

# AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 565#

## If State Aid to Private Schools Stopped: What would happen?

In the United States, the First Amendment of the Constitution has to date protected the ideal of Separation of Church and State to a greater extent than in Australia. Direct State Aid to private ( religious) schools has not mushroomed as it has in Australia during the last 50 years.

Only 10% of school children attend private schools in America.

It could be argued that, if the Menzies Government had not introduced State Aid in the years 1964-69, and the disadvantaged children in Catholic schools had been enrolled in public schools throughout Australia, a figure of 10% rather than 33% would be the norm in Australia.

Once the basic principal of **separation of religion from the State** and its corollary of **public funding for public schools only** is breached, inequalities and disadvantage are inevitable.

This is because only public systems which are free, secular and universal - systems which are public in purpose, outcome, access, ownership, control, accountability and provision should be the only ones which is publicly funded. And what wonderful schools they are: Hear what their alumni have to say on <https://www.nswtf.org.au/news/2014/08/19/nsw-public-school-alumni-project-video.html>

When the principle of separation of religion and the State is breached and Public Treasuries opened to private, religious corporations and enterprises, children will be selected on religious, economic and other tests.

Many well-meaning educationists and philanthropists forget these simple facts, and cannot see beyond the 'need' for funding for disadvantaged students. But there will always be more 'disadvantaged' students if religious schools select and reject children.

And this is why the Karmel or the Gonski Model or any Needs based or sector-neutral model is flawed – and can only lead to MORE not LESS disadvantage.

Even in the Land of the Free, there are wide differences between neighbourhoods. Although, nationally only 10% in grades 1-12 attend private schools, in some neighbourhoods, the majority go to private school. And the government support for Charter Schools, which are a variety of private-public partnership arrangements means that in the USA, they can pick and choose whether they're going to be public for one purpose or private for another.

For further information see: on the American situation see

<http://www.citylab.com/housing/2014/08/where-private-school-enrollment-is-highest-and-lowest-across-the-us/375993/>

For further information on the Charter School problems in the US see

<http://today.uconn.edu/blog/2014/08/public-dollars-private-rules-the-charter-school-calculus/>

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