

Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership variation – Principal Professional Development Program (PPDP)

PPPD — Report on Action Research Projects

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary 3

 Overview: Themes, lessons and questions emerging from the Action Research Projects 4

Introduction 6

 The Brief 6

 Background 6

 This report 7

The Action Research Projects 8

 Impact 9

 Themes and Lessons Emerging from the Action Research 11

Conclusion 19

References 20

Appendix 1: Ten Tests for Effective Principal Development 21

Appendix 2: PPDP Action Research Projects 22

Executive Summary

The findings of the eight State and Territory Action Research Projects add important insights and evidence to the growing catalogue of international and local reports that focus on the impact of leadership development programs on the professional practice of principals leading to improved school performance and student outcomes. In general, evidence detailed in the Project reports shows that the leadership development programs (Programs) investigated have had a positive impact on principals' understandings of the leadership requirements and professional practices outlined in the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*.

In the main, Programs draw on international and local research and the contributions of expert practitioners to help shape learning experiences that:

- acknowledge school context
- enable disciplined individual and collective reflection
- challenge participants to explore new approaches to school leadership for sustained improvement, and
- engage participants in relevant Action Research Projects related to school needs.

Importantly, all Projects acknowledge that due to the relatively short research timeframe it is not possible to determine the extent to which the Programs have impacted on student learning outcomes.

Notwithstanding this, it is apparent from the research findings and observations that there is a continuing commitment by systems and sectors to build on current programs and to expand opportunities for principals and aspiring principals to participate in them at different stages of their careers. Further, most point to the need for continuing research to track the extent to which the gains made by participants are demonstrated in improved professional practices leading to improved school performance and student outcomes.

Four themes have been drawn from the research findings:

1. Strong, purposeful school leadership: the precondition for sustained school improvement
2. A multi-faceted approach to principal professional learning: enhancing the knowledge, skills, personal and interpersonal requirements for effective school leadership and improved school performance
3. Leadership in the school context: generating professional learning opportunities focused on the reality of leading and managing a school
4. System/sector commitment: supporting quality professional learning for principals.

Related to the themes are eight associated lessons and a series of questions for the consideration of systems, sectors and program designers and deliverers. The themes, lessons and questions are detailed in the table in the Overview section.

Overview: Themes, lessons and questions emerging from the Action Research Projects

This table provides a high level snapshot of the findings drawn from the Action Research Projects with a view to providing guidance to a broad audience involved in developing and reviewing principal professional learning and leadership programs.

Themes	Lessons	Questions
Strong, purposeful school leadership: the precondition for sustained school improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective leadership development programs are aligned to the <i>Australian Professional Standard for Principals</i>. They focus on the leadership requirements and professional practices of principals enabling them to create the conditions for sustained school improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can the Australian Professional Standard for Principals be used to design effective leadership programs for principals/school leaders in our particular setting? What research evidence and learning experiences should be provided to enable principals/school leaders to enhance their professional practices in order to improve organisational performance and student outcomes? What professional practice outcomes are expected for program participants and how will we know they have been achieved?
A multi-faceted approach to principal professional learning: enhancing the knowledge, skills, personal and interpersonal qualities for effective school leadership and improved school performance and student outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective leadership development programs support the development of the personal and interpersonal qualities (personal wellbeing, emotional intelligence, empathy, resilience) required of school leaders for improved school performance and student outcomes. They recognise the value of 360o survey instruments and self-reflection tools for this purpose. Effective leadership programs recognise the importance and value of coaching and mentoring as means for supporting principals/school leaders to reflect on their professional practice, and to test ideas and action plans for improvement and change. Coaches and mentors should be selected on the basis of practical experience and expertise, and matched appropriately to participants. Effective leadership programs promote and support the engagement of principals/school leaders in school-based inquiry/Action Research Projects related to the identified improvement needs of the school. Effective leadership development programs focus on the development of skills and strategies required for leading and managing change, effective use of data, creating a collaborative and sharing culture and for empowering staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What content, processes and learning experiences should be incorporated into leadership development programs designed to enhance the knowledge, skills, personal and interpersonal qualities for effective school leadership and improved school performance and student outcomes? What is the most effective way of building coaching and mentoring into leadership development programs taking into consideration the need for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rigorous selection and training processes for coaches/mentors Engagement of coaches/mentors who are mindful of school context and the roles, responsibilities and tasks of school leaders Engagement of coaches/mentors with significant practical experience and expertise and skilled in facilitating structured coaching conversations Learning experiences designed to build the capacity of school leaders to engage confidently in coaching conversations with staff Ensuring the correct match between coaches/mentors and program participants. How can action research/inquiry projects related to clearly defined school improvement needs be incorporated realistically and effectively into leadership development programs?

Themes	Lessons	Questions
	<p>to take collective responsibility for improving teaching and learning practices and sustained school improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective leadership programs incorporate and support the use of appropriate technologies for personal reflection, individual and collective research, access to resources and communication and interaction with peers and program facilitators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the best way of enhancing school leaders' knowledge, understandings and skills of leading and managing change for school improvement taking account of the context from which school leaders come? What learning experiences should be incorporated to support principals to develop and sustain a school culture of shared leadership, collaboration and trust? How can the use of learning technologies be incorporated into leadership development programs to support personal and collective reflection, individual and collective research, access to resources and communication and interaction between peers and program facilitators?
Leadership in the school context: generating professional learning opportunities focused on the reality of leading and managing a school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective leadership development programs are more likely to impact on the professional practices of school leaders when they are anchored in the reality and practicalities of leading and managing a school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What needs to be done to ensure that leadership development programs meet the expectations and needs of school leaders in effectively undertaking their day-to-day leadership tasks and responsibilities? What should be done to know the expectations and entry points of school leaders prior to participation in the program? How will this information be used to support the professional growth of each participant? How best can program learning experiences be designed to connect content and delivery to school leaders' contexts, knowledge, experiences and skill levels?
System/sector commitment: supporting quality professional learning for principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective leadership development programs provided by State and Territory systems and sectors demonstrate high level commitment and the provision of infrastructure support and resources.* They recognise the crucial role that principals and school leaders play in improving school and system performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What level of infrastructure support and resources should be directed to leadership development programs for principals and aspiring principals? What scope is there to develop cross-sectoral partnerships for the design and delivery of leadership development programs?

* *Infrastructure support and resources* refers to the short-term, medium-term and long-term activities needed to ensure that the professional learning happens – such as funding, agreements, regular meetings, reference groups and committees, administration support, time release from classroom, monitoring and feedback mechanisms. With system /sector support, these structures can become part of day-to-day operations and work to demonstrate the school's ongoing commitment to professional learning.

Introduction

The Brief

Ross Kimber of *rfk consulting* was engaged to write a report on the impact of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Principal Professional Development Program (PPDP) across eight Action Research Projects (referred to as Projects), in alignment with the Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership (ITQNP) variation - Principal Professional Development Program.

Specifically he was requested to:

- Describe and compile the findings of the eight Action Research Projects funded under the PPDP
- Determine the impact of the professional learning opportunities on teacher and school leader practice across the eight Action Research Projects
- Identify those features of the professional learning opportunities that are effective, new and/or innovative
- Determine if the effective, new and/or innovative practices can be replicated and delivered at scale
- Compare the professional learning opportunities to current national and international best practice
- Prepare a draft written report for AITSL and then a final substantive written report suitable for publication that includes future recommendations.

Background

Australian Government funding enabled AITSL to engage eight Action Research Projects (one in each state/territory) throughout 2013. These Projects were focused on professional learning activities funded through the ITQNP variation - PPDP.

As articulated in the Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders, AITSL recognises the importance of

professional learning for school leaders and the impact it has on improving professional practice, and in turn, outcomes for students. At its most effective, professional learning develops individual and collective capacity across the profession. The PPDP has sought to identify clear messages about the types of professional learning that are most likely to lead to sustainable change.

Each state/territory, in agreement with AITSL, nominated an Action research project with a focus on a specific professional learning opportunity afforded to principals and school leaders funded under the PPDP and selected as evidence of best practice. Action researchers were appointed to work alongside one system/sector in each state/territory to document and report findings from the Project. Projects were required to be based on one or more possible research questions including:

- What learning, innovation and/or improvement does the professional learning opportunity focus on? Can this be further enhanced and, if so, how? Can it be delivered at scale?
- What impact does the professional learning opportunity have on teacher and school leader practice? How can this learning be consolidated/embedded?
- How well does this professional learning opportunity compare to current international best practice or 'best practice' in other contexts or 'best practice' across Australia?
- How could this professional learning opportunity inform next practice? In what ways does this professional learning transform principal/school leader knowledge, skills and understanding? How does this type of professional learning opportunity contribute to sustained learning and development for principals and school leaders?
- Can this professional learning opportunity be easily replicated / applied / implemented to other state/territory systems/sectors? What would restrict this occurring?

Action research commenced early in 2013 and concluded in September, 2013 with action researchers submitting reports detailing the findings of their research and identifying the impact on principals/school leaders, their professional practices and their schools together with possible implications for sustainability, replication and delivery at scale. Learnings from the Projects were showcased at the AITSL Leadership Symposium held in Melbourne on 6 September 2013. At this symposium Professor Alma Harris and Dr Michelle Jones provided an initial summary of aspects of the research Projects and outlined '10 Tests for effective principal development' drawn from the Projects' findings and some of the international literature related to principal professional learning and its impact on professional practice and organisational performance (see Appendix 1).

Finally this report contains recommendations arising from the Action Research Projects for the consideration of AITSL.

This report

This report outlines the findings of the eight PPDP Projects conducted in each state/territory. It provides an overview of the Projects in tabular form and contains brief project descriptions, research questions used, the impact on principal/school leader participants in the Projects and their professional practices and the implications for sustainability, replication and delivery at scale (see Appendix 2).

This report, drawing on the reflections, insights and findings from the Project reports, identifies a number of key themes that illustrate conceptually what needs to be considered in the development of relevant, collaborative and future focused professional learning programs and activities designed to impact on the professional practices of principals/school leaders in order that school improvement and better outcomes for students occur. Where it is appropriate, reference is made to learnings from international research together with what is known about current national and international best practice.

Further, this report identifies eight lessons and a series of questions that may be useful to systems, sectors, authorities, leadership centres and institutes, professional associations and networks in each state/territory or at national level as they develop professional learning opportunities and programs for principals/school leaders.

The Action Research Projects

As indicated above, AITSL commissioned eight Action Research Projects, one in each state/territory, to be undertaken by selected action researchers during 2013. Final reports were submitted in November 2013. The Projects and action researchers are listed in the following table:

State/Territory	Project	Action Researcher
Australian Capital Territory (ACT)	The Impact of Coaching on ACT Principal Leadership	Helen Tracey
New South Wales (NSW)	Evaluation of the Association of Independent Schools (NSW) Leadership Centre Flagship Program for experienced school leaders.	Norman McCulla
Northern Territory (NT)	Coaching and mentoring for school improvement	Kathryn Moyle, Julianne Willis, Paul Richards
Queensland (QLD)	Take the Lead: through graduates' eyes	Michelle Anderson
South Australia (SA)	The impact of online professional learning opportunities and tools for self-reflection on principal knowledge, understanding and practice	Helen Nixon, Rosie Kerin
Tasmania (TAS)	An investigation into the impact of the Shadowing Program for Aspiring Principals on participant leadership development and career choice	Michael Brakey
Victoria (VIC)	Impact of a systemic "change management" approach on leading complex and sustainable curriculum change	Ross Kimber
Western Australia (WA)	Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (CEOWA) Experienced Principals Program 2013	Michael O'Neill

All Projects focus on leadership development programs (referred to as Programs) that have been developed and delivered in the context of system/sector initiatives. These Programs have been designed to enhance principals'/school leaders' knowledge, understanding and skills required for school leadership that has impact on professional practices leading to school improvement and improved learning outcomes for all students. The Projects have been conducted to determine the extent to which these Programs have impacted on principals/school leaders, their leadership practices, their schools and learning outcomes for students.

Most Programs offered by systems and sectors focused exclusively on principals; however one catered for both principals and school leaders including those aspiring to be principals, and two only for those aspiring to be principals. Information provided by the action researchers about participation in the Programs can be shown in the following table:

State/ Territory	Participation in system/sector leadership development programs		
	Principals	Principals/ aspirants	Aspirants
ACT	✓		
NSW		✓	✓
NT	✓		
QLD			✓
SA	✓		
TAS			✓
VIC	✓		
WA	✓		

Project reports invariably refer to the experience and contexts of Program participants and, in some instances, outline the extent to which Programs have been designed and delivered in context-relevant ways to meet the varying needs of principals and those aspiring to principalship.

Project reports recognise that the Programs studied/evaluated have drawn upon a range of information, research and policy resources to inform their design, development and implementation. Sources include the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* (AITSL, 2011) and the *Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders* (AITSL, 2012) together with past and current program development and implementation initiatives within systems and sectors and the findings from various international and local leadership research initiatives.

Impact

Commonly, reports refer to the positive impact that Programs have had on principals/school leaders. However they mostly indicate that the relatively short timeframe for the research has not enabled significant findings to be drawn in relation to the impact of the Programs on educational outcomes for students. Rather, the insights and findings tend to focus more on the participants' experiences of the Programs (e.g. relevance of the content and the activities, deeper understanding of the requirements and responsibilities of school leadership,

opportunities for self-reflection, exposure to new skills, participation in school-based Action

Research Projects) and the related areas of leadership practice and school improvement that many participants are in the process of implementing. This is not surprising given that the majority of Projects focused on interviews with selected Program participants as the preferred methodology for the action research. The ACT report on the impact of coaching on principal leadership contains the following observation:

Inevitably, this assessment of the effectiveness of coaching professional development relies heavily on school leaders' own reporting of the effects of programs on their professional practice. While it may be possible in a larger study or over a longer time period to collect more objective data measuring the impact on staff, students or school of changes in a principal's leadership style and practices as a result of participating in a coaching program, it would be unwise to discount the importance of principals' own views about the effectiveness of coaching... Self-reporting by principals of the impact of coaching professional development, compared with other professional learning they have undertaken and in terms of how they conduct themselves in their day to day leadership of their school, and what they see as the impact on the school and on their relationships with other staff, appears a reliable measure of the value of programs.

This illustrates an important finding across all Projects and underlines an overall observation that impact in this case, should be viewed from the perspective of “intermediate” outcomes for principals involved in the Programs rather than “final” outcomes in relation to sustained changes in leadership practice leading to improved student outcomes. This in turn makes it more difficult to make definitive statements about sustainability.

Common to the research reports is the view that follow-up action research would be required before any evidence-based claims could be made in relation to the impact of particular professional learning programs on leadership practices leading to improved student outcomes. Similarly most reports expressed difficulty in making definitive claims about the impact of leadership programs over time on leaders’ practices leading to improvement. By way of example, the report from SA in commenting on the impact of its Program on participants states:

It is difficult for any study to evaluate the ‘sustainability’ of professional development programs within a short timeframe. In the case of this Project, participating principals were either still engaging with the sector learning opportunities or had only recently engaged with them as the opportunities themselves had only recently been offered or developed. In situations like this, assessment of ‘sustainability’ of impact requires a much longer time scale.

The Projects refer to leadership development Programs that differ to some extent in the scope of their design and delivery. Three of the Projects relate to Programs that focus holistically on the knowledge and skills required of effective school leaders. Typically these Programs have been undertaken over a number of months and have provided a range of intensive professional learning activities and experiences covering the three leadership requirements and associated professional practices as outlined in the Australian Professional Standard for Principals

The other five Projects relate to Programs that use more specific vehicles for developing the knowledge and skills required of effective school leaders. These Programs have also spanned a number of months. Three of the Programs have approached leadership development through the experience of being coached, the development of coaching skills and the application of

coaching skills to bring about school improvement. One has focused on the impact of online learning opportunities on principal self-reflection, knowledge, understanding and practice. One has centred on the use of shadowing of effective principals as a vehicle for understanding leadership styles and applying learnings to their own contexts. One has focused on the role of the principal in sponsoring and leading improvement, innovation and change in school settings.

