

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT

SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 777

PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

PUBLIC FUNDS FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL OWNERSHIP

An essential feature of public schools has always been that they have been paid for out of the public purse AND remain in public ownership and control.

A feature of private schools has always been that school assets have been paid for by private organisations. After all, they are privately owned and controlled. Most Catholic schools for example are in the ownership of the local Archbishop.

Assumptions about public ownership and control have been turned on their head by recent Victorian governments. New public schools are in private partnerships and privately maintained while new private schools are paid for with public money yet privately owned.

What exactly does ‘public’ mean then in the real world of school building?

New Public schools are called [New Schools PPP](#) and are part of [32 Partnerships Victoria projects](#) contracted worth around \$30.1 billion in capital investment by the Andrews Labor Government. (See Appendix 1)

What are PPPs? They are private public partnerships.

What, in the name of public accountability, are Private public partnerships? Official documents tell us that:

The Partnerships Victoria policy provides a framework for developing contractual relationships between the State and private sector for delivering of public infrastructure and related services through public private partnerships (PPPs).

*On 28th October 2015 the State Government of Victoria entered into a Public Private Partnership (PPP) contract with Learning Communities Victoria (LCV) to **finance, design, construct and maintain** 15 schools in some of Victoria’s key growth areas. The Project has a capital value of \$291 million and includes a **25 year operating term throughout which LCV will maintain the school facilities.***

So, in Victoria, a private company, Learning Communities Victoria, is financing, designing, constructing and maintaining for a 25 year period, 15 schools in our growth areas. This gives private, international companies a guaranteed public funding income stream, a key to the public Treasury of Victoria for 25 years!

Back in the day, the design, financing construction and maintenance was done by the Department in conjunction with the public works Department . Apprentices received trades training and schools were in public ownership and control. Elected politicians could be held responsible for their proper maintenance.

Now, all these responsibilities have been ‘contracted out’ to LCV – Learning Communities Victoria. We discover that the contracting out is even more complicated. Because [Learning Communities Victoria](#) comprises [Amber Infrastructure Group](#) as sponsor, [Clarke Hopkins Clarke](#) as architect, [Watpac](#) as builder, [Spotless](#) as facilities manager and YMCA and CERES as community partners.

Schools have already been built under this PPP scheme.

Schools opened in 2017

- Casey Central East Primary School (Cranbourne North)
- Cranbourne South West Primary School (Cranbourne West)
- Heather Grove Primary School (Clyde North)
- Epping North Primary School (Epping North)
- Mernda Central Prep – Year 12 School (Mernda) - including primary and secondary school components
- Mernda South Primary School (Mernda)
- Pakenham South West Primary School (Pakenham)
- Point Cook South Prep – Year 9 School (Point Cook)

Schools opened in 2018

- Armstrong Creek Education Precinct (Armstrong Creek) – including Armstrong Creek Special School and Armstrong Creek Primary School
- Bannockburn Prep – Year 12 School (Bannockburn) - including primary and secondary school components
- North Geelong Special Developmental School (Hamlyn Heights)
- Torquay North Primary School (Torquay North)

We are told that the under this PPP the private group Learning Communities Victoria will finance, design, construct and maintain the new schools over a 25

year period. Yet The State will retain school ownership and responsibility for delivering educational services.

Does this mean that Principals, and teachers, appointed and paid by the State will have to deal for basic maintenance of facilities with international companies like Spotless?

And what exactly does the expression ‘the State will retain school ownership’ mean in this context? Will the State have legal ownership but the private sector equitable ownership for 25 years? And what exactly is the long term price tag for the taxpayer?

The PPP saga continues with promises of [70 new school projects](#) underway – with land being acquired, designs being developed, or construction underway. Funding has been provided in the 2018-19 Budget for land acquisition for new schools in the municipalities of Casey, Wyndham, Hume, Melton, Whittlesea and Cardinia.

Public school supporters can take some comfort from the fact that the State will pay for and retain ownership of the land upon which schools are built. As parents demanding the re-opening of schools closed by the Kennett Government know, public ownership, if only of the land, is something worth fighting for.

State Funding of New Private Schools.

But what if taxpayers are paying for new schools which are privately owned?

To date, the private religious sector have demanded running costs, and these have, in some cases, outstripped those of the local public school. But now they are demanding – and obtaining. Public money for Private property!

Mr Elder’s electioneering from the Victorian Catholic Education Office has had its effect, even if Mr Elder himself has become a liability for his church. On 18 October 2018 we are informed that

The Victorian Government is investing [\\$400 million to build and upgrade Catholic and independent Schools across the State,](#)

[The Government is working closely with the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools](#) Victoria to ensure available funding is targeted to the areas of highest need. Grants will be targeted at improving the condition of schools and creating more spaces for student learning.

Private schools earmarked for this private asset building at public expense are:

ROUND 1

- Casey Grammar School
- Geelong Lutheran College
- Gilson College
- Good News Lutheran College
- Hillcrest Christian College
- Holy Trinity Lutheran School
- Lakeside College
- St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic School
- St Peter's College
- St Oliver Plunkett's School
- Catholic College Bendigo
- St Francis Xavier College
- St Clare's Primary
- Galen Catholic College
- St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School
- Lisieux Catholic Primary School
- Oscar Romero Catholic Primary School
- Siena Catholic Primary School

ROUND 2

- Ave Maria College, Aberfeldie
- Beaconhills College - Pakenham Campus
- Chairo Christian School - Pakenham Campus
- Cobram Anglican Grammar School
- Darul Ulum College of Australia
- Mt Hira College
- St Paul's Anglican College - Warragul Campus
- St Michael's School, Traralgon
- Nagle College, Bairnsdale
- Kilbreda College, Mentone
- Salesian College, Sunbury
- Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Bentleigh
- St Dominic's School, Broadmeadows
- Mount St Joseph Girls' College, Altona
- St Joseph's Primary School, Boronia
- Mercy College, Coburg
- St Anthony's School, Melton South
- Sacred Heart School, Croydon
- Catholic Regional College Caroline Springs, Caroline Springs
- St Mel's School, Shepparton South
- Catholic College Wodonga, Wodonga
- Marist College Bendigo, Maiden Gully
- St Thomas the Apostle, Cranbourne East
- Notre Dame College, Shepparton
- Proposed Primary/Secondary School, Shepparton South/Kialla
- Our Lady Star of the Sea Primary School
- St Monica's College, Epping
- Padua College, Mornington
- Holy Child School, Dallas
- St Louis de Montfort's School, Aspendale

ROUND 3

- Alphington Grammar School
- Ballarat Steiner School
- Christian College Geelong
- Cornish College
- Gippsland Grammar
- Henderson College
- Harkaway Hills College
- Lighthouse Christian College
- St Matthew's School
- Sacred Heart Girls' College
- St Brendan's School
- Mount Lilydale Mercy College
- Catholic Regional College North Keilor
- Catholic Regional College Melton
- St Catherine's School
- St Brigid's School

- St Andrew's Christian College
- Victory Christian College
- Victory Lutheran College
- Waverley Christian College
- Marist Sion College
- Santa Maria College
- Proposed School - Bannockburn
- Mater Christi College
- St Joseph's School
- Salesian College
- Trinity College
- St Peter's School
- St John's School
- Damascus College
- Christ Our Holy Redeemer School
- St Mary of the Cross
- Proposed School - Sunbury
- St John the Apostle Catholic Primary School
- MacKillop Catholic Regional College
- St Andrew's School
- Presentation College Windsor
- Proposed School - Wollert

This means that public money is now being diverted, not only to the running costs of the private religious sector, but into the assets in the ownership of religious organisations.

Since many private schools are also used for church purposes, taxpayers are being asked to not only directly subsidise religious activities but to increase the asset wealth of those organisations. So much for separation of religion from the State in Australia.

APPENDIX ONE:

VICTORIAN PPPS COSTING TAXPAYERS \$30.1 BILLION

Projects under procurement

- [Northern Roads Upgrade](#)
- [South Eastern Roads Upgrade](#)

Contracted projects

- [Ballarat North Water Reclamation Project](#)
- [Barwon Water Biosolids Management Project](#)
- [Bendigo Hospital](#)
- [Biosciences Research Centre Project \(AgriBio\)](#)
- [Campaspe Water Reclamation Scheme](#)
- [Casey Community Hospital](#)
- [Citylink-Tulla Widening Project](#)
- [EastLink](#)
- [Fulham Correctional Centre Contract Extension Project](#)
- [High Capacity Metro Trains](#)
- [Hopkins Correctional Centre](#)

- [Melbourne Convention Centre Development](#)
- [Melbourne Exhibition Centre Expansion Project](#)
- [Metropolitan Mobile Radio \(MMR\)](#)
- [Metro Tunnel Project](#)
- [Mobile Data Network](#)
- [New Royal Children's Hospital Project](#)
- [New Schools PPP](#)
- [Partnerships Victoria in Schools Project](#)
- [Peninsula Link](#)
- [Port Phillip Prison Contract Extension Project](#)
- [Ravenhall Prison](#)
- [Royal Melbourne Showgrounds Redevelopment](#)
- [Royal Women's Hospital Project](#)
- [Southern Cross Station](#)
- [Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre \(VCCC\)](#)
- [Victorian Correctional Facilities](#)
- [Victorian County Court Project](#)
- [Victorian Desalination Plant](#)
- [Western Roads Upgrade](#)
- [West Gate Tunnel Project](#)
- [Western Roads Upgrade](#)

Completed projects

- [Emergency Alerting System](#)
- [Wodonga Wastewater Treatment Plant](#)

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