking organisational lessons from the business world, he was now of the view that:

...if you are really going to directly influence schooling you can’t just go to a B.P. and just take what they have as their values and mission statement because they are all about petrol. Schools are very different enterprises(1:6).

Responsibility for the implementing of the school’s vision was largely given over to staff. “One of our staff has been looking at performance appraisal and another went to NSW recently to look at multiple intelligences (1:3). Last night I asked my librarian to prepare a discussion paper, asking teachers to start thinking about using the library as a hub (1:3).”
One aspect of strategic planning which Leader One continued to value was the collection and use of data.

(Principal are very good at) collecting data for reporting purposes for their school annual reviews to the Department of Education and the Office of Review. I think it is used only as a benchmark aid as the state government insists on being able to use it as a report card and I find nothing wrong in that. I’m talking about the range of data that is used, data on homework, attendance...and all of those things. There is an accountability that goes with it. I think the real sense in which data must be collected in schools is for improvement of student learning... how do you use it to be able to change the thinking about what goes on within the school?. The basic part of that is to try to give it a vision and so the strategic intent is a part of that in gathering that together and presenting an overview with others interpreting the evidence. What does it mean? What do we have to do? It is where your strategic planning fits in because the continuous improvement and change are the two factors that are great in any type of strategic planning and unless you address that in terms of policy, you don’t go anywhere, all you do is keep reproducing and regurgitating material and you don’t make any change to education (1:9).

Leader One had at this point reached the conclusion that incremental change and improvement were not sufficient.

In terms of the strategic positioning that I have learnt about I see that I used to think of schools as having the developmental planning of the strategic plan and I now see it as a lot more fluid. Perhaps conceptual matter and getting some type of concept into motion is going to be a better way for me to be able to look at schooling because I can then look at all the interplay of the forces that come into the place and I can also guide it through operational planning. So I guess I am moving away from the managerial models more into the dynamic inter-related ones that I now need to be able to see schools in a more comprehensive way. We have been locked into a lockstep approach and strategic intent doesn’t happen like that. It happens without being linear and supports what happens in more bursts of activity where there are a number of forces that are acting upon the school itself (1:9)

For Leader One, the dilemma continued in the form of a question about the nature of leadership and management.

We don’t see schools changing and the integral problem occurs because principals are somewhat walking the tightrope between leadership and management. I believe that we are doing a lot of managing where we should be leading. I don’t believe you can grow a leader; I don’t think you can switch leadership. What does the ideal leader look like in terms of the position? It is not a manager. It is not a leader but if it is an integrative of both of those what sorts of concept would you see (1:7)?
Thus Leader One presented an interesting case of a leader who had struggled with the meaning of his role in terms of the extent to which it should involve the creative, envisioning function, which he thought of as leadership, vis-a-vis the more practical, implementational role which he described as management. He had a long-term time frame as well as the required three year charter, and thought that formalised processes were important, particularly in terms of using data to ascertain outcomes. Significantly, however, over time he came to the decision that change did not occur in a linear fashion and that therefore planning could not be linear but had to be more ‘fluid’, to accommodate the multiplicity of forces internal and external to the school. It therefore needed to be based on organisational values which were more stable, as well as on the Effective Schools literature, which provided external reference points. Responsibility for implementation of aspects of the vision was given to key staff members.

Leader Two

Early in the study, in 1994, Leader Two was exploring useful ways of planning for the school’s future. Like Leader One, he was already responsible, as a principal in the Schools of the Future program, for preparing a three year charter outlining aspects of future action. He was, however, looking for something that would provide greater scope in ideas and allow for the uniqueness of the school to be better represented. At that time he expressed pleasure that a highly placed colleague from a major free enterprise position had lent him his business plans (2:1), although he later reached the conclusion that “we are different from organisations that produce tyres, etc., more community based, but there is still a process of quality that exists (2:6).” The Leader’s time-frame for planning at that point was “not a specific time, but beyond 2000(2:1).” By the end of the study, Leader Two had found a planning process with which he was very happy. This process had several main features.

The first of these was the annual preparation of a ‘strategic focus document,’ which led to activities in the school being concentrated and thereby, he suggested, having more effect on teaching and learning.
In terms of implementing the vision, one of the things that became quite apparent to us is that to achieve such a vision you’ve got to focus all your resources. So what we have done and we do it through our school council is that we, each year, develop what we call a strategic focus document which is one of our five focus areas, and at this school the first one is to care for students as individuals and there’s 1750 students. That obviously should be one of our key focuses. The next one is on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The next one is on using information technology to improve the quality of teaching and learning. And the other two are more to do with things like financial viability of the college, and we’ve also got one that sort of goes well beyond, looking at the internationalisation of the college and the long term trends. Now we use that for our focus...and develop a series of targets. We use that focus first of all to do our budget on...So it is the financial resources but we also use it to focus our human resources and we do that via our system of appraisal; all our staff go through an appraisal process. They are required to negotiate the three goals with their facilitator who is usually their line manager and those goals have got to come from the strategic focus. Indeed, we have tightened it up even more... at the moment we are mandating about a couple of goals...one is on teaching and learning and one is on the use of learning technologies (2:7).

The significant aspect of these strategic focus documents is, perhaps, that they were built around statements of values, especially the core values associated with teaching and learning and caring for students. They did not begin with an assessment of the school’s current position.

Current realities were, however, considered extremely important by this principal.

(The focus) comes in evaluation as well...we actually do as many different forms of ongoing evaluation as we can. We have a very lengthy survey of staff on their use of learning technologies each year and that gives us data that we can compare. We of course use the Department’s evaluation processes for the staff survey and the parent survey and so on. One of the things we have had very little success with is assessing student outcomes. We’ve got no effective way in my view of really showing improved student learning outcomes by testing because we haven’t got base line data because we didn’t have it when we started the process (2:8).

Also of importance to the principal was the group of key staff that he now had working to implement the vision, as opposed to the three heads of school at the beginning of the study.

What we tend to do is to identify key staff to look at various components of it. Our head of curriculum has been absolutely critical in our teaching and learning agenda. With our technology agenda we have
a couple of key people there, some of whom have been relatively junior people whom we've sort of built up that haven't got positions of authority, but nevertheless they are very influential because they do the work, they work with us (senior management) and we listen to them and consult with them on a very regular basis. They help us to sort of implement the components of our strategic vision (2:7).

Thus Leader Two had changed quite significantly in his views and actions over time, in three major respects. First, he had moved from a position in which school size and resources were predominant in his thinking about achieving the vision, to a position in which values statements formed the basis of all planning, including processes and resource allocation. Second, he was more prepared to assign responsibility for various aspects of the vision to a greater range of people, for them to manage in their own way, thus spreading and differentiating the sources of power and influence. Third, both in order to balance the latter and to inform future action, he had instituted enhanced evaluation processes, to obtain data about a full range of issues.

Leader Three
Leader Three had a very long-term planning frame, stating that she thought in terms of at least twenty years when she thought about the school's future. "We're building a building at the moment and I'm looking to ensure that that building in 20 years, 30 years, 50 years, will still have the flexibility to be able to be changed in terms of its function (3:1)"

This Leader had very clear views about planning which became even stronger during the course of the study.

If we are doing strategic planning, people expect you to have strategic documents there and it is not just accountability, it is that if I'm the leader I can go back to those documents and I know what the directions are that are set, I know what the principles are upon which I'm operating around here and I know what our priority outcomes are. (But) in trying to articulate the need for this capacity to deal with change to be expanding all the time, not only on the part of the whole school but individuals as well, I'm really talking about acknowledging that the change is chaotic. The whole change environment is one of chaos. It's a bit like directing a play, that's my background. You have absolute chaos when you are in the process of 120 kids making a play to put on to the community and you operate in that chaos quite creatively, really creatively; you have awful ups and downs, you are as high as a kite one minute and then you think it's never going to happen and that's a bit
like the chaos I’m talking about, but being able to feel more and more comfortable operating in that chaos but knowing that there are still clear intentions about what we are doing...The chaos requires you to constantly reflect, which is rather exhausting, bringing in the external stuff, knowing what’s happening internally and trying to pin-point just what is the reality. Schools are dynamic and chaotic but there has been this expectation on the part of leaders that there will be this strategic clarity and planning and we educators are the biggest planners I have ever come across...we will sit around at meetings and plan ourselves to death and we will write up beautiful documents and manuals and the reality has no connection and we never actually get around to changing what we are doing (3:17).

Leader Three did not mean that there was little need to deal with detail. On the contrary, detail in the form of information about current realities was extremely important to her. “It’s a very complex art, I think, to be able to pin-point what it is that is actually happening in this dynamic chaotic environment (3:17).” Her starting point for doing this was the collection and interpretation of data.

Part of the change process now is to get data and analyse that (3:7). I don’t do a SWOT analysis. The first bit has been just to understand where we’re at in terms of results of students, in terms of attendance of students, in terms of how we allocate our FD and that’s been a big issue, how we allocate our funds and how we’ll know if that’s being used wisely and how we’ll look to see the results of where that money is going to. So, it is coming in with that data and it’s me asking for it and shaping up the first lot, so I actually took it home, put it into the computer and brought it back and said “Look at this,” so graphs and pictures and figures and things. There are those who resist that, but it’s happening. You know people more and more will feel comfortable with it and just this week two of my level co-ordinators have come in and said “This is really interesting. Look at this and on these days.” It’s the indications that the staff would have; they would look at the learning outcomes but (also) what’s the environment in my class, what are the indications in my class that I’m setting up an inter-dependent learning system, that we care for one another, that we make decisions together (3:8).

Leader Three was very frustrated with the “we’re running the country show” mindset of her unwieldy school council (3:6) and preferred to work through a small group of key people: “I’m very much on about a small strategic planning group that empowers other groups and they have responsibilities and outcomes that they have to achieve (3:7).” At the same time she targeted other individuals to follow through on the detail of discrete aspects of the overall vision, as in the case of the staff member
cajoled into undertaking the integrated science/technology program that was high on her agenda (3:2). She considered working with people to be the most challenging aspect of implementation.

It’s not too stressful dealing with our finances - there’s never enough money to go round, but that management side of things, there are ways around that. You can get yourself informed, you can seek help, you can outsource, you can do a lot of the management stuff just by being a wise strategic manager, if you like. (But) you can’t delegate or outsource your relationships (3:11).

Thus in Leader Three we have someone who considers it very important to obtain feedback about outcomes in detail, but not to set out plans for the future in detail, since the chaotic environment might cause a change of direction at any time. She has a long-term time frame and works through a small strategic planning group and key individuals. She considers the challenges of management to lie in working with people.

**Leader Four**
Leader Four had a complex time frame in his thinking and planning: “the issue is to try and deal with the students today...how do we improve their lot, but also recognise that you’re in there for the longer haul and that the bigger game is in fact for students forever, for all students (4:1)?”

In the early stages of this study, Leader Four had been for some time an avid user of traditional strategic planning processes, regularly conducting a SWOT analysis for the school’s governing body, though feeling that this device was a little constraining in its link to the existing education marketplace. He wished to talk about opportunities and threats more in terms of what was good or bad for his own school, rather than in competitive or comparative terms (4:1). He was already, at that stage, a strong believer in the use of data about current realities of the school, to serve as part of the thinking about future action. More than a decade previously, for instance, he had arranged a whole-school evaluation by an outside panel, and thereafter had arranged for regular reports on aspects of school life to be forwarded to him by various school community members or through an external consultancy study.
Leader Four saw his own role as looking to the bigger picture and focusing on the values that were to be pursued (4:1, 4:2). His attitude towards his role in terms of implementation of the vision is well summed up in the following statement:

How do things get done if you are always moving on? Well the truth is they probably don’t get done. There is always the mad catching up or trying to deliver the strategic document for the council weekend or write some paper for someone else - like council want an education brief on the latest idea and I was trying to say it was an evolving idea and that all I could give were the elements, where I couldn’t give the final product. One of the members of council who is an engineer said, of an earlier time, “When we built our new campus the Head of school there gave us a document that included all the locks, doors, windows, frames, everything”. I said “Well you have to understand that I am not a person like that; what I’m like is I want to keep on with the main ideas, working out where they are going (4:5).” ...To a certain extent when the community has accepted it and owned it then I have at that stage moved on to something else because I am on the creative edge rather than the implementation edge (4:5).

This is not to say that detail was unimportant to this Leader. On the contrary, he was well aware of its importance.

You can rise or fall on the detail so therefore someone has to be working on that. There is a sense in which I might have someone working in detail on an idea that won’t get through because I have also been working on a conflicting one and maybe even assign a different person to work on the detail of that (4:5).

Although Leader Four placed staff strategically in order for implementation of the vision to be achieved through them, he admitted that sometimes after starting them on a course of action he would change the direction without remembering to tell them. (4:5). Leader Four therefore presents a picture of a principal almost in perpetual motion, always thinking ahead to the long-term goals based very strongly on values, and not often, though sometimes, stopping to deal with the detailed ramifications of his current ideas for development. He does, however, constantly seek feedback on current realities through a range of reporting and evaluation procedures to inform his thought processes about future action. In this way, he continues to use formalised procedures, but in the sense of building up evidence to support his vision of the future. He does not then take part in any detailed planning, stating in fact, “I’m not much of a manager (4:7).” It is clear,
though, that he keeps control over the selection of operations to serve the vision, as he says “I have always gone with resourcing change instead of stability (4:7).”

Leader Five
From the beginning of the study, Leader Five worked with a number of time-frames in her planning for the school.

Three weekends ago now, we had ourselves fully prepared and we went off for a weekend, 15 of us, to look at our new strategic plan. What we decided to do was to recast and restate what we’ve always called our School Aim and Goals, which can be revised, and we’ve set eight goals, as a result of recasting that and out of those eight goals each goal has a whole series of objectives, plus the resources and strategic moves that are needed to fulfil those objectives. It’s going to take us another six months to complete it, because we’re doing three types; we’re doing 1995/6 for our eight goals, and they’re what you would expect for students, staff, etc. Then we’re doing 1995-2000 and then we’re doing 1995-2005. So we’re trying to look at the immediate and do that in a lot of detail, then five years, ten years. And we want every two years to keep that flowing through, so that we’re always looking at how we’re going to manage, but we’re looking at what it is we think that in ten years’ time, five years’ time, will be the picture (5:2).

Leader Five was always interested in models of planning.

I’ve been looking at all the ways the ‘new’ model of strategic plan is done. So I trotted off to numerous talks on quality control, and I realized we’ve gone from quality control through total quality management, to quality assurance, to total quality assurance and we’re now into quality enhancement and quality transformation. So words have increasing significance. We’ve gone from an appraisal control model with summative and formative and all that now to another model that moves more from the individual, to something that says, here are all the expectations, let’s see if we can assure you that this will happen, and you assure us that that will happen (5:1).

By the end of the study, the leader had refined her views on the meaning of planning.

Planning is vital but there are levels of planning. Now you are planning when you say “my mission, my philosophy, my practice for this school is, etc. etc.” whatever it might be. That’s planning because you’re actually identifying things that you will need to refer a lot of other implementation to. For example, you have four things here that are critical. We are a value driven school, we require a balance between curricular and co-curricular, we require all students to have their own excellence of endeavour and we require them all to develop their own wisdom for life (5:9). It’s a bit like a mantra. So you put that up front in all your planning and then so many other things link into it. Now many schools spend a lot of time drawing up a strategic plan and that’s fine
and I have seen some very fine examples. We have a different approach in that each year I provide council with an update of the document that looks ahead 2 years and 5 years and 10 years. And that document looks at 8 specific areas, the parents, the curriculum, the co-curricular, the whole area of business administration and the service areas of the school, the support staff, all the properties and maintenance and all to do with that, finances and everything concomitant with that and associated areas, and associated areas for this two year period include the management of human relations or industrial relations, expectations of both society and parents which are ever changing and very interesting, economic changes, technology and electronic communications in the media, national and state educational agendas, marketing, promotion and competition and quality and accountability. Now they might change, that last list might change over time but that's where they are at the moment (5:9).

Leader Five's background as a geographer had led her to become a strong user of statistics and data.

Well, I've got a Masters Degree in Town Planning so planning is very important to me and I'm great with statistics and demographics and all of that (5:8)...We've gone through everything - all the demographics, the census, transport, local governments, other schools, and then heading into our own community - what they're like, where they live, where they work etc. So it's a very detailed thing and the other half of the statistical review of the school, which is upgraded every two years, is room usage, staff/student ratios, budgetary, the whole bit. It's a massive undertaking. I did the first two entirely myself, and I now have other people who keep it on the move (5:1)... (For a potential new development) we did full demographic surveys, we did full population surveys through Roy Morgan, etc (5:7).

Leader Five took a dominant role in the planning process from the beginning of her time in the school, recognising that in doing so, she was perhaps crossing into areas of management.

I wrote everything we needed for the planning weekend. I put it all together, supplied the reading lists, set the eight goals, put example objectives for each of the goals, example resources that we would need to fulfil the objectives and so on (5:2)...leadership and management are clearly defined and understood as two separate things, but also things that merge at times (5:2).

Leader Five involved others such as staff and council members in the planning task, but it was also clear that she took very much a 'hands-on' role in the follow-through, possibly because of her superior training in such processes. Indeed, her responses indicated an awareness of some views from within the school that she might be too heavily involved in the 'day-to-day
(5:5). She appeared to work with large staff groups herself rather than to work through 'key' staff in getting new initiatives underway.

Thus Leader Five presents as someone very interested in processes and detail and very involved in mapping out procedures to be employed in implementing the vision. As such, she faces a dilemma concerning the nature of leadership and management and her role within that. Although information on current realities is used to guide action towards achievement of goals, the goals take the form of the essential values for which the school stands.

Leader Six
Leader Six, from the public service, had very clear views about the planning function.

I think of myself as a general purpose manager, and strategic leadership is part of the role but only part of it (6:1)... Again, there is no useful distinction to be made between long-term and short-term and between strategy and implementation (6:1)... The management literature is as faddish as the fashion world and there are so many academics trying to write books and set themselves aside from the pack that they recycle words and fashions change. I have never subscribed to the rational comprehensive approach to strategy or planning. I've always allied myself with people like Henry Mintzberg who these days is suddenly coming into vogue. Mintzberg and the people I read and the way I operate would say that strategies are an emergent phenomenon, not something which is planned by a bunch of boffins and then solidly executed over a few years, so the view that has always come naturally to me seems to be becoming mainstream now, which is nice (6:9).

Following on from this, differences in approach to planning between the public service Leader Six and the education leaders became clear. Where the others were focused primarily on taking an organisation forward for purposes of development, Leader Six was focused only partly on that, with the greater part of his role being creating the capacity to respond to crises, sometimes involving life and death situations. His planning was therefore more strongly focused on having an organisation that was fit, capable and able to make quick responses to immediate turbulence, all of which involved a heavy emphasis on chain-of-command, resource deployment and fitness, analysis of outcomes of actions, and delegation of responsibility for the
whole - task, whatever it might be, from problem definition through solution to evaluation.

If you look at the way this show is run in a formal structural sense, it is incredibly orderly, well-resourced, and, leaving aside a couple of wrinkles that are unusual, very traditional. I have the traditional management doctrine; that structure is important, not unimportant; that values and business rules are important, not unimportant; you don’t have good organisations without good systems, so (we) invest heavily in records and IT and training and all corporate services of various sorts, to make sure that our people go into the field as well equipped as we can make them. So that’s very traditional, there’s nothing tearaway about any of that (6:5).

Leader Six also felt that formalised methods of working with information were important.

