

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 538#

PYNE USING CURRICULUM TO FURTHER ENTANGLE RELIGION WITH THE STATE

16 January 2014

The Federal Minister for Education, Christopher Pyne, is trying to pull off a political stunt. He wishes to divert attention away from Coalition inequitable funding policies. Nor does he wish to confront the real reason for the failure of Australian education to keep up with International standards – a greedy denominational system. So he diverts attention with mealy mouthed moralising and - a review of the national curriculum. In the process he is undermining our secular State and seeking to further entangle religion with the State through what is actually taught in our schools.

The reviewers are business academic Ken Wiltshire and education consultant Kevin Donnelly. Both are regarded as outspoken conservative culture warriors with links to the Liberal party . Like Abbott, Donnelly has also had connections with the DLP.

Pyne and Donnelly talk about teaching our children Western traditions and Judeo-Christian values, but Coalition education policies reflect DLP obsessions. Santamaria and Cardinal Pell, promoters of anti-democratic, authoritarian religious ‘Western’ values are now casting a long shadow over Australian public education. One commentator had this to say:

[Azdrubal6 LisaGuf 11 January 2014 6:10am](#) : Sorry to disappoint, there is no actual review. It's just part of the show to get education to where they're taking it. Where that is, was I suspect decided long ago, probably at a meeting between Santamaria and the archbishop. Big Tony has the script - that's all you need to know.

Public Education Supporters Need to get back to Basics: A Free Secular and Universal Public Education System with Sole Public Funding and Separation of Religion from the State

What do we know about Kevin Donnelly and Ken Wiltshire, the two men Pyne has appointed to run the process?

According to Bridie Jabour 10 January 2014, in *History wars: the men behind the national school curriculum review* at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/10/the-men-behind-the-school-curriculum-review>

Kevin Donnelly

Kevin Donnelly heads the Education Standards Institute which is owned by the K Donnelly Family Trust, according to a search of the institute's ABN. He has written on education for the *Drum*, the *Australian* and the *Conversation*, among others, and has argued the current curriculum is taught through an "Indigenous, Asian and environmental" perspective.

He has also railed against what he sees as the promotion to students of "alternative sexuality and gender lifestyles". In a [piece for the now-defunct the Punch](#) in 2010, he warned about the impact of voting Green in the Victorian state election.

"Government and other faith-based schools will also be made to teach a curriculum that positively discriminates in favour of gays, lesbians, transgender and intersex persons," he said.

Donnelly was chief of staff for Kevin Andrews when he was shadow education minister and in the 1990s worked for tobacco company Philip Morris on [developing an educational program for school children](#) (also mentioned in [this research paper](#)) with the company's backing.

The program was called "I've Got the Power" and taught children about making responsible decisions by themselves. Choices about cigarette smoking were included in the pack as part of things they should say no to, but the health dangers of tobacco were not mentioned. The pack was not labelled as being produced by a tobacco company.

Donnelly defended the program, saying it was only financed by Philip Morris and that the company had no control over what went into the packs.

"Philip Morris is genuinely interested in putting a quality program into schools to empower people, but they have been criticised. In reality, they are damned if they do and damned if they don't when they should be congratulated," he [told the New Zealand Herald in 1999](#).

Donnelly wants to bring a more “Judeo-Christian” approach to history teaching and has previously written that at every year level teachers must incorporate Australian indigenous histories and cultures into an “overwhelming” number of topics.

“Add the fact that students must be taught ‘intercultural understanding’, with its focus on diversity and difference, and are told to value their own cultures and the cultures, languages and beliefs of others, and it's clear that the underlying philosophy is cultural relativism,” he wrote in the Australian earlier this year.

Donnelly also believes studies of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, the Ottoman empire, Renaissance Italy, the Vikings and medieval Europe should be compulsory.

When he was asked by a Crikey journalist on Friday if he was a member of the Liberal party, Donnelly replied that the question was not relevant.

