

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 561#

WHO IS RICHARD BOLT, SECRETARY OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, VICTORIA

On July 21 Victoria's top education bureaucrat, Richard Bolt was reported as attacking the role the federal government plays in school funding. See <http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/blast-for-canberras-role-in-funding-education-20140717-ztxvd.html>

Richard Bolt, an engineer with administrative experience has no prior experience in public education. He is the brother of Andrew Bolt, the *Herald Sun* political commentator.

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/media-and-marketing/i-dont-have-to-fear-insulting-people--20111121-1nptc.html>

Addressing an economics conference at Melbourne University on the issue of federalism Mr Bolt called for an end to meetings of education ministers. According to Geoff Maslen in *The Age July 21*, he described the current Commonwealth funding of private and public schools as 'very dysfunctional'

In a rare public comment by a leading state public servant, Victoria's top education bureaucrat Richard Bolt has attacked the role federal governments play in school funding, describing the situation where the Commonwealth funds private schools and the states their public schools as "very dysfunctional". Richard Bolt criticised

- The distortion of federal state powers in education
- The two funding streams of public and private education
- The lack of harmonising of funding and the growing inequities

"In the case of schooling, this means the states and territories are marching to the tune of the federal government's agenda. That is entirely bizarre and out of kilter. Most of the leadership in national school reform should come from the states and territories because there is nothing like managing a system to know what is required." He also said that the role of the federal government should be largely 'non-directive, supportive, challenging and catalytic...

But don't think for one moment that Richard Bolt is a supporter of public education. He gives a side-swipe to 'maximising equity' but appears to be advocating a form of Gonski type voucher system – administered by the State.

The only winner in a voucher system is the sectarian, not the public system of education.

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