My purpose today is to propose a new blueprint for public education in Australia.

Reaching a new settlement on the nature of public education may be the defining project for education in the early years of the 21st century. A critical issue is to establish the role of the independent school in this settlement.

The central issue is the role of government and the concept of ‘public good’. For more than a century, public education has been synonymous with public control, public funding, public ownership and public delivery, with ‘public’ represented by ‘government’ in this prescription.

Some have advocated that government vacate the field altogether, as instanced by James Tooley’s self-proclaimed ‘global and historical wake-up call’. He asserts that ‘There are solutions to the fundamental challenges facing education. The solutions do not require much more from government other than it leaves education well alone’ (Tooley, 2000, p. 1).

What can nations expect from their public schools? Can governments deliver on their promises in public education? Is the public good well served? What is the contribution of the independent school to the public good? Are these the right questions to ask? It is timely to explore the concept of ‘public good’, identify values that should underpin the efforts of governments and other stakeholders, test alternative scenarios for the future of public education against these values, draw implications for independent schools, and identify the major domains where change is required.

A ‘third way’ test of the public good in education

Mansbridge’s tour de force on the contested nature of the public good is worthy of close attention. She acknowledges that the concept is ‘unendingly contestable’ but that such a contest should be welcomed to help ‘retrieve the public good from platitude, disdain, and justifiable mistrust to rebuild it as a centrepiece of . . . politics’. She observes that ‘the moral language of the Western tradition has typically contrasted the public good with private goods’ although ‘Western thinkers [including Adam Smith] have also suggested that the opposition between public good and private benefits so prominent in ordinary language might conceal a different congruence’ (Mansbridge, 1998, p. 3).

A helpful starting point in establishing a contemporary view of the public good is to move from a focus on inputs (‘more money please’) or on means (‘only government should be involved’ or ‘leave it to market forces’) to unrelenting concern for outcomes, underpinned by commitment to core values. This is a ‘third way’ in defining the public good. Many commentators persist in defining the third way as an alternative to socialism or capitalism, government regulation or free market. Retrieving UK Prime Minister Tony Blair’s early statement on the topic, the third way calls for absolute adherence to core values but in getting there: ‘we should be infinitely adaptable and imaginative in the means of applying those values. There are no ideological pre-conditions, no pre-determined veto on means. What counts is what works’ (cited by Midgley, 19981998, p. 44).

The challenge in establishing a ‘third way’ view of public education is therefore to be clear about two things; first, the ends that are sought and, second, the values that should underpin the achievement of those ends.

There is a consensus emerging among nations about the ends, if key statements of policy by governments and institutions such as OECD and UNESCO are taken as a guide (Barber, 1999; Chapman, 1997; Chapman and
Aspin, 1997; Delors, 1996). It goes something like this:

All students in every setting should be literate and numerate and should acquire a capacity for lifelong learning leading to successful and satisfying work in a knowledge society and a global economy.

Since all governments are seeking to achieve this outcome, it seems an appropriate contemporary expectation for a ‘world-class’ school. It does not, of course, represent all aspirations we would have for such a school. It is simply the common ground. Different nations, systems and schools will include others. For example, Confucian-based societies give priority, even pre-eminence, to moral education, and the nurturing of harmony among state, society, family and citizen (Yao, 2000, pp. 209 — 216). What lies beyond the common ground may well be what most people associate with the independent school and what many independent schools lay claim to in articulating their mission.

Six core values are proposed for a public good test for policy and practice in efforts to create world-class schools.

- **Choice** to reflect the right of parents and students to choose a school that meets their needs and aspirations.
- **Equity** to provide assurance that students with similar needs and aspirations will be treated in the same manner in the course of their education.
- **Access** to ensure all students will have an education that matches their needs and aspirations.
- **Efficiency** to optimise outcomes given the resources available.
- **Economic growth** to generate resources that are adequate to the task.
- **Harmony** to remedy the current fragmentation of commitment and effort in support of schools.

