

Formative evaluation of the NSW Proud Schools Pilot: Stage 2

Final Report

For the Department of Education
and Communities

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Acknowledgments

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The Proud Schools Steering Committee gave advice and input into the evaluation planning.

Background research for the Pilot commissioned by the Department provided a context for understanding the findings—*Proud Schools Project Consultation Report*, Family Planning NSW (2011); and the position paper, *Same Sex Attracted and Gender Questioning Young People: Issues for NSW Schools*, Lynne Hillier and Anne Mitchell from the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University (2011 unpublished).

We consulted with the school community for the 12 schools involved in the Proud Schools Pilot. We thank those who provided feedback to the evaluation for their time and insights and trust we have adequately captured the issues and lessons for other schools.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

DEC	New South Wales Department of Education and Communities
GLBTI	Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender and Intersex people
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NSW	New South Wales
PD	Professional Development
PDHPE	Personal Development, Health and Physical Education
WIP	Wear it Purple day
WTI3	Writing Themselves In 3 Report

Executive summary

This report presents the findings of a comprehensive independent formative evaluation by ARTD Consultants of Stage 2 of the Proud Schools Pilot, an initiative of the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC).

The evaluation covers the delivery of the Proud Schools Pilot by 12 schools from its inception in December 2011 to the end of May 2013, when it finished.

Proud Schools Pilot

Young people who are same sex attracted or gender questioning are subjected too often to bullying at school because of their sexual orientation. A 2010 study found that 61 per cent of these young people had experienced verbal abuse and 18 per cent had experienced physical abuse, with 80 per cent reporting that the abuse occurred at school¹. Bullying adversely impacts on students' wellbeing and on their enjoyment and learning outcomes at school. Research shows that there is a strong relationship between homophobic abuse and self-harm and suicide and between homophobic abuse and drug and alcohol abuse and that homophobia impacts negatively on health and wellbeing outcomes more generally.

The purpose of the Proud Schools Pilot was to develop a framework to support secondary schools to address homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism, and provide a safe and supportive environment for same sex attracted and gender questioning students. Stage 1 of the Pilot consisted of the development of a position paper *Same Sex Attracted and Gender Questioning Young People: Issues for NSW Schools* and a stakeholder consultation project. Stage 1 covered a number of broad domains, including management and practice, school culture, teaching and learning and responding, supporting and partnerships. These were used to inform implementation of the second stage of the pilot. The second stage of the Pilot (the subject of this evaluation) saw 12 secondary schools trial strategies identified in the position paper. Family Planning NSW was contracted and worked in partnership with Twenty10 (herein these agencies are referred to as "the contracted agency") to provide support with planning and implementation of strategies within schools.

¹ Hillier L, Jones T, Monagle M, Overton N, Gahan L, Blackman J, and Mitchell A. (2010) *Writing themselves In 3: The third national study on the sexual health and wellbeing of same sex attracted and gender questioning young people*. Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University.

Participating schools—schools’ baseline position in regards to addressing homophobia and transphobia

The 12 Pilot secondary schools were drawn from the Hunter/ Central Coast and Sydney Regions and represented a range of public schools, including: rural and metropolitan based schools, comprehensive/ selective schools, large and small schools. Five of the twelve schools had initiatives on challenging homophobia and discrimination and about creating more inclusive schools for same sex attracted and gender questioning students in place prior to the Pilot.

Data collected from the Pilot schools at the start of the Pilot indicated that verbal homophobic bullying was common in participating schools—54 per cent of students said they heard homophobic language (such as “that’s so gay”) every day. The data also indicated that by this measure and other measures, the school climate towards same sex attracted or gender questioning students differed greatly from school to school. For example, students’ ratings of whether same sex attracted or gender questioning students would feel safe at their school ranged from just 6 per cent of students agreeing with the proposition at one school (47 per cent, don’t know, 47 per cent, no) to as high as 56 per cent agreeing at another school. Teachers and students observed similar incidences of verbal or physical homophobia or transphobia within schools but the incidences being reported varied widely from school to school. Students’ and teachers’ knowledge about their school’s approach to supporting same sex attracted and gender questioning students before the Pilot tended to reflect how much focus had been on the area prior to the Pilot.

The evaluation methods

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach, which incorporated a before and after design in the collection of student and staff members’ attitudes and practices to assess changes over time in key focus areas of the Pilot (checklists). Data were collected and analysed at two key time points: during the early phases of the Pilot (baseline) and post implementation of the Pilot (follow-up). The evaluation also examined what works for schools in different situations and contexts.

We analysed data from the five schools where students completed baseline and follow-up student checklists and the six schools where we had teaching staff checklist data at both time points. These checklist tools were optional and schools made the decision about their use based on the schools’ needs. Parents provided feedback via an online submission portal or in parent meetings held at two schools. We visited three schools and interviewed 28 teachers and 17 students. Additional data were collected through a review of initial school plans and reports, and from representatives of the pilot schools at a school meeting held by

the Department at the end of the Pilot and through interviews with external support agency representatives.

Strength of the evidence

Overall, the multiple sources of evidence and convergence of findings from separate data sources mean we are confident about the evaluation findings.

The student and staff checklist data had gaps and methodological limitations meaning that the findings about change as a result of the Pilot are indicative only and limited to those schools that provided both baseline and follow-up information (eight of the 12 schools provided both baseline and follow-up data for students, teachers or both). However, the amount of change observed varies widely between schools and the direction of change is fairly consistent within schools and across different questions, meaning we are reasonably confident that the strategies implemented as part of the Pilot have caused some of the changes seen.

Key findings

The evaluation shows that it is feasible for NSW Government secondary schools to implement strategies to promote a safe and supportive environment for same sex attracted and gender questioning young people. Further, the evaluation shows that these efforts can bring about some positive changes in the school climate towards same sex attracted and gender questioning young people in the short term. Some schools chose to do more than other schools, depending on what the school had in place before the Pilot and on the school's assessment of parental and community support for the Pilot. All schools are planning to continue to implement strategies and build on their efforts during the Pilot.

Using a whole-of-school approach was more effective than single strategies in bringing about positive changes in the school climate towards same sex attracted and gender questioning young people.

Extent schools were successful in planning and implementing strategies

Schools were aware that implementing strategies to explicitly address homophobic and transphobic bullying and raise awareness of sexual and gender diversity may be seen as contentious by some members of the school community. As such, most schools focused their awareness-raising strategies on recognising diversity more broadly and promoting acceptance and tolerance for students who are different than others.

Each school chose a different mix of strategies to build on existing specific and broader welfare and wellbeing approaches and initiatives and to fit within their local operating context. The strategies used by schools fitted broadly within a whole-school approach to

providing safe and supportive learning environments for students and were designed to align with existing DEC policy and procedure.

Pilot schools used a mix of one-off, short-term strategies around raising awareness of diversity and recognising difference and improving school culture, along with longer-term strategies to embed a more supportive culture for same sex and gender questioning students, such as modifying the school's policy related to anti-discrimination and reviewing curriculum materials. Revising the relevant policy to reference homophobic and transphobic bullying and communicating the changes made to the school community was something most schools did or are planning to do in 2013.

Curriculum is core business of schools. Professional development enabled teaching staff to review and modify their teaching and learning materials. These opportunities were taken up by six schools.

Schools engaged key members of the school team, including executive staff, to lead the Pilot, and some engaged students and the broader school community—parents, local community groups and police school liaison officers from local area commands — in coordinating and implementing the Pilot within their school. Most schools took up the opportunity to work with the contracted agency to plan their approach.

The extent schools were successful in raising awareness

Although schools implemented a different mix of strategies, the results indicate that even a small amount of effort can make a difference in increasing students' and teachers' awareness of their school's stance on anti-bullying and make a contribution to a supportive school environment. Follow-up checklist data indicate that students and teachers were more aware of their school's strategies in regard to providing a safe learning environment for same sex attracted and gender questioning students at the end of the Pilot.

Overall, two third of students thought Proud Schools had a positive impact in their school (68 per cent yes, weighted average across all schools; 12 per cent don't know; 20 per cent no). In their commentary about the rating they gave, students' expressed a range of views about the impact of Proud Schools and the types of impacts they had seen at their school. These views encompassed perspectives such as being pleased about the Pilot and being involved in strategies, to scepticism about the ability of Proud Schools to bring about change, to disliking some aspects of the Pilot usually the school events to raise understanding and awareness.

Perhaps of the greatest interest is the divide amongst school communities within the Pilot, in those who are supportive of the Pilot, and those who think building awareness and understanding of gender and sexual diversity is risky for students who are uncertain about their sexuality or an imposition on those students just not interested or whose culture is

not accepting of sexual and gender diversity. Even so, the results suggest that school stakeholders may come to develop greater understanding over time of the importance and need for initiatives that are about providing a safe and supportive school environment that is inclusive for all students. Schools without previous sexual and gender diverse initiatives and which focused on diversity more broadly (and not sexual and gender diversity specifically) felt this approach was more acceptable to their parents.

The Pilot indicated that students and teachers are often uncertain about where they can get further external professional support for students who identify as same sex attracted or gender questioning. In addition, school relationships with external agencies to support same sex attracted and gender questioning students were often weak prior to the pilot and did not change as a result.

Schools' success in the Pilot was supported by having executive leadership for the Pilot within the school, access to guidance and support from expert contracted agencies, having support for the Pilot within the school community and linking Pilot strategies to related programs/ strategies within the school. Challenges faced by schools in delivering the Pilot included conflicting priorities within the school, different views on the school's role in addressing gender and sexual diversity across the school community, and short time frame for the contracted agency to provide support, advice and guidance.

The Pilot had a slow start and school coordination teams felt that they lacked the knowledge, direction and guidance they required to best support same sex attracted and gender questioning students in their school, especially in the first six months of the Pilot period. This shows that schools would benefit from clear advice about their role and guidance about how to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for same sex attracted and gender questioning students.

Early impacts of Proud Schools Pilot on the school climate

Given the formative nature of the Pilot—where schools were trying out different approaches— and the relatively short duration of implementation, we would not expect to see large changes occurring. Despite the short time period of the Pilot, three schools showed a statistically significant increase in the proportion of students who believed same sex attracted and gender questioning students would feel safe at their school at follow-up. Two schools showed a decrease in the number of students who heard homophobic language “every day” or “every week” in their school. We had baseline and follow-up student checklist data for five of the 12 schools.

Students and teachers in all eight schools which provided post-Pilot checklist data for either students or teachers indicated some level of change in the indicators of the school's climate towards same sex attracted and gender questioning students. In general, the amount of change seen appeared to mirror the depth and scope of strategies being

implemented in a school. Schools that implemented a higher number of strategies and implemented more comprehensive and/or whole-of-school approaches for example, curriculum review and review of school policies and procedures appeared to be the most successful in achieving change.

Summary of findings

The experiences of the schools that participated in the evaluation offer insights into any future delivery of approaches and strategies to support inclusive and safe schools for same sex attracted and gender questioning students in schools:

1. All schools welcomed guidance to plan and implement strategies for same sex attracted and gender questioning students in schools, particularly those without experience in implementing initiatives related to sexual and gender diversity.
2. Schools were more receptive to and preferred one to three hour time allocation for professional learning sessions in this area (rather than whole day session). This module style of approach provided flexibility for delivery and accommodated schools' schedules.
3. Schools wanted stronger leadership from the Department of Education and Communities to provide guidance and evidence-informed practice for them to address sexual and gender diversity in their school. Teachers said this would give the issue "clout". They felt that leadership from the Department will also encourage schools to actively address homophobic and transphobic bullying, which affects student welfare and learning outcomes.
4. Schools in the pilot indicated the importance of engaging students and parents in planning about sexual and gender diversity related initiatives, where possible and of communicating the rationale behind the school's anti-discrimination related policies and practices that homophobic or transphobic bullying are not tolerated. In schools where such initiatives were contentious with members of the school community, some schools determined to address the area initially in terms of a general commitment to respecting student diversity and ensuring anti-discrimination related policies reference and are inclusive of homophobic or transphobic bullying.
5. Schools found their existing pathways to support young people who are same sex attracted or gender questioning, including access to specialist external support agencies were not strong. Schools identified that they need to strengthen pathways and links with external support agencies to help ensure that students who feel able to identify as same sex attracted or gender questioning receive the support they require from within and outside of the school.

6. The Pilot schools found that the joint meetings with other Pilot schools and networking where they could share information, experiences and ideas useful and beneficial.

1. Introduction

This is a report of an independent evaluation of the Proud Schools Pilot for the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC), conducted between June 2012 and June August 2013.

The evaluation aimed to explore what approaches/ strategies are appropriate, feasible and successful to provide a safe environment for same sex attracted and gender questioning students in schools, and identify what, if anything, about a school's individual context makes these strategies successful.

1.1 Evaluation

This formative evaluation looked at the effectiveness of the pilot in supporting schools to prevent and address homophobia and to provide a safe and supportive environment for students. The table below shows where each item is addressed in the report².

Item	Where addressed in report
Understand each school's baseline position in regards to addressing same sex attraction and gender diversity. By understanding each school's starting point the evaluation will be able to identify strategies that can be used by other schools to successfully address same sex attraction and gender diversity.	Chapter 1, section 1.5
Assess the extent schools are successful in planning and delivering strategies, including at a whole school level to address homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism and to support safe and inclusive school environments.	Chapter 3
Assess the success of the approaches used in raising awareness of issues associated with homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism and for same sex attracted and gender diverse students at high school.	Chapter 4
Inform recommendations for a final approach for access by other high schools.	Chapter 5
Explore early impacts of the initiatives put in place by schools in raising awareness of issues amongst staff members and students.	Chapter 4

² An additional item—*Consider the success of the draft framework and its elements for supporting schools to address homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism and for supporting schools to provide a safe and inclusive school environment for sexual and gender diversity*—was no longer relevant because development of a framework was deferred. This was so the lessons from the Pilot could be used to inform advice and guidance for schools.

1.2 Overview of the Proud Schools Pilot

The Proud Schools Pilot was an initiative implemented by the NSW Department of Education and Communities for the purpose of developing a framework to support secondary schools to:

- address homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism
- provide a safe and supportive environment for same sex attracted and gender diverse students.

A Proud Schools Steering Committee comprising representatives from the DEC and government and non-government agencies was established in 2010 and provided advice, guidance and strategic oversight.

The Pilot had two stages. Stage 1 of the Pilot consisted of the development of a position paper *Same Sex Attracted and Gender Questioning Young People: Issues for NSW Schools* and a stakeholder consultation project. Stage 1 covered a number of broad domains, including management and practice, school culture, teaching and learning and responding, supporting and partnerships. These were used to inform implementation of the second stage of the pilot. The second stage of the Pilot (the subject of this evaluation) saw 12 secondary schools trial the strategies identified in the position paper. Family Planning NSW was contracted and worked in partnership with Twenty10 (herein referred to as the contract agency) to provide support with planning and implementation of strategies within schools. This evidence is summarised below in section 1.3.

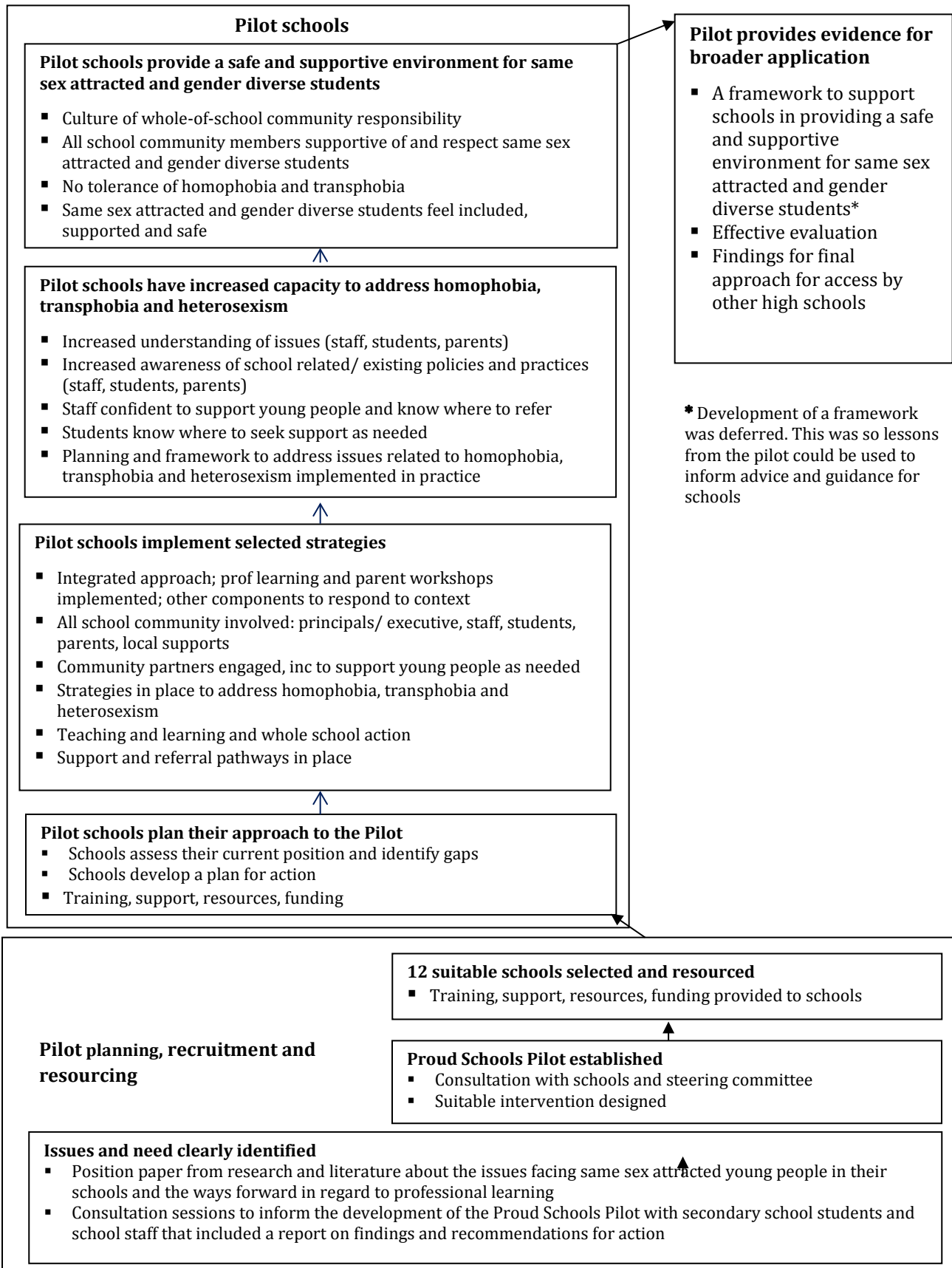
The second stage was a pilot of strategies in 12 secondary schools from the then two department regions—Hunter/ Central Coast and Sydney regions, and is the focus of this evaluation. The implementation of the Pilot was supported by the contracted agency and this support is described in section 1.4.