Importantly all research reports point to the critical importance of school leadership as the catalyst and driving force for school improvement and for creating the conditions for sustaining highly effective teaching and learning practices within schools.

Themes and lessons emerging from the Action Research

Analysis of Project findings has led to the identification of key themes and associated lessons that illustrate important considerations for the design, development and delivery of effective principal development programs designed to impact on principals/school leaders, their leadership practices, school improvement and the improvement of student outcomes.

Four key themes have been identified:

1. Strong, purposeful school leadership: the precondition for sustained school improvement
2. A multi-faceted approach to principal professional learning: enhancing the knowledge, skills, personal and interpersonal qualities for effective school leadership and improved school performance
3. Leadership in the school context: generating professional learning opportunities focused on the reality of leading and managing a school.
4. System/sector commitment: supporting quality professional learning for principals.

Each of these themes is explored below. Within each theme, where appropriate, local and international research and practice are referred to and examples from Projects used to exemplify how the theme has manifested itself in practice. In addition lessons and a series of questions have been identified in relation to each theme to assist states, territories, systems, sectors, leadership centres and institutes, professional associations and networks in the further development of professional learning programs with impact for principals/school leaders. The lessons are in part derived from the work of Harris and Jones (2013) who, as indicated earlier, have identified '10 Tests for effective principal development' drawn from their initial analysis of the Projects' findings.

1. Strong, purposeful school leadership; the precondition for sustained school improvement

Project reports point to the primacy of the principal working closely with other school leaders and staff in creating the conditions for sustained school improvement. The leadership Programs that are the subject of the Action Research Projects are premised on this precept. Most Project reports refer to local and international research findings and point to their value in strengthening the focus and intent of the Programs. Research findings have helped shape the design and delivery of the Programs.

Research undertaken in eight disadvantaged schools in Victoria by Zbar, Kimber and Marshall (2009) identified a fundamental precondition for substantial school improvement, namely, "strong leadership that is shared". The authors make the point, which is echoed through a number of the Action Research Projects, that:

Each of the study schools is characterised by having strong leadership, with a clear vision and direction for the school and a high degree of leadership stability over time. They all have principals with a passion to lead and make a difference in the interest of kids, who also are willing to build and spread leadership throughout the school.

The Action Research Report from Victoria, in discussing the impact of a change management Program on principals, makes the point that:

Leadership from the principal and the school leadership team is fundamental to creating and sustaining an effective performance and development culture; direction, encouragement, support and "gentle" prodding are key features of effective leadership from the principal.

The ACT report in discussing the impact of coaching on principals' professional practices, draws on the findings outlined in a range of documents or pieces of research related to leadership development (e.g. Dempster et al. 2011, Harris & Jones 2012, OECD Toolkit 2009) to headline the importance of principal professional development. It refers to the work of Viviane Robinson (Robinson et al. 2008) and highlights one of her findings:

Principals' engagement with continuing professional development was the single most important factor in leaders' influence on student outcomes. She found that school leaders' involvement in both promoting and participating in professional development, thus modelling professional learning, was the leadership dimension most strongly associated with positive student outcomes.

Projects also draw attention to the importance of the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* (the *Standard*) for systems and sectors in developing the Programs. Research and a growing body of knowledge about the role of school principals have informed the *Standard*. It defines the crucial role that principals play in the education and development of children and young people and sets out the leadership requirements and professional practices pertaining to the role. Five professional practices are described, namely; *leading teaching and learning, developing self and others, leading improvement, innovation and change, leading the management of the school and engaging and working with the community*. Project findings relate to one or more of these five professional practices.

Importantly, Project reports reinforce an overarching view that the *Standard* provides an evidence-based framework that can be used effectively to develop and implement leadership development programs that resonate with principals/school leaders. In one sense it provides widely accepted benchmarks anchored in what principals can do to lead and sustain school improvement and improved performance. Of significant interest though is the observation that Programs have adopted different approaches and perspectives to leadership development. This is not surprising given differing system/sector contexts and priorities and the varying experiences and needs of Program participants. Overall however, the Programs recognise that principals/school

leaders should demonstrate a core set of leadership knowledge skills and behaviours. The Project reports show, as Harris and Jones indicate, "there is no single, best-fit principal development approach" (Harris and Jones 2013).

What lesson can be drawn from this theme?

Effective leadership development programs are aligned to the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*. They focus on the leadership requirements and professional practices of principals enabling them to create the conditions for sustained school improvement.

Questions for systems, sectors and leadership program designers and deliverers

How can the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* be used to design effective leadership programs for principals/school leaders in our particular setting?

What research evidence and learning experiences should be provided to enable principals/school leaders to enhance their professional practices in order to improve organisational performance and student outcomes?

What professional practice outcomes are expected for program participants and how will we know they have been achieved?

2. A multi-faceted approach to principal professional learning: enhancing the knowledge, skills, personal and interpersonal qualities for effective school leadership and improved school performance and student outcomes

Projects report a range of approaches adopted in Programs to strengthen and enhance the professional practices of principals. Some (NSW, QLD, WA) take a holistic approach to leadership development and incorporate an integrated set of learning activities based on leadership development research and school-based Action research projects. Others take a focused approach to a specific area of leadership such as change management (VIC), development of coaching skills (ACT, NT), shadowing of experienced principals (TAS) and use of online learning tools for self-reflection on professional practice (SA). In these cases the Programs have provided entry points for

developing new learnings across the leadership spectrum.

Importance of self-reflection

A standout finding across the Projects is the importance of building into Programs the opportunity for participants to engage in self-reflection in some instances supported by the use of data collected through 360° feedback instruments, in some through coaching/mentoring and others through structured conversations with peers and reflective activities built into the Programs including reflective journaling. This is indicative of the importance attributed to the *developing self and others* professional practice specified in the *Standard*. The NSW Project report for example indicates that:

There is evidence emerging from participants that the participants themselves have reported benefitting from the reflective nature of the action research and the overall emphasis on reflection in the Program design. (Participants have been encouraged, for instance, to maintain personal journals). They felt that developing relational leadership was the most influential area of what they did. There is a strong alignment here with the values component of AITSL's Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

An holistic approach to leadership development

The Association of Independent Schools (AIS NSW) *Leadership Centre Flagship Program* spread over twelve months is for senior leaders and emerging principals. It is a new Program open to participants across all systems and sectors. It is based “on an understanding of leadership as both an inner and outer journey. The outer journey involves the acquisition of leadership knowledge and skills; the inner journey is about understanding self, the articulation of personal values and theory, the ability to discern and focus strategically on the core purpose of schooling, and to reflect on experience in light of moral purpose.”

It is a highly structured Program incorporating ten face-to-face days with high quality academics, educators and practitioners, use of a 360° profile instrument, peer learning, shadowing and mentoring, professional reading, online learning, implementation of a school based change project and ongoing and summative personal reflections. This Program

required significant commitment, support and direction from the AIS NSW Leadership Centre and strong personal commitment and will from the participants. Summaries of the findings from interviews with selected participants over three phases of the Program reveal that overall, participants thought highly of the Program and benefitted from the range of learning experiences offered, particularly the opportunities for self-reflection and the implementation of a school-based Action research project.

Similar approaches were adopted, albeit on a smaller scale in QLD and WA. The QLD *Take the Lead* Program has been designed as part of a recruitment strategy for small school teaching principals in rural and remote schools. The Program was designed to provide aspiring principals with a supported career pathway and included a six-day residential program covering a range of professional learning experiences focused on preparing for principalship, school visits, mentoring, support and incentives for career advancement. Interviews with selected graduates revealed that they rated the Program as an important leadership preparation program with many expressing the view that their confidence had developed leading to demonstrable career steps. Value was placed on the inclusion of school visits and mentoring although it was reported that more could have been done to make them more useful for the participants.

The Catholic Education Office of Western Australia's (CEOWA) eight-day, cross sectoral Experienced Principals Program targeted principals with ten or more years of experience interested in improving their health and well-being and enhancing their leadership capabilities. The Program is regarded as meeting “a need that has been completely neglected in the Catholic and public systems in WA”. And as the Project report observes “similar levels of neglect may well have occurred in other states of Australia bar Victoria”. In that sense it can be seen as a unique program in the Australian context. A key component of the Program, a health assessment and wellbeing analysis was overwhelmingly supported by principals and added an innovative dimension to the professional practice of *developing self and others*. Other components of the Program included a 360° review instrument, executive coaching, modules focusing on leading teaching and learning and health and lifestyle management and completion of a cross-sectoral

project in a corporate environment. According to the Project report all components were seen to be beneficial by participants with those components rated most highly being those relating to the principals' professional experiences and school contexts.

An approach focused on specific areas of leadership development

Five of the eight Projects, as indicated above, have reported on Programs that focus on a particular area of school leadership as a means for developing knowledge and skills required of principals/school leaders. Nevertheless in most instances it has been reported that the Programs provided opportunities for deepening participants' understandings related to the professional practices as outlined in the *Standard*.

Coaching and mentoring

The ACT Project in investigating the impact of four coaching Programs on principals found among other things that the coaching Programs had contributed to building the confidence and self-efficacy of school leaders, building the capacity of staff and building a school climate of collaboration and trust. The report observes, "The Programs shared a conception of coaching as a reflective approach to leadership which leads to personal growth and has the potential to build the capacity of others and strengthen a collaborative and trusting school climate." A key finding of the Project was that principals "observed positive changes in their school environment as a result of putting their coaching skills into practice." Further it reported:

Many principals remarked on the benefits they could see in their practice and in the school culture from the continuous learning possibilities that coaching offers, noting the impact their own engagement with coaching professional development had on other staff. Principals welcomed the encouragement to reflect on their own professional practice, the support coaching provided for the transfer of knowledge and skills through in-depth professional conversations with staff, and the opportunity to share knowledge and experience with colleagues.

Other important observations arising from this Project refer to the importance of voluntary participation in coaching Programs, the involvement of expert coaching consultants, the

need to take account of school context and the importance of the correct match between coach and participant. Evidence provided through the Queensland Project shows the need to make better use of the school visits within the Program together with a review of the purpose and timing of the mentor component and in particular the matching of participant and mentor expectations.

The NT Project set out to investigate how school principals in the Northern Territory (NT) have applied the approaches learnt through coaching and mentoring professional learning Programs to bring about school improvements. Findings from the structured interviews "demonstrate that the use of coaching and/or mentoring conversations for intentional school improvement is at an early stage of development in the NT. Further work is required to explore the links between coaching and/or mentoring conversations to enable sustainable organisational performance improvements." Evidence provided in the report suggests that:

The overarching implication arising from this Project has been the acknowledgement by the school principals involved, about how valuable structured reflection conversations with other principals and academics is useful to assisting their work in transforming the work of schools through the use of coaching and/or mentoring conversations for school improvement.

The NT report also refers to the distinction between coaching and mentoring and the need to explore differing coaching and mentoring styles and the implications for principals

Online learning

The South Australian Project differs from all other Projects in that it focused on the impact of online professional learning opportunities on principal self-reflection, knowledge, understanding and practice. The Project report indicates a paucity of research in this area and observes that both the Government and Catholic systems have been keen to explore and understand more about the effects of leaders' engagement with online professional learning. The government sector's entry into the Project related to the use of its online Self Reflection Tool (DECD 2012) and the Catholic sector's entry through principals' participation in a Queensland Education Leadership Institute leadership program (QELi 2010-2013) that uses a blended approach to participant learning,

combining peer interaction and coaching with seven online learning modules, each of three weeks' duration.

This Project reported on the importance of finding the most appropriate online application and outlined initial difficulties in doing so. Findings from the face-to-face and online interviews with participants demonstrate the "benefits of engaging in online professional learning and reflection: online formats provide flexibility that promotes a sense of autonomy and control over one's learning and the possibility of enhancing existing networks." Participants also stressed the importance of online learning being supported by a facilitator and the need to ensure that online learning opportunities are supplemented by regular, individualised contact with mentors and colleagues. Importantly this Project observed that there was:

Evidence of changes in leaders' professional knowledge, understanding and practice: it is encouraging to note that there are signs that there may be significant, and possibly even transformative, outcomes from their online learning and reflection experiences.

Shadowing

The Tasmanian Project focuses on the impact on participants of the Shadowing Program for Aspiring Principals, a statewide program that uses contemporary learning models for the development of future principals. It incorporates a 360° reflection tool, opportunities to explore different leadership styles and reflect on their own styles, participation in a five-day shadowing experience and engagement in a school-based action research project. Evidence provided in the Project report shows that reflection on practice, pursuant professional conversations and the shadowing element rated very highly among participants. Further, it claims that:

There is strong evidence that many participants are moving towards the potential to be change agents at all levels. There is also evidence that the Program has helped them to become inter-dependent learners who would no longer say there need to be networks created to support their on-going learning but would see the need and create those networks for themselves.

Managing change

The Victorian Project set out to determine the extent to which the *Change²* process (a research-based Program developed in the UK by Dame Pat Collarbone and her associates of *Creating Tomorrow Ltd*) impacted on two Catholic school principals in Melbourne, their schools and other schools with whom they worked as *Change²* facilitators. Evidence presented in the Project report highlight the crucial role of the principal in sponsoring and leading improvement, innovation and change in school settings. Through the process principals gained a deeper understanding of the change process and the skills and tools required to engage school leaders and staff in trusting collaborative processes using data and feedback for school improvement purposes.

In summary, all Projects refer to Programs that were carefully designed to address the knowledge, skills and personal and interpersonal qualities required of principals and school leaders. Approaches differed in relation to state/territory, system and sector contexts and priorities. Nevertheless it is possible to generalise from them some important lessons that can be considered in the further development of leadership development programs.

What lessons can be drawn from this theme?

Effective leadership development programs support the development of the personal and interpersonal qualities (personal wellbeing, emotional intelligence, empathy, resilience) required of school leaders for improved school performance and student outcomes. They recognise the value of 360° survey instruments and self-reflection tools for this purpose.

Effective leadership programs recognise the importance and value of coaching and mentoring as means for supporting principals/school leaders to reflect on their professional practice, and to test ideas and action plans for improvement and change. Coaches and mentors should be selected on the basis of practical experience and expertise, and matched appropriately to principals/school leaders.

Effective leadership programs promote and support the engagement of principals/school leaders in school-based inquiry/Action research projects related to the identified improvement needs of the school.

Effective leadership development programs focus on the development of skills and strategies required for leading and managing change, effective use of data, creating a collaborative and sharing culture and for empowering staff to take collective responsibility for improving teaching and learning practices and sustained school improvement.

Effective leadership programs incorporate and support the use of appropriate technologies for personal reflection, individual or collective research, access to resources and communication and interaction with peers and program facilitators.

Questions for leadership program designers and deliverers

What content, processes and learning experiences should be incorporated into leadership development programs designed to enhance the knowledge, skills, personal and interpersonal qualities required for effective school leadership and improved school performance and student outcomes?

What is the most effective way of building coaching and mentoring into leadership development programs taking into consideration the need for:

- Rigorous selection and training processes for coaches/mentors
- Engagement of coaches/mentors who are mindful of school context and the roles, responsibilities and tasks of school leaders
- Engagement of coaches/mentors with significant practical experience and expertise and skilled in facilitating structured coaching conversations
- Learning experiences designed to build the capacity of school leaders to engage confidently in coaching conversations with staff
- Ensuring the correct match between coaches/mentors and program participants?

How can action research/inquiry projects related to clearly defined school improvement needs be incorporated realistically and effectively into leadership development programs?

What is the best way of enhancing school leaders' knowledge, understandings and skills for leading and managing change for school

improvement taking account of the context from which school leaders come?

What learning experiences should be incorporated to support principals develop and sustain a school culture of shared leadership, collaboration and trust?