The first five of these six values are based on a classification proposed by Swanson and King (1997) and these may be considered mainly western values. Three are based on the classic trio of liberty (choice), equality (equity) and fraternity (access). To make them a truly universal set, especially in the light of the emerging global consensus on expectations for schools, one ought to draw more broadly in building a framework of values to shape policy and practice in public education. Given the influence of its culture and the achievements of students in nations that have its values as a core, it seems appropriate to draw from Confucian society to complete the list. Dimmock highlights harmony in his recent cross-cultural east-west perspective on student-centred schooling (Dimmock, 2000, pp. 268 — 270). There should also be a place for the *ren-yi-li* normative structure of Confucian ethics, with *ren* being ‘a capacity and an act of utmost benevolence and love’, *yi* being ‘moral rightness and appropriateness’, and *li* being ‘the etiquettes, norms, mores and protocols in . . . daily and institutional life’ (Ip, 1996, pp. 42 — 43).

Jerome T. Murphy, Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, believes that ‘what will determine whether we call them public schools is not so much the vehicle that’s providing the education, but really whether they ascribe to a certain set of public values. Values like equal educational opportunity, values like non-discrimination, and so on. We’ll have multiple delivery systems to achieve public values’ (Murphy, 1999). Pope John Paul II focused on equity and ‘basic values’ when he argued that ‘without doubt, to move beyond a situation that is less and less sustainable, the main problem to be solved is the full recognition of the juridical and financial equality of State and non-State schools, by overcoming a long-standing resistance that is alien to the basic values of the European cultural tradition’ (Pope John Paul II, 1999, p. 8).

**Scenarios for the future of public education**

Getting the mix right is a high stakes game, given three entirely feasible but dramatically different scenarios for the future of public schools in the decade ahead. Consider the following.
Scenario 1: Public schools as safety net schools

It is 2020. The differences among schools in terms of quality and resources that were evident in 2000 have widened. Most students attend private schools. Parents became increasingly dissatisfied with education offered by schools owned by government and other public authorities. They left the system, prepared to invest ever-larger proportions of personal resources to assure their children success and satisfaction in a knowledge society and global economy, with access to the rich range of technologies necessary to achieve these ends. Public schools in some nations are now simply safety net schools, offering a standard curriculum with little differentiation in program and outcomes. Private financial support is rarely sought and often actively opposed. Proponents of such schools won the day in public policy debates on these particular matters in the early years of the century. However, electoral considerations ensured that governments introduced, continued and then expanded their financial support of private schools.

Scenario 2: The decline of schools

It is 2020. Schools are rapidly disappearing. A range of educational, technological and social developments overtook the institution that dominated the 20th century. In the view of many, schools became increasingly dangerous places to be, a perception fuelled by media accounts of frequent violence and the prevalence of drugs. Combined with advances in information and communications technology, home schooling gathered momentum in the early years of the century. Support for secondary schools fell most dramatically when traditional approaches to curriculum, teaching, learning and organization proved impervious to change. They were steadily replaced by adaptations of innovative learning centres, formed initially in partnership with private enterprise that lost patience with the outcomes of upper secondary schooling. By the end of the first decade of the new millennium, some governments provided all citizens with lifetime entitlements to education and training.

Scenario 3: All schools can be public schools

It is 2020. The differences among schools in terms of quality and resources that were evident in 2000 have narrowed. Conflict on public policy, polarised in many countries on the means of schooling (‘government must take responsibility for all aspects of public education’) turned to agreement on values that should underpin the endeavour. A rich range of schooling was offered, with government generally vacating the field of ownership and delivery, focusing on generating revenue to support all schools, with a demanding regime of accountability in the use of public funds. They had no alternative,
Such scenarios are but a sample of the possibilities. These three and more may be mixed and matched, with other elements included from a range of developments already in train. A particular scenario may be more feasible, or at least seem more readily applicable, to some nations than to others. Those selected here for illustration have their foundation in trends that are already evident and reported in the literature.

The first scenario ['public schools as safety net schools'] is evident in David Hargreaves’ contribution to an OECD report – ‘public schools would only be for those students whose parents could not afford the alternatives: a kind of safety net for the disadvantaged’ (Hargreaves, 1999 as reported by Kennedy, 1999). Hargreaves is now in a powerful position to influence this and other scenarios in Britain, for he heads the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

The second scenario ['the decline of schools'] reflects the stunning growth of home schooling. Home schooling is now the fastest-growing segment of primary and secondary education in Canada, rising 10 per cent per year since 1990. In Ontario, only 15 per cent go this way because they are too far from a school, while 35 per cent do so because their parents do not believe public schools meet their children’s needs. A school board on Vancouver Island supplies computers to home schoolers. Knowles asserts that ‘When they move to college or university, these kids thrive on their individuality and on the self-directed nature of their previous learning experience’. Dick Baerendgret, Chair of the Home Education Corporation of Alberta, proclaims that ‘Home-schooled kids must be doing well . . . both Harvard and Yale put a premium on enrolling them’ (these accounts from Greenfield, 2000). In the United States, current estimates are that between 1.2 and 1.8 million children are educated at home (Archer, 1999, p. 24).

The third scenario ['all schools can be public schools'] is based on the policy framework for public schools proposed by Caldwell and Hayward, 1998) in which four concepts were addressed: ‘public good’, ‘entitlement’, ‘contribution’ and ‘design’.

**Applying the public good test**

Scenario 1 ('public schools as safety net schools') is likely to prevail if public policy emphasises equity and access but downplays choice, efficiency and economic growth. This scenario minimises choice. Scenario 2 ('the decline of schools') may be the outcome if the emphasis is on choice, efficiency and economic growth, with a loss of commitment to equity and access. Scenario 3 ('all schools can be public schools') may unfold if there is a balance among all six values. Independent schools may lay claim to be public schools, and satisfy the public good test, if they achieve this balance. I invite you to read the three scenarios, in the light of the aforementioned assumptions on core values and expectations for schools, to obtain a sense of this analysis, as summarised in Table 1, and assess the extent to which your school, or independent schools in general, can satisfy the test.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 1</th>
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<td>Applying the public good test to alternative scenarios to 2020</td>
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faced with an electoral revolt on disparities in outcomes, and pressure from an increasing majority of taxpayers who insisted that all schools should be funded on the same educational needs-driven basis. Community support for schools is so high that all can offer a rich range of curriculum, with the support of state-of-the-art learning technologies.
Scenario 3 does not mean that all schools must offer the same program. It means that all must work collectively to satisfy the six public values. It means a much higher level of cooperation than currently exists across all sectors. It means higher levels of coordinated support from public as well as private sources.

**Putting the values to the test in eight domains of policy and practice**

Eight domains of policy and practice are selected to illustrate where the public good test should be applied. The list is illustrative rather than exhaustive.

1. **Curriculum and the public good**

The emerging consensus on the characteristics of world-class schools is commendable, but many would argue that the range of outcomes and their measures are much too narrow. The idea of ‘multiple intelligences’ (Gardner, 1983) is a helpful starting point.

Handy argues that three intelligences — factual intelligence, analytical intelligence and numerate intelligence — ‘will get you through most tests and entitle you to be called clever’ (Handy, 1997, p. 211). He suggests eight more: linguistic intelligence, spatial intelligence, athletic intelligence, intuitive intelligence, emotional intelligence, practical intelligence, interpersonal intelligence and musical intelligence’ (Handy, 1997, pp. 212 - 213).

Leadbeater suggests that ‘the curriculum needs to encourage creativity, problem solving, team building, as well as literacy and numeracy’ (Leadbeater, 1999, p. vi). Beck sets a similar curriculum in the context of globalisation:

One of the main political responses to globalisation is . . . to build and develop the education and knowledge society; to make training longer rather than shorter; to loosen or do away with its link to a particular job or occupation. This should not only be a matter of ‘flexibility’ or ‘lifelong learning’, but
of such things as social competence, the ability to work in a team, conflict resolution, understanding of other cultures, integrated thinking and a capacity to handle the uncertainties and paradoxes of the second modernity. Here and there, people are beginning to realise that something like a transnationalism of university education and curricula will be necessary. (Beck, 1999, p. 27)

To do all of this will require the abandonment of much of the existing curriculum. Writing for the UK setting, Seltzer contends that ‘we can’t just keep piling new expectations and structures on to old ones. Something has to give. We should aim to have reduced the national curriculum in the UK by half by 2010, in order to make room for new approaches’ (Seltzer, 1999, p. xxi; see also Seltzer and Bentley, 1999).

These views suggest that the public good will be well served with change in the direction proposed by Seltzer. The core values at stake are equity, access and economic growth. Expectations for world-class schools are also at risk. Independent schools are well placed to take the lead.

2. Pedagogy and the public good

The revolution in information and communications technology and the advent of exciting, pedagogically sound approaches to inter-active multi-media learning mean that it is possible to learn anytime, anywhere. A revolution is clearly under way.

More fundamentally, and linked to curriculum, is how learning occurs. To what extent does the following view of how students learn in the United States apply in other nations?

They are extremely good at manipulating symbols and working on computers, they are verbally fluent and extremely good at asking questions, but they don’t really know anything in depth and they haven’t really read anything. The high school curriculum is so chopped up into tiny bits and pieces that the integrating power of a liberal education is somewhat lost.

(Sheridan, 1999, p. 274)

Henry Kissinger believes that ‘the present generation has the power to tap into astonishing amounts of knowledge on any subject but no ability to integrate it into a knowledge of the past and no ability therefore to project it meaningfully into the future’ (cited by Sheridan, 1999, p. 274). To what extent does the Kissinger critique apply in the independent school?

Application of the public good test suggests that different pedagogy is required to meet expectations for world-class schools. The divide between technology-rich and technology-poor schools indicates that equity and access are also at risk. Many observers would agree that independent schools lie at the technology-rich end of the spectrum, and that is to the good, but is it to the public good?

3. School design and the public good

Curriculum and pedagogy cannot be constrained as single domains for they influence, and are influenced by, what occurs in other domains. It is here that the concept of ‘design’ comes into play.

Dimmock (2000) provides a rich inter-cultural perspective from the East and West. He distinguishes ‘design’ from ‘re-structure’ and ‘reform’. Design must have intentionality, connectivity, reinforcement, synergy and consistency. Design elements include societal culture, organizational culture, leadership and management, performance evaluation, personnel and financial resources, organisational structures – all centred on informed learning, informed teaching and an outcomes-oriented curriculum, energised by information and communications technology (Dimmock, 2000, p. 4).

Hill and Crévola adopt the same approach and propose a general design for improving learning outcomes that includes standards and targets; monitoring and assessment; classroom teaching programs; professional learning teams; school and class organisation; intervention and special assistance; and home, school and community partnerships – all underpinned and centred on beliefs and understandings (Hill and Crévola, 1999, p. 123).
Caldwell and Spinks, 1998) offered a design to guide efforts to create schools for the knowledge society, illustrated in a gestalt – a perceived organised whole that is more than the sum of its parts – as in Figure 1.

- Dramatic change in approaches to learning and teaching is in store as electronic networking allows 'cutting across and so challenging the very idea of subject boundaries' and 'changing the emphasis from impersonal curriculum to excited live exploration' (Papert, 1993). At risk is the balkanised curriculum that has done much to alienate children from schooling, especially in the middle years of the transition from primary to secondary (g1 Connectedness in curriculum).

- Schools as workplaces are transformed in every dimension, including the scheduling of time for learning and approaches to human resource management, rendering obsolete most approaches that derive from an industrial age, including the concept of 'industrial relations' (g2 Workplace transformation).