Schools could choose from a range of options and implemented a mix of these and other strategies chosen with advice from the contracted agency, the options being:

- professional learning for staff
- information session/ workshop for parents
- provide opportunities for student involvement
- acquisition of resources to support school communities
- sharing of good practice.

The Department provided guidance and support to schools when needed and coordinated the development and housing online of the student and staff checklists before and after the Pilot. The checklists asked about attitudes to same sex attracted and gender diverse students and teachers' practices and capacity in this area.

Figure 1. Program logic for the Proud Schools Pilot



1.3 How schools were supported to deliver the Pilot

The DEC contracted Family Planning NSW in partnerships with Twenty10 to provide support for teachers, students and parents, on the request of schools.

There was a fairly long lead time for establishing these formal support mechanisms for the Pilot (figure 1). Much of the support was provided between October 2012 and May 2013.

1.3.1 Role of DEC

The DEC had an oversight and coordination role and was responsible for identifying the Pilot schools, contracting a support agency and coordinating networking events.

Networking events were held by DEC in

- December 2011—to brief schools about the Pilot, including the; research and provide professional learning and networking opportunities.
- October 2012—to provide professional learning, to discuss progress with planning, provide network opportunities, information sharing and to update schools
- March 2013—where schools shared experiences and learnings and provided input into how they would contribute to the post evaluation of the pilot.

Box 1.1 Not-for-profit support agencies

Family Planning NSW is the state's leading provider of reproductive and sexual health services. They provide information and health promotion activities, as well as education and training for doctors, nurses, teachers and other health, education and welfare professionals.

Twenty10 is a community-based state-wide organisation that works with and supports young people of diverse genders, sexes and sexualities, their families and friends. They aim to be *a beacon of strength and acceptance* - supporting young people to build resilience and achieve their potential.

Figure 2. Timeline: Support strategies for Stage 2 of the Pilot

	2011		2012												2013					
	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
DEC briefing/networking event of staff from the 12 Pilot schools to introduce the Pilot																				
Department officers undertook visits to each of the pilot schools to talk about local planning, and progress integrated approach																				
Contracted agency receive funding and start planning																				
Schools complete pre-staff checklists and initial school planning undertaken																				
Schools complete pre-student checklists																				
Schools plan/ implement strategies																				
DEC networking event for pilot school																				
Contracted agency visits Pilot schools and provides advice and support to schools in planning and implementing their approach																				
Contracted agency visits 4 schools to undertake workshops with students																				
DEC networking event for pilot schools																				
Contracted agency works on draft framework*																				

* Development of a framework was deferred. This was so lessons from the pilot could be used to inform advice and guidance for schools

1.3.2 Role of contracted agency

The contracted agency had a dual role in assisting schools in planning their approach and strategies to implement the Pilot, and in providing professional development for school staff. The contracted agency provided an implementation plan which described the kind of support that they would provide. .

Support and advice to plan

Schools were initially given the latitude to decide what strategies to implement during 2012 and in October and November 2012 were given formal support with their planning by the contracted agency. It is apparent that schools with little experience in this area tended to be uncertain about what strategies would work best in their schools and waited for the support of Family Planning NSW before fully implementing strategies. Schools which had already been addressing homophobia and transphobia prior to the Pilot took advantage of the support from contracted agency but mostly had started planning and implementing strategies before that time.

Contracted agency observed that school plans varied from being very detailed to minimal detail and that more explicit guidance for planning and/or more time would have assisted some schools to better target their efforts.

Professional development and training

The contracted agency delivered professional development to six of the twelve schools during the Pilot period, with some sessions in the last semester of 2012 and additional sessions in the first semester of 2013. Four schools had two professional learning sessions each.

The time spent on professional development per school ranged from one to five hours, with a total of around 30 hours over the twelve sessions. Most schools chose to have professional development for one to three hours to better fit into existing professional development schedules. This suggests that professional learning in this area should be developed as modules and with flexibility for delivery to accommodate the 1-3 hour time allocation.

For schools that allocated a shorter time for professional development sessions, the sessions focused on research describing the impact of homophobia and transphobia in schools and on individual students. Longer sessions introduced ways to address the use of homophobic language and/or discussed curriculum ideas. Where two sessions were held, these sessions might be a session for the welfare team, and one for a subject area, for example, PDHPE to review curriculum materials.

The contracted agency's role was to assist schools to engage, and increase the awareness of, Proud Schools amongst students, parents and the community.

All schools were offered by the contracted agency the opportunity to hold a student workshop, facilitated by the contracted agency. Four schools took up the offer and sessions were run in February and March 2013 (see chapter 4). The contracted agency suggested that needing parental permission for students to participate might have discouraged schools from taking up the opportunity along with other prior commitments.

One school invited the contracted agency to conduct an information group with parents.

Figure 3. Schools participation in support strategies

School	Teacher PD forums	Student forums	Parent workshops
S1		120 students	
S2			
S3		15 students	
S4		11 students	
S5			
S6			
S7		40 students	
S8			
S9			
S10		20 students	15-20 parents
S11			
S12		12 students	

1.4 The Pilot schools

The 12 Pilot schools included co-educational, single-sex, comprehensive and specialist schools from regional or metropolitan locations (table 1). Five schools had sexual and gender diversity initiatives in place prior to Proud Schools, two were single-sex schools and three had high proportions of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Table 1. Matrix of the characteristics of the Pilot schools

	Comprehensive	Selective	Specialist
Metropolitan	4 schools	1 school	1 school
Regional	5 schools	1 school	0 schools

1.4.1 Position of schools prior to implementing Proud Schools

Prior to Proud Schools, the 12 Pilot schools reported being at different points along the continuum of activity in supporting same sex attracted and gender questioning young people. While some schools were very proactive in establishing a safe school environment, having had specific sexual and gender diversity related initiatives in place for some time, others had implemented limited strategies and yet others had done little in this area (table 2). The existing initiatives encompassed:

- anti-bullying policies that recognise homophobia/ transphobia
- special awareness-raising events to promote acceptance and celebrate diversity
- work to acknowledge diversity in the curriculum
- peer support groups.

Information collected early in the Pilot³ indicated a high level of uncertainty amongst both staff and students about how the school supports students who are same sex attracted or gender questioning. For example, a high proportion of students (83%) across all Pilot schools did not know whether the school anti-bullying plan specifically mentions homophobia and transphobia. Further, 75% of all students and 70% of staff did not know whether their school library has books, magazines or other materials that included or discussed sexual diversity.

Information was also collated to measure how teachers and students regarded and acted towards same sex attracted and gender questioning young people. The information highlighted the striking differences in the school climate between the different schools prior to their involvement in the Pilot (table 2 and appendix 4, figures 3 to 5). School 1, which had a sexual and gender diversity initiative in place over the past few years that addressed policy, celebrated diversity and also had targeted programs for same sex attracted and gender questioning students had created the safest school environment according to students' ratings. But other schools with sexual and gender diversity initiatives in place had poor ratings of school climate by their students. The school climate is likely to be also influenced by other school welfare and discipline strategies and the local community context.

According to students, the use of homophobic language at school is relatively common (particularly amongst younger students), but nevertheless there are big differences between schools. The proportion of students indicating that in the last six months they heard homophobic language every day ranged from 33% to 72% for individual schools (table 2). Student reports of verbal and physical homophobic and transphobic bullying in the same time period are much less common. The reported incidence ranged from 2% to 18% of students at individual schools saying they have seen verbal or physical homophobic behaviour or bullying at their school every day.

Students at each of the schools also had different views about whether or not same sex attracted or gender diverse students would feel safe at their school. More than half the students at school 1 (56%) indicated that students would feel safe. By contrast, just 6% of students at school 8 thought so. A substantial number of students just did not know (45% of students on average across all schools). The pre-Pilot checklist data also shows that whilst staff indicated they do not tolerate homophobic bullying and react to negative behaviours and outward displays of disrespect of difference, they were less likely to know about new strategies in the school undertaken to provide safe and supportive environments, including for same sex attracted and gender questioning students. Some schools were also reported to be less likely to have clearly communicated their approach to addressing homophobic and transphobic behaviour to the school community. Interviews

³ Student and staff checklists administered by DEC. See chapter 2 for a description.

with school leaders confirmed that schools are committed to addressing homophobic or transphobic behaviours but that, before the Pilot, they had not been proactive in communicating this to their school community.

Table 2. Students’ ratings of school climate towards same sex attracted and gender questioning students prior to the Proud Schools Pilot

School	Position prior to baseline re sexual and gender diversity initiatives	In the last 6 months, how often did you hear homophobic language at your school such as “That’s gay”	In the last 6 months, how often did you see verbal or physical homophobic behaviour or bullying at your school?	Do you think same sex attracted or gender diverse students would feel safe at your school?
		% students, every day	% students, every day	% students, yes
S1	Sexual and gender diversity initiatives	33%	2%	56%
S2	Sexual and gender diversity initiatives	No data	No data	No data
S3	Sexual and gender diversity initiatives	54%	8%	44%
S4	Not a focus	No data	No data	No data
S5	Not a focus	57%	16%	25%
S6	Welfare support	56%	8%	31%
S7	Not a focus	67%	5%	47%
S8	Sexual and gender diversity initiatives, Stage 4 only	72%	16%	6%
S9	Sexual and gender diversity initiatives	62%	18%	16%
S10	No information provided	No data	No data	No data
S11	Not a focus	47%	3%	44%
S12	Not a focus	43%	11%	22%

1.5 Background research—homophobic discrimination in schools

Background research for the Pilot commissioned by the Department provided a context for understanding the findings—*Proud Schools Project Consultation Report*, Family Planning NSW (2011, unpublished); and the position paper, *Same Sex Attracted and Gender*

Questioning Young People: Issues for NSW Schools, Lynne Hillier and Anne Mitchell from the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University (2011, unpublished). The position paper drew on the findings of the Writing Themselves In 3 (WTI3), the third national study of the sexual health and wellbeing of same sex attracted and gender questioning young people by the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University (2010).

This section also summarises the findings of these papers and others, in particular the findings presented in *Safe at School: Addressing the School Environment and LGBT Safety through Policy and Legislation*, a 2010 collaboration of the Williams Institute in the UCLA Law School and the National Education Policy Center. This paper is one of a series of briefs funded in part by the Great Lakes Centre for Education Research and Practice.

1.5.1 Disclosure of sexual identity

Disclosing one's sexuality to someone can be a daunting prospect. In the Writing Themselves In 3 report, the majority of the young people had disclosed their same sex attraction to at least one person and support for them was higher than in previous studies (Writing Themselves in 1 and 2 reports). There was an increase in the percentage of young people disclosing their sexuality to family members and an increase in the support they were given. Some of the young people had a family member who had come out previously, and they felt better about disclosing to their family members. There were some whose parents struggled to accept or were unsure about this disclosure, which caused some tension. There was however, a significant number of young people who were not supported at all. In some instances, these disclosures lead to young people not feeling safe at home anymore. For many young people, their friends were the first people they talked to about their sexuality, with their friends being very supportive (Writing Themselves In 3).

Verbal and physical abuse

Recent research in Australia has revealed that many same sex attracted and gender questioning young people were suffering high rates of homophobic and transphobic verbal and physical abuse. In the WTI3 report, 61% of students reported verbal and 18% physical abuse related to homophobia. 69% of students reported other forms of homophobia, such as being excluded and rumours (WTI3). The most common place for this to occur was at school. There is an indication from these young people that the abuse is sustained and embedded in school culture and they report that in many cases the abuse is ignored. There were examples in WTI3 of young people being abused and not disclosing to parents or teachers. WTI3 reports that there is an increase in this abuse. Stories of being shoved into walls, not being able to use change rooms or toilets for fear of violence and having clothes and possessions destroyed are common across the research.

1.5.2 Impact on health

There have been many links between abuse and negative health indicators such as drug abuse and self-harm. In *Writing Themselves In 3*, young people's rates of self-harm and suicide attempts were high, with 31% having harmed themselves and 16% having attempted suicide. The report showed a strong relationship between homophobic abuse and self-harm and suicide. There were also links between homophobic abuse and drug and alcohol abuse.

1.5.3 Impact on learning, attainment and achievement

Bullying related to homophobia and transphobia is reported to adversely impact on students' enjoyment, aspirations and learning outcomes at school. There are connections between early school leaving, poor educational attainment and homophobic bullying. Over two thirds of the young people in one Northern Irish study who left school earlier than they would have preferred had experienced homophobic bullying, and 65 per cent of those who had achieved low results had also been bullied.⁴

The *Safe at School: Addressing the School Environment and LBGT Safety through Policy and Legislation* report says quotes a 2009 American study⁵ to say,

Of the LGBT students surveyed, 32.7% missed a day of school because of feeling unsafe, compared with only 4.5% of a national sample of secondary school students. Not only do their grades suffer as a result, but the percentage of LGBTs who do not plan to pursue a post-secondary education is almost twice that of a national sample of students generally.

According to the Australian *Write Themselves in 3* report gender questioning students are affected more than same sex students. Gender questioning students reported they had moved schools (22%), left school altogether (22%), been unable to use the toilet (24%) and been unable to use the change rooms (35%). A greater portion of these students than other same sex attracted young people had difficulty concentrating in class (42%), dropped their marks (34%), missed classes (36%), missed days (35%), hid at recess and lunch (32%), and dropped out of extra-curricular activities (23%).

1.5.4 School responses to homophobic and transphobic bullying.

The school environment and the policies put in place had an effect on homophobic bullying and the links to self-harm. Most young people felt their school was neutral (44%), but 27%

⁴ Toolkit for Teachers. Dealing with Homophobia and Homophobic Bullying in Scottish Schools

⁵ Poteat, V. P., Espelage, D. L. & Koenig, B. W. (2009). Willingness to remain friends and attend school with lesbian and gay peers: Relational expressions of prejudice among heterosexual youth. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 38, 952-962.

classified their school as homophobic (Writing Themselves In 3). Young people in supportive schools were less likely to be abused or to self-harm.

In some instances given in the *Writing Themselves in 3* report, same sex attracted students were blamed by both students and teachers for their victimisation, which were attributed to being too flamboyant as one reason.

Another issue is how schools and teachers react to discrimination and bullying related to sexual and gender diversity. It seems that many teachers do not know how to deal with this issue and are scared that if they confront it there may be a backlash from parents and the community. Also, policies around homophobic or transphobic bullying are not always in place or implemented. This also has an effect on whether same sex attracted and gender questioning students feel safe at their school. Another issue, as mentioned, is if teachers are themselves same sex attracted or gender diverse and face pressure to keep quiet about this or are encouraged to be the contact point for students seeking information and support or who are experiencing homophobia or transphobia.

While some students identified that there were processes in place in their school to deal with homophobia under general rules such as anti-bullying, the groups were critical of the lack of clarity and consistency around homophobia. Students said that homophobic language was sometimes tolerated by teachers, and that it was unclear how a student should report homophobic abuse and homophobic language.

1.6 Strategies for improving school safety

It would appear that there is as yet no one integrated approach that provides a clear and accessible means for Australian schools to receive the same level of training, resourcing and support to address this area. There are however, some policies that schools have put into place and are effective in making sure all students are safe, and external organisations that work with schools in this area. There has also been much student voice in this area.

1.6.1 Safe Schools Coalition Victoria

The Safe Schools Coalition Victoria (SSCV) is the first comprehensive project of its kind in Australia and is partnered with the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA). It is a coalition of schools and individuals and was established in 2010. It is dedicated to creating a safer educational environment for same sex attracted and gender questioning young people. It provides training, resources and consultancy support for every school in Victoria on sexual and gender diversity, in order to enhance school performance.