Over time I’ve done quite a lot of statistics and operations research, which I always did hard...others would fly through it and top the class and I would struggle to pass but still, formal concepts of a mathematical kind are very important to my way of thinking about all sorts of situations, whether it’s project management or organisational structure, or what have you (6:5).

Overall, Leader Six presented a somewhat different picture to the education leaders. Although he looked a few years down the track in trying to suggest better ways of structuring his organisation, particularly in terms of its interdependence with other bodies, for most of the time he functioned within a very short time frame, expecting to have to prove the worth of the organisation at any minute by way of reaction to situations arising. He described his way of operating as ‘very organic,’ because of his philosophy that ‘talk is free-flowing,’ but at the same time his rules and structures ensured that there was a well-defined hierarchy for decision-making, roles were quite explicit, and resources were well organised. At the end of the study, when Leader Six had moved on twice to different CEO positions in the public service, he had not changed his earlier opinions on any of the foregoing.

**Leader Seven**

Leader Seven, formerly from the public service but now in a very large corporation, was not dissimilar to Leader Six in terms of her modus operandi. Indeed, she acknowledged a transition in her own thinking over time, towards a more reactive behaviour pattern.
I think it (the futures time-frame) is getting shorter and shorter. I probably gave you a different answer a few years ago. My focus in (this organisation) and the wider industry is no more than three years. We’ve got some longer-term plans but the focus is - perhaps because of the crucial importance of systems within our industry- a lot of focus is on the next nine months, you know surviving the year 2000 and all of the issues around that, but in terms of improving the share price and shareholder return, we’re very short to medium focused and so we’re looking at what we can do now to make an immediate impact...and I think those time horizons are getting smaller and smaller...there is still a place for it (being creative, thinking outside the square), but it tends to come from places you can’t predict or expect but you need to be open to it when it does come. Talking to my colleagues at the same level as me here, just dealing with the day to day pressures and trying to foretell tomorrow is - even in the just over a year that I’ve been here - the pressures on that are becoming greater and greater and so people are more focused on the latter (the reactive) I think rather than the former (the proactive); that’s probably not a good thing but that’s where we are (7:9).

This was certainly a little different to the experiences of the Leader at the beginning of the study, when she had described the following processes, though in a different organisation:

We’re in the process of putting a corporate plan together...not so much a ten year horizon but a five year horizon till the turn of the century. What is the plan, the vision for this organisation for that period of time? Where does it come from? It comes from any direction. It comes from building on the past, what do we do well and how do we continue that? It certainly comes from talking to people outside, who have a vision for where this organisation will be placed in the city and the State, and from a long process of working with the Government last year to produce a document concerning our future. There’s a fair amount of dialogue in this organisation because of the corporate planning stage that we’re at and the transition that we’re in (7:1).

Early in the study, this respondent relied heavily on her organisation’s strategic planning group to provide her with information about different kinds of trends potentially impacting on the organisation. “What we need to know, not to any scientific degree, is what the trends are (7:2).” The planning itself was undertaken chiefly by herself and two others. Years later, as a corporate Number 2, this leader described her work in much the same way: “I’m collecting information and I’m analysing it and I’m making recommendations to the CEO (7:5).” She had continued to rely heavily on information-gathering to ascertain current realities, and appeared still to be
doing the planning for her division (for which she had global responsibility) with a very small group or, in fact, largely alone.

Thus Leader Seven presented in much the same vein as Leader Six, with a tendency towards a more reactive approach, largely as a response to turbulence in the environment (7:8). Planning for her very large division was undertaken very much by herself, with this perhaps being made more possible by the fact that a large part of her work in each job situation was downsizing.

Leader Eight
Leader Eight made much of the benefits to himself of the long-term strategic planning processes to which he had been exposed in his early days with the company (8:1).

I was very fortunate in that my first three years with the company were in an area where the investment cycle related to tens of years rather than tens of months, so I have always had this ability to understand the dichotomy between the long-term and short-term issues (8:10)...the then Chief Executive placed a great store in the lessons of history. We used to produce, as part of our annual long-term strategic planning process, a document dealing with all the proven principles and past lessons we had learnt (8:11).

As CEO himself over the last 20 years, however, Leader Eight had moved away from this regular planning process. At the beginning of the study he reported:

In recent times in this company we moved away from a detailed annual strategic planning process and concentrated on a major review every two or three years.

At the end of the study, this CEO felt perhaps even more strongly about the issue.

There is clearly an argument that one should have an annual planning process which links the long-term plans and numbers in with the annual budgets, (but) I have never been enamoured with this process as too often the lofty strategic planning objectives seem to disappear when the realities of a short-term budget become evident (8:11)...These days we spend an enormous amount of time on communications upwards, downwards, outside, inside and so on. This has many ramifications in terms of government, customers, suppliers, the financial community, media, environmental groups, etc (8:12).
Early on, Leader Eight stated that his organisation had moved from having a large corporate centre of 500 personnel some years earlier to a centre of 50 only at this time. The planning function, along with several others, had been largely decentralised to constituent businesses, although the final authority and responsibility still lay in the centre, in the hands of four or five senior management, of whom he was one (8:3).

Interestingly, at the end of the study, Leader Eight reported a “reassertion of the corporate centre (8:6).”

There’s no question that increasingly we are seeing more of a centralised focus emerging once again in our businesses. It’s been driven in part by technology; information technology has moved on so much that it’s now possible once again to do a lot more functions at the centre, in an economical way. Shared services is a buzz word that exists now that certainly didn’t exist four or five years ago...It’s the sheer capacity and speed of the IT world, I’m afraid, that makes it possible to store and transmit huge amounts of data that were once in a distributed system, but are now being done at the centre, so if you look at the modern corporation today all the accounting, the routine type functions, the supply functions, even the human resources administration functions, are all coming back into this shared services concept and then that shared service operation is supplying the administration, carrying out the functions for the businesses in the field – it’s quite a significant change...The globalisation process is affecting every business because of this opening up of markets, because of this information technology revolution (8:6).

Leader Eight, like Leader Seven, was conscious of a shortened time-frame in the strategic process.

There’s a much sharper focus from the ownership point of view, from the shareholder these days...You can’t sit there in a business anymore that’s going to take ten years to deliver acceptable returns (8:7).

Leader Eight valued the information collection and management services to which he had access in his organisation, but did not take it upon himself to be heavily involved in the data interpretation processes.

I have never operated with a great deal of resource around me in terms of research assistance and so on. I have a bad habit that if some issue doesn’t really interest me or seem all that important, I tend to leave it in the bottom of the basket for six months and eventually chuck it out. Such an approach does have some advantages, although obviously unfair on people who find I don’t get to the items which they regard as being important (8:12).
An additional point made by Leader Eight, however, is quite illuminating. After stating earlier that "The Chief Executive is responsible essentially for direction-setting in a company like this – that’s what a chief executive’s all about," he states at the end of the study, after watching "a huge shakeout of many businesses in Australia (8:6), that "development of overall strategy is not something that should be divorced from the integrated management of the company, and must always be a core focus jointly of the top management and the Board (8:10)." In this, he seems to have moved from seeing himself as the sole strategic leader who "talks independently to members of the Board (8:2)" to a more multi-level position in which he is also a member of top management in relation to the ‘leaders’ on the Board. It is still clear, however, that he considers strategic direction setting to be a function of the top echelons of employees.

Thus in Leader Eight we see another CEO who does not attach a great deal of importance to the regular strategic planning exercise, choosing instead to form an ad hoc group every now and again to conduct a strategic review. He appears not to take a significant part himself in that particular process, perhaps indicating that the strategic review group has an advisory, and not a decision-making, role. He states that he does not surround himself with research resources, but it is clear that current realities are ascertained through constant communications with a range of bodies, such as government and finance, and through staff members constantly travelling the world to assess product lifecycles and other matters. Finally, towards the end of the study, he seems to have a greater awareness of the ‘management’ role vis-a-vis the ‘leadership’ role.
Summary of Planning

As summarized in Table 4, the planning behaviours of the eight leaders were quite complex and reflected several commonalities but also some differences, though the latter group was somewhat less significant. Time – frames for thinking ahead were almost always multi-level, with both long-term and short-term thinking taking place, but the public service and corporate leaders (6, 7 and 8) pointed to a shortening time-frame, due to an increasing need to respond to environmental complexities, particularly in the global context in the case of the corporations.

In the leaders’ attitudes to strategic planning, there was a marked shift away from the traditional practice of the SWOT analysis type of planning, towards a more fluid and dynamic approach in which values provided a stable reference point against which all other matters could be plotted or assessed. Those leaders (2 and 5) who still practised a form of annual planning also used values as their starting point, while Leader 6, who felt that formalised processes were very important, made values and structures the focus, the latter being to provide accountability mechanisms. Indeed, all education and public service leaders listed values as the main focal point for any planning, while the corporate leaders were more concerned with resources and product matters. In the cases of the three state school leaders (1, 2 and 3) and the public service leader (6), planning was carried out by the leader and a small group, whereas the heads of one independent school (4) and one corporation (8) took a limited part only in the process, the second independent head (5) worked directly with larger groups, and Leader 7 moved towards planning alone, perhaps because of the nature of her main task, which was to downsize the staff body. All leaders ascribed importance to outcomes and all leaders demonstrated a serious belief in the use of data to describe current realities of organisational life. This latter point could perhaps be seen as slightly at odds with the move away from strategic planning, but it would appear that the use of data was now seen as an ongoing process designed to provide the checks and balances needed to guide action in a continuous way, rather than as in a ‘set-in-concrete’ plan.
### Table 4: Aspects of Leaders' Planning Practice

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of Planning</th>
<th>Leader Education</th>
<th>State Education</th>
<th>State Education</th>
<th>Independent Education</th>
<th>Independent Education</th>
<th>Public Service → Corporate</th>
<th>Corporate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time frame</td>
<td>Long &amp; Short</td>
<td>Long &amp; Short</td>
<td>Long &amp; Short</td>
<td>Long &amp; Short</td>
<td>Long, Medium &amp; Short</td>
<td>Some long but partly reactive</td>
<td>Becoming shorter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to Strategic planning</td>
<td>Moved to more dynamic approach</td>
<td>Annual planning but on basis of values</td>
<td>Feels that rigid planning is futile</td>
<td>Planning on basis of values with constant feedback stream</td>
<td>Annual process but on basis of values not SWOT</td>
<td>Formal processes important</td>
<td>Becoming reactive more than proactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning focus</td>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Values focused resources</td>
<td>Should be values</td>
<td>Values &amp; resourcing, Change</td>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Values and structures</td>
<td>Rationalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who does the Planning?</td>
<td>Leader plus small group</td>
<td>Leader plus small group plus day staff</td>
<td>Leader plus small group</td>
<td>Key staff. Not leader</td>
<td>Leader plus large group</td>
<td>Leader plus small group</td>
<td>Largely self sometimes small group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes Important?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Important?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptualisation of role as leadership/management</td>
<td>Moving towards leadership</td>
<td>Moving towards leadership</td>
<td>Moving towards leadership</td>
<td>Always in leadership role</td>
<td>Both, but moving towards leadership</td>
<td>No difference between the two roles</td>
<td>Difficult to say due to very specific nature of role</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finally, the leadership/management distinction was seen to be an issue, with the education leaders already in (Leader 4), or moving towards (Leaders 1, 2, 3 and 5), a role which they conceptualised more as ‘leadership,’ the public servant (6) insisting that there was no distinction between the two, and the long-standing corporate leader (8) indicating an enhanced awareness of his management function. Leader 7 was not easily identified as moving in either direction.

**Working With People**

The second section of Part B deals with the way in which the leaders constructed the change experience for the people they worked with, especially the staff. This includes actions such as those aimed at motivating people for change, those aimed at increasing the capacities of people to make change, and those in which the main intent is control. Different leaders showed different emphases in the approaches they used, but again there were several major themes.

*Leader One*

Leader One focused on giving people ownership, by encouraging diverse groups and individuals to enter into a large number of discussion sessions, stimulating them with well-known public speakers, and encouraging them to express viewpoints (1:1). He aimed to help create a ‘community of learners,’ by encouraging staff to make outside visits, to take part in “Senge’s systems look” at what they did, and to learn new skills in lateral thinking (1:2), in technology and in how to work as a team (1:11).

This principal felt that positive reinforcement, in the form perhaps of incentive payments, was valuable (1:6). He believed he had to act as a role model (1:4) and arranged what he called a /mentor/coach/critical friend system for staff, in order to help them become ‘learning theorists (1:2).’ He believed in training people for leadership through exposure to inspirational thinking (1:10) and, finally, encouraged staff to enter into an appraisal program.

I’ve talked to my staff about appraisal now for 12 months and they’re ready to embrace appraisal; they’re coming to me saying “I think we’re
going to look at appraisal” and I’m saying “fine”. So my advisory committee looking into what an effective teacher is, provided the model for what indicators we’d need to find. And so teachers for the first time are beginning to emerge and say “I want to be part of the team, let’s share our skills, let’s look at the opportunities(1:6).

**Leader Two**

This principal appeared to focus on communication, the building of collegiality, and the giving of positive feedback, small rewards and thanks for a job well done. He felt that he needed to be seen to be caring, compassionate, consistent, and willing to delegate or to trust. “In the end, you need to be all things to all people (2:10).” He empowered people by giving them responsibilities for decisions which he would not over-ride and by making certain committee positions open to elections by staff (2:8). He gave the staff members in senior positions experiences that would equip them for future leadership roles (2:3).

Leader Two considered it very important that a person in his position try to act as a model in different ways, not just in being seen to “suffer” like everyone else (2:4), but in “taking a class and trialling all the things the teachers are trialling ...and to be seen using the computer and setting an example to the rest of the staff (2:10).

As with Leader One, Leader Two gave the appraisal process a great deal of attention.

The appraisal process is critical to empowering...because we actually negotiated goals with each individual, seriously negotiated them.... It is just a cooperative effort really. You have to empower people, you have to take them along with you and then you’ve got to sort of let them run themselves. You have to find a way however to keep them accountable...You have to have very strong accountability mechanisms. They have to be relatively soft and gentle but they also have to be very thorough and rigorous and I don’t think those two things are necessarily in conflict (2:9).

The appraisal process, in which coaching/mentoring operated, was closely tied to a strong professional development program was tied largely to a strong professional development program in which staff were required to take part and in both of these processes a coaching/mentoring program operated (2:8).
Leader Three
This principal depicted herself as a fairly forceful leader who rather determinedly engaged her staff in change related activities. She talked of “playing a strong bit of hands on leadership” and “keeping the pressure on for everybody to get up to the mark quickly (3:8).” She felt that coaching was important, especially in terms of group learning, as in the analysis of data (3:8). She also stressed the importance of making structures, responsibilities and expected outcomes very explicit (3:7), of valuing each person’s contribution (3:7) and of acknowledging to staff the good things that were happening (3:5).

Modelling was also important to Leader Three, especially by way of setting standards through one’s personal values and ethics (3:11).

You can’t change people; they can only change themselves. You can only behave in ways which reflect to them that there are different ways of going or different ways of living out your life, but there are people who don’t want to grow, almost; you know you can’t take them on a journey until something else happens in their own lives and that’s what makes it really, really difficult for leaders I think; in the end you’ve just got to spend more time nurturing the people who are flogging themselves to death anyway to get on board and to work hard on achieving whatever it is the community wants (3:12).

However, this leader did suggest one way of predisposing people towards change.

Some of the way you get people to take things on board is by actually making something happen, like a new building, like some new computers into the place, like a curriculum review, and without the entire vision perhaps being understood by everybody, what at least is understood is, things are changing around here...my goodness, there’s a new building over there with these things happening in it, and my goodness there’s something else happening over there (3:3).

Leader Three also paid great attention to appraisal, in which she again was quite forceful, insisting that staff obtain feedback from students especially, but giving staff the right to shape the survey questions and analyse the results.

You will help your kids understand the context they are operating in when they give that feedback and you will put it all together and report to your team leaders. I don’t need to see that, but as a team then, you can make decisions about what have we learned collectively about how these new curriculum approaches are working(3:15).
Training others in leadership was also seen to be a very significant aspect of the role. Here again, this principal played a forceful hand in insisting that some staff members undergo formal training with an external consultant, after school hours for a period of weeks.

It's become even more urgent for me that as many staff as possible have leadership training, because they need to be supported in getting in touch with this educational future, and they need to get supported in how you make decisions and how you feel confident in leading your team of people (3:2). (They) have to be equipped for talking; they're in contact with more staff on a daily basis than I am, so your professional development coordinator, your curriculum coordinators, your people managing the sub-schools, have to be confident themselves about the future (3:3).

Leader Four
This principal indicated a strong interest in entering other people's mindsets, as it were. He talked of "hearing and encouraging other people in expressing their vision and, if they haven't got one, encouraging and supporting them as they seek one (4:4)". He also stated that "a good change agent goes right inside to where people are and what their deeper wishes are as opposed to more mundane, everyday issues (4:2)." His interest in people's mindsets, as opposed, for instance to their professional skills, carried over into his staff appointments.

Another issue would be for me making sure I have got a set of people around whose skills complement mine. So I am conscious for example that I am not too good on detail so I need detail people around me. I need people around me who are also ideas people or stimulate and bubble along and are imaginative and can be creative and be foolish, so it is complex (4:4).

Somewhat enigmatically, he also looked for people who were not in themselves vulnerable and could therefore accommodate others (4:2), while at the same time he wanted these strong people (as well as himself) to model vulnerability.

You've got to model vulnerability as well as willingness to take a view...You're thinking about leadership so you're already into the area of tall poppies and can be cut down and you're into behaviour modelling (of) vulnerability as well as 'feeling' statements, not just safe statements. So it's okay to fail, it's alright to make a mistake; we can all be wrong. (4:1)...I have in my mind a role for modelling so I model how I deal with something and if I make a mess of it then I am not afraid to
model failure or model the ability to reflect on what happened and why it was good or bad (4:4).

Despite his emphasis on understanding individuals, there is a sense of some detachment from people in the social sense in this principal. There is a feeling that when he engages with people, it is chiefly at the more cerebral level, and that it is the ideas produced by individuals or groups that he becomes involved with, as much as, or even more than, the people themselves. His talk is full of the words “ideas” and “thinking” and he explains how he often moves on in his thinking, forgetting to tell people that he has done so (4:5). He sees his leadership role as “very much playing with the ideas, the philosophies, the values (4:5).”

I certainly used to write an enormous amount, but after coming back from leave I’ve done less writing and played around more with talks and visual images as I’ve used in Powerpoint. So I’ve strung less sentences together, but strung more ideas together maybe. Powerpoint is actually another means of communication. So, Powerpoint says that you can put together some ideas, you can move ideas around. You can do it graphically, whereas before I felt limited by being able only to put sentences and paragraphs and pages together, but now I’ve actually got some sort of freedom, and I suspect that technology’s going to open that up further, so that it’s closer to the reality of the mind. You don’t actually think in linear sequences from A to Z, you actually move around a bit and that’s okay. And it’s a medium in which you can move around and you don’t have to provide the coherence, you provide material where other people can enter the environment and make their own sense of it. That’s my experience of the new technology, that it’s a more open-ended environment in which you can create, or describe an environment (4:2).

The principal did not talk of people dynamics such as staff teams, creating other leaders, or giving positive reinforcement, as other education respondents did. He did, however, concur with them in considering appraisal or evaluation of staff to be important.

I guess the notion of students having some say in teacher evaluation was therefore important...important to students because they had voice but important to teachers because they recognised that they were there to serve rather than be served in the old-fashioned sense, so that the service notion for teachers is actually working for their students. The students weren’t working for them (4:2).
Leader Five

This principal appeared to focus quite heavily on the challenge of changing people.

Now, in looking at teachers, this is the area of the future, I reckon, for the principals, where we need to try and work with our colleagues, insofar as we are able to assist them to change attitudes and perceptions and the way they do things, so they can cheerfully cope with a redefinition of their role (5:3) ... We have always had good PD programs in terms of training teachers to be computer-literate, to look carefully and closely at new ways of doing things; we have scholars in residence (5:3). I’ve got a couple of people going to courses at (a Management Institute) because they’re unable to face change and they desperately need either a change of career or change of their attitude within their career... it’s rubbing off and that’s not good for anyone (5:3)... The hard thing is to move in a profession that looks backwards rather than forwards, which is highly unionised and therefore protects a status quo through a structure that is really fast becoming less useful for doing all the things that we need to do within it (5:3).

Interestingly, like Leader Four, also from the independent education sector, Leader Five did not speak about organising the staff into working teams, though she herself worked with a senior team (5:2), giving positive reinforcement, or developing leadership skills in others. Nor did she speak about empowerment of staff, though several of her actions could reasonably be seen to support that aim. In these interviews at least, she appeared to be very much more focused on ideas, structures and outcomes.

Again, like Leader Four, this Leader wrote and talked a great deal, though not necessarily for a wider audience.

I don’t write to be published. I write a lot for the school community. I write every week for the school community on a whole variety of issues. I don’t write very much for magazines; I don’t think I’m a particularly good writer, but I must say a lot of the things that are printed in magazines are so self-evident, that I wonder why they’re being printed. Now, I know they’re very useful to a lot of people, so I don’t bring that in to be difficult, and when I read things that I think are useful, I print them off for certain staff to keep the ideas flowing (5:4).

I talk a lot, both formally and informally (5:3). I have four or five opportunities each year, at the beginning of each term, to discuss things of an in-depth nature with the whole staff. We look forward to that, and I generally think ahead or think around or present some ideas I’ve had, and we then have a bit of a think and discussion on it and keep going (5:4).
Finally, this principal, like all the other education leaders, believed that appraisal was a valuable process. She had, however, moved away from an ‘appraisal control’ model, to a more fluid arrangement of individual assurance. In this system, all staff were given the right to request appraisal for their own development, with the focus on either personal attributes or task achievement, and with the assistance of a colleague as mentor or coach before final presentation of a report from themselves to the principal (5:10).

Leader Six
The public service CEO focused a great deal on communications, holding frequent meetings with senior management teams. He kept them informed about the issues on his mind and invited them to come back with relevant factual material from the work face (6:4). He placed much importance on explicitness, not only of structures and roles, but also of personal characteristics, particularly his own, in order that there be a high level of predictability.

(It's) having a way of doing things, which is organised, which you can use automatically, which your gang can forecast in advance, so that they know what you're likely to do or think, and they can also know what you're likely to get wrong and pay close attention to, because there are some things where I'm very gung-ho and over the top and the others will say “Just hang on, think about it, sleep on it overnight, don't act now, act tomorrow;” because I'm always pretty trigger-happy, whereas the troops will say “think, take it easy, don't let your emotions take charge.” So, the troops know what I'm like, and I know what they're like (6:4).

This CEO felt that people who run organisations should have a range of skills or, when they don’t have them, should surround themselves with people who have what they don’t have (6:1). He appointed many women to the organisation, on the grounds that:

I think by and large, men are largely blind to social structures and nuances and signals and even layers of meaning within social situations, belief systems, etc. Women are much more attuned to all those things and it makes them very effective in many situations (6:6).

There was heavy investment in the training of people and an emphasis on giving them exposure, with opportunities to practise using individual discretion (6:3).
Fitness and capability, if you like, the Norman Dixon thing, the way the people are, the way they were potty-trained, the schools they went to, the way they were socialised into the organisation, the way they're armed with strategic and tactical doctrine, all of that is there before somebody says "advance" and the outcome is determined before somebody says "advance" (6:3).

Having had some personal experience in the management of a school, this CEO suggested that in the field of Education, there had been "an awful lot of junking of solid conceptual frameworks and replacement of them with complete fairy floss over the last ten or fifteen years (6:3). He felt that at the moment the school system in Victoria lacked "the kind of belief system which is really capable of driving what people want out of education (6:3)."

The strong views on structures and roles were carried over into training others for leadership.

You know, Peter Drucker, in the heyday of psychological testing, said the best predictor of how someone will go in a job is not a battery of tests, but how they went in a smaller job of a similar kind. I fervently believe that. And the organisational corollary of that is, if you want good top management, you want an organisation that breeds it; you need to give people as far down the line as possible, within a more restricted space perhaps, but still the same range of things to test and develop their competencies on, so you try and give them maximum autonomy within a framework so that they can understand how they'll be judged and what's expected of them. Give them room to move, and the ones who succeed at that are likely to succeed a level up, and so the developmental organisation equips people with the skills they need for the jobs at each level. Good structures, accompanied by consistent business rules, breed good people. The more you can reflect the holistic world environment into the work environment of increasingly small groups, the more you're going to breed people who can do bigger jobs. So I structure anything I run to make sure that people, as far as possible, have thinking tasks at crucial stages in their career, and doing tasks, and, as they get further towards the top, make sure that there is no job designed so that it's all thinking or all doing (6:7).

Finally, this CEO suggested that running an organisation was no different to raising children, in terms of the need for positive reinforcement, for inculcating norms, and for using negative sanctions where applicable, rather than just being a "cheer squad" (6:7). In conjunction with this, he found appraisal to be a most necessary organisational process.

The CEO will be appraised against the interests of the 'owners,' in terms of what the organisation is achieving, and if the chain of responsibility runs true, the CEO will secure his objectives through the next line of
management,' and so on. The logic of organisation calls for a high degree of consistency, from top to bottom, in the artefacts against which every member of the organisation is judged (6:9).

Leader Seven

This public service turned corporate leader also focused on communication.

I think the principal lesson is communication; you can never do enough of it. Just when you think you're sick of saying the same thing you realise nobody's been listening or nobody's actually heard the real message and you think that there's nobody you've left out of the loop either in terms of the formal communication like the email or newsletter or whatever, or the informal of walking around talking to people. I have quarterly gatherings of all my staff to talk about where we've been to let them ask questions. Just when you think you've done enough of that you realise it's barely adequate and so especially when you're going through life changes I think the main message is the need for constant communication and if you get sick of it then probably you've barely scratched the surface in terms of the message (7:5).

This leader was also focused on maintaining a well-trained staff, for the benefit not only of the organisation but of the people themselves.

We've been endeavouring to train our workforce much better than it was, so they're equipped with new skills (7:1). We have a graduate recruiting program; we invest in their induction and their training (7:8).

At the beginning of the study, team building was high on the agenda.

"Building good teams has been an important part of our process and empowering senior people so they in turn can get their people to make changes. No one person can change all of that by yourself, you need other people to do it, so building the teams and empowering people to do it is the important part of it (7:1)."

Towards the end of the study, however, whilst Leader 7 still felt that this was an ideal situation, it seemed that the more reactive style of operation that she herself had been compelled through environmental forces to adopt, resulted in her not sharing decision making to the same level.

The leader also believed in providing opportunities to encourage and develop new leaders within the organisation.

I'm planning for the succession (for when I leave), dealing with issues about ensuring that it's as seamless a transition as it's possible to be, and that people here are well placed to have an equal chance of taking over from me (7:4).
There's been a fair effort in internal management rotation; because there's been a lot of job reductions and eliminations; the opportunity for people for promotion that they experienced in the eighties has of course disappeared, and so we've given people the opportunities to do other jobs within the organisation; even at relatively junior management levels we've done that (7:1).

Leader Eight
This leader again was focused on communication, his aim being to empower, through training, and through explicitness of roles.

Our philosophy is to empower; the biggest force for change in Australian manufacturing industry at the moment is training, is quality accreditation, is sharing of information, is continuous improvement, and it all comes back to empowerment of the workforce. Whereas, the traditional mould of the past was you had the supervisors and the foremen and you let everything float down. That traditional structure has just been thrown out the window now. That means you have to decentralise and motivate people at the lowest level and get people involved. What we are doing is really involving the people, so that their loyalty is then to themselves and their place of work, not what happens in the State office of this union or that union or the ACTU or whatever, and that's the process that's going on. You have to communicate all the way down, you spend a lot of time communicating (8:5).

This Leader was well aware of one apparent advantage that he, as a corporate leader, had over most education leaders.

Ownership's a terribly important thing, we have been enormously successful in passing equity ownership to everyone who works in the place. If you can get that ownership, that proprietary interest, it changes people's attitudes. We spend a lot of time talking about what we're about in the organisation (8:5).

His comments indicate that he did not feel that equity ownership was the only kind of ownership, but that it was a powerful motivator.

This CEO felt that modelling was important, as in his own situation in which he had been, as a young employee, the recipient of modelling and coaching. He expressed concern about young people in current times who, as a result of the more decentralised organisational structure, did not have the same access to developmental experiences as he himself had enjoyed (8:5).
Summary of Working With People

As summarized in Table 5, the practices followed by the various leaders in working with people, notably their staff, were quite complex and individualistic, but several patterns and a few major differences in foci did emerge. Table 5 indicates those issues or processes that were most frequently raised and records those leaders who raised them. In some cases, but only a few, the processes were mentioned indirectly rather than directly and a judgement had to be made, after cross-referencing, as to whether that was the leader’s intended meaning. For example, at no stage did Leader 5 talk of ‘empowering’ her staff; she did, however, talk of leaving them to run meetings to make certain decisions, and of making them responsible for their own appraisal processes; this was seen to be her way of drawing attention to empowerment.

Surprisingly, perhaps, there were only three aspects of working with people, that every one of the eight leaders identified as significant to his or her strategic leadership role; these were empowerment, professional development and modelling, mentoring or coaching. The next most common aspect was that of appraisal, with all of the school leaders and the public service leader giving it some prominence and the corporate, and public service turned corporate, not mentioning it. Interestingly, however, these last two were also those who talked of providing equity ownership for employees. One might wonder, therefore, if the ownership was seen somehow to replace the need for appraisal, or if it was simply the case that in such large organisations as these, appraisal issues were not in the CEO’s domain, or if indeed appraisal was not so significant in the corporate area for particular purposes such as dismissing non-performing staff.
Table 5: Leaders’ Practices in Working with People

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Leader Education</th>
<th>State Education</th>
<th>State Education</th>
<th>Ind Education</th>
<th>Ind Education</th>
<th>Pub Public Service</th>
<th>Public Service → Corporate*</th>
<th>Corporate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMC*</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating Leadership</td>
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<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*MMC = modelling/mentoring/coaching
The clearest pattern to emerge other than the foregoing is the total alignment on some issues of the three state school principals and the public service leader, as one grouping, as compared to the independent school leaders and the corporate leader as a second grouping, with the public service turned corporate leader (No 7) somewhat in the middle. Indeed, leaving Leader Seven aside, perhaps on the grounds of her very narrowly defined role, the alignment between the remaining leaders as two 'groups' is very powerful. The former all indicated that significant processes were: creating leadership within the ranks, creating staff teams, and using positive reinforcement; the latter did not mention these. Again, there could be several reasons for this. In terms of the purposes of this study, however, it seems that some of these differences and the reasons for them might bear further investigation, particularly in relation to the state education vis-à-vis the independent education leaders, where length of exposure to the strategic leadership function of self management might come into play.

Interestingly, Leader Seven, with a public service and corporate background, gave responses that were split between the two groupings. Whilst she talked about the importance of staff teams, at least early in the study, and while she felt it was important to create new leadership, she did not talk about positive reinforcement. This might well be felt, however, to be incompatible with the task of downsizing, or dismissing people.

Finally, each of the leaders mentioned other major foci of their work with people, and these also are summarized in Table 5. The most common of these perhaps was the desire to reward people in some way; this ranged from equity ownership to incentive payments, to providing dinners with wine around an after-hours meeting. One leader felt that negative sanctions were as important as the positive, but should be used carefully; this leader also stressed the importance of rules within the organisation. Three mentioned the importance of communication, two talked about motivating people by getting something visible happening ('success breeds success') and one gave particular emphasis to appointing the right kind of staff to get change happening. It was difficult, however, to determine patterns in these
responses. Bearing in mind the success of all these leaders, and the semi-structured interviews employed to elicit information, these responses should be taken only as representing the priority assigned to these areas by the various leaders in their individual roles, rather than absolute measures of value attached to them.

Thus, in the area of 'working with people,' as in other areas of this research study, the responses reflect some patterns and some idiosyncracies. These will be discussed further in Chapter Six, which brings together the various findings, to ascertain the ways in which outstanding strategic leaders approach their task, to draw attention to any patterns across sectors of respondents, and to highlight any areas appearing to be worthy of further investigation.
Chapter Six: Summary, Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusion

Chapter Six presents the summary, discussion, recommendations and conclusions of the study. The summary provides a synopsis of the thesis, setting out the purpose of the study, the research questions, a brief overview of the methodology, and a synthesis of the findings. The discussion presents the findings in light of the existing literature in order to identify the contribution that the study makes to knowledge and the implications thereof for improving practice, for theoretical knowledge about strategic leadership and for research methodology. The recommendations consist of a simple listing based on the findings. The conclusion makes a final synoptic statement about the study.

Summary

Purpose
The last decade has seen schools in many countries, including Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Canada, exposed to major and rapid change. They are, almost by definition, affected by the global shift towards a knowledge economy and, like all organisations, they face continuous upheaval in the external environment, in the form of changing trends of a social, political, economic, demographic, cultural and technological nature. Those in systems of public education must deal with these forces within the context of a new form of school governance, in which central authorities have become leaner and more focused on policy and accountability, while schools have been given responsibility for resource allocation to support learning and teaching. The implications for school leadership of such a confluence of forces are significant, with several writers (eg Leithwood, Begley and Cousins 1992, Sarros 1993, Bhindi and Duignan 1997) pointing to the need for new kinds of future-oriented leadership. The focus of this study is ‘strategic leadership,’ which was identified by Caldwell and Spinks (1992) as being necessary within the then new context of school self-management.
Strategic leadership is seen to differ from day to day leadership on three dimensions: time, scale of issue and scope of action. It involves looking to the future in a way that was not previously necessary when implementing directives from the centre. It is concerned with being proactive in devising and implementing strategies that will maximise perceived strengths and minimise perceived weaknesses, in relation to the type of context in which the school operates and the type of clientele that it serves. In policy documents strategic leadership is usually viewed as part of the role of the formal leader.

How strategic leadership is exercised, however, has remained unclear. Whilst the tasks required of the strategic leader have been outlined (Caldwell and Spinks 1992, Davies and Ellison 1999, Kotter 1990, Limerick, Cunnington and Crowther 1998), little attention has been paid to understanding how the leader best carries out the role and under which conditions, or how the knowledge, skills and attitudes to do it are developed. Gronn (1996:25) asks for “a new world order in the study of headship,” which he sees as necessitating “longitudinal, naturalistic and biographical investigations, particularly the latter, to better enrich knowledge of where leadership comes from and to ascertain what leading and following look like when scrutinised in any depth.” The purpose of this research is to contribute to that knowledge about strategic leadership.

As the underlying purpose of the study is to improve strategic leadership in schools, information is obtained primarily from individuals considered to be outstanding strategic leaders within the education sector. To enhance understanding, however, especially since the concept of strategic leadership has been recognised in fields outside education for much longer than within it, information was also obtained from outstanding individuals within the public and corporate sectors. Three advantages of including other sectors are identified. The first is that the processes occurring within education may be more clearly apparent, when seen in relief or contrast against other forms. The second is that processes and practices from other sectors may offer alternatives. The third is that some comparison may allow
greater understanding of the effects of different contexts on the processes and practice of strategic leadership, and thereby indicate likely areas for change, should the context of education itself change.

Research Questions

Two research questions guided the investigation:

1. For outstanding strategic leaders in school education and the public and private sectors,
   a) How is strategic leadership exercised, and does this change with changes in time and context?
   b) How has the capacity for strategic leadership been developed?
   c) What similarities and differences exist in the strategic leadership of the education / non-education groups?

2. How may the capacity for strategic leadership be developed for school leaders?

Methodology

As the concept of strategic leadership in schools was relatively new, it was decided that the investigation should centre on a small number of participants considered to be outstanding in the field. The need to gather information from a small number of participants led to the selection of the naturalistic research methodology for the study, with the researcher as the research instrument and the focus on understanding the meaning that people give to their experiences. In the absence of any a priori theory arising from the literature to give shape to the investigation, this allowed for the research design and the guiding substantive framework to emerge from the data rather than be preordinately constructed.

As the research interest lay in exploring the meaning that people give to their experience, the specific methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology was considered appropriate. This involved the discerning of themes (phenomenology) within the account of the lived-experience of participants, and the interpretation of meaning (hermeneutics) through engagement with the researcher’s related knowledge and experience. Gurr’s (1996) work was helpful in illustrating the use of this methodology in school-based research.
Data collection was undertaken through in-depth interviewing, which served as a means both of gathering experiential material and of facilitating a conversational relation with an interviewee about the meaning of an experience. The interviews were conducted in semi-structured format, with some set opening questions and the researcher then following lines of inquiry that suggested themselves from an interviewee’s responses. Two major sets of interviews were conducted, four years apart, with follow up visits and phone calls after each set for the purpose of clarifying or expanding on intended meanings where necessary.

Data analysis followed the procedure described by Tesch (1990:92-113), which involved a reading of the entire data set, delineation of meaning units, grouping of the meaning units into themes, checking of the themes against original transcripts, and providing some contextual material that might help to illuminate the text. Report writing utilised three kinds of phenomenological writing; namely, the ‘thematic,’ based on emerging themes as generative guides, the ‘analytical,’ examining systematically the themes revealed by the narratives, and ‘exemplificative,’ utilising first-hand accounts from the participants themselves to allow the reader to rework the material in order to personally appropriate whatever might seem meaningful (van Manen, 1990:168-173).

Eight participants were selected on the basis of a peer-group nomination process. For each sector, the initial nomination process was conducted through a letter survey of a large number of leaders in that sector. A description of strategic leadership taken from Caldwell and Spinks (1992) was provided, and leaders were asked to nominate, in no particular order, any colleagues whom they felt to be outstanding practitioners of strategic leadership within their sector of enterprise. Those people receiving the highest number of nominations were then approached by letter and asked to participate.

The total sample of eight outstanding strategic leaders included five males and three females. There were three males and two females from the education sector, one male and one female from the public sector and one
the highest number of nominations were then approached by letter and asked to participate.

The total sample of eight outstanding strategic leaders included five males and three females. There were three males and two females from the education sector, one male and one female from the public sector and one male from the corporate sector. During the course of the study several of these participants changed their employment base, but in only one case did this involve a change between sectors; this was in the case of the female public service CEO who moved into the corporate sector. In the findings this leader (known as Leader 7) was referred to as the ‘public service turned corporate.’

Findings

General Synthesis
This study has provided a body of information about the exercise of strategic leadership and factors affecting the development of strategic leadership capacity. Some strong patterns of response were evident across all eight leaders; these provide a useful understanding of how strategic leadership is practised. In addition, there were some strong response differentials between groupings or individuals which contributed to an understanding of some of the attributes or factors impacting on strategic leadership.

The participant responses were clustered around the two main themes of direction-setting and implementation. Direction-setting involved vision and futures-thinking, based primarily on values and ideas respectively, and called into play some of the factors affecting the capacity to be strategic, as in personal attributes, background influences and current influences. Implementation was focused on approaches to planning and to working with people.

