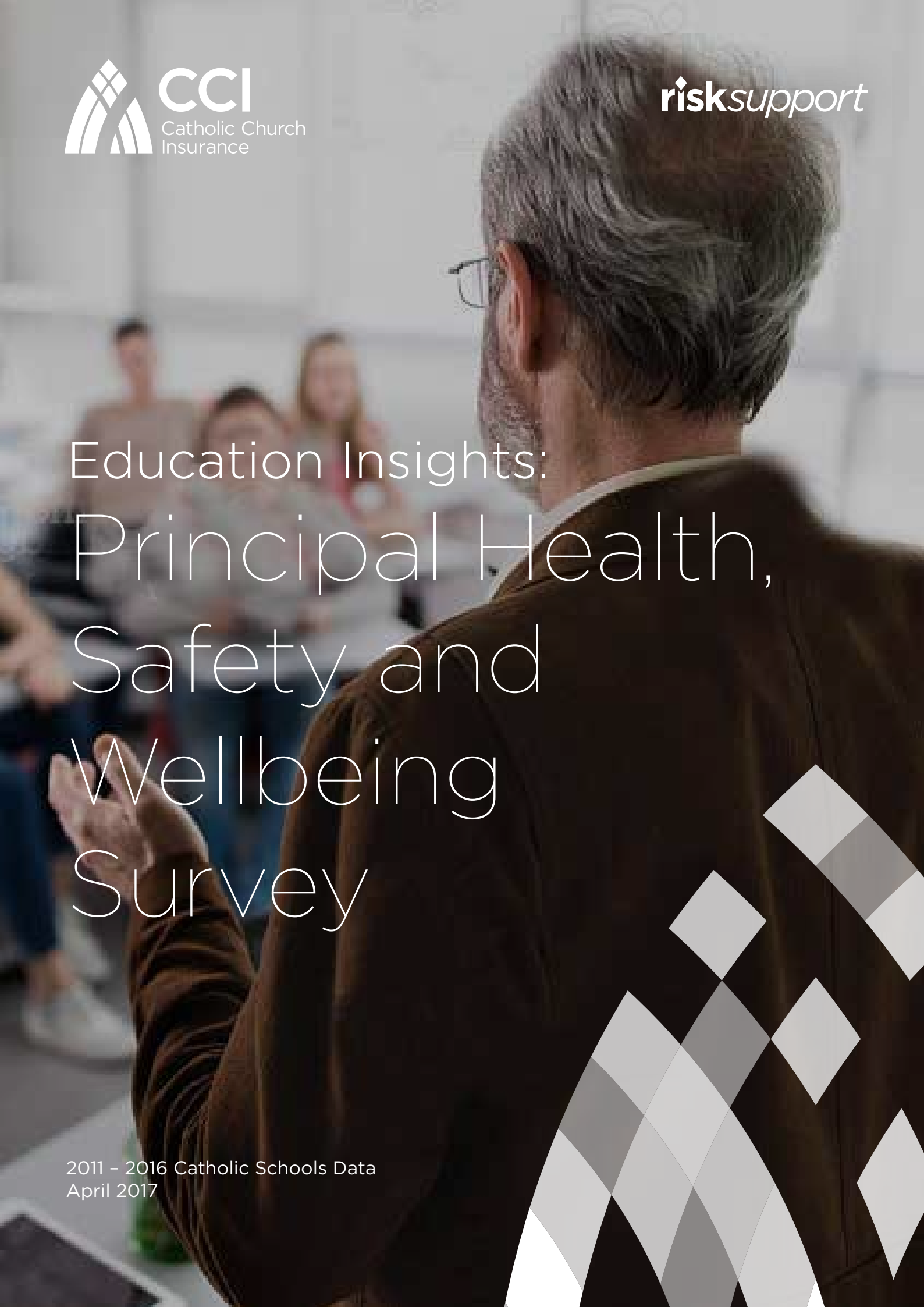




Education Insights: Principal Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey

2011 – 2016 Catholic Schools Data
April 2017

«The purpose of this report is to show the responses of Catholic school leaders to the 5 year study, allowing CCI and others with a long term commitment to the Catholic education sector, its people and its communities, to assess and respond to their needs and concerns.»



Overview

Commissioning a Catholic School Leaders Health, Safety & Wellbeing Report

School leaders' roles have changed from practicing teachers with added responsibilities, to full time professional managers of human, financial and other resources. This has meant that more and more tasks have been added to the job description. In this environment, the responsibilities and range of knowledge and skills that effective school leaders need today is daunting.

In response to concerns that the increasing complexity and workload demands of school leadership roles are impacting on the health and wellbeing of Australian school leaders, Associate Professor Philip Riley, from Australian Catholic University, a registered psychologist with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, began a longitudinal study to investigate and monitor principals' occupational health, safety and wellbeing.

The survey has run nationally every year since 2011 and is designed to collect data and monitor the wellbeing of school principals, deputies and assistant principals, and contribute to initiatives designed to minimise adverse health impacts.

With this in mind, and considering that almost all Catholic schools and colleges are insured by CCI, we have partnered with ACU to financially support this study and ensure it continues into the future.

We have also commissioned Professor Riley to develop this special report showing the responses of Catholic school leaders. The data within this report reflects Catholic principals, deputies and assistants who participated in the Australian Principal Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey between 2011 and 2016.

The purpose of this report is to show the responses of Catholic school leaders to the 5 year study, allowing CCI and others with a long term commitment to the Catholic education sector, its people and its communities, to assess and respond to their needs and concerns.