- The fabric of schooling is similarly rendered obsolete by electronic networking. Everything from building design to the size, shape, alignment, and furnishing of space for the 'knowledge worker' in the school is transformed. In one sense, of course, the school has no walls, for there are global learning networks, and much of the learning that calls for the student to be located at school occurs in many places, at home and, at the upper years of secondary schooling and, for life-long learning, in the work place. (g3 School fabric and globalisation).

- A wide range of professionals and para-professionals support learning in an educational parallel to the diversity of support that may be found in modern health care. The role of teacher is elevated, for it demands wisdom, judgement, and a facility to manage learning in modes more complex and varied than ever. While the matter of intellectual capital must be resolved, the teacher is freed from the impossible task of designing from their own resources learning experiences to challenge every student: the resources of the world's great teachers will be at hand (g4 Professionalism and great teaching).

![Figure 1](http://www.deadline.net.au/isb_ncisa/htm_file/prof_caldwell.htm)

A capacity to work in teams is more evident in approaches to learning, given the primacy of the work team in every formulation of the workplace in the knowledge society. This, of course, will confound those who see electronic networking in an outdated stereotype of the loner with the laptop. The concept of 'pastoral
care’ of students is as important as ever for learning in this mode, and in schools that quite literally have no boundaries (g5 Teams and pastoral care).

- Spender’s (1995) challenge to formulate ‘cyber-policy of the future’ is a priority. The issues of access and equity will drive public debate until such time as prices fall to make electronic networks as common as the telephone or radio, and that may soon be a reality (g6 Cyber-policy, access and equity).

- The concept of the virtual organisation or the learning network organisation is a reality in the knowledge society. Schools take on many of the characteristics of such organizations, given that learning occurs in so many modes and from so many sources, all networked electronically (g7 Virtual schools).

Several elements of this vision were formed from my knowledge of what occurs in independent schools, especially during my term on council at Methodist Ladies College in Melbourne. The challenge for each independent school is to create a design that suits the setting, but pursing the vision of a world-class school. Core values under critical scrutiny are, once again, equity and access. Realising this vision calls for high levels of professional knowledge.

4. Professionalism and the public good

The unrelenting focus on learning outcomes in the emerging consensus on world-class schools suggests that teachers’ work should be research-based, outcomes-oriented, data-driven, and team-focused, with lifelong professional learning the norm as it is for medical specialists. There is a danger, however, that this may be too narrow a view, just as the concept of world class schools may be too narrow.

A wonderfully rich professionalism is evident in the ‘intelligent school’ proposed by MacGilchrist, Myers and Reed (1997). This is the organisational counterpart of an individual with ‘multiple intelligences’. Professionals in an ‘intelligent school’ will have contextual intelligence, strategic intelligence, academic intelligence, reflective intelligence, pedagogical intelligence, collegial intelligence, emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence and ethical intelligence.

The challenge is how to attract and keep in the profession the best of our young people and the wisest of our mature people. There are implications for governments and the wider community as well as for schools. For our part, in universities, we need to re-design programs in teacher education.

Above all, we need passion in the profession. There is a wonderful passage in Milan Kundera’s Identity (Kundera, 1998, p. 75). One of the central characters had this to say:

... the old occupations ... were unthinkable without a passionate involvement: the peasants in love with their land; my grandfather, the magician of beautiful tables; the shoemakers who knew their villager’s feet by heart; the woodsmen; the gardeners ... The meaning of life wasn’t an issue [for it was] in their workshops, in their fields. Each occupation created its own mentality, its own way of being. A doctor would think differently from a peasant, a soldier would behave differently from a teacher. Today we’re all alike, all of us bound together by our shared apathy towards our work. That very apathy has become a passion. The one great collective passion of our time.

How do we create a passion in and for the profession, which, paradoxically, is a return to a classical view of professionalism? The core value in the public good test that is immediately relevant is harmony, for in many ways it seems a divided and disillusioned profession in many nations.

