

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

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Taking God to School The End of Australia's Egalitarian Education? Marion Maddox 27 February 2014

This is the title of a book recently published by Marion Maddox , the professor of Politics at Macquarie University. It is available at Embiggen Book Shop in Melbourne. It represents a realisation by the Sydney elite that perhaps the DOGS have been right all along. You can have a Denominational or a public system funded by the State. You cannot have both. With a State funded Denominational system you certainly cannot have separation of religion and the state.

The most startling thing about this book is Maddox's reference to the history of church/state conflicts; the withdrawal of State Aid in the nineteenth century; and the conduct of the DOGS High Court case . On pages 64-68 she even refers to *Contempt of Court* and *Unto God and Caesar* by Jean and Richard Ely respectively. DOGS are in danger of becoming mainstream.

A child who was educated in the 1970s, before the full effects of State Aid were felt by the Australian public systems, Marion Maddox went to public schools until the last two years of her school life. Then, as the daughter of a Methodist Minister, she attended MLC Burwood. She writes:

When I went to school, we assumed that local Australian schools were the ideal of 'free, compulsory, secular' education. We all went to the local school, or almost all of us. The Australia we knew was proud of being egalitarian, and relatively free of religious conflict. The main issue was privilege: some wealthy private schools, more or less religious, could claim to provide an education superior both to the public system and to parochial Catholic parallels,. Unquestionably, my own education gained, being shifted from an economy-class school to the business-class version. This made me more aware of the urgent need of the free, secular system that my own religious forebears had pushed to install in this hopefully egalitarian country. But, as this book shows, 'choice' has since widened the gaps between the wealthy and the rest, and also hammered in religious wedges.

DOGS can only note that they have been saying the same thing for years. You cannot divert public money to private, denominational schools and educate all the children. You can only deprive the majority while filling the few with peculiar tenets.