Mark Wilson
Head of Risk Management, CCI

The Business Case for Creating a Mentally Healthy Workplace

In 2016 Price Waterhouse Coopers conducted a Return on Investment analysis for addressing mental health in the workplace. They found that mental health conditions present substantial costs to organisations, estimated at \$10.6 billion annually.

However, they also found that with the successful implementation of an effective program to create a mentally healthy workplace, organisations can, on average, expect a positive return on investment (ROI) of 2.3. That is, for every dollar spent on successfully implementing an appropriate action, there is on average \$2.30 in benefits to be gained by the organisation. So addressing the problem in schools is also a good investment for the future of the nation.

<http://www.headsup.org.au/creating-a-mentally-healthyworkplace/the-business-case>

Researcher's Summary

Overview

The participants have very demanding jobs. They spend very long hours at work, both during term time and during holiday periods. The number of hours worked appears to have no relation to salary. They appear dedicated to the task of running schools as effectively as possible for its own intrinsic reward. The details of the personal costs of their work, their occupational health, safety and wellbeing are a complex mix of personal and environmental factors: from those who appear to thrive in the job to those who are perhaps just surviving.

Researcher and acknowledgements



Chief Investigator:
Associate Professor Philip Riley
Projects on this scale do not happen without a number of dedicated people's support. I am indebted to Catholic Church Insurance who became a research partner in 2016 and fully funded the production of this special report for the Catholic sector.

Philip Riley, PhD, MAPS
Australian Catholic University

4 Key Findings

1. Hours of work

- Participants spend very long hours at work — a trend that is increasing with detrimental effects.
- Avg. weekly working hours ranges between 51-60 during term and 25-30 during holidays.
- In 2011, 51.2% worked more than 56 hours/week and 26.5% worked upwards of 61 hours/week. In 2016, 51.6% worked more than 56 hours/week and 26.7% worked upwards of 61 hours/week.
- Work-Family conflict occurs at approx. double the rate of the population.
- Participants work too many hours and it's taking a toll on the greatest support group, their family.

2. Work demands vs resources

- Participants report very high demands out of balance with available resources.
- Emotional demands and emotional labour expected of principals and deputies/assistants is 1.7-times the population.
- This level of demand is dangerous to the long-term health of participants who consistently find that the resources available to them are not concomitant with the demands.

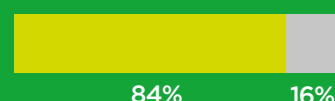
3. Offensive behaviour

- Participants experience a far higher prevalence of this at work than the general population.

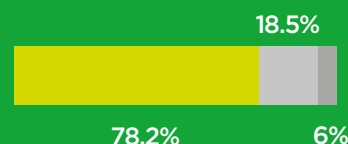
4. Stress and emotional demands

- Principals experience high levels of emotional demands compared to the general population.
- This results in higher levels of burnout and stress (e.g. difficulty sleeping, somatic symptoms.)
- Top source of stress is sheer quantity of work, followed by lack of time for teaching and learning.
- Only 80% of respondents rate their own happiness as very important or higher.

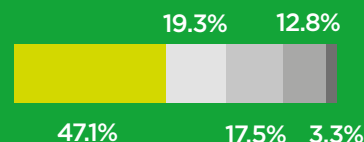
The participants



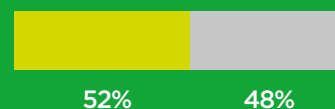
There were 740 participants: 618 (84%) were principals and 122 (16%) were deputies or assistants.



78.2% primary school, 18.5% secondary, 6% combined.



17.5% in urban locations, 47.1% suburban, 12.8% large towns, 19.3% rural and 3.3% remote areas.



52% female, 48% male. The cohort mean has aged -1 year each year of the survey with an average age of 55 in 2016.

3.5 – 5.6 yrs

Most participants had been in their current role for 3.5 – 5.6 years and leadership roles for approximately 14 – 18 years, followed by approx. 10 – 11 more years in teaching.

<\$50K->\$160K

Annual salary range <\$50,000 - >\$160,000 with women disproportionately in lower paid roles.

Researcher's Recommendations

4 Key Recommendations

1. Professional support

Professional support is a strong predictor of coping with the stresses of the role. Analysis of the survey data clearly points to the benefits of professional support for all principals and deputy/assistant principals. Those identified as coping least well with their daily tasks had the lowest levels of professional support from colleagues and superiors, while those who coped the best reported the highest levels of professional support. Those who receive the least also had the greatest challenges to maintaining their mental health.

2. Professional learning

Provision of ongoing professional learning is likely to assist all principals and deputy/assistant principals in two ways. First, by skill improvement and secondly, through the benefits of increased perceptions of support. Provision of education on the emotional aspects of teaching, learning, organizational function, emotional labour, dealing with difficulties and conflicts in the workplace, employee assistance programs, debriefing self and others would be a great benefit. Targeted professional learning is also likely to make principals and deputy/assistant principals feel better supported than they currently report.

3. Balance job demands vs. resources

Stress and psychological risk at work can be conceptualised through the balance of job demands (e.g., workload, time pressures, physical environment, emotional labour) and job resources (e.g., feedback, rewards, control, job security, support). High job demands lead to exhaustion while low job resources lead to disengagement, both symptoms of job burnout. However, high job resources buffer job demands, reducing their negative impact on individuals. Principals and deputies/assistants report very high demands, out of balance with available resources to buffer the demands. When job demands are this high, they need to be balanced with significant resources to buffer the demands.

4. Address bullying and violence

The survey reveals three types of offensive behaviour identified as consistently occurring in schools:

1. Adult-adult bullying
2. Threats of violence
3. Actual violence

The consequences of offensive behaviour in schools are likely to become costly for employers, through time lost to ill health, OH&S claims against employers' responsibility for not providing a safe working environment and reduced functioning while at work. The cost to mental health is also high.

