

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT

SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 783

OLD SECTARIAN SCHOOL NETWORKS :

BRAZEN AND SHAMELESS

The ghost of Bob Santamaria, the National Civic Council, or the ‘Movement’ - whichever you prefer, and the ‘Catholic right’ are alive, well, and out in front.

The Catholic inspired right wing in Australian politics was the brain child of Archbishop Mannix, the Victorian archbishop determined to obtain the State Aid for church schools they had lost in 1872. He worked out that the power in Australian politics lay in the middle where the cross bench could blackmail whatever government was in power.

Back in the day, the ‘groupers’ as they were called, divided the Labor Party in Victoria and Queensland but took over and systematically dominated NSW Labor. At the federal level they produced the DLP. In the last century, old boy networks strategically influenced key positions in the political, legal, academic and media elites.

In recent times, the ‘old boys’ have dominated the Liberal Party. And State Aid to religious schools has skyrocketed to the point that it has overtaken taxpayer payments to public schools.

But just in case Catholic voters thought they should look to the Liberal Party to look after the Catholic sectarian interests, messages are being strategically issued from the old Labor Party stalwarts. After all, their great and fearless leader, Bill Shorten himself, is an old boy from Xavier.

But on 14 February the Fairfax Press made official, but had been scuttlebutt in the Murdock Press the week before with the announcement that a Labor Senator from Victoria, Jacinta Collins had resigned from Parliament and was heading to a leading role in the National Catholic Education Commission. David Crowe had the following report at :

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/labor-senator-resigns-from-parliament-heads-to-catholic-schools-role-20190214-p50xwk.html>

Labor senator Jacinta Collins had announced a surprise departure from the upper house with a declaration that “Christian social principles” remain strong within her party despite talk of the waning of the Catholic right.

Senator Collins, who is tipped to head the National Catholic Education Commission, used her valedictory speech to debunk the “myth” that she was one of a dying breed within Labor.

“Those who come to our great party, or broad church, from a base of Christian social principles are not disappearing,” she said.

“In some respects we are stronger than during some periods over the last two decades – just look at the recent euthanasia debate.

“It serves the interest of some on the far left and the far right of politics to dismiss and diminish us but I thank the many people, across a wide spectrum, who do not.”

Senator Collins has been one of the strongest voices within the party on social issues as well as a defender of federal funding for Catholic schools ahead of the federal government’s offer of \$4 billion to satisfy demands from private schools late last year.

Her appointment as executive director of the NCEC is expected to be announced on Friday.

Debates on religious freedom have often been led by conservatives within the Liberal and Nationals parties but Senator Collins used her speech to emphasise Labor’s support for the same principle.

She quoted a chapter in the party’s national platform, which states: “Labor supports the appropriate protection of the religious freedom of all people.”

Senator Collins also quoted a resolution moved by colleagues Kristina Keneally and Louise Pratt at the party’s national conference in December that the party stands for civil rights including freedom of religion.

Senator Collins, whose term was due to expire on 30 June this year, is expected to be replaced on Labor’s Victorian Senate ticket by Raff Ciccone, an official at the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association (SDA), the same union she worked for before entering Parliament.

So, Jacinta Collins is following a well worn path. Politician, then administrator/lobbyist.

For example, Mr Elder from the Victorian Catholic Education Commission did his Church schools proud after a stint as a State Liberal politician. He is suffering a bullying complaint, but has been rewarded with a role at the Catholic University.

Public school supporters can be forgiven for wishing to vote Labor when Bill Shorten and Tanya Plibersek offer more dollars to the public sector. But make no mistake! Before any desperately needed dollars flow through to the public sector, the private sector has been handsomely rewarded for their successful political networking and brazen, self-interested lobbying.

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