

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

PRESS RELEASE 474

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE SINGS FROM THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
AUSTRALIA EDUCATIONAL HYMN SHEET**

26 May 2012

In a Speech to the Christian Schools Australia National Policy Forum on 21 May 2012, Christopher Pyne promised ‘more of the same inequities’ in Australian education. The speech is an indication of the Opposition’s tunnel vision on Australian education. Pyne, like his leader Abbott is a product of the Roman Catholic system and its pre-enlightenment mind-set. Not unsurprisingly, their political and educational philosophy ignores the vast majority of children in public schools.

<http://www.pyneonline.com.au/media/speeches-media/speech-to-christian-schools-australia-national-policy-forum>

The only good thing about the Opposition’s policy is that they reject the Gonski version of the ‘voucher system’ (the National Resource Standard) .

However, this is only promise to will give us more of the same outrageous inequities. ‘*We remain firmly committed to the current funding model for schools.*’ For Abbott and Pyne the public school vote does not exist.

This means that, eventually the religious schools will burst asunder with their own greed. Their level of dependence on public funding is becoming so great that any government interested in the national interest will find it so easy to take them over and rationalise their absurd duplication of facilities.

Analysis of Pyne's Speech:

Pyne commences the speech by casting aside the Gonski Committee report as unrealistic – there is no federal or state money to pay for the Gonski 'National School Resource Stand (SRS). Given the \$70 billion black hole left by Coalition taxation policy, this is almost certainly the case.

He then lists five principles underlying Coalition education policy.

1. *The principle of Choice* (This covers only choice for private school parents, not public school students)
2. *The principle that all children should have the opportunity to secure a quality education* (although he questions the need for any further funding to achieve this. If anything he notes that although education spending has increased in Australia by 44% over the last decade, we have still managed to fall behind by international standards. He fails to take the next step – there is something VERY VERY wrong – like funding of a denominational system which cannot and will not ever do the job)
3. *The principle of fair, objective and transparent criteria distributed according to socio-economic need.*(This rhetoric would be amusing except that Pyne turns around and tries to defend the current SES funding system and seems unable to get beyond the interests of fee-paying religious schools)
4. *Students with similar needs must be treated comparably throughout the course of their schooling.* Christopher Pyne is prepared to espouse the needs of the disabled – but not the disadvantaged.
5. *The principle of Local Autonomy.* (Mr Pyne does not support proposals to introduce a National School Resources Body and School Planning Authority. Perhaps this is because the shocking disparities between the resources available to private and public schools could be quantified and questioned.)

6. *The principle of accountability.* (But Mr Pyne is only interested in accountability to community, families and students. He is not concerned about his responsibility if he becomes Minister for Education for the lack of accountability for expenditure of public money in the private religious sector.
7. *Every student must be entitled to a basic grant from the Commonwealth Government.* (So here Mr Pyne wants his own version of the voucher system with no strings attached.)
8. *Certainty of Funding.* (This is for the private religious sector so they can have their cake and eat it.)
9. *Private Schools should not be penalised for private investment in schools.* (Private schools will be encouraged to expand as much as they wish.)

In conclusion, Christopher Pyne has this to say:

'The Coalition has a very clear policy – not a single school's recurrent funding levels would be reduced from 2014 in real terms. Based on the current arrangements, funding to the non-government schools sector rises by about \$4.2 billion over a quadrennium through increases in indexation. And that is a real commitment that funding to the non-government sector will be maintained in real terms, not just dollar terms....An Abbott Government will give the non-government sector the funding certainty into the future without caveats or false promises.'

DOGS notes that Mr Pyne and Mr Abbott cannot see past the religious school vote.

This may mean that between them they could lose the unlosable election!

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