With regard to vision, all of the leaders had assumed the role of chief decision-maker and saw that function as an essential part of their role. Although they talked about the importance of having others in the organisation involved in the process, their responses also indicated a strong
education leaders, whilst reserving the decision-making for themselves, did not take the same creative role.

Vision itself was quite complex in nature, with four kinds being identified, namely the organisational, the whole-industry, the universal and the personal. Again a division occurred between groups, though this time the public service leader was aligned with all the education leaders in exhibiting each kind of vision, where the public service turned corporate and the corporate were more narrowly focused, primarily on the organisational. There was a much higher rate of job turnover amongst the state education/public service leaders than the private sector leaders, which appeared to be connected to the notion of personal vision, as leaders removed themselves from obstacles imposed by a system, or took advantage of opportunities that it provided for transfer or promotion.

Futures thinking, like vision, had several strands, with the five categories of ‘external environment,’ ‘core business,’ ‘organisational,’ ‘leadership/strategic leadership,’ and ‘change’ being identified. Each of the leaders exhibited all of these kinds of futures thinking, demonstrating a very wide knowledge base and a keen desire to remain up-to-date. All leaders paid considerable attention to technology and to the need for everyone in an organisation to thrive on change. Significantly also, in talking of strategic leadership, all education leaders stressed the importance of values, where the non-education leaders talked in more concrete terms.

In describing their personal attributes, all leaders except the corporate expressed a sense of themselves as energetic, restless, and risk-taking, while the corporate felt that he was essentially pragmatic. All expressed a sense of being strong in decision-making, hard-working and reliable, and sensitive. All held university qualifications, with the long-term corporate having perhaps the lowest qualifications and the public servant the highest. All had been affected by key individuals, most often university staff or workplace mentors, at an early stage of their careers. All three females and the male who claimed to “read the world more as a woman than most men” identified family as a major influence on the development of their strategic
capacity; the remaining four, all men, did not. Reading broadly was very important to all, though slightly less so for the corporate leader, with the education and public service utilising a very wide range of material, and the corporate being more business-oriented. Other significant influences on leaders were informal networks and, amongst the education and public service, self-development programs.

In planning, the education leaders utilised both long-term and short-term time-frames, while the non-education pointed to an increasingly shorter, more reactive approach, due primarily to complexities arising from the global context in which they operated. In attitudes to planning, there was a strong move by all away from the traditional practice of the SWOT analysis type of planning, towards a more fluid and dynamic approach in which values provided the stable reference point for education leaders and more business-oriented matters did so for the non-education group. The three state school leaders and the public service leader carried out the planning themselves with the aid of a small group, where the others were individualised in this area. All leaders ascribed importance to outcomes, though the corporate looked for shareholder value while others focused on broader values. All leaders demonstrated a serious belief in the use of data to describe current realities, with data being obtained on a range of external and internal issues and in an ongoing manner. Finally, the education leaders appeared to think of themselves more as 'leaders', whilst the non-education identified themselves more as both 'leaders' and 'managers'.

In working with people, three aspects were identified as significant to the strategic leadership of all eight leaders; these were 'empowerment', 'professional development' and 'modelling, mentoring or coaching.' For all school leaders and the public service, appraisal was important, though this varied in nature, while the corporate and public service turned corporate were more focused on equity ownership as a means of ensuring commitment. Otherwise, the main pattern of response was that all public sector, but no private sector, leaders talked of creating leadership within the ranks, developing staff teams and giving positive reinforcement. The non-
education talked more about the importance of communication than did the education leaders, but given other evidence, it is highly likely that this was at least in part a reaction to their physical isolation from others in the organisation by way of being housed in highly secured, penthouse offices. Other matters discussed were rewards and sanctions, rules, motivating by making something visible happen (‘success breeds success’) and appointing the right kind of staff to get change happening.

Differences between sub-groups:
The research set out in part to determine any differences between the education and non-education groups and, indeed, there were some patterns of distinction arising between these groups. This was complicated, however, by the response patterns of the long-term public servant, which aligned him frequently with the education respondents, rather than the other non-education respondents. Another significant pattern in grouping also arose, however, this being the state school and public service leaders (all public sector) on the one hand, and the independent school and corporate leaders (all private sector) on the other. With regard to gender, two points of difference were noted. All sub-group response patterns are set out below:

It should first be noted that there were several areas in which all eight leaders were similar. These included the importance of vision, types of futures thinking, tertiary qualifications, the impact of early academic or workplace mentors, a sensitive and hard-working nature, fondness for reading and informal networks, movement toward planning of a more fluid nature than traditional strategic planning, belief in the importance of outcomes, use of data in a continuous loop, and focus on empowerment, modelling/coaching and professional development.

i. Education compared to Non-education
Several differences were evident between these groups. The non-education leaders exhibited a shorter time-frame for planning, greater acknowledgment of the management aspects of their role, the use of something more concrete than values (eg structures) as a basis for planning, and an emphasis on the importance of communication with others in the organisation (though the latter was possibly related to their physical
isolation in secure offices). More often, however, the public service leader was more closely aligned with the education leaders; this group exhibited all four kinds of vision against the corporates’ organisation focus, read a wide range of material compared to the corporates’ business focus, found appraisal useful, where the corporates looked to equity ownership as a control over commitment, and participated in personal development programs, where the corporate did not. Overall, what can be said is that the corporate leader and public service turned corporate were very much more organisationally focused than the education leaders, who were engaged in a personal, values-driven journey, and that the long-term public servant moved between the two on various dimensions, but tended more towards the education leaders.

ii. Public sector compared to Private sector
A second group differential concerned the public sector, both education and non-education, as compared to the private sector, both education and non-education. Of greatest interest here, perhaps, is the rate of job turnover by the public sector as compared to the private. The public sector leaders, who were five in number at the beginning of the study, changed jobs between them eight times during the four years of the study and in addition had a background of shorter job tenure prior to the study. In this, the women and the man who claimed to “think more like women than most men” were particularly well represented. In contrast, of the three private sector leaders at the commencement of the study, only one changed jobs during the study, and that after a tenure of twenty years, while a second retired after a lifetime in the one company, half of it in the one position, and the third continued into a seventeenth year in the same position.

Possibly as a consequence of the above pattern of movement, the four current public sector leaders and the public service turned corporate, exhibited a strong concern for leadership training within the organisation, so that others within the organisation would be prepared to take over the leadership if called upon to do so, though there was certainly no assumption that this would happen. The private sector leaders, however, did not exhibit
this concern, even in the case of the corporate leader who had himself been groomed as a contender for the top role from his earliest years with the company.

All public sector leaders personally participated in planning, along with a small group, whereas the private sector leaders were more diverse in their arrangements, with one taking little part, one working directly with a large group, one with a small group, and one largely alone. Finally, all public sector leaders talked about creating staff teams and about positive reinforcement, neither of which was mentioned by private sector leaders.

iii. Gender difference
Two examples of gender difference arose in the study. In each of these the same man as mentioned above remains aligned with the three women in comparison to the remaining four men.

The first example of gender difference concerned the identification of family as a background influence on strategic leadership development. This identification was made by the three female respondents and the above-mentioned male, where none of the other four male respondents mentioned family as an influence. The second example occurred within the subset of the five respondents who commenced the study as public sector employees and changed jobs between them eight times during the study. The two females and the same male in that sector changed twice in those four years, with one female changing from the public to the corporate sector, whilst the remaining two males changed once only.

Discussion
This section presents the findings in light of the existing literature in order to identify the contribution that the study makes to knowledge. It then proceeds to consider the implications of the knowledge gained, for improving practice, for theoretical knowledge about strategic leadership, and for research methodology.
Contribution to Knowledge

The study of existing literature in Chapter Two highlighted the absence of any a priori theories of strategic leadership to be tested in the current research. It did, however, identify several accounts of the strategic leadership function (Caldwell and Spinks 1992, Kotter 1990 and Limerick Cunnington and Crowther 1998. It also highlighted the concepts of vision (e.g. Bennis and Nanus 1985, Ramsay and Clark 1990, Starratt 1993), especially multi-layered vision, (Sheive and Schonheit 1987) and of futures thinking (e.g. Caldwell 1993, Slaughter 1994, Davies and Ellison 1997), as being linked with future-oriented leadership. In addition it drew attention to the disfavour with which the traditional practice of strategic planning is currently viewed (e.g. Boisot 1995, Hamel and Prahalad 1989, Mintzberg 1994, Handy 1996) and discussed a range of alternatives for achieving a desired future which might be connected to strategic leadership (e.g. Boisot 1995, Van der Heijden 1997, Caldwell and Spinks 1998, Davies and Ellison 1999). The literature did not, however, provide insights into how leaders actually exercise strategic leadership or how the capacity to do this is developed.

In ascertaining the contribution to knowledge made by the study, it is clear that the study informs on different levels. While it lends support to some ideas from the existing literature and issues a cautionary note about others, it also extends existing knowledge in a range of areas. The study also draws attention to further areas arising for investigation.

Relation to existing knowledge

In relation to existing knowledge, the study confirms some ideas and poses questions about others. It confirms the work of Caldwell and Spinks (1992), who elaborated on five key operations of strategic leadership, though it perhaps suggests that the role of the leader’s vision has a more forceful integrating function between external and internal environments than was at that time suggested. It also gives support to the work of Kotter (1990), in terms of the primacy of the vision of the formal leader in leading an
organisation, and thereby questions the view of Limerick, Cunnington and Crowther (1998) that strategic management depends on group-generated vision. It does, however, support the emphasis of the latter in their contention that values have an intrinsic importance in future-oriented action in education.

The study further affirms the significance of vision as identified by many writers (e.g. Beare, Caldwell and Millikan 1989, Greenfield, Licata and Johnson 1992), and expands on the nature of vision. In particular, it brings together the ‘organisational’ and ‘universal’ vision of Sheive and Schonheit (1987) with two other elements. The first, called here ‘whole-industry’ vision, relates to the leaders’ motivation to improve not just their own organisations but the entire industry in which they are located; it relates strongly to Porter’s (1996:51) view that “the true leaders will be those who don’t just optimise within an industry, but that actually reshape and redefine their industry.” The second, called here ‘personal vision,’ is linked to the notion of ‘heroic quest’ as raised by Caldwell and Spinks (1998) and is concerned with the leaders’ intertwining of the work life with a personal journey of self-exploration and self-discovery. It is also reminiscent of Covey’s (1996:43) view that “tomorrow’s successful leaders will value principles more than they value their companies.” The study lends strong support to these views therefore, and suggests that the successful strategic leader will have a vision that goes far beyond the immediate organisation.

Related to the above, the study brings into question, in relation to education, the notion of ‘shared vision’ that Senge (1992) and Fullan (1993) suggest is crucial to the development of effective organisations, if that is taken to mean sharing the decision-making itself about the vision to be followed. Even if it is taken to mean a top-down movement in which the leader shares information about the vision and attempts to align people with it, shared vision does not appear to be a major concern of the education leaders in this study. The impression gained is that these leaders are intent on achieving what they think is the right future for the organisation and are
unlikely to be persuaded away from those directions once they have made up their minds.

The study does show, however, that 'shared vision' is a little more apparent within the corporate and public service sectors, albeit still at the top level, but possibly as a means of limiting power and responsibility of individuals, especially in a situation where shareholder value is paramount. In these sectors the leaders also exhibited a greater awareness of their own 'management' role in contradistinction to 'leadership.'

As with vision, the study confirms the importance of 'futures thinking' as outlined in the literature (eg. Slaughter 1994, Davies and Ellison 1997, Hamel 1996), but extends knowledge by elaborating on five categories of futures thinking; namely, the external environment, core business, organisational, leadership, and change. It points especially to the great significance that strategic leaders attach to both the increasing impact of technology, and to the necessity for everyone in the organisation to be capable of living with change and optimising its effects. In relation to education, it also confirms the importance ascribed in the literature to values in direction-setting.

The study further confirms the indications in the literature that strategic planning as formerly practised, in terms of a SWOT analysis resulting in detailed planning, is no longer seen as sufficient to guide organisations through a turbulent environment (as argued by Boisot 1995, Hamel and Prahalad 1989, Mintzberg 1994, Handy 1996). The study does show, however, that elements of strategic planning, especially those to do with the collection and interpretation of data from both external and internal environments, are of great importance; it is the specific use of the data collection and interpretation in an ongoing feedback loop rather than as an infrequent major exercise driving a concrete plan of action, that marks the difference in approach. In relation to the various planning approaches discussed earlier, such as strategic intent (Hamel and Prahalad 1994, Boisot 1995, Davies and Ellison 1999), strategic thinking (Mintzberg 1995, Garratt 1995), strategic architecture (Hamel and Prahalad 1994) and strategic
conversation (Van der Heijden 1997), the practice or behaviours exhibited by the leaders in this study would seem to borrow something from each, rather than to be closely aligned with any one approach. These leaders use the data collection of strategic planning, the sense of 'direction, discovery and destiny' of strategic intent, the 'seeing in every direction' of strategic thinking, the 'opportunity approach' of strategic architecture, and, though with the more narrow purpose of testing their own ideas, the strategic conversation.

In relation to the education leaders in this study, the notion of the 'heroic quest' involving the personal journey of self-exploration (Caldwell and Spinks 1998) is possibly that which comes nearest to their strategic practice, although it perhaps gives insufficient attention to the importance they place on the collection and interpretation of data. Such practice would be supportive of De Pree's (1990:1) view of leadership as the task of 'defining reality' and of Drucker's (1995:96) view that in today's context of uncertainty, an organisational leader must "be data literate; know what to know."

The study provided a consistent picture of the factors influencing the development of these leaders' capacity for strategic leadership. Clearly important was the presence of a mentor, either at university or in an early workplace. Family also was an important influence on all women and one man. All leaders read a great deal, with the corporate rather business focused and all others reading a very wide range of material but, in the case of the educators, relatively little to do with education per se. Also significant were informal networking and, for those other than the corporate, participation in personal development programs.

The differences between the sub-groups in the study also offer new insights. First, it can be seen that planning practice in the non-education sector has been affected by globalisation and increased technology, both of which are yet to impact fully on the education sector. Time-frames are shorter, the visionary role is shared more, though remaining at the top levels or within special advisory groups, and there is a greater acknowledgement
of the management function of the leader in contrast with the leadership function. Also noted is a tendency away from devolution of decision-making to constituents and toward the recentralisation of decision-making, a move attributed to the power of technology for information-processing, which in itself associates direction-setting especially with the use of data.

Differences between the corporate leaders and the education/public service are also revealing. The corporate were much more closely focused on their own organisations and share-holder value than they were on the wider industry, more universal values, or their own personal journey. They also used and valued equity ownership, not normally considered possible in a school or public setting, as a useful way of rewarding employees, including themselves, and of maintaining commitment to the organisation.

Differences between the public sector, both school and other, and the private sector, both school and other, have also been described. Of particular note is the relatively higher rate of job turnover amongst the leaders from the public sector, with some examples of voluntary job changeover after only two years or less. The fact that all public sector leaders also exhibited a concern for leadership training within the organisation, while the private sector did not, could derive from an expectation of greater turnover, with a concomitant desire either for simple stability and efficiency or, more strongly, for ensuring that prevailing norms were continued. Further research, as discussed below, could elaborate on the effects of the relative turnover by the different sectors.

Although the study did not set out to investigate gender effects, some points seem worthy of note. The general lack of difference identified might indicate that these outstanding strategic leaders, both male and female, have learnt strategies typically associated with both female and male successful leadership. For example, whereas Gray (1993:114) notes that men fail to understand themselves and are reluctant to undertake personal ‘getting to know you’ courses, four of the five men in this study, like two of the three women, had participated voluntarily in quite confronting personal development programs.
However the study highlighted two areas of difference. The first concerned the identification by all women and one man, but not the other men, of family as an influence on their strategic leadership development. To follow an argument by Hall (1997:313) this might reflect greater openness by the women than the men due to same-gender interviewing, but might also represent actual differences in experience which would be highlighted in a more gender-focused study. Similarly, with the second gender difference, further elaboration might indicate why it is that within the public sector, where job turnover was higher than in the private, the women and the same man changed jobs more often than the other men. Like the other men, they talked about their dreams for the future and their capacity to move to avoid major obstacles, but the study did not investigate in detail the nature of such obstacles. Could this be related, for instance, to Weiner’s (1993) finding that women leaders “tend to feel isolated and lonely, frequently perceiving their workplace as male-dominated, hostile and contradictory?”

A final point in relation to the findings is the lack of change in views, despite many changes in context, over the four years of the study. Only one leader expressed a major change in views, as he moved from utilising a business approach to planning at the beginning of the study to utilising values-based planning at the end. The lack of movement may perhaps be explained, however, by the obvious importance that the leaders attach to lessons learnt from early academic or workplace mentors, lessons that have formed a foundation for life views, as it were. It is also explained by their strong focus on internalised values rather than changing environmental factors, in their pursuit of a desired future.

New areas for investigation

In addition to shedding light on existing literature and providing new information about strategic leadership, the findings point to areas requiring further investigation in relation to strategic leadership in schools. Five areas are identified.

The delimitations of this study must be borne in mind. These were, chiefly, that it was concerned with the strategic practice of a small number of
outstanding leaders only, and that the boundaries of the research were
determined chiefly by the perceptions of those whose practice was being
investigated. Clearly, the issues raised below as being worthy of
investigation would depend on the inclusion of responses from a broader
range of participants and, in some cases, of a broad range of contextual
material.

Five areas for further investigation arise through the study. These are:

i. *The leader-follower dynamic*

This issue arises due to the questions raised by the study about whether
shared vision is in operation, or whether the leaders, as appears to be the
case with the school leaders in particular, are involved in a personal crusade
and are very determined to achieve what they want. If the principals are
successful, and it has been assumed on the basis of the peer group
identification process that they are, then it follows that there is at the very
least a high level of co-operation by others in the schools, since the lack of
such would clearly jeopardise processes and outcomes and render the
leaders less successful. The question arises therefore as to the nature of the
dynamic between the leader and the followers. An investigation is needed to
find out why the followers follow the leader or, if they are not doing so, why
they follow the vision espoused by the leader. Is it perhaps the case that they
are following someone else who is close to the leader and responsible for the
translation of the vision and the transmission of the culture? Or is it perhaps
the case that they obtain a different set of rewards from this sort of leader
than those expected in a more inclusive ‘shared vision’ arrangement. A
preliminary study by this author (Dettman 1993b) of a single successful
strategic school leader showed, for instance, that staff took considerable
pride in having a leader who led from the front on values issues and
consequently was accorded a high public profile. Such a situation helped
maintain the reputation of their place of employment and therefore, as they
saw it, enhanced not only their current job security but their prospects for
future promotion to other schools.
ii. The strategic leader's involvement in 'culture'

With much attention paid in education literature to culture and cultural leadership (e.g. Caldwell and Spinks 1992, Sergiovanni 1987, Starratt 1993), the lack of overt reference to culture by these leaders was noticeable. Indeed, the subject was mentioned only twice, once by a non-education leader (7) who said it was necessary to understand the culture, but not to be part of it, and once by an education leader (1) who considered it to be important that the culture of the school be understood by all. In support of this general lack of reference to culture, the preliminary study (Dettman 1993b) referred to above found that the followers involved considered the leader to be not greatly concerned with culture, where culture was defined as "the way we do things around here." This seems strange, since the leaders are so strongly focused on values, and these reflect what the school stands for. It could be, however, that these leaders give preference, in the words of Johnson (1990:218) to shaping 'cultural bonds' (symbolic aspects of shared purposes, values, traditions and history) rather than 'rational bonds' (rules, roles, functions, penalties and formal authority that specify and regulate the behaviour of individuals in organisations'). Telford (1994) would argue that such a one-sided approach would not work, which leaves the question of how the 'rational bonds' in cases such as those in the present study are in fact interpreted and promoted within the organisation. An investigation into the ways in which the rational side of culture operates within a highly strategic leadership situation might provide understandings which would help prevent a potentially misguided 'heroic quest' ending in organisational failure.

iii. Effects of the strategic leader's desire for change

One of the strong findings was that each strategic leader considered it essential for every person in the organisation to have a very positive attitude towards change. Each of the education leaders expressed at the very least a personal enjoyment of change, while some, along with the public service and public service turned corporate, described the 'thrill' or 'excitement' they obtained from the change process or new experiences. All school leaders
readily acknowledged that it was often difficult for staff to keep up with them, particularly as they themselves, for several reasons, did not always include staff in consideration of the ‘big picture.’ Significantly also, the public sector school principals, whose roles perhaps by definition offered less independence than the private sector, but whose positions within a system also provided opportunity for promotion and transfer, also exhibited a high rate of job turnover, seemingly to both obtain that excitement and to bypass obstacles to goal achievement.

