

# AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

## PRESS RELEASE 606#

### ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY VICTORIAN AUDITOR-GENERAL FINALLY MOVES

**For the last fifty years DOGS have contended that privatisation means abdication of Ministerial responsibility for the expenditure of taxpayer moneys. We have little trust in our political system to keep the bastards honest. But has State Aid to private religious schools also meant the muzzling of the Office of the Auditor General?**

This is nowhere more apparent than in the provision of State Aid for private religious schools. The public exposure of their financial affairs has been on the DOGS agenda since the earliest days when the original Needs policy was transformed into 'bottom of the schoolyard schemes' which cast the 'Bottom of the ocean' taxation schemes of taxation evaders like Skase and Bond into the shade.

Ray Nilsen, in paid Advertisements placed in national newspapers exposed these 'Bottom of the schoolyard schemes' in which taxation dollars provided for 'poor parish schools' were diverted into new "Needy" secondary schools. In other words, taxpayers funded the gross, uneconomic and inefficient duplication of State school facilities and then suffered the closure of public schools in the 1990s.

Trevor Cobbold of Save our Schools and researchers at the ACER are now exposing the resources 'arms race' indulgences of the private religious sector. And finally, after much prodding, the Auditor General of Victoria is having a look at what is really happening to our Taxpayer dollars. The Farrah Tomazin of *The Age* 28 June at:

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/where-does-the-money-go-auditor-general-to-investigate-private-school-funds-20150627-ghz5vq.html>

tells us that the Auditor General, John Doyle has the following on his agenda:

*Four months after the Andrews government introduced new laws giving greater funding certainty to non-government schools, Auditor-General John Doyle has launched a probe into whether state grants are being used "economically, efficiently, and effectively" in the Catholic and independent systems...*

In a rare public interview, Victoria's financial watchdog also:

□ Revealed the government is unlikely to provide him with long-awaited "follow-the-dollar powers" until after he completes his audit of the East West Link, which may mean a second audit is required once the legislation is in place to ensure Victorians get "the full story" about the controversial road proposal.

❑ Criticised the education department for poor record keeping, the growing gap between city and country schools and consistently failing to follow many of the recommendations he has made in previous reports.

❑ Warned resources were becoming stretched in his office, given the number of audits under way and the growing focus on government spending on infrastructure and information communications technology, but the government had rejected a request for additional funding in the May state budget.

The review of state grants to non-government schools is likely to be tabled by the end of the year. Mr Doyle said more than \$650 million in recurrent funding was provided to the private system each year, but how the money was used was not routinely examined by the education department.

*He said given non-government schools were receiving public funds, the parliament had a right to know how it was being spent.*

**DOGS NOTE THAT THE TAXPAYERS WHO ELECT  
REPRESENTATIVES TO PARLIAMENT ALSO HAVE A RIGHT TO  
KNOW HOW THEIR MONEY IS BEING SPENT!**

LISTEN TO DOGS PROGRAM

ON 3CR

855 ON THE AM DIAL: 12.00 NOON SATURDAYS

For Podcast go to <http://www.3cr.org.au/podcasts/podcasts/list> and go to DOGS