How can the use of learning technologies be incorporated into leadership development programs to support personal and collective reflection, individual and collective research, access to resources and communication and interaction between peers and facilitators?

3. Leadership in the school context: generating professional learning opportunities focused on the reality of leading and managing a school

All Projects point to the importance of ensuring that the content and learning experiences of leadership development programs be related to the "real" work of principals and school leaders, recognising and respecting school context, the expectations of participants and their entry points into the Programs. In general, through interviews conducted in all Projects the connection between the theoretical underpinnings of school leadership and application to the participants' workplaces and professional practices was highly valued.

This finding across all Projects regardless of their foci is not surprising. The demands on school leaders are high. School leaders expect Programs, especially when spread over many months, to add value to their knowledge and understanding of school leadership. They appreciate that Programs are tailored to meet their needs. The ACT Project, reporting on the impact of coaching programs on principals, observed that:

Participants in the ACT coaching professional development programs were highly positive about the quality of the program delivery. Generally, they commented on how much they enjoyed the workshop experience, particularly the practice coaching sessions and appreciated the clear connection between the knowledge and skills developed in the program and the demands of their workplace. Many noted the direct link between coaching skills and real issues they faced every day in the school.

The WA Project refers to principals' feedback on some components of the Program where it was felt by participants that there was a lack of relevance between the cross-sectoral Project undertaken in a corporate environment and the enhancement of principals as educational leaders. The report makes the point that "systems and sectors should consider a bespoke approach tailored to individual needs and systemic contexts." The Tasmanian Project states that research findings will be shared with system leaders with responsibility for aligning system goals and priorities with the beliefs and practices of schools leaders.

The *Change*² Program adopted by the Catholic Education Office in Melbourne is an intensive, highly structured Program with a recurring emphasis on the empowerment of school leaders for school improvement purposes. It has been designed to ensure whole school ownership of, and commitment to, change processes for improvement and to the growth and enhancement of leadership capabilities and skills at various levels within the school.

The Program is delivered in the school setting by trained facilitators and is directly related to the development of strategies for school improvement through shared leadership and collaborative processes. In this sense it represents a highly customized approach to leadership development.

Queensland's *Take the Lead* program was developed as part of a recruitment strategy for small school teaching principals (i.e. schools with student enrolments of 150 or fewer) across the state, with a specific focus on rural and remote locations. As such it was designed to blend theoretical knowledge about school leadership with the practical realities of the teaching principal's role in rural and remote parts of the state. In general participants appreciated that the program was tailored to meet both their own needs and the needs of the Queensland education system. Tapping into the knowledge and experience of practising principals as mentors was also seen as an important vehicle for relating content of the program to participants' context.

What lesson can be drawn from this theme?

Effective leadership development programs are more likely to impact on the professional practices of school leaders when they are anchored in the reality and practicalities of leading and managing a school.

Questions for leadership program designers and deliverers

What needs to be done to ensure that leadership development programs meet the expectations and needs of school leaders in effectively undertaking their day-to-day leadership tasks and responsibilities?

What should be done to know the expectations and entry points of schools prior to participation in the program? How will this information be used to support the professional growth of each participant?

How best can program learning experiences be designed to connect content and delivery to school leaders' context, knowledge experiences and skill levels?

4. System/sector commitment: supporting quality professional learning for principals

It is important to note from the Project reports that system or sector support in each state/territory has been a key factor in the successful delivery of the Programs. Most Project reports refer to the commitment of the systems/sectors to provide the necessary infrastructure support and resources required to design and implement the Programs in the context of the need for effective school leaders capable of driving school improvement and improved student outcomes, system and sector priorities and the nationally adopted *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*.

The Victorian Project reports, for example, that the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) "has embarked on a carefully planned, research-informed, well-resourced and strategic initiative that has at its core the improvement of learning outcomes for students." The South Australian Project stemmed from a joint commitment on the part of the Catholic and Government school systems to investigate the impact of online learning experiences embedded in their respective leadership development programs in which system resources had been invested. Similarly the ACT Project involved a study of the impact of coaching programs initiated and resourced by the Catholic and Government school systems. The NSW Leadership Centre Flagship Program differs from all other Programs in that it has been designed and delivered within the independent schools' sector. Infrastructure support has been provided through the AIS NSW's Leadership

Centre with participation on a fee-for-service basis.

The Project reports highlight the growing tendency for systems and sectors to initiate Programs that draw on the latest educational leadership research and, in many cases, studies that investigate and report on the influence that school leadership has on student learning outcomes.

In addition, and importantly, most Projects report that findings from the action research will inform further development of Programs with the intention to offer future Programs for principals and aspiring principals. The AIS NSW through its Leadership Centre plans to advertise the Flagship Program nationally to both government and non-government schools on a fee-for-service basis. In Victoria the CEOM will continue its rollout of the *Change²* Program taking into account the findings of the Action Research Project. In the NT consideration will be given to how coaching and mentoring strategies can be taken up by principals in other government and non-government schools in the NT. The Tasmanian Shadowing Program has been operating for three years and findings from previous evaluations and this action research are being considered by the Professional Learning Institute and have helped system leaders to understand the impact that one of their flagship programs is having on a critically important group of teachers in the system, namely aspiring principals.

What lesson can be drawn from this theme?

Effective leadership development programs provided by State and Territory systems and sectors demonstrate high level commitment and the provision of infrastructure support and resources. They recognise the crucial role that principals and school leaders play in improving school and system performance.

Questions for system, sector, professional associations/institutes and network leaders in States and Territories

What level of infrastructure support and resources should be directed to leadership development programs for principals and aspiring principals?

What scope is there to develop cross-sectoral partnerships for the design and delivery of leadership development programs?

Conclusion

The findings of the eight Action Research Projects add important insights and evidence to the growing catalogue of reports on the impact of leadership development programs on the professional practice of principals leading to improved school performance and student outcomes. In general, the evidence detailed in the Project reports shows that the Programs have had a positive impact on principals' understandings of the leadership requirements and professional practices outlined in the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*.

The identification of the four themes together with the associated lessons and questions for Program developers illustrate important considerations for the design, development and delivery of effective principal development programs intended to impact on principals/school leaders, their leadership practices, school improvement and the enhancement of student outcomes. Accordingly the themes, lessons and questions have the potential to be used as resources to assist the development and review of professional learning programs for school leaders. Further they may assist in conducting audits of current leadership development programs delivered at national, state/territory, sector or local levels.

The Programs draw on international and local research and the contributions of expert practitioners to help shape learning experiences that acknowledge school context, enable disciplined individual and collective reflection, challenge participants to explore new approaches to school leadership for sustained improvement and engage participants in relevant Action Research Projects related to school needs. Importantly all Projects acknowledge that because of the relatively short research timeframe, it is not possible to

determine the extent to which the Programs have impacted on student learning outcomes.

Notwithstanding this, it is apparent from the research findings and observations that there is a continuing commitment by systems and sectors to build on the current Programs and to expand opportunities for the participation of principals and aspiring principals at different stages of their careers. In addition most point to the need for continuing research to track the extent to which the gains made by participants flow through to professional practices leading to improved school performance and student outcomes. It is clear that the time is right for the exploration of further possibilities and opportunities for research of this kind.

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Appendix 1: Ten Tests for Effective Principal Development

These “tests” were presented at the AITSL Leadership Symposium held in Melbourne on 6 September 2013 by Professor Alma Harris and Dr Michelle Jones, Lead Researchers for the AITSL Action Research Projects. They are also included in a draft paper *Effective Principal Development ‘10 Tests’* prepared for AITSL in September 2013.

