

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Press Release 1040

Congratulations to Murat Dizdar for Defending Public Education and Questioning the Private Sector

DOGS wish to congratulate NSW Education Secretary, Durat Dizdar for defending and promoting public education. It is to be hoped that other Secretaries of Public Education throughout Australia see fit to follow his example.

[Murat Dizdar was interviewed by the ABC's Australian Story on Monday 6 April and was quoted in a preview article for the broadcaster saying the existence of private schools "needs to be debated and discussed".](#)

"I'm not sure that when you look at the facts around the globe, you need that provision," Dizdar is quoted as saying in an article on ABC's online news website and both the interview and the immediate reaction of the private sector were reported in the Sydney Morning Herald on 8 April 2025.

"We've had countries across the world that have been very successful on their educational path with one provision, and that's been a public provision. It needs to be debated and discussed."

This took a lot of guts, passion, and courage. Public servants in the education sector usually self muzzle when it comes to taking on the private sector. That is when they are not patrons of that sector themselves.

Not unexpectedly, his comments sparked a fierce backlash from Catholic Schools NSW. Its chief executive, Dallas McInerney, releasing a statement confirming he had contacted the offices of NSW Premier Chris Minns and Education Minister Prue Car to express his "deep concern".

"The secretary's comments are outrageously bad and very worrying for Catholic education," McInerney said in the statement sent to the state's Catholic schools.

"It is significant for all the wrong reasons when the NSW's most senior educational official puts a question mark over the role and future of our (and other non-

government) schools and further invites a national discussion about his preference for a one-provision (public only) model of schooling for Australia,” he said.

“Thankfully, the department does not make policy; it is charged with implementing government policy.”

Their political harassment worked.

NSW politicians vehemently reiterated their support for the private sector

Hours before the *Australian Story* episode *Class Wars* went to air, Dizdar appeared to walk back his comments calling into question the existence of private schools.

In a [statement published](#) on the NSW Department of Education website, he said his comments *“regarding public provision were not intended to disrespect the good work of my colleagues in other sectors”*.

Australian Story detailed Dizdar’s career, from being a student at selective Fort Street High School to becoming head of the NSW public education sector after two decades in the state system as a teacher, principal and in senior departmental roles.

“I’ve been to 1600 schools out of the 2200 in the state,” he said. “I don’t consider it a job. To me, it’s a life passion.”

His comments come as public schools in NSW face declining enrolment share as parents increasingly leave the public school system and turn to private and Catholic schools, driven in part by better academic outcomes, stricter discipline and concerns about violence.

Dizdar also outlined the state’s plan for public education and the commitment to explicit teaching across the state’s schools and welcomed NSW’s recent \$4.8 billion school funding deal with the Commonwealth.

“The last four or five years has really hurt on a personal front. I don’t like the fact we’ve lost 25,000 students that were with us in our system and have made alternative choices ... I want to win back those enrolments,” he said on the program.

The most interesting reaction to Dizdar’s remarks were the comments from the readers of the Sydney Morning Herald.

The vast majority took the DOGS position – private schools should not be publicly funded.

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