

# AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

## Press Release 1039

### Catholic Church Cries Poor but what is it worth?

When demanding ever more billions from the public Treasury for its educational and welfare enterprises; when confronted with those abused within its institutions for restitution; or when asked to pay payroll tax, the Catholic Church in Australia is expert in 'crying poor'.

Back in the 1960s they demanded millions (now billions) for their 'poor parish schools'. Those schools are now taking in more public money than our 'poor' public schools.

Sixty years and billions of dollars in running costs alone later, investigative journalists have started to add a few property figures together . They have been assisted by Municipal Councils forced to forego hundreds of millions in rates and taxes because religious institutions are exempt from all taxes.

Back in 2018 a number of Age reporters found that the Victorian Catholic church owned property worth 9 billion, the Australian church owned property worth more than \$30 billion. <https://www.theage.com.au/interactive/2018/catholic-inc-what-the-church-is-really-worth/>

On 8 April 2025 Estimates of the value of Victorian churches belonging to Catholic, Uniting and Anglican institutions were revealed by the state's truth-telling inquiry.

Melbourne's Catholic church buildings are worth more than \$3 billion, according to documents made public by Victoria's truth-telling inquiry.

The estimate — **which does not include the value of the land** — was revealed in documents published by the Yoorrook Justice Commission last week, following a lengthy legal discussion in which the church asked for some details to be kept secret.

According to the documents, the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne owns 350 church sites on an area of land roughly equivalent to 56 MCGs.

The estimated value of nearly \$3.3 billion reflects the insured value of 730 buildings on church sites controlled by Melbourne's Catholic archdiocese, which extends to Yea and Geelong.

The estimate excludes the value of other land the church owns including:

- schools (there are more than 300 Catholic-owned primary schools within the Melbourne archdiocese)
- universities, including residential colleges
- hospitals
- aged-care facilities
- properties owned by other church-owned related entities (like convents and monasteries)

The Melbourne archdiocese has warned Yoorrook this figure "may not be fully reliable," and "should not be construed as definitive or comprehensive", given the submission was prepared in a short period of time.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-04-08/melbourne-catholic-churches-billion-dollar-value-truth-telling/104924228>

DOGS note that this wealthy institution is not only entangled with the State in the building up of its wealth. It uses this wealth – leached from taxpayer funds - to exert political influence in public and educational policy.

The sectarian educational policy pursued by the majority of religious organisations in this country involves the separation of children on the basis of class creed and colour. And now they have the gall to discriminate against teachers and children on the basis of whether a child's parents are 'woke'.

Politicians and religious men should look carefully at this entanglement of Church and State when they bemoan the erosion of our democratic and cohesive society.

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