

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 599#

RESTORE THE 'FREE' TO 'FREE SECULAR AND UNIVERSAL' PUBLIC EDUCATION

Our public schools in Australia are so good, so learning friendly for children, that many parents from our Asian neighbours are enrolling their children in them as fee paying students! They are welcomed with open arms by Principals attempting to balance their budgets on minimal public funding. (<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-18/state-schools-cashing-in-on-rise-in-international-students/6478566>) Stories are told of parents arriving at auctions of homes in catchment areas for public schools of repute with bags of cash!

We know how good our public schools really are. And we welcome children of any country, colour, or religion to enrol in them. The more variety, the better the education for Australian children and harmony within our society.

But - Beware of Asian parents bearing gifts! They arrived in the 1980s with similar gifts for our universities. Australian politicians decided that what was good for Asian fee paying students was good enough for children of tax-paying citizens! What was free tertiary education became a cash cow for universities, public money was withdrawn, and Australian students burdened with HECS debts. Pyne and the universities want more of the same.

The latest migration of Asian students into our public education institutions should be welcomed so long as education remains 'free'. Our public schools should remain openly accessible without fees, and without any entrance requirements. Once barriers are introduced, the essential nature of our great public systems are badly compromised.

DOGS say that we should put the 'free' back into our free, secular and universal' public systems of education.

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