5. Funding and the public good

New approaches to the funding of schools may be required. The stresses and strains of strict adherence to traditional approaches are already evident. The commitment to free and compulsory education was made in the 19th century when schools consisted of large classes, few professional staff other than teachers, blackboards and slates, and little equipment apart from a few maps and globes. There was considerable community commitment to and ‘in kind’ support of the local school. Public expectations could be met to the full without a financial
contribution from parents, voluntary or otherwise. A similar situation applied to hospitals.

In the early 21st century, expectations are rapidly outstripping the capacity or willingness of the community to meet through taxation the full cost of education and health. The key is to establish and then cost a series of school designs. Interest is growing in several nations and there is now a sturdy methodology for costing the various elements. The International Institute for Educational Planning of UNESCO recently published a report on needs-based resource allocation in education (Ross and Levacic, 1999; see also Goertz and Odden, 1999). We are moving toward this approach in Australia, especially in Victoria, and to some extent nationally with the new mechanism for Commonwealth funding for non-government schools.

Tom Bentley (1998), director of the UK independent think-tank Demos, proposes ‘shifting the way we see education from a separate sector of society to a culture that infuses every sector’ (p. 187). The implications for funding are profound, including ‘releasing ourselves from over-dependence on taxation and public spending . . . filtered through an expensive and slow-moving bureaucratic system’ (p. 180).

For Australia, I think the GST will help because of the higher than expected revenue it will deliver to the states, replacing the annual fight for funds from the Commonwealth and reliance on limited revenue from a rag-tag collection of sources at the state level. Governments should take a leaf out of the Blair Government’s book in the UK and place education at the top of their priorities when GST revenue flows to the states.

Most core values in the public good test are challenged in this analysis, but particularly economic growth, as it applies to resources for schools, and a capacity to satisfy other values such as choice, equity, access and harmony.

6. Leadership and the public good

Outstanding leadership at all levels of schools and school systems is a key element in likely and preferred scenarios. Attracting, preparing, placing, developing and rewarding school leaders is as much an issue as the nurturing of the profession at large. Around the world there is a crisis in accomplishing these things. The initiative of the Blair Government in creating the National College for School Leadership in Britain is remarkable by international standards. Commendable though it is, such an initiative must be part of a comprehensive and coherent range of policies and resource commitments that cover everything from the design of school buildings to the provision of strong management teams.

We should not be seduced by the view that leadership is unimportant, or even unnecessary. In the gripping first chapter of Ian McEwan’s remarkable novel Enduring Love (McEwan, 1998), a hot air balloon containing a small and frightened boy rolls uncontrolled across an open field. A sudden gust bears it aloft while its desperate owner tries to keep it on the ground. He is joined by several passers-by, each of whom take a rope in an endeavour to bring things under control. There is no effort to work together. One after another they release their hold, until one remains. The consequences are devastating. One who let go feels deep guilt. He reflects on the need for leadership, believing that ‘No human society, from the hunter-gatherer to the post-industrial, has come to the attention of anthropologists that did not have its leaders and its led . . . ’ (McEwan, 1998, p. 11).

Leadership was required in a time of crisis but so was a capacity for all to be committed to a common purpose and to work together. Are these not the requirements for leadership in a time of high expectations for schools? Is it not a crisis for many students, who do not succeed? Lives are at stake!

The public good test calls for leaders who have a capacity to work with others to design and deliver a world-class school or system of schools with a commitment to the core values that constitute the test.

7. Management and the public good

Traditional approaches to management are still required in areas such as planning, budgeting and staffing. Consistent with the emergence of the knowledge society, innovation in management calls for ‘knowledge management’. This is not just a fad that will pass or a piece of jargon to describe what has always been a requirement in the organisation.
According to Bukowitz and Williams (1999, p. 2), ‘knowledge management is the process by which the organisation generates wealth from its intellectual or knowledge-based assets’. In the case of school education: ‘Knowledge management is the process by which a school achieves the highest levels of student learning that are possible from its intellectual or knowledge-based assets’. Successful knowledge management is consistent with the image of ‘the intelligent school’ (MacGilchrist, Myers and Reed, 1997) and the concept of ‘intellectual capital’ (Stewart, 1997).

