**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

**PRESS RELEASE 516#**

# VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT PRIVATISES EDUCATION WITH TAXPAYERS MONEY THROUGH GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY

# 31 May 2013

# The Victorian Government is assisting in the planning and building of private schools in developing areas, using a VIC URBAN trading as ‘PLACES VICTORIA’ with the use of taxpayer funds.

# At the same time it is starving existing State schools of maintenance funds, closing and selling their valuable sites, and pleading ‘poor’ when developing communities demand new public schools.

# Recent examples of this overt and covert privatisation of education are occurring in Epping in the north of Melbourne as well as in the Docklands.

1. **Epping**: Concerned public school parents discover that the authority has contributed to the building of a Catholic school in the Aurora development at Epping before any public school has even acquired land. A **Places Victoria** spokeswoman said the authority had contributed $650,000 to the Catholic primary school at Aurora. She said **Places Victoria** would contribute to the development of a second school by selling a site at the estate to the Education Department, in June or July.

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/schools-cash-goes-west-as-demands-on-budget-head-north-20130429-2ioze.html#ixzz2UjKKtlRS>

# Docklands :PLACES VICTORIA ( read VIC URBAN trading as a privatisation company) is currently seeking expressions of interest to build a new índependent’ school in the Docklands.

A 2050 square metre site near the corner of Harbour Esplanade and Dudley Street has been set aside for the Docklands' first school.

Places Victoria said it is looking for a "vertical model" for the school rather than a traditional campus design.

Places Victoria chief executive Peter Seamer said Docklands was forecast to have 750 children aged 14 and under by 2016.

"To support greater population diversity and enable families with young children to comfortably live and work in Docklands, Places Victoria is seeking bid proposals for the development and operation of a privately run primary school," he said.

RMIT environment and planning professor Michael Buxton said the school would probably be part of a medium or high-rise building because of the tight space available. "It's not just an issue for the Docklands. There are now schools in inner suburbs where virtually all the playgrounds have been built over," he said.

Professor Buxton said poor planning meant that little space had been set aside for schools in the Docklands. "They're now trying to belatedly deal with this issue."

## Places Victoria has asked for proposals for a "stand-alone" school or a college that was part of a "larger development". Expressions of interest close next month. See article by Benjamin Preiss May 16, 2013. See <http://www.bordermail.com.au/story/1503099/docklands-school-plan-takes-shape/>

Meanwhile, Australian Education Union state president Meredith Peace said the government should invest in public education if the Docklands community needed a new school.

‘‘If state government’s not prepared to demonstrate its commitment to public education by doing that then it’s very disappointing,’’ she said.

 And a community group is calling for state government help after Sandringham College announced it would stop enrolling year seven students at its Beaumaris campus next year.

Sandringham principal Allen McAuliffe wrote to parents earlier this month telling them that the college could not sustain the campus in its current form.

"I realise this decision will not please many people in the community and it is not our preferred path," he wrote.

The Beaumaris School Community Group spokesman Clarke Martin said the decision "must be challenged for the good of the local community".

# **See** b.preiss@theage.com.au **and** <http://www.places.vic.gov.au/cs/Satellite?c=VPage&cid=1315983607871&pagename=VicUrban%2FLayout&site=Places>

# DOGS note that in Victoria, more perhaps than any other State in Australia, the entanglement between religion and the State has reached an obvious and completely unacceptable stage.

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