

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 536#

WHY CAN'T SCHOOLS OF WEALTHY RELIGIONS BE WEANED

OFF THE PUBLIC TREASURY TEAT?

The Rationalist Association of NSW Inc. of 58 Regent St. Chippendale NSW 2008 Australia P: +61 (0) 2 9698 2933 are once again asking why Independent schools cannot be weaned from the Public Treasury teat.

They are wealthy enough to run their own system.

Here is their Media Release on the Wealth of the Catholic Church in particular,.

MEDIA RELEASE: 12 DECEMBER 2013

FINALLY: SOME HARD INFORMATION ON CATHOLIC WEALTH IN AUSTRALIA

The vice-president of the Rationalists Assn of NSW, Dr Max Wallace, author of *The Purple Economy: supernatural charities, tax and the state*, said today the evidence reported in *The Daily Telegraph* of 12 December 2013 ('Catholic coffers crammed with cash') confirms what has always been suspected: the Catholic Church in Australia is seriously rich.

The information was revealed in evidence given to the Royal Commission into institutional abuse of children in Australia, in its hearing in Brisbane. The *Telegraph* reported that the Brisbane archdiocese alone held \$30M in cash; there are properties and a development fund with a surplus of \$22M; only \$2.5M had been paid out to victims of abuse of which \$1.7M was covered by insurance - the Brisbane archdiocese paid out only \$760,000 to victims.

In a telling comment, the Archbishop of Brisbane, Archbishop Mark Coleridge, said Brisbane was 'not even one of the 'fat cat' dioceses.'

Max Wallace said these questions follow:

* how much are the 'fat cat' and other Catholic dioceses of Australia really worth?

* why was the reporting requirement for charities, including churches, which reveals their wealth, omitted from the legislation creating the Australian Charities Commission when that requirement applies in New Zealand and Britain? Asset rich churches should pay fair tax

* why has no one questioned why the Catholic Church wants the Charities Commission abolished altogether?

"It seems clear now that the Catholic Church, in parallel with moves to conceal reports of child abuse by hush money payouts (*Daily Telegraph* 11 December 2013), has sought to conceal the true scale of its wealth. It confirms my argument Rich enough? Do church schools really need government money? that the Church could very likely fund its own schools and that the Gonski reforms were beside the point in context of church wealth.

Max Wallace said some credit for these revelations must go to former Prime Minister Julia Gillard: without her calling the present Royal Commission we would still be in the dark as to the true scale of child abuse, deception and the wealth of the churches in Australia".

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