

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT

SCHOOLS

Press Release 754

GONSKI 2.0

An opportunity for edu-businesses and edu-preneurs ?

DOGS have always been reluctant to get involved in debates on curriculum fads, testing procedures and classroom technicalities. Their main goal has always been the protection and promotion of public education and its corollary – the opposition of public funding to private, religious schools.

It must be noted however, that the Gillard's NAPLAN scheme opened the way for greater accountability from the private sector and the MYSCHOOL website enabled public school supporters to catch glimpses of where the Australian education system. billions of taxpayers' money was actually going. This had not been possible since 1973.

GONSKI 1.0 exposed the extraordinary levels of inequality both within and between the Australian public and private systems of education. It became blatantly obvious that the public systems needed huge injections of money to right what has become a grievous wrong caused by half a century of State Aid to private schools. There was some hope of more funds at some distant time but, with a change of government, future funds were on the never-never.

Meanwhile, with a combination of new technology, NAPLAN testing, International testing, and the MYSCHOOL website, glaring inequalities in public funding of private and public schools are there for all to see.

By 2014, the Federal Minister for Education, Simon Birmingham realised that he was sitting on a powder keg of lack of accountability as well as International ratings and growing educational inequalities between public and private sectors. . Auditor General's reports indicated a veritable augean stables of accountability for the billions provided, with minimum strings attached to Catholic Education systems and so-called independent schools In trying to assert even a minimum amount of ministerial responsibility Birmingham raised the usual hornets nest of sectarian threats.

At the classroom level, with NAPLAN testing, parents and teachers were restive. Would these lead to automatic testing of teachers themselves and a return to the nineteenth century system of payment by results? Many Public school teachers are the servants of the disadvantaged. Would they and their students be blamed as victims?

In the final analysis, in a democracy, he who pays the pipe should call the tune. But this is becoming ever more difficult for Education Minister Birmingham. Or is it?

The usual political tactic in these circumstances is to create a diversion : GONSKI 2.0

But GONSKI 2.0 under the Coalition did not deal with inequalities as GONSKI 1.0 under Gillard did. It dealt with classroom and curriculum issues.

In many ways, the report reflects a smorgasbord of popular ideas that have been doing the rounds for some time.

Glen Savage notes in his article in *The Conversation*, at <https://theconversation.com/gonski-review-reveals-another-grand-plan-to-overhaul-education-but-do-we-really-need-it-93119>

Educators could be forgiven for seeing these arguments as yawn-worthy: not because they're wrong, but because they have been repeated ad nauseam. Despite this, the report is also deeply radical in scope and vision, especially in its focus on overhauling core aspects of curriculum, assessment and reporting. In doing so, it places significant faith in the power of data, evidence, technology and personalisation of learning to drive improvement, and help the nation cast off the shackles of its "industrial model" of schooling

The following are the major recommendations of Gonski 2.0:

1. **Individualising Learning** (Recommendation 1)

Embed a focus on individual student achievement through continuous learning progress- with the expectation that each student should achieve at least one year's growth throughout each year of schooling.'

2. **Basing Learning on progression instead of annual package of curriculum content**

(Recommendation 6)

'Prioritise the implementation of learning progressions for literac and numeracy in curriculum delivery during the early years of schooling to ensure the core foundations for learning are developed by all children by the age of eight.'

3. **The creation of a new online assessment tool to measure learning progression** (Recommendation 10)

'...Support should be provided to teachers in the form of an online formative assessment tool. The tool would assist them to readily identify the stage of learning a student has reached and to provide a choice of possible appropriate interventions.'

4. **Establishing a national research and evidence institute will drive better practice and innovation** (Recommendation 23)

The report makes a number of other recommendations to supplement these major changes, including but not limited to:

- Establish a National Research and Evidence Institute to coordinate and disseminate best practices. This is essentially identical to Labor's promise to create an [Evidence Institute for Schools](#) if elected.
- Develop an online and on-demand formative assessment tool, to be based on revised national curriculum learning progressions. This would help teachers monitor student progress in real time and better tailor teaching.

- Introduce a national Unique Student Identifier for all students to be used throughout schooling. This would enable the consistent tracking of students if they move between schools or systems.
- Prioritise literacy and numeracy, particularly in the early years, to ensure young people have the necessary foundations.
- Conduct a comprehensive national review into years 11 and 12, with a focus on objectives, curriculum, assessment provisions and delivery structures.

DOGS and many public school teachers have been here before. Public school teachers are in the front line with their disadvantaged students. When provided with resources they have many, many success stories.

A major concern with Gonski's proposed changes that depend upon on technological developments, is that they will open the door to edu-businesses. They will also create new opportunities for edu-preneurs whose work seeks to profit from translating "what works" into action in the classroom. And the lack of accountability of public money in our private sector will escalate even further into for-profit exercises.

DOGS are not alone

Below is a comment to an insightful interview between Greg Ashman and Glen Savage at <https://gregashman.wordpress.com/2018/05/09/glenn-savage-on-gonski2/>

Mitch

[May 9, 2018 at 12:05 pm](#)

....

- One of the big things holding back Australian education is our fascination with wasting Government money on financially-selective schools
- That although everyone complains about 'seven different systems', following the nuance of the constitution and leaving it to the states may actually be a better thing for us
- That there may be positives of a 'learning progressions' approach but there will also certainly be negatives and there hasn't been a proper evaluation of these
- Detail was low

Glenn, although in this interview you were hesitant to enter the tradition/progressive debate on curriculum or pedagogy you did say some things I have never seen you say anywhere else so forcibly

"we need to be careful not to get caught up in curriculum fads that do much to celebrate the notion of transcending so-called 'siloed disciplines' in favour of what, in reality, can often be an atmospheric assemblage of dispositions we're apparently supposed to structure learning around."

Don't you know that saying this is enough to get your education academic credentials revoked! 😊

LISTEN TO THE DOGS PROGRAM

855 ON THE AM DIAL: 12.00 NOON SATURDAYS

<http://www.3cr.org.au/dogs>