Test 1 - Effective principal professional development focuses on the *reality* of the job, the ‘day to day’ practicalities of managing and leading a school. (Relevant Curriculum)

Test 2 - Effective principal professional development encourages and supports learning in different *contexts*, sectors and situations thus extending leadership capability, experience and expertise. (Diverse Experience)

Test 3 - Effective principal professional development involves coaching or mentoring around role, responsibility and task by those with the relevant *practical* expertise and experience. (Expert Guidance)

Test 4 - Effective principal professional development engages participants in collective school based enquiry and *disciplined* collaboration. (Collaborative Learning)

Test 5 - Effective principal professional development uses rigorous, reliable and valid ways of judging and promoting the *ability, aptitude and proficiency* of the principal. (Self-Assessment)

Test 6 - Effective principal professional development supports participants in the systematic interrogation, analysis and *use of data* to directly improve teaching and learning. (Data Informed)

Test 7 - Effective principal professional development recognises and supports the development of personal effectiveness (emotional intelligence, *empathy, resilience and personal wellbeing*) in order to improve school and learner outcomes. (Personal Effectiveness)

Test 8 - Effective principal professional development promotes the principal as researcher, as the leading *learner* within the school, encouraging and supporting the systematic and focused enquiry of others for the benefit of the organisation. (Research Orientated)

Test 9 - Effective principal professional development is futures focused and future proofed; it has to engage principals in understanding and using the latest learning *technology* and expertise. (Future Focused)

Test 10 - Effective principal professional development is aligned to the national standard and actively uses the standard to benchmark in order to maximise principal quality. (Standard Based)

Appendix 2: PPDP Action Research Projects

Action Research Project	Project Description	Impact	Implications
ACT The Impact of Coaching on ACT Principal Leadership	<p>An investigation of four coaching Programs adopted by school authorities in the ACT, how they have been implemented and their impact on principal leadership. Common to all Programs was a focus on developing the coaching skills of principals to enable them to be effective coaches in their own schools.</p> <p><i>Research questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has participation in coaching programs contributed to the self-efficacy of participating principals? • How has participation in coaching programs contributed to principals' leadership of teaching and learning in the school? • In what other ways have principals benefited from their participation in coaching programs? • What impact have coaching programs had on principal collaboration across the ACT? • What changes could increase the impact of coaching programs for principals? <p><i>Methodology</i></p> <p>Following a literature search, interviews were conducted with nine principals in the Government sector and six from the Catholic sector.</p>	<p>Overall the coaching Programs impacted on principals in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building the confidence and self-efficacy of school leaders • building the capacity of staff • building a school climate of collaboration and trust • facilitating learning conversations and an improved ability to manage "difficult" conversations • supporting development of a coaching leadership style • providing the opportunity for modelling continuous learning. 	<p>Coaching is a valuable component of principal professional development programs. Issues which should be considered when designing coaching programs at system level include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • context matters – not one size fits all • intensive programs are preferable • system support is important • participation should be voluntary, at any career stage • expert coaching support is essential • time is a critical factor – for professional learning, practice, review • possibility of building a cohort of principals as coaches.

Action Research Project	Project Description	Impact	Implications
NSW Evaluation of the Association of Independent Schools (NSW) Leadership Centre Flagship Program for experienced school leaders	<p>The Flagship Program of the Leadership Centre of the Association of Independent Schools (NSW) is a year-long program for senior leaders who are considering principalship, and/or who want to deepen and extend their capabilities in their current role. The program is open to participants from across all education sectors throughout Australia and beyond. It focuses on both the inner, personal journey towards leadership as well as the outer, contextual journey.</p> <p><i>Research question</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How and in what ways do participants in the AIS Leadership Flagship Program perceive and demonstrate that the program has contributed to their individual and collective development as confident, competent and visionary educational leaders making a positive impact on the learning and personal growth of students, staff and school communities? <p><i>Intended learning outcomes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gain insights into how and in what ways, if at all, participants changed as an outcome of their participation in the program To gain insights into how and in what ways, if at all, participants' school practices changed as an outcome of their participation in the program To identify areas where the program might be further improved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The data show that participants thought highly of the program and benefitted from it It is clear from both the action research data and the evaluative data collected by the program designers that the program has been highly successful in what it set out to do The data also show considerable impact in participating schools by way of the impact on school-wide improvement projects and in the development of participants' relational skills The program design confirms and also extends current understandings of good practice in leadership development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a large-scale holistic developmental program. There are considerable data sets arising from both the action research component as well as the evaluation component. These will require consolidation and alignment with the overall literature In providing scope for participants to reflect on their experiences and the learning that resulted with an independent yet trusted observer, it has provided some rich, longitudinal and developmental data There are two main areas of indications for policy and practice: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The nature of the program itself and how it might be further developed and improved Identification of strategies for application of the learnings, both in the short term and post program regardless of whether or not the participant moves to a principal role. The following areas have emerged as means for consolidating and extending the learnings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What was found out with regard to the design, implementation and evaluation of the flagship program in relation to existing good practice

Action Research Project	Project Description	Impact	Implications
	<p><i>Methodology</i></p> <p>The study was conducted over three cycles wherein individual reflective “learning conversations” were held by telephone with ten participants in each round.</p> <p>Three reports were prepared to tell the story of the leadership journey of participants: Beginnings, Developing, Reflections and Directions.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. What issues and policy implications emerge in reconciling the inner and outer journeys to leadership in the career trajectories of teachers? 3. The role of action research in the implementation and evaluation of leadership programs? 4. Attributes of effective professional companionship 5. Identifying long-term demonstrable outcomes in school practice from participation in the program. The intention of the AIS Leadership Centre is to advertise the Flagship Program nationally to both government and non-government schools on a fee-for-service basis.
<p>NT</p> <p>Coaching and mentoring for school improvement</p>	<p>This Project set out to investigate how school principals in the Northern Territory (NT) have applied the approaches learnt through coaching and mentoring professional learning programs to bring about school improvement.</p> <p>This Project has set out to exemplify high quality approaches to principals’ professional learning, and to explore practical applications in remote school contexts of some of the best practice characteristics elaborated in the Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders.</p>	<p>The overarching implication arising from this Project has been the acknowledgement by the school principals involved, about how valuable structured reflection conversations with other principals and academics is useful to assisting their work in transforming the work of schools through the use of coaching and/or mentoring conversations for school improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The findings from the interviews demonstrate that the use of coaching and/or mentoring 	<p>Based upon the outcomes from this Project, consideration will be given to how these strategies can be taken up by principals in other government and non-government schools in the NT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional learning for school principals and other school leaders is required to enable them to become coaches and mentors Further work is required to explore the links between coaching and/or mentoring conversations to enable sustainable organisational performance improvements

Action Research Project	Project Description	Impact	Implications
	<p><i>Research Questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How could this professional learning opportunity inform next practice? • In what ways does this professional learning transform principal / school leader knowledge, skills and understanding? • How does this type of professional learning opportunity contribute to sustained learning and development for principals and school leaders? • In what ways have professional learning strategies developed through coaching and mentoring programs offered in the NT, been applied by school principals in remote schools to bring about school improvement? <p>This Project was undertaken in remote and very remote schools in the NT.</p> <p><i>Methodology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with the school principals when they attended a workshop in Darwin • Site visits to each school to follow up on the initial interview • A process of review and refinement at a final workshop held in Darwin at the end of the Project. 	<p>conversations for intentional school improvement is at an early stage of development in the NT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals reported on the importance of using coaching and/or mentoring conversations in their schools, and believe their respective approaches to whole school improvement have benefitted from their use • Principals indicated that a clear, structured program to support them to reflect on their own approaches to coaching and/or mentoring for school improvement has been beneficial to them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Project has pointed to the need to define differing coaching/mentoring styles for principals as they enter projects of this kind • It would be beneficial to conduct a formal NT-based research project, over an agreed extended period of time to validate the outcomes found in this Project • Quantitative performance improvement data would be useful to inform such an Action Research Project • The development of a performance matrix that includes identified good/best practice would be beneficial for schools • The development of benchmarks would be useful to support coaching and mentoring conversations for intentional school improvement • Whole of sector executive support is necessary for 'success'.
<p>QLD Take the Lead: through graduates' eyes</p>	<p>The Take the Lead program was developed as part of a recruitment strategy for small school teaching principals (i.e. schools with student enrolments of 150 or fewer) across the state, with a specific focus on rural and remote locations.</p>	<p>The 12 graduates interviewed rate <i>Take the Lead</i> as an important leadership preparation program for first-time principals of small schools in rural or remote locations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program is filling a critical gap in the preparation of first-time principals for such settings by offering a dedicated focus on teaching principals and by embedding multiple teaching

