

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 529#

STATE AID BAD FOR RELIGION : UNITING CHURCHES SOLD OFF

17 October 2013.

DOGS have always claimed that State Aid to Church schools is not only bad for education. It proves disastrous for religion.

The more religious enterprises are propped up with taxpayer funds, the less committed adherents become to their religious beliefs.

As the State Aid bill has soared since the 1960s, attendance at church has plummeted. The pews are empty. "For Sale" notices appear on crumbling churches. Church schools are no longer about religious belief. They have descended into the market place of consumer aspiration, the plaything of insecure parents.

The Uniting Church of Victoria is currently proving the point.

It is currently forced to sell off 56 Victorian church properties in order to pay off the debt incurred by the Acacia College Mernda debacle. Acacia College closed last year after opening its doors in February 2010 for students from prep to Year 9 in a rapidly-expanding growth corridor in Melbourne's north. Cost overruns and unanticipated financial obligations discovered late in 2012 left the school's finances in disarray. **The 56 properties however, represent less than one per cent of the Victorian and Tasmanian Synod's property portfolio.** See <http://www.news.com.au/breaking-news/national/uniting-church-sells-off-56-vic-properties/story-e6frku9-1226736679816>

MEANWHILE , Wesley College is offloading the first blocks in a four-hectare portion of land at the edge of its Glen Waverley Campus for approximately \$20 million, and Methodist Ladies College enjoys facilities that are superior to those of Melbourne University. These schools could perhaps provide the church with some petty cash to prop up the properties of the 14 congregations affected by church mismanagement of funds.

DOGS SUGGEST IT IS TIME CHURCHES PAID FOR THEIR OWN SCHOOLS AND LEFT

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