

# **AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

## **Press Release 708**

### **Gonski2.0 passes the House of Representatives Now for Negotiations with the Catholic Sector.**

The Gonski 2.0 funding legislation passed the lower house yesterday with the help of independent **Cathy McGowan** and **Rebekah Sharkie** of the Nick Xenophon Team. Labor, the Greens and independent **Andrew Wilkie** voted against it. A Senate inquiry into the changes will be held before an upper house vote in late June.

**The Catholic sector are having second thoughts about what is in truth a very generous deal. After all, what they REALLY want is a behind the scenes agreement that they can spend taxpayer dollars wherever and however they want. And they know full well that politicians value a quiet life over accountability for public money. So one wonders what is really going on behind the scenes. Actually we do have a few clues.**

According to **Matthew Knott** [in the Fairfax papers](#) the Archdiocese of Brisbane has assured parents their fees would not be going up next year and thanked the federal government for a "commitment to fair and equitable funding",. The Education Department [has also announced](#) funding would be maintained for the ACT Catholic system until 2021 under a "temporary" assistance package. This is in contrast to modelling by the National Catholic Education Commission and [published in The Australian](#) earlier this month that some schools could face fee hikes of up to \$6000 because of the new funding model.

But tensions continue between the Coalition and the Catholic Church over the possibility of less money for some Catholic schools, with senior Coalition figures including former prime minister **John Howard** [involved in negotiations](#) with high-level Church officials to calm the waters. John Howard started the latest round of the 'Greeds' policy in 1999., and in the process developed one of those 'special relationships' with the Catholic sector. Forget about separation of church and State in Australia when it comes to taxpayers money!

So it is not unsurprising that the ABC had Howard on TV exuding concern about the Coalition education funding policy and his fundamental belief in educational 'choice' – for those whom he values politically. Turnbull and Birmingham have consequently rolled him out in the current debate with the Catholic school sector over what the sector says will be a shortfall in funding for some Catholic schools under **Malcolm Turnbull's** Gonski 2.0 plan. **Meanwhile, State Schools have been duded once again and will be forced to beg some crumbs from the Private Schools table.**

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