1.6.2 Student voice

Student voice has been increasing to support same sex attracted and gender questioning young people. Student voice which works for social justice is an important method of enabling and initiating discussion within schools, triggering action against homophobia in those schools. Hillier and Mitchell say⁶,

There were many examples in the research of young people making 'ground up' changes in their schools through taking up petitions, writing letters, giving class presentations, going to the media and generally refusing to have their rights denied.

The Wear it Purple campaign was an invention of a Year 11 student in a Sydney school in 2010. The campaign was designed to raise awareness about youth suicide, depression and anxiety specific to sex, sexuality and gender diverse people and encouraged as many people as possible to wear a purple armband to show their support. The initiative included asking students to ensure that their school anti-discrimination related policies expressly deal with sexual orientation and gender identity.

Several school-based intervention projects such as the Safe Schools Coalition Victoria and Pridentity claim that student voice is a positive outcome of their interventions because it can help further advance GLBTI issues in the school in the long term. The Women's Health In The North 'Pridentity-inclusive sexuality education kit'⁷ notes that project workshops "will often ignite student enthusiasm and inspire them to take further action", especially through bodies like 'Gay-Straight Alliances'.

1.6.3 Role of support agencies

Support agencies external to schools have an important role in assisting both individual same sex attracted young people and to assist with any broader initiatives across or within schools.

Support agencies operating in NSW include:

- **Twenty 10** a NSW based non-profit organisation which supports and works with SSAGQ young people under 26. counselling and case management service can be readily accessed by young people across NSW both by a free call phone line and through the website where young people can search for support/social groups closer

⁶ *Same Sex Attracted and Gender Questioning Young People: Issues for NSW Schools*, Lynne Hillier and Anne Mitchell from the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University (2011, unpublished)

⁷ Women's Health In the North and Reidy, C., (2011), Pridentity: Inclusive Sexuality Education Resource Kit, Women's Health In the North, Thornbury, Victoria.

to home. Twenty10 also runs its own groups for young people, including one specifically for GQ young people.

- A number of local groups that offer social opportunities, support and activities for SSAGQ operate throughout NSW but may change from time to time. These are an important source of referrals for school welfare staff and a current directory of these is maintained through the Twenty10 website.
- **The Gender Centre of NSW** provides a state-wide service to people with gender issues, their partners, families and friends. It has a strong interest in educating the public and service providers about the needs of people with gender issues and about transphobia. It runs a range of services similar to Twenty 10 and also offers emergency accommodation. Its brief is not for young people only but young people access their services regularly.

ACON is the largest provider of services to the GLBTI community in NSW, with a central focus on HIV/AIDS. It has a central location in Surry Hills and outposts in Western Sydney, Hunter, Mid-North Coast, Illawarra and Northern Rivers. It runs groups for young people, including the long-running *Fun and Esteem* program for young men and a 10 week workshop called *School's Out* for young people still in schools to help them counteract homophobic bullying. They are currently drawing together their youth programs into a single *Youth Project* with an additional worker focussed on young lesbians. ACON auspices the *Lesbian and Gay Anti-Violence Project* which currently has a large focus on homophobic bullying in schools.

- **The Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service of NSW** operates with volunteer counsellors 7 evenings a week and is available to SSAGQ, their families and friends to provide gay-friendly counselling and referral for individuals throughout NSW.
- **P-Flag (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)** has 4 groups in NSW to support parents and other family members and friends coming to terms with the sexuality of someone close to the, usually a son or daughter.
- **Family Planning NSW (FPNSW)** is widely respected as providers of professional development on sexual health issues to teachers throughout NSW. An example of relevant services they deliver *That's So Gay* which is a one day course designed for teachers, health and youth workers and others who work with young people in addressing homophobia in education settings to assist them to combat homophobia in schools. This course is currently awaiting accreditation with the *NSW Institute of Teachers*.
- **The NSW Teachers Federation** has a Gay and Lesbian Special Interest Group. The Group maintains regular contact with members and has meetings during the year. One of the functions of the Group is to provide advice or recommendations to the Federation's Executive about these issues in relation to teachers and students. A smaller organising committee also exists to liaise with the GLBTI community through community organisations and community events. The Teachers Federation also runs professional development sessions as part of its trade union training program.

1.6.4 NSW Department of Education and Communities

The Department of Education and Communities (DEC) has some initiatives to support schools in providing a safe and supportive environment for same sex attracted and gender questioning students, linked to NSW Equal Opportunity legislation. There is however, no overarching comprehensive policy in place to provide direction to schools in this area. There is an Anti-Bullying Policy in place for schools, but homophobia is mentioned only briefly. There are opportunities for teaching about homophobia across the curriculum; for example, within the area of curriculum support for Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) there are resources and strategies that are provided to address homophobia. The crossroad course for Year 11 and 12 public school students can also include course content to address homophobia.

1.6.5 Research on ways to address homophobia and transphobia in schools

This section summarises the recommendations of a selection of references about effective ways to address homophobia and transphobia in schools.

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008) promotes equity and excellence in schooling and identifies as part of this goal the need for all school sectors to provide all students with access to high quality schooling that is free from discrimination based on sexual orientation.

The National Safe Schools Framework (2010) endorsed by all ministers for education through the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs in December 2010, is underpinned by guiding principles that emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a pre-requisite for effective learning in all school settings and includes schools affirming the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe and be safe at school.

*The UNESCO Education sector response to homophobic bullying*⁸ (2012) shows that bullying and abuse of same-sex attracted young people in schools is a world-wide issue. The report outlines ideas for responses at both the national and the school level, noting that several international frameworks such as the Yogyakarta Principals⁹ can provide a good starting point for developing national policies. The report outlines several characteristics of effective school anti-bullying policies and programs, including beginning interventions of children at young ages “before their attitudes and behaviours become fixed”, ensuring the involvement of all school stakeholders and ensuring that the actions and intentions are clear to all. A central aspect of any action, according to the report, is an articulated vision that all stakeholders are aware of and understand.

⁸ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002164/216493e.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/category/REFERENCE/ICJRISTS...48244e602.O.html>

*The Great Lakes Centre for Education Research and Practice's, Safe at School*¹⁰ report talks about the ongoing safety issues that many same sex attracted and gender questioning students face in school. To address these safety issues and the needs of same sex attracted and gender questioning students, the report makes a variety of recommendations. There are three key areas where recommendations are made, these include the school climate, curriculum and pedagogy, and school sports. The overall purpose of the recommendations is to make schools safe and to improve the quality of life for everyone within the education system.

The report makes three main policy recommendations about ways to address the school climate. The first recommendation is to adopt proactive school climate initiatives that demonstrate a commitment to inclusive policies and shared values. The second recommendation is to end discriminatory disciplinary practices and the inappropriate referral of same sex attracted and gender questioning students to special education. The third recommendation is to implement initiatives that specifically address homophobia at individual school sites, which may include safe zones, gay-straight alliances, and suicide prevention programs.

The report also made three recommendations about curriculum and pedagogy. These were to develop and implement sexual and gender diversity related professional development, locally determined and agreed upon by faculty and staff, for all school-site personnel; align classroom pedagogy with shared values and respect for differences; and include age-appropriate sexual and gender diversity related content in the curriculum.

There were also three recommendations made about school sports. The first was to involve key members of campus athletic programs in sexual and gender diversity related initiatives. The second was to make it clear that homophobic comments and actions by coaches and student athletes are completely unacceptable. And the last was to encourage student athletes to participate in targeted programs such as initiatives addressing bullying and hate violence, as well as gay-straight alliances, safe zones and wellness programs.

Evidence and experience suggests that an effective education sector response to homophobic bullying includes interventions in the following areas:

- Policy
- Curriculum and its implementation
- Support for all learners
- Partnerships and coalitions.

¹⁰ Beigal S, Kuehl SJ. *Safe at School: Addressing the School Environment and LGBT Safety through policy and legislation*. Great Lakes Centre for Education Research and Practice, 2010.

2. Evaluation methods

This chapter is a summary of the evaluation questions, design, methodology and the strength of the evidence upon which the findings are based. The evaluation methods are described in detail in Appendix 1.

The focus of the data collection was on collecting evidence about the effectiveness and appropriateness of the strategies used (formative evaluation) and on the short-term impacts of these strategies. This approach was appropriate because it was a pilot and because of the relatively short time between the delivery of strategies and the collection of post- Pilot data.

2.1 Key evaluation questions

The evaluation was guided by the following four questions.

1. What have schools implemented before and during the Pilot?
2. How successful have strategies implemented by schools as part of the pilot been?
3. What is it about the strategies that assisted schools to achieve their goals?
4. How can the strategies support other schools to successfully address homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism and provide safe and supportive environments for sexual and gender diversity?

Each of these four questions had a number of sub-questions, provided in appendix 2.

2.2 Evaluation design

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach, which incorporated a before and after design in the collection of student and staff attitudes and practices to assess changes over time. Data were collected and analysed at two key time points: during the early phases of the Pilot (pre-Pilot data collection), and post-implementation of the Pilot.

The evaluation also had a “realist evaluation” orientation, focusing on ‘what works for whom and in what circumstances’ (see Pawson and Tilley, *Realistic Evaluation*, Sage 1997). This was considered an appropriate approach because Proud Schools was an innovative pilot without rigidly defined components, meaning schools might implement it somewhat differently.

The methods used were

- an analysis of DEC administered and designed baseline (pre-Pilot) and follow-up (post-Pilot) checklists of students and staff at the Pilot schools
- an analysis of pilot school initial plans, school reports and the strategy of the contracted agency
- site visits to three schools at the end of the Pilot to collect data from school staff, students, parents
- discussion groups with Pilot school representatives at the end of the Pilot schools meeting held in March 2013
- interviews with contracted agency representatives
- an online parent portal, which allowed parents to make submissions, including anonymously.

The data collected from the school community at each school are shown in table 3.

Table 3. Summary of data collected from the school community by Pilot school

School	Student pre checklist N students	Student post checklist	Teacher pre checklist	Teacher post checklist	Parent submissions N parents	Parent interviews	Teacher in-depth interviews#	Student focus groups N students
S1	676	337	49	36	27**			
S2	1	1	58	30	1			
S3	40	62	18	9	0			
S4	1	42	42	35	0			
S5	116	0	42	12	0			
S6	274	0	48	0	0			
S7	261	122	51	0	0			
S8	116	73	37	0	0			
S9*	401	60	38	28	1	0	11	1
S10	3	42	27	0	0			
S11*	78	0	13	0	12***	4	9	8
S12*	37	0	35	0	0	5	8	8
Total	2010	654	458	150	41	9	28	17

* Denotes site visit school. **Only 15 submissions had responses to open-ended questions. ***Only nine submissions had responses to open-ended questions. #Data also collected from lead teachers at DEC teacher workshop at the end of the Pilot.

Pre only Post only Pre and Post Not applicable

2.3 Strength of evidence

The multiple sources of evidence and convergence of findings from separate data sources mean we are confident about the evaluation findings.

Interviews with staff at the site visit schools. We spoke to most of the school staff involved in the coordination of Proud Schools at two of the three site visit schools. At one school, only the Year Advisor was available to speak with us, but seven teachers not directly involved did provide feedback. We are confident that these interviews provide in-depth information about how Proud Schools was implemented at these schools.

The student and staff checklist data, which were intended to be used by schools to measure the school climate and to assist schools with planning and progress, had gaps and methodological limitations meaning that the findings about it are indicative only. The evidence is limited to those schools that provided both baseline and follow-up information. These tools were optional for schools to use, according to their needs but were also intended to inform the evaluation findings.

- Without a control group it is difficult to be certain about how much of any significant changes seen over the two time points can be attributed to the strategies implemented as part of the pilot. Some of the differences at baseline and follow-up are likely to be because of the strategies, but some of the differences could also be accounted for by maturation of the students or familiarity with the checklist or other external factors, for example discussion about Proud Schools in the media. However, the amount of change observed varies widely between schools and the direction of change is fairly consistent within schools and across different questions, meaning we are confident that the strategies implemented as part of the Pilot have caused some of the changes seen.
- Only some of the pre- and post-surveys appear to be a repeated sample, that is drawn from the same cohort of students at the two different time points. Having a fully repeated sample would have strengthened the research methodology. In addition, the checklist did not include unique identifiers, which meant the pre- and post-responses for individuals could not be matched. This means that there was less power to detect significant change over time.
- There was a drop off in response rates to the checklists from baseline to follow-up—43% student respondents and 60% staff completed the checklist at follow-up (post-Pilot) compared to than did at baseline (pre-Pilot). To check whether the respondent groups were different, we compared the Year group of students who responded at baseline with the follow-up respondents. The responses from students in different Year groups were not significantly different in individual schools. For teachers, the checklist did not collect demographic information at both time points and it is not possible to make an assessment about whether there were any differences in the characteristics of respondents at the two time points.

- Three schools provided baseline and follow-up checklist data for both students and teachers, and this small number of schools somewhat limited our ability to assess the influence of the different contexts within which schools operate and where schools had different starting positions regarding the delivery of sexual and gender diversity related initiatives. All three of these schools had pre-existing sexual and gender diversity related initiatives and two out of the three schools were located in the inner-west of Sydney and have similarities in their community demographics.
- The student and teacher population sizes were not made available to ARTD so we are unable to calculate response rates or comment on whether these are reasonable or otherwise.
- Some schools distributed the student checklist only to Year groups participating in the Pilot, and not to all students. Changes in student checklist data may not represent whole-of-school change, but changes only in those directly targeted by the Pilot.

The parent submissions and interviews represented a range of views from whole-hearted support for Proud Schools, equivocal or cautious support, to strong opposition and dislike. Because we heard from just 50 parents (from 5 schools) we are unsure about the frequency with which the different views are held by parents involved in the 12 school communities. We have therefore documented the different views but made only limited comments about the frequency with which they were offered, and then in regard to the 2 schools from which most of the submissions came. The views of these parents are interesting because one of the schools has an existing sexual and gender diversity related initiatives of some years standing and the other school did not have pre-existing initiatives.

2.3.1 Reporting significant differences in this report

We have used a significance level of $p < 0.05$ to denote significance differences from pre to post-Pilot data in this report. Data tables in this report highlight data with significance levels of: $p < 0.005$, $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.1$. In each data table, cells with significantly different pre-post data values are shown as follows.

- $p < 0.005$: data highlighted in dark red, followed by **three** stars, such as +45%***.
- $p < 0.01$: data highlighted in mid red, followed by **two** stars, such as +23%**.
- $p < 0.05$: data highlighted in light red, followed by **one** star, such as +17%*.
- $p < 0.01$: data *not* highlighted in colour, but followed by the symbol “x”, such as +5%^x

This style of reporting significance levels is re-explained in table notes throughout this report.

3. How well schools implemented Proud Schools

This chapter describes how schools implemented the Pilot and discusses how effective the strategies have been in driving positive changes within schools. It shows that each school chose a different mix of strategies to build on existing broader welfare approaches and on anti-homophobia initiatives and to fit within their local school context. One thing most schools had in common was a focus on valuing and accepting diversity more broadly. The strategies used were a mix of one-off strategies aimed at changing the school culture, along with strategies to imbed and sustain measures to ensure a safe and respectful environment for same sex attracted and gender questioning students, such as modifying the school's policies related to anti-discrimination and reviewing teaching and learning materials.

Although schools did different strategies the results indicate that even a small amount of effort can make a difference in increasing awareness of schools' stance on anti-bullying amongst students.

3.1 Leading strategies in the school

All schools had a small team to plan and coordinate Proud Schools, including someone from the school's executive team, the principal or deputy principal or head teacher.

The Proud Schools teams also included teachers from different subject areas, the school student welfare team and others for example, students and parents. A few schools sought input from external agencies and one school, from their school council. One school (school 12) held meetings once a term with representatives from the local health district, NGOs, School Liaison Police or Gay and Lesbian Liaison officer from a local area command, local youth support services and interested parents. Another school (school 6) engaged their School Liaison Police from a local command as part of their Proud Schools "core team".

Three schools that wanted to engage parents in coordinating and planning Proud Schools had not gone ahead with the idea. One school had intended to convene a parent group but had not really followed through. Another school encountered resistance from parents to their children being part of Proud Schools and made the decision not to go ahead with organising a parent group. This school intends to convene a combined parent and student group in the future. The other school did not have an active parent body at the school to engage in the work and chose to put their efforts into other aspects of implementing Proud Schools.

Many schools spoke about using evidence from the baseline student and staff checklist data to inform their planning. The checklist data were made available to schools between August 2012 to November 2012, which coincided with when contracted agency began

providing support with planning and implementation of Proud Schools at the school level. Three schools did not get their students to complete the student checklist.

There was some evidence of schools sharing ideas, for example students from a few schools visited one of the other Pilot schools for their flag-raising day. School 10 started a “gay/straight alliance” student support group after hearing about a similar group that was working well at another school.

3.2 Which students and teachers were involved and why

Ten schools involved the whole school population, at least to some extent, through strategies such as posters, Wear it Purple day and school assemblies.

Schools 4, 5, 8, 9, 11 and 12 involved students in particular Stages to address issues such as the use of homophobic language or other issues identified about which the school was aware. For example, school 12 involved Stage 4 students because they were aware of a high use of homophobic language in these Year groups (that is, “that’s so gay”). School 9 focused on an older age group because they knew a senior student was struggling with issues around his/ her sexuality. Anecdotally, other schools involved Year 7 and Year 8 as the Family Planning NSW consultation report done in Stage 1 indicated that homophobia was more prevalent in this year group. Further, they intended to expand their work as the students moved through the year groups and they were able to involve new Year 7 groups.

