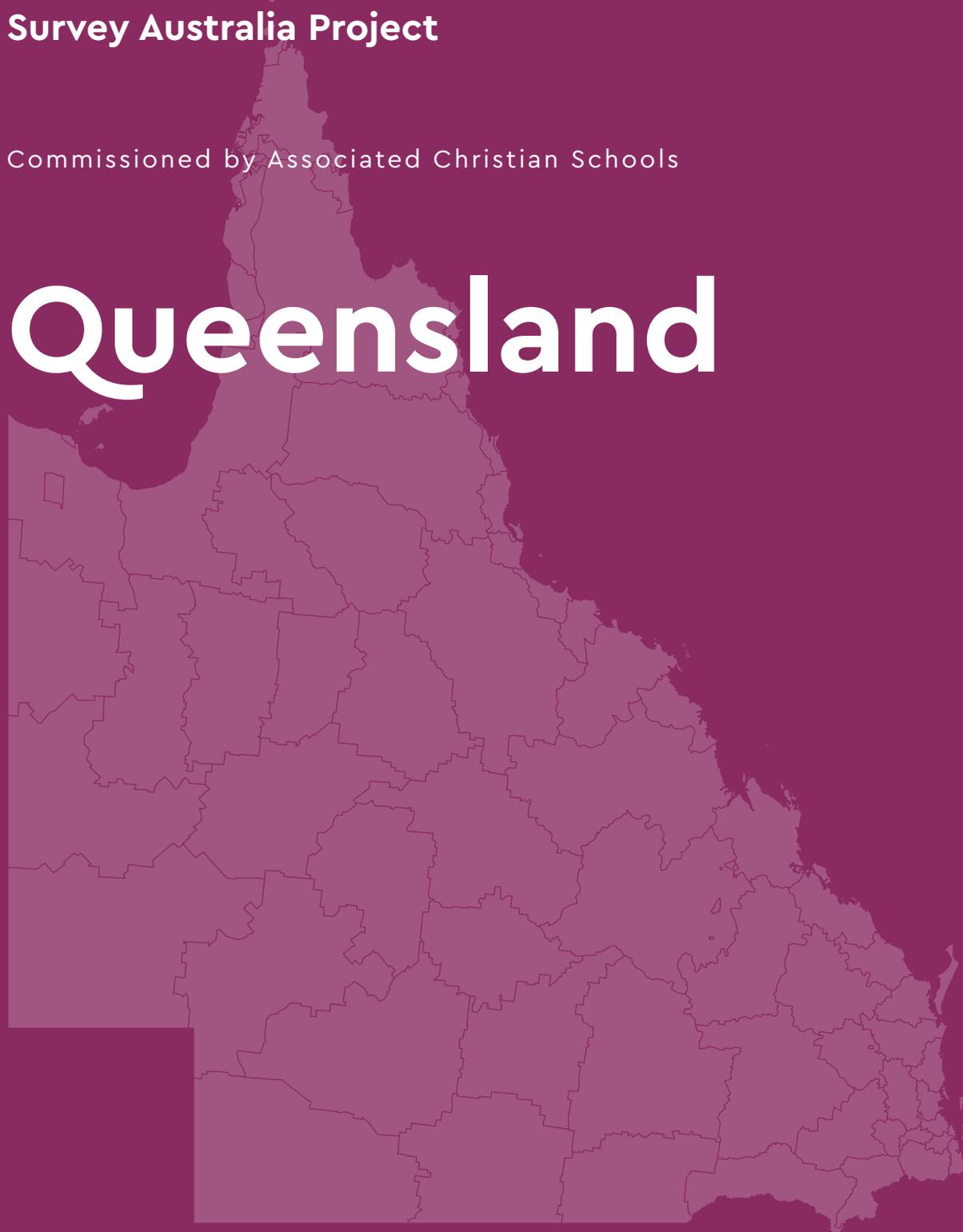


Australian School Millennials and the Common Good: A State-by-State Analysis of the Cardus Education Survey Australia Project

Commissioned by Associated Christian Schools

Queensland



mccrindle



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Christian education for the common good

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Dr Darren Iselin was commissioned by Associated Christian Schools to undertake this research.

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1. School effects 2. Religious schools 3. Private schooling 4. Independent schooling 5. Christian schools 6. Catholic Schools 7. Independent schools 8. Australian education 9. Graduate outcomes 10. Education policy 11. Purposes of education 12. Cultural engagement 13. Educational attainment 14. Spiritual formation 15. Graduate destinations

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Keywords

- Australian Education
- Metropolitan/ Non-Metropolitan schools
- Federalism and State based networks of schooling
- Christian School Networks
- Education and the Common Good

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Preface

The Cardus Education Survey Australia Project (2020)¹ and its landmark findings highlighted that the formation practices that occur across Australian school sector types, in partnership with the family and local community, have a significant impact on graduates' contribution to the common good across contemporary Australian society. The Cardus Education Survey (CES) Australia findings identified the contribution to the common good of graduates from Government, Catholic, Independent, and Christian schooling sectors to the academic, vocational, social and civic development of a nationally representative sample of 4913 graduates who completed secondary school between 1998 and 2011. The CES Australia reports contributed to the expanding corpus of other Cardus Education Survey reports from North America that have been compiled since 2011.² The CES has become a significant benchmark for measuring academic, cultural and spiritual outcomes of secondary school graduates.

Whilst the recent CES Australia project findings were noteworthy, Australia's federated education system necessitates a more nuanced and detailed analysis of this landmark data. There is wide ranging diversity of school types and educational emphases within each state and territory in Australia and this diversity fundamentally impacts on the type of education and formation that graduates receive across the nation. To better understand these contextual differences, Associated Christian Schools (ACS) through its Executive Director / Principal Research Officer Dr Lynne Doneley, commissioned a project to explore a detailed state-by state analysis and evaluation of the CES Australia project data sets, paying particular attention to the geographical, socio-cultural, metropolitan/ non-metropolitan, and demographic profiles and dimensions that are contextualised within each Australian state and territory.

1 Cheng, A. and Iselin, D. (2020). *Australian Schools and the Common Good*. Ontario: Canada.

2 Pennings, R., Sikkink, D., Wiens, K., Seel, J., & Van Pelt, D.A. (2011). *Cardus Education Study: Do the motivations for private religious Catholic and Protestant schooling align with graduate outcomes?* Hamilton, Canada: Cardus; Pennings, R., Sikkink, D., & Van Pelt, D.A., Van Brummelen, H., & von Heyking, A. (2012). Pennings, R., Sikkink, D., Berner, A. (2014). *Cardus Education Survey 2014: Private Schools for the Public Good*. Hamilton, Canada: Cardus. *Cardus Education Survey: A rising tide lifts all boats: Measuring non-government school effects in service of the Canadian public good*. Hamilton, Canada: Cardus. Green, B., Sikkema, D., Sikkink, D., Skiles, S., & Pennings, R. (2016). *Cardus Education Survey 2016; Educating to Love your Neighbour*. Hamilton, Canada: Cardus; Green, B., Sikkema, D., Sikkink, D. (2018). *Cardus Education Survey 2018: British Columbia Bulletin*. Hamilton, Canada: Cardus; Green, B., Sikkema, D., Sikkink, D. (2018). *Cardus Education Survey 2018: Ontario Bulletin*. Hamilton, Canada: Cardus; Casagrande, M. Pennings, R., & Sikkink, D. (2019). *Cardus Education Survey 2018: Rethinking Public Education*. Hamilton, Canada: Cardus.



Specifically, the project investigated and analysed five of these state jurisdictions: New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. Whilst an important part of the CES Australia nationally representative data collection, the very small sampling sizes of the Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania and the Northern Territory unfortunately did not allow for statistically reliable data sets within these more detailed state/territory-based analyses and therefore these have not been included in the final suite of state-based reports. The five state-based analyses and summaries have been presented separately in accessible bulletin formats that explore trends, strengths and points of interest relating to graduates' contribution to the common good across all sectors with a specific state-based emphasis. Through this suite of documents, The ACS State-by-State Analysis of the Cardus Education Survey Australia Project specifically seeks to:

- Identify how schools contribute to the common good within contemporary Australian society according to state/ territory breakdowns and analyses.
- Explore possible reasons and hypotheses for specific state-based findings that are supported by the data and related research.
- Compile a clear, succinct and well synthesised publication for policy makers, government officials and law makers regarding the transformative outcomes of schools within and state/territory boundaries and to what extent these state-based findings have impacted upon graduates' contribution to the common good.
- Promote further conversations on how Australian schools in different regions and geographical areas contribute to the common good in unique, nuanced and heavily contextualised ways.
- It is hoped that the analysis of these state-based findings will assist educational leaders and policy makers (at both state and federal levels) to consider ways to improve and promote equity and access; school and community engagement; employment and training, university enrolments, family cohesion, and civic, social and religious engagement across every state and territory in Australia.

Background: The Cardus Education Survey Australia Project

The Cardus Education Survey Australia Project was undergirded by a set of assumptions about what type of people are needed for our shared life to flourish. People who are employed, intelligent, and capable of developing various skills are good, but our common life also needs people whose disposition is one of service, who give of their time, resources, and skills; who belong and are involved with religious communities, local political and environmental groups, and are committed to their families and their communities; and who, ultimately, are capable of loving their neighbours.³

For nearly a decade, Cardus, a Canadian independent think tank with hubs located across North America dedicated to the renewal of social architecture, has gathered data about the ways secondary school graduates contribute to the common good. The Cardus Education Survey (CES) has been administered multiple times across the USA and Canada since 2011.

Convinced of the importance of the CES findings and the robustness of the survey instrument, a consortium of Australian Christian school associations came together in 2019 to implement the CES in Australia, leading to the formation of the CES Australia Project. Whilst the project was overseen and licensed through Cardus, the Australian implementation of the CES was entirely funded and coordinated by a consortium project team consisting of 6 Australian Christian School Associations: Adventist Schools Australia (ASA), Associated Christian Schools (ACS), Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACCS), Christian Education National (CEN), Christian Schools Australia (CSA) and Swan Christian Education Association (SCEA).

The CES was adapted for the Australian context and administered in 2019 by ORIMA Research to a nationally representative sample of 4913 adults ages 25 to 39 (millennials) who attended secondary school

in Australia. In all, 3913 respondents completed the survey online and another 1000 respondents completed it via computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) technology. Access to the methodological report can be found here: <https://carduseducationsurvey.com.au/research/>

The findings highlighted that the formation practices that occur across Australian school sector types, in partnership with the family and local community, have a significant impact on graduates' contribution to the common good across contemporary Australian society. The CES Australia identified six major themes relating to how millennials from Government, Catholic, Independent and Christian schools contribute to the common good:

- Formation: The influence of school and educational experiences
- Work: Employment, vocational pathways and income
- Belonging: Involvement in associations, groups and causes
- Generosity: Giving through donations and volunteering
- Family: Marriage and relationships
- Religion: Faith and spiritual commitments and practices

The findings, though presented separately by sector, are not intended as competitive claims between sectors within Australian education. Whilst the study has been financially supported by six Christian school associations, the CES Australia project was conducted in a manner to ensure independent analysis that will be of benefit for the common good of all Australians. Access to each of the CES Reports is available here <https://carduseducationsurvey.com.au/research/>

3 Cheng and Iselin, 2020.

Executive Summary: Queensland Millennial Graduates: Contributing to the Common Good

The findings of this state-based report of the CES Australia data reveal that, across all sectors within Queensland (QLD) education, millennial graduates contribute to the common good and sustain civic life in varying degrees across a range of civic outcomes. These graduates were employed, actively contributing to their chosen careers and work, while displaying a commitment to service and public life.⁴ These dispositions were evidenced in membership of a variety of associations and groups, volunteer work in their communities, financial giving to a range of causes and organisations and expressed in their commitments to families and others within their wider community.⁵

QLD schools, to varying degrees across all sectors, seek to form graduates who contribute to the common good, suitably prepare for career and university success, promote holistic character development initiatives and ensure that graduates are well equipped to deal with the problems of life and have a sense of meaning and purpose in their future endeavours. Findings within this state analysis suggest that the vast geographical land area of the state and long history of relative socio-economic disadvantage across both metropolitan and non-metropolitan regions continues to produce lower educational attainment, employment opportunities and career pathways options for QLD graduates. However, there are some optimistic findings regarding levels of bachelor completions that are higher in

non-metropolitan areas in QLD than most other non-metropolitan areas in Australia (apart from Victoria), and most notably significantly higher across each sector than NSW graduates in non-metropolitan areas. Furthermore, QLD graduates from across all sectors were generous with their time and money, often serving and giving at greater levels than their counterparts in other states. QLD Christian school graduates are more likely than any other graduate in Australia to serve with generosity as expressed through volunteering in their communities. Due to the complex interrelationships and demographic characteristics of family, community and schooling, these findings relating to graduates' contribution to the common good should be treated with caution and direct association of schooling alone should not be assigned without considering these important formative elements shaping each QLD graduate.

The findings from this detailed state analysis of the Cardus Education Survey Australia data reveal that QLD graduates are distinctive in their contribution to the common good across a range of civic, social, religious, vocational and educational categories. It is hoped that these findings stimulate further conversation, reflection and analysis regarding the role all QLD schools play, in partnership with the family and local community, in forming active, public facing citizens who are contributing to the common good within contemporary Australian communities.

4 Cheng and Iselin, 2020.

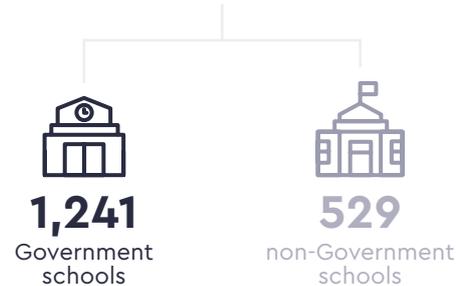
5 Ibid.

Queensland: A state analysis of the Cardus Education Survey Australia Project

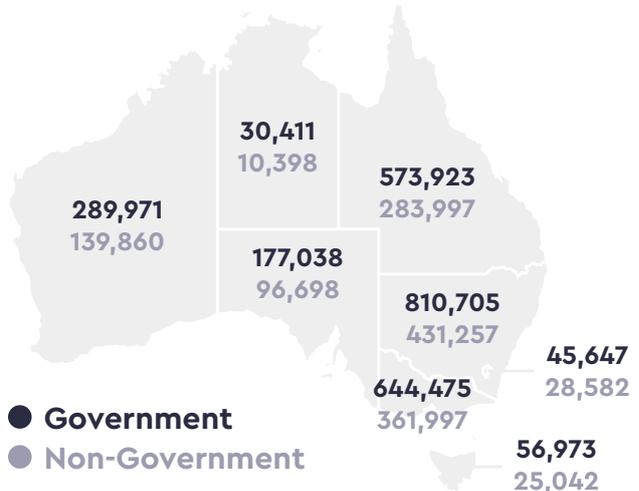
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Demographic Snapshot

In Queensland there are currently



Student enrolments by state and territory and Government/Non-Government school affiliation, 2020



Millennial graduates from Queensland contribute to the common good through:

Formation

Queensland schools prepare graduates for university and career success.



Two in three Queensland graduates (66%) felt prepared for university success (cf. 71% VIC, 67% NSW, 64% WA, 63% SA).



Three in five Queensland graduates (58%) felt prepared for career success (cf. 60% VIC, 59% SA, 58% NSW, 53% WA).

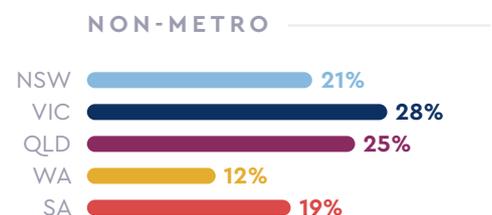
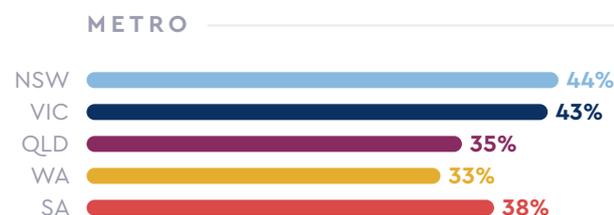
Work

Professional skills, employment and having a stable income are important both for individuals and communities to flourish. These are important in profiling a graduate who contributes to the common good.



Two in every three graduates from Queensland are employed (68%)

Graduates with bachelor degrees across metro and non-metro regions



Belonging

Membership of associations, groups and causes promote a sense of belonging within communities, expand social networks, and encourage broader civic engagement.



24% of Queensland graduates are involved in a sport, leisure, or cultural group

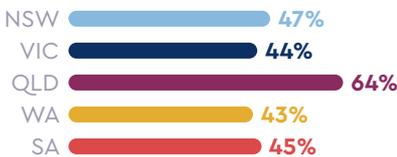


18% of Queensland graduates in non-metro areas are involved in business or professional group, having the third highest involvement across the nation

Generosity

Giving of one's time and money is a civic value that enhances community, assuming individuals cannot flourish if their neighbours cannot.

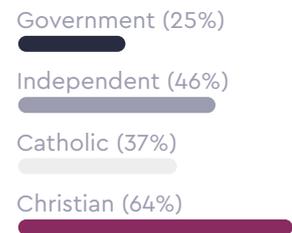
Queensland Christian graduates' are more likely than any other graduate in any state to volunteer



Queensland graduates' level of giving compared to all other states



Graduates from Queensland Christian schools are more likely than Christian school graduates from any other state to volunteer:



Faith commitments and spiritual practices

Faith and belief not only provide a sense of purpose, and the associated benefits of good mental health and wellbeing, but also provide places of belonging and community connection.



One in six Queensland graduates attend church at least monthly (17%).



Queensland Christian school Graduates are the **most likely** to attend church at least monthly compared to graduates from other schools (38% cf. 21% Independent, 14% Government, 12% Catholic).

Building flourishing communities of the future

To increase the wellbeing and flourishing of Australian communities and graduates Queensland schools could focus on:



Promoting holistic profiles of Queensland graduates that measure what is of value across educational, vocational, civic and social measures.



Cultivating the importance of membership and involvement in a variety of civic associations and groups.

METHODOLOGY

In 2021 Associated Christian Schools (ACS) commissioned a project to explore a detailed state-by-state analysis and evaluation of the CES Australia project data sets. Data from the Cardus Education survey Australia project was collated from a nationally representative sample of 4,913 graduates, conducted in March and April 2020, who completed secondary school between 1998 and 2011. 17% of the total sample was from Queensland.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2020.

CARDUS

Adventist Education

Australia

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NATIONAL
vision community partnership

CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
Australia

Swan Christian EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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ACS

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Introduction: Queensland State Representative Sampling, Data Collection, and Analysis

This detailed state analysis of the CES Australia project data, concentrates on QLD graduates and their responses as part of a representative sample of 25–39-year-olds (Millennials) who graduated from QLD Government, Catholic, Independent and Christian school secondary schools from 1998–2011. In most Australian survey data collections related to schools, three dominant sectors are represented: Government (state or public) schools and two major groups within the non-Government (private) sector, namely, Catholic schools and independent schools.

For the purposes of the CES Australia inquiry, we also explored a fourth category, Christian schools, which have historically been represented as a range of Protestant denominational sub-categories within the independent schools' sector.

The current project investigated and analysed the CES Australia data across five state jurisdictions: New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. Whilst an important part of the CES Australia nationally representative data collection, the very small sampling sizes of Tasmania and the Northern Territory unfortunately did not allow for statistically reliable data sets within these more detailed state/territory-based analyses and therefore these have not been included in the final suite of state-based reports.

Furthermore, whilst the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) is also a distinct education system with well-established ministerial oversight, for the purposes of this standalone report, ACT data has been included into the NSW data sets due to the extremely small sampling of ACT respondents within the national representative sample.

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics was utilised to derive population profiles for the 25–39 age cohort by gender and state (metropolitan/non-metropolitan). These general population profiles formed the basis of nationally representative targets for the data collection of the survey.

The responding sample for Queensland was representative across gender and state sampling means and included a total of 11% of respondents from Queensland metropolitan areas (2% below the general population in the State's metropolitan areas) and 6% of respondents from non-metropolitan areas (the mean for general population in non-metropolitan areas in Queensland).

Overview of Schooling in Queensland

Schooling in Queensland started in 1826 with a small cohort of 16 pupils, predominantly the children of soldiers and convicts located in Moreton Bay.⁶ It was not until 1850 that the first national school was established in Warwick, an outcome of the State Aid debates relating to Australian schooling.⁷ Historically, Gilbert suggests that QLD has lacked the strong educated class of the southern states, and the vast geographical land area of the state has contributed to a history of relative disadvantage, proportionally lower educational attainment and often a disconnection or indifference to centralised state government educational initiatives.⁸ Due to this tyranny of distance, political power has historically remained provincial and parochial with strong socially conservative views leading to a perception of the state from NSW and Victoria as being the "deep north".⁹

Gilbert suggests that the socio-economic characteristics of QLD present considerable obstacles to improvement agendas and these proportionally higher levels of social and economic hardship are reinforced when considering QLD has Australia's highest proportion of population living outside of the metropolitan area.¹⁰ Such a dispersed distribution of population is illuminated by the sheer size of the state where Brisbane is closer to Melbourne than it is to Cairns and to Hobart as it is to Cape York.¹¹ This highly decentralised population with, at times, disproportionate regional political influence, has also influenced educational policy. The historical dominance of primary industry as the state's major employer, driving a more pragmatic and work-related decision-making regarding schooling completion, significantly contributing to a strong reluctance to embrace secondary education, even as late as the 1960's. Such aversion to educational change also

contributed to a reluctance to introduce an optional Prep year until 2007 and, this initiative was not made compulsory for all parents until 2017. These changes finally brought QLD students closer in alignment with ages for school commencement and total years of schooling as other states and territories across the nation.

However, Yates suggests that this historical educational deficit within the state has led to a renewed commitment over the last 60 years to make up for lost ground regarding educational attainment, schooling retention and student pathways options. This spawned a raft of radical initiatives and educational policy decision making evidenced in the landmark change initiatives, with varying levels of success, of the Radford Report (leading to the removal of public examinations in the 1970's); Review of School Based Assessment (ROSBA) (the adoption of criteria based assessment measures and proliferation of subject offerings in senior school in the 1980's); and the New Basics and productive pedagogies framework arising from the Wiltshire Report and Queensland School Reform Longitudinal study (QSRLS) in the 1990's. Rob Gilbert reflects that the "The history of curriculum policy and development in Queensland offers an intriguing study, for what is often viewed as a tradition bound and conservative culture and polity has in fact produced a surprising number of what can be seen as quite radical curriculum reforms".¹²

There are currently 1770 QLD primary and secondary schools, making it the third largest education sector in Australia and just over half the size of NSW education sector. These include 1241 Government schools and 529 non-government schools.

