

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

## **PRESS RELEASE 522#**

### **Federal Election 2013: State Aid Auction**

#### **Catholic Education Clear Winner**

**The Catholic Education sector has been handsomely reimbursed for signing up to the federal Government's education reforms.**

Their 'bad behaviour' and blatant lack of accountability has been generously rewarded.

- On top of the increasing billions in : basic funding grants; capital grants; taxation exemptions - not to mention SES overpayments to wealthy schools - The Catholic system is expected to receive \$1.6 billion of extra funding over the next six years. \$1 billion comes from the federal government.
- The Catholic Education Sector will have almost carte blanche in the manner in which it administers the money. So, as in the past, the rich will get richer and the aspirational poorer. The poor will be turfed out into the public sector. The Church is not about 'real' charity.
- The taxpayer funding of a 'State within a State', and the expansion of sectarian education in Australia will continue apace. This is against the interests of our democracy, our next generation of students, our national competitiveness in the global economy, and our civil society.

The increase from the \$1.4 billion initially on offer in April to the \$1.6 billion offered by Rudd and Shorten is partly explained by a newly offered 'implementation fund'.

Mr Rudd said the extra funding would help Catholic schools implement key aspects of the reforms including teacher performance reviews and increased data collection.

He gave into any requirements for transparency or accountability for expenditure of public moneys and claimed that he *respected the need for the Catholic sector to maintain flexibility in distributing the funding.*

*“The Rudd government has the utmost respect for the integrity and autonomy of the Catholic education system, which for over 150 years has served some of the most disadvantaged communities in Australia,”* he said.

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/federal-election-2013/catholic-sector-signs-up-to-school-funding-reforms-20130723-2qfjp.html>

This means that the outrageous lack of accountability of the Catholic Education systems throughout Australia, will continue to undermine basic democratic principles of accountability for public moneys.

As Trevor Cobbold from Save our Schools points out:

1. It is not good enough for Catholic education systems to get billions of dollars in taxpayer funds and not have to account for how they distribute this funding to member schools. A 2009 National Audit Office report and the Gonski report on school funding both criticised the lack of transparency on how school systems distribute taxpayer funds to their member schools.
2. 7. The Federal Government should adopt the recommendation of the Gonski report that school systems should disclose how they allocate taxpayer funds to member schools. The recommendation should be written into school funding legislation.
3. 8. The massive over-funding of high SES Catholic (and other high SES private schools) is a barrier to reducing the large achievement gap between rich and poor identified in the Gonski report. It compounds a large resource advantage for high SES schools and it denies much-needed funds to disadvantaged government and private schools.
4. 9. The \$615 million a year in over-funding for private schools would be a good initial down-payment on the Gonski report's recommendation for a \$5 billion funding increase for disadvantaged government and private schools.

- [Catholic Education Authorities Mislead on Over-Funding.pdf](#)

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