Teachers from six schools attended professional learning sessions held by contracted agency that specifically addressed reviewing teaching and learning materials to be inclusive of sexual and gender diversity.

School 4 has a high proportion of students from cultural backgrounds where same sex relationships are not accepted for religious reasons and decided not to involve students more broadly via events such as Wear it Purple day.

3.3 Strategies used to improve the “school climate”: leadership, school culture, policy and programs

The authors of Safe at School¹¹ state that “complex problems in school settings are often best addressed through a combination of approaches and initiatives”. This conclusion is echoed by the health promoting schools movement where whole-of-school approaches are recommended to bring about positive changes in school environments.

This section assesses the extent to which schools have delivered different types and combinations of approaches, with these being summarised in table 4 (below).

¹¹ Beigel S, Kuehl SJ. *Safe at School: Addressing the School Environment and LGBT Safety through policy and legislation*. Great Lakes Centre for Education Research and Practice, 2010.

Table 4. Summary of strategies used by schools to implement the Proud Schools Pilot

School	Number	School culture		Policy and programs		Leadership	Professional learning and supportive curriculum				
		Events recognising sexual and gender diversity	Purchased resources for library	Specific initiatives for addressing homophobia and creating safe learning environments for same sex attracted and gender questioning students	School policies are inclusive of addressing homophobic bullying	Measures to communicate school's policy about diversity to school community	Teacher professional learning: focus on knowledge*	Teacher professional learning: focus on planning for inclusive teaching and learning	Professional resources available	Teaching and learning changes	Classroom pedagogy
S1	6	E√√		√#	√	P, S, T	√	√			
S2	6	√√	√		√	P, S, T			√	E*	
S3	8	√√	√	√##	E	P, S, T	√	√	√	√	
S4	6	√	√			S-Stage 5	√		√	√	√
S5	7				√	S, T	√	√		√	√
S6	4	√		√#	√	P, S, T					
S7	5	√√√			√	S, T	√	√			
S8	5	√			√	P, T, S-Stage 4, 5				√E	√E
S9	7	√	√		√	P, S-Stage 5, 6		√	√	E	
S10	8	√√	√	√#	E	P, S, T	√		√	√	
S11	4	√√√			√	P, S-Stage 4,6, T				√	
S12	5	√√				P,S-Stage 4, T	√	√		√	

Notes: P=Parents, S=Students, T=teachers. Don't know. #gay-straight alliance ##peer support group/ training. E=Existing. E* Crossroads Program. √√ No. of events.

3.3.1 Addressing the school climate

The authors of *Safe at School*¹² point to the importance of demonstrating a commitment to inclusive policies to bringing about change in the school climate towards same sex attracted and gender questioning students. The authors also say that broad general measures addressing bullying and hate applicable to all students can help promote a safe and respectful environment for same sex attracted and gender questioning students; an approach that resonated with schools in the Pilot.

Many of the Pilot schools implemented strategies to address the school culture that were about recognising diversity generally rather than specifically addressing homophobia or transphobia.

Schools told us they believed the message of Proud Schools was about respecting all difference: not only gender and sexual diversity (hereafter “diversity”). This approach was perceived by Proud Schools teams (and a few parents) as being less risky for same sex or gender questioning students—who they felt could face discrimination from being potentially singled out—and was likely to be more acceptable to some parents. A real concern for two schools was that their community norms were perceived as being not very accepting of sexual and gender diversity, and that Proud Schools might be misconstrued by parents as being about promoting same sex relationships rather than being a message about keeping students safe. Other teaching staff at schools, for example those located in inner city communities, described their community as being accepting of sexual and gender diversity (schools 1 and 3) and these schools had successfully introduced targeted initiatives along with awareness-raising measures.

Schools used different kinds of strategies to promote messages about acceptance of diversity.

- 11 of the 12 schools held Wear it Purple days to recognise diversity and show that all students are part of the school community. Two schools also held Proud Schools days to promote awareness of the Pilot and Pilot messages.

The Wear it Purple day was designed to raise awareness about youth suicide, depression and anxiety specific to sex, sexuality and gender diverse people and encouraged as many people as possible to wear a purple armband to show their support. It had been the invention of a Year 11 student in a Sydney school in 2010. Students were asked to ensure that their school bullying policies were expressly inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity.

¹² Beigal S, Kuehl SJ. *Safe at School: Addressing the School Environment and LGBT Safety through policy and legislation*. Great Lakes Centre for Education Research and Practice, 2010.

- A few schools put posters up around the school or had poster competitions or painted murals in school communal areas, such as playgrounds or entrance areas. These were to display images of diversity and acceptance of difference and in most cases were not strongly focused on sexual and gender diversity but rather on diversity in general.
- Other awareness-raising strategies such as the use of theatre and student meetings
 - “Brainstorm Productions” and “Young Australia” to present to their younger students (one school)
 - “Bamboo Theatre” perform “Proud 2 B Me”; Years 9, 10 and 11 students discussed their school’s role in providing an inclusive and safe environment for all students, and about school policy related to anti-discrimination and harassment at Year meetings
 - Student forums facilitated by the contracted agency (four schools) to raise awareness around homophobia and transphobia in schools.

Executive staff members informed the school community more broadly about Proud Schools and the key messages of recognising and valuing diversity. The messages were given via staff meetings, school assemblies, newsletters to parents (three schools) and by putting information about Proud Schools on their website (three schools).

A few schools discussed Proud Schools at a P&C meeting. One of these schools engaged the contracted agency to talk with parents at their P&C.

The checklist data indicate that materials depicting diversity were noticed by the school community. Where schools had been active in getting messages across—that is, displayed materials and held several events—then it appears that students and staff were aware of these (table 5). There were significant and relatively large increases in the awareness of both staff and students of materials depicting diversity at school 1, which had been particularly proactive. For other schools, the awareness of these materials also increased significantly amongst either students or staff (we do not have data for both groups for several schools). Perhaps of even greater interest is that according to staff and students these materials are remaining in place more often. The data show a significant increase in the proportion of staff and students saying the materials remain in place at all schools that put up these materials.

Table 5. Change in student and staff members' awareness of materials to communicate school policy about diversity

School	Awareness of materials depicting sexual diversity in a positive way				These materials remain in place without being damaged				There is information in newsletters for students and parents related to sexual diversity	
	Students		Staff		Students		Staff		Staff	
	Baseline % students agree	Change @ post %	Baseline % staff agree	Change @ post %	Baseline % students agree	Change @ post %	Baseline % staff agree	Change @ post %	Baseline % staff agree	Change @ post %
School 1	62%	+13%***	57%	+38%***	44%	+19%***	53%	+32%***	33%	+33%***
School 2			26%	+49%***			29%	+39%***	16%	+37%***
School 3	40%	-1%	28%	+50%***	30%	+20%*	28%	+27%	6%	+49%**
School 4			23%	+24%*			21%	+29%**	14%	+7%**
School 5			38%	+12%			38%	+12%	7%	+1%
School 7	7%	+61%***			26%	+16%***				
School 8	6%	+6%			21%	+1%				
School 9	13%	+4%	26%	+45%***	16%	+14%***	21%	+35%*	13%	+27%*
All schools, weighted average	25%	+17%*	33%	+36%***	27%	+14%**	32%	+29%***	15%	+26%***

***significance at p<.005; **significance at p<.01; *significance at p<.05; *significance at p<0.1.

3.3.2 Providing access to resources that include GLBTI characters

Four schools purchased resources that included same sex attracted characters or discussed sexual diversity. One of these schools indicated these resources are marked as being for older students only.

The evidence from school 3, where resources were purchased and we have feedback from students, shows that very few students know about these or think they can borrow such resources from the school library. Although there was a large and significant increase in teachers agreeing that such resources were available after the Pilot. Other schools that purchased resources did not provide pre- post-Pilot data (to explore change in student and teacher awareness of available resources over time).

Table 6. Change in the availability of material for students to access that are inclusive of sexual diversity

School	Acquired resources during Proud Schools	Students can borrow books/ magazines from the library that include gay and lesbian characters or discuss sexual diversity				Students can access websites at school that include gay and lesbian characters or discuss sexual diversity			
		Students #		Staff		Students#		Staff	
		Baseline % Students agree	Change @ post %	Baseline % Staff agree	Change @ post %	Baseline % Students agree	Change @ post %	Baseline % Staff	Change @ post %
School 1	E	40%	-1%	24%	+37%*	38%	-3%	29%	+13%*
School 2	Yes			31%	+16%			27%	+16%
School 3	Yes	18%	3%	17%	+38%*	53%	-19%	17%	+5%
School 4	Yes			23%	-1%			33%	-11%
School 5	No			10%	+15%			12%	+21%*
School 7	No	20%	12%*			14%	+29%***		
School 8	No	12%	2%			20%	0%		
School 9	Yes	14%	-4%	24%	+19%	20%	+1%	16%	+10%
All schools, Weighted Average		21%	+2%	22%	+21%*	29%	+2%	22%	+9%

***significance at p<.005; **significance at p<.01; *significance at p<.05; *significance at p<0.1

For schools 1, 3, 9 the main change (increase) has been in 'Don't know'. E= School had resources in library prior to Proud Schools.

3.4 Policy and programs

All school staff have a responsibility to comply with legislation and DEC policies and procedures align with legislative requirements. Schools' policies (and programs) related to discrimination, harassment and vilification also need to align with legal obligations and be responsive to diversity.

3.4.1 School policy

School policies can explicitly and clearly articulate key messages to the school community that homophobic and transphobic bullying is unacceptable. The literature in this area indicates that having, implementing and publicising such a policy helps same sex attracted

and gender questioning young people feel safer and protects against stress and mental health problems¹³ but only if a young person has not been abused.

As such, this was one strategy that all schools regarded as appropriate and feasible to implement (table 7). Eight of the twelve Pilot schools reviewed their school policies and these specifically reference homophobic and transphobic bullying, and two schools' policies already did so. The remaining two schools indicated to the Department that a review of their anti-discrimination policy is planned in the near future.

One school also reviewed the school forms to be more inclusive of gender and sexual diversity and another had changed their "Anti-racism" officer to an "Anti-discrimination" officer. One school council is leading a review of their school's approaches to addressing the use of homophobic language so that they can have a whole-of-school approach to dealing with this issue.

We saw significant positive changes in awareness amongst students in all schools (where we have data) that their school's anti-bullying plan specifically includes reference to homophobia and transphobia (table 7). Across all schools there was an average increase of 28% amongst students answering yes to this question. Teaching staff described how the schools have been actively disseminating information about their policies, for example in newsletters, assemblies and student Year meetings. More teaching staff agreed that policies that address homophobic and transphobic bullying had been clearly communicated to the entire school community after the Pilot, an average increase across schools of 23%.

¹³ *Same Sex Attracted and Gender Questioning Young People: Issues for NSW Schools*, Lynne Hillier and Anne Mitchell from the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University (2011, unpublished).

Table 7. Change in awareness of school policies

School	Schools report they have modified policies to address homophobia and transphobia	School policies and procedures support the inclusion of same sex attracted and gender questioning young people and make it clear that homophobic and transphobic behaviours and language are unacceptable#				These policies are clearly communicated to the entire school community	
		Students		Staff		Staff	
		Baseline % students agree	Change @ post %	Baseline % staff agree	Change @ post %	Baseline % staff	Change @ post %
School 1	√	21%	+30%***	81%	+13%*	45%	+40%**
School 2	√			57%	+32%*	29%	+35%*
School 3	E	18%	+30%***	62%	+5%	33%	+11%
School 4	√			55%	+10%	34%	0%
School 5				62%	+5%	31%	+28%
School 7	√	15%	+31%***				
School 8	√	9%	+21%***				
School 9	√	17%	+26%***	66%	+16%	37%	+23%
All schools, Weighted Average		16%	+28%***	64%	+14%	35%	+23%*

***significance at p<.005; **significance at p<.01; *significance at p<.05; *significance at p<0.1. #Students were asked: Do you know if the school anti-bullying plan specifically includes homophobia and transphobia?

3.4.2 Targeted initiatives on addressing homophobia and creating more inclusive school environments

Four schools implemented gay-straight alliances and peer support programs to provide specific support for same sex attracted and gender questioning students. Such initiatives have proven track records¹⁴ and focus on immediate issues of health and safety for these students. Young people whose disclosures about homophobia or sexual orientation are received openly are less likely to harm themselves than those whose disclosures are met with rejection.¹⁵

¹⁴ Beigal S, Kuehl SJ. *Safe at School: Addressing the School Environment and LGBT Safety through policy and legislation*. Great Lakes Centre for Education Research and Practice, 2010.

¹⁵ *Same Sex Attracted and Gender Questioning Young People: Issues for NSW Schools*, Lynne Hillier and Anne Mitchell from the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University (2011, unpublished)

- School 1: This school had a track record in recognising diversity and had a similar group in the past. This had a high recognition factor amongst staff because at baseline 86% of staff were aware that students are supported by staff in groups that challenge homophobia (table 11).
- School 3: Has developed a Diversity Group with 45 student members that has been running for 12 weeks in this metropolitan school. The existence of the group and its work appears to have become well known amongst staff, with a significant and large increase in the proportion of teachers (+44%) saying that students are supported by staff in groups that challenge homophobia compared to baseline (table 13).
- School 8: Has a peer support program, where trained Year 10 students provide peer support to Year 7 students (part of a broader peer support program). No follow-up staff checklist data were collected at this school, but significantly more students involved in school activities associated with Proud Schools agreed at follow-up that there are teachers/ staff who they or their friends would feel comfortable talking to about their sexuality at follow-up.
- School 11: Gay/ straight alliance group; a new initiative for this school.

Interestingly, there were significant positive changes in staff being aware that there are designated staff members to whom same sex attracted and gender questioning students can go to seek support or with any concerns they have about homophobia, for four schools—schools 2, 3, 4 and 9. Across the schools a range of teaching staff were identified as being approachable and able to support students, if approached: school counsellors, welfare teachers, PDHPE teachers, Rainbow group or Proud Schools teachers and Year advisors.

At least one school, school 12, also actively sought to strengthen the school's links with external human service agencies as a way of getting professional help for students in need. Unfortunately, this school did not provide post-Pilot staff or student data to ascertain the success of this work. One regional school was frustrated that a lack of external services meant that such supports were not readily available for their students. Improving support by external agencies was not a key strategy mentioned by other Pilot schools, despite some teachers indicating that they would benefit from further guidance in supporting same sex attracted and gender questioning students.

Table 8. Change in supports for same sex attracted and gender questioning students

School	Same sex attracted and gender questioning students support group	The school has links with organisations that can provide information, services and supports to the school, parents and students about sexual and gender diversity		Students are supported by staff in projects or groups that challenge homophobia		Are there any teachers/ staff at your school who you or your friends would feel comfortable talking to about sexual or gender or diversity?		There are designated staff members to whom same sex attracted and gender questioning students can talk to or go to with any concerns they have about homophobia	
		Staff		Staff		Students#		Staff	
		Baseline % Staff agree	Change @ post %	Baseline % Staff agree	Change @ post %	Baseline % Students agree	Change @ post %	Baseline % Staff	Change @ post %
School 1	Yes	59%	+23%***	86%	-12%	57%	-4%*	43%	+20%
School 2	No###	69%	+20%	69%	+13%			52%	+44%***
School 3	Yes	56%	+33%	45%	+44%*	58%	-6%	28%	+50%*
School 4	No	33%	+7%	33%	+11%			28%	+10%*
School 5	No	28%	+5%	60%	-1%			28%	+14%
School 7	No					44%	-3%		
School 8	Yes					35%	+18%*		
School 9	No	35%	+44%***	37%	+22%*	49%	+1%	16%	+43%***
All schools, Weighted Average		47%	+22%***	55%	+13%	49%	+1%	33%	+30%***

***significance at p<.005; **significance at p<.01; *significance at p<.05; *significance at p<0.1

For this all schools, except school 7, the main change (increase) has been in those saying 'Don't know' not in those saying staff are not available.

##Proud Schools student group formed to assist in planning and implementation of Pilot strategies.

3.5 Strategies to support professional learning and a supportive curriculum

3.5.1 Professional learning

Teachers from eight of the twelve schools attended professional learning sessions facilitated by contracted agency at the end of 2012 and in early 2013. These sessions were designed to assist schools to implement their Proud Schools Plan. For example, improve teachers' understanding of issues for same sex and gender attracted students, and increase their capacity to challenge students' use of homophobic language. Some sessions also assisted teachers to review particular curriculum materials.

Across all schools there was a significant positive change at follow-up compared to a baseline in teachers agreeing that "the professional learning I have received has been helpful in meeting my learning needs". At the individual school level the positive changes seen were significant for schools 1, 5 and 9. Six schools had support from Family Planning NSW in reviewing teaching and learning programs.

Despite many more teachers agreeing that their professional learning needs had been met after the Pilot, a number of teachers said that they would benefit from more professional learning to further develop their capacity in the area. A few teachers from schools which had had only one or two hours of training from contracted agency (and had not had time to focus on curriculum) said that this had helped them to understand their potential role in supporting same sex attracted and gender questioning students, but had not provided them with enough practical resources or guidance to enable them to fulfil this role. A few teachers felt they would have benefited from a "refresher" session later on in the year, to reinforce what they had learnt and to link this with their school's overall approach to providing an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students.