It would seem that two kinds of investigation might be useful here. The first, an exploration of the relative levels of choice and flexibility of the public and private leaders, might enhance understanding of contextual factors aiding or hindering a leader’s capacity and motivation to be strategic. The second, an exploration of the effects of leaders’ ‘adrenalin-fed’ behaviour, especially in combination with varying rates of job turnover, might enhance understanding of the effects of such leadership behaviour on organisations, including effects on staff morale and on overall productivity.

iv. Effects of context on leader’s exercise of strategic leadership

The study raised the issue of the potential effects of globalisation and technology on the organisation and the strategic leader’s role. Globalisation was seen to extend the time and space dimensions in which one operated, so that organisational effort was continuous, with something always happening somewhere, and there were no distinct parameters indicating when work began and finished. While globalisation might seem some way off in relation to schools in Australia, it is noteworthy that the primary school principal in the study talked about “bringing Michael Fullan in from the USA [sic] by satellite to address the parent body.”

Technology, which was clearly impacting on education in many ways including that illustrated above, was seen by the corporate and public service turned corporate leaders to be forcing a recentralising of powers to the head office of the organisation, due to its superior capacities to rationalise many information processes. This must lead to the question of whether a similar pattern will begin in schools once a high-level
technological capacity is in place everywhere. An investigation might assist in foreseeing such a move and ensuring preservation of resources which might otherwise be inappropriately allocated.

v. Gender differences

The present study did not reflect much gender difference, but nor did it seek to explore gender effects. Following on from the foregoing discussion of findings, it seems that more gender focused investigation might provide extra detail that would uncover more subtle gender difference. Hall (1997:313), for instance, reports on a study that on first analysis showed little gender difference between the leadership behaviours of men and women but on deeper gender-based analysis revealed the very subtle behaviours engaged in by the women to overcome the effects of people's expectation that the school head would be a man. Similarly, the work of such writers as Shakeshaft (1987), Blackmore (1993) and Blackmore and Kenway (1993) provides cogent argument for looking for more subtle clues to gender effect than the current study allowed. Further investigation might assist in determining factors associated with background or with practice that further illustrate how the strategic leaders have become such, and how they behave or practise within the role.

Implications

Several implications follow from the preceding discussion of findings and areas for possible further investigation. Implications for improving practice derive from the patterns of behavior or background experience coming into play across the eight leaders studied or within the sub-groups involved. Implications for theoretical knowledge about strategic leadership derive from the ways in which this information supports or clashes with previous knowledge of the area. Implications for research methodology derive from the positive and negative aspects associated with the methodology used in this study.
Improving practice

The findings of the study have considerable implications for improving strategic practice within schools. These relate to two areas, chiefly the development of the capacity of school leaders for strategic leadership, but also the provision of a context conducive to strategic leadership. In addition, areas for further research have been highlighted, which have the potential to further improve practice.

i. Development of the capacity for strategic leadership

While the capacity to develop different kinds of vision or to develop new personal attributes might be open to question, many of the behaviours in which the outstanding strategic leaders engage can be learnt and are likely to be a function of exposure, experience, and teaching. For those aspiring to leadership or already in leadership positions, it would seem useful, for instance, to provide programs to enhance futures thinking; this would involve up-to-date information on trends in the external environment, the core business, organisations and leadership. Of particular use would be programs to enhance the knowledge, capacities and attitudes of leaders in relation to information technology, the effects and management of change, and the identification and processing of useful data from the internal and external environments. Personal development programs would assist leaders in understanding themselves and their impact on others. Mentoring programs could be established to link potential leaders, especially the young, with others from inside or outside of the organisation, who might encourage in them a wider perspective than the immediate organisational. Finally, a continuing effort could be made to provide school leaders with opportunities to maintain collegial networks in which ideas can be discussed and elements of best practice disseminated.

ii. External factors

In addition to enhancing the relevant skills or attributes of those who are in, or potentially in, a position to exercise strategic leadership, employing authorities could take action to provide a context that is optimally conducive to that practice. The provision of programs such as those mentioned above
and the facilitation of networking and other access to information and ideas would be a first step.

As previously discussed, a better understanding of the reasons for, and the outcomes of, the differing job tenure rates between the private and public sectors, might provide valuable information; in particular, it might illuminate the particular obstacles that public sector leaders perceive to the attainment of their goals. Both sectors, however, might benefit from a greater knowledge of the effects of different job tenures and what constitutes optimal job tenure in order to ensure smooth running of the organisation alongside change processes. Authorities in both sectors could build such knowledge of job tenure effects more solidly into the appointment process.

With regard to the public education sector in particular, since it has many sites accountable to a central authority, the issue of the recentralising effect of technology experienced by the corporate sector in the study needs to be considered. It seems possible that the more the technology is clustered within the centre, say in relation to staffing matters for instance, the greater could be the tendency for associated powers to return to the centre, since that is where the information is stored. This seems especially likely in a situation in which the use of data is urged for an increasing range of decisions. Perhaps there needs to be an awareness of this possibility, and a vigilance against it, if strategic leadership is to be properly exercised at the local site.

The study showed considerable differences between the vision of those in education and the public sector (all not-for-profit) and those in the corporate, profit-based sector; the latter were more focused on the organisation itself rather than wider values, and motivated to provide shareholder value. There may be lessons for education system authorities in this, given a current climate of privatisation which in some countries has already allowed profit centres to take on responsibility for educational provision. The findings indicate, though across different sectors of enterprise, that where profit is the motive, the vision may be considerably narrower. This may not necessarily be problematic, especially if a school is strongly and narrowly focused on student learning outcomes, given that the wider vision
of some strategic leaders may have the potential to lead schools in directions inappropriate to them.

iii. Further research

The findings suggest that there are several aspects of strategic leadership that require further exploration if this concept is to be more fully understood. In particular, a better understanding is needed of the leader-follower dynamic, the leader’s involvement in culture, the effects of the leader’s ‘adrenalin-fed’ behaviour, the effects of context on the leader’s behaviour, and the gender differences in strategic leadership behaviour.

Theoretical knowledge about strategic leadership

The study shows that strategic leadership is an area with its own unique features, or combination of features. While it borrows from many related areas, it differs from all of them in some way. For example, it involves the use of data that is a cornerstone of strategic planning, but includes a heavy orientation towards values, and a fluid feedback loop, that are not normally part of that process. It involves the intuitive understanding of the environment that is associated with strategic intent, but again includes an emphasis on values that is not associated with that concept. Similarly, it provides the ‘seeing’ in all directions that is part of strategic thinking, but goes beyond that to values. It draws on the notion of strategic management but attaches a greater importance to the beliefs, values and characteristics of the leader. It provides more than the intellectual contribution of strategic architecture and, finally, appears to be more weighted towards the leader’s values and views than is proposed in the more democratic strategic conversation.

In terms of more general leadership theory, strategic leadership also borrows from some areas, but remains separate. It has connections with the leader trait theory, since it suggests particularly that strategic leaders are risk-taking and enjoy the thrill of change, but it goes far beyond that to certain practices in which the leaders engage. It relates also to the situational contingency theory, since it acknowledges the potential impact of context, in
one way or another, on a strategic leader's behaviour, yet it suggests many enduring qualities and features which over-ride context.

Overall, the results of the study indicate that successful strategic leadership in schools most nearly approximates the "heroic quest" described by Caldwell and Spinks (1998). The school leaders studied tended to be focused not so much on the organisation of which they are a part, though that is important to them, but on something much bigger and grander which compels their thought and action and leads to the pursuit of that ideal, regardless of the obstacles that present themselves. In addition, however, these leaders made use of data to monitor aspects of the forward thrust and ensure that organisational movement followed the desired direction.

The notion of the strategic leader as a somewhat "willful" person is a little reminiscent of some earlier views of leadership. It brings to mind Greenfield's (1984:166) theory of leadership, in which 'the leader becomes an entrepreneur for values,' and 'those who cannot readily be recruited to the moral structure for which the leader stands must be sold into it by persuasion, calculation, guile, persistence, threat, or sheer force.' In its most benign form it presents the leader as Starratt's (1993:136) 'Socratic gadfly,' "raising questions, challenging assumptions, asking for another opinion, looking beyond tomorrow's solutions to the larger challenge." The problem seems to be that the challenging of assumptions and seeking of other opinions is largely geared to the refining and testing of the leader's own ideas, rather than being more open-ended as in, for instance, the concept of strategic conversation.

In terms of the transformational leadership issue, the study would clash with the views of those (eg Gronn 1995, Lakomski 1995, 1999, and Crowther 1996), who reject the emphasis on the strong visionary leader and the reliance that it thereby ascribes to hierarchical positioning rather than multiple loci of decision-making. Lakomski, (1999:9), for instance, suggests that the organisation consists of a "broader network of distributed cognition," in which there is no distinction between individual and cultural cognition and we cannot therefore make assumptions about direct causal
relationships between what a leader does and particular outcomes. Lakomski (1995), like Limerick, Cunnington and Crowther (1998), would suggest also that there should be no distinction between leadership and management, for similar reasons.

These views raise the question therefore of whether these theorists are trying to explain practice or lead practice. That is to say, are they attempting to explain WHAT IS, or WHAT SHOULD BE. For, as Gurr (1996) indicates, there is no doubt that they use a different concept of transformational leadership to that originally proposed by Burns (1978), and certainly see it as a more leader-directed form of behaviour than Burns implied. Burns, indeed, saw transformational leadership as much more of a group process in which all parties contributed to something bigger than themselves and their own interests, in contrast to what he perceived as the formerly operating transactional leadership, in which individuals negotiated with the leader, to their mutual satisfaction.

The present study gives cause to wonder if there might be elements of transactional leadership present, since the devising of strategy, in the education sector at least, seems to be rather one-sided. The question has been raised as to exactly why, in such a situation, the followers follow the leader, or whether they do actually do this. It has been suggested that there may be items of exchange in operation, as in the followers’ greater job prospects under a strategic head leading, say, an innovative school with a high public profile. It has been pointed out, however, that such issues can only be addressed through further research that includes the views of those in the organisation other than the leader.

Research methodology
In relation to the research methodology, three points can be made. First, the extension of the study over a lengthy period allowed for a series of observations to be made regarding change or the lack of it over time, and the reasons for such. In the present case, for example, even the relative absence of change served its purpose in underlining the main thrust of the outcomes,
which related to a leader's personal journey, and the importance of early mentors in establishing life-long values.

A second point in relation to methodology concerns the time taken in the transcription and analysis of such a large amount of raw data. This occurred chiefly because no a priori theory was used to guide the interviews which, though semi-structured, were therefore quite free-ranging. This meant that much detailed work was necessary, first to transcribe the lengthy interviews in their entirety and with absolute accuracy, and then to interpret meaning and discern themes. The latter involved constant reviews of the large amount of detail in the interviews to check and recheck intended meanings against emerging themes.

The third point relates to the difficulty in obtaining interviews with people of high public profile, as was the case with the public and corporate sector respondents involved in this study. Although there was some good fortune here in obtaining the cooperation of those at the top of the peer-nominations list, nevertheless there was a great deal of difficulty in actually arranging interviews and having them followed through. This occurred due to the significance of the respondents within their organisations or the broader public sphere, resulting in frequent calls for them to travel overseas or otherwise change schedules at very short notice.

**Recommendations**

Given the implications of the study as described above, four specific recommendations follow. The first concerns the provision of particular knowledge and skills to aid the development of the capacity of school leaders for strategic leadership, the second the provision of more personal assistance in such development, the third the consideration of some issues pertinent to the context in which strategic leadership is exercised, and the fourth further research aimed at illuminating issues connected with the exercise of strategic leadership.
Recommendation One: Development of knowledge and skills of the school leader

The implications drew attention to several aspects of strategic leadership which could be learnt or developed as a result of exposure or training. These were specifically five kinds of futures thinking, knowledge and skills in information technology and the management of change, and the identification and processing of useful and relevant data.

It is therefore recommended that:

i. extensive and continuing provision be made by education authorities, to school leaders and potential leaders, of futures-related information in the areas of the environment external to the school, the core business of teaching and learning, organisations, leadership, and change.

This would mean bringing new and challenging ideas to the attention of school leaders by such means as regular on-line offerings, award-bearing programs offered perhaps in conjunction with a tertiary institution, or a series of meetings addressed by guest speakers. It seems unlikely that the dissemination of written documents would be as effective.

ii. every effort be made to ensure that school leaders and potential leaders have a reasonable level of knowledge and skill in technology and change management.

Certificated courses in each could be offered by the central authority itself, or in conjunction with a tertiary or other body, and completion of these courses could be considered an essential or desirable criterion for selection in appointment and promotion processes.

iii. school leaders and potential leaders be given training in the use of data in decision making, including the identification of desired information and a reasonable level of expertise in collection and interpretation methods.

Again, this might best be accomplished through a short certificated course to be used as a criterion in appointment and promotion processes. However, given that in large systems, a large number of school leaders would be dealing with similar issues at approximately the same time, on-line chat or other interactive sessions could be provided, at which examples of the use of data could be illustrated. In addition, leaders could be assisted in locating up-to-date demographic information concerning their school population and location.

Recommendation Two: Development of the ‘self’ of the school leader

The implications further noted the importance to leaders, as highlighted in the findings, of personal development programs that allowed the exploration of the self, of collegial networks that provided for a supportive
exchange of experience and thinking, and of access to mentors at an early career stage, largely for the establishment of values,

It is therefore recommended that:

i. a range of personal development programs be made available to school leaders and potential leaders and that participation in these be encouraged and facilitated.

While a central authority might recommend programs and provide access to them in terms of finance and time allocation, it is important that the programs be run by external, independent bodies, so that the participating leaders feel able to be open to this sometimes confronting experience and therefore able to reap the benefits of it. Again, participation in such a course might be made a criterion for selection in appointment or promotion processes.

ii. assistance be given to leaders in developing and maintaining collegial networks.

This calls for the establishment of networks, either through electronic chat rooms or other interactive means, or through formal and informal gatherings. It calls also for the overt recognition, by both central authorities and the leaders themselves, of the importance of allowing time for such networking.

iii. ways be explored of enhancing mentor relationships for people in early stages of a teaching career.

This calls for leaders first to be made aware of the possible impact that they can have in the personal sense on others in the organisation, particularly the younger, and then to consciously build the modelling process into their way of leading. It suggests also that more formalised mentor/coach partnerships might be valuable in the school or between schools, and that meetings for the discussion of personal issues such as values, ethics, and concerns might be as important within the school as meetings about school business.

Recommendation Three: Contextual factors affecting strategic leadership

The implications drew attention to some external or contextual issues relating to the exercise of strategic leadership and requiring monitoring and perhaps action by education authorities, if strategic leadership in schools is to be optimised. These include the ascertaining of the nature of obstacles to strategic leadership which might cause high job turnover by leaders, determination of desirable job tenure to serve the interests of schools, consideration of the potentially centralising effect of technology, which might affect the capacity of the leaders to be strategic, and recognition of the probable narrower focus of profit-driven providers.
It is therefore recommended that education authorities give serious consideration to these contextual factors, as they impact on strategic leadership in schools.

This calls in the first instance for some research by central authorities or individual school councils, at local sites, to ascertain contextual factors affecting strategic capacity, along with the relation these bear to job tenure of leaders, and the effects on the school of length of tenure. The first part of this would require interviewing or surveying of the leaders, while the second part would require surveys of parents, staff and students.

In large systems, central authorities also need to consider the impact of system-wide conditions, such as how information is distributed through technology, on strategic leadership at individual sites. Some of these issues would arise through the interviews and surveys mentioned above. Similarly, where systems contemplate new arrangements for provision, aspects of the strategic leadership presupposed by those arrangements ought to be examined, especially for their fit against assumed values.

**Recommendation Four: Areas for further research**

It was suggested in the implications that the exercise of strategic leadership might be enhanced through further research aimed at illuminating several issues. These were the leader-follower dynamic, the strategic leader’s involvement in organisational culture, the effects of the leader’s ‘adrenalin-fed’ behaviour on the organisation and others in it, the effect of the context on the leader’s exercise of strategic leadership, and gender differences in strategic leadership.

It is therefore recommended that research be undertaken in schools to investigate these issues, in an effort to further illuminate the phenomenon of strategic leadership.

The area of context has been discussed above. Since the other areas listed for research would be dependent on the views of others in the organisation re the leader’s behaviour patterns, this research might best be undertaken by external researchers. In addition, since the purpose would be as much to improve future provision across systems as to improve individual performance, it would seem advisable to conduct a mixture of system-wide and individual-site research. For instance, an investigation of ‘adrenalin-fed’ behaviour might best be conducted through a single case study, while an investigation of the relative merits of different job tenures might best be explored across a large range of sites, both within and outside of, a system.
Conclusion

Strategic leadership is about taking an organisation and, in the present context a school, through the turbulence of today's environment. It is about creating a future that will allow the school to flourish. Some factors contributing to successful strategic leadership involve characteristics such as kinds of vision held, level of risk-taking and capacity to cope with rapid change, and these may or may not be open to the effects of personal growth. Others, however, can be developed. Several categories of futures thinking can be taught, for instance. The selection and interpretation of data can also be taught, along with technology skills. Approaches to working with staff in matters such as appraisal, teamwork, professional development, and mentoring, can continue to be explored. Personal development programs can be provided to help leaders to better understand themselves and their impact on others, while networks of various kinds can be established to facilitate the sharing of experience. In addition, some contextual conditions affecting the capacity to be strategic can be enhanced. Obstacles can be removed, though with some controls left in place to ensure the leader's personal journey remains appropriate. In education systems, positive action can be taken to ensure that centralisation of information through technology does not affect access from the local site. Proposed new arrangements for education delivery can be assessed in regard to types of strategic leadership to be exercised. In these ways might strategic leadership contribute to a brighter future for all schools.
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APPENDIX:

Hard copy example
of a leader transcript (Leader Three)
Plus disk containing
all leader transcripts Nos 1-8.
Can you describe the things you do to be a strategic leader?

