

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT
SCHOOLS**

PRESS RELEASE 821

**STATE AID TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAS LED TO A FANTASY LAND IN
EDUCATIONAL AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

*In a Time of Universal Deceit — Telling the Truth Is a Revolutionary Act
George Orwell 1984.*

In February 2019, a Coalition-dominated parliamentary committee criticised the "inadequate" administration of tens of billions of dollars in federal funds and said the money was not being distributed in a transparent and accountable way. The committee suggested it was difficult to know if the funding was ultimately going to students based on need. These criticisms merely echoed numerous Auditor Generals' reports in the last decade at both Federal and State levels which outlined inadequate accountability for billions of dollars of taxpayer money.

This is a serious matter of Ministerial responsibility - if Ministerial responsibility is still relevant in the current Australian politicized, privatised educational system.

This latest report was not even a criticism from the Opposition, the teacher unions or the Auditor General. The criticism came from the Coalition's own Parliamentary public accounts Committee. It merely recommended laws be strengthened to ensure funding was being doled out effectively and in line with national priorities and legal requirements. But the Morrison Government is not even prepared to do that.

Their response indicates that, in educational funding, as in so many areas of urgent public policy, in Australia, we are confronted with diversion and fantasy.

Blame and even accountability is diverted down the line to teachers while fantasy has led to a response that education systems best addressed the educational needs of their students and the Department of Education was already doing "reasonable and risk-based" monitoring.

The Diversion

In its response to the committee, quietly released this week, Fergus Hunter, from *The Age* informs us that the government said it "does not agree" with the recommendation, arguing

there should be an "appropriate" level of scrutiny that allowed schools to focus on teaching and reducing red tape for teachers was a priority for the government.

[The Coalition Government also rejected this bipartisan call for more scrutiny of school funding](#) in the same week that Australia slipped down the OECD international educational scale with the [PISA results with Australian children no longer even reaching the OECD average in maths.](#)

The Fantasy

[According to Chris Bonner](#) part of the Coalition and even the Labor fantasy is that school reforms can be pushed, and succeed, regardless of context and how we provide and resource our systems of schools. It is underpinned by a belief that schools exist in isolation from each other and stand apart from what happens around them. But the settings in which schools operate, the whole framework of schools, really matters.

DOGS agree that schools do not exist in isolation, but disagree with Chris Bonner and others who have become hooked on a false belief that some kind of 'Needs' policy and subsidisation of private education can or should succeed. The truth, the plain truth in these times of deceit is that public and private are diametrically opposed systems.

Taxpayer funding of education depends upon what kind of society you want to produce for the next generation.

The public system is open to all children and is the cornerstone of a democratic State.

The private system segregates children on the basis of class, creed and ethnicity and is the basis of an unequal, oligarchic or autocratic State.

By providing State Aid to private, segregated schools we are dividing our children and moving from a democratic to an autocratic State.

Never can the twain meet. It is a fantasy to think otherwise.

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