Ken Wiltshire



Ken Wiltshire oversaw a review of Queensland's education curriculum in the 1990s. Photograph: UQ business school

Wiltshire is a Queensland-based academic who has also written for the Australian and used a column in the newspaper earlier this year to label the implementation of the Gonski funding model by the Gillard government “a national disgrace”.

Wiltshire oversaw a review of Queensland’s education curriculum in the 1990s under the Labor premier Wayne Goss who agreed to implement 95% of the recommendations, though Wiltshire accuses former prime minister and Goss chief of staff at the time, Kevin Rudd, of sabotaging the plan.

“It is unfortunate that Kevin Rudd has little credibility when it comes to education,” he wrote.

“When the Goss government commissioned the review of the Queensland school curriculum and agreed to more than 95% of its recommendations, Rudd took no interest in the implementation and allowed many of the initiatives to be sabotaged.”

He added: “Indeed his own gargantuan Office of Cabinet tried to sink many of the recommendations from the beginning, based on personal biases and ideology.”

Wiltshire is a supporter of the Gonski blueprint of funding and in the same piece before the election wrote that he hoped Tony Abbott would implement it if he won government.

In 2010 he argued for the independents to side with Abbott in creating a minority government, saying it would be the wish of the majority of people in their individual electorates and if the Greens aligned with Labor it would create backdoor deals.

“Through this back door Labor would be able to introduce the Greens' priorities on gay marriage, softer border protection, and heftier mining taxes and so on,” he said.

He ended the piece: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

Wiltshire is the JD Story professor of public administration at the University of Queensland business school.

The following comments are of interest:

[nogapsallowed](#) : [12 January 2014 7:59am](#)

So it is not relevant whether Donnelly is a Liberal Party member, is it?

Is it of any relevance that the whole ideological push of the present government appears to be driven by the conservative think-tank, the Institute of Public Affairs? And that among the corporate sponsors of that group is Big Tobacco?

Donnelly's appointment is as breathtaking in its audacity as Brandis's selection of Human Rights Commissioner from the ranks of the IPA, long renowned for its vocal hostility to human rights issues.

On every front the LNP is putting foxes in charge of the chicken pens. Ideological warfare it certainly is. A fit and proper way to run a country it ain't

And

[Roodan](#) : [11 January 2014 7:13am](#)

The most brilliant propagandist technique will yield no success unless one fundamental principle is borne in mind constantly - it must confine itself to a few points and repeat them over and over.” — Joseph Goebbels

Of course there is no such thing as world history. England and its racially constructed colony pooped out of the sea, without influence from any other nation like a virgin and other such **Judeo-Christian”(Islamic)** fundamentalist bullshit.

In a world where studies of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, the Ottoman empire, Renaissance Italy, the Vikings and medieval Europe should be compulsory.

Yet one that ignores the existence of a far earlier Local Asian, Chinese Japanese and Australian history which in the cases of China had a civilization when Europeans still mostly lived in caves, it beggars belief that such blinkered reading of human history could be described as educational .

Such self-aggrandising, delusion **can do nothing but harm to Australia;** a maturing Nation with it's own distinctive personality, that unlike most colonial leavings, has the opportunity to carve out a unique culture that is all of it own making.

This attempt to suppress the development of a natural Australian culture is a clear example of a political elite **uncomfortable with democracy, freedom** and the culture of Australia. That they hanker for mummies apron strings is a case of arrested development, let us be sure that we don't allow these timid backward looking Euro centric sycophants of the LNP drag us down with them.

After all the vikings are even further from these shores than the English and would in any case eat these morons for breakfast.

The issue is on-going. The reports in The Guardian on 13 and 15 January 2014 are worth a visit.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/14/school-curriculum-review-conservative-panellist-hits-back-at-critics?INTCMP=ILCNETTXT3487>

http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jan/13/australias-judeo-christian-heritage-doesnt-exist?CMP=ema_632

and

The January 13 editorial in the Sydney Morning Herald is worth a visit.
<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/smh-editorial/curriculum-review-must-focus-on-the-needs-of-children-20140112-30oor.html#ixzz2qbdrbAKp>