Findings and Themes



Findings and Themes

Hours of Work

Hours of Work During Term

More than a third of Catholic principals are working between 50 and 60 hours per week during term. This group rose sharply in 2015, and despite a small decrease in 2016, still remains the largest combined group of respondents.

Between 2011 and 2016, the number of Catholic principals working between 61 and 65 hours per week has consistently increased. More than 10% of principals have indicated they now work between 61 and 65 hours per week.

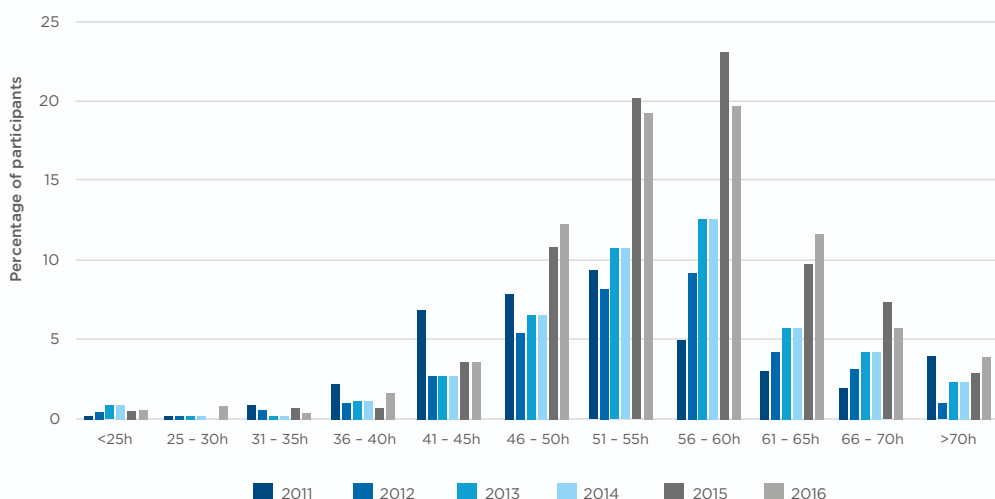
The number of principals who have indicated they are working between 46 - 50 hours per week has also increased steadily, after an initial drop from the 2011 survey. More than 10% of principals have been working these hours over the last 2 years.

Whilst the average Australian work week has shrunk in the past decade for every state and territory, coinciding with a shift toward measuring employee output rather than time on the job, the average hours a principal spends at work during term has increased.

In 2016, the average Australian full-time worker spent 40.6 hours a week at work, compared to less than 5% of principals who reported working between 41 and 45 hours at work during term.

« Whilst the average Australian work week has shrunk in the past decade, the average hours a principal spends at work during term has increased. »

Chart 1: Hours of Work During Term



Findings and Themes

Hours of Work

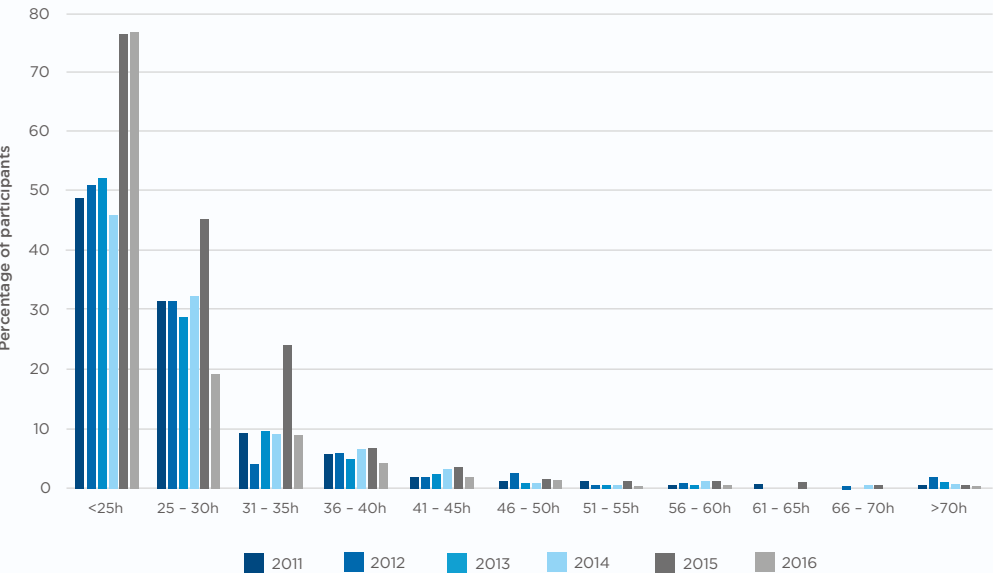
Hours of Work During Holidays

The data shows that Catholic school leaders are also continuing to spend considerable time at work during the holidays. Although pleasingly participants are reducing their working hours during holiday periods as a trend, which perhaps indicates a more appropriate balance between work and life.

For example there was a noticeable drop in the number of principals who indicated they are working between 25 – 35 hours per week during holidays in 2016.