6 Barcan, 1980.

7 Barcan, 1980; Shellard, 1983.

8 Yates, 2011.

9 Gilbert, 2011, p.165.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

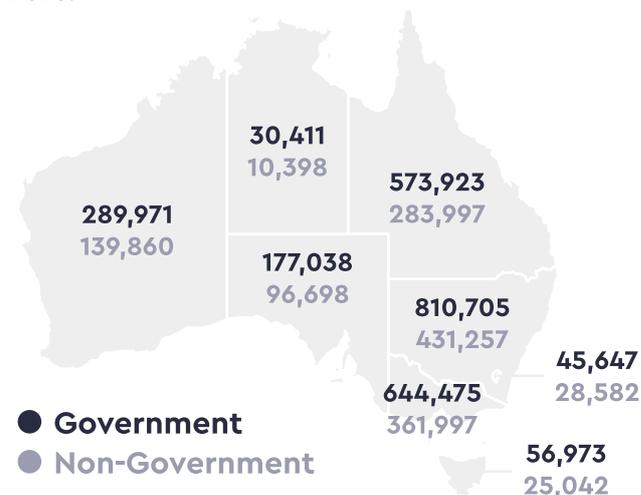
12 Gilbert, 2011, p.164.

Table 1 Australian Schools by Sector 2020¹³

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	Australia
GOVERNMENT	2157	1537	1241	510	799	191	152	88	6675
Primary	1608	1130	913	352	540	125	65	57	4790
Secondary	369	244	190	66	112	37	15	19	1052
Combined	67	83	93	74	82	25	67	8	499
Special schools	113	80	45	18	65	4	5	4	334
NON-GOVERNMENT	950	717	529	205	309	71	38	48	2867
Primary	494	434	222	96	145	30	10	28	1459
Secondary	140	96	77	20	30	5	7	6	381
Combined	254	160	186	81	119	31	20	13	864
Special schools	62	27	44	8	15	5	1	1	163
ALL SECTORS	3107	2254	1770	715	1108	262	190	136	9542
Primary	2102	1564	1135	448	685	155	75	85	6249
Secondary	509	340	267	86	142	42	22	25	1433
Combined	321	243	279	155	201	56	87	21	1363

Across these 1770 schools, QLD has student enrolments of 857,920 representing just over a fifth (21%) of all Australian student enrolments. In 2020, the proportion of students enrolled in non-government QLD schools was 33% just below NSW (35%) and behind Victoria (36%) and the Australian Capital Territory (39%) (see map 1).

Map 1: Student enrolments by state and territory and Government/ Non-Government school affiliation, 2020.¹⁴



13 ABS Australian Schools by Sector 2020 <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/schools/2020>

14 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2020. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/schools/2020>

Queensland Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)

QLD has a significant proportion of local areas of disadvantage, whereby 7 of the top ten areas in the nation are found in QLD.¹⁵ These areas are evident in regional, rural and remote communities and these disparities have remained unchanged for decades, despite a raft of policy initiatives and programs.

¹⁶ Furthermore, QLD has the third fourth largest percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments (9%) of any State or Territory in Australia (see Table 2) which exceeds the national average (6%).

Table 2: Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Enrolments by State and Territory, 2020.¹⁷

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments by state and territory, 2020



¹⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2018. Socio-economic indexes for areas (SEIFA)

¹⁶ Ibid. [https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2033.0.55.001~2016~Media%20Release~Census%20shows%20our%20most%20advantaged%20&%20disadvantaged%20areas%20\(Media%20Release\)~25](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2033.0.55.001~2016~Media%20Release~Census%20shows%20our%20most%20advantaged%20&%20disadvantaged%20areas%20(Media%20Release)~25)

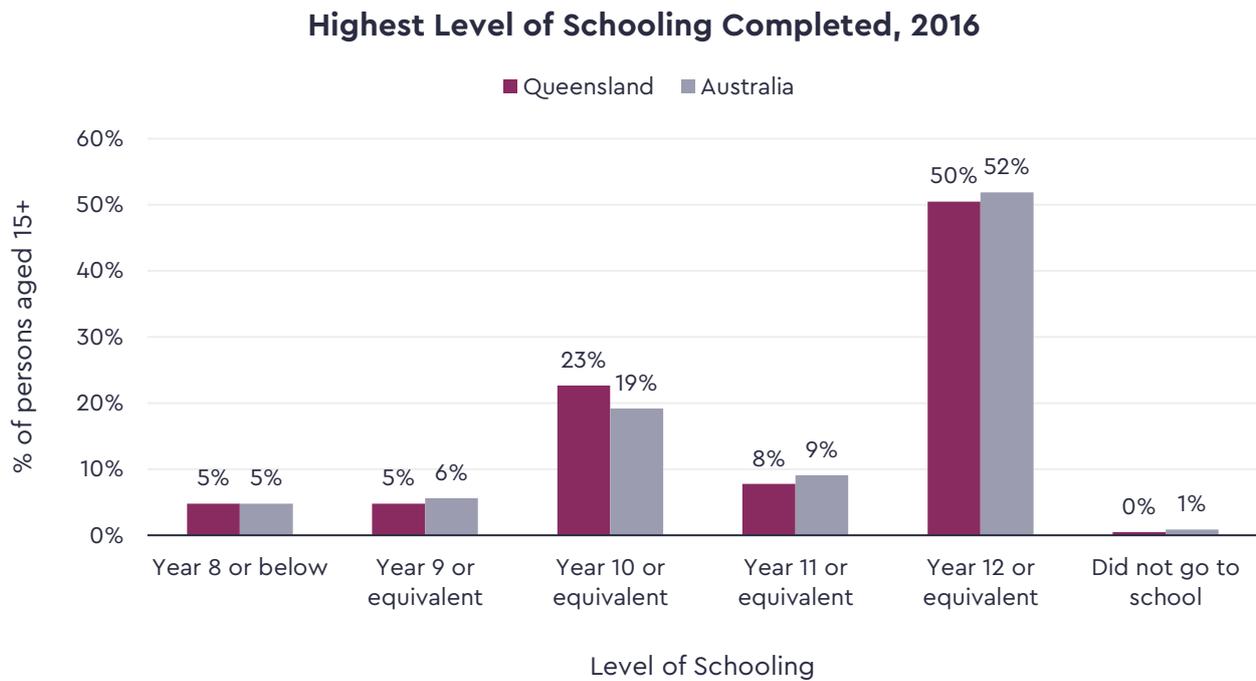
¹⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2020 <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/schools/2020>

Queensland Year 12 Completion Rates

Analysis of the highest level of schooling attained by the population in QLD in 2016 compared to the rest of Australia reveals that 51% of QLD students completed Year 12 or equivalent compared to the national average of 52%. These levels are below VIC students'

Year 12 completion rate of 54% and NSW levels of 52% but are higher than SA's completion rate of 47%. A higher proportion of QLD students had also left school at an earlier level (Year 10 or less) (23%) than the national average of 19% (see table 3).

Table 3: Highest Level of Schooling Completed, 2016¹⁸



¹⁸ ID Demographic resources <https://profile.id.com.au/australia/schooling?WebID=110&BMID=40>

Queensland Millennial Graduates and Formation: Schools and Educational Experiences

The CES Australia investigated a range of formation practices in Australian schools. Formation refers to the way that schools shape the values and character of young people throughout their schooling experience. It is important to note however that schools are part of complex moral ecosystem, including family and community, where shared commitments are formed and practiced. The survey asked respondents to reflect on their school's cultural emphases and distinctives, their levels of satisfaction with their school and how well they felt their school prepared them for life within contemporary Australian society. Within this state specific analysis, we have used this data to examine graduate perceptions of their schooling experiences, to understand how these experiences might have influenced their lives and contribution to the common good.

Overall, QLD schools' preparation for career success was similar to other states (58% see figure 1). QLD Catholic graduates (61%) and QLD Independent graduates (60%) were more likely than any other sector in QLD to feel prepared for career success. Furthermore, QLD graduates overall felt more prepared for career success in non-metropolitan areas (65% see figure 3) than in metropolitan areas (54% see figure 2). Catholic graduates in non-metropolitan areas (78% see figure 3) felt most prepared for career success than any other graduate from the nation and were over three times more likely than WA graduates to feel prepared for career success (23% see figure 3).

Figure 1 Percentage of respondents who felt prepared by their school for career success

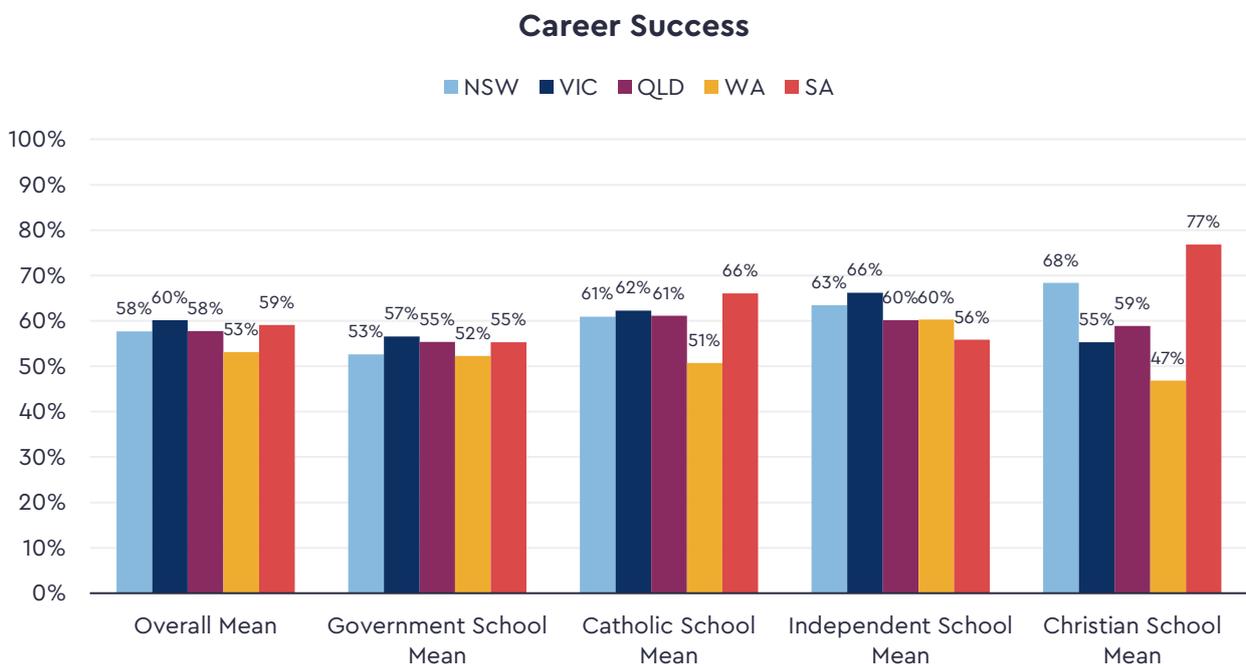
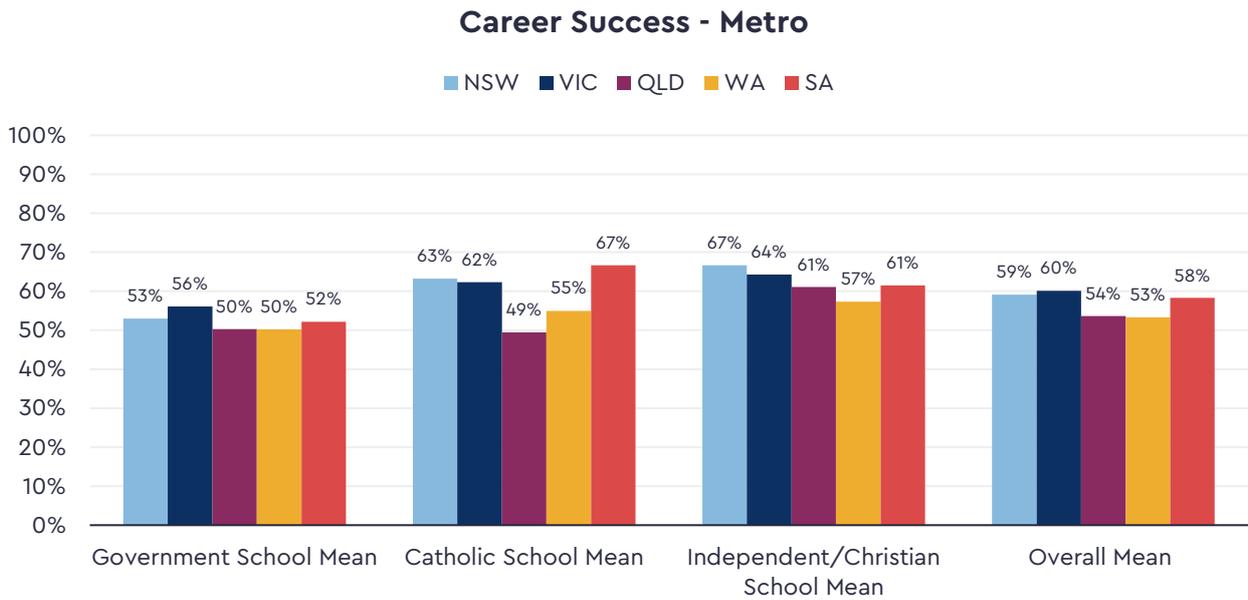
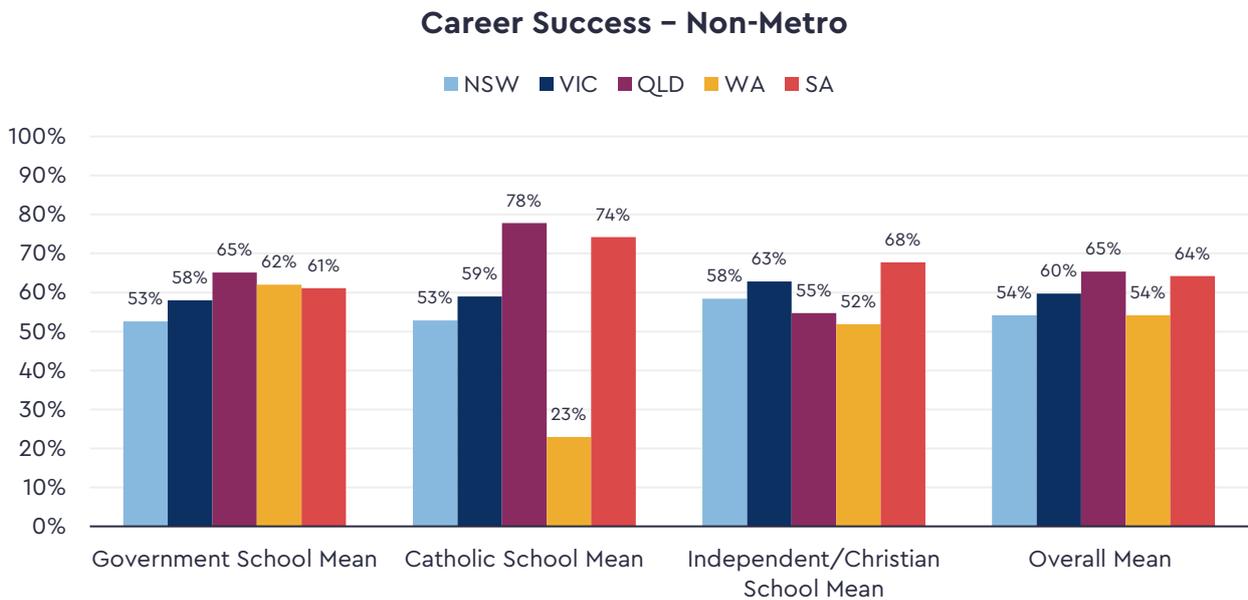


Figure 2 Percentage of respondents who felt prepared by their school for career success – Metropolitan areas*



* Due to very small Christian school sampling responses in non-metropolitan areas across all states, all metropolitan and non-metropolitan analyses used within this report will merge Independent and Christian data sets.

Figure 3 Percentage of respondents who felt prepared by their school for career success Non-metropolitan



QLD graduates' perceptions on how well they felt prepared for university success were consistent with the rest of the nation (66%) with QLD Government school graduates (60%) preparedness highly consistent across nearly every state in Australia. When analysed according to metropolitan and non-metropolitan locales, QLD graduates again felt more prepared in non-metropolitan areas, with Government (62%) and Catholic (76%) feeling more prepared than other graduates from these respective sectors across

the nation (see figure 6). Feelings of preparedness translated well into actual bachelor completions for QLD Catholic school graduates (34% – second highest in the nation across all non-metropolitan graduates from all sectors). Although these high levels of completion across each sector in QLD were significantly less than QLD metropolitan graduates (see figure 5 and figure 6). A more detailed analysis of these results will be discussed in the next section.

Figure 4 Percentage of respondents who felt prepared by their school for university success

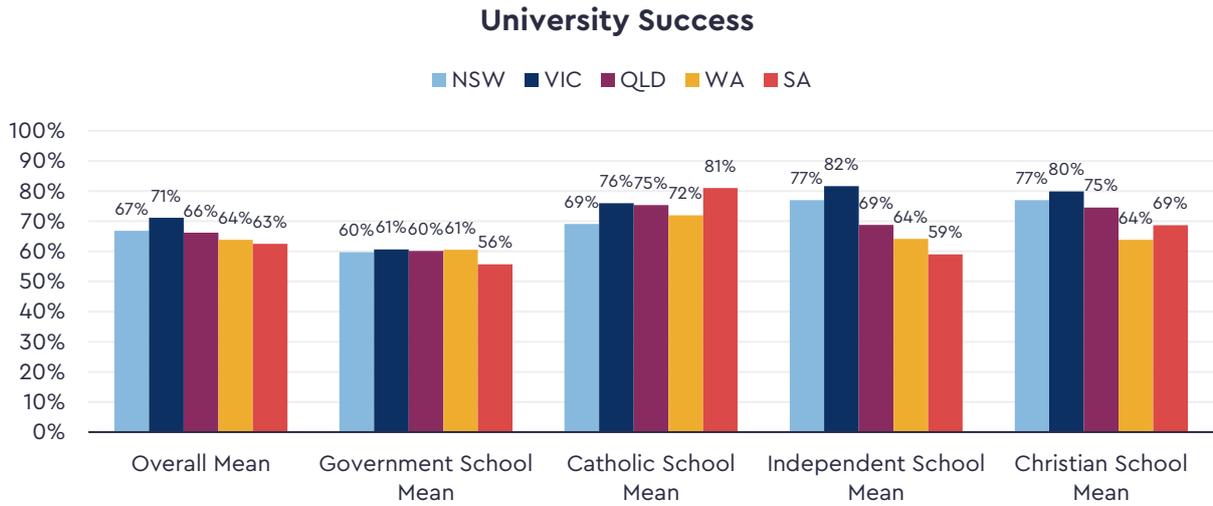


Figure 5 Percentage of respondents who felt prepared by their school for university success – Metropolitan areas

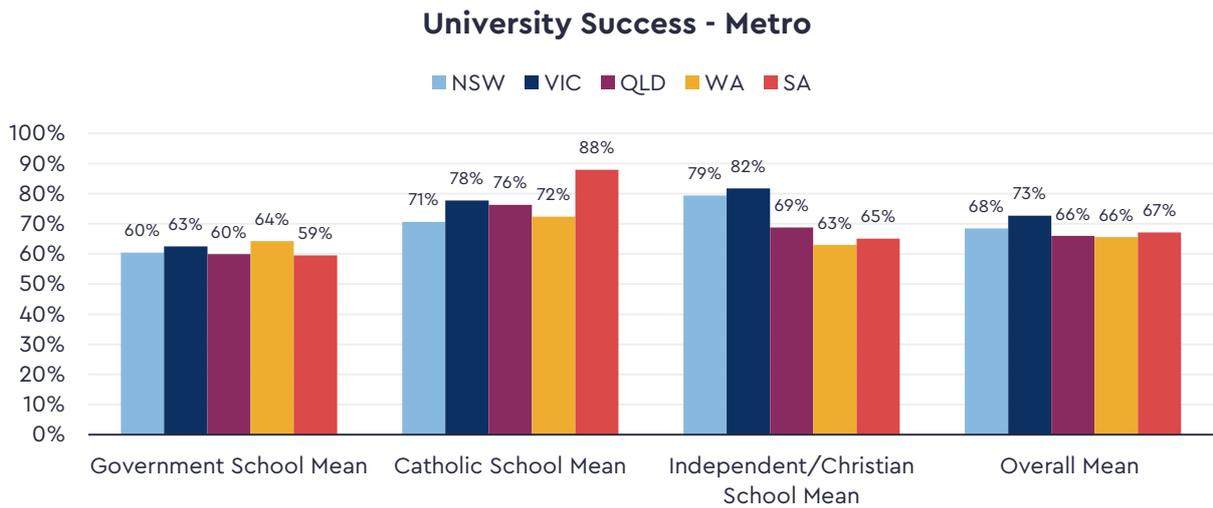
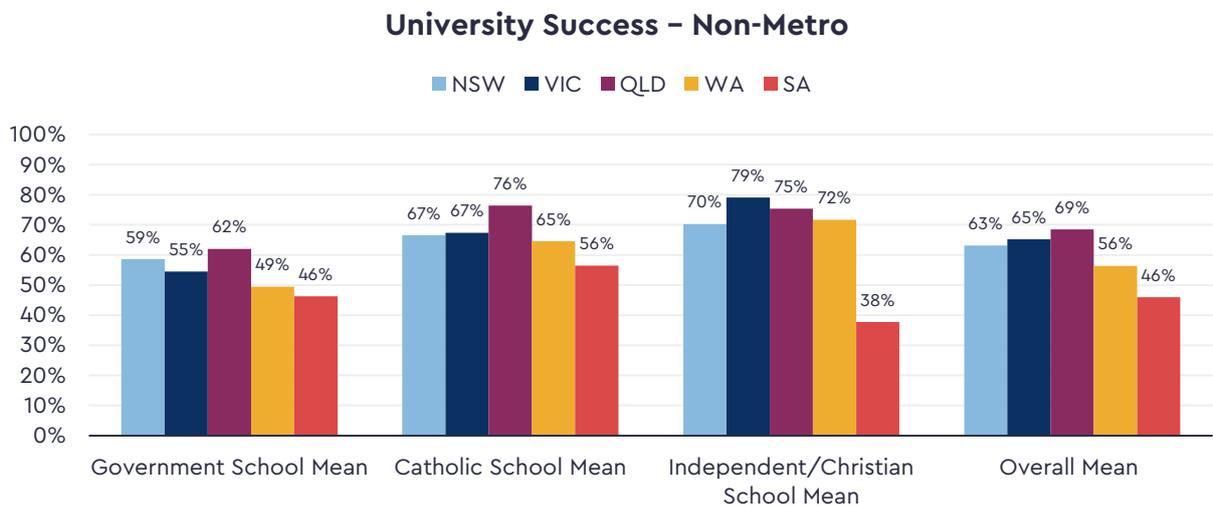


