

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Press Release #1078

The Erosion of Separation of Church and State has led to Turbulence in the Liberal Party and a Shift to the Right in Australian Politics.

Corruption of Accountability in the Expenditure of Public Money in Education in the NSW Catholic Education Office is symptomatic of a much broader corruption of and takeover of the Liberal Party in many States and at the federal level in Australia.

We saw these right wing takeover tactics with the Movement, The Groupers and then the DLP in the Labor Party in the 1950s-1970s.

Now we are witnessing history repeating itself in the Liberal Party.

In recent weeks this has been the subject of discussion in the mainstream media. Perhaps the most interesting articles however are those by Bernard Keane from Crikey entitled :

[Melbourne on the harbour: How the NSW Liberals'ICAC farce could lead to another one-party state](#) where he refers to the corruption inquiry into the influence of the religious *Reformers* (including members of *Opus Dei*) and the use of Catholic Education office (taxpayers) funds as political donations . He argues that:

In a disturbing parallel with the last decade in Victoria, the factional antics of far-right Christians in the NSW Liberals could condemn that party to oblivion — and leave NSW Labor without any real opposition.

Similarly, Jack Waterford in Pearls and Irritations with an article republished from *The Canberra Times* entitled [When Religious Conservatives tried to reshape the ACT Liberals](#) traces the effect of religious conservatives on branch stacking in the ACT Liberal Party.

DOGS note these worrying developments and argue that authoritarian religious groups have always assumed a God given right to take power and force others into submission. The rot started in 1964 when thousands of dollars were given to religious school buildings. That trickle of public money is now an ever increasing flood of billions of dollars which one particular church believes it can spend at will – not even on its many victims of sexual abuse, but on further political influence.

This is why the DOGS continue to promote the separation of religion from the State; oppose State Aid to private religious schools and defend public education as a cornerstone of our democracy.

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