For school 3, 95% of teachers at baseline said they feel confident about their capacity to challenge homophobic and transphobic language and this decreased significantly by 17%. A few comments on the survey by teachers from this school indicated that this subject may not have been fully addressed in the professional learning for teaching staff sessions.

Table 9. Change in teacher practices regarding sexual diversity and challenging homophobia

School	Type of professional learning in Proud Schools	The professional learning I have received has been helpful in meeting my learning needs		I feel confident to challenge homophobic and transphobic behaviour or language		GLBTI people are portrayed respectfully in my subject area		Students views: Overall, do you believe sexual diversity is included in your school's curriculum?	
		Baseline % staff agree	Change @ post %	Baseline % staff agree	Change @ post %	Baseline % staff agree	Change @ post %	Baseline % students agree	Change @ post %
School 1	Knowledge +Curriculum review	53%	+20%***	92%	-1%	86%	-7%	37%	+8%*
School 2	None	35%	+26%	82%	+11%	83%	+3%		
School 3	Knowledge +Curriculum review	44%	+45%	95%	-17%*	83%	-5%	40%	+2%
School 4	Knowledge	41%	+12%	84%	0%	84%	-22%*		
School 5	Curriculum review	43%	+32%**	78%	13%	69%	+23%*		
School 7	Knowledge +Curriculum review+ Use of language							14%	+16%***
School 8	None							13%	+3%
School 9	Knowledge +Curriculum review	39%	+39%***	87%	5%	63%	11%	22%	+2%
All, weighted average		43%	+29%***	86%	+2%	78%	+1%	25%	+7%

***significance at p<.005; **significance at p<.01; *significance at p<.05; *significance at p<0.1. GLBTI= Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex people.

3.5.2 Curriculum

Five schools purchased professional resources, which assisted teachers to recognise inappropriate language and for use in programming.

Some schools specifically reviewed teaching and learning materials, generally English or PDHPE materials and a few schools developed lesson materials. For example, school 4 had incorporated texts that reference sexual and gender diversity in their English literature classes (for example, the introduction of the text *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*). A few

schools linked their Proud Schools' efforts to the Crossroads program, a mandatory personal development and health education course for Year 11 and 12 students¹⁶.

3.6 Success factors

School informants identified a number of factors that they felt had been important in enabling them to successfully implement the Proud Schools Pilot. These encompassed the formal support provided for the Pilot and factors that were internal or external to the school.

The school's local context

The social norms around acceptance and tolerance of sexual diversity were an important factor that could either support or hinder the extent to which a school implemented strategies associated with the Pilot. Where the school was located in an area where the community is more openly accepting of sexual and gender diversity then schools were more comfortable about implementing a wider range of initiatives to support safe and inclusive school environments.

Capacity, resources and guidance

Piloting new approaches in schools needs dedicated staff and resources, so one important factor for schools was being able to access funds to implement strategies associated with the Pilot. Schools also appreciated and benefited from the three DEC Proud Schools networking forums, which enabled the school staff to establish links with and share their knowledge and learn from the experiences of other schools in the Pilot. Two of the schools (school 1 and school 3) were relatively proactive in creating safe and supportive environments for same sex attracted and gender questioning students prior to the Pilot and schools built on their knowledge of what works.

Schools that had accessed support and expert advice from the contracted agency which also nominated this support as being important factors in their success.

Leadership

Teachers and parents identified the importance of school leadership for the Pilot as a key success factor and having a clear message that explained why and what the school was intending to achieve. In individual schools a Proud Schools team lead the planning and implementation of strategies and where this team was active and had highly motivated teachers then the schools had more success. Having a school executive in this team was one

¹⁶ <http://www.dsr.nsw.gov.au/assets/pubs/oep/crossroads.pdf>

way that principals or other executives indicated their support for the Pilot to the wider school community. Other ways the school executive might inform the school about the Pilot and indicate their support was via staff meetings, school assemblies, in newsletters, on the school website and in parent meetings. The better informed the school community the easier it was to engage teachers and students in strategies. Students and teachers often said that explaining the school's rationale and actions around the Proud Schools Pilot to students was critical to its success. The external support agencies also observed that from their perspective, schools with both active leadership and more detailed plans were more successful at implementing the Pilot.

Schools where students were involved in the planning said this helped maintain Proud Schools as a priority amongst staff and maintained the momentum of implementation. Students indicated their involvement in planning and implementing strategies was essential if the strategies were to engage other students.

Linking Proud Schools to existing practices

Another key success factor was the ability of the school to embed Proud Schools work into existing policy, procedures and operating processes. For example, to build on structures such as peer support, student mentoring programs, the Student Representative Council and welfare support structures.

3.7 Challenges

The schools faced different types of challenges in implementing Proud Schools.

Conflicting priorities

Schools have annual planning processes to identify and choose their priorities to meet the range of welfare and student learning needs of their students. Addressing homophobia and transphobia was already a priority for five of the schools and these schools found it relatively easy to engage staff and access resources to implement Proud Schools strategies. For some schools, other issues had a higher priority and a key challenge for the core Proud Schools team was getting Proud Schools recognised as a priority and gaining commitment from the wider teaching staff. These schools also highlighted sustaining efforts in the longer term as a challenge, given other priorities.

Different views about the role of the school in addressing homophobia and creating more inclusive school environments

Proud Schools is essentially a student wellbeing and welfare initiative. It aims to address homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism, and provide a safe and supportive environment for same sex attracted and gender questioning students.

Nevertheless, homophobia, transphobia and sexual diversity are seen as a “tough subjects” and school informants report that a minority of teachers were (at least) initially uncomfortable about directly discussing sexual diversity and reluctant to be involved. Some teachers held the view that recognising sexual and gender diversity is not the role of the school, particularly in the classroom. These kinds of views were reflected in the comments of some students and also some parents, who regarded Proud Schools as being about promoting a “lifestyle” that is not in accord with their personal beliefs. For example, school 5 had complaints from parents about the intention to hold a “Wear it Purple day”, and it did not proceed. And teachers in three schools described some students as being “fearful” of discussing issues related to sexual diversity or of being identified as supporting “gay” events. These views were more likely to be reported by regional schools and those with a high proportion of students from cultural backgrounds where sexual diversity is unacceptable for some. As a result, the challenge for schools was to choose strategies that were acceptable to the school community but also effective in raising awareness of homophobia and creating a safe and supportive environment for same sex attracted and gender questioning students.

Making decisions about the right approach to take and the timing of advice

The Pilot had a long lead time and schools were given latitude to plan and choose the appropriate strategies for their school (figure 1). The Department had only a limited role in guiding, planning and supporting implementation in schools. The main provider of direct support for implementation was the contracted agency which had experience in the area.

The research was presented by DEC to the schools in late 2011. The contracted agency did not provide assistance to schools with planning their approach for another six months and it was at this time that the contracted agency started contacting schools to provide advice and support.

Without this early formal support with planning, or an existing clear framework, some schools—particularly the five schools that had not previously had a focus on addressing homophobic and transphobic bullying—were uncertain about how to best implement strategies. As a result, these schools were slow to plan and start implementing strategies. In addition, the publication of negative newspaper articles about Proud Schools mid-way

through the Pilot affected schools' planning processes and confidence, increasing their uncertainty about how to proceed.

The Pilot schools' main commentary on the usefulness of the support provided by the Department was related to the position the Department took in providing leadership for schools (for example, clear guidelines for the strategies they might use and/or clear public policy stance on the area) and being supportive of schools in their chosen approach. The schools commonly said they would have preferred the Department to take on a stronger leadership role, which they said would have greatly assisted them in their efforts to engage their school community in the Pilot and given them more confidence in their decision-making at the school level. Schools said they would benefit from guidelines endorsed by the Department to support their initiatives in this area.

Take-up of support provided by contracted agency for student engagement strategies

As indicated in section 3.3.1, four schools engaged the contracted agency to speak with students about homophobia/ transphobia, and one school engaged the contracted agency to speak with parents. A number of factors affected the contracted agency's ability to work with schools during the Pilot. Firstly, the contracted agency did not initially realise that students would need parental consent to participate in forums run by their staff, which delayed the student forums. Secondly, schools took time to contact the contracted agency to arrange a time for these workshops, possibly due to scheduling difficulties.

Teacher feedback on the language used by the contracted agency during workshops with students was that at times it was positively biased towards same sex attracted and gender diverse persons, which was not in line with the "everyone is equal" message schools wanted to achieve and approaches that values diversity and promote respectful relationships.

Proud Schools–Case story

The school context: A comprehensive high school located in a regional NSW town. The socio-economic status of the area is high, but the area also has ‘pockets of disadvantage’ and as such the school has students from a range of backgrounds (school staff).

Within the local community there are few if any support groups for same sex attracted and gender questioning young people. School staff indicated that same sex attracted people are not really visible within the local community. This may partly explain why teachers perceive that some members of the community are not always open-minded to the issues affecting same sex attracted or gender questioning young people. Amongst the school’s students prior to the Pilot, just 16% said that same sex attracted or gender questioning students would feel safe at the school and a further 47% did not know if this would be the case. Students and staff members also reported similar and relatively high incidences of verbal or physical bullying at the school; with around 40% of students and 39% of staff saying that they see this every day or every week (baseline checklist data).

Initiatives prior to the Pilot: The school had taken some steps to address homophobia and support same sex attracted and gender questioning students, in particular aligning their discrimination, harassment and vilification policy with the *Anti-Discrimination Act NSW (1977)*. Welfare support teachers and police liaison officers had been made available to students who are same sex attracted or gender questioning. At the curriculum level, a Year 10 English unit addressed sexual and gender diversity and the Year 11 Crossroads program covered same sex relationships. However, few students were aware of these initiatives. Just 17% of students knew about the focus of the discrimination policy before the Pilot, compared with two thirds of staff. And 16% students knew about the designated staff members to whom same sex attracted and gender questioning students can talk to about their sexuality or go to with concerns about homophobia.

What the school hoped to achieve: The school executive was alerted to a need for further action, by the baseline checklist data. They hoped the Proud Schools Pilot would enhance the existing measures and support new strategies, and importantly, create a greater awareness of the homophobia and transphobia among students and staff members.

What the school did during the Pilot: The school established a Proud Schools committee of seven staff with the school principal and Year Advisor leading the planning process. They decided to introduce Proud Schools gradually, firstly securing the support of teachers and improving their understanding and skills through two days of professional learning run by the contracted agency towards the end of 2012.

The contracted agency stayed involved with the school throughout 2013; supporting teacher professional learning and assisting the school to incorporate measures that recognise sexual diversity and address homophobia and transphobia across school policies and plans. The school purchased new resources for the library and published information

about the Pilot in their newsletter. They increased the visibility of sexual and gender diversity through posters of different family types, the Proud 2 B Me theatre production for Years 9, 10 and 11, and the celebration of Wear it Purple day, which the school re-branded as Rainbow Day to give a broader message about tolerance of differences.

There were also new classroom strategies and a focus on curricula and pedagogical change. For example, the diversity of family types represented in class texts was considered across faculties. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* was considered in English and the song *Same Love* for Year 10 PDHPE

Impacts of the Pilot: Although the Pilot significantly increased students' awareness of school plans and policies and other supports in place, we saw no demonstrable impact on the frequency of homophobic language or of verbal and physical homophobia and transphobia (as observed by students and teaching staff). Even so, staff members report seeing some positive changes in the school environment and in their own skills and understanding. Teachers said they are more confident about talking to students about sexual diversity and better at challenging pejorative language like 'That's so gay'. Teachers have also observed students 'picking up on' inappropriate comments by others. '

Key success factors and challenges: Key to the school's success was the professional learning, which successfully secured the support of teachers. The expertise of the contracted agency was also widely regarded among all school staff. The Department of Education and Communities' support of Proud Schools was another enabling factor. Along with the Pilot funding, this endorsement garnered the critical whole-school 'buy-in', without which the executive felt they would probably not have got all staff on board.

Staff raised the lack of time to plan for, and promote, Proud Schools strategies, in the context of competing school priorities, as a challenge. Others thought that events like the school's Rainbow Day might be short-lived and commented that a long-term commitment and effort would be needed to continue to bring about change in the school environment.

There was also some apprehension around particular implementation strategies. For example, some staff considered that Proud Schools strategies could identify students rather than support them, 'The danger can be that the kids are stigmatised because of the attention.' A number of male students found the Proud 2 B Me performance confronting as they did not want to 'learn about gay people'. With only one male staff on the Proud Schools committee, an opportunity to role model for boys may have been missed. Staff perceived that some students were unwilling to change their negative attitudes towards same sex attracted and gender questioning students.

The school intends to continue strategies commenced under the Pilot, to celebrate Rainbow Day each year. The school would also like to establish a Proud Schools student group and involve parents more. Some staff emphasised the need to reinforce inclusive messages to sustain their impact.

4. Short-term impacts of Proud Schools

This chapter examines the short-term impacts of Proud Schools on the school climate and school planning. Given the formative nature of the Pilot—where schools were trying out different approaches—and the relatively short duration of implementation, we would not expect to see large changes occurring. Nevertheless, we saw significant changes in two measures for two of the schools towards more supportive school climates. In addition, the majority of students indicated that Proud Schools had a positive impact on their school. There was no demonstrable change in school climate (as observed by students) for three other schools for which we have data.

The chapter draws on commentary by students and teaching staff in the open-ended questions in the surveys and in focus groups, and a comparison of baseline and follow-up data for measures of the school climate towards same sex attracted and gender questioning young people. As mentioned in chapter 2, the survey measures are indicative only and limited to the schools which returned student (5 schools) or staff surveys (6 schools) at baseline and follow-up.

Comparisons of the baseline measures of school climate across schools were discussed in chapter 1.

4.1 Changes in the school climate

The literature says that having a supportive school climate towards same sex attracted and gender questioning students protects their mental health and supports students' learning.

4.1.1 Indications of change: ratings of safety, frequency of homophobic language and bullying

The evaluation used three measures of school climate: students' ratings of whether same sex attracted and gender questioning students would feel safe at their school; students' ratings of the frequency they hear homophobic language; and, students' and teaching staff ratings of the frequency of verbal or physical homophobia or transphobia (table 15).

Students' ratings

More than half of the students at 7 of the 8 schools for whom we have data agreed that Proud Schools had a positive impact on their school. At two schools (school 1 and school 7)—where more than 75% of students said Proud Schools had a positive impact—we saw positive significant change in students' perceptions about whether 'same sex attracted or

gender questioning students would feel safe at their school' (table 10). Students at these same schools and one additional school also reported a significant decrease in the frequency they hear homophobic language; decreases of 12% (school 1) 16% (school 7) and 10% (school 8).

Some of the change seen could be due to a test effect¹⁷, but the amount of change varies between schools, which indicates the changes seen are probably reflecting real changes in students' perceptions.

Proud Schools appears to have had a low profile amongst the Stage 4 and 5 students targeted at school 8 (table 10). Only 18% had heard of Proud Schools and 31% of these students thought it had a positive impact (most did not know). Even so, there was a positive significant increase (from a low base of 6% to 16%) of students who agree same sex attracted and gender questioning students would feel safe at their school. A few students at this school believed it would take time for the Pilot to have an impact on their school culture, given that the strategies associated with the Pilot had only really started at the beginning of 2013, and because changes in school culture took time. As one student said: 'I think instead of like a big revolution [the Proud Schools Pilot] will be a gradual evolution'.

Teachers' ratings

There were no significant changes in teaching staff members' ratings of the frequency of verbal or physical abuse at the end of the Pilot for 5 of the 6 schools for whom we have data. For school 4, we saw a significant decrease of 26% of teachers saying it occurs often compared to baseline (table 10). We do not have any student data for this school.

¹⁷ Test effect. Where the change seen is due to being tested at two time points due to familiarity with the questions.

Table 10. Change in school climate: students' and staff members' perspectives

School	Baseline position - same sex attracted and gender questioning students	Post-Pilot Students' ratings of awareness of Proud Schools and impact of Proud Schools on school		Students' rating of school climate towards same sex attracted and gender questioning students		Frequency students report homophobic language used by students, in the last 6 months		Frequency students report seeing verbal or physical homophobic behaviour or bullying at their school, in the last 6 months		Staff views' of Incidents of verbal or physical homophobia or transphobia occur often at this school	
		% students heard of Proud Schools	% students agree Proud Schools has positive impact#	Baseline % students agree same sex attracted and gender diverse students feel safe at school	Change @ post %	Baseline % students report everyday or every week	Change @ post %	Baseline % students report everyday or every week	Change @ post %	Baseline % staff agree	Change @post %
School 1	Sexual and gender diversity initiatives	63%	81%	56%	+10%**	62%	-12%***	4%	0%	6%	-6%
School 2	Sexual and gender diversity initiatives									7%	+4%
School 3	Sexual and gender diversity initiatives	48%	68%	36%	+17%	74%	-4%	26%	-9%	28%	-17%
School 4	Not a focus	16%	100%							38%	-26%*
School 5	Not a focus									28%	-3%
School 7	Not a focus	66%	76%	47%	+20%***	91%	-16%***	14%	-4%		
School 8	Focus on Stage 4	18%	31%	6% ¹	+10%*	91%	-1%	37%	+8%		
School 9	Sexual and gender diversity initiatives	23%	69%	16% ²	+8%	83%	+4%	40%	-12%	39%	0%
School 10		48%	51%								
All schools, Weighted Average		55%	68%	32%	+13%	80%	-6%	24%	-3%	25%	-8%

GLBT=Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual and Transgender. N/A=Not available. ¹ 47% Don't know. ² 51% Don't know.