« Although principals spend considerable time at work during the holidays, this is reducing. »

Chart 2: Hours of Work During Holidays



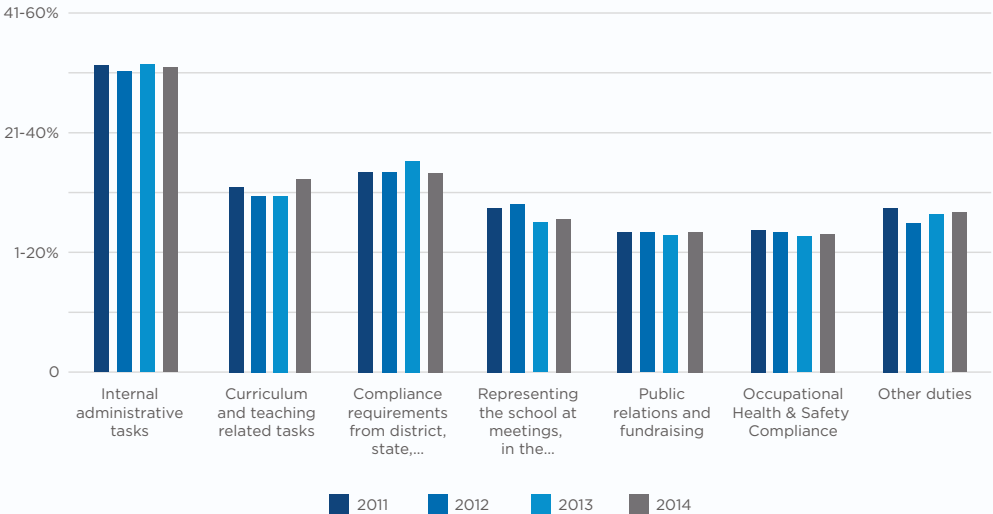
Time Usage Whilst at Work

Participants' time is heavily skewed towards the management of internal administrative tasks, which they spend more time on than curriculum and teaching related tasks.

Interesting to note is that they have also consistently spent around double the time on managing compliance tasks compared to curriculum and teaching tasks.

Note: This question was removed from the survey in 2015 to reduce the length of the survey, given the answers for all principals were so similar for the first 4 years.

Chart 3: Time Usage Whilst at Work



Findings and Themes

Level of Autonomy and Confidence in Carrying Out Role

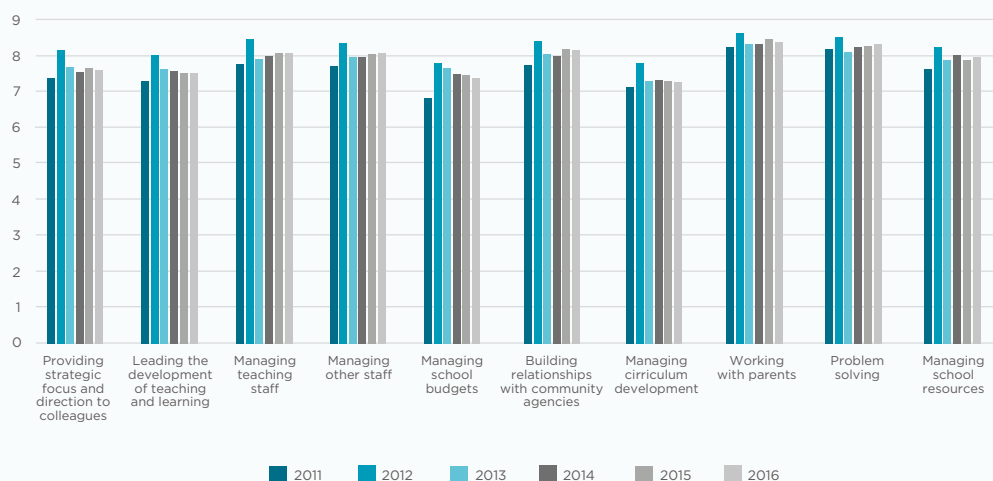
Level of Autonomy

Overall, Catholic school leaders report high levels of autonomy in their role across all measures. While all scores fluctuate slightly across the years, overall there is very little change over the 5-year period in the data.

The 2012 survey data continues to stand out as an irregularity compared to the other 5 years, which have been very stable in comparison. 2016 sees a mix of slight increases and decreases across all measures.

“Catholic school leaders consistently report high levels of autonomy in their role.”

Chart 4: Level of Autonomy



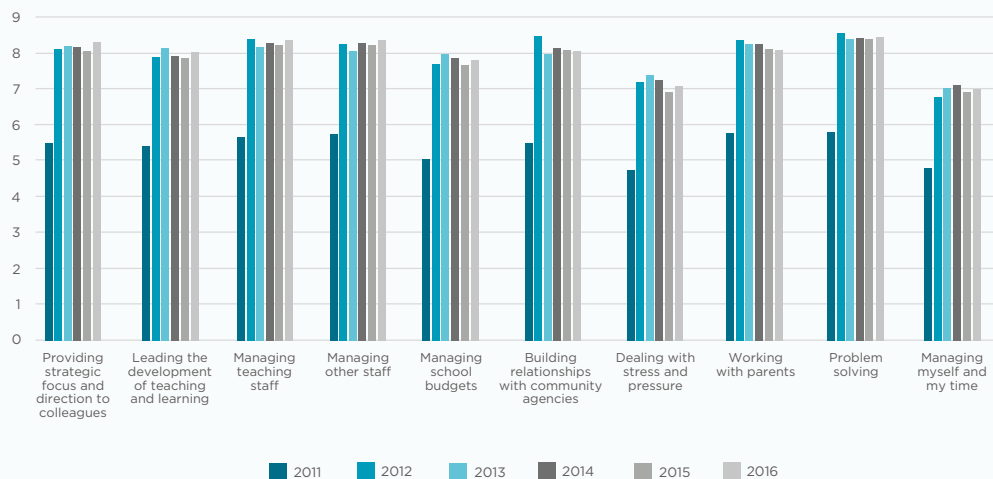
Levels of Confidence

Participants' level of confidence in carrying out their role is directly correlated to their level of perceived autonomy. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that Catholic school leaders also report consistently high levels of confidence in their roles, despite 2011 clearly not following this trend.