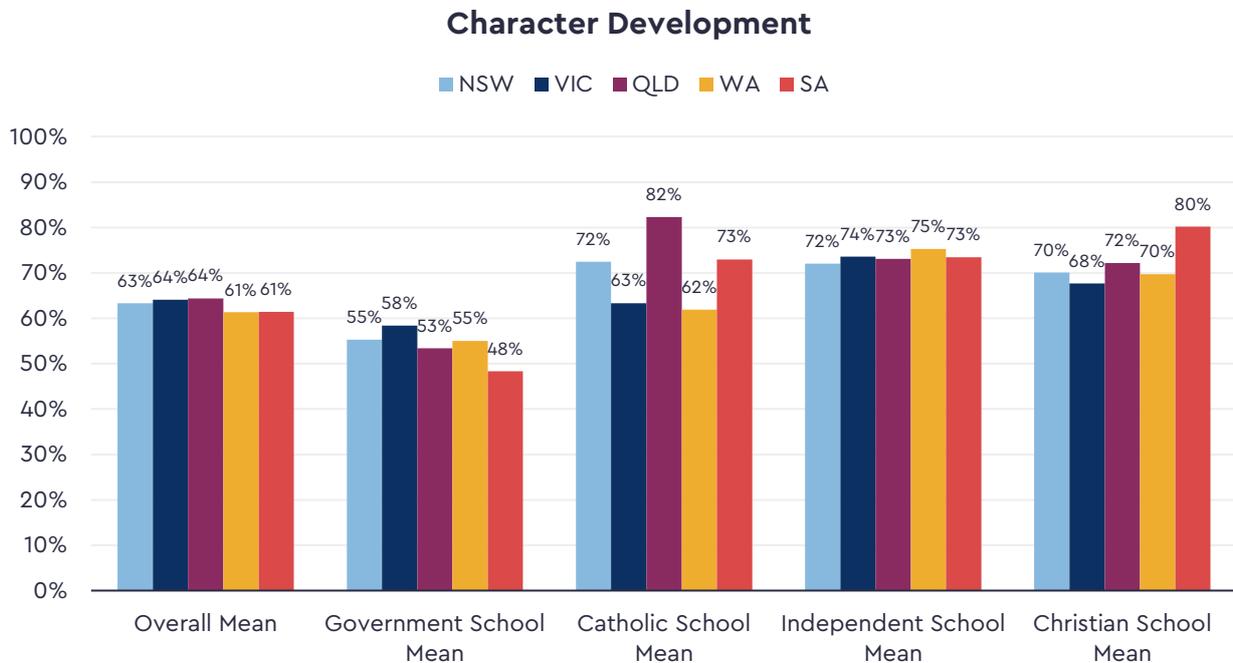
Figure 6 Percentage of respondents who felt prepared by their school for university success Non-metropolitan



Emphasis on character development within QLD schools was quite high across QLD schools overall (64%) and was generally strong across each sector (see figure 7). The cultivation and emphasis of character development was most noticeable in QLD

Catholic (82%), Independent (73%) and Christian (72%) graduates, with QLD Catholic graduates perceiving that their schools' emphasis on character formation was the highest of any graduate from any sector and state across Australia (see figure 7).

Figure 7 Percentage of respondents who felt there was an emphasis on character development in their school



QLD graduates overall felt well prepared for dealing with life's problems by their school (55% see figure 8), consistent with other states across Australia. QLD Christian (74%) school graduates were most likely to feel prepared to deal with life's problems (see figure 8), with only NSW (75%) and SA more likely to feel as prepared (76% see figure 8).

QLD Christian school graduates overall were just as likely as graduates from other states to have felt prepared to find a sense of meaning, purpose, and direction in life (55% see figure 8). QLD Christian school graduates (75%) were the most likely to feel prepared than all other QLD graduates (see figure 9). In an age of increasing rates of social isolation, disconnection and mental health challenges and an aching sense of meaninglessness and capacity to deal with problems, these results are noteworthy.¹⁹

QLD Christian school graduates were nearly 26% more likely to feel prepared for this than a QLD Government school graduate (49%) and nearly 29% more likely than a government school graduate from SA (44%) (see figure 9). It is recommended that further investigations into the reasons for these high levels of preparedness in key areas relating to resilience and wellbeing in QLD Christian school graduates are undertaken to assist all schools in shaping graduates with a sense of purpose and hope for the future.

¹⁹ Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010; Shankar et al. 2015.

Figure 8 Percentage of respondents who felt prepared by their school to deal with life's problems

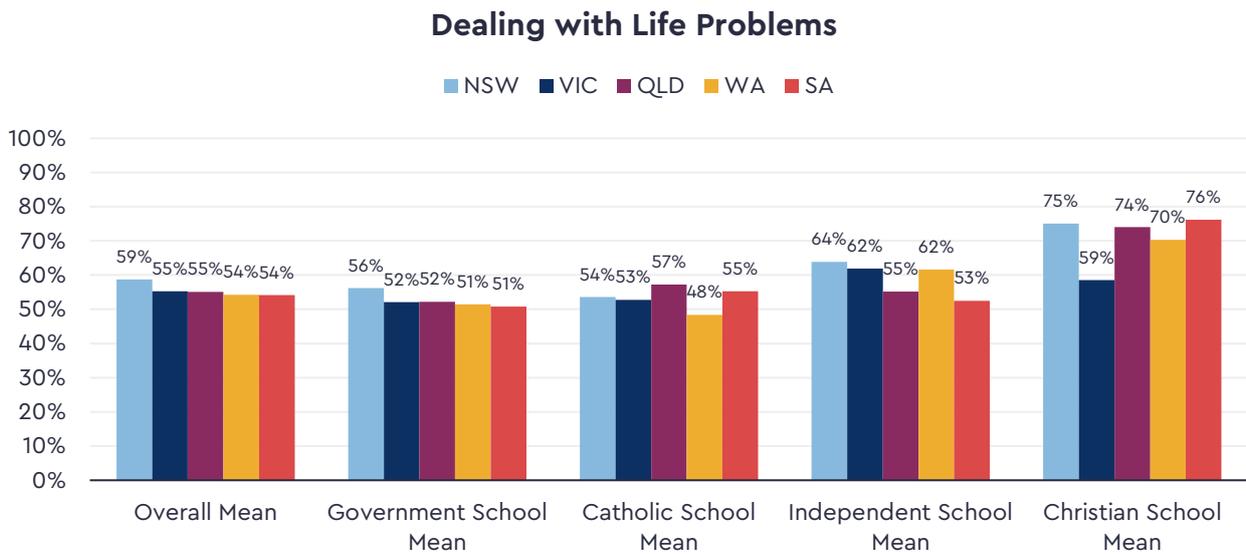
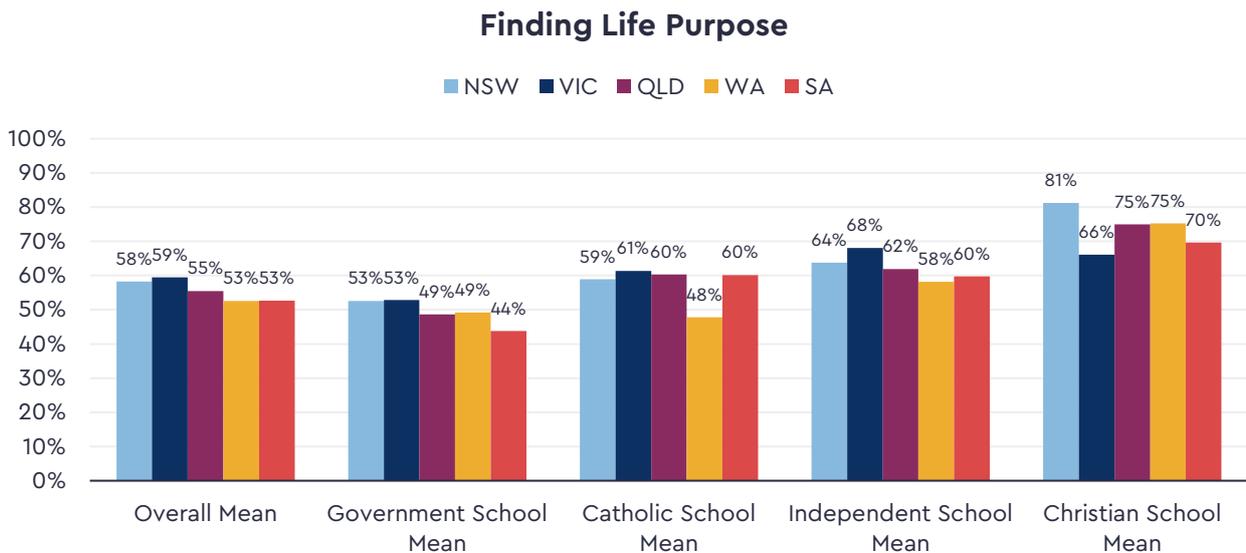


Figure 9 Percentage of respondents who felt prepared by their school to find meaning and purpose in life



Across other perceived levels of satisfaction, emphasis, and preparedness regarding a range of concepts including academic excellence, community service, discipline, teacher relationships, spiritual values and interaction with society and culture, QLD school graduates were generally not different to other states in any statistically significant way.

These findings on formation through graduate schooling experiences reveal those levels of engagement, satisfaction and perceived feelings of preparedness ways shape and inform a graduate's contribution to the common good later in life. Whilst a school's focus on measures relating to economic productivity, job preparedness and social efficiency

are important and constitutive of flourishing, a quality and holistic education must also seek to form good citizens through social, civic, and even religious dimensions. In the results presented, QLD schools are preparing graduates for academic learning, career preparation and university preparation across both metropolitan and non-metropolitan locales. QLD schools in various ways are preparing graduates with resilience, wellbeing and a disposition that is others focussed and character orientated. Evidenced in these findings, schools prepare their graduates for the common good, in a variegated range of ways that are not merely economic, but most importantly are holistic.

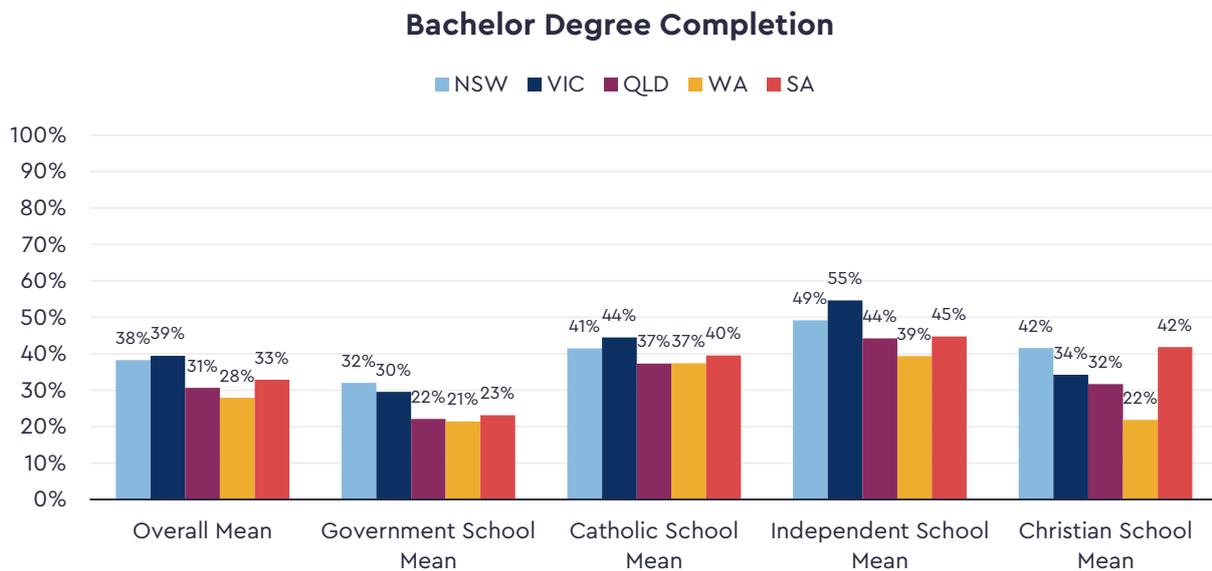
Queensland Millennial Graduates and Work: Employment, Vocational Pathways and Income

This section of the CES Australia explored whether different perceptions across school sectors translate into different career and employment pathways. Specifically, do the different perceptions of how well schools prepared graduates for career, university and work have an impact on actual outcomes related to educational attainment, employment, and income? The acquisition of professional skills, employment and having a stable income are unquestionably important to flourishing both for individuals and the communities in which they live. However, they are only one important element in the profiling of a graduate who contributes to the common good.²⁰ Questions within this section sought to glean highest post-secondary qualification, employment and work-related information and income levels of each respondent.

Overall, QLD graduates' bachelor's degree completions were the second lowest in the nation across all school sectors (31% see figure 10). QLD Independent school graduates were most likely of any sector in QLD to have completed a degree (44%). QLD Catholic (37%) and QLD Christian school (32%)

graduates have lower levels of bachelor completions than other similar graduates from each sector in most other states (see figure 10). The findings revealed that QLD Government school graduates had the equal second lowest level of bachelor completions (22%), slightly below the OECD averages for Australian graduate completions of 24–35-year-olds which is at 24%.²¹ These low levels of bachelor completions across each sector in QLD might suggest graduates were seeking alternative career and vocational pathway options that did not require university courses. Furthermore, QLD post-school qualification rates (55%) suggest that these non-university pathway options and post school employment opportunities were contributing factors that have impacted on these comparatively low bachelor completions across state. What the impact on QLD bachelor completions of the Bradley Review²² on these retrospective findings is unclear, further investigation into these comparatively low rates is required and will be discussed further in the metropolitan / non-metropolitan analysis of these results later in this section.

Figure 10 Percentage of respondents who have completed a bachelor's degree



20 Cheng and Iselin, 2020

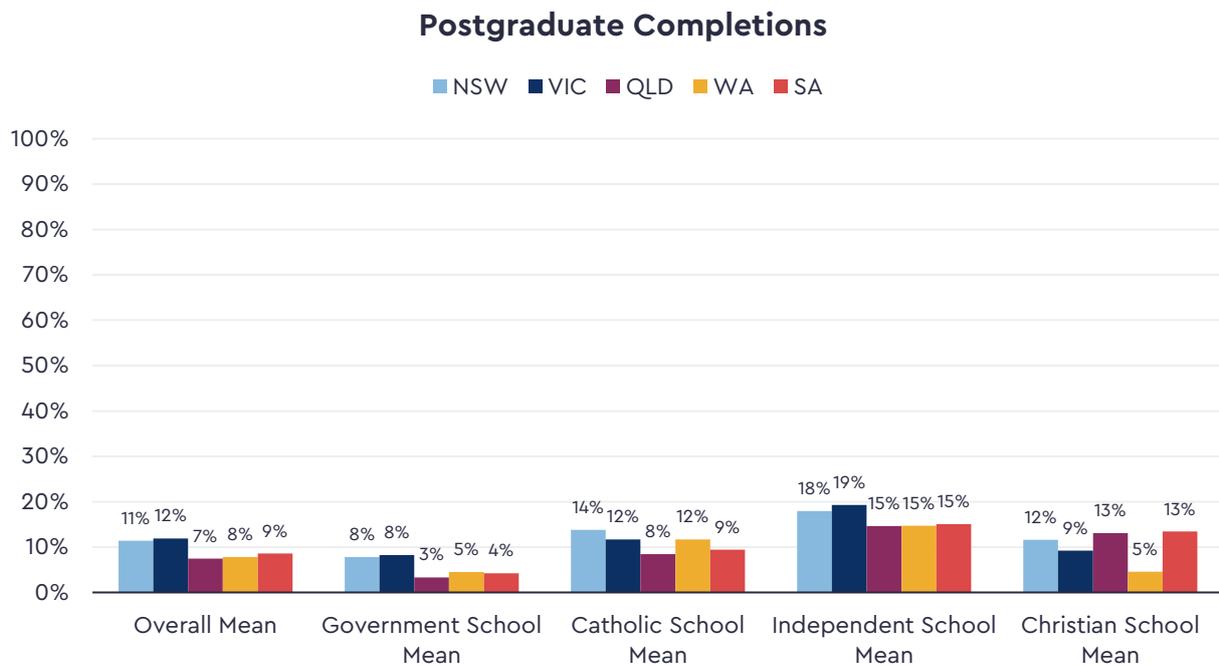
21 OECD, 2019

22 Bradley, D., Noonan, P., Nugent, H., & Scales, B. (2008). Review of Australian Higher Education: Final Report. Canberra.

The findings also revealed that QLD graduates overall were least likely to have completed postgraduate degrees than any other graduates across the nation (7%). QLD Independent school (15%) and Christian school graduates (13%) were most likely to have completed a postgraduate degree within QLD and

were up to five times more likely to have completed these qualifications than a QLD Government school graduate (3%), which had the lowest level of completions of any sector across the nation (see figure 11).

Figure 11 Percentage of respondents who have completed a postgraduate degree



QLD Graduate Bachelor Completions Metropolitan / Non-Metropolitan Analyses

When further analysis is undertaken to differentiate responses from metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, it is revealed that QLD graduates overall in metropolitan areas (35%) were second least likely have completed a bachelor's degree than other states in the nation, apart from WA (33%). QLD Government graduates in metropolitan areas were the least likely of any Government graduate from across the nation to have completed a bachelor's degree (25%), significantly lower than any other state (see figure 12). Independent/ Christian²³ graduates in QLD in metropolitan areas are most likely of any QLD sector

to have completed a bachelor's degree (47% see figure 10), although such rates were significantly lower than NSW (53%) and VIC (55%) Independent/ Christian graduates in metropolitan areas. The findings also revealed that QLD Catholic graduates in metropolitan areas (39%) were the second least likely of all Catholic graduates across the nation, apart from SA Catholic graduates (39%) to have completed a degree.

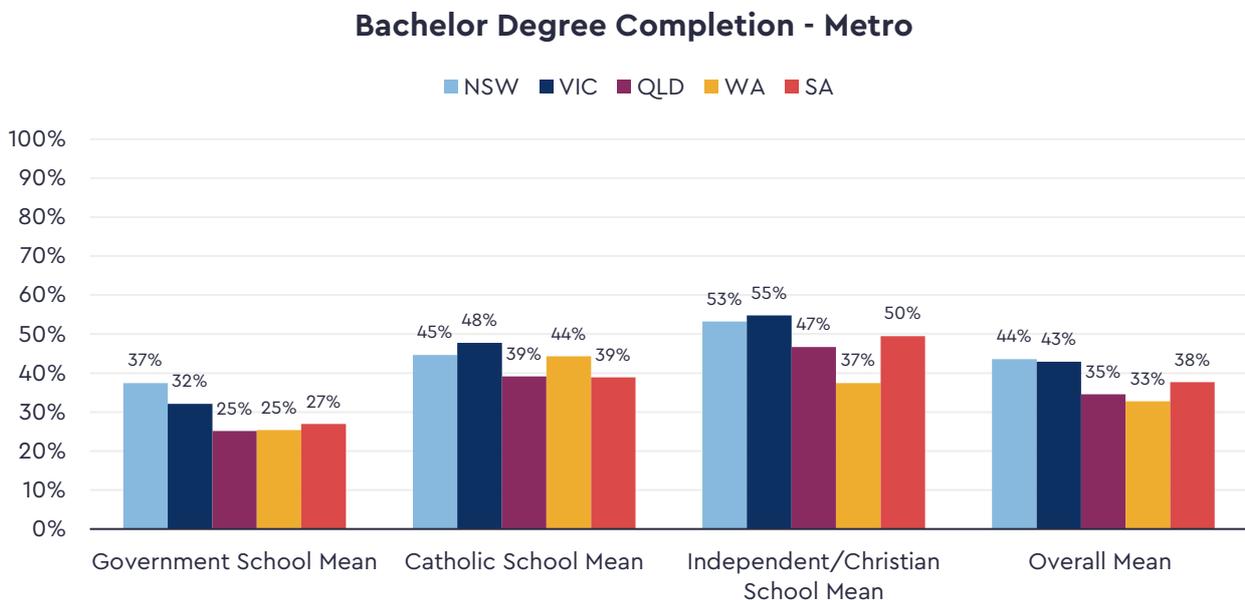
²³ Due to very small Christian school sampling responses in non-metropolitan areas across all states, all metropolitan and non-metropolitan analyses used within this report will merge Independent and Christian data sets.

However, in contrast to this comparatively low metropolitan result, QLD Catholic graduates in non-metropolitan areas had the highest level of bachelor completions of any other Catholic graduates in the nation and were over 5 times more likely to have completed a bachelor's degree than a Catholic graduate in non-metropolitan areas from WA (6%). Whilst overall results in QLD non-metropolitan locales were still lower across each sector than their QLD metropolitan counterparts, each sector had higher levels of bachelor completions than nearly all non-metropolitan graduates in other states (apart from VIC). Such a result suggests that graduates who do choose a university pathway option in non-metropolitan areas, succeed in completing their degree. It also highlights that the level of preparedness for university success in QLD schools within each sector in non-metropolitan areas was higher than any other state, compared to graduates from similar sectors (apart from the VIC Independent/Christian sector 79% see figure 14).