Knowledge management involves a school developing a deep capacity among its entire staff to be at the forefront of knowledge and skill in learning and teaching and the support of learning and teaching. This is more than occasional in-service training or professional development. This is a systematic, continuous and purposeful approach that starts with knowing what people know, don’t know and ought to know. It assumes a high level of professionalism, as already described, and includes a range of functions such as selection, placement, development, appraisal, reward, succession planning, contracting of services and ensuring that every aspect of the workplace is conducive to efficient, effective and satisfying work for all concerned.

Interestingly, Bukowitz and Williams see the recent loss of middle management as a loss of capacity in respect to these matters. ‘Once middle management was "out" it was not surprising that knowledge management was "in". Knowledge management represents an effort to repair past damage and an insurance policy against loss of organisational memory in the future’ (Bukowitz and Williams, 1999, p. 7). They conclude that middle managers may be a good idea after all:

As organizations begin to restore some of these positions, they will do so with the revitalised view of the role of middle managers as orchestrators of knowledge flows. . . middle managers will increasingly be asked to look across the organisation. Their success will hinge on the ability to facilitate communication . . . leverage resources, transfer best practices, identify synergies and encourage knowledge re-use. (Bukowitz and Williams, 1999, p. 355)

This view of management is relevant to the application of all values that make up the public good test as well as the capacity to meet the expectations for a world-class school.

8. Governance and the public good

Applying the public good test in the governance domain is complex and contentious. The most notable recent development is the ‘schools for profit’ movement in the United States. It is now a growth industry, with leading players including Edison Schools Inc. which runs 26 independent charter schools and 53 traditional public schools, and Nobel Learning Communities, Inc. that operates 137 private schools (Schnaiberg, 1999, p. 13). The former had an initial public offering (IPO) in November 1999, raising US$122 million. Edison plans partnerships with universities in teacher education programs (see cover story in Business Week, April 7, 2000 for a comprehensive account of these developments).

Private involvement in Britain is already evident with the privatising of school support services in the London boroughs of Hackney and Islington. Education minister Estelle Morris has raised the possibility of more, stating that ‘if we are talking about a new way to manage a school and the private sector wants to be involved — as long as it isn’t for profit — I think we ought to be open to that’. She drew a distinction between ‘profit’ and ‘management fee’, asserting that ‘people need to be paid for what they do’ (Morris, 2000). However, elements of public education are already run on a private basis, including sale of textbooks and computers, so where should the line be drawn? [Tooley (2000, pp. 196-200) develops this line of argument and identifies ‘seven virtues of the profit motive in education’].

Another major development in school governance in the United States has been the emergence of charter schools. These are publicly funded schools that are owned or operated by non-public bodies and generally free from constraining regulations that are applied to schools of a public authority. The number of charter schools has increased from two in one state in 1992 — 93 to 1484 in 32 states in September 1999. In a recent survey, the most important reasons for applying for charter status were reported to be realising an alternative vision (59 per cent), serving a special population of students (23 per cent), gaining greater autonomy and flexibility (9 per cent) attracting more students (4 per cent), obtaining increased funding (3 per cent), and securing greater involvement of
parents (3 per cent) (Nelson et al., 2000). Hentschke links market forces and public services in his assessment of charter schools:

Charter Schools are a testimony to the resilience and responsiveness of the American system of government as well as a tangible indicator of our growing recognition of the use of market forces and incentives in providing public services such as education. (Hentschke, 2000, p. 3)

There are long-standing patterns in other nations that challenge the view that the public interest is best served by having all or most schools owned and operated by government. In Hong Kong, for example, only 6 per cent of primary schools and 8 per cent of secondary schools are owned and operated by government, but about 90 per cent, representing a rich range of non-government schools, owned and operated by churches, charitable trusts, and private companies, are almost fully funded from the public purse. This pattern, summarised in Table 2 (Education Department, 1999), warrants international attention by those who contend that public education is and ought to be synonymous with government delivery.