It is also pleasing to see that almost all measures of confidence in their roles increased in 2016.

“Catholic school leaders also report high levels of confidence in their roles, and almost all measures increased in 2016.”

Chart 5: Levels of Confidence



Findings and Themes

Sources of Stress

Sources of Stress

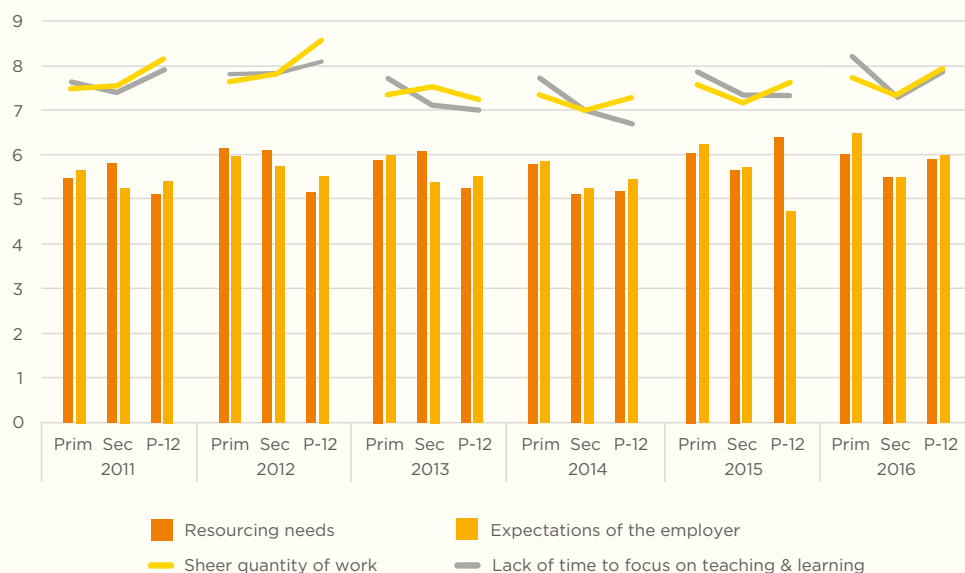
Sheer quantity of work is the number one source of stress, closely followed by lack of time to focus on teaching and learning.

All four sources of stress have remained stable over the study for all types of Catholic schools. While all scores fluctuate slightly across the years, overall there is very little change over the 6-year period in the data.

Interesting to note is that Catholic principals report similar levels of these sources of stress as the overall Australian principals study group, with the exception of 'expectations of the employer', which they report noticeably lower.

« Catholic school leaders report 'expectations of the employer' lower as a source of stress. »

Chart 6: Sources of Stress



Sources of Stress

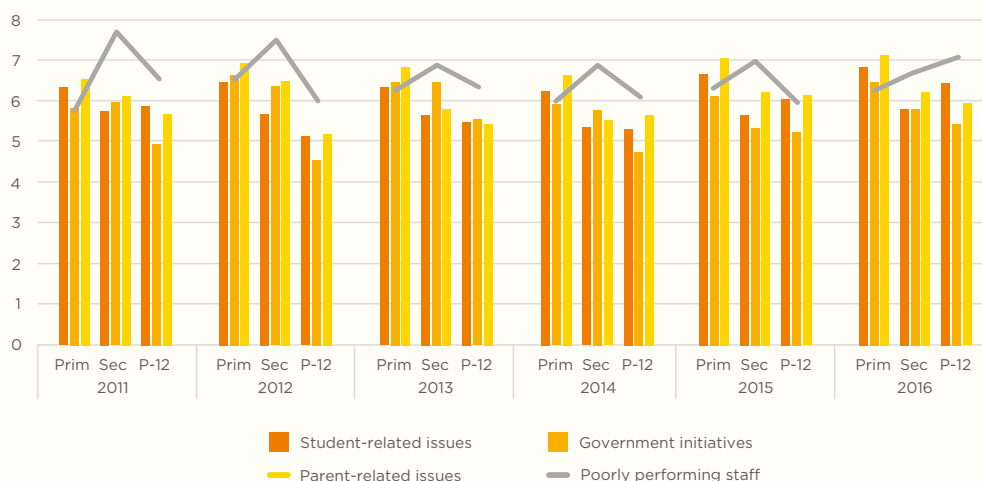
Again, all four sources of stress have remained stable over the study for all types of Catholic schools. While all scores fluctuate slightly across the years, overall there is very little change over the 6-year period in the data.

All four measures are also reported consistently by Catholic school leaders compared to the overall Australian principals study group.

Interesting to note is that 'parent related issues' is consistently rated as the highest source of stress for Catholic primary schools across the 6 years compared to the other 3 measures, and 'Government initiatives' is consistently rated lowest by P-12 Catholic schools over the same period.

Secondary Catholic schools also consistently report the highest levels of 'poorly performing staff' as a source of stress, with the exception of the 2016 results.

Chart 7: Sources of Stress



« As a source of stress, 'Government initiatives' is consistently rated lowest by P-12 schools, whilst 'parent related issues' is consistently rated highest by primary schools. »

Findings and Themes

Sources of Stress

Sources of Stress

Stress from mental health issues of both staff and students has risen considerably across the board, a trend also reflected in the overall Australian principals study group.

Catholic secondary principals rated stress from mental health issues of staff significantly lower than the overall Australian principals study group however, whilst Catholic primary principals rated it higher.

Mental health issues of students is consistently rated highest by secondary principals compared to other schools, with the exception of the 2016 data. Stress from financial management issues is consistently rated higher by both primary and P-12 schools compared to secondary schools.

