

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT

SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 831

STATE AID TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS REACHES NEW LEVELS OF EXCESS

Even the children, perhaps most particularly the children, can see the gross unfairness in school funding .

On the ABC's Q & A Monday night 9 March, three students from public schools were given air time.

<https://twitter.com/QandA/status/1237157881138405376>.

They were extraordinarily articulate with their observations and a credit to both their teachers and the public system. They give hope for a democratic citizens of the future. The mathematics teacher on the panel, the famous Eddie Wu, also articulated in no uncertain terms the values of a free, secular and universal system of education.

Yet no panel member was prepared to question the basis of a Needs policy, even though it is generally agreed that all attempts to implement such policies have failed – dismally. However, the principal of St Andrews Cathedral School Sydney lambasted the Catholic education lobby groups for their undermining of the most recent Gonski model.

The Morrison/Tehan attempt to base ‘Needs funding’ to private schools on the parental incomes of parents applies only to federal funding. Federal State Aid to private schools now amounts to almost 20 billions of State Aid dollars for private, but not public schools.

Why are public schools left out of the federal “Needs” equation?

Meanwhile, to add insult to injury, the outrageously wealthy schools must be paid off in case they lose any federal funding. They are offered a special \$1.2 billion private school 'choice fund' over ten years paid to peak private school bodies. can be used as investment nest egg.

Michael Koziol of The Age, March 8 2020 points out that private administrators handed this special bundle of taxpayer dollars will be able to invest hundreds of millions of dollars from a special federal government fund for years - rather than hand it over to schools upfront - as long as they spend it before the end of the decade.

In 2020, \$61.5 million will go to the Catholic sector nationally, including \$20.1 million to NSW, while \$41.5 million will go the independent sector nationally, including \$14.6 million to NSW. The amounts will be indexed annually.

But unlike typical recurrent funding, the money from the choice and affordability fund does not have to be spent each year. The guidelines state: "For avoidance of doubt, expenditure of some or all of the funds received may occur in later years, as long as the NGRB commits to the expenditure before 31 December 2029."

This means the organisational bodies can retain and invest the money for years, which Catholic Schools NSW confirmed it would do in part.

DOGS note that if Needs based funding based on parents' taxable income was given to public schools throughout Australia, the vast bulk of any genuinely 'Needs" based funding would be given to the public, not the private sector.

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