The values in the public good test that are most relevant in matters of governance include choice, equity, access, efficiency and harmony, and a vigorous debate can be mounted on the extent to which each is satisfied in developments described here. Charter schools and for-profit schools are not beyond the realms of possibility in Australia. What might this mean in the future of the independent school?

Table 2

Student enrolment in Hong Kong classified by type of school attended in 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Aided</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>30 270</td>
<td>401 316</td>
<td>45 216</td>
<td>476 802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>36 705</td>
<td>365 458</td>
<td>53 709</td>
<td>455 872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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Abandonment in pursuit of the public good

Innovation is an integrating theme in the commentary on the eight domains where the public good test was applied to policy and practice. Peter Drucker (1999) suggested that this theme is central to institutional success in the 21st century, but he also recognised the need for ‘organised abandonment’ of things:

- Which were designed in the past and which were highly successful, even to the present, but which would not be designed in the same way if we were starting afresh today, knowing the terrain ahead;

- Which are currently successful, and likely to remain so, but only up to, say, five years— in other words, they have a limited ‘shelf life’; or

- Which may continue to succeed, but which through budget commitments, are inhibiting more promising approaches that will ensure success well into the future.

A values-driven approach calls for abandonment of a pre-occupation with means, focussing instead on ends (‘all students in every setting . . . ’) and underpinning values (liberty or choice, equality or equity, fraternity or access, efficiency for optimising outcomes, economic growth for adequacy, harmony to reduce fragmentation). A more pragmatic approach to means calls for abandonment of a view of public education that limits virtually every aspect of design and delivery to an exclusive role for government, replacing it with a new kind of commitment, driven by passionate adherence to each of these values.
The eight domains for change in the field of education call for abandonment of a range of approaches. Change in curriculum may require abandonment of some learning areas that have been painstakingly constructed in recent times. Pedagogy is a domain fraught with dilemmas, but ripe for abandonment of approaches that do not yield outcomes consistent with expectations for world-class schools. Innovation in design will certainly require abandonment of standard class sizes for all students at every level in facilities built like a collection of boxes, lined end to end or stacked one upon the other. New approaches to professionalism will challenge the modest levels of knowledge and skill that sufficed in the past, with a vision for values-centred, research-based, outcomes-oriented, data-driven and team-focused approaches that matches, indeed, exceeds that of the best of medical practice.

Decisions on funding will similarly challenge the constrained view of the recent past to call on all of the resources of the community in support of its schools. Leadership is vital but approaches that do not lead to commitment to a common purpose should be abandoned. Management must be re-shaped to find a place for knowledge management, suggesting that some tasks should be abandoned, curtailed or shifted to others if the role of middle management, in particular, is to be rewarding for incumbent and organisation. New arrangements for governance, like funding, will call for abandonment of a constrained approach, admitting possibilities that have hitherto been unthinkable.

How does one proceed with such change in a profession that is growing weary of continuous change? It is not sufficient to simply note that this has been the case for virtually all fields of endeavour. Education has been different because there has not been agreement on the ends that we seek nor has there been a consensus on the values that should underpin the effort. This paper has proposed a way forward for those who seek to define a new role for public education in the 21st century. The challenge of change — for innovation and abandonment - is as relevant to the independent school as it is to the government or systematic non-government school. What shall be your response in the face of this challenge? To what extent does or should your school satisfy the public good test or subscribe to a set of public values?

I conclude with a tribute to the contributions of independent schools, for their commitment to the public good, and the achievements of many in creating world-class schools for the knowledge society. However, I urge a new willingness for independent schools to work with government schools to create the kind of education system that will serve the public good more comprehensively in the century ahead.

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