

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 574#

Forty years pre-Gonski: how Whitlam surrendered to Catholic Church over state aid to get elected in 1972

Gough Whitlam has been lauded for introducing 'fairness' into Australian education. And he certainly opened up free tertiary education. But he gave in to pressure groups who were against free, secular and universal public education.

'Fairness' in primary and secondary education is code for saying that he poured public funds into private, mainly Catholic schools on the basis of 'Need' - which swiftly became greed.

The 'Needs' policy as recommended by the Karmel Committee was never implemented. Before any funds could trickle through to disadvantaged children in public schools, the wealthy schools had to be paid off. Those funds provided to Catholic education authorities for disadvantaged Catholic children were channelled into new, mainly secondary schools. So much for 'public accountability'.

DOGS exposed the corruption in expenditure of public money through Advertisements in newspapers in the 1970s and 1980s. The corruption has continued, with Howard and Abbott's encouragement .

Those promoting the 'fairness' interpretation of twentieth century educational history have a questionable bias. Like Senator Faulkner, they generally have a private school background. But what really happened and the 'deals' done between Whitlam and the Catholic Church surface from time to time. The truth will out!