#Only students who had heard of Proud Schools strategies answered.

Agree= definitely has + has to some extent had a positive impact.

***significance at p<.005; **significance at p<.01; *significance at p<.05; ^significance at p<0.1.

4.1.2 Students' perceptions about the impact of Proud Schools and what else the school could do

Overall, most students thought Proud Schools had a positive impact in their school (68% agreed, weighted average across all schools) (table 10). Nevertheless, in their commentary about the rating they gave, students expressed a range of views about the impact of Proud Schools and the types of impacts they had seen at their school. These views encompassed perspectives such as being pleased about the Pilot, to scepticism about the ability of Proud Schools to bring about change, to disliking some aspects of strategies associated with the Pilot. These views were in line with those expressed by teachers and students during our site visits to the three case study schools.

Positive views

Students who thought Proud Schools had a positive impact talked about:

- same sex attracted young people now feeling safer at school, and feeling pleased that this was the case
- themselves and others having a better understanding about homophobia and being more accepting of people who are different from themselves
- getting an insight into the impacts of intolerance on same sex attracted young people
- the unifying aspects of Proud Schools being a good thing for the school
- seeing changes in teachers' attitudes and actions at school towards same sex attracted young people
- having a heightened awareness of homophobic behaviour
- seeing less discriminatory behaviour and seeing more accepting behaviour by other students.

Box 5.1 Impact of Proud Schools: Illustrative comments by students

I know more about homophobia and transphobia and it has made me think. (school 1)

Everyone still uses gay as an adjective and a name for people. (school 1)

More information and more openness provide a more inclusive environment. (school 2)

Has given same sex students as well as family and friends a chance to discuss issues and remove discrimination from our environment. (school 3)

When people use the words 'that's gay' this is just slang and no offence is intended. (school 3)

I felt lucky to be part of such an accepting and inspiring activity for our school and most people have acted nicer than before. (school 7)

Proud Schools will have no effect on people who are either not interested or against the factor of same sex attraction. (school 7)

People just wore purple not knowing what it was about. (school 8)

The Proud Schools reached some people. (school 8)

Proud Schools will have no impact on bullies or people just not interested. (school 9)

It opens up your eyes to the issues. (school 9)

The Gay-Straight alliance does solve a social problem. (school 10)

Doesn't help at all because it still happens within school. (school 10)

If you are going to stop discrimination against gays you might as well put in the same amount of effort for discrimination in general. (school 10)

Negative views

Students who did not agree that Proud Schools had a positive impact on their school talked about:

- people still using “that’s gay” or themselves and others not seeing this as a discriminatory term
- there being more encouragement needed to get students talking about the issues
- their doubt that people (some students) would be willing or susceptible to changing their attitudes or beliefs
- having personally seen no change in the use of homophobic language amongst other students
- the risk of gay and lesbian young people being identified and bullied as a consequence (no one gave an actual example of this happening to anyone)
- awareness of Proud Schools not being high enough throughout the whole school (that is, only certain students/ Year groups being targeted)
- their school strategies not being communicated clearly enough to the schools community (that is, not all students being aware of what the school was doing)
- One-off celebratory events being seen as necessary but not sufficient: students said this helped raise awareness but longer-term measures were required to establish long-term change. As one student said: ‘it’s like when we do bullying workshop at school and stuff: the effect will last about a week before things go back to normal and people forget about it’
- being concerned that Proud Schools had too high a profile within the school, which they said could make some students uncomfortable or even encourage discrimination if a student was identifiable
- least commonly, disliking the positive discrimination towards gay and lesbian people.

Ways the school could have a greater impact on homophobia and promoting a safe environment

Students made many suggestions about how the Proud Schools strategies that their school undertook could have a better impact on their school. But perhaps of the greatest interest is the divide between students wanting the school to do more of the same and those who think awareness-raising strategies are risky for students who are uncertain about their sexuality or an imposition on those students just not interested or whose culture is not accepting of sexual and gender diversity.

Students talked about:

- wanting more in-depth information about the impacts of homophobia and transphobia, suggesting more students have education in this area and other information about sexual and gender diversity (common suggestion)

- having more frequent events to maintain awareness of the issues and more promotion of strategies to reach more students, for example, posters recognising sexual diversity (common suggestion)
- keeping a lower profile within the school to minimise the amount of attention given to same sex attracted or gender questioning individuals, so students who do not wish to be involved can choose not to be (common suggestion)
- doing more to promote who and what kinds of support same sex attracted or gender questioning students can get from school staff or from other support agencies (a few students)
- focusing more on issues in the broader community affecting same sex attracted and gender diverse people (a few students)
- involving students more in planning (a few students)
- enforcing consequences for those who bully same sex attracted students (a few students)
- teachers being more proactive in challenging homophobia language and bullying (a few students)
- introducing gender neutral toilets (a few students)
- more skilled school counsellors able to discuss bullying related to sexual diversity openly (one student)
- having more gay and lesbian teachers as role models (one student)
- raising funds for suicide prevention organisations (one student).

4.1.3 Teachers' views

Most teachers—those we spoke to during site visits and those who completed the staff checklists—were supportive of the Proud Schools Pilot. Teachers said the Pilot had helped build awareness of the impact of homophobia and transphobia across the school community, and helped schools to communicate their policies and procedures in regards to homophobia and transphobia. Teachers also said the Pilot had helped students to feel more comfortable when discussing issues related to sexuality. The few teachers who were less positive about Proud Schools did not believe that schools are the most appropriate forum for addressing issues related to sexual and gender diversity.

Teachers believed that Proud Schools strategies should be integrated into a whole-school approach, incorporating the Proud School message into school's policies, curriculum and communication materials. A few teachers therefore had reservations about one-off 'celebratory' events, such as Wear it Purple as such events did not provide long-term support for same sex attracted or gender questioning students, and may unintentionally draw negative attention towards same sex attracted and gender questioning students.

4.1.4 Parents' views

Only a relatively small number of parents took up the opportunity to give their views about the Pilot—50 parents in total. Getting a wide section of parents to engage in their child's high school activities is generally a challenge for schools, so this is not unusual. As such, the low response could be due to several reasons; a lack of interest amongst parents or parents being disinterested or because parents are unaware of the Pilot. Indeed, most parents we spoke to during our site visits had only recently been informed of the Proud Schools Pilot by their child's school.

Parents had differing views and moral points of view ranging from qualified support to being very supportive to outright opposition to Proud Schools. Although parents from five schools made submissions to the online portal most of the responses came from two schools; school 1 and school 11. School 1 has been proactive in creating a safe and supportive environment for same sex attracted and gender questioning students for some years and actively informed parents about the Pilot on its website and in the school newsletter. The school also has a high proportion of its students from multicultural backgrounds. It is interesting that all but one of the parent comments at this school were very positive about and supportive of Proud Schools. The other parent gave qualified support but would have preferred the school to take a lower profile in addressing sexual and gender diversity.

School 11 was also active in informing parents, holding a parent meeting and informing parents through the newsletter. But this school had not had any sexual or gender diversity initiatives prior to Proud Schools. Two of the five parents of students from this school expressed their opposition to the school being involved in the Pilot. The other three parents were very supportive.

Box 4.2 Illustrative quotes from parents

"My child came home and spoke excitedly about the forums she participated in and she was very positive about the message that her school was a safe place for all girls regardless of their orientation. It is an excellent program and I am very glad our school participated in it."

"It makes students aware of differences and encourages them to be accepting of everyone, regardless of sexual orientation. This helps to minimise bullying and encourages students to be supportive of one another."

"Accepting gay, lesbian and transgender people is fine, and eradicating bullying and bias is great too. However, I don't think the school needed to make such a big song and dance about it. Also, the school needs to be aware that there are other kids who are slowly working through and wrestling with these issues."

"As a parent of a Year 7 child I think that the normalisation of homosexual relationships and diverse gender identification is unnecessary and should not be taught."

"I am opposed to the Proud Schools program. Parents should not be coerced to support something the majority of Australians are opposed to. Same sex attracted students and gender diverse students should feel safe, but should not be allowed to express their sexuality at school, neither should heterosexuals. School is not an appropriate context."

"Got us talking at home about this topic. reduces fear and stigma associated with same sex relationships. I guess it is important to realise that not all parents are educated on same sex relationships and may have a difference of opinion to those expressed at school, i.e. for religious reasons"

Some parents who were broadly supportive nevertheless had reservations about what they saw as an overtly ‘celebratory’ element of Proud Schools (e.g., Wear it Purple Day), which they saw as potentially “promoting” same sex relationships. There was also a view expressed by a small number of parents that some students might feel uncomfortable about being a part of these events and feel excluded if they did not participate.

The reasons given for opposing Proud Schools were that these parents felt that schools were “normalising same sex relationships” and that a message about acceptance of same sex relationships as being normal was being imposed on students and that schools are not the appropriate place for addressing sexuality. These views were expressed by two of the 50 parents who provided feedback.

A few parents expressed the belief that Proud Schools strategies should be integrated into a whole-school approach addressing bullying and hate, and should not be individual one-off events. As one parent said:

‘Don’t make [Proud Schools] stand out.... [Proud Schools] needs to be embedded into education and text books. You can have your awareness days, but [Proud Schools] needs to be fully integrated into students’ learning’.

The parents’ feedback suggests that Proud Schools can be contentious for some parents but also that parents can come to appreciate and understand the intent of initiatives to support same sex attracted and gender questioning students over time, as seems to have occurred at one school. It also shows that schools’ choice to take a broad approach to raising awareness about diversity is appropriate and more likely to be acceptable to parents.

4.2 Changes in school planning

To be sustained, principles and actions supporting inclusivity and recognition of diversity will need to be incorporated in school planning processes and leadership for any operational changes provided by the school executive.

The survey asked teaching staff three questions to measure changes in this area, whether: school planning is inclusive of sexual and gender diversity; same sex attracted students, staff and parents are included in the school context within the school plan; the school plan provides outcomes, targets and strategies for the support of sexual and gender diversity.

Overall, the data indicate that according to teachers, only minimal change has occurred in these aspects at four of the six schools for whom we have data (table 11). For two schools, school 2 and school 3, significant positive changes were seen for two of the measures; “school planning is inclusive of sexual and gender diversity” and “the school plan provides outcomes, targets and strategies for the support of sexual and gender diversity.”

Significantly more teaching staff in school 2 also reported change in the measure, “same sex

attracted students, staff and parents are included in the school context within the school plan”.

These results reflect the focus of these two schools’ work, for example, school 2 reported implementing strategies such as including information about the school’s approach in weekly class information sessions, information stalls at induction days and providing pamphlets about the policy to students and parents. School 3 also implemented a broad range of strategies.

Table 11. Change in school planning, staff views

School	School planning is inclusive of sexual and gender diversity		Same sex attracted students, staff and parents are included in the school context within the school plan		The school plan provides outcomes, targets and strategies for the support of sexual and gender diversity	
	Baseline % Staff agree	Change @ post %	Baseline % Staff agree	Change @ post %	Baseline % Staff agree	Change @ post %
School 1	63%	+22%	53%	+10%	37%	+17%
School 2	64%	+15%*	44%	+35%***	31%	+29%*
School 3	39%	+50%*	44%	+11%	17%	+50%*
School 4	48%	-11%	38%	-13%	29%	+12%
School 5	40%	+19%	16%	+25%	17%	+8%
School 9	56%	+9%	37%	-2%	24%	+19%
All, weighted average	52%	+17%*	39%	+11%	26%	+23%**

***significance at p<.005; **significance at p<.01; *significance at p<.05; *significance at p<0.1.

5. Conclusion

NSW schools are expected to respect and value diversity and be free from all forms of discrimination. Schools are expected to strive—through teaching and learning and student welfare structures, practices and school programs—to prevent and respond to incidents of harassment, aggression, violence and situations of bullying.

5.1 Overview

The strategies used by schools fitted broadly within a whole-school approach to providing safe and supportive learning environments for students and aligned with existing DEC policy and procedure. Schools mainly sought to do so through strategies to address the “school climate” that recognise diversity and discourage bullying more broadly, as well as through formal policies.

The Pilot indicates that changing related school policies to reference homophobia and transphobia and communicating the intent of these policies through one-off strategies, such as having posters around the school that recognise diversity, awareness-raising events and one-off professional development for teachers can change students’ and teachers’ views about whether discrimination on the basis of sexual and gender identity is acceptable. At the beginning of the Pilot, many students and teachers were unsure about their school’s approach to supporting same sex attracted and gender questioning students, but this knowledge increased as a result of the Pilot. There was no evidence of changes in overall school culture in 9 of the 12 Pilot schools—this was not unexpected, given the short duration of the Pilot. As noted by teachers, students and parents during this evaluation, cultural change takes time.

Although one-off strategies provided some evidence of success, the Pilot indicated that integrated, whole-of-school strategies that focused on long-term change were the most successful. Schools that focused on reviewing and changing school policies and procedures and that worked to integrate diversity within the school curriculum were the schools that believed that the Pilot had been the most successful.

Many schools integrated Proud Schools into their overall approach to providing a safe and supportive environment for all students, and did not always make particular reference to same sex attracted and gender questioning students. This seemed to be successful in most cases, particularly in schools where some members of the school community did not agree the school should be addressing sexual or gender diversity issues. The literature supports the effectiveness of incorporating sexual and gender diversity into a school’s overall approach to accepting diversity. However, the literature also says it is important that

schools ensure that their position on sexual and gender diversity is not lost—sexual and gender diversity should still be given specific attention in school policies and procedures.

Schools faced a number of challenges when implementing the Pilot. Some of these challenges could be easily overcome: for example, the challenges schools faced in planning could be reduced by improving support and mechanisms for planning (see section 5.2). Other challenges, such as community concerns regarding the Pilot can be managed when the community is consulted and the strategies are focused on inclusiveness and acceptance of diversity more broadly (see section 5.2). There are opportunities to facilitate school success in supporting same sex attracted and gender questioning students by ensuring certain enablers (such as departmental and executive level leadership at the school level and access to sufficient support, guidance and resources) are present within the school.

5.2 Specific findings

Evidence-based planning was important for schools

Many schools used the baseline staff and student checklists to understand the starting position of their school, and develop a tailored approach to the Pilot. This assisted them to link evidence to planning. Schools indicated that they would like these tools to be modifiable (for example, make the checklist shorter) to enable the tools to better meet their needs and to reduce time-burden on students and teachers.

Professional learning: Teachers needed knowledge, skills and resources to successfully support diversity

Eight of the 12 Pilot schools funded professional development for teachers as part of the Pilot, and this appears to have been successful in improving teachers' understanding of the area. Even so some teachers were still unsure about how to deal with homophobic and transphobic behaviours they observe in class or the school grounds, or how best to support same sex attracted and/or gender questioning students and it is apparent that ongoing professional development may be required for these teachers.

Schools preferred professional learning sessions of one to three hours because this approach fitted better around other school commitments and reflected their usual approach to scheduling professional learning.

The contracted support agency demonstrated their capabilities to support schools to develop their knowledge and skills in this area, within the limits of their size and capacity.

Schools were unclear about pathways to support services for same sex attracted or gender questioning students

The Pilot indicated that both students and teachers are not always clear about the proper pathways to support for students who identify as same sex attracted or gender questioning and need support. In addition, school relationships with external agencies to support students who are same sex attracted or gender questioning were often weak and the strength of these links did not change as a result of the pilot. The importance of having good links with appropriate local support agencies was demonstrated by the small number of students who come forward as same sex attracted or gender questioning during the Pilot.

Addressing diversity in schools worked best when there is “support from the top”

Schools involved in the Pilot all had support from their executive team: including their principal, deputy principal or head of student welfare. Schools believed having the support of the school executive was integral to the success of the Pilot. School staff indicated that support from the school leadership team gave the Pilot status within the school community, and enabled whole-of-school changes to be made in some schools.

Support from within the Department of Education and Communities was also deemed critical to the success of the Pilot as this gave schools the fortitude to address this contentious student welfare area. Schools expressed a need for ongoing department guidance and support to provide their staff with further confidence when addressing this area.

Student and parent support was important

Pilot schools indicated that where possible it was important to engage students and parents in order to communicate the Pilot messages and the schools’ policies related to anti-discrimination.

Many students were keen to be involved in strategies that support same sex attracted and gender questioning students and wanted a role in deciding the direction of school strategies in regards to supporting same sex attracted and gender questioning students and addressing homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools. School staff also talked about successfully engaging students in general diversity themes through linkages with school PDHPE or other welfare and wellbeing programs.

Engaging parents in diversity programs of this type proved more challenging—not only because of the general difficulties in engaging busy parents in secondary school activities, but also because of the contentious nature of implementing sexual and gender diversity

related initiatives in schools. As such, school leaders took account of local context when devising strategies and used formal parent groups to inform and engage parents. Many schools in the Pilot focused on diversity policies and procedures in general and avoided raising awareness through one-off events that focused on sexual and gender diversity.

Sharing knowledge of successful strategies supported schools efforts

Pilot schools took the opportunity to share information and ideas and reported being able to do so enhanced their own efforts. The Pilot schools were also keen to learn from others that have been successful in this area previously.