The findings for QLD graduates levels of bachelor completions across both metropolitan and non-metropolitan locales reinforces Gilbert's assumptions surrounding the absence of a distinct and well established "educated class" in QLD and an historically dominant primary industries driven economy, which may have impacted university pathway options

available for graduates within the CES Australia representative sample.²⁴ These factors, coupled with the sheer geographical size of the state and its proportionally high levels of relative social and economic hardship in a state that has Australia's highest proportion of population living outside of metropolitan areas, has historically contributed to lower educational attainment and lower levels of university pathway options for graduates.²⁵ The widely dispersed and yet sizeable population centres in regional areas across the state and limited accessibility to employment opportunities in these centres may contribute to a greater disparity in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan regions areas within these findings. While rates of bachelor completions are low across all regions, the levels for QLD non-metropolitan graduates, even when considering socio-economic challenges is proportionally higher than most other states in Australia (apart from VIC), and significantly higher across each sector than NSW graduates in non-metropolitan areas. The findings regarding bachelor completion by QLD graduates is worthy of further analysis, especially in regard to the access, provision and resourcing of university pathways options across both QLD metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas and the mitigating factors that may impinge on these levels being achieved.

Figure 12 Percentage of respondents who have completed a bachelor's degree – metropolitan



24 Gilbert, 2011, p.165.

25 Gilbert, 2011; Yates, 2011.

Figure 13 Percentage of respondents who felt prepared by school for university success – metropolitan

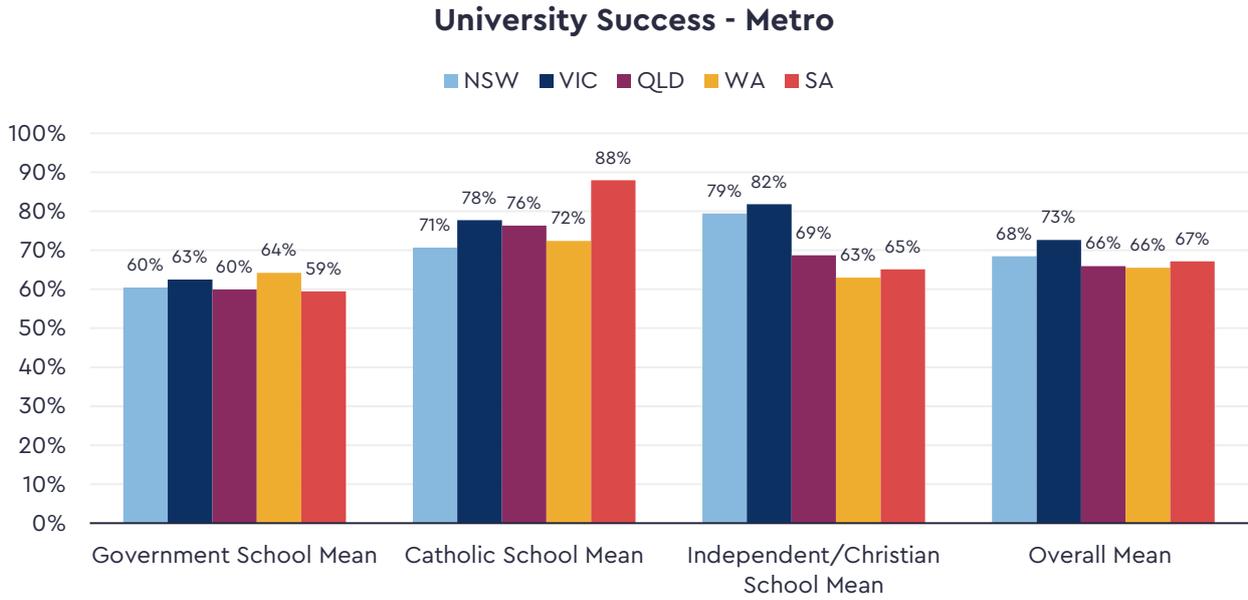


Figure 14 Percentage of respondents who felt prepared by school for university success – non-metropolitan

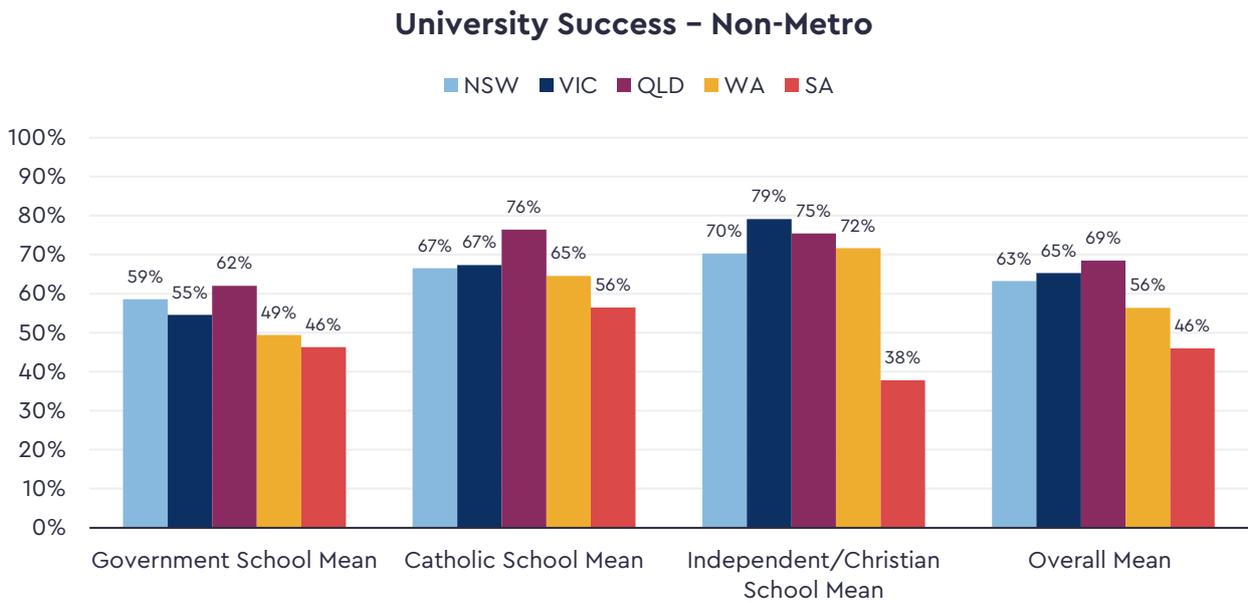
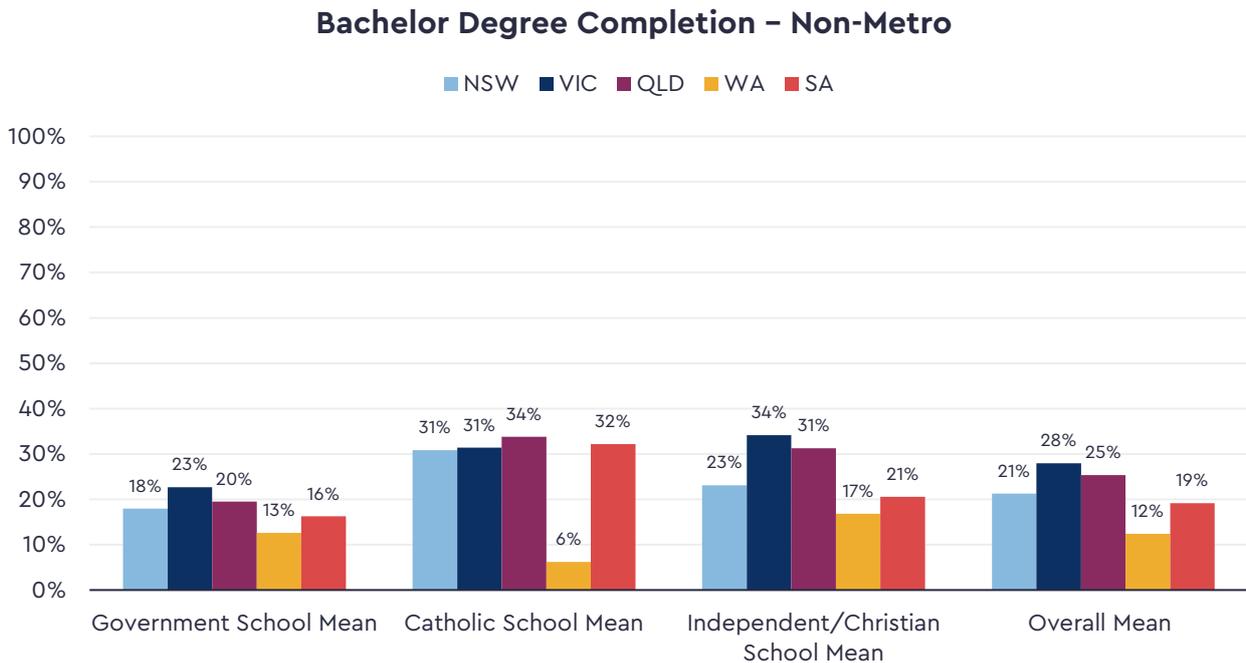


Figure 15 Percentage of respondents who have completed a bachelor's degree – non-metropolitan



Disparity between metropolitan and non—metropolitan locales was evidenced further in postgraduate degree completions (see figure 16), with QLD graduates overall (9%) the least likely of any graduates in the nation to have completed postgraduate study (see figure 16). QLD Government graduates were least likely of any graduates from any state (5%) to have completed postgraduate study and are two times less likely than Government graduates from NSW (10%) and VIC (9%). Similarly, QLD Catholic graduates in metropolitan areas (9%) were least likely of all Catholic graduates across the nation to have completed postgraduate study and nearly twice less likely than NSW Catholic graduates (15%) in metropolitan areas. Surprisingly, QLD Catholic graduates from non-metropolitan areas (9% see figure 17) were more likely to have completed postgraduate study than metropolitan QLD Catholic graduates (9% see figure 16).

These low levels of postgraduate completion were also evidenced in QLD non-metropolitan areas with Government graduates (1%) the least likely of any graduates from any state in the nation to complete a postgraduate degree (see figure 17). However, postgraduate completion rates for QLD graduates in non-metropolitan areas were most likely of any other graduate across any other state to have completed a postgraduate degree in a non-metropolitan area. These postgraduate figures provide a caveat to what are otherwise concerning findings regarding bachelor and postgraduate completions from QLD graduates in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. These findings are retrospective however and may have been ameliorated in more recent times through higher education reform initiatives and key seminal report recommendations arising from John Halsey's Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education.²⁶

26 Halsey, J. (2017). Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education Commonwealth of Australia. Flinders University, Adelaide.

Figure 16 Percentage of respondents who completed post-graduate degree – metropolitan

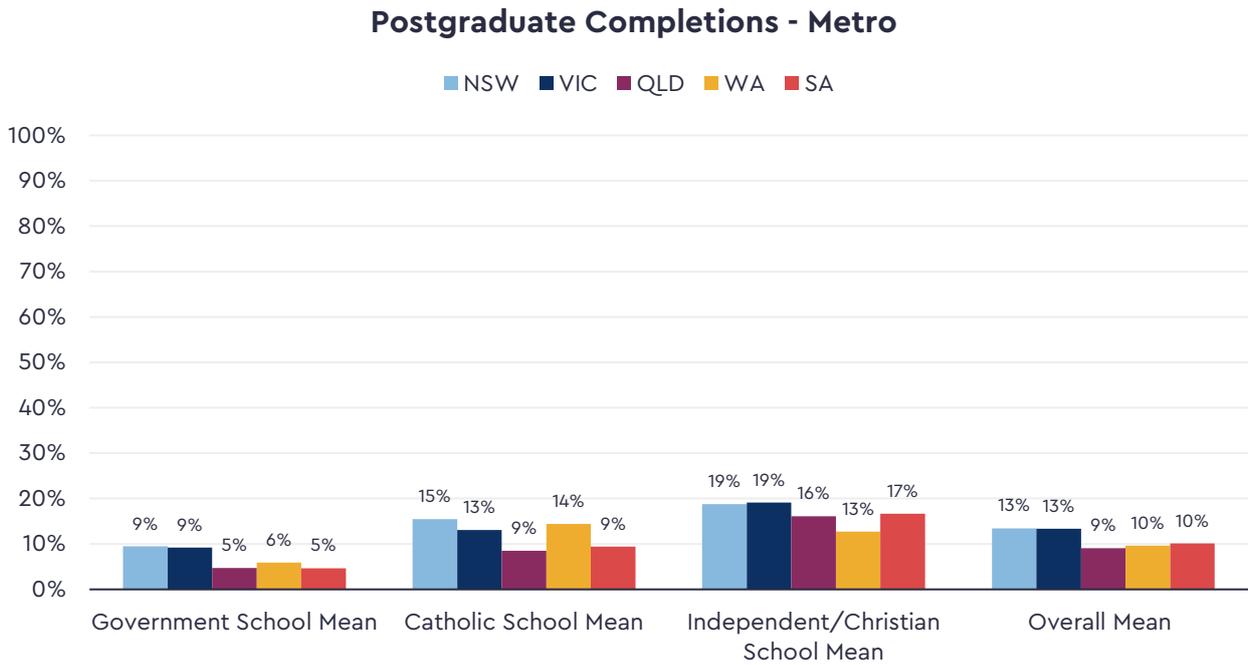
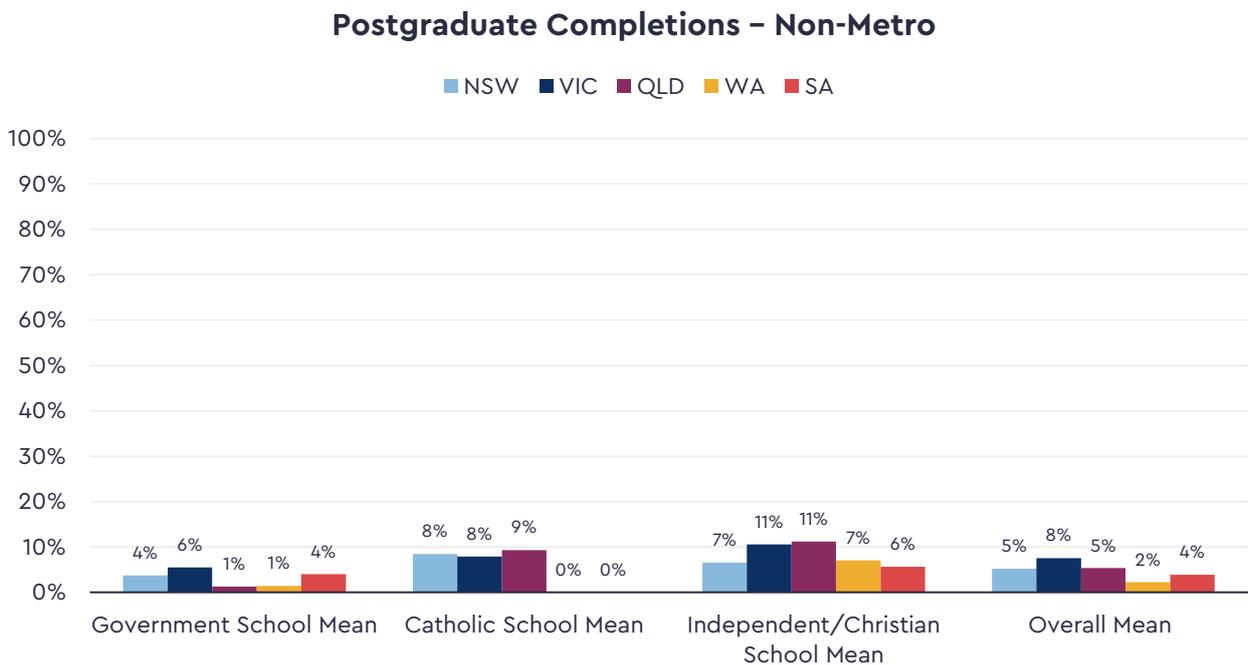


Figure 17 Percentage of respondents who completed postgraduate degree – non-metropolitan



The QLD results for both bachelor level and postgraduate degree completions in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas are further highlighted when

comparing to recent bachelor's degree completion data as evidenced in reports by the ABS (2018)²⁷ and Universities Australia (2019).²⁸

27 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018

28 Universities Australia, 2019

These trends necessitate that an equitable and accessible pathway for all Australian students, irrespective of their postcode or region, is a key area to address in ensuring shared commitments to the common good are worked out within all communities and regions. Longitudinal nationally benchmarked data on educational attainment consistently shows that there is a clear relationship between rural, regional, and remote geographic location and

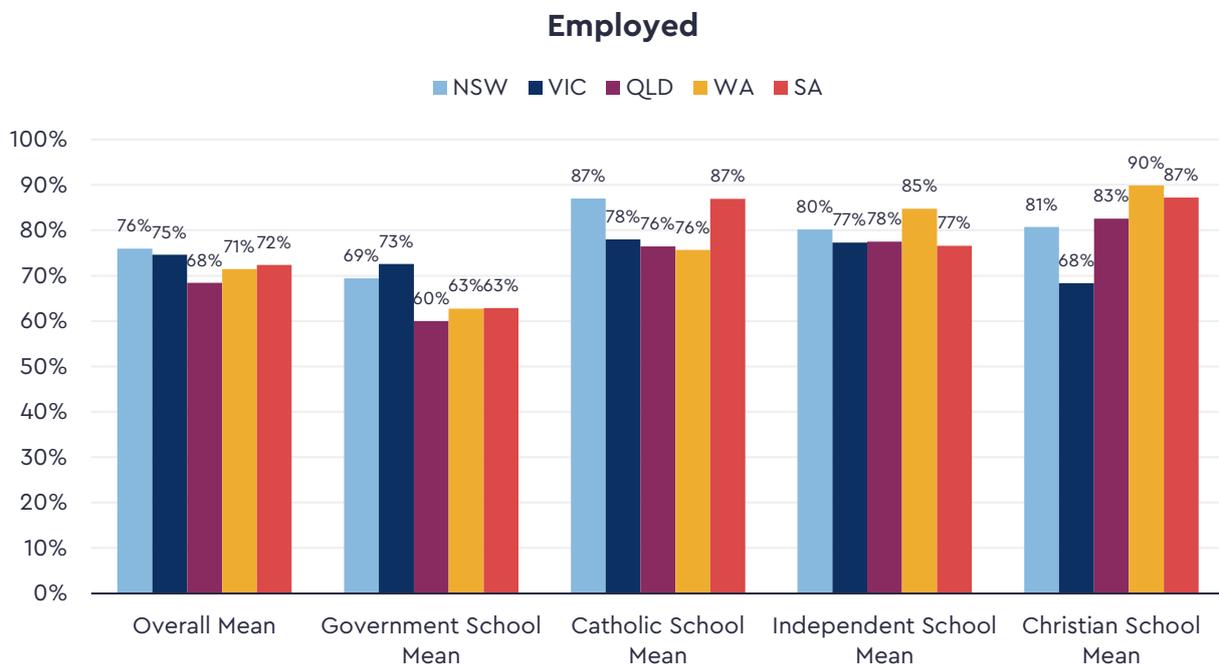
lower educational outcomes when data across a range of variables is aggregated.²⁹ Furthermore, the QLD graduate data gleaned from the CES Australia suggests that access, engagement and promotion of a diverse range of university pathway and tertiary partnership options are required to suitably prepare graduates for future work across both metropolitan and non-metropolitan locales.

Employment

Employment of QLD graduates overall (68% see figure 19) is the lowest in the nation across all other graduates from all other states. These findings are below OECD findings (75%)³⁰ and QLD Government school graduates were the least likely to be employed (60%) of all graduates across the nation. QLD Christian school graduates were the most likely of all QLD graduates to be employed (83% see figure 19) and both QLD Catholic (76%) and QLD Independent (78%) were also above the Australian OECD mean.³¹ Overall, QLD graduates were the second least likely in the nation to be employed in metropolitan areas

(56%) slightly ahead of WA graduates (see figure 20). QLD Government school graduates were least likely of any sector and any state to be employed in metropolitan areas (46%) whilst QLD Catholic (66%) and QLD Independent/Christian (65%) graduates were comparable to employment levels for metropolitan areas across most other states (see figure 20). Levels of employment were significantly lower for QLD graduates in non-metropolitan areas across every sector with the most disparity between QLD Independent/ Christian graduates in metropolitan (65%) and non-metropolitan (43%) locales.

Figure 19 Percentage of respondents employed



29 Halsey, J. (2017). Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education Commonwealth of Australia. P. 8

30 OECD, 2019.

31 Ibid.

Figure 20 Percentage of respondents who are employed fulltime – Metropolitan areas

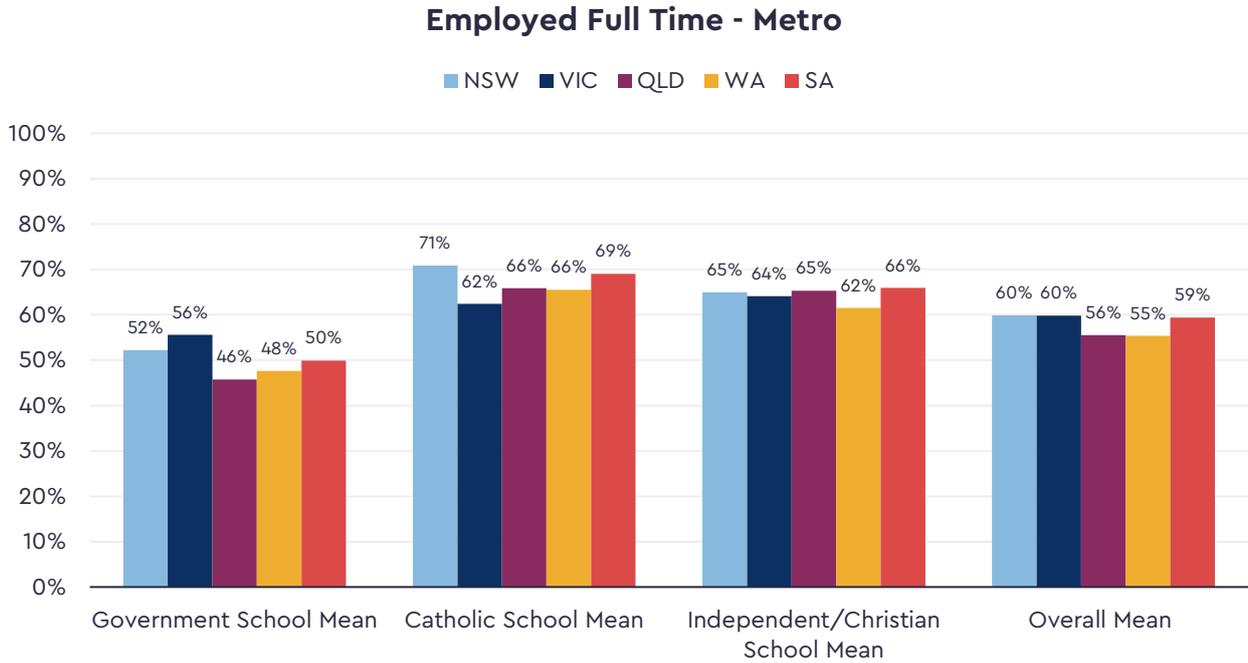
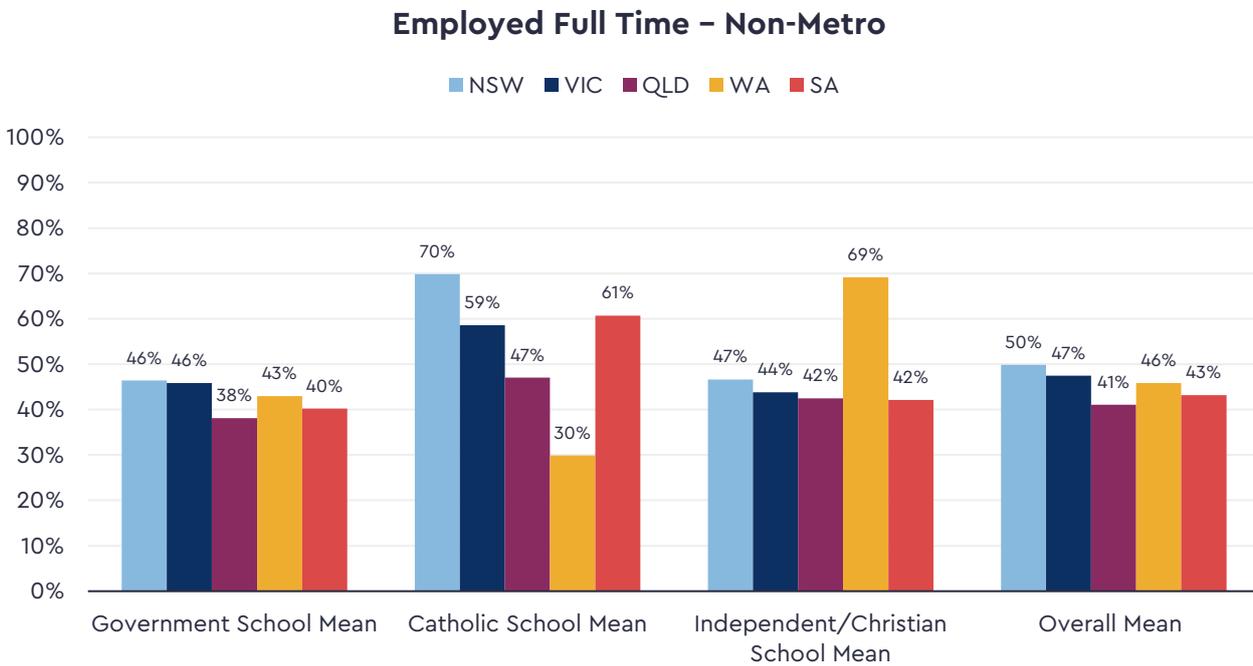


Figure 21 Percentage of respondents who are employed fulltime – Non-metropolitan areas



Income

Lower employment levels also led to subsequent lower levels of income overall for QLD graduates (\$87,000 see figure 21) when compared with other states. When analysed further according to both metropolitan and non-metropolitan locales, QLD Catholic graduates had the third highest level of income for graduates in metropolitan areas across all sectors and states, just below SA Catholic (\$107,000) and NSW Catholic graduates (\$108,000). Despite this, QLD graduates overall in metropolitan areas had the lowest levels of income of all graduates in the nation

(\$89,000 see figure 22). QLD graduate income levels in non-metropolitan areas was significantly lower across Independent/Christian (\$74,000 see figure 23) and non-metropolitan locales to metropolitan locales (\$92,000 see figure 22). There was surprisingly no difference in income levels for QLD Government graduates overall (\$83,000 see figure 22 and 23). These findings are to be treated cautiously as they do not factor in adjustments for varying costs of living between metropolitan and rural, regional and remote areas.

Figure 21 Respondents household income

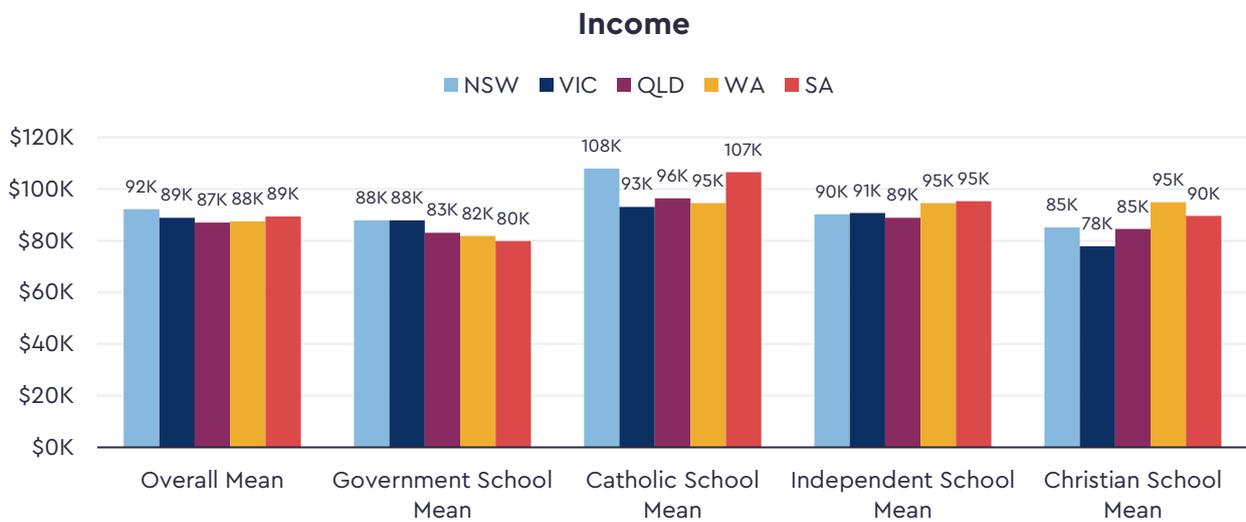


Figure 22 Respondents household income - Metropolitan

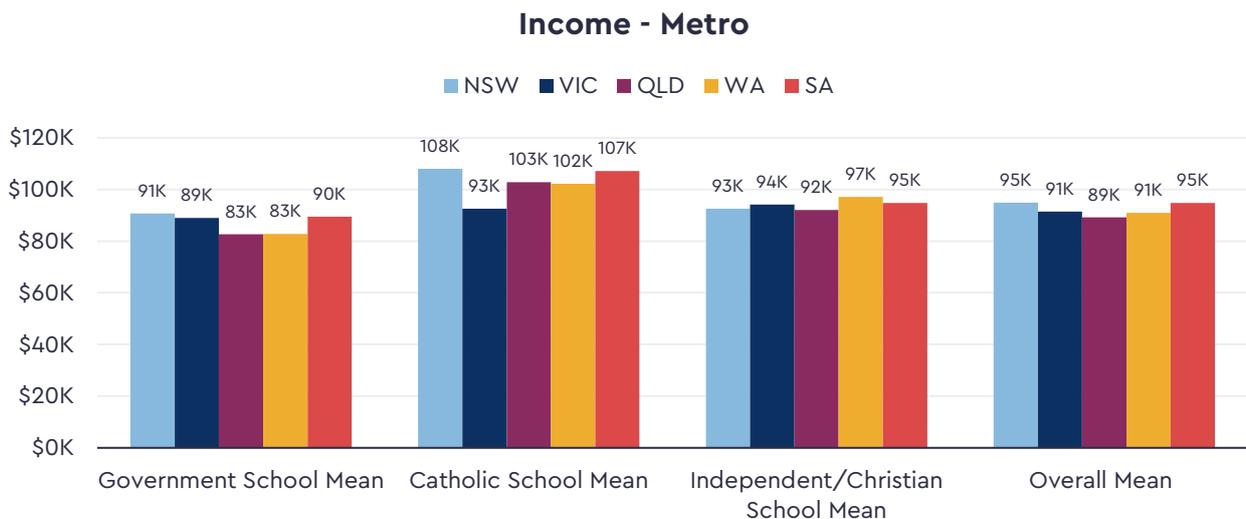
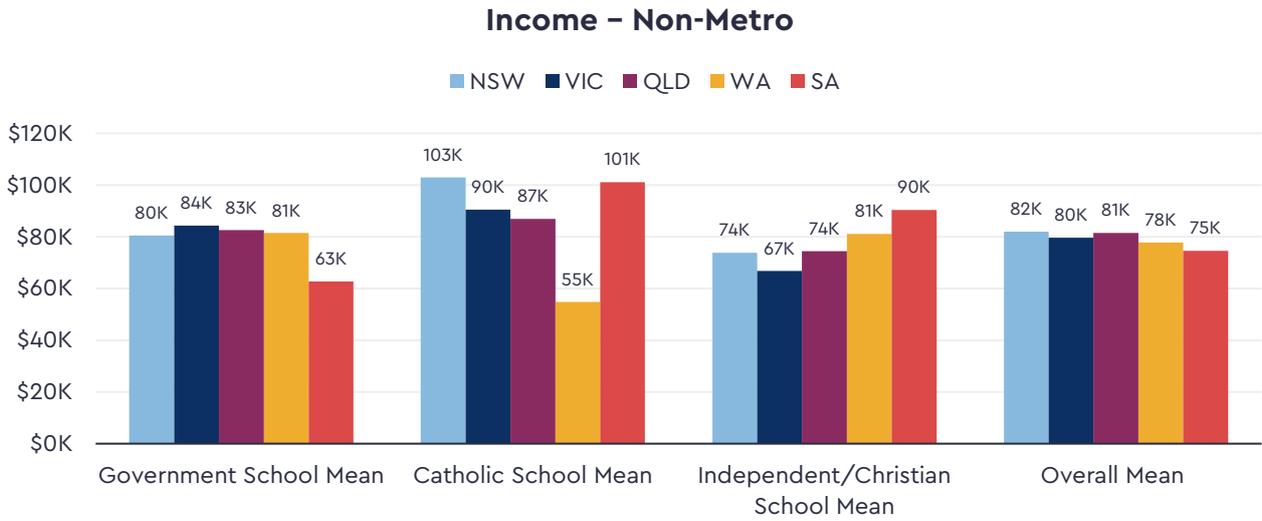


Figure 23 Respondents household income non-metropolitan



In this section, we presented findings relating to graduates of Government, Catholic, Independent and Christian schools in terms of their educational attainment, employment, and income. These findings revealed some significant differences between sectors and revealed low levels of bachelor and postgraduate degree completion across the state. These lower rates also appear to have contributed to lower levels of employment and income for QLD graduates overall when compared to graduates from other states. The combination of social and economic challenges evident across the state, dispersed non-metropolitan communities and the vastness of the state's regions may, in part, contribute to these results but further

investigation is required and across all QLD education sectors.

In analysing the results from this section, we hope this data raises important conversations about how to pursue the flourishing of individuals through work, career pathways, employment, and household income levels across both non-metropolitan and metropolitan locales and how these goods may promote the common good within these communities.³²

32 Cheng and Iselin, 2020.

Queensland Millennial Graduates and Belonging: Associations, Groups and Causes

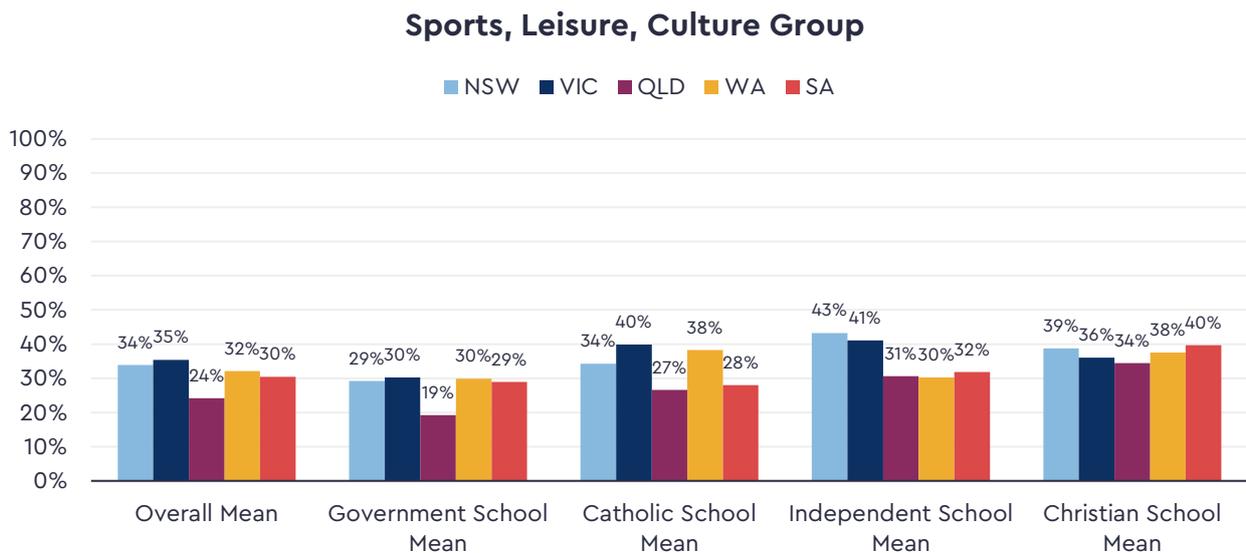
In this section, the CES Australia sought to identify whether a graduate's formative experiences at school impacted on their engagement in a diverse range of associations and community groups that nurture commitment, service, and care for others. Membership of associations, groups and causes promote a sense of belonging within communities, expand social networks, and encourage broader civic engagement. To investigate these important agencies for engagement and contribution to the common good, respondents were asked whether they had formed civic ties to associations including political parties, church or religious groups, trade unions, sports, leisure or cultural groups, and business and professional organisations.³³

Unlike other graduates involved in the CES Australia representative sample, QLD graduates were least likely to be involved in a range of civic associations, groups and causes. Specifically, QLD graduates overall were the least likely to be involved sports, leisure or cultural groups (24% see figure 24) than graduates from any other state. QLD graduates from Government schools (19% see figure 24) were also least likely of any graduates in Australia to be involved in these types of groups and associations that build strong social

networks and community. These findings were also relatively consistent across both metropolitan and non-metropolitan communities, with no significant statistical difference between involvement in these associations across each region.

In contrast to findings that were consistent across other states, QLD Christian school graduates were also less likely to be a member of a church or religious group (34% see figure 25), a rate lower than all other Christian school graduates from across the nation. Nevertheless, these levels of church or religious group involvement were still higher than all other QLD graduates from Catholic (22%), Independent (20%) and Government schools (18% see figure 25). These QLD graduate findings are in stark contrast to the proportionately high levels of church/ religious group involvement as evidenced in NSW (47%) and VIC (50%) Christian school graduates (see figure 25). These findings were relatively consistent across both QLD metropolitan and non-metropolitan communities although a higher proportion of QLD Government graduates were involved in church or religious groups in non-metropolitan areas (24% see figure 27) than in metropolitan areas (15% see figure 26).

Figure 24 Percentage of respondents involved in sports, leisure or cultural associations



33 Cheng and Iselin, 2020.

Figure 25 Percentage of respondents involved in church or religious groups

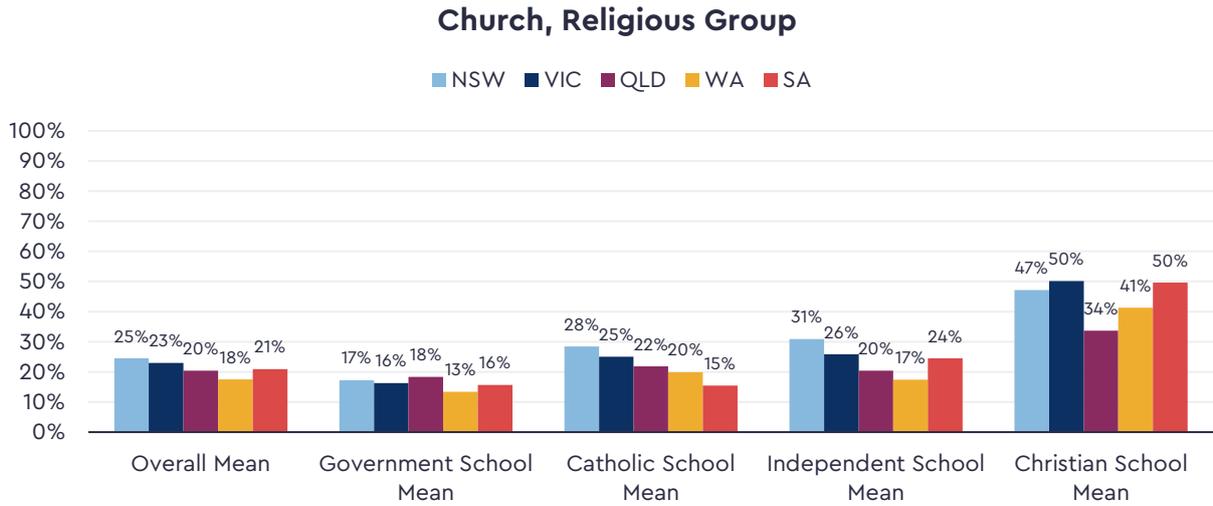


Figure 26 Respondents involved in church/ religious groups – Metropolitan

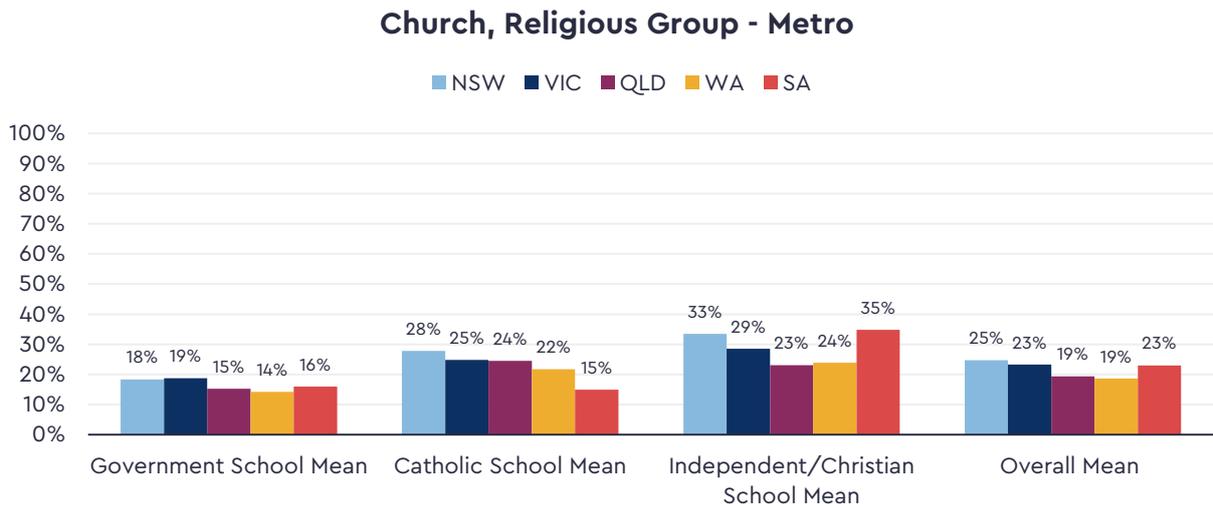
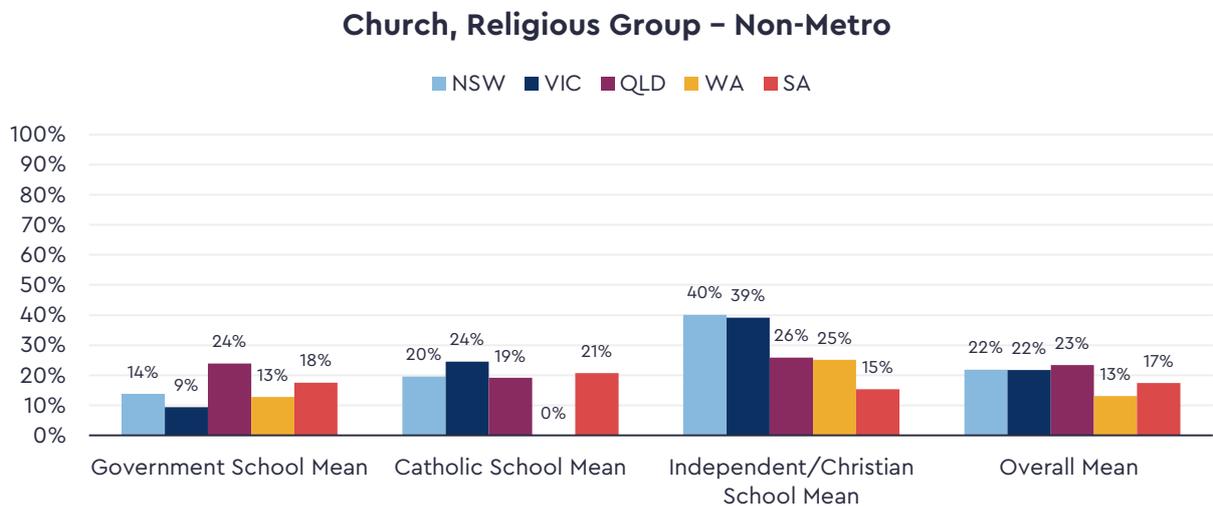


Figure 27 Respondents involved in church/religious groups – non-metropolitan



Furthermore, QLD Government graduates were the least likely of all graduates across the nation to be involved in political parties or groups (4% see figure 28). This contrasts with QLD Christian school graduate's involvement with political parties which was four times more likely than a QLD Government school graduate (see figure 28) and the second most likely graduate across any sector and any state to be involved in political parties, apart from Christian

graduates in VIC (23%) and SA (23% see figure 28). Whilst there is no specific data on the type of political party these graduates were involved in, there was a proportionally very high participation rates in political groups for QLD Independent/ Christian graduates in non-metropolitan areas (21% see figure 29). Further analysis of these results in non-metropolitan areas is therefore recommended.