« Catholic secondary principals rated stress from mental health issues of staff significantly lower than the overall Australian principals study group. »

Sources of Stress

While there is some volatility across the years, overall there is very little change over the 6-year period in the data. Stress from declining enrolments has consistently risen gradually over the lifetime of the study.

Interesting to note is that stress from union/industrial disputes, complaints management and interpersonal conflicts is rated significantly higher by Catholic school leaders as compared to the overall Australian principals study group.

« Stress from union/industrial disputes, complaints management and interpersonal conflicts is rated significantly higher by Catholic school leaders. »

Chart 8: Sources of Stress

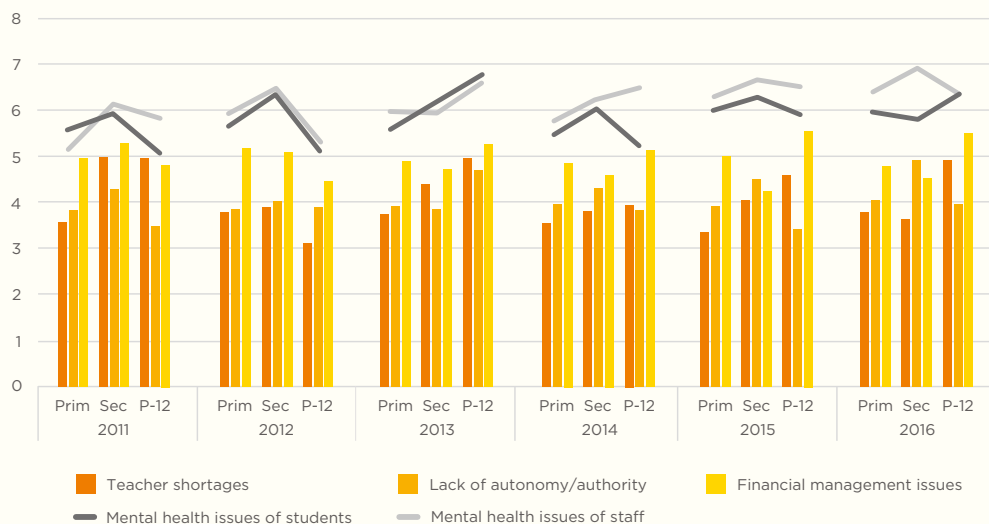
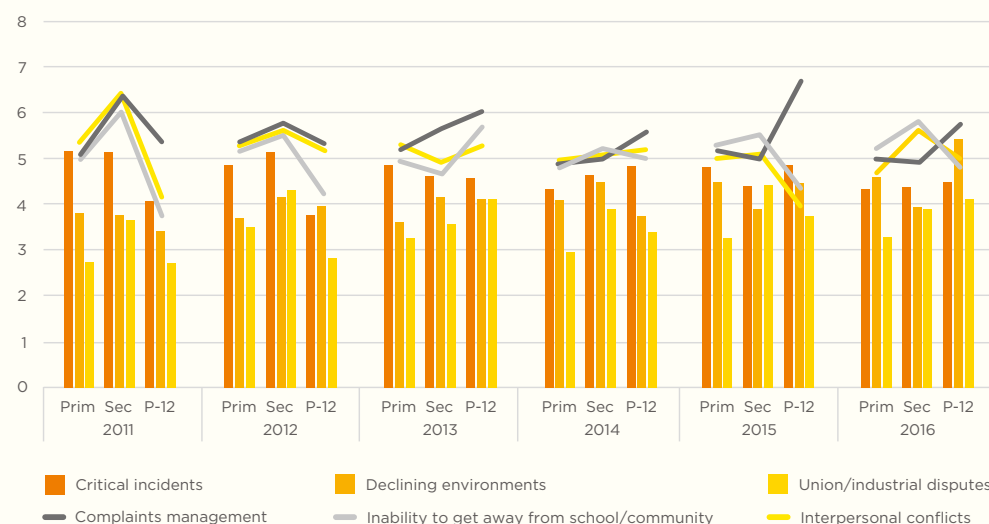


Chart 9: Sources of Stress



Sources of Support

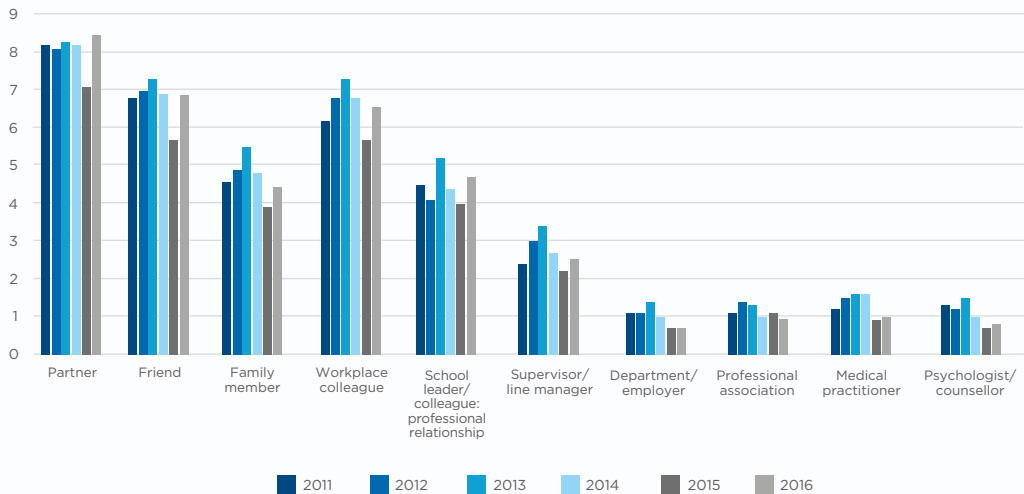
Participants reported that their partner is their greatest source of support, followed by friends and colleagues.

