

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT
SCHOOLS
PRESS RELEASE 806**

SHEPPARTON MEGA-SCHOOL:

**APPLY ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES OF SCALE
TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS RATHER THAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The [Victorian Labor Government has announced](#) that it will merge four secondary schools in Shepparton and Mooroopna into a new “super school” of about 3,000 students. The merger is being strongly resisted by of the [Stop Shepparton’s Super School](#) Facebook group. [A community meeting](#) earlier this month called for an independent review of the decision. [Many parents are concerned](#) because the merger will restrict public school options in the area.

The Minister for Education, James Merlino, claims that the merger will boost student results and provide a broader curriculum. [The proposal’s website](#) says that it “will transform student outcomes”. Yet, two years after the plan was first mooted the Minister has failed to provide any evidence for his claim. When faced with a direct request for this evidence at the recent community meeting in Shepparton, the government representative couldn’t provide it. It reveals breathtaking arrogance and contempt of parents and students at the four schools who are having the lives upended by the transition arrangements.

There is good reason for this failure – there is little evidence to support their claim!

Trevor Cobbold of Save Our Schools has listed the evidence against mega schools at <http://saveourschools.com.au/school-closures/vic-govt-has-failed-to-justify-shepparton-super-school/?unapproved=2684&moderation-hash=9f54a1985b40094b4c431debb45fc316#comment-2684>

He finds that the general consensus is that secondary schools should enrol between 400 and 1,000 students to provide the most effective learning opportunities. Certainly, it should be much less than the 3,000 proposed for the Shepparton super-school. Two of the schools in Shepparton are within the indicated range and a third has 1,123 students. The fourth school is in the small town of Mooroopna and has just over 300 students. It is the only secondary school in the town.

The DOGS position on this question is as follows:

If the Government is so concerned about student choices in curricula offerings and economies of scale, then why are efficiencies imposed upon the public system but ignored when it comes to the private system. Proper economic principles of scale, economic policy, and accountability should be applied to the private rather than the public system.

Public schools should offer opportunities to LOCAL communities, wherever they may be, not force long traveling distances upon children. Yet in these latter days of privatization, there is one rule for public but quite another for the private sector. But the private sector has proved, again and again, that it cannot, will not, and never shall educate ALL the children. As in the nineteenth century, so in the twentieth and twenty first, it has proved a failure. When will we ever learn?

Especially in country areas, but also in urban areas, private schools duplicate, triplicate etc etc public school facilities.

Nothing much has changed since 1844 when a colonial Select Committee found that the denominational system was a failure and recommended establishment of the Irish National system . This became our current public system.

Our forefathers did something about it in the nineteenth century. They established our current public system open to all children and offensive to none. In the second half of the nineteenth century they abolished State Aid to private religious schools and by 1911 had established public secondary schools. But now our politicians are marching us back into a divided education system and society like that of the eighteenth century.

To prove the point we quote from the 1844 Select Committee:

The first great objection to the denominational system, is its expense; the number of schools in a given locality ought to depend on the number of children requiring instruction, which that locality contains. To admit any other principle is to depart from those maxims of wholesome economy, upon which public money should always be administered. It appears to the Committee impossible not to see, that the very essence of a denominational system, is to leave the majority uneducated, in order thoroughly to imbue the minority with peculiar tenets.

It is a system always tending to excess or defect, the natural result of which is, that wherever one school is founded, two or three others will arise, not because they are wanted, but because it is feared that proselytes will be made; and thus a superfluous activity is produced in one place, and a total stagnation in another. It is

It is a system impossible to be carried out in a thinly inhabited country as many of its firmest advocates have admitted....and being exclusively in the hands of the Clergy, it places the State in the awkward dilemma, of either supplying

money whose expenditure it is not permitted to regulate, or of interfering between the Clergy and their superiors, to the manifest derangement of the whole ecclesiastical polity.

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855 ON THE AM DIAL: 12.00 NOON SATURDAYS
<http://www.3cr.org.au/dogs>