Action Research Project	Project Description	Impact	Implications
	<p>The Take the Lead program involves a structured program of professional learning comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a six-day residential program to further prepare participants for their new roles within small school contexts • the assignment of a mentor to new teaching principals for a two-year period • support for attendance at forums and conferences • support to prepare for permanent and promotional employment opportunities • access to remote incentive benefits, including accommodation and travel funds. <p>A follow-up study with 12 graduates of the Take the Lead program to assist evaluate the impact of the program on their confidence, efficacy and readiness to step into a leadership role in a small school located in a rural and/or remote setting.</p> <p><i>Research Questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How successful has the Take the Lead initiative been in encouraging aspirant leaders to become principals of rural and remote QLD schools? • Are there any ways that the Take the Lead Program could be enhanced? If so, what are the possible requirements and implications of implementing the proposed enhancements? 	<p>Data collected through interviews indicate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • content richness at the residential conference was valued but it is important to recognise the differing contexts and circumstances of participants • school visits are highly valued, but under-utilised sites of learning • mentoring was seen to be necessary, however, attention to the matching and timing of it is required • transitions in and out of the program could improve for greater efficiency and effectiveness • participants' confidence has developed, leading to demonstrable career steps by graduates. <p>Take the Lead has helped:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide the bridge from teacher to principal • develop participants' understanding and importance of the school-community context • inform participants' decision making about their readiness to be a principal • clarify and demystify the principal role in a small school in a rural or remote setting 	<p>principal perspectives within the program's activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings suggest improvements could be made around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – identifying the needs of learners as they enter the program – the selection, preparation, matching and timing of the mentor component – clarifying the ongoing support for learners post the residential. • Revisions to the program are recommended. Of note, these are to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. make better use of the school visits within the program 2. Review the purpose and timing of the mentor component within the program. This includes the matching of participant and mentor expectations 3. Include a specific explicit module within the residential on the processes and competencies of seeking and securing a principal post in a rural or remote small school 4. Assist participants to transition post-the residential via improved communication and ongoing networks and types of support.

Action Research Project	Project Description	Impact	Implications
	<p><i>Methodology</i></p> <p>Research methodology took the form of telephone interviews and email contact with the 12 selected participants from various stages in their careers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> create a new or different network of colleagues. 	<p>5. Set up an alumni of Take the Lead graduates to participate in the program and support program participants</p> <p>Recommendations have been acted on and steps taken to continue beyond 2013.</p>
<p>SA</p> <p>The impact of online professional learning opportunities and tools for self-reflection on principal knowledge, understanding and practice</p>	<p>This Project focused on online professional learning opportunities for principals. Both the Government and Catholic sectors were interested in this because they had already invested sector and AITSL funding in professional development for school leaders in which online learning was a central component and they saw this as a possible way forward for future programs.</p> <p>The objective was to produce qualitative information about the impact of online professional learning opportunities on principal self-reflection, knowledge, understanding and practice.</p> <p><i>Research Question</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do online professional learning opportunities and resources, augmented by a specific focus on self-reflection and appraisal, inform principal knowledge, understanding and practice? 	<p>Analysis of information gained from an initial focus group discussion resulted in the identification of seven key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits of engaging in online professional learning and reflection: online formats provide flexibility that promotes a sense of autonomy and control over one's learning and the possibility of enhancing existing networks Benefits of blended learning: principals valued online learning opportunities that were supplemented by regular, individualised contact with mentors and colleagues Benefits of contextualizing learning and providing models of good practice: the contextualisation of the online material made the learning more stimulating and worthwhile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any attempts to up-scale or replicate the online tools or courses, would need to have a focus on the human voice-to-voice or face-to-face dimensions that brought these courses to life for the participants. The design of future online professional learning opportunities needs to find ways to provide what principals said they value: the integration of online learning with other forms of communication and mentoring by an expert in the field. This was considered desirable to help participants keep focused on the topic, to challenge them to think more deeply and to assist them to contextualise, individualise and consolidate their learning. Project findings should be considered intermediate outcomes until further research can be undertaken into how the recent learning opportunities undertaken

Action Research Project	Project Description	Impact	Implications
	<p><i>Methodology</i></p> <p>An initial focus group discussion and subsequent interviews were conducted with three Government and three Catholic school principals who participated in online professional learning programs and accessed online resources related to issues of leadership and in particular an online Self-Reflection Tool (DECD, 2012) to assist current and aspiring school leaders to understand and meet the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of professional learning with the support of a facilitator or mentor • Benefits of accessing quality research in education and other fields of knowledge • Disincentives to participating in online professional learning and reflection: recognition of the challenges of new technologies based on ease of access or generational divides • Evidence of changes in leaders' professional knowledge, understanding and practice: it is encouraging to note that there are signs that there may be significant, and possibly even transformative, outcomes from their online learning and reflection experiences • Participants indicated that online communication within a forum is not sufficient. They emphasised the need for sustained, positive interactions with others and noted that peer-peer and peer-mentor relationships are crucial. 	<p>by principals have, over time, affected their practices and brought about changes in their schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online learning for principals is most effective when it features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Contextualised case studies – Blended learning – Ease of access and interaction – Education, leadership and management literature – A highly skilled, independent mentor – A range of professional learning options – iTunes U, or similar online courses – Authentic, rigorous engagement.
<p>TAS</p> <p>An investigation into the impact of the Shadowing Program for Aspiring Principals on participant leadership</p>	<p>The Shadowing Program for Aspiring Principals is a state-wide program that uses contemporary learning models for the development of future principals and is available to teachers and senior staff. The program has operated in 2010, 2011 and 2012 with approximately 20</p>	<p>The impact on school leader practice cannot be over-emphasised. In the findings there is regular reference to how participants continue to use their acquired knowledge and skills to constantly seek improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Shadowing Program will become fully effective when participants demonstrate effective changes in practice and when system improvements are evident

Action Research Project	Project Description	Impact	Implications
<p>development and career choice</p>	<p>participants in each year. Participants have a total of 3 days of seminars where the theoretical components of the program are delivered and where participants prepare for both the shadowing component (5 days) and the inquiry (completed over a number of months)</p> <p>Outcomes for aspiring principals include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing an understanding of the different styles of leadership required to become an effective principal. • Developing a self-understanding of their own leadership styles and emotional intelligence skills. <p><i>Research questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the program provide participants with a clear understanding of the different leadership styles required to be an effective principal? • Does the program allow participants to develop a clear understanding of their own leadership styles and emotional intelligence skills? • Has the program influenced the way that participants see themselves as educational leaders? • Have participants made any significant leadership and/or career choices as a result of participation in the program. • Do participants place value on particular aspects of the program? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents were able to identify specific aspects of leadership theory that still resonate with them. They were able to provide specific examples of where they applied their learning and in many cases could identify where that was still occurring in their work • Participants indicated that the program gave them a deep level of understanding about their own leadership styles and emotional intelligence and a range of practical behaviours that make them more effective leaders • Participants demonstrated high levels of self-awareness as educational leaders • Participants brought a wide range of life experience with participants contributing to the divergent pathways they have followed since their participation. Many participants have made informed choices about careers that balance their professional and personal life goals and situations. • Reflection on practice, pursuant professional conversations and the shadowing element rated very highly among participants. • Participants valued use of the inquiry, use of current best theory, a working knowledge of principal 	<p>as a consequence of their continued leadership and learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This research has helped leaders in the Professional Learning Institute understand the impact that one of their flagship programs is having on a critically important group of teachers in the system, namely aspiring principals. • Participant feedback will be used to guide not only the development of this program but other programs organised for leaders in the system. • Findings will be shared with system leaders with responsibility for aligning system goals and priorities with the beliefs and practices of schools leaders. • As the impact of the program has been traced over three consecutive years with similar outcomes, it can be confidently concluded that the program attains its desired goals and offers insights into developing teachers and leaders for other systems and states.