All forms of support have been diminishing (2011-2015) but bounced back in 2016. This is against the national trend where support continued to diminish for other school sectors.

Interesting to note is that Catholic school leaders have indicated they receive slightly higher support from friends, school leaders and colleagues as a friend, and their department/employer, than the overall Australian principals study group, but lower support from professional associations, colleagues and medical practitioners.

« Almost all sources of support increased for Catholic school leaders in 2016, against the trend of other school sectors. »

Chart 11: Sources of Support



Findings and Themes

Demands at Work and Individual Interface

Demands at Work

Principals report higher demands at work than the general population across all measures.

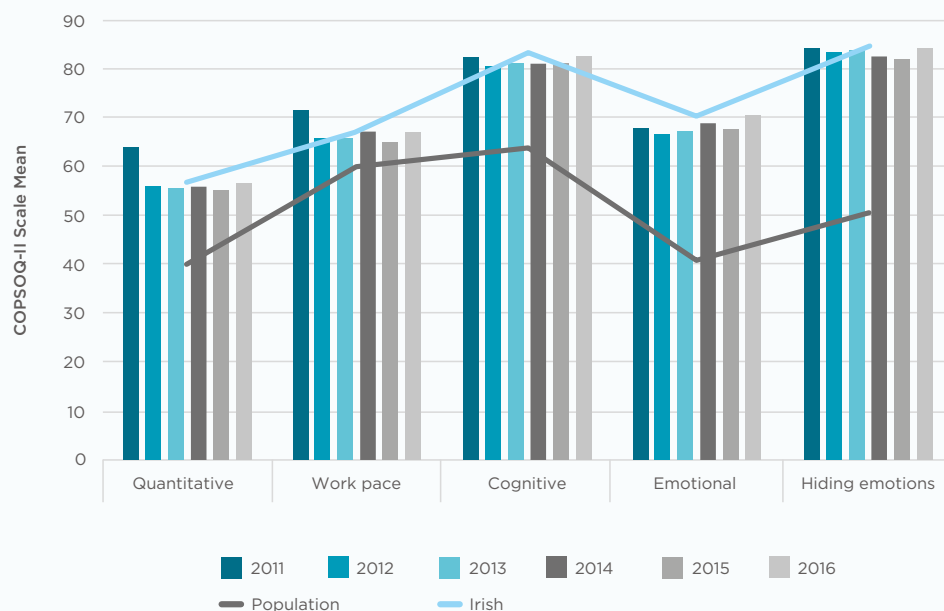
Overall, there has been very little change over the 6 year study in demands at work, despite a significant number of principals entering and exiting the survey, suggesting it is the role rather than the individuals that creates the demands.

The Australian Catholic Principals data is also consistent with the Irish study, which supports this conclusion.

Interesting to note is that all measures have trended up slightly in 2016, and the levels of demands at work reported by Catholic school leaders are consistent with the overall Australian principals study group.

« *It seems to be the role, rather than the individual, that creates the demands at work for principals.* »

Chart 12: Demands at Work



Work-Individual Interface

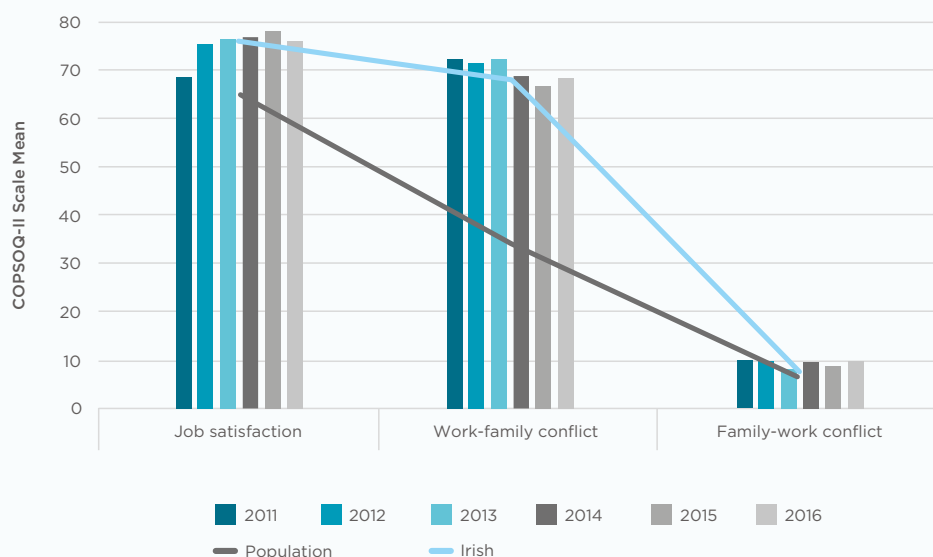
Work's impact on family is consistently rated significantly higher than family's impact on work over all six years of the survey.

In fact, work-family conflict occurs for the participants in this study at almost double the rate of the general population. Despite the fact the overall trend for this reported conflict has been a gradual decrease between 2011 – 2015, it has risen in 2016, increasing for the first time since 2013.

Interestingly this pattern is reversed for reported levels of job satisfaction, which has trended up between 2011 – 2015, but dropped in 2016 for the first time in the study.

Despite these changes in trends in 2016, survey responses for all three measures of work-individual interface have on the whole remained very consistent across all years of the study. They are also very consistent with the Irish Principal's Wellness Survey.