The Pilot indicated that other schools wishing to implement strategies in this area are highly likely to be interested in what worked for Pilot schools. Further, the findings indicated that for information to be useful guidance for other schools, lessons about successful strategies should be directive in regards to what schools could undertake in this area, but also allow schools to tailor their approach to account for the context in which they work. The guidance could also reference approaches that may work in certain contexts, and approaches that all schools should be able to implement. For example, reviewing and changing school policies and procedures to better address issues related to diversity is something that most Pilot schools chose to do and appears to have been very successful in helping schools to “set the scene” for the Pilot, and to establish their desired school culture in this area.

5.3 Potential for replicating strategies

The evaluation of the Pilot indicates that strategies implemented as part of the Pilot could be replicated in other schools.

Schools have a legal obligation to ensure their practices align with anti-discrimination legislation. This encourages schools to take action around this issue, and to review their anti-discrimination practices in regards to student and teacher diversity. The Pilot indicated that reviewing and communicating a school’s policy related to anti-discrimination was a great way of enabling schools to review their diversity practices.

Schools have a professional development budget, but using this budget to support professional development around diversity will depend on the priority the school places on this issue.

Appendix 1 Detailed methods

Site visits

ARTD researchers visited three schools at the end of the Pilot (schools 9, 11 and 12) and talked to 64 members of the school community who had been involved in or had an interest in Proud Schools: 17 students, 28 school staff and 9 parents (table 4).

The schools were asked to advertise the evaluation on their school's website and via letters to parents to let them know how they could provide feedback and to encourage them to permit their children to participate.

Parents at the site visit schools were invited to speak with the evaluators at a parent meeting; after a regular Parents and Citizens meeting at school 12 and at a special Proud Schools parent meeting at school 11.

We facilitated up to two focus groups with students at each of the site visits. One focus group was with students who were selected on the basis of having been directly involved in strategies associated with the Pilot and the other group was with a randomly selected group of students or where students volunteered. Only students with written consent from their parents participated in a focus group. All students who returned consent forms, and were present at the school on the day we visited, participated in a focus group.

The school staff members who gave their feedback as part of small discussion groups included core members of the Proud Schools coordination teams and other interested teachers. The staff members included teachers of Personal Development, Health and Physical Education; English; Science; Mathematics; Languages; Technological and Applied Studies; and Creative and Performing Arts teachers – also Year advisors, Welfare head teachers and one school principal (school 9).

Table 12. Data collected at the three site visits

School	No. of students	No. of parents attended meeting	No. school staff Proud Schools core group	No. of other teachers	Total
School 9	1	0	6	5	12
School 11	8	4	4	5	21
School 12	8	5	3	5	21
All sites	17	9	13	25	64

Online parent portal

Parents of students attending the 12 Pilot schools could give feedback anonymously via an online portal.

A total of forty submissions were received from parents whose children attended one of four schools, of which twenty-five submissions included responses to all questions. All but two submissions came from parents of children attending two schools; one school was a site visit school. We did not receive submissions from parents of students involved in eight of the Pilot schools. Whilst lack of time or interest may explain some of the low response, it is possible that some schools were less effective in advertising the parent portal to parents.

Student checklist data analysis

The student checklist was designed to provide information about students' views about what the schools is doing to support students who are same sex attracted or gender diverse and ways to do this even better..

We received student checklist data from 1,505 students pre-Pilot and 816 students across ten schools¹⁸ post-Pilot (table 13). One school asked the whole student population to complete the checklist and other schools asked only some students, often student Years they were involving as part of the Pilot.

Although students from eight schools responded at both baseline and follow-up, three schools had less than three students respond at pre- or post-Pilot or at both time points and these schools were not included in the analysis. Amongst the five schools for whom data were analysed, there were significant differences in the number of students who responded to the student checklist in each school over the two time points (table 13). At

¹⁸ Only one respondent from three schools

follow-up, students from one school represented just over half of the checklist respondents (51%).

Given the large differences in response rates to the checklists across each school, it was possible that reported averages would be skewed towards the performance of schools with higher response rates. With this in mind, an average of averages was used, so that each school was given an equal weight in the overall analysis of the data. This method was applied at both baseline and follow-up and chi-square tests for weighted cases were conducted for each survey question to explore whether baseline – follow-up differences in responses were statistically significant. Probability (p-values) smaller than 0.05 indicate the differences between scores at pre- and post-Pilot are statistically significant.

Table 13. Number of student respondents by school at baseline (pre) and follow-up (post)

School or origin	Number of respondents at baseline	Per cent respondents at baseline	Number of respondents at follow-up	Per cent respondents at follow-up
School 1	407	27%	61	9%
School 2	40	3%	62	9%
School 3	117	8%	73	11%
School 4	261	17%	122	19%
School 5	680	45%	337	51%
Total	1505	100%	655	100%

We also compared which group of students (Year group) responded at the different time points; remembering that the pre-checklist was administered in 2012 and the post-checklist in 2013 we expected that post-checklist respondents were one school Year older than pre-checklist respondents. We found this was the case for two out of the five schools, with both pre- and post-checklist respondents appearing to come from the same cohort of students (table 14).

In the remaining three schools only about half of the post-checklist respondents were one year older than pre-checklist respondents, while the remaining respondents were either same school Year as pre-checklist respondents (that is, one Year younger than expected), or two school years older than the pre-checklist students (that is, one Year older than expected). Given the low number of respondents across schools, we assessed whether the responses from younger and older respondents were reliable for the pre-post analysis. We

conducted a number of chi-square tests to explore whether responses of older or younger students were significantly different from responses of students who were exactly one school Year older at post-checklist. We found no significant differences between groups, indicating that although some of the post-checklist respondents were one Year older or younger than expected their responses were similar to those of students who at post-checklist were one school Year older than students at pre-checklist.

Table 14. Proportion of students in each Year pre- and post-Pilot by school

School	Time administered	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Total	Total N
School 1	Pre-2012	16%	18%	18%	22%	14%	12%	100%	680
	Post-2013	14%	15%	25%	28%	9%	8%	100%	337
School 3	Pre-2012	0%	0%	95%	3%	0%	3%	100%	40
	Post-2013	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	62
School 7	Pre-2012	51%	49%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	261
	Post-2013	1%	98%	1%	0%	0%	0%	100%	122
School 8	Pre-2012	0%	47%	53%	0%	0%	0%	100%	117
	Post-2013	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	73
School 9	Pre-2012	45%	23%	30%	1%	0%	0%	100%	407
	Post-2013	0%	0%	48%	0%	52%	0%	100%	61
Total	Pre-2012	28%	26%	23%	10%	6%	6%	100%	1505
	Post-2013	7%	26%	24%	24%	9%	4%	100%	655

Note: Grey cells indicate where the same cohort (Year group of students responded to the survey pre and post-Pilot).

Staff checklist data analysis

This staff checklist was intended to help identify areas where the school is supporting sexual and gender diversity, areas in which the school could improve and has improved and to seek staff members' view on the school's approach to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students, including same sex attracted and gender diverse students.

We received follow-up staff checklist data from 150 staff across 6 schools and 458 at baseline from 12 schools. All 6 schools were included in the baseline staff checklist survey and a pre-post analysis of change. Although not as large as within the student survey, there were differences in the number of staff who responded to the survey in each school (table 15). For example, at follow-up staff from one school represented six per cent of respondents, while staff from another school almost a quarter (23%) of respondents.

Table 15. Number of staff member respondents across schools, baseline and follow-up

School or origin	Number of respondents at baseline	Per cent respondents at baseline	Number of respondents at follow-up	Per cent respondents at follow-up
School 1	49	20%	36	24%
School 2	58	23%	30	20%
School 3	18	7%	27	6%
School 4	42	17%	35	23%
School 5	42	17%	12	8%
School 9	38	15%	28	19%
Total	247	100%	150	100%

Given the differences in response rates to the checklists across each school, it was possible that reported averages would be skewed towards the performance of schools with higher response rates. With this in mind, an average of averages was used, so that each school was given an equal weight in the overall analysis of the data. This method was applied at both baseline and follow-up and chi-square tests for weighted cases were conducted for each survey question to explore whether baseline – follow-up differences in responses were statistically significant. P-values smaller than 0.05 indicate the differences between scores are statistically significant.

Information about the role of the respondent within the school was only asked at baseline, and as such it was not possible to compare the characteristics of respondents at the two different time points.

Appendix 2 Further details of evaluation questions

1. What have schools implemented before and during the Pilot?
 - What strategies have schools implemented and in what circumstances and for which part of the school community?
 - What strategies have schools used to improve students' understandings, in particular how have schools addressed understanding of targeted Year groups?
 - What strategies have schools used to improve teacher and staff understanding and practice?
2. How successful have strategies implemented as part of the Pilot been?
 - How successful have schools been in clarifying teachers' and school executives' understanding about same sex attraction and gender diversity and about increasing staff capacity to manage and respond ?
 - To what extent have schools successfully taken a whole-of-school approach to addressing homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism?
 - To what extent have schools in the Pilot raised awareness of and increased understanding in the school community about issues associated with homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism and for same sex attracted and gender diverse students at high school?
3. What is it about the strategies implemented as part of the Pilot that assisted schools to achieve their goals?
 - What are the key success factors for successfully implementing strategies and what are the barriers to success? How are barriers overcome?
 - How appropriate and feasible is it for schools to implement strategies?
 - What strategies (professional development, information sessions for parents, dedicated school team, resources and student involvement) have raised awareness of the issues for groups in the school community, and under what circumstances?
 - What approaches have been the most successful in different contexts/ schools, and why?
 - What mechanisms explain why schools have achieved outcomes for the different groups?
4. How can strategies implemented as part of the Pilot support other schools to successfully address homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism and provide safe and supportive environments for sexual and gender diversity?
 - What is the potential for replicating successful strategies in other schools?
 - Which elements of the strategies are more likely to help, and for which school contexts?
 - What are the key elements used by Pilot schools to address homophobia and transphobia and to provide a safe and inclusive school environment? How can these be used for schools beyond the Proud Schools Pilot?

Appendix 3 Student ratings of school climate measures pre-Pilot

Schools denoted as S1 to S12. Where <4 students returned pre-checklists, that is, schools S2, S4 and S10, students' responses are not included in figures 3 to 5.

Figure 4. Students' responses to pre-student checklist by school: In the last 6 months, how often did you hear homophobic language at your school such as "That's gay"?

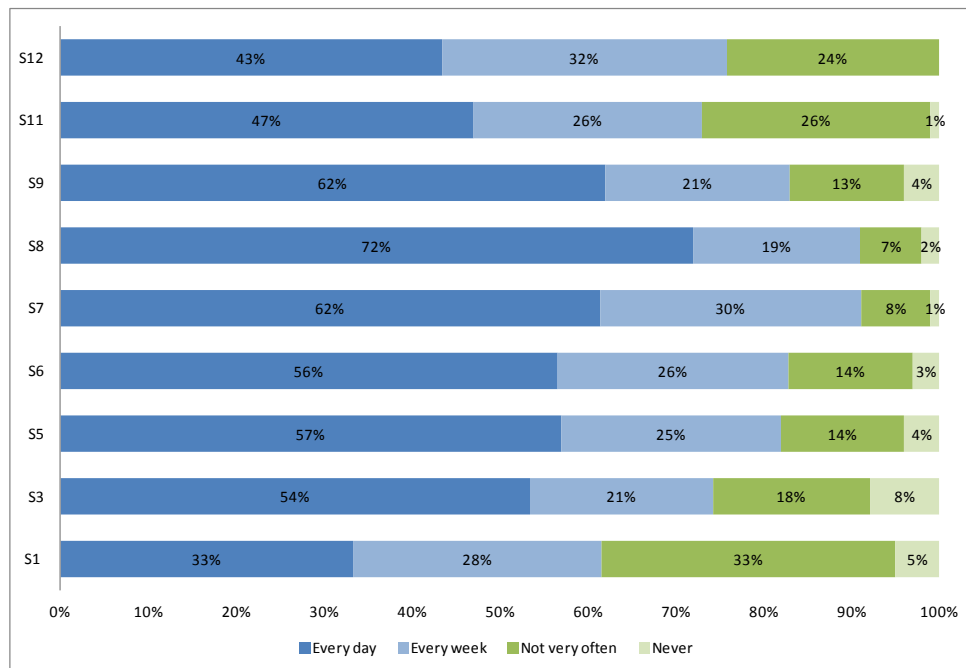


Figure 5. Students' responses to pre-student checklist by school: In the last 6 months, how often did you see verbal or physical homophobic behaviour or bullying at your school?

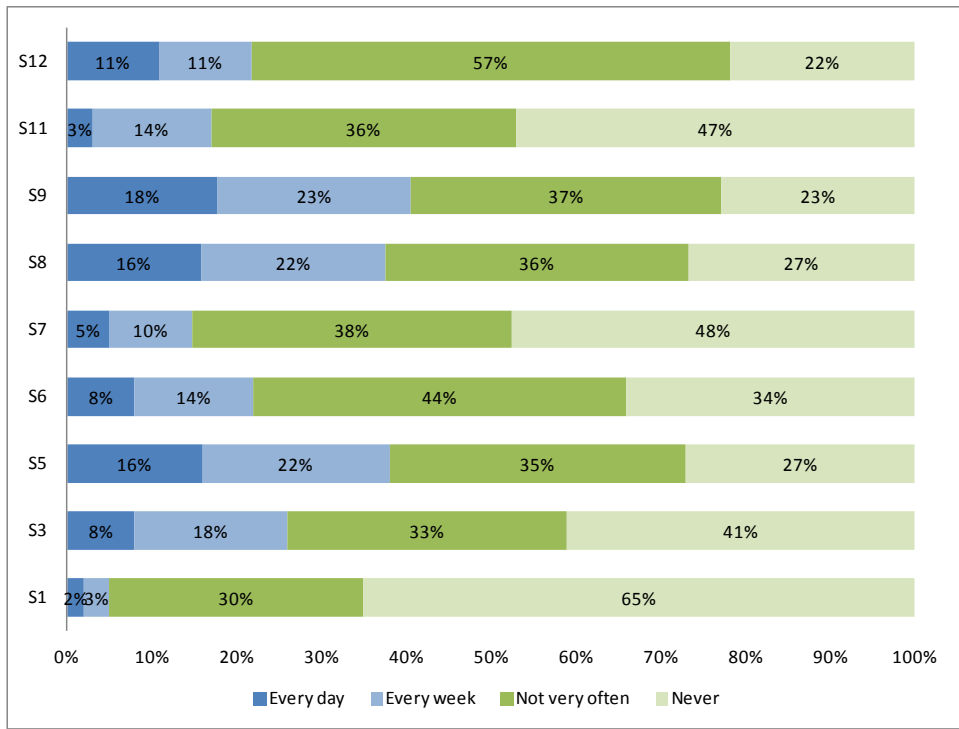
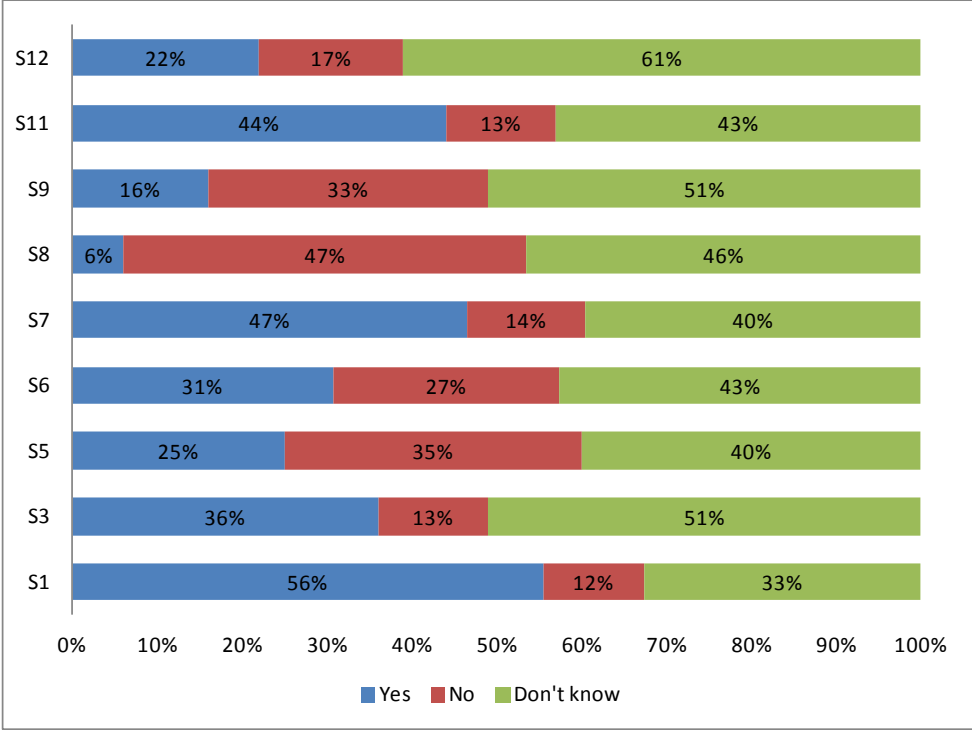


Figure 6. Students' responses to pre-student checklist by school: Do you think same sex attracted or gender diverse students would feel safe at your school?



Appendix 4 Staff checklist results

The results show staff checklist results where pre- and post-Pilot data are available.

