

# **REDESIGNING THE PRINCIPALSHIP IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

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degree of Doctor of Education.**

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## **CERTIFICATE**

I certify that this thesis has not been submitted for any degree nor has it been submitted as part of candidature for any other degree or award.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me, and that any help I have received in preparing the thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged.

Signature of Candidate

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research was to determine how the role of the principal in the Catholic school could be redesigned so that more quality applicants are prepared to seek principalship and principals already in the role could be retained. The catalyst for this study derived from the shortage of suitable applicants for the position of principal, a problem that exists not only in Australia, but also in many Western countries.

An exploratory mixed method design was chosen for the study with the data gathering divided into two phases. The first phase was the qualitative phase during which the data were gathered using focus group interviews and analysed using QSR N6. The second phase was the quantitative phase, where the data were collected using a survey constructed from the data gathered and analysed in the first phase.

This research project asked the question, how can the principalship be redesigned to attract more quality applicants to the role and retain incumbents already in the role? The research revealed that, to answer the question a fundamental rethinking of the principalship is necessary and that such momentous change requires nothing less than a paradigm shift. The new paradigm would be based on sharing leadership rather than on an hierarchical approach. It would have structures that are flexible and customised to the local needs of the school and school community. Learning would be central and a work/life balance would be essential, for all principals. The new paradigm would also offer enough flexibility to encourage women to both take up, and remain in, principalship.

The findings from this research led to the development of nine propositions, which, it is suggested, should inform and influence the new paradigm of principalship. Together with the recommendations, they provide a scaffold and a guide to action for redesigning the principalship.

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