I guess the first thing is to operate from a level, which is one where you can get a very wide perspective on things and be informed about what it means to be taking an organisation through change processes. It’s the standing back and feeling that you are well resourced within yourself, in order to do the planning with the people, and the next thing is that you’ve got to take the people with you and plan with the people. And I suppose, some of the resourcing, myself, the equipping, myself, came through studying at a business level; I did a Grad. Dip. In Business, which took me out of the educational environment. I came late to education anyway, so I was already never totally socialised into the educational setting; I always feel very comfortable with making connections between education and the business sector, the corporate sector, which a lot of educationalists don’t, because they somehow feel that that’s a corruption of the educational world. So, the meeting with people to study, who were from the business sector, from big corporations, was very stimulating for me, it broadened my perspective. Certainly as a teacher I was only aware to a certain extent that the work practices and change processes and what we’re doing here with students is similar to what you would do in a big corporation in trying to service clients’ needs. That was very stimulating. I loved the reading. I loved the work we did and it was to do with planning and moving through change processes and in understanding the psychology. I suppose, of people and groups within an organisation. So, I’m just interested in all of that sort of stuff at that level... and then very interested, and always been, in how you change people. So I’ve always been active in the professional development area. So then you’ve got to come down I think from your plan and involve people and then skill the people and resource the people to come with you. So I think probably that was the major thinking that was sitting there with me.

Do you have a mental picture of where you would like the organisation to be in ten years? How far ahead are you looking?

I think in terms of at least twenty years when I’m thinking about the school. And it’s difficult to juggle the two things. So... we’re building a building at the moment and I’m looking to ensure that that building in 20 years, 30 years, 50 years, will still have the flexibility to be able to be changed in terms of its function... because what’s happened, for example, in schools, ...you build classrooms that are now, really, not the best places to be trying to get learning happening and students interacting with each other and with technology, for example. I’m very aware that you really have to have your head down the track and I was very aware coming in here that even though the school had a reputation for success, I haven’t done anything about that, because the reputation was there. So we had a good reputation and demand for people to come into it. But I was interested in Brian’s talking with a group of principals and he was talking about the Sigmoid Curve, which you’ve probably heard of. But I haven’t read it. It’s on my list for the holidays, because what’s being articulated there, is the need to go into an organisation and... not go in because it’s run-down and you’ve got to move it, but going into an organisation that is successful in what it’s doing, but moving people out and forward, because if you don’t at that time, it just becomes more and more difficult to get the change happening because you’re on a downhill thread rather than an uphill one. I’m not sure where that point came from now. My vision. So it is out into the future. We could sit around as, in my perception, the school had got to that point where it felt very comfortable with its own achievements... and why would you need to do anything other than what we’re doing... and I think that’s courting disaster, if ever an organisation feels complacent about where it is, then it can’t take care of its future. The only way you take care of your future is to be constantly looking at what you’re doing and looking for improvement and generating that awareness amongst people that you really have to all the time be looking at the change process.

To what extent do you think you can get staff involved in the long-term picture?... or to what extent does the vision for the organisation end up being your vision?

I’m struggling with that myself... the second part of the question. The first part, you can’t get your staff involved too far into the future, I don’t think... they simply can’t deal with it... they are so busy dealing with the incredible burdens of the day-to-day that to move them too far into the future is just very confusing
perhaps and alienating...that the incredible culture change that’s going on in state schools has people stumped. They are lost in themselves and trying to find out where they are, and that is a very difficult climate that we’re working in at the moment. Now, when I talk too far into the future, I don’t spend a lot of time dwelling on it, I simply try and brush-stroke a direction into the future and have it happening perhaps only here and there because I think I would just end up with a greater sense of anxiety amongst the staff. So I’ve got my head into that direction but I doubt that other people would know what’s in my head...in fact my two assistant principals say to me sometimes “what’s in your head?”...you know, because I’ll drop something or come in with some planning and they’re not fully aware of where it’s coming from; part of that is that we don’t have time to sit down sufficiently and talk about it, because I think it is important, the more people you can get inside your head the better...so it isn’t a conscious thing...I’ve got to keep that in my head, some of it is just the exigencies of running the school...but the technology stuff for example, girls and science and technology, you know I have a vision of integration, of science happening not only in a science classroom, but somewhere where there is a coming together of the scientific and the mathematical and the technology in a learning centre and I’ve just had a conversation, because we’ve gone through allocating positions of responsibility for next year, I’ve had a conversation with the person who didn’t actually want that position, but he’s the only one really who can do it, and said, “Look, we have a future that’s a very different future...and I’m looking to you to take us there through that curriculum area...and you’ll get a lot of support in that”...but we really have to try and imagine a very different future and that is at least maybe something happening in five years quite naturally. It won’t happen next year quite naturally. It’ll take three years to get people’s heads together in different areas to really shape the curriculum and use a room and set up a room that allows some of those things that I guess the futurists are on about too...and people planning across the world really are, for young people to learn and to be equipped for a very different world. I mean the Internet thing is just one example without going overboard about the technology because I think there is a balance that’s needed, but how will we even in five years, it might be as early as that...certainly in ten years’ time, those of us who don’t understand how to access computers, probably won’t be able to shop as readily as somebody else, so it’s just the need I think to be aware of a future that’s just so different to what we’ve come out of in the past.

So, would you say that the vision that guides the school is largely your own, though it gets modified a bit perhaps?

It certainly is modified. I think there is a very long-term vision which is an educational vision about equipping young women to be really confident and resourceful in the world and I think a lot of that would be shared if not articulated. I think we have a common understanding that we are trying to equip young women to have those general sort of all-embracing kind of attributes that will allow them to really manage themselves and manage other people in the other world, whether it is a family, or whether it is a large corporation. And there’s a fairly commonly-held view across the school that that ought to be what we’re on about. How you get there, and what you do, and the difficulty of doing it, that’s just your hard, roll up your sleeves, make your mistakes, and just sort of keep on going stuff, because it is difficult training young women to be assertive and questioning.

You mentioned the building. Can you give any other examples, say in your staffing or budgeting or whatever, of where you’re able to implement things now that are serving a very long-term purpose.

I think I’d come back to the professional development of staff, and it’s become even more urgent for me that as many staff as possible have leadership training, because they need to be supported in getting in touch with this educational future, and they need to get supported in how you make decisions and how you feel confident in leading your team of people as you progress towards that. So the very first thing, and I don’t thing we’ve done it, ...we had the vision, and I made sure the resources were increased and we trebled our PD budget this year, and I insisted that we do some basic leadership training with leaders at the start of last year...but it was imposed by me, and I don’t apologise for that. I think there are times when you have to be coercive about it and simply say, “Look, I want you all to do this leadership training and I know you don’t believe it’s important or whatever, but I want you to do it, so I’m setting this up and so on.”

What did it consist of?
It was a six week training period of a too-short one and one half hours sessions and that was a compromise because I was imposing it after school regularly, week by week over that six week period. It was designed by a consultant from outside who worked with a small team of people to design the leadership training...and again it's part of the culture that's difficult within the state system of moving people into overtly hierarchical. if you like...you know a leader doesn't have to be on about status, but one of our difficulties in the state system is in acknowledging that we've got to have some leaders who take responsibility for outcomes and who then take responsibility for moving staff towards those outcomes, and that's a new part of our culture.

How do you go about getting people to look down the track, when introducing ideas to staff?

It has to come from I think the staff base, not me articulating, though I think me articulating is increasingly important, and I'd say...I'm aware now, the time is right for me to do more of that, but the staff who are in positions of leadership also have to be equipped for talking; they're in contact with more staff on a daily basis than I am, so your professional development coordinator, your curriculum coordinators, your people managing the sub-schools, have to be confident themselves about the future, and it has to be kind of integrated; they, at the middle levels of leadership, have to have an understanding that can then be articulated when they are working with their teams of staff, and then made explicit, I suppose, when you are reviewing curriculum, which we've reviewed over the last three years; all of our curriculum from years 7-10 has been reviewed. It's been reviewed in the light of past practices more than it's been reviewed in the light of the future and that again is a situational thing and the need I think to take people with you rather than be too far out in front and have the people lost in the middle so there's no connection, and I think the way we've gone I would like to give people to come into a very different vision of the future, so bit-by-bit we're going ; you can't climb the mountain before you've done the little hills, and the next, in fact the over-riding, thing is that we have to establish a context where change is accepted and not resisted. We're not there yet, but we've moved a long way. So one of the things that we're trying to do is to get people for example to come in to staff meetings; that's been successful. Time is an element and you can't do a lot of it, but during our middle-school processes and during the Junior School Review processes, we've had people from other schools come in ...we've got to get people who are managing change well, and have them come in and talk to staff, because if the principal's the only one who's doing it, whilst I'm sure there's a degree of respect for the principal, nevertheless it's still the principal's message, and what I've been delighted with this year is the now increasing degree, I believe, of receptivity to the outside world. Now we've got to build on that, we've really got to capitalise on that. I'd love to get X from the...she's on television again, she's done wonders in an underprivileged school in Y, they've got a very strong technology push, every bit of money they get goes into computers and that's particularly important in an underprivileged school. They're a disadvantaged school, so they've got some extra funds, but she has, with her staff, got a vision that particularly in a school like an underprivileged school, if they don't equip their students to be able to deal confidently with this technological world, you've created a double disadvantage, and so I'd love to get her to come over and talk to staff, or somebody from her staff, so the next thing will be this technology upfront push. We haven't done it overtly to nearly the extent that we need to. We're about to spend $100,000 on computers over the next two years, which is a great deal of money for us, but only breaking the ice still. So some of the way you get people to take things on board is by actually making something happen, like a new building, like some computers into the place, like a curriculum review and without the entire vision perhaps being understood by everybody, what at least is understood is...things are changing around here...my goodness, there's a new building over there with these things happening in it and my goodness, there's something else happening over here. You know, there's new job descriptions for all of our leaders out which really emphasise leadership and responsibility for outcomes. So, I've just done that and I took that on myself because in a way this leadership thing is still the principal's, and I mean the leadership team's, vision, and that's still a bit daunting for people, but we'll get there. There's been no revolution; it's just part of the burden that is being carried by teachers that they realise that if you are going to be a leader, then wow, you know there are some expectations now that are written down in terms of that leadership. So, all of those little bits that you make happen at a concrete level start to build the climate that I think allows you to start to move into the future.

What would you say drives you?
I have an enormous amount of energy and imagination I suppose. I love doing things. Why I do what I do... well, at a simple level, I've always served people. I was a nurse. I was a trained nursing sister before I entered education, so I was in that world and made a choice about where I was going to go, and I've always been interested in making people's lives better, so there's something a bit sort of evangelistic. I don't mean it to sound like that, but I have always been in that sort of mode of... wow, there's a world out there and we're here, so we can move closer... so when you identify things that even as a child you saw as somehow being interesting, I mean it mightn't be when you get into it, but at least it's something to be explored, so there is something about the imagination taking you into the world of others and letting you sort of plod around there to sort of see what it's like a bit. And the energy that goes with it... it's just the real thrill of change processes. Back in the 70s it was a high time. I don't know,... did you have a high time in the 70s. It was in state education.

Actually I was more busy being a young mother then.

Were you? Well I did my degree in the early 70s, so I left nursing and I was a young mother then, but my youngest daughter had just entered primary school, and we had just come from the country to Melbourne and I did a degree as an adult then and that was just so exciting after being at home and a mother. I loved my kids and my baby and family, and I've still got the same husband, so it was basically very stable. I mean, I think all women, I make assumptions about this, but I think all women have struggled with their role as mothers and lovers and wives, if you like, so I tend to make sweeping generalisations there, but for me it was really liberating personally, because I was giving out as a young mother all the time and I'd given out as a nurse and a nursing sister and it was all the time giving out to others, and it was such a liberation to indulge myself with going and studying and doing a degree, and filling in, you know, putting stuff back in. And so that was really exciting, and then I got into teaching, began teaching in 1976 and through all that time I worked as well, so I was still at the hospital being a nurse as well, so I had three lives that I juggled and felt totally stimulated by, so the motherhood and wife role, and the student role which was wonderful in the 70s and had its own level of, well, your imagination could run riot, there wasn't anything that anybody thought they couldn't do. So that was a wonderful period of expression, but at the same time I was in the hospital, working at the weekends and doing the academic in the holidays and still being in my other profession. So that was exciting and then we rolled into the late 70s and the minute I hit the schools, I was still using up all this energy, and I began change processes the minute I got into schools... and working with teams of people to get curriculum change and so on. So the energy just rolled on. I think it is to do with not being satisfied with where you're at, and yet in my own private life there is an incredible stability, so it isn't related to moving on, it is sticking things out and seeing things through. There is something basically that excites me about contemplating how things can be better and trying to move into that improved situation. I think people get a bit shocked with me because I don't see bad things as being bad things... it just is... so we're in this incredibly confusing time for teachers in state schools and they want to bemoan where we're at, and you know... it's not the same, it's this, it's that and the other... but to me it's neither good nor bad, it simply is, it's a state of being and you have to deal with it because all things are good or bad and so I've got a reasonably philosophic view I suppose of the state we're in.

How would you say you work with ideas, reading, writing, thinking and so on?

The source of ideas... again through formal study...

Particular courses? You mentioned some finance before; does anything else really stand out as having changed your life or your thinking?

I'm not sure that it's been life-changing, but I think good learning experiences probably affirm, give you an affirmation of what you have vaguely been mulling around in some way and been able to articulate and what a good course does is to affirm you in your vague thinking and clarify it and deepen your knowledge about that area. So there have been lots of different things; I mean even a women's leadership course years ago. It didn't change my life but it just affirmed some vague feelings that women can do all sorts of things; you know there are some anxieties about it and it doesn't matter whether you're a woman or not... it won't be easy, but you know you can feel the fear and the anxiety and know that's just a state of being... so, some
people will think ‘oh, I couldn’t do that’, and off they’ll go... but I’ll think ‘oh, could I do that?, ’ so I’ll keep moving towards it. Now what good professional development does is to help you through the ‘how do I do this?’ and shape and make clear the vaguenesses that surround any leadership, I suppose. That’s all very vague.

What do you read?

Executive memos! One of my frustrations at the moment is I don’t have enough time to do the right sort of reading. I’m fascinated by all sorts of different things, but my favourite reading is really very good literature, poetry, plays and novels. But my life since I became a principal has taken me more and more away from that and I sort of try and grab good literature and at least read a novel or two during the holidays. And that’s got increasingly difficult to do. Once I could sit down and just go through three or four good pieces of literature and just leave aside all the other stuff... literature’s very creative, you see; it really sets the mind going in an English teacher... it’s stimulating your imagination all the time, so that’s important to me... it’s always visionary, it’s always internal and connected to a great big life. I mean you can’t get a bigger picture than good literature because it’s universal in what it’s articulating. I do like reading leadership stuff and I was impressed by the Max De Pree leadership book. I found that really interesting, the notion of the leader as the server, and don’t ever expect to be thanked but spend your life thanking other people. He was on about a lot of other things too, but I certainly was interested. I was also interested in the situation being articulated there, that an organisation can’t stand too much change, that if you’re going to change your staff over, then there’s a limit to the number of staff that you ought to be changing over. And according to that, this organisation should be on its knees, because we’ve had more than half of our staff move out in three years. That’s one of the things the state system is struggling with, we’re really being rocked in our organisation, and the fact that we’ve still got a direction in this place, given the change that’s happened in two years, I think is an enormous credit to the teachers who have moved in, who have grappled with what’s going on and have had to get hold of the direction we’re going and then having to accommodate it, but it certainly has put us... has stopped or toned down the pace at which we could have moved into the future. We’re still going in the right direction I believe, but it’s certainly toned that down and again, I think that what those books do, is they give you a jolt out of just getting on with what you’re doing and just say... just take a minute and acknowledge that you are with your staff, doing good things and getting somewhere... don’t forget to tell them that, you know. I think there is a need to be telling your staff, keep the pressure on, which I do. I think they see me as reasonably task-oriented and needing to be leading change processes.

If you’re thinking 20 years down the track, as you said, where do your ideas for that come from?

A lot of curriculum material, a lot of educational stuff, so it’s national curriculum journals. The IARTV stuff, I think you get good articles there, it’s a matter of scanning what’s available because you can’t read it all. It’s probably a fairly eclectic approach; it’s a bit here, a bit there, a bit somewhere else. Or you talk with somebody who’s been to something and they’ll give you the transcript of a keynote speaker’s address. Now it doesn’t mean you take it on board and try to emulate that; it’s just a little drip happening, I think, that here and there these little bits just keep reminding you of that direction that’s out there that you’ve got to be moving towards. I haven’t read much by the futurists. It’s one of the areas that I’ve articulated to other people that I now have to pay attention to; it’s very pressing for me to do that; I’m just conscious of this body of literature that I haven’t even begun to be able to deal with, but that’s an exciting prospect.

I don’t write very much. I’m very good at holding a lot of things in my head. I don’t need to order it and put it on paper. I think it’s good to do that though, and I think formal study or writing an article helps you to do that if you can find the time.

How do you get feedback from others then?

Because the ideas at a probably non-school level are floating around, I guess you get challenged by your own group, and in that group there would be other educationalists, or people working at a consultancy level who are dealing with educational institutions as well as other organisations, and then it’s talking with your people here, usually on the run because time is so pressured, and you’ll get your feedback there. I will
give people articles I’ve read and they will sometimes feed back a line ... ‘that was interesting’ or ‘what did you get out of it?’ But not nearly enough of that happens. I’d like to think that more of that was happening, so the feedback only comes through if I’ve spoken at something which is a community group, parent-community group or teacher group.

The school council are very supportive, very trusting of my directions, and together we’ve changed enormously the way the council operates. In fact one of the council members who’s been the old guard and is still with us almost doesn’t know what’s going on because things have changed, especially in the way we operate. I have to ask questions because you can’t leave people behind, but you almost don’t have time and some people do drop off, you know.

I say our structures have changed but we’re still really clinging to the representation model that we’ve had which is some students on council, some teachers on council, some parents on council and we have a large council of 15; we’re on the maximum that you can have. Now I guess in my view the way that council operates now... it’s terrible, but I don’t even see a role for students on council, because, I just don’t see a role for them in what we’re on about...self-management and a far more executive model of operating. Students are lost in that. Students have a very important role to play in a school’s operating but it’s at the operational level, it’s on project teams. At the actual council level I think there is a limited role. We’re still on a community model a bit. We’re still on a “We’re running the local country show” and we need to have people feeling good, having a say. And we just don’t have time to do that. Now we’ve been conscious of reshaping council so that we don’t meet if we don’t have to. We used to have seven sub-committees of council, now we don’t. I suppose we’ve ended up with one project team that meets all the time and that’s the finance and major fund-raising group, simply because we’re on about $100,000 worth of computers and a new building which we’re financing ourselves, so there’s a lot of financial stuff and getting lines up, and organising, so as a project team we need to be meeting all the time. But our curriculum team of council does not meet every month, because once the charter’s set and the direction’s set and you’re approved, your review has happened, it’s operational stuff and it’s just reported to council. So, this has been quite a significant change for our council and staff, and we’re not there yet. So, I can’t articulate too much of that; if I were to say too much of what’s in my head at the moment to too many people, I would lose their trust. So, I have to balance a lot of the time what’s in my head with “what are you ready for?” And I think that’s being responsible, not devious... and you get the change anyway, and we’ve had a very good change agent on council who was an educator and a consultant and has now taken a package and is working in real estate at the management level, in training and development. But she has experienced at the Rialto all the change processes that have been happening and she’s been wonderful to have in there, and has been able to do the articulating in a way. I’ll be trying to set up an agenda, and she says, “Why are we having a meeting? We don’t need that agenda; it’s lovely to hear what’s happening, but we’ve got no decisions to make, we’ve got no time for that” And so she’s been a wonderful aid to the process of change at the council level. But schools are different from organisations, in that they are community-based organisations, in that they deal with people and it is different to dealing with an output of tyres or transistor bits or whatever. We’re closer, I think, to the public service or the government service agency, where you’re providing service to people. I don’t think the processes are any different, and I perhaps haven’t found yet the most articulate way of saying that to staff, but whether we’re educating young women for the future, or whether we are producing the tyres, there is still a whole process of quality along the way, that exists. There is still a way we interact with individuals and take up our responsibilities, that to me’s exactly the same. And there are still the same caring issues about the staff that will produce the tyres or the chips or whatever as there is when you’re dealing with your staff and students and parents. It’s just that you’ve got a much wider vested interest group closer to your action than the customers who buy.