Figure 28 Percentage of respondents involved in political parties

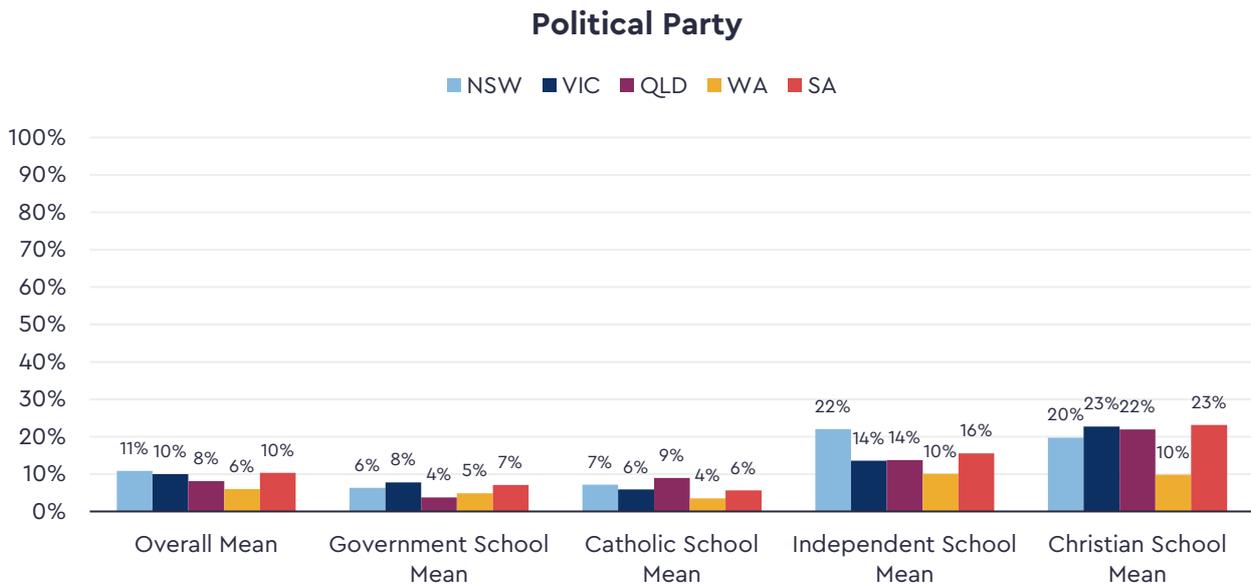
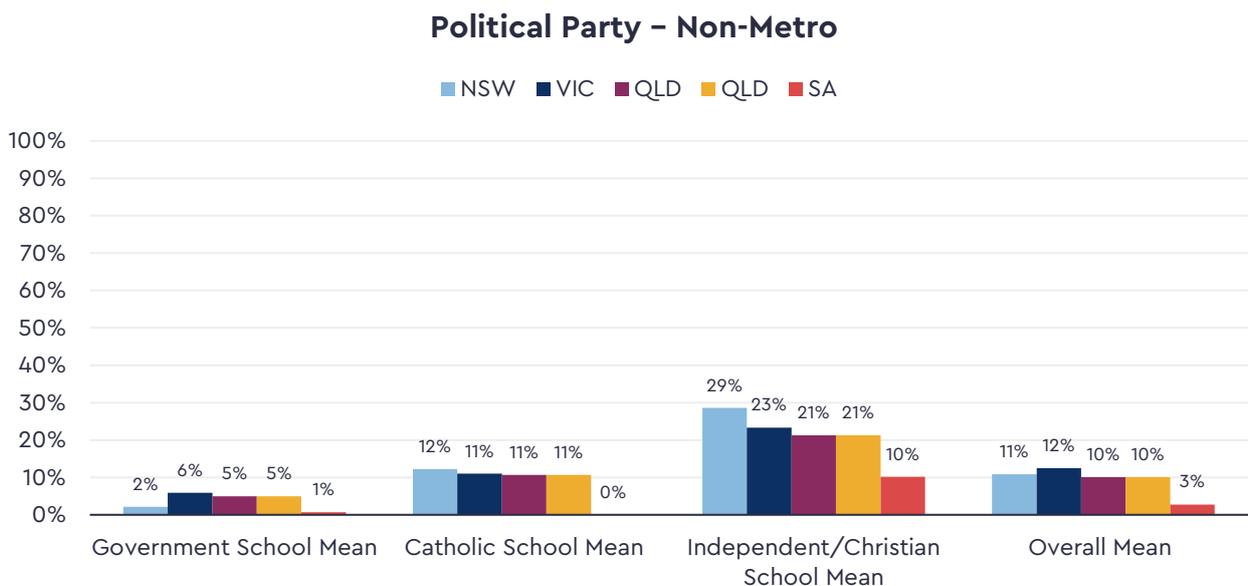


Figure 29 Percentage of respondents involved in political parties - non-metropolitan



These findings suggest that, in partnership with family and community, QLD schools play some role in enriching the social fabric and cultivating rich networks for membership and involvement in a variety of civic associations, though these participation rates are proportionally lower than graduates from other states. Participation in political parties and church and religious groups was noteworthy across QLD Christian school graduates, and whilst membership of sporting, leisure and cultural groups was lower compared to graduates from other states, these associations and groups still attracted the highest level of involvement in QLD. These results would support the findings of the

CES Australia that revealed that overall lower rates of association as evidenced in these QLD findings reflect broader trends of decreasing social connectedness, engagement and belonging in their local communities and that there may be value in considering how schools — whether Government, Catholic, Independent or Christian — might better foster the kinds of social bonds and dense community networks that all students need to flourish into adulthood. These bonds are both necessary and critical for the future wellbeing and flourishing of Australian communities at large.³⁴

34 Cheng and Iselin, 2020.

Queensland Millennial Graduates and Generosity: Volunteering and Giving

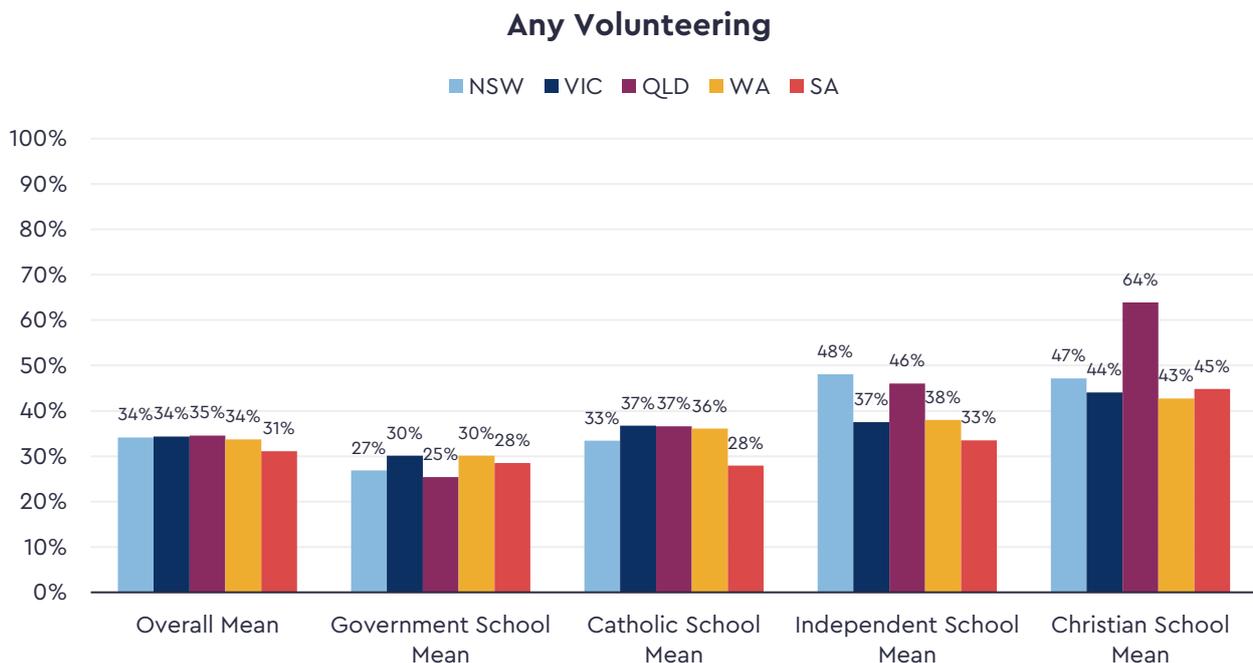
This section explores how respondents from each state of Australia cultivate the civic virtues of generosity which actively promote the common good. Giving to the community, whether through time or money, is how individuals find meaning and seek the good of others. The CES Australia sought to investigate how prevalent volunteering and giving are among graduates from Government, Catholic, independent, and Christian schools. The questions in this section investigated what levels of generosity were evident across graduates and was there any difference to giving of time and resources according to each state and in what areas of civil society are they contributing.

According to 2020 research, a third of all Australians have volunteered (33%) while more than one in five have been involved with fundraising for a specific

charity (23%) or advocating and raising awareness (21%). Almost half of those who volunteer (48%) do so at least once a month, while more than a quarter (26%) volunteer at least once every few months.³⁵

The overall levels of volunteering from graduates across all sectors and states in the CES Australia align closely with these findings, with one notable and highly significant exception – QLD Christian school graduates. The QLD state analysis revealed that the number of QLD Christian school graduates who were volunteering in some way in their community was 64% (see figure 30). These significantly high results were 16% higher than NSW (48% see figure 30) and two and a half times more likely to volunteer than QLD Government school graduates (25% see figure 30).

Figure 30 Percentage of respondents who volunteer

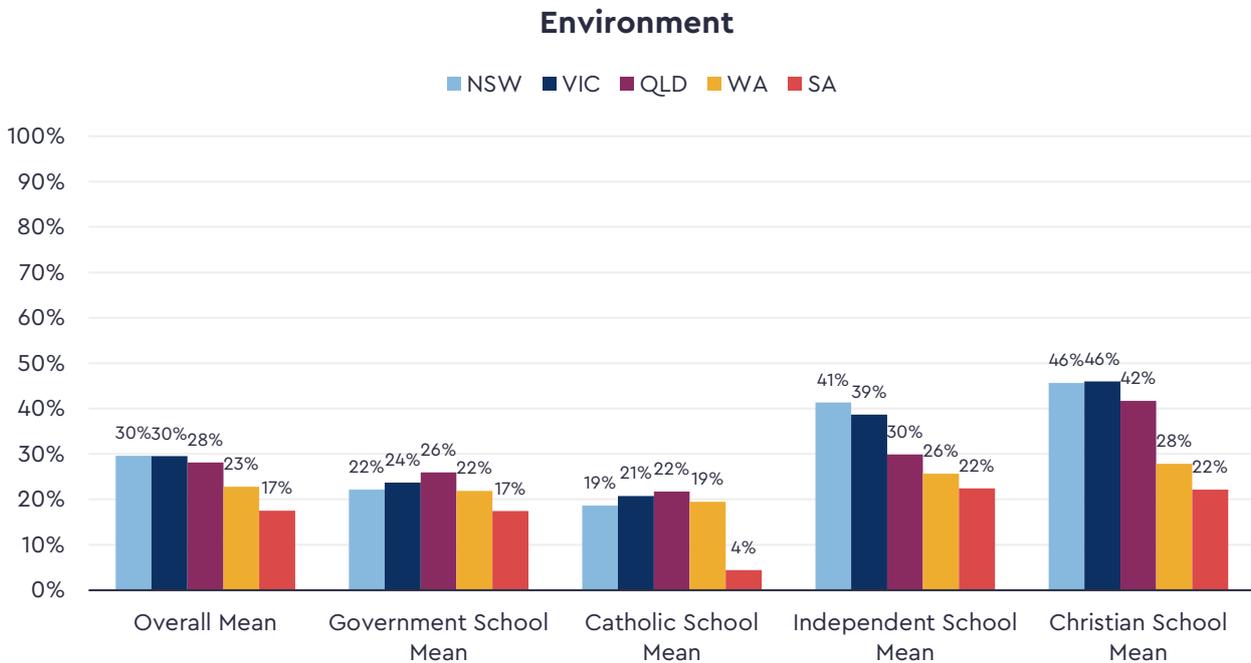


35 McCrindle, 2020; Cheng and Iselin, 2020.

QLD Christian graduates were actively involved in volunteering for environmental causes (42%), slightly below the levels of volunteering for NSW and VIC Christian graduates (46% see figure 31) but were more likely than any other QLD graduates from any sector and nearly twice more likely than QLD Catholic graduates (22%) to volunteer for these causes. Similarly, Independent/ Christian graduates from QLD metropolitan areas were significantly more likely to volunteer for environmental causes (37% see figure 32) than any other graduate from any other sector and state (see figure 32). These findings are also significantly higher than the levels of volunteering for environmental causes for QLD non-metropolitan locales (see figure 32) and significantly lower than

non-metropolitan volunteering for environmental issues and causes from NSW (62%) and VIC (56%) graduates. In contrast to the findings of the NSW and VIC state analyses, these results suggest regional areas in QLD are not as concerned nor engaged in their local communities regarding a range of environmental issues and do not give of their time to volunteer for these causes like their metropolitan or interstate counterparts. One possible reason for these contrasting results in QLD may be the dominant and dependent nature of primary industries that drive the state's economy in these centres which stimulates significant growth, employment, and productivity, within these rural, regional and remote locales.³⁶

Figure 31 Percentage of respondents who volunteer for environmental groups



36 Gilbert, 2011, p.165.

Figure 32 Percentage of respondents who volunteer for environmental groups – metropolitan

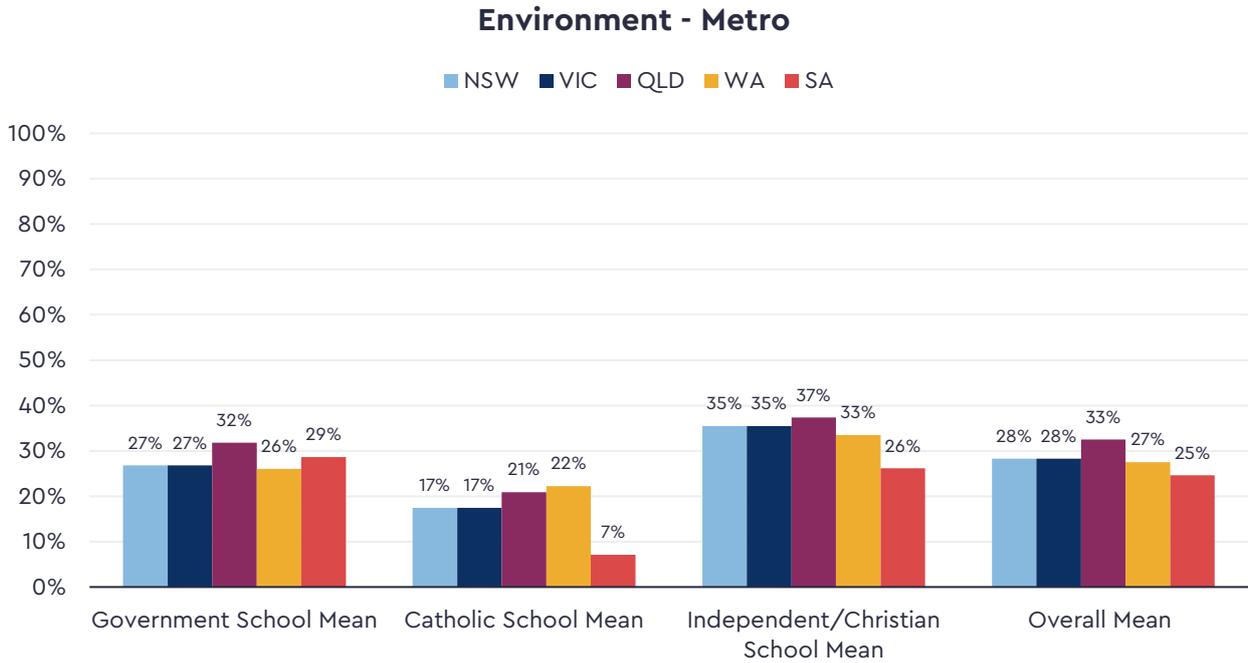
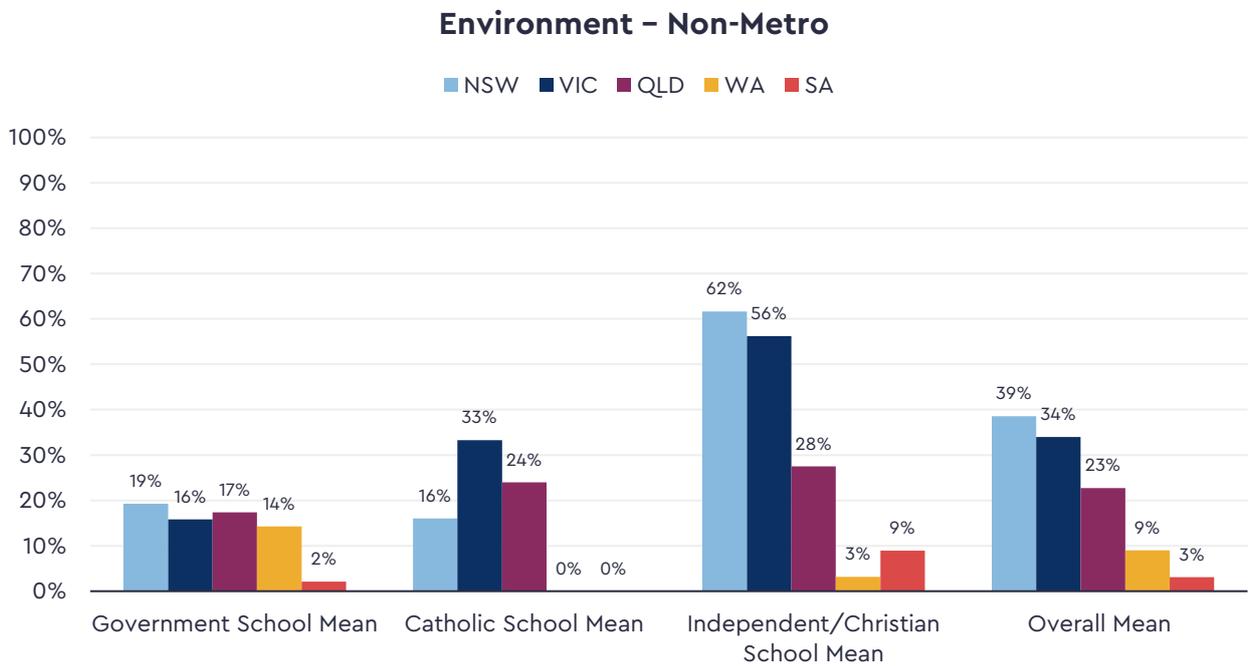


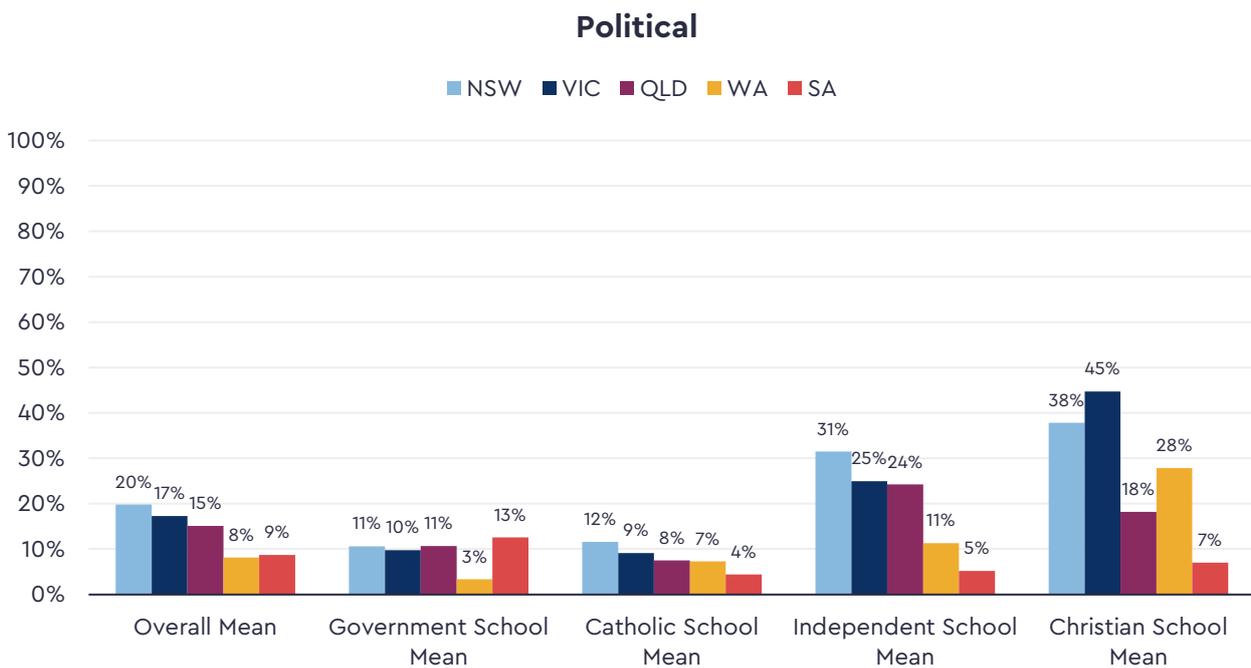
Figure 33 Percentage of respondents who volunteer for environmental groups – non-metropolitan



QLD Christian school graduates were also unlike their southern colleagues in regard to volunteering for political parties and causes and were significantly less likely to volunteer for political parties (18% see figure 34) than Christian school graduates from NSW (38%) and VIC (45%) (see figure 34). However, when analysed further, a QLD Independent/ Christian graduate in a non-metropolitan area (39%) was significantly more likely to volunteer for political groups and causes than a QLD Independent/ Christian graduate from

a metropolitan area (17% see figure 35). The factors driving these high levels of volunteering for political parties by Independent/Christian graduates in non-metropolitan areas is worthy of further consideration and the findings may also be impacted by the parochial and at times very powerful regional centres of political influence that exist across QLD.³⁷ Caution would also be advised when assuming involvement in a particular type of political party or political leaning.