Chart 13: Work-Individual Interface



When it comes to job satisfaction, Catholic school principals have consistently reported higher levels of satisfaction than the full Australian principals wellness study group, since 2011.

« *Catholic school principals have reported higher job satisfaction since 2011 than the overall Australian principals study group.* »

Findings and Themes

Health and Wellbeing and Offensive Behaviour

Health and Wellbeing

Principals report higher than the general population on levels of burnout and stress, as well as depressive, somatic and cognitive stress symptoms. Unfortunately they also report much lower than the population on self-rated health, which is one of the best predictors of future health issues.

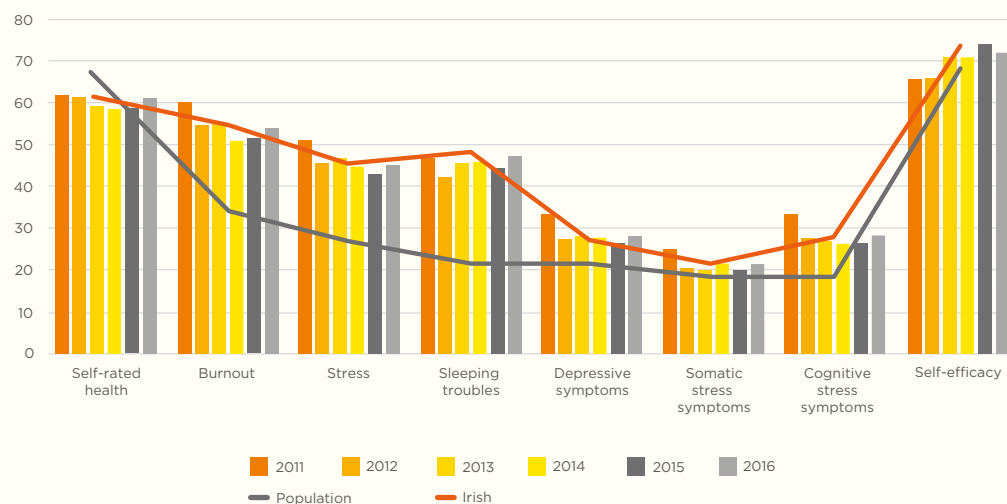
Principals of primary schools reported lower levels of self-rated health, but higher levels of burnout, stress, sleeping troubles and depressive symptoms, as well as somatic and cognitive stress symptoms than their secondary school counterparts.

Despite self-reported levels of these and other health and wellbeing issues all trending gradually down over the first 5 years of the study, each measure has risen slightly against this trend in 2016. This pattern is again reversed when it comes to self-efficacy, which has consistently trended up over 5 years, but decreased for the first time in 2016.

Despite some slight improvements in depressive and cognitive stress symptoms, self-reported measures of health and wellbeing are very consistent for both Catholic school leaders and the overall Australian principals study group across all 6 years of the study.

« Primary school principals report higher levels of burnout, stress, sleeping troubles and depressive symptoms, as well as somatic and cognitive stress symptoms. »»

Chart 14: Health and Wellbeing



Findings and Themes

Health and Wellbeing and Offensive Behaviour

Offensive Behaviour

Participants report experiences of threats of violence, actual physical violence, conflicts and quarrels as well as gossip and slander well above that of the general population.

All measure of offensive behaviour increased in 2015 across the board. Some reduced slightly in 2016.

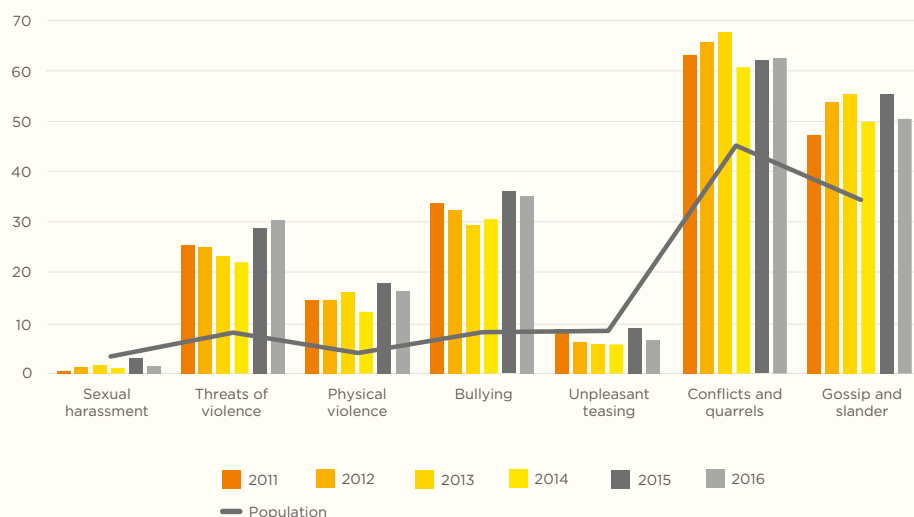
Whilst all measures of offensive behaviour increased across the board in 2015, pleasingly we can see some reductions in these measures in 2016.

In addition, Catholic school leaders report significantly lower experiences of threats of violence and physical violence than the overall Australian principals study group across all six years of the study.

In line with the data being reported under Health & Wellbeing, we are seeing Catholic primary school principals reporting higher levels of sexual harassment, threats of violence and physical violence, as well as gossip and slander, whilst all other measures are equal overall.

« Catholic school leaders report significantly lower threats of violence and physical violence. »

Chart 15: Offensive Behaviour



❖❖ School leaders' roles have changed from practicing teachers with added responsibilities, to full-time professional managers of human, financial and other resources. ❖❖

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