What would you say are the personal characteristics and skills that have enabled you to be successful in this area?

I think I’m pretty driven...energetic...empathetic, but I also have a capacity for objectiveness. We did a leadership thing with Hay-McBer recently where I found it was interesting how I perceived myself in relation to staff. Over the years some of the feedback I’ve got is about my aloofness; people found me aloof, and that always used to... well, not shatter me, but I couldn’t understand what they were talking
about, because I’m also very people-oriented and very comfortable with people. I’ve scared people, which I could never quite understand. I think as a leader, in curriculum or whatever, I was a little bit too well-informed, so that I became a bit intimidating in terms of my peers, not in terms of a lot of other people, because I’m not really that well-informed. I’m struggling to get my executive memos read, and I really feel my deficit in being up-to-date and all that sort of thing. So, having had the sort of feedback I have over the years I really make an effort to address what I’ve had come to me which is not to appear dogmatic or shut people out from presenting a viewpoint; in fact one of my vice-principals would say that I overcompensate for that, so in a council meeting I’m very aware, because of the students and parents there, I’m very aware of making sure that when a parent makes a statement, that statement is valued, that it is given time. Now that’s a hard thing to do when time is very precious, but given that we’ve got a particular structure and that those people are on there, I need to value that person’s contribution. And I can usually see a point of view, when somebody articulates something. There aren’t too many connections with X (from Monash), but with most people I know where they’re coming from, so when they articulate something there is a lead-in for me, so I think “I know where you are coming from” and can say “yes, I acknowledge that, but…” So, I hope I’m not overcompensating for that feedback I’ve had in the past, but I think I’ve matured too; maybe in the past I was too impatient or had to get to the end result too quickly, whereas I still want to get there quickly but I think maturity helps you to tone it all down a bit. So I was very good at getting people on side, but for some people I was a bit aloof, was the word. I’m not particularly aggressive; I don’t want to use that word because I didn’t ever have that feedback. I’m relatively confident, exploratory...I really want to get inside what people are doing when I hear about things and open it up and say “well tell me how you’ve done that”, so I always get people to talk more than they get me to talk, because...it’s a bit selfish, because I’m interested in people and I want to draw out what it is that they’ve discovered that I haven’t perhaps discovered. I really like talking to people and getting inside them.

Where do you go from there - say in planning?

When I first came here I had a mandate for curriculum change, and the council had signalled that we needed some curriculum review, so I felt very confident in doing that because I’d had a lot of experience in doing that. But I wanted a very collaborative approach, involving as many groups as possible. And that was very exciting in the first year, to actually have staff and parents and students engaged in getting our mission statement up...in articulating together a vision about what this school was on about. Not particularly futurist stuff, just immediate vague future and that was enough for us. I mean, the other stuff, it’s going to come and it’s sort of there getting shaped, so the formal planning was...structures were important, a planning team, we will head up this strategic planning exercise, so it was a small group identifying the processes, getting the bits in, knowing how we would get to point Z, using a consultant to help us along the way. I’m doing the same with the charter implementation. I’m very much on about a small strategic planning group that empowers other groups and they have responsibilities and outcomes that they have to achieve. But there has to be a group of which I’m a part. I also like outside people being in on it, so we have a consultant...again, my vision, if you like, to have that outside connection who’ll help to keep us on track. And that’s important, so the formal thing happens with that group. It happens with me at home, doing the garden, thinking things through and dragging all these vague things together, because that’s the way I operate. It isn’t one model or the other model, although I’m working pretty close accidentally to a particular model of getting the change process going. But I like to know that the structures are there so it’s formalised in people’s responsibilities in groups and connected to the over-riding strategic planning group who have to keep everything on track because if we don’t...well, it’s a big school, 900 students and a lot of action...over 100 staff including cleaning and ancillary, and a large body of active parents.

Has the planning group used demographic data?

Oh yes, we’ve been doing that, and that’s part of the change process now, is to get data and analyse that and that’s been another shock to the group...and again I’ve had to play a strong bit of hands-on leadership stuff here...to actually do a lot of the stuff myself and take it to the group, to the point after three years where it’s happening out there now and with this new focus on leadership I’m saying to the sub-school heads, I want to empower you to be real mini-principals of those schools in ways...but they don’t get time for it, not like in private schools where you get much more time allocated for those to do the role. But
people are getting the message that they have my trust. We’ll support them with professional development and working closely together, so I’m very much coaching along the way. It’s not as though they’re running blind. The structure and the shape is there and they have my confidence in their ability to work with their teams and do those things and collect the data which is reported back into it so that we can look at how we’re going. That’s a new thing for staff, but very good I think. I now have people coming into my office and saying “Would you look at this” and they’ve just analysed a bit of data.

I don’t do a SWOT analysis. The first bit has been just to understand where we’re at in terms of results of students, in terms of attendance of students, in terms of how we allocate our PD and that’s been a big issue, how we allocate our funds and how we’ll know if that’s being used wisely and how we’ll look to see the results of where that money is going to. So, it is coming in with that data and it’s me asking for it and shaping up the first lot, so I actually took it home, put it into the computer and brought it back and said “Look at this,” so graphs and pictures and figures and things. There are those who resist that, but it’s happening. You know people more and more will feel comfortable with it and just this week two of my level co-ordinators have come in and said “This is really interesting Look at this and on these days”. And this from someone who said it wouldn’t work. When I look around the place and see what people are doing and how they’re operating in their roles and just the little bits of things like curriculum review and new middle school units and computers coming in and being set up in a different way so that people can access them across the curriculum and people running in with their bits of data, which never really happened before, and actually finding it interesting…the things that are vaguely sitting up here in my head I can see happening, and so the nebulous stuff, that’s up there leading us into the future, bit by bit I do feel a sense of satisfaction that it’s happening and I think the challenge for me now is to take these bits of things and find a way…it’s not easy…to communicate to the community what’s happened, but in a way that links them further into the future. It can link us into what we’ve achieved…“aren’t we wonderful, because this is what the community’s done” and I’m able to say that because I think people are getting the feeling that there’s a change process happening that predominantly can be felt. Some would say it isn’t good but most people would feel that those achievements are good, but if I can change the way I’m now articulating that it will now move us into the next step which is the future…And how we’re going to use those computers and that technology and make some integrated links across our different areas…and that’s the thing I’m struggling with a bit at the moment. It’s at that strategic level again, but making the links. The structures are there, I’m satisfied with those at the moment, although we’re looking at the decision-making right now…I’m reviewing that with the vice-principals. for me it is finding my communication either in articles, speeches, etc., but getting it to the entire community.

But my vision is tied up with the industrial. If the industrial scene reverts back to as bad as it’s been, it’s the one thing that would make me want to be somewhere else. I don’t have much patience with a bureaucracy that ties your hands with “thou shalt” and doesn’t let you get on with things. I must get liberated out of the tortuous staff situation or I will have to find another direction for myself. I am impatient in where I want to take the school to. I should have a few more years here to complete my journey with the staff, but I’ll leave before that if I’m stymied by the Federal Award. Before, the union was driving much of the decision-making in the school. I don’t want to go back to that. Now, the vested interest groups have a say.

I think we’ve covered a great deal of territory. Thank you for our discussion.

LEADER THREE INTERVIEW TWO

PAM: As a strategic leader, do you now do things differently?

Well, first of all, in reading back over what I’ve said it reminded me of the context I was in then and the tremendous concern as a leader that I had for staff and their journey, I guess. The anxiety that they were experiencing. So that came out very strongly. So, that was interesting to me and I would still be feeling exactly the same. I wouldn’t do things differently, I would still be concerned about the anxiety of staff and their capacity to be able to become part of the school’s vision and direction and the enormous change processes that are going on. I’ve changed my context twice since being at Canterbury, so a lot happened in
just that twelve months. This was 1994, late 1994. 1995 was an extraordinary year of personal reflection and change and events happening for me so I then did change and move into a new position.

Was that in any way related to the things you had been saying to me in December.

Yes, it would have been. I guess two things promoted the change. Do you want to talk about that. Two things promoted that. One was still the uncertainty of, although the industrial scene had cleared up, somewhat and did not become as negative as I thought it might become in terms of impacting on the direction that was happening in the schools, that was a lesser anxiety, but still my own impatience about achieving the change and being able to, as a staff and a community and a council, take affairs into your own hands for your community a little more, which was my desire with my group of people; I could see that it wasn’t going to happen as quickly and that was one of the things that promoted the change. We still couldn’t get into staff selection, we were still constrained by the rules and regulations of the bureaucracy enormously and that was frustrating for a community I feel that was capable of moving reasonably confidently in that sort of direction of self-managing decision making. So there was that and then there was that whole Handy stuff that I talked about in here, and I still refer all the time to the Sigmoid Curve. I’d been four years at that school, I’ve never been longer than five years in one position and I’d been listening (you’d be amused at this). I was on the way to a meeting and was listening to Peter Couch or something on the radio interviewing the CEO from a big corporation and they were having this discussion about the life of a CEO in terms of its, the maximum impact positively the CEO can have in an organisation and they were talking about four years and it was like the voice of God was talking to me, saying “Hang on a minute, you’ve been four years in that place and I guess those funny little things, sometimes they just strike a chord.

So it was your choice to move on

Oh absolutely. Yes absolutely and remember I’m probably different from a lot of people that you would be talking to because I came late into my profession, so you know, I’d already done other things and then you know I’m relatively young professionally in education so I’m a bit of the gobbler upper of experiences and needed high stimulants in terms of my own development. So that had always been my own decision, absolutely. Yes. And that’s always been exciting, scary like you’re experiencing. Very scary but also challenging and confronting for yourself, all that stuff which I like. But I did see myself longer as a Principal at Canterbury because I absolutely loved the place. I really did. Loved the community and the girls and the staff.

So how did you come to move?

I went to Hawaii on this six week, I think I told you about that did I? On a six week advance management program to the Asia Pacific Centre for Executive Development and there again I was the only educator there. Everybody else there was pure business and so I spent 7 weeks of intensive study with business executives. Now that was great. It highlighted for me some really good stuff that schools do that are often deficient enough in business organisations but it also confirmed this change of process in constantly finding environments where your own growth can happen and what happened in that program and they talked about that was that often people went back and resigned from their jobs because they had now been changed by yet another experience and they began to reflect on “where am I going now?” So that was another issue, but by the same token, I also went back ready to take on the world. I went with such strategic clarity about what needed to happen in this community and where I needed to move with the staff and how I needed to proceed. It was like standing back from your environment and being in an intense study situation where you were really just enveloped and had this high stimulus of other people around you. It was just magic stuff. I guess I came back a changed person although I always had this bit of a business orientation.

How did you get to go to it?

I was selected to go to that so I suppose people were selecting and certainly the department, my employer, would have been saying “well she’s not too stupid, the school’s going along alright and obviously she’s
capable of doing this and making a further contribution in some other way” because the people who did that course, their employers are supposed to see somebody with potential otherwise you don’t get to go to the course. So there must have been some, which I was not aware of, positive vibes on the part of the employer to think that I could do something else. And, and I don’t know I’ve never sussed it out, but certainly when I came back there was a kind of awareness that maybe this new position now at the Centre might be something that would be appropriate for me to go into. And so I was very subtly tapped on the shoulder and told “Look how about, you know… applying for that”. And I hadn’t even thought of it and I went into it and had a very short period of time to make a decision about whether now there was a new strategic direction for me, if you like, that was different, you know, not associated with a school. That was a very stressful time for me making that decision, because the community had no inking that I would leave and I felt like I had ratted and the students thought that I had ratted on them, you know, they just felt that I had let them down, so when you are part of a community like that you know that’s how people feel if they feel things are going along alright then somebody just suddenly rips it out from under you.

The Council President was just so supportive. He was a lecturer at Swinburne, a very capable, competent person and so he gave me a lot of support. He said you have to find your own direction and you know you have equipped others. I knew that there were Assistant Principals who were very capable of stepping into my shoes anytime I wanted to move away, so you know I didn’t have any of that – Oh I can’t be replaced – I never believe that and I think a good leader, you know, if you are a good strategic leader you can move out of that place and you have people who are capable of continuing that journey on and I did have. There were people there who could continue to take the place for me and they have done. So I made the decision to leave and it was a combination of all those things. A bit of frustration with the pace of things in the bureaucracy. My own higher need for stimulus and change and this new job that came up and somebody – I never even thought of it – I knew they were talking about the Centre being developed but I’d never seen myself in it. I hadn’t given it a minute’s thought. So that is another direction and just on the personal journey of a leader I found it very exciting, very challenging, hard, different kind of work for the time I was there. Particularly in that first year when it was being established and you knew you were making directions.

How long were you there.

I was only there for eighteen months. It was a contract for five years.

This is difficult as I’m not exactly a leader any more. Before, I was a leader of a community. Well, yes, pretty much you are a leader. I know your council is the decision making body but you are the leader, you are the one pulling things together and providing the direction and the advice, as you know, so basically it is the Principal who has to have that strength of working with others to achieve what the community needs.

Well you have worked with other Principals in that particular job and you still work with other Principals so perhaps you could take it from the perspective of what you would say to them about strategic leadership and consider whether there’s anything that has developed from your earlier views.

Well, I think for me the strategic leader is one who is really tuned in to the externals, and all the things that are happening out there, political things, social things, and is able to then see very clearly the link with the community. If this was Canterbury and there were all these things happening out there, it’s a very different world the kids are going into, there are all the social complexities that are impacting on schools whether it’s the more affluent part of the school community or the more needy part of the school community – it didn’t matter who it was – we are in a time where there are just scary things happening for everybody. Now, somehow or other, you can’t shut all those externals out and you have to be aware of how they are impacting on this school as a strategic leader. I think. It is able to make connections between those things and to create an environment where you move forward nevertheless through the pain, because all change is going to be painful, and a strategic leader has to be able to draw those people together and take them through the pain and the changes knowing that this is about growth anyway and all of us are going to – it is about growth - and have confidence and be optimistic that there is another future out there, just because
it’s different from what we have experienced, that doesn’t matter, we are part of that sort of evolutionary thing.

So if one of your Principals said to you “well how do I do this?”, what would you say?

Well, the first thing I’d say is I think, apart from being able to manage your money and not get in the red the prime thing you have to do is to connect with your people and build relationships with your people and if you cannot do that you’ll go nowhere. So there is a real emphasis for me on the leader building relationships and building connections, so your interpersonal skills and your values and your ethics are just so important. If the people don’t trust you and aren’t feeling that there are worthwhile things happening here then the values sometimes get really challenged and I think you have to do that. For a strategic leader I think it’s all the time being aware of – Yes that’s what we have valued in the past and ...really that’s what has driven us when we have been making decisions about money or about who we employ or what the curriculum’s going to be. Are they the overriding values or are there some fundamental ones that perhaps we are overlooking. So the strategic leader for me is somebody who pares it all right down to absolute fundamental truths if you like about why are we here and what does that mean in terms of our values and how in God’s name do we dig them out and that’s the hard bit. in the dynamics of a big staff and students and parents and then of course your employer and politics and economics of everything, the dynamics of making it work through the day-to-day behaviours is so difficult and that’s where the stresses come because it’s basically dealing with people. It’s not too stressful dealing with our finances – there’s never enough money to go round - but that management side of things there are ways around that. You can get yourself informed, you can seek help, you can outsource, you can do a lot of the management stuff by just being a wise strategic manager, if you like. You know, how do I efficiently handle all this effectively? Then you find ways to do that. You can’t delegate or outsource your relationships and your building of your relationships and connections. Cannot outsource that. If you are no good at that, either building your external relationships and that means your employer, it means the local community, if you can’t do that effectively you are going to take your staff nowhere and that’s really tricky stuff, really demanding.

Have I answered your question a bit? I think for me that’s what strategic leadership ultimately is and I’m more, even more aware, of the importance of that building that sense of community amongst your people. I don’t mean in a wimpy, soft way because it does mean taking hard decisions and I think I was able to take hard decisions but still maintain pretty healthy, positive relationships and trusting relationships with the people in the community.

It might also help you to further refine that by thinking perhaps about other Principals whom you know who haven’t perhaps been able to get into it quite as well. Is there anything you think they have in common? Things that they forget to do or fail to do or simply cannot do.

I reckon when I look around I can think of one blatant example because I worked with this person when I was a first year out teacher and this person was...had more years of experience, not as old as me but more years of teaching experience and at that stage even I thought I really worry about this guy’s ethics. I didn’t like the way this person spoke to students, dealt with adolescent females, worked with some teachers who may have been struggling with discipline in their class and this person and another guy would say to “just send those bloody kids to me, I’ll fix them up” and there would be a bit of a shouting match or a wallop over the backside in the woodwork room or whatever. Now, I was questioning that person’s values and ethics even before I knew that. The other thing that was manifest was almost the developing of cliques so that there was a real buddy system of a little clique group that was really strong and it could be quite – I don’t want to overplay this but – it made others feel they weren’t able to access that group of people or that they might be somehow made the butt of jokes or – am I making myself clear about that – just all those general signals that a group sends out, a little clique will send out to the majority – and it’s quite subtle; it might be body language or statements said or how they sit in the staffroom that said “You’re not part of this group”. Now that wasn’t to me in particular.

Was this in the same place?
This was in teaching so I want to follow this through. So in other words there was a capacity to divide staff already. As a teacher this person could divide staff by being in this clique and others not quite on the inner circle. Then the ethical sort of stuff of how you actually deal with students within the school. There were other things like non-professional statements, I would call them, like "They can't teach bloody English around here so we'll have to teach it in this subject" and so then you'd go into this person's classroom and they would have an English lesson on the board when the subject was something or other else. Now that wasn't a direction at me, this was just general behaviour of somebody so it was non-professional. Statements would be made that I couldn't accommodate, interaction with students which I'm not saying they were ever assaulted or did anything really improper. It was not to that level but it was certainly enough to make me think that's not how we ought to deal with students. It wasn't within the bounds of appropriate discipline code or whatever. And it was this dividing staff - passionate commitment from those who were part of the clique and then a passionate dislike of that from a lot of the other staff. Alright, so that consistent behaviour went through into – and that person was an Assistant Principal - the staff were divided in that school and there were the buddies and the non-buddies so half the staff absolutely hated the person or were absolutely devoted as though this person was a guru status. Then that person became Principal. A lot of the same questionable, ethical values from my perspective and I guess from some others as well, when that person became Principal the same thing happened to the point where the staff became divided, council was at logger-heads with the Principal and you know just whole divisive stuff. People being removed and other people having to come in and take over the Principal position.

Now, I wouldn't want that to come out too strongly because people would identify the school from what I've said. But if you are talking about a strategic leader that wasn't, the things that I'm talking about, bringing people together, you can't get 100% people loving you it's not on about that but it is at least having a fairly open, clearly understood framework of what is acceptable personally and professionally in this place.

What about people who are generally very sound people but for some reason just can't quite get to taking their organisation well through difficult times, Can you put a finger on what's missing?

I think it's complex and I think it's complex because of some of the things I've said about all the inter-play of issues.

