

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Press Release 721

GONSKI 2.0 AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW?

Gonski 2.0 has been launched and submissions invited until November 2, 1917. <https://www.education.gov.au/review-achieve-educational-excellence-australian-schools>

But DOGS note that there is nothing particularly exciting or promising for public education in this Review. Why?

There is nothing independent about the Gonski 2.0 Review.

Gonski 1.0 under Gillard exposed some of the outrageous inequalities between private and public sector education funding, because it was ‘sector blind’ the gap between wealthy and disadvantaged has only gotten worse. The evidence of the result of a half a century of State Aid to private religious schools is there to be observed by all who have eyes to see.

But, the terms of reference for Gonski 2.0 alongside their 4 Issues Paper manages to avoid any confrontation with obvious issues. ‘Sector blind’ means just that – blind to mistakes of the past.

In the words of common sense, it is not possible to have any semblance of equality of educational opportunity for Australian children when education institutions, by their very nature and selection processes, are unequal.

DOGS put this to the Karmel Committee –sitting around a table in Canberra, in 1973. They pointed out that educational institutions that are not free, i.e. that charge fees, or discriminate against the enrolment of any child on the basis of creed, colour or parental bank balance. There was a deafening silence. Karmel looked into space, Jean Blackburn looked at her notepad. Father Bourke glanced upward with bleary blue eyes and Peter Tannock glared.

After he climbed further up the greasy academic pole, Karmel wept crocodile tears about his problems with wealthy fee paying schools. But he lacked the intestinal fortitude at the time that it mattered.

David Gonski has even less room to manoeuvre than Karmel ever had. With their ‘sector blind’ terms of reference and issues paper, and no extra funding, members of the Gonski 2.0 have been placed into a fairly tight straightjacket.

The only loopholes for anyone who has nothing to lose – i.e. is at the end of their career, and wants a place in history as a truth teller – someone with the intestinal fortitude to expose the blatant failure of the privatisation experiment – consider the following Term of Reference:

Propose related transparency and accountability measures that support the effective monitoring, reporting and application of investment.

DOGS will follow future developments with interest

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