1.1 Diversity of schools

The diversity of school types and geographic location are factors that have an impact upon the culture of schools.

The different types of schools within the NSW public school system have their own inherent features that shape school beliefs and practices. For example, the shared beliefs about the emphasis given to public performance will be very different in a high school that specialises in the performing arts compared to a high school that specialises in something else. Types of schools include:

- single sex schools
- coeducational schools
- comprehensive high schools
- selective high schools for academically gifted students
- comprehensive schools that include selective classes for academically gifted students
- specialist high schools for technology, agriculture, languages, sport, performing arts and music
- specialist schools with programs for students with disabilities, learning difficulties and/or behaviour disorders
- central schools that cater for rural students in Years K–10
- multi-campus secondary colleges
- schools with pre-school units attached.

The geographic location of a school may also influence its culture. Schools range from one and two teacher schools in rural areas of NSW to large schools in regional and metropolitan areas. Schools reflect the beliefs and aspirations of their wider communities. The needs and interests of a small, isolated farming community from the far-west of NSW may be different from the needs and interests of those who live in a suburb of Sydney made up of people from diverse ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds.