

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 471

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT FAILING TO PROVIDE THE CHOICE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TO EVERY CHILD

3 May 2012

The Victorian Government is failing to provide public schools for children in both the settled and developing areas of Melbourne.

For example, parents are having to battle to obtain secondary schooling in both

- Coburg and
- Doreen

And these are the areas with articulate and technologically savvy parents.

COBURG

The battle for a secondary school in Coburg is well documented on the following website: <http://www.highschoolforcoburg.org/> The group has been fighting for one for more than three years and wants the existing Coburg Senior High School expanded to a full public high school from years seven to 12.

The battling parents outline a series of reports and put-offs by Minister Dixon. But, in the latest ironic twist, the old Coburg High School site, abandoned and sold by Kennett in the 1993, has come up for sale just as a report looking at the need for a new Coburg High is being updated for the Minister for Education. (*The Age*, Friday 30 March at <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/fight-for-the-old-school-tie-coburgs-got-just-the-place-20120329-1w17j.html>) DOGS quote from the Age article

The Bell Street site was to be home to a \$250 million housing, office and retail development with 510 apartments, but the developers, Hamton, have scrapped those plans and advertised the site for sale ...

Hamton said it would be happy to sell the site to the state government to use as a school.

Education Minister Martin Dixon will receive an updated report from his department today.

Ms Hall said it was ironic that site was being sold in the same week that the minister was receiving a report on the issue.

The local federal MP, Kelvin Thomson, said the state government should consider the site for a new secondary school.

"The closure of the old Coburg High School was a mistake which has diminished secondary education options for the rapidly growing number of children in Coburg and Pascoe Vale," he said.

However, a Department of Education and Early Childhood Development spokesman said: "The department is not seeking to purchase any additional land in the Coburg area."



The parents and children of the Coburg area have placed The Baillieu government and Minister, Martin Dixon on trial.

If they do not provide a secondary public school for this local community they have failed the most basic test of a democratic government.

MERENDA/DOREEN

Articulate and media savvy parents in the Mernda/Doreen area have been petitioning the government for a public secondary school in the area. There is a Christian, and Anglican and a Uniting Church secondary school – and a Muslim Shia school proposed – but no public secondary school. There is a public/private primary school next door to a Catholic school, but no public secondary school. The State Government has not even acquired a site for such a school.

Information about this group of parents is on their Facebook page at

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/We-need-a-Doreen-Secondary-College/101034423303115>

Meanwhile, the amount proposed for new public schools and maintenance in the State Budget is derisory.

Mr Dixon should be called for what he is – the Minister for Private Education – and replaced by a Minister who is committed to the provision of a public education for every Victorian child.

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