Action Research Project	Project Description	Impact	Implications
	<p><i>Methodology</i></p> <p>Participants in the 2010, 2011 and 2012 programs were invited to participate in two phases of research. The first was a survey to which 42 of the 65 previous participants responded. The second focused on eight participants who agreed to an interview.</p>	<p>capability frameworks and the spaced nature of learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is strong evidence that many participants are moving towards the potential to be change agents at all levels. There is also evidence that the program has helped them to become inter-dependent learners who would no longer say there need to be networks created to support their on-going learning but would see the need and create those networks for themselves. 	
<p>VIC</p> <p>Impact of a systemic "change management" approach on leading complex and sustainable curriculum change</p>	<p>A case study approach was adopted to determine the extent to which the Change2 process impacted on the principals of two Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, their schools and other schools with whom they worked as Change2 facilitators. Change2 is a research-based program developed in the UK by Dame Pat Collarbone and her associates in Creating Tomorrow Ltd. It is an intensive, highly structured program with a recurring emphasis on the empowerment of school leaders for school improvement purposes. It has been designed to ensure whole school ownership of, and commitment to, change processes for improvement and to the growth and enhancement of leadership capabilities and skills at various levels within the school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indications are that the Change2 process has had a positive impact on the principals, their schools and on staff who have been directly involved in the process • Information gained from stakeholders has led to the following findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The principals gained a deeper understanding of the change process, and skills required to engage stakeholders (e.g. listening, questioning and coaching skills) – The principals cited professional growth and enhanced understanding of effective school leadership as personal gains from the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence shows that providing school teams with the opportunity, through the CEOM's Change2 initiative, to participate in a facilitated, structured and systematic change management program is an effective form of professional learning • The evidence from this Action Research Project is that the CEOM has embarked on a carefully planned, research-informed, well-resourced and strategic initiative that has at its core the improvement of learning outcomes for students. • Leadership from the principal and the school leadership team is fundamental to creating and

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	<p><i>Research Question</i></p> <p>What impact has the principals' involvement in the Change2 process had on their roles of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leading teaching and learning • developing self and others • leading improvement, innovation and change both within their school and as a system leader? <p><i>Methodology</i></p> <p>School visits and interviews with principals, teachers and system leaders over a period of five months.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Empowerment of staff, in the context of school improvement goals and priorities, has been an important feature of the initiative. Whole school ownership of change has occurred through distributed leadership and collaboration among staff on agreed priorities. – The power of individual and collective reflection as tools for generating ideas and action plans for improvement – Clarity of purpose, commitment, a strategic approach to design and implementation of the initiative and a willingness to work together have helped create confidence in the process and an expectation of success. – Structural arrangements were evident to enable change objectives to be met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide time for teachers to work and collaborate more effectively in teams • ensure that school leaders are engaged in the process and able to model effectively the behaviours expected of all • structure team meetings so that authentic conversations about teaching and learning practices occur (common approaches to 	<p>sustaining an effective performance and development culture; direction, encouragement, support and “gentle” prodding are key features of effective leadership from the principal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important for systems to ensure that before schools “sign up” for programs such as Change2 they must be ready and willing to participate with full knowledge of what is expected and what the implications for them might be • The Change2 initiative is resource intensive (e.g. training of facilitators and master facilitators, co-facilitators working with schools, time allocations to enable change teams to work effectively) and while there probably cannot be a guarantee of successful outcome in each case, the system can create the conditions for effective implementation and support • The training of principals as facilitators for the Change2 process is a strong feature of the initiative. It allows principals to take on a system leadership role and symbolically underlines the importance of principals assuming collective responsibility for system improvement. It also enables principals to model high quality leadership practices.

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		<p>lesson planning, shared planning of units of work and classroom activities, shared resources, effective use of data for planning differentiated learning activities, cooperative teaching, learning tasks for students, etc.).</p>	
<p>WA Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (CEOWA) Experienced Principals Program 2013</p>	<p>This Project focused on the evaluation of the CEOWA's Experienced Principals Program, 2013. This cross-sectoral leadership program conducted over eight days, targets principals with ten or more years of experience interested in improving their health and wellbeing and enhancing their leadership capabilities. These outcomes are achieved through participation in a highly interactive, Master of Business Administration (MBA) style program that incorporates health assessment, 360-degree leadership profiling, executive coaching and completion of a cross-sectoral project in a business environment.</p> <p>The CEOWA has sought to address a specific cohort of very experienced principals who had over time developed unique needs that were too easily overlooked.</p> <p>Aligned to the Australian Professional Standard for Principals the program was organised around four pillars:</p> <p>Pillar one: Health assessment and wellbeing analysis</p> <p>Pillar two: 360-degree review</p> <p>Pillar three: Theoretical program</p> <p>Pillar four: Mastery project</p>	<p>Findings relating to each of the four pillars are as follows:</p> <p><i>Pillar one: Health assessment and wellbeing analysis</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overwhelmingly supported by participants Acknowledgement that participant health and wellbeing has suffered as a result of role intensity Serious health and wellbeing issues identified by composite report Despite this, poor uptake of health coaching service. <p><i>Pillar two: 360-degree review</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integral Development 360-degree tool and executive coaching deemed effective in identifying leadership strengths and weaknesses and enhancing effectiveness Request that coaches visit principals in-situ to conduct executive coaching sessions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This program recognises a need that has been neglected in the Catholic and public systems in WA. Given the small number of participants it is not suggested that findings from the study could be generalisable. Rather, the Project was designed as a 'pilot' to gain insights from participants concerning the effectiveness of the design and to inform the development of future programs. It is argued that the program was innovative in its emphasis on holistic professional development that not only focused on professional knowledge and skills but also incorporated an emphasis on health and wellbeing. It sought to extend professional knowledge and leadership skills by placing principals in a corporate setting, working on a group mastery project that tackled an authentic problem for that corporate client.

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	<p><i>Research Questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How has participation in the Experienced Principals Program met the needs of experienced principals in terms of knowledge, skills, behaviours and sustained impact on their practice? Can it be enhanced and can it be delivered at scale? <p><i>Methodology</i></p> <p>Six individual semi-structured interviews were undertaken at the commencement of the program and one focus group of six participants was also interviewed. Semi-structured interview questions were designed to elicit participants' reasons for enrolling in the program, their expectations and their perceptions concerning the adequacy of professional learning at this stage of their career.</p> <p>At the conclusion of the program participants were again interviewed to ascertain: Their satisfaction with the program overall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual elements of the program Suggestions for improvement Key learnings gained. 	<p><i>Pillar three: Theoretical program</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affinity amongst participants with regard to the Leading teaching and learning professional practice module Agreement that the Peak performance under pressure: Reviewing health and lifestyle management module was relevant and beneficial. Participants raised as concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the lack of specific focus on the Australian Professional Standard for Principals by facilitators the lack of contextual understanding of program facilitators activities (e.g. case studies) that failed to leverage participant experiences overuse of theoretical concepts and models within program modules. <p><i>Pillar four: Mastery project</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad agreement that the project was collegially beneficial and assisted establishment of cross-sectoral links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cross-sectoral nature of the program provided a breadth of experiences from different systems and sectors harnessing diverse professional backgrounds and enabling the co-construction of new knowledge If well designed, such programs have the capacity to meet a myriad of personal and professional needs of men and women who have given much to their profession and communities over time Experienced principals "deserve" to be repaid with a program that regenerates, enthuses and enables them to care for themselves so they can care for others Systems and sectors should consider a bespoke approach tailored to individual needs and systemic contexts It is recommended that an Executive level health assessment be offered on an annual basis to provide ongoing monitoring and review for injury and illness risk, with the goal ultimately being prevention of early onset chronic disease, and the best management of existing conditions.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants raised as concerns the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – time-hungry nature of project given the intensity of the principalship – lack of clarity with regard to project purpose/scope and poor support from project facilitators – disconnect between the corporate environment and schools – inability of the project as a medium through which to transfer observations regarding leadership capability and culture from corporate to school environments – lack of relevance between the project and enhancement of principals as educational leaders. 	