Figure 34 Percentage of respondents who volunteer for political groups



37 Yates, 2011; Gilbert, 2011, p.164.

Figure 35 Percentage of respondents who volunteer for political groups – metropolitan

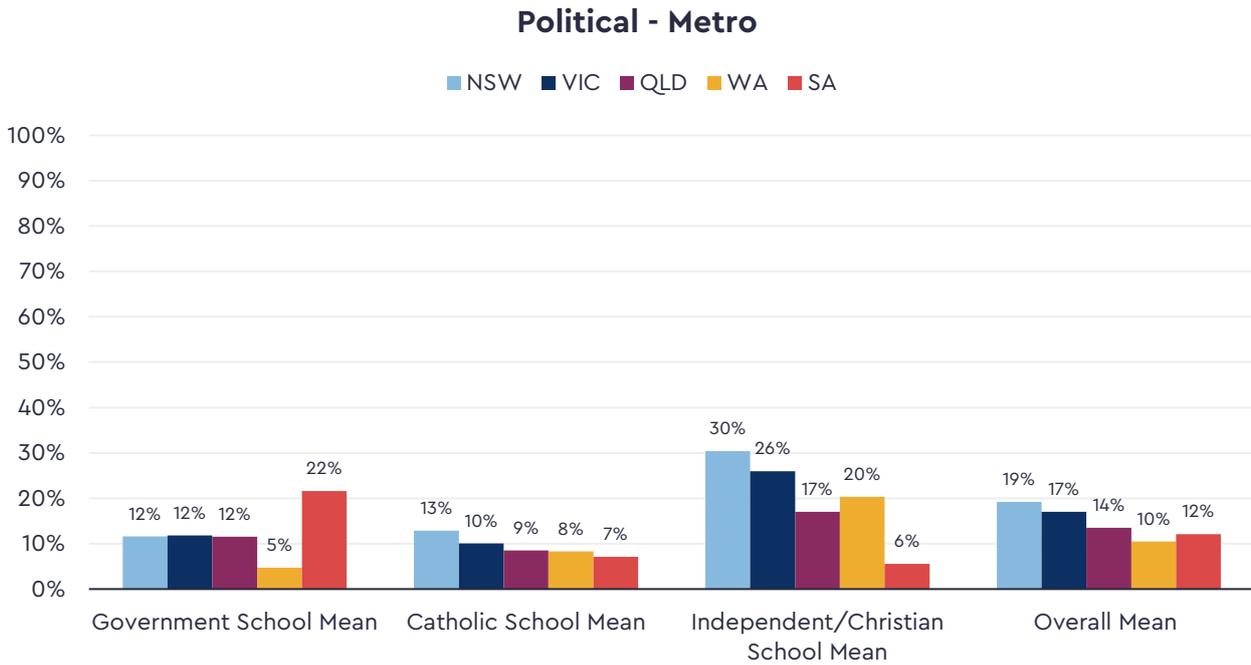
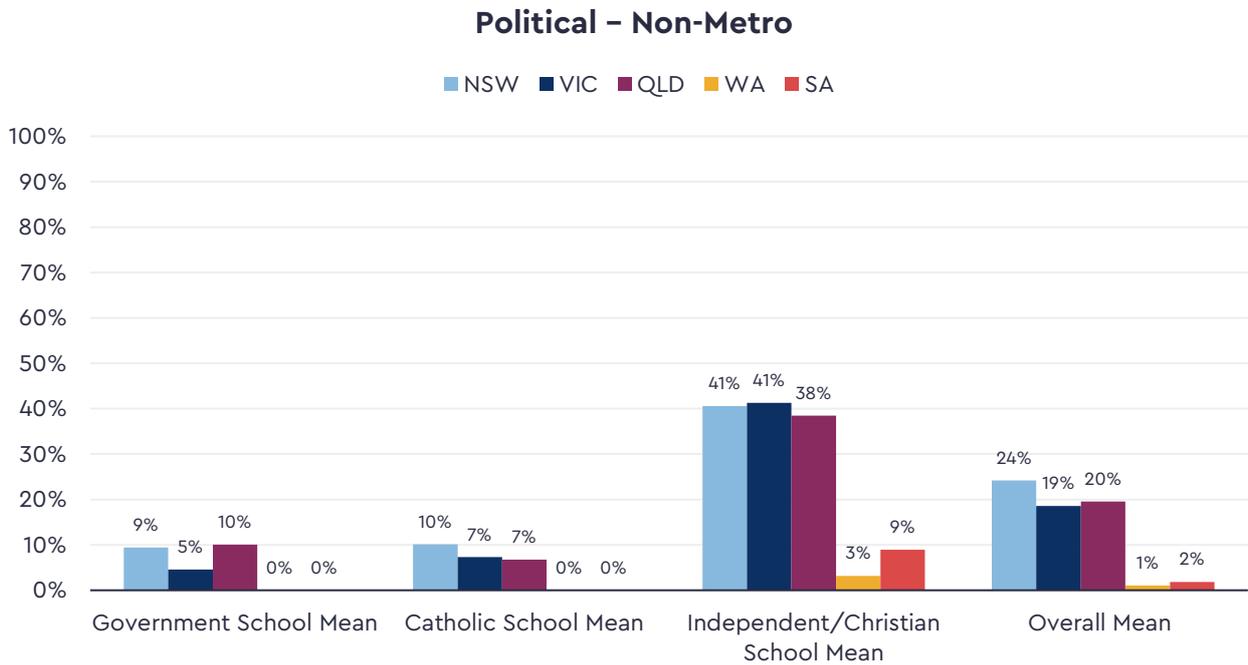


Figure 35 Percentage of respondents who volunteer for political groups – non-metropolitan



In the remaining types of organisations in which respondents reported volunteering, such as groups that assist children, the poor, elderly, youth, and sporting and cultural organisations we did not find statistically noteworthy differences in participation across the various school sectors in QLD.

Giving

Levels of active civic engagement and service are not limited to volunteering. A 2020 McCrindle report identified that approximately seven in 10 Australians give annually. Whilst this rate is high, it does represent a five percentage-point drop since 2019³⁸. The overall means for each state involved in the CES Australia study would support these findings³⁹ and there was a general consistency in levels of giving across all QLD graduates overall (65% see figure 37). For QLD graduates across all sectors, there was also a

consistency of giving across both metropolitan and non-metropolitan locales, with a higher level of overall giving from QLD graduates in non-metropolitan areas (67%) than in metropolitan areas (64%) and higher levels of giving from QLD Government graduates (65%) and Catholic graduates (68%) in non-metropolitan areas than QLD Government graduates (61%) and Catholic graduates (66%) in metropolitan areas (see figure 38 and figure 39).

Figure 37 Percentage of respondents who give

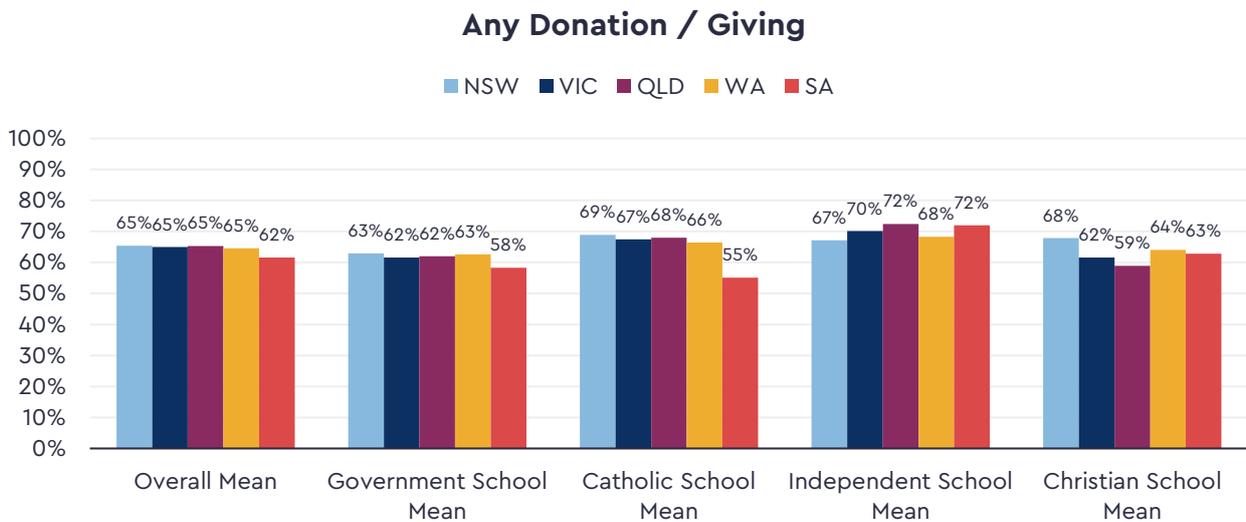
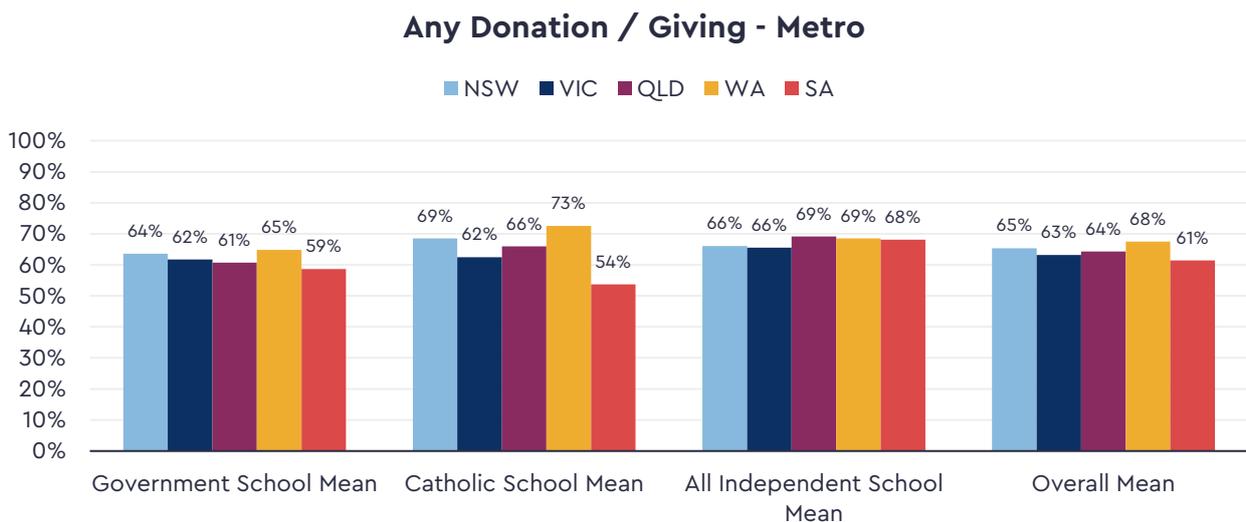


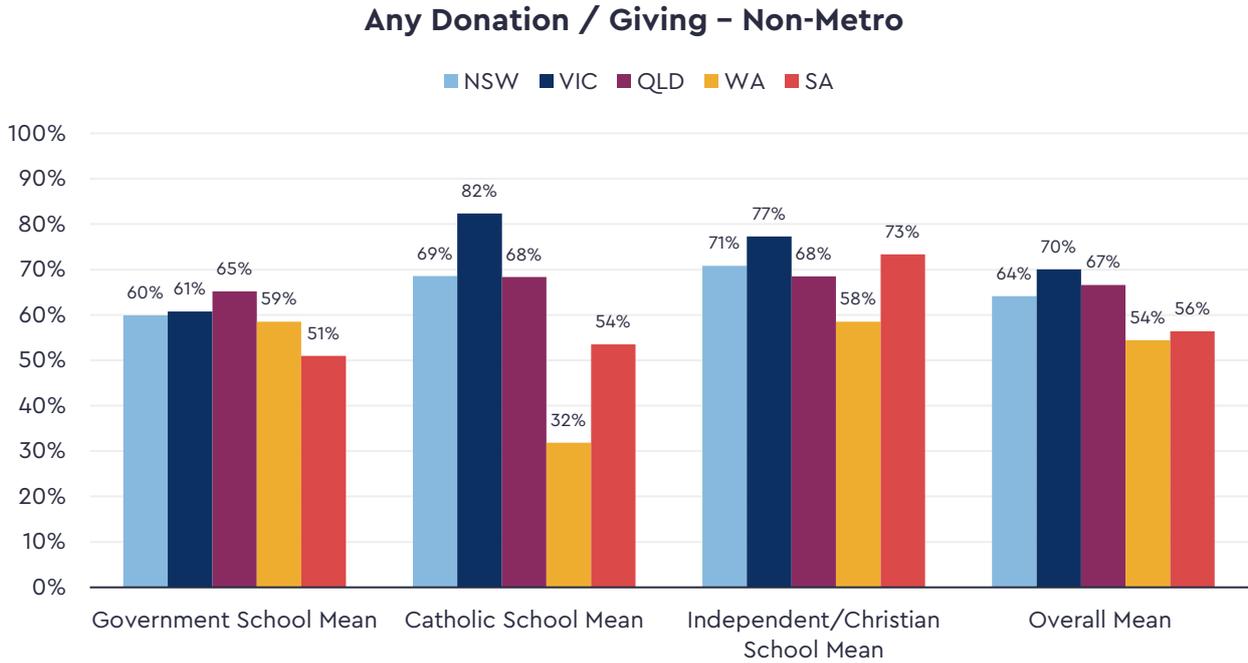
Figure 38 Percentage of respondents who give – metropolitan



38 McCrindle, 2020; Cheng and Iselin, 2020.

39 Cheng and Iselin, 2020.

Figure 39 Percentage of respondents who give – non-metropolitan



These findings suggest that QLD graduates are far more likely to give financially rather than volunteer within their communities and highlight how levels of engagement and generosity of time and money vary across metropolitan and non-metropolitan locales in QLD.

This section explored how generous QLD graduates are with their time and money and how they are seeking to serve the common good through volunteering and/or donating to charitable organisations. According to the findings, giving was more common than volunteering across QLD graduates, who gave generally at the same levels as those from other states, although the monetary levels of this giving are not certain. When these levels of volunteering and giving were further differentiated by school sector, there are some significant findings

for QLD graduates, especially from the Independent/Christian sector in relation to volunteering and across all sectors in regard to the level of graduates who are giving across non-metropolitan areas. We also acknowledge that there are other forms of civic engagement beyond volunteering and giving which were not investigated in the CES Australia data. Furthermore, many of the cross-sector differences must also consider demographic characteristics. Such a pattern highlights the important role that the family plays alongside schools in nurturing civic dispositions of service and generosity. It is hoped that these findings will stimulate wider conversations on how schools and communities can better play a role in shaping graduates to be even more generous with their time and money in community enhancing and hospitable ways.⁴⁰

40 Cheng and Iselin, 2020.

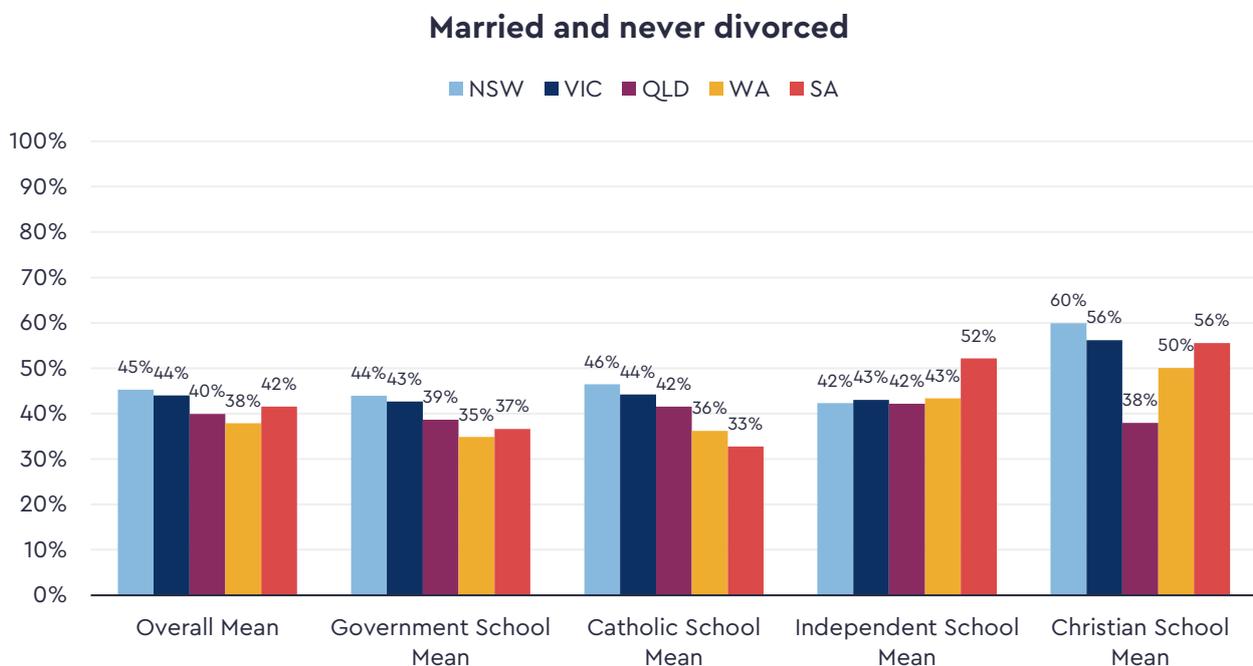
Queensland Millennial Graduates and Family: Marriage and Relationships

Marriage is an established tradition that serves an important part in personal happiness and is a core foundation for a flourishing society. Schools and families represent two parts of a broader moral ecosystem in which young people are formed. Conceptions of the good and the practices that embody those ideals are taught and reinforced within schools, families and other communities. Importantly, the school and family structures are mutually supporting; healthy schools need healthy families and vice-versa.⁴¹ Young people need these reciprocal relationships for their formation, growth and development into adulthood. In this section, we consider the potential role of schools in family formation. That is, what are the marital outcomes among graduates from Government, Catholic, Independent and Christian schools?

The findings revealed that, overall, QLD graduates were less likely to be married than nearly any other state in Australia (40% see figure 40) with only WA graduates less likely to be married (38%). In contrast

to all other states and all graduates within the CES Australia, QLD Christian school graduates were least likely of any other graduate from any other sector and state to be married and not divorced in the nation (38% see figure 40). Furthermore, QLD graduates in non-metropolitan areas from Catholic (40%) and Independent/Christian (33%) schools were significantly less likely to be married than their Catholic (45%) and Independent/Christian (43%) metropolitan counterparts (see figure 41 and 42). While we cannot ascertain the quality of these marriage relationships, nor the extent to which values were shaped by family and other community values, it is worth considering if higher levels of relative social and economic disadvantage are a contributing factor in this disparity. This assumption is, however, challenged by the finding that QLD Government graduates are more likely to be married and not divorced in non-metropolitan (44%) rather than in metropolitan (35%) locales (see figure 41 and figure 42).

Figure 40 Percentage of respondents who are married and never divorced



41 Cheng and Iselin, 2020.

Figure 41 Percentage of respondents who are married and never divorced – metropolitan

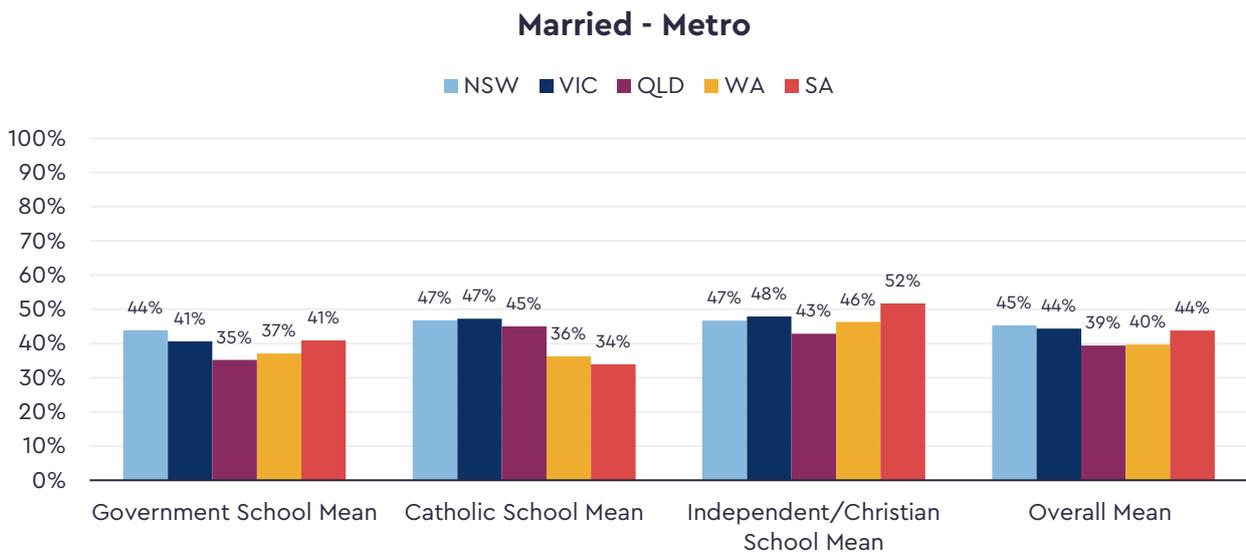
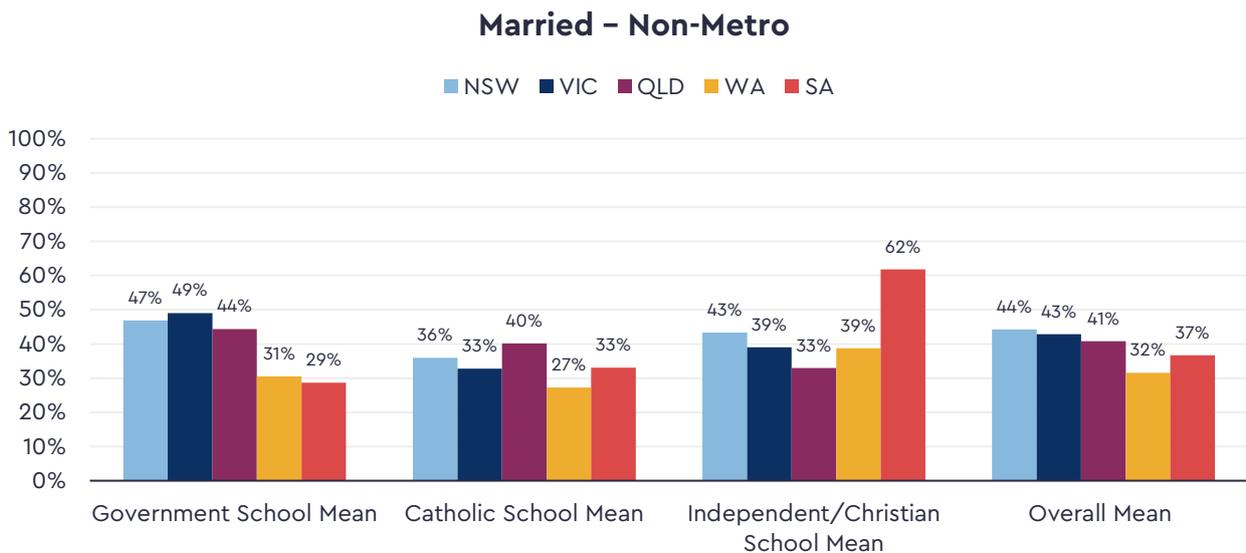


Figure 42 Percentage of respondents who are married and never divorced – non-metropolitan



The findings also revealed that overall, QLD graduates were more likely to be divorced (20% see figure 43) at rates much higher than any other state Australia. QLD graduates' high rates of divorce overall reveal that they are nearly twice more likely to have had a divorce than VIC graduates (12% see figure 43). Whilst there was no major statistical difference between the rates of divorce from graduates of QLD Government (21%) or Independent (22%) schools, the levels of divorce in QLD Catholic (17%) and Christian (15%) was somewhat lower (see figure 43). Significantly, rates of divorce were far more prevalent in non-metropolitan areas than in metropolitan locales across every sector and were particularly evident in QLD Catholic (14%) and

Independent/ Christian school (19%) graduates from metropolitan areas (see figure 44) compared to QLD Catholic (23%) and Independent/ Christian school (31%) graduates from non-metropolitan regions (see figure 45) (see figures 44 and 45). Such significant difference in marriage commitment further highlights the disparity that is apparent between regions and this finding is worth of further investigation and analysis – especially in regard to possible associations between socio-economic conditions and quality of family life and relationships in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas.

