

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 608#

FIGURES NOW PROVE THAT STATE AID TO PRIVATE RELIGIOUS IS ECONOMIC STUPIDITY

For half a century DOGS have argued that State Aid to private schools was not only bad social policy, educating those able to pay for the first class ticket to heaven and the good job. It would, in the end, prove disastrous if not stupid - economically.

The dissembling, false claims, scare mongering and misuse of statistics by the private and religious school sector over the last fifty years is now under scrutiny from another group that include statistics experts - the **Save Our Schools** gurus.

The Coalition, which has 'private schools in their DNA, and the weak kneed Labor Party have showered the private sector with so much public money that the figures are blowing their economic arguments out of the water. Although Chris Bonner, Bernie Shepherd and Trevor Cobbold still promote Gonski, with the facts and figures, it will not be long before they realise that the only way forward for a national system is that discovered by our forefathers in the nineteenth century, and practised by countries like Finland and Germany: public is public and private is private with no public funding of private, religious education.

No country can educate its population with a school system that discriminates against children on the basis of religion, or ability to pay.

The Save Our Schools team should be commended for their research. In a nutshell they proved that on recent funding trends 40% of Catholic schools will get per student public funding in excess of similar government schools next year, another 40% two years after - and half the Independent schools by the end of the decade. Their report can be read at

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxK25rJrOw-eQ3dlZmZZRGNNV1k/view?pli=1>

It received coverage on the ABC on *The Drum* at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-07-17/the-drum-friday-july-17/6629582> and in the *Sydney Morning Herald* at <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/government-funding-for-private-schools-to-outstrip-average-public-schools-by-2020-20150716-gicdjt.html>

The following is their executive summary of this research:

Recent trends in school recurrent funding strongly suggest that over forty per cent of students in Catholic schools next year will average as much, if not more, public funding than their peers in similar government schools. Two years further on an additional forty per cent will most likely join them. Half the students in Independent schools are on track to get as much, if not more, than government school students by the end of the decade.

This finding emerges as one of the most significant to date from our analysis of My School data. We have previously shown that changes in school funding in recent years – increasingly favouring students who are already advantaged -has done little for student achievement and nothing for equity. Earlier this year we pointed to a \$3 billion over-investment in better-off students, without any measurable gain in their achievement. Now we find that state and federal governments, within four years, will be funding the vast majority of private school students at levels higher than students in similar government schools. Concerns about funding equity should now be joined by concerns about effectiveness and efficiency in how we provide and fund schools.

The apparent runaway public funding of private schools is a legacy of discredited sector-based funding which the half-hearted implementation of the Gonski recommendations hasn't really touched - and which current school funding schemes and dreams will almost certainly worsen. While Gonski pointed to the need to close the gaps in student achievement, the only gap being closed is that between government funding of its own schools and its funding of the schools that are considered to be "private". Private schools are about to operate at a far more substantial, and previously unimaginable, public cost.

In this report we illustrate how funding has changed and how familiar claims about the relative cost of schools have become obsolete and misleading. We address questions which arise about our schools: what is public, what is private, what should be the difference between them, what obligations do and should fully-funded schools have to the public which pays to run them? Such questions have to be answered if schooling is to provide access and equity combined with effectiveness and efficiency.

Chris Bonnor and Bernie Shepherd

Another article at Online Opinion is found at <http://onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=17530>

Some of the comments are very revealing and indicate growing unrest in the Australian community at the current state of educational affairs.

Some comments

- Just another example of the surreptitious erosion of Democracy. I also see in it sly attacks on unions as their members can mostly be found in the public system. Public school staff, and parents of pupils have been designated LEANERS and not likely to contribute to the creation of a reliant conservative voting bloc. In Mammon We Trust.

Commenter

harry snr

Date and time

July 16, 2015, 6:57PM

- This is a timely, balanced piece of rigorous research by Shepherd and Bonnor. It draws the necessary attention to the need for fair changes to be made to the funding of students in school. No doubt it will be attacked with diversionary arguments by those who want to preserve privilege for some schools.

Commenter

Jim McAlpine

Location

Moss Vale

Date and time

July 16, 2015, 8:47PM

- Speaks volumes about the mind-set & priorities of those running our country - continue to hand out welfare to the advantaged while soap-boxing about 'lifters & leaners' and 'ending the age of entitlement'. They really are quite determined to create a new sub-class in this once great country.

Commenter

Sir Rex

Location

Turrumurra

Date and time

July 16, 2015, 11:00PM

- Is there any doubt that Tony Abbott is hell-bent on turning Australia into a nation of haves and have-nots?

Everything his government has done since the release of the 2014 Budget has been the action of a government on a mission to destroy egalitarianism and the Aussie fair-go in favour of feathering the nest of the already rich and privileged.

Commenter

Whatevayareckon

Location

Hicksville, Dystopia via Abbottanian Howardism

Date and time

July 16, 2015, 11:21PM

- Class war. Let's keep the hoi polloi in its place.

Commenter

Wayne

Location

Canterbury

Date and time

July 16, 2015, 11:23PM

- So many poor countries strive so hard to keep education free yet we try to throw it away. This doesn't pass the sniff or pub test. It bears to reason that with the high fees parents pay for private education, the government doesn't need to add anymore. Someone somewhere must be laughing all the way to the bank.

Commenter

Knee Jerk

Location

Sydney

Date and time

July 17, 2015, 12:19AM

- The federal LNP government has been very clear in their intention to fund the independent school sector. They are very keen on creating a two tier education system, all hidden under the guise of "choice".and " "personal freedom". But these statistics speak clearly of the real impact. Once again, the disadvantaged will suffer the most through poorly funded local schools.

Weep fort the future, there is not even a notion of true egalitarianism left in our leadership. A race to the bottom of the economic pile.

Commenter

Topcrumpet

Location

Sydney

Date and time

July 17, 2015, 7:29AM

- How strange that a heavily biased Catholic cabinet led by a former priest in training could preside over such obvious favouritism to the Catholic education sector, next thing they will employing their own in preference to non Catholics. Secret meeting with Pell anyone. How much the LNP has changed from its origins.

Commenter

Bruce

Date and time

July 17, 2015, 7:36AM

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/government-funding-for-private-schools-to-outstrip-average-public-schools-by-2020-20150716-gicdjt.html#ixzz3gfLYJVJg>

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