Table 16. Q4.1 Views on whether there are materials depicting sexual diversity in a positive way

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	4%	3%	18%	0%	20%	3%	47%	46%	10%	49%	49	35
School 2	14%	0%	26%	0%	34%	25%	24%	54%	2%	21%	58	28
School 3	11%	0%	50%	0%	11%	22%	28%	78%	0%	0%	18	9
School 4	12%	3%	31%	18%	33%	32%	21%	44%	2%	3%	42	34
School 5	5%	0%	31%	25%	26%	25%	36%	42%	2%	8%	42	12
School 9	11%	0%	42%	7%	21%	22%	26%	56%	0%	15%	38	27
Weighted average	10%	1%	33%	8%	24%	22%	30%	53%	3%	16%		

p=.000.

Table 17. Q4.2 These materials remain in place without being damaged or defaced

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	2%	0%	2%	6%	43%	9%	43%	34%	10%	51%	49	35
School 2	10%	0%	10%	0%	50%	32%	24%	43%	5%	25%	58	28
School 3	6%	0%	11%	11%	56%	33%	28%	44%	0%	11%	18	9
School 4	12%	0%	19%	12%	48%	38%	19%	41%	2%	9%	42	34
School 5	2%	0%	14%	17%	45%	33%	31%	25%	7%	25%	42	12
School 9	11%	0%	24%	7%	45%	37%	16%	37%	5%	19%	38	27
Weighted average	7%	0%	13%	9%	48%	30%	27%	37%	5%	23%		

p=.000.

Table 18. Q4.3: There is information in newsletters for students and parents related to sexual diversity

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	14%	0%	27%	3%	27%	31%	27%	43%	6%	23%	49	35
School 2	17%	0%	26%	7%	41%	39%	16%	46%	0%	7%	58	28
School 3	22%	0%	44%	0%	28%	44%	6%	33%	0%	22%	18	9
School 4	29%	3%	26%	18%	31%	59%	14%	21%	0%	0%	42	34
School 5	10%	17%	45%	33%	38%	42%	7%	8%	0%	0%	42	12
School 9	16%	0%	42%	30%	29%	30%	13%	33%	0%	7%	38	27
Weighted average	18%	3%	35%	15%	32%	41%	14%	31%	1%	10%		

p=.000.

Table 19. Q4.4 Students are supported by staff in projects or groups that challenge homophobia and transphobia within the school

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	2%	0%	2%	3%	10%	23%	55%	40%	31%	34%	49	35
School 2	2%	0%	9%	0%	21%	18%	59%	57%	10%	25%	58	28
School 3	0%	0%	17%	0%	39%	11%	39%	56%	6%	33%	18	9
School 4	7%	3%	17%	9%	43%	44%	31%	35%	2%	9%	42	34
School 5	5%	0%	10%	33%	26%	8%	55%	42%	5%	17%	42	12
School 9	3%	0%	29%	4%	32%	37%	32%	48%	5%	11%	38	27
Weighted average	3%	1%	14%	8%	29%	24%	45%	46%	10%	22%		

p=.107.

Table 20. Q4.5 Same sex partners of staff or students are welcomed in the same way as opposite sex partners at school functions

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	0%	3%	2%	0%	20%	20%	47%	31%	31%	46%	49	35
School 2	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%	11%	41%	46%	41%	43%	58	28
School 3	0%	0%	6%	0%	17%	33%	50%	44%	28%	22%	18	9
School 4	5%	3%	10%	6%	24%	32%	48%	44%	14%	15%	42	34
School 5	7%	0%	10%	0%	24%	25%	38%	42%	21%	33%	42	12
School 9	5%	0%	5%	4%	24%	30%	53%	41%	13%	26%	38	27
Weighted average	3%	1%	6%	2%	21%	25%	46%	41%	25%	31%		

p=.370.

Table 21. Q4.6 Counselling/ student welfare areas provide confidentiality and privacy for students seeking support for same sex attracted or gender questioning issues

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	0%	3%	4%	0%	14%	17%	29%	40%	53%	40%	49	35
School 2	0%	0%	2%	0%	14%	4%	38%	46%	47%	50%	58	28
School 3	6%	0%	0%	11%	17%	22%	44%	33%	33%	33%	18	9
School 4	2%	3%	7%	3%	24%	32%	50%	38%	17%	24%	42	34
School 5	0%	0%	7%	0%	17%	33%	69%	42%	7%	25%	42	12
School 9	0%	0%	5%	4%	16%	11%	55%	37%	24%	48%	38	27
average	1%	1%	4%	3%	17%	20%	48%	39%	30%	37%		

p=.727.

Table 22. Q4.7 Counselling/ student welfare areas signify support for same sex attracted and gender questioning students

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	0%	3%	6%	0%	22%	20%	35%	37%	37%	40%	49	35
School 2	2%	0%	3%	0%	22%	14%	40%	43%	33%	43%	58	28
School 3	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	22%	28%	67%	22%	11%	18	9
School 4	7%	3%	7%	0%	43%	44%	33%	38%	10%	15%	42	34
School 5	0%	0%	12%	8%	29%	25%	55%	42%	5%	25%	42	12
School 9	0%	0%	5%	4%	26%	11%	58%	48%	11%	37%	38	27
Weighted average	2%	1%	6%	2%	32%	23%	42%	46%	20%	29%		

p=.228.

Table 23. Q4.8 There are designated staff members to whom same sex attracted or gender questioning students can talk to or go to with any concerns they have about homophobia or transphobia

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	4%	3%	10%	0%	43%	34%	29%	37%	14%	26%	49	35
School 2	7%	0%	5%	0%	36%	4%	36%	50%	16%	46%	58	28
School 3	0%	0%	22%	0%	50%	22%	22%	78%	6%	0%	18	9
School 4	14%	0%	19%	6%	38%	56%	26%	26%	2%	12%	42	34
School 5	7%	8%	19%	0%	45%	50%	21%	25%	7%	17%	42	12
School 9	0%	0%	18%	7%	66%	33%	16%	26%	0%	33%	38	27
Weighted average	5%	2%	16%	2%	46%	33%	25%	40%	8%	22%		

p=.000.

Table 24. Q5 The professional learning I have undertaken has been helpful in meeting my learning needs regarding sexual diversity and challenging homophobia

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	6%	0%	31%	6%	10%	21%	49%	47%	4%	26%	49	34
School 2	9%	0%	38%	25%	19%	14%	26%	50%	9%	11%	58	28
School 3	6%	0%	28%	0%	22%	11%	44%	89%	0%	0%	18	9
School 4	14%	6%	36%	19%	10%	22%	36%	44%	5%	9%	42	32
School 5	10%	0%	33%	8%	14%	17%	36%	42%	7%	33%	42	12
School 9	5%	0%	45%	13%	11%	9%	39%	48%	0%	30%	38	23
Weighted average	8%	1%	35%	12%	14%	16%	38%	53%	4%	18%		

p=.000.

Table 25. Q6.1 There are school policies and procedures that support the inclusion of same sex attracted and gender questioning young people and make clear that homophobic and transphobic behaviours and language are unacceptable

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	0%	0%	0%	0%	18%	6%	61%	53%	20%	41%	49	34
School 2	2%	4%	7%	0%	34%	7%	41%	68%	16%	21%	58	28
School 3	0%	11%	6%	0%	33%	22%	56%	56%	6%	11%	18	9
School 4	2%	0%	10%	3%	33%	31%	50%	59%	5%	6%	42	32
School 5	2%	0%	7%	17%	29%	17%	55%	50%	7%	17%	42	12
School 9	3%	0%	3%	9%	29%	9%	58%	65%	8%	17%	38	23
Weighted average	2%	3%	6%	5%	29%	15%	54%	59%	10%	19%		

p=.101.

Table 26. Q6.2 These policies have been clearly communicated to the entire school community, including staff, parents, students and parent groups such as the school P&C

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	4%	0%	14%	0%	37%	15%	37%	56%	8%	29%	49	34
School 2	5%	0%	24%	4%	41%	32%	24%	46%	5%	18%	58	28
School 3	0%	0%	50%	22%	17%	33%	33%	33%	0%	11%	18	9
School 4	10%	6%	19%	25%	38%	34%	29%	28%	5%	6%	42	32
School 5	7%	8%	21%	17%	40%	17%	29%	42%	2%	17%	42	12
School 9	0%	0%	32%	9%	32%	30%	29%	43%	8%	17%	38	23
Weighted average	4%	2%	27%	13%	34%	27%	30%	41%	5%	16%		

p=.008.

Table 27. Q6.3 Incidents of verbal or physical homophobia or transphobia occur often at this school

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	33%	26%	47%	53%	14%	21%	2%	0%	4%	0%	49	34
School 2	16%	25%	53%	43%	24%	21%	7%	7%	0%	4%	58	28
School 3	17%	0%	50%	56%	6%	33%	22%	11%	6%	0%	18	9
School 4	10%	19%	38%	50%	14%	19%	33%	6%	5%	6%	42	32
School 5	0%	8%	40%	50%	31%	17%	14%	25%	14%	0%	42	12
School 9	5%	0%	32%	17%	24%	43%	34%	35%	5%	4%	38	23
Weighted average	14%	13%	43%	45%	19%	26%	19%	14%	6%	2%		

p=.416.

Table 28. Q6.4 I feel confident to challenge homophobic and transphobic behaviour or language

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	2%	0%	4%	3%	2%	6%	53%	38%	39%	53%	49	34
School 2	3%	4%	5%	0%	9%	4%	48%	57%	34%	36%	58	28
School 3	0%	0%	6%	0%	0%	22%	67%	22%	28%	56%	18	9
School 4	0%	0%	10%	6%	7%	9%	60%	59%	24%	25%	42	32
School 5	0%	8%	12%	0%	10%	0%	52%	58%	26%	33%	42	12
School 9	0%	0%	0%	4%	13%	4%	55%	57%	32%	35%	38	23
Weighted average	1%	2%	6%	2%	7%	8%	56%	49%	31%	40%		

p=.405.

Table 29. Q7.1 The school has links with organisations that can provide information, services and support to the school, parents and students about sexual and gender diversity

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	2%	0%	2%	0%	37%	18%	53%	32%	6%	50%	49	34
School 2	0%	0%	2%	0%	29%	11%	55%	64%	14%	25%	58	28
School 3	0%	0%	11%	0%	33%	11%	56%	78%	0%	11%	18	9
School 4	7%	0%	5%	0%	55%	59%	33%	31%	0%	9%	42	32
School 5	0%	8%	5%	8%	67%	50%	21%	25%	7%	8%	42	12
School 9	0%	0%	5%	9%	61%	13%	32%	70%	3%	9%	38	23
Weighted average	2%	1%	5%	3%	47%	27%	42%	50%	5%	19%		

p=.003.

Table 30. Q7.2 The school consults with and refers students to these organisations

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	0%	0%	4%	0%	55%	44%	33%	35%	8%	21%	49	100%
School 2	0%	0%	2%	0%	34%	14%	53%	64%	10%	21%	58	100%
School 3	0%	0%	0%	0%	67%	44%	33%	44%	0%	11%	18	100%
School 4	7%	0%	5%	0%	64%	66%	24%	31%	0%	3%	42	100%
School 5	0%	0%	7%	8%	74%	58%	19%	25%	0%	8%	42	100%
School 9	0%	0%	3%	0%	71%	70%	24%	26%	3%	4%	38	100%
Weighted average	1%	0%	4%	1%	61%	49%	31%	38%	4%	11%		

p=.089.

Table 31. Q7.3 Students can borrow books/ magazines from the library that include same sex attracted characters or discuss sexual diversity

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	0%	0%	0%	0%	76%	38%	20%	26%	4%	35%	49	34
School 2	2%	0%	3%	0%	64%	54%	22%	29%	9%	18%	58	28
School 3	0%	0%	11%	0%	72%	44%	17%	33%	0%	22%	18	9
School 4	2%	0%	2%	3%	71%	75%	21%	19%	2%	3%	42	32
School 5	7%	8%	5%	17%	79%	50%	5%	25%	5%	0%	42	12
School 9	0%	0%	3%	4%	74%	52%	21%	30%	3%	13%	38	23
Weighted average	2%	1%	4%	4%	73%	52%	18%	27%	4%	15%		

p=.017.

Table 32. Q7.4 Students can access websites at school that include same sex attracted characters or discuss sexual diversity

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	0%	0%	6%	6%	65%	53%	27%	21%	2%	21%	49	34
School 2	3%	0%	7%	0%	62%	57%	22%	29%	5%	14%	58	28
School 3	0%	0%	22%	11%	61%	67%	17%	11%	0%	11%	18	9
School 4	0%	0%	5%	6%	62%	72%	31%	22%	2%	0%	42	32
School 5	12%	8%	5%	17%	71%	42%	7%	33%	5%	0%	42	12
School 9	0%	0%	13%	9%	71%	65%	16%	17%	0%	9%	38	23
Weighted average	3%	1%	10%	8%	65%	59%	20%	22%	2%	9%		

p=.195.

Table 33. Q8.1 Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people are portrayed respectfully in your subject area

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	0%	0%	2%	3%	12%	18%	55%	35%	31%	44%	49	34
School 2	0%	4%	3%	0%	14%	11%	45%	50%	38%	36%	58	28
School 3	0%	0%	0%	11%	17%	11%	61%	56%	22%	22%	18	9
School 4	2%	0%	5%	3%	10%	34%	55%	56%	29%	6%	42	32
School 5	0%	0%	12%	0%	19%	8%	52%	42%	17%	50%	42	12
School 9	3%	0%	8%	4%	26%	22%	50%	65%	13%	9%	38	23
Weighted average	1%	1%	5%	4%	16%	17%	53%	51%	25%	28%		

p=.987.

Table 34. Q8.2 Lessons on sex and sexuality address the needs of same sex attracted and gender questioning young people

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	2%	0%	2%	0%	51%	47%	37%	38%	8%	15%	49	34
School 2	0%	0%	10%	4%	47%	46%	34%	32%	9%	18%	58	28
School 3	0%	0%	6%	0%	50%	22%	22%	67%	22%	11%	18	9
School 4	2%	0%	7%	0%	45%	59%	43%	34%	2%	6%	42	32
School 5	2%	0%	7%	8%	48%	42%	36%	17%	7%	33%	42	12
School 9	3%	0%	8%	4%	66%	70%	21%	26%	3%	0%	38	23
Weighted average	2%	0%	7%	3%	51%	48%	32%	36%	9%	14%		

p=.286.

Table 35. Q8.3 Staff who are required to teach lessons on sex and sexuality are provided with training on how to respond to students' comments and concerns about gender and sexual diversity

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	2%	0%	4%	0%	63%	50%	27%	38%	4%	12%	49	34
School 2	3%	0%	14%	4%	55%	50%	26%	32%	2%	14%	58	28
School 3	0%	0%	6%	0%	56%	22%	39%	67%	0%	11%	18	9
School 4	5%	0%	7%	6%	55%	69%	33%	19%	0%	6%	42	32
School 5	2%	8%	5%	0%	55%	42%	36%	25%	2%	25%	42	12
School 9	0%	0%	5%	4%	74%	48%	21%	43%	0%	4%	38	23
Weighted average	2%	1%	7%	2%	60%	47%	30%	37%	1%	12%		

p=.005.

Table 36. Q9.1 School planning is inclusive of sexual and gender diversity

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	0%	0%	4%	0%	33%	15%	53%	64%	10%	21%	49	33
School 2	0%	0%	12%	4%	24%	18%	57%	54%	7%	25%	58	28
School 3	0%	0%	17%	0%	44%	11%	33%	89%	6%	0%	18	9
School 4	5%	0%	19%	12%	29%	50%	48%	34%	0%	3%	42	32
School 5	10%	8%	10%	17%	40%	17%	38%	42%	2%	17%	42	12
School 9	0%	0%	8%	9%	37%	26%	53%	52%	3%	13%	38	23
Weighted average	3%	1%	12%	7%	35%	23%	47%	56%	5%	13%		

p=.058.

Table 37. Q9.2 Same sex attracted students, staff and parents are included in the school context within the school plan

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	0%	0%	4%	12%	43%	24%	43%	48%	10%	15%	49	33
School 2	0%	0%	10%	4%	45%	18%	41%	54%	3%	25%	58	28
School 3	0%	0%	11%	11%	44%	33%	44%	44%	0%	11%	18	9
School 4	2%	0%	12%	9%	48%	66%	38%	22%	0%	3%	42	32
School 5	12%	25%	17%	17%	55%	17%	14%	33%	2%	8%	42	12
School 9	3%	4%	13%	13%	47%	48%	37%	35%	0%	0%	38	23
Weighted average	3%	5%	11%	11%	47%	34%	36%	39%	3%	10%		

p=.167.

Table 38. Q9.3 The school plan provides outcomes, targets and strategies for the support of sexual and gender diversity

School	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Don't know		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
School 1	0%	0%	6%	9%	57%	36%	33%	39%	4%	15%	49	33
School 2	2%	0%	19%	4%	48%	36%	29%	46%	2%	14%	58	28
School 3	0%	0%	17%	0%	67%	33%	17%	56%	0%	11%	18	9
School 4	5%	0%	12%	6%	55%	53%	29%	38%	0%	3%	42	32
School 5	12%	17%	21%	25%	50%	33%	17%	17%	0%	8%	42	12
School 9	0%	0%	26%	17%	50%	39%	24%	43%	0%	0%	38	23
Weighted average	3%	3%	17%	10%	55%	38%	25%	40%	1%	9%		

p=.005. □—o