Figure 43 Percentage of respondents who have been divorced

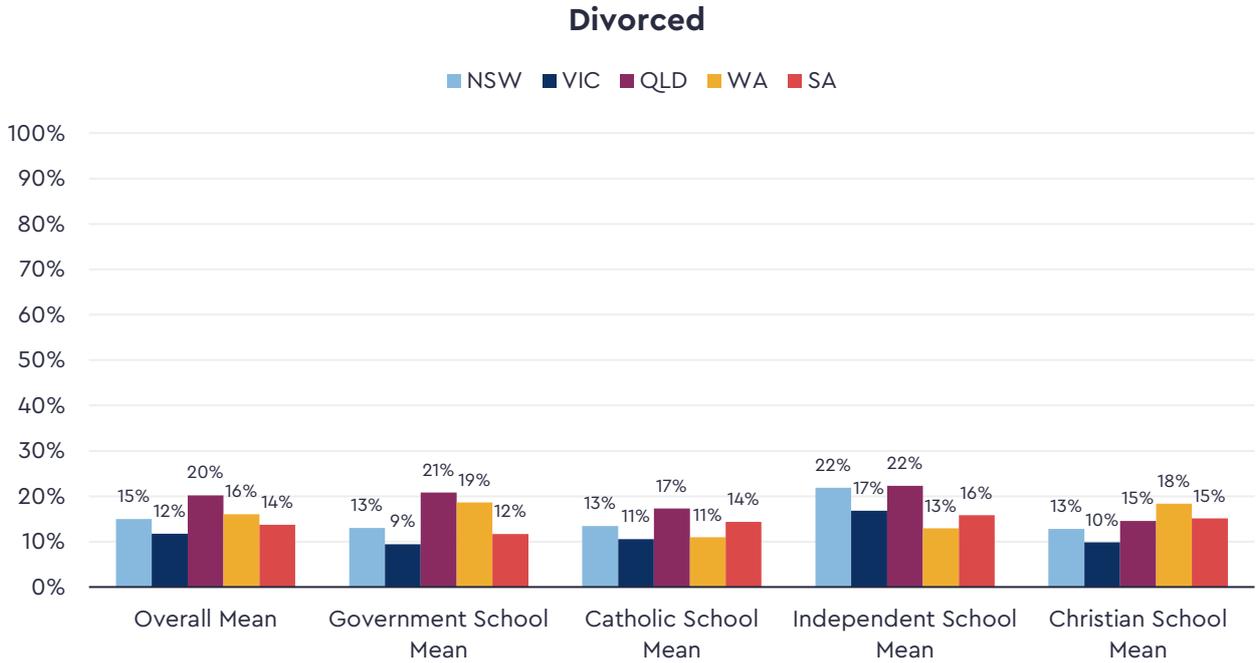


Figure 44 Percentage of respondents who have been divorced – metropolitan

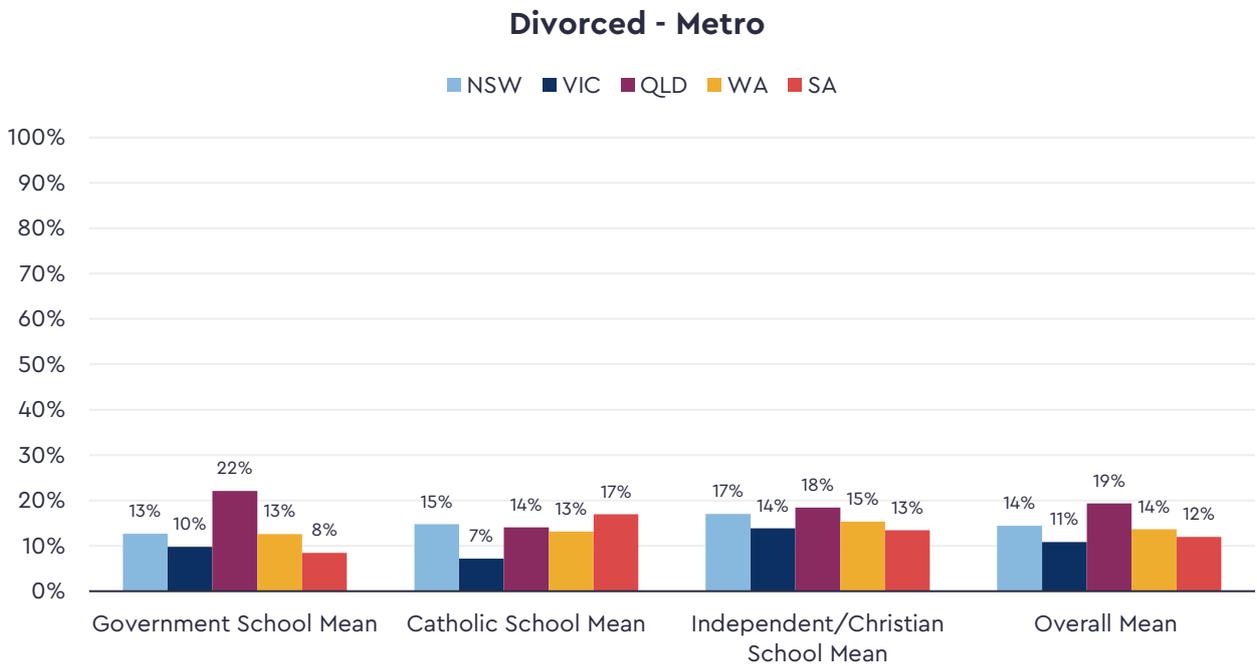
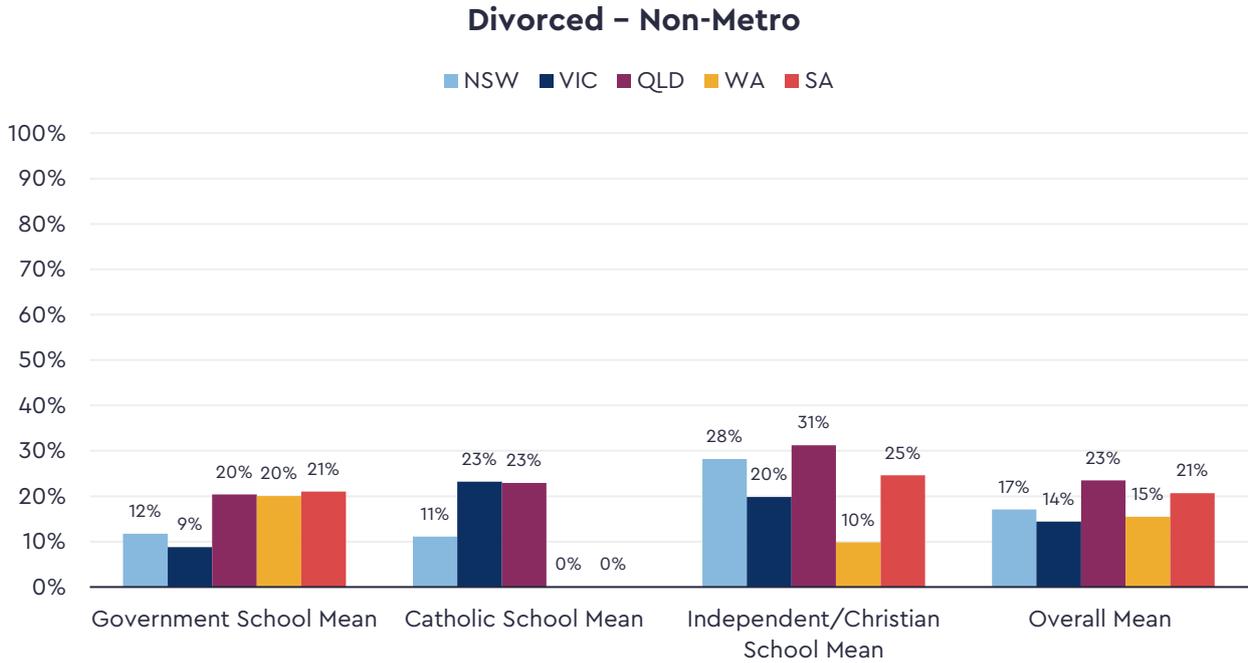


Figure 45 Percentage of respondents who have been divorced – non-metropolitan



The QLD findings relating to marriage and relationships are significant and are contrary to the findings across all other jurisdictions within this study. Lower levels of respondents identifying as being married and much higher levels of divorce across all sectors, particularly in non-metropolitan areas, suggest that a range of external, socio-cultural, and socio-economic factors, apart from school, family background and local community, may contribute to these findings within the QLD state analyses.

These findings also underscore the importance of sustaining healthy families in which the kinds of virtues that are conducive to greater civic responsibility can be nurtured and promoted. Cultivating a strong connection between home and school is, therefore, vital as both spheres make large imprints in the kinds of citizens that are ultimately formed.⁴² The impact of the community within which these relationships and values are nurtured and promoted is also important and is a reminder that all schools — Government, Catholic, Independent and Christian — can consider and reflect upon as they seek to serve the common good.

42 Cheng and Iselin, 2020.

Queensland Millennial Graduates and Religion: Faith Commitments and Spiritual Practices

Australia's religious profile has shifted considerably in the past two decades and is perceived as one of the most religiously diverse nations in the world.⁴³ Australians are identifying less as Christian, and an increasing number do not identify with any religion at all. Furthermore, religion remains a contested construct within Australia's public square.⁴⁴ This is reflected in the CES Australia data, with only about one in five respondents reporting that they grew up in families who thought religion was important⁴⁵. In this section, we consider whether schools play a role in fostering hearts that are sensitive to a sense of the transcendent. In the CES Australia, we asked a variety of questions about beliefs about God, moral reasoning and religious practice. The questions were focussed primarily on whether schools instil religious beliefs and practices and a sense of the transcendent, not specifically whether they instil beliefs and practices of religious traditions.⁴⁶

Consistent with the findings earlier in this report regarding civic engagement, belonging, volunteering, and giving, QLD Christian school graduates are most likely of any QLD graduate to attend church/religious service at least monthly (38% see figure 46) and are 3 times more likely than QLD Government (14%) and Catholic (12%) graduates to attend a church or religious service (see figure 46).

These higher rates of church and religious service attendance from QLD Christian school graduates (though slightly lower than NSW (42%) and VIC (43%) Christian school graduates) are worthy of further investigation and may be impacted by more socially conservative and traditional views of QLD respondents in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan locales.⁴⁷

QLD Catholic graduates (12%) are half as likely than NSW Catholic graduates (23% see figure 46) to attend church or a religious service regularly and are less likely to attend than QLD Government graduates (14%) although the findings do not remain significant when other controls including family background are applied.

43 Bouma, 2016.

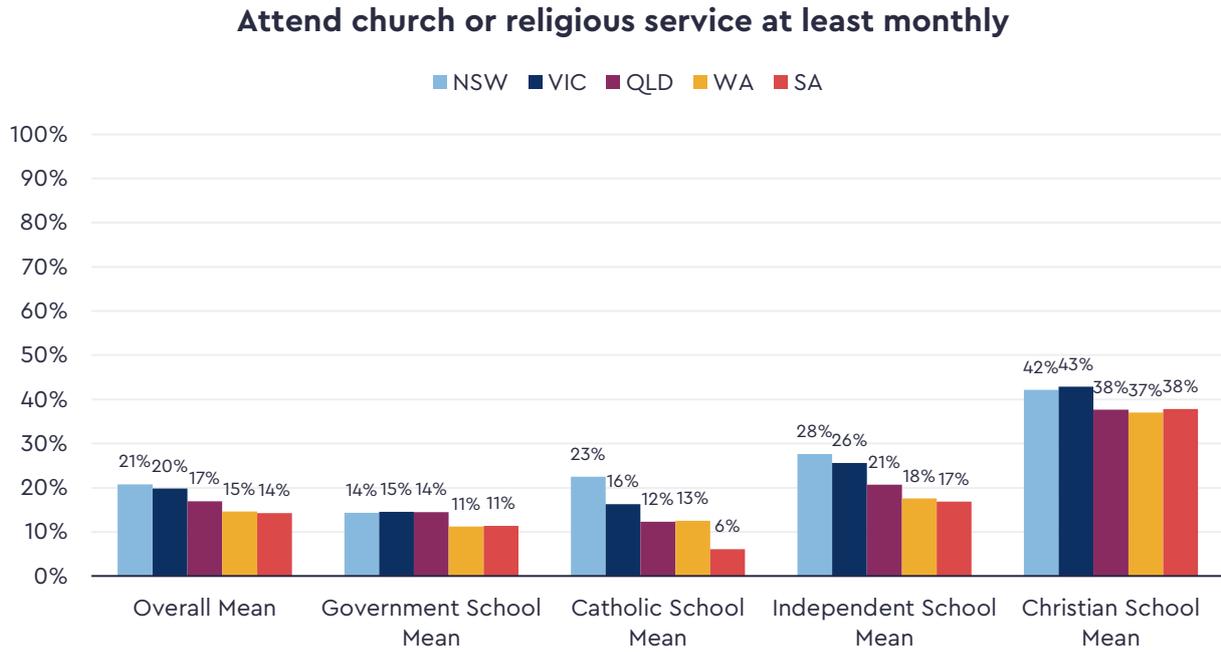
44 Keddie, A., Wilkinson, J., Howie, L. et al. '...we don't bring religion into school': issues of religious inclusion and social cohesion. *Aust. Educ. Res.* 46, 1–15 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-018-0289-4>

45 Cheng, A. and Iselin, D. (2020). *Australian Schools and the Common Good*. Ontario: Canada.

46 Ibid.

47 Gilbert, 2011.

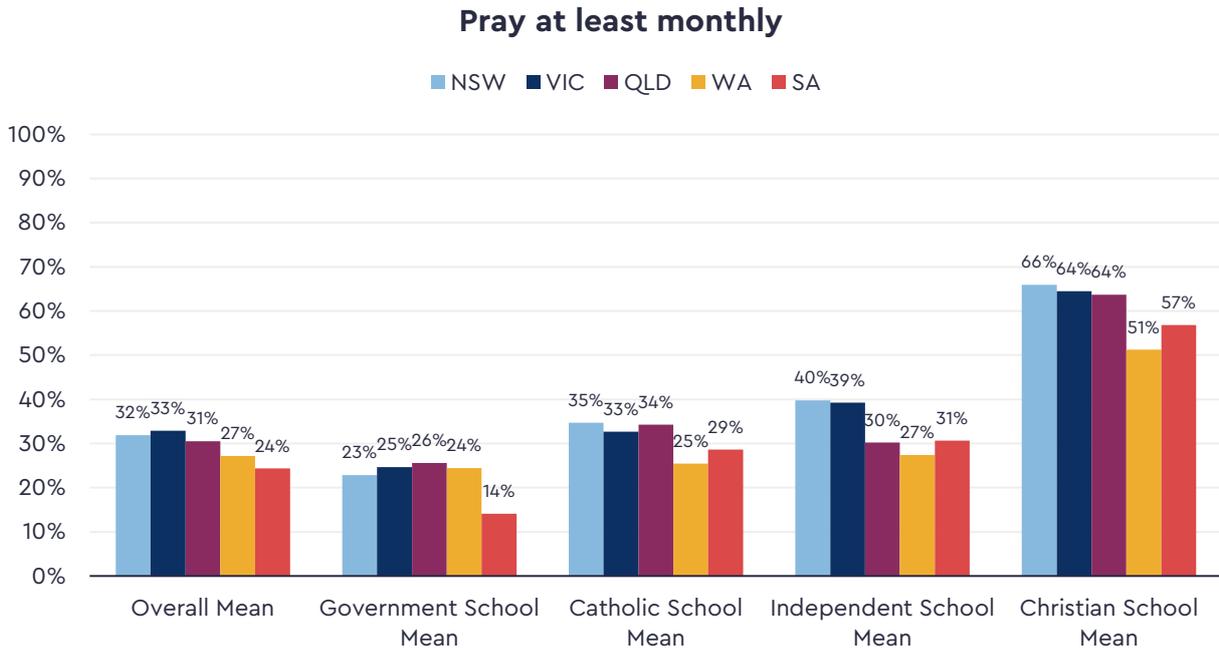
Figure 46 Percentage of respondents who attend church/ religious service monthly



These findings about religious commitment are reinforced further particularly for QLD Christian school graduates who are more likely to pray at least monthly (64% see figure 47), than graduates from nearly every other state (apart from Christian graduates from NSW 66% see figure 47). It is important to note the

integral role that family religious background and local community plays on these findings and caution is required when interpreting these results solely from a school sector perspective. These results are consistent with results relating to prayer from QLD graduates in QLD metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas.

Figure 47 Percentage of respondents who pray monthly



Contemporary Australia has been reported as one of the most religiously diverse nations in the world⁴⁸. QLD schools take different approaches and place different emphases on the importance of fostering a sense of the transcendent in students. This, alongside family background and other variables, is likely to play an important role in how graduates relate to religion or spirituality.⁴⁹ Rather than dismissing religion, we

intentionally include this section to raise the question of how religion might be constitutive of the common good⁵⁰ in contemporary Australian society and how a reframing of religious ideas and values, may promote better dialogue on this important area from across all schooling sectors.

48 Bouma, 2016.

49 Cheng and Iselin, 2020.

50 Korrt, Dollery & Grant, 2014; VanderWeele, 2017b.

Conclusion

The findings of the QLD state-based analysis of the CES Australia data reveal that, across all schooling sectors in QLD, millennial graduates contribute to the common good and sustain civic life in a plethora of ways. The results both describe and reinforce the particular ways each Australian school sector within each state jurisdiction, educates for the common good. Schools of all types — government and non-government, religious and secular — provide a public education, that is, an education that seeks to shape and form graduates for active participation and engagement in and for the good of society. These contributions are important to our social fabric and integral to sustaining and promoting goods we might share in common.⁵¹

Whilst there are a number of noteworthy differences across sectors within QLD education, we hope these comparisons will activate thoughtful reflection on how the distinctive characteristics in any given school sector might better inform policy decision making and discussion within and across the Government, Catholic, Independent and Christian sectors in Australian education.

QLD schools, to varying degrees across all sectors, seek to form graduates to contribute to the common good and suitably prepare them for career and university success, promote holistic character development initiatives and seek to ensure that graduates are well equipped to deal with the problems of life and have a sense of meaning and purpose in their future endeavours. Some of the findings within this state analysis would suggest that the vast geographical land area of the state and long history of socio-economic challenges across both metropolitan and non-metropolitan regions continues to produce proportionally lower educational attainment, fewer employment opportunities and career pathways options for QLD graduates. However, there are some optimistic findings regarding levels

of bachelor completions which are higher in non-metropolitan areas in QLD than most other non-metropolitan areas in Australia (apart from VIC), and most notably significantly higher across each sector than NSW graduates in non-metropolitan areas. Furthermore, QLD graduates across all sectors were generous with their time and money often serving and giving at greater levels than their counterparts in other states. QLD Christian school graduates are more likely than any other graduate in Australia to volunteer in their communities. Due to the complex interrelationships and demographic characteristics of family, community and schooling, findings relating to graduates' contribution to the common good should be treated with caution and direct association of schooling alone should not be assigned without considering these important formative elements shaping each QLD graduate.

Due to the intended purpose and design of this study, it is important to recognise the retrospective nature of measuring graduate outcomes from respondents who graduated secondary school between 1998 and 2011. Seismic changes have impacted on Australian education since this time including the adoption of a national curriculum, national testing, an increasing reliance on digital technology and a significant spike in mental health and wellbeing concerns amongst our secondary students. The schools represented in this report have also developed in significant ways so care needs to be taken to use the data prudently to inform current practice and policy making without imposing assumptions that may have shifted in the decade since these graduates left our schooling communities. Educators and educational leaders are encouraged to reflect upon these state-based and across sector results and to consider how their schools are shaping the current generation of Australian secondary students to better contribute to the common good in the ever-changing socio-cultural milieu that is contemporary Australian society.

51 Cheng and Iselin, 2020.

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