So is context important?

Context is also important so that if you were in an environment where it is a highly industrialised city and there is also a connection, a nostalgia with the past, and how things were and were wanting to revert – not revert – but to kind of cling on to the halcyon days of what it was like, then you've got an extremely difficult context and then I think the strategic leadership becomes difficult. I've seen other Principals and I've thought what would I do in that situation? I'd still have to keep pressing forward you know with the change, finding ways to build those relationships so that I would be chatting with you about the reason for all this, constantly trying to put where we are now and how we can get to the future without all the anxiety and the need to revert back to all of the regulations of union agreements or whatever. But it's all very well to stand outside and judge that but I think some of it is about personal courage, personal confidence, faith in yourself, to sometimes just know that that's all happening but just continue to work away at the relationships and the direction and explaining where you are going and trying to plug them in to that and trying to help people also be connected to their own journey and growth and development and where you are going. You can't change people anyway – they can only change themselves. You can only behave in ways which reflect to them that there are different ways of going or different ways of living out your life but there are people who don't want to grow almost you know you can't take them on a journey until something else happens in their own lives and that's what makes it really, really difficult for leaders I think, in the end you've just got to spend more time nurturing the people who are flogging themselves to death anyway to get on board and to work hard on achieving whatever it is the community wants. It isn't being nasty to those people because you can alienate incredibly and then you set up a kind of victim mentality so that the people who are the blockers, who are the white-anters, and every school's got them, gain a sort of power themselves. They get more people on-side just because people start to feel sorry for them. I had a couple of people on staff who were extremely difficult and the rest of the staff didn't want them around but if they thought there was any injustice to those people in any way or that you were ignoring them or not
kind of valuing, as a leader, them as part of this group no matter how much the staff were frustrated with them, it is the quickest way to your own death because it’s freaky stuff and so the person who is the absolute – you just throw up your hands and wonder how they ever became part of the profession – that you’d better treat them carefully because they’ll get people on side and you will alter the dynamics of your staff.

I wonder if you might just explain a bit more perhaps the personal journey bit that you mentioned. I’m not sure if that came up very much before. Does that indicate some change in your thinking from four years ago?

No not at all. I thought it actually did come out. Yes. There is a bit here for example, just a sense of there is a bigger picture and I think that is part of being a strategic leader too. Connected to the biggest picture you can possibly be connected to. So there is a bit of that.

If you would like to talk about that.

Just wondering how to do that. Can you ask me another question. What is it that I perhaps need to encompass.

Are you saying perhaps that exploring things in your job is, if I’m understanding you, is the same as exploring things in yourself. It seems to be almost the same thing.

Oh. Yes. I think you’re right. It is what I’m articulating. That your journey as a leader is your own journey as a person and you are constantly confronting your own values and what am I on about and is what I’m doing and thinking best for this place? For these people? It is your personal journey.

So how do you carry that over, in that case; how much of the vision for the school ends up being your own vision about what you think is the right sort of world? As opposed to being composed by all the people in the community or more people in the community.

Yes OK. I think a lot of the vision for your school and wanting to make things you know a better society. I think leadership, that’s my very personal view, I think all leaders no matter where they are ought to have a view of evolution and ongoing world that we are all a part of and be wanting to make a contribution to that evolutionary process, creating a better society for each one of us. I’ve got very... That gets challenged of course by people but I see that as unquestionably what I would expect of a leader, that they are plugged into wanting a better place that they leave behind or that in educating our students we are educating them so that when they go out into the world as adults, as responsible citizens, as caring people, you know, not just there for themselves, that they are able to see themselves in an interdependent way, so that I need to be aware that I want my own growth but I have to see it in the total sort of context. I know we are getting into a heavy philosophical argument here.

No, it is very interesting.

Yes, so in working with the community I go in with, this is this evangelistic thing if you like that I was talking about; I sort of go in having the confidence, and I think you have to be confident. If you don’t have some kind of base from which you confidently work, if you don’t have an optimistic view of the future. If you think, oh God it’s all doom and gloom out there, you know and these poor kids, you’ve stuffed up your school and your community from the beginning. You’ve taken in attitudes which are counter to developing the basic confidence and self-esteem of both your staff and kids and parents who are all tremendously anxious about... you know...where my career is going, whether my daughter is going to get a job and you know be able to be a confident adult with a lifestyle that you know she feels comfortable about. If you go in with anything other than an optimistic – not fairyland stuff – if you go into a leadership role with anything other than – when I look at the total civilisation evolution, things that just continue to get better even though we kill each other off, we are living in poverty, we are doing extraordinary things in the overall scheme of things - there is this for me, constant improvement of the world.
I think you were saying before that the context makes a difference but obviously your vision, from what you were saying, remains the same because you are saying that something is sort of up there which is fairly absolute. So your different context is simply going to provide for you what? A different starting point?

I’ve got another view and I’ve articulated this to the person who was my second leader when I changed my job and was at the Centre because I honestly believe that most people who are in education, teachers go into teaching with a similar view to mine. They have a real sense of wanting to make a difference in the lives of kids because they see it connected to a better society and I think gets altered as we go into schools and find the job so hard, so complex and the demands increasing on the part of students who no longer want to be disciplined this way, they want this, they want that, the parents have high expectations, the employers have high expectations, business out there keeps telling us that we are not educating properly and there are all these demands that cram in on teachers and schools and there develops I think a sense of “I don’t have any power to make the contribution I think I can make. I somehow feel powerless.” I think it would be a subject of an interesting doctoral thesis but I think that is what burns teachers off and they look for people to support them such as unions or they put it on their leader to provide these sort of comforts and connections for them that restore that sense of “I’m here to make a difference to kids lives” and to society. In that sense what I’m trying inarticulately I suppose to get across is that my vision in going into the school I don’t think was greatly different from what if you asked teachers would be their vision for being there anyway so it is not as though I have an idiosyncratic view of the world and of leadership that means I’m going to be out on a limb when I get in there so it was very easy given that I feel I’ve got a fundamental connection with what people are on about anyway to go and say OK we are all wanting to make a difference in this community and have the best opportunities we can for our kids and see them grow as much as they can possibly grow and in all the different ways then OK what are our priorities here? What are we saying about the future and that’s the first thing I did when I went into a school, was to get those people, the community together and lets together define that stuff. What do you find? What surprisingly you find is you are coming up with you know the same visions and the same goals and then it might come down to priorities and oh well this group feels this is a priority and that one and you are going to have differences of opinion and conflict and argument and debate and some people not being happy because this is now the priority when they really think this one is more urgent but that’s just the stuff of healthy debate in schools.

Since we spoke last, there has been some change in the literature about strategic leadership Have you kept up with that, and have you any thoughts about the sorts of things people are saying?

I guess what I’ve seen happening in the literature and again remember I read a lot of non-educational stuff as well as educational stuff, there is a consistent theme for me emerging. The high performance and having a leader who can work with people so that you get increasingly high performance from every individual is a theme. The need for every individual to have I guess the capacity to make decisions and to feel they are making decisions that make a difference. That’s another theme that’s very hard to get into organisations because of bureaucracies. That’s another theme.

The learning constant, personal as well as professional learning, but also the learning we do as a group is a theme that I see emerging. How does the leader facilitate this learning across the community? That there is a need for not one person setting the direction and saying this is how things are going to be but rather we don’t know how things are going to be or the new environment of uncertainty and change, constant change, means that we have to be prepared to know that that’s what we’re heading for and you run like hell towards it and you throw everything into getting there but be prepared that you have only got half way through or a quarter through that journey and you might have to change direction and run just as fast and energetically in the other direction. I identify with all of that and I am probably picking out those themes.

I am identifying with these things and I think they were things I was trying to do at Canterbury. I think the learning and not being defensive about our own individual professional competence, that is, I now have to learn to use computers and how do I help kids use this tool in order to make their own meanings and feel some kind of power, of you know, their direction and growth if you like. If I feel defensive about that that’s counter productive in schools. I use that example because what are schools talking about. They’ve
still got teachers who can’t philosophically take the step into accepting the computers as part of the new world and so they are still saying I’m never going to have one I don’t want to touch one, blah, blah, blah.

How do I as a leader facilitate getting all of those members of staff on side prepared to undertake the learning and then learn from each other so that you and I can do it together and there is no defensiveness about that and if I’m a bit of a slow learner then its going to be tolerated and I’ll be supported in that. So there has to be that pressure from the leader for everybody to get up to the mark very rapidly. There is a sense of urgency got to be created and then I’ve got to support them and I’ve talked about that here so that is no different. I have to resource that learning and I’ve got to provide the structures in my teams or make sure that the structures are there that allow people to pursue that learning. If it’s nothing but an agenda dominated by ticky-tacky management administrative stuff we’ll never get any learning. I think that is one of the keys at the moment that teams are so boggled down. It was the same at Canterbury so it hasn’t changed. We were battling to clear the agendas so we could talk about the real stuff. What are we doing with the kids in this area and how are the different individuals going and what are you doing in your class that has worked for Jim or Jill or whoever. So that’s what we talk about, that’s where we make some decisions about “Gee Pam you are really on to something there. Why don’t we actually try to take that on board and give it six weeks of trying to do that with either this class or these particular students and then come back and see what signs we’ve got that that’s either effective or not effective”. As a leader I have to be somehow aware of that.

Do you want to follow up on those signs because I think that was quite a significant part of what we said last time.

Oh well, I think that getting appropriate data is really important. What’s the quality of feedback?. What’s the kind of feedback that I need to help me make intelligent decisions about whether what we are doing is worth it. That’s one of the big issues in terms of leadership at the moment, certainly in schools. How do we assess appropriately our students? What are the signs, you know, that we are looking for?

Are you just talking about learning outcomes here?

That’s part of it but its also the indications that the staff would have; they would look at the learning outcomes but what’s the environment in my class because I can set up some pretty draconian kind of structures and teach in a fairly tough school oriented sort of way and a lot of the other things that we are trying to achieve in this school, like a sense of empowerment and self responsibility and caring for others and well there are some examples that might go by the board so what are the indications in my class that I’m setting up an inter-dependent learning system, that we care for one another, that we make decisions together, so I need some feedback about that because maybe the learning outcomes, the results at the end of the test, don’t tell me that so how do I get that feedback? Do I give a little questionnaire to my kids at the end of this unit and there will be those kind of other things that I get feedback about. I certainly think so.

That’s scary for teachers. I don’t know whether I mentioned that. Staff got very anxious when I suggested that we should get feedback from our students. I actually, again there was pressure from the Principal, I think that there has to be pressure from your visionary leader pushing towards that. Now if I just dictate I’ll get conformity and I got conformity I didn’t get commitment so when I said “Alright as part of this curriculum review now we have implemented a new system we want to find out how the kids are feeling about it and the results are one thing, we’ve got those to look at, but that’s only a small part of what we are trying to do around here because we want good relationships between staff and students and students and students etc. so I said ”We want to survey the students. We want teachers to survey their own students, the data will be yours, the questions can be shaped by you. You will help your kids understand the context they are operating in when they give that feedback and you will put it all together and report to your team leaders. I don’t need to see that, but as a team then, you can make decisions about what have we learned collectively about how these new curriculum approaches are working. That was very scary and even though I felt I was handing over a lot of the decision making to them and even though they did that it was still a conforming to the pressure from me rather than a commitment on everybody’s part. But sometimes you have to start there and what you find happening oh there were a whole lot of people who were saying it was so great getting the feedback from the kids. They grew another inch taller and what happens if the feedback isn’t so good? Then it’s compounding perhaps what you know deep down.
So that means that you have another team responsibility then; how is the team going to deal with supporting the teachers who are saying well the feedback I got on that new unit was just appalling. You know they obviously hated it ... and yet there are others sitting around in this team going they loved it. Alright let us now uncover why. Is it something to do with this particular student group that needs now to be handled in a different way or materials have to be modified in some way. That's really scary because you feel as though you are really on the line. But that is the real work of these teams ... finding ways to do that rather than process your administrative stuff.

Can I go back to something.
You did mention much earlier on that sometimes you only get a quarter of the way along the road you are going on and then change. Could you explore that notion of planning ahead, thinking ahead and at the same time maintaining the flexibility to opt out or change after only a quarter of the way there.

OK Remember I only had four years in the Principal's chair so you probably need to talk to somebody who's been at it for fifteen years. I found the pressure for the strategic leader was coming from the staff, even parents, even students... you are the leader, you have the answers, you set it all down. So on the one hand there was that expectation that you knew it all and "just tell us so that there are no uncertainties and we'll set the direction and we'll get geared up and we'll go there" and you know, it will never change, and if you dared to suggest that hang on a minute, I don't have all the answers and that looks as though that is the kind of direction we are going in but things may change you know, the resourcing may change or actual things out there in society may change, the economics out there may affect things and it may be important now that our curriculum, or the way we are going about teaching even has to change because things out there such as learning on the internet maybe now change what we've put in place... and maybe we don't need a teacher in a classroom with 25 kids the way we set out to have in the future, because we might want to now have the kids operating independently using the internet doing some research and you know you really don't need a teacher to 25 kids. That's probably not a very good example.

Another one might be, we are going with this keys to life literacy program by Western Australian First Steps but in a minute, because we've got some new research happening in literacy now with Universities working very closely with schools and really monitoring and all that we might get only a quarter of the way through implementing Western Australian First Steps and we might have to change because something better will come up and do we want to be left behind doggedly pursuing the keys to life as it was in Western Australian First Steps or a combination of the two when we know that My God there is a new way of working with kids and teaching literacy that is superior. I'll support you in that and I'll resource it as best I can and we'll in a way take risks and make mistakes and do all the rest of it but we now have a new direction which is also filled with uncertainty and we might get down the track and the blooming researchers will come up with some more... now that's a very difficult thing I think to handle in schools because if people who want that certainty on the part of their leader then see that as, "well we are going to start this but God she's going to change her mind", how do they make a commitment to it? How do you get people to feel confident in that uncertain sort of environment that maybe in two years we have to change our system of teaching and that will mean new skills will have to be learned and it may mean all sorts of things... new books have to be got in or whatever. It's very disenfranchising I suppose for some staff but I kind of think that is how it's got to be. You go into the State system and go into Schools of the Future and before you are even down the track the school government is, well, you know there is going to be a new system. Are you going to be fazed by that or can we embrace all of that, make our own decisions about what is right for our community. Not be scared off by it or go "Oh my God, we haven't even finished this and, typical, we've got something on the horizon that we are now expected to deal with".

So, how concrete can you actually become in your thinking?

I think its got to be concrete, as clear and as concrete as you can make it so it may be for example that in your planning or in your vision or in one of your priorities you have to find a way to articulate just what I talked about. Canterbury was articulating, talking to people about that change thing. I didn't feel, and if you go back and read here, I had this concern for not dumping too much on staff that they couldn't cope
with so I would be talking all the time about change in personal lives, as well as that in the school and education and helping people to not continue to wring their hands about the changes to HSC and VCE and all the bad things that had happened to us so talking with them, one to one, and trying to understand them but take them on. What I would want to write down and articulate more courageously and constantly for example at a school would be a priority to develop our capacity as individuals and a staff to want to embrace change. That is to be constantly plugged into a system of learning and to networks for reading and talking about that and processing it in a non-defensive way and making intelligent choices about what then are the changes that are most urgent and pressing for us in this community for our kids and leading them into the future.

I would really want to articulate that to promote the capacity to change and provide confidence and optimism and a really healthy growth environment, because all those things are important; I would want to articulate that as a priority in my school and I would want to have the values or principles that go with that articulated. Now people tend not to read them but I still want to write them down. So I would want to have that documented as one of the things I’m about in this school. As part of our vision in the future we have to learn to be able to change with as little damage to ourselves as possible; stress is natural but as little of those negative stress things as possible...to be able to contemplate and implement change with the sense of commitment and optimism rather than “I’m the victim again. Here is yet another change that I have to deal with. Yeah I’ll manage it because I’m professional and yeah I can cope so I’ll do it.” I’d rather see the attitude that change is really inevitable and it’s really quite exciting. It’s very hard but the trick for us and our skills is to know what the appropriate changes are for our community and us as staff and how we are going to support that with all those things I’ve talked about. And gee that’s hard.

So, I’m articulating what I would like to actually write down if we are doing strategic planning and people expect you to have strategic documents there so that it is not just accountability, it is that if I’m the leader I can go back to those documents and I know what the directions are that are set, I know what the principles are upon which I’m operating around here and I know what our priority outcomes are. Now in trying to articulate the need for this capacity to deal with change to be expanding all the time on the part of the whole school but individuals as well, I’m really talking about acknowledging that the change is chaotic, the whole change environment is one of chaos and it is affected by economies going bust in the global scene, it is affected by political whims and decision making, local state, national, global level. It is affected by a changing student population, it is affected by staff moving in and out of your school with different talents and aspirations. It’s affected by the capacity for you to get money into the school so there are a whole lot of chaotic things happening that you have to be a bit comfortable with. It’s a bit like directing a play, that’s my background. You have absolute chaos when you are in the process of 120 kids making (Riot under the Sun?) as a play to put on to the community and you operate in that chaos quite creatively, really creatively; you have awful ups and downs, you are as high as a kite one minute and then you think its never going to happen and that’s a bit like the chaos I’m talking about, but being able to feel more and more comfortable operating in that chaos but knowing that there are still clear intentions about what we are doing, the best for kids and equipping them as caring, responsible, knowledgeable people able to go out there into the world but in the daily processes there will be that sort of sense of “we are on this direction but it’s in a state of turbulence all the time and in a moment we may have to change direction on the way we teach history or the way we organise our kids for classes in you know whatever”. Now it’s difficult to articulate it because it has never been something that has been articulated as what you do in schools. It’s rather been this articulation of clear directions and actually a whole set of regulations about how you are going to get there and expectations written down, and people want to go back to that sort of simple thing. Hugh McKay talks about it in Generations as a real danger that we revert back to this need for simplicity and clarity so that we go back to the regulations and over-prescription of things and setting a direction and absolutely sticking to it and I really identify with that. I really think again, part of that chaos is a bit about decisive, in inverted commas, decision making and what that means to people because decisive decision making can be linked to this sense of certainty about life and its all mapped out and strategically planned and you can go away and just do that and come back and be accountable in six months for your progress or a year for your progress but if you are operating in a chaotic environment you will be constantly, you know, the evaluative thing just goes on all the time and the reflection and maybe that’s a word that has been missing from what we are talking about because the chaos requires you to constantly reflect which is rather
exhausting... you reflect on the personal and you reflect on the impact within my team or school or whatever. So the chaos is bound up with that constant reflection, bringing in the external stuff, knowing what’s happening internally and trying to pin-point just what is the reality. I’ve talked to Brian Caldwell about that. Actually defining what the current reality is in your school from day-to-day is enormously difficult. It’s a very complex art I think, to be able to pin-point what it is that is actually happening in this dynamic chaotic environment. So schools are dynamic and chaotic but there has been this expectation on the part of leaders that there will be this strategic clarity and planning and we educators, are the biggest planners I have ever come across.

Maybe it all comes from that lesson plan we had to do at College.

Yes. Lesson plans are the biggest... and we will sit around at meetings and plan ourselves to death and we will write up beautiful documents and manuals and the reality has no connection and we will spend ages doing that and we will do the planning and then we never actually get round to changing what we are doing and being totally engrossed in all of that.

Thank you very much again
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Title: Strategic leadership in school education and the public and corporate sectors

Date: 2000


Publication Status: Unpublished

Persistent Link: http://hdl.handle.net/11343/35380

File Description: Strategic leadership in school education and the public and corporate sectors

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