

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 623#

FEES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

UNDERMINE FREE PUBLIC EDUCATION

Principals of underfunded public schools are now desperate enough to undermine the very concept of a free public education. As governments press forward with the privatisation of public education, isolated principals imitate their more fortunate private school counterparts and charge fees for essentials.

The Age with the assistance of Cate Hall, President of the *Our Children our Schools* organisation revealed that parents were asked to pay \$270 to enrol their children at a public high school in Melbourne. *The Age* also reported that another school is charging for sex education classes. Such fees are inexcusable, unethical and illegal in public schools.

It is not known whether other schools charge fees for enrolling students, but Cate Hall, the president of [Our Children, Our Schools](http://www.ourchildrenourschools.org.au), told [the ABC](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-19/melbourne-state-school-criticised-over-enrolment-fees/6865022) <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-19/melbourne-state-school-criticised-over-enrolment-fees/6865022> that it was not the only school asking for down payments on enrolments. There are also widespread concerns about fees and levies in public schools. An [Auditor-General's report](#) earlier this year found significant non-compliance with legislative requirements for free education in Victoria with parents being charged for items that should be free. He discovered that the Department does not even know how much it costs to run a school. The Auditor General was also questioning private school accountability procedures, but has since resigned his position.

Public school parents are being taxed three ways for the education of their children. They pay taxes for:

1. Public schools which are obliged to enrol their children and are allegedly free, secular and universal
2. Ever increasing grants of State Aid to private religious schools which they either do not or cannot use
3. Increasing fees and imposts charged by underfunded public school principals who are desperate for funds for essentials and are left isolated by a depleted Education Department that is dominated by private school sympathisers.

Australian public school parents should say: Wrong Way! Go Back — to the days before State Aid was given to private schools — and follow countries like Germany, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and even Chile. **Australian parents and taxpayers are entitled to, indeed they are owed, a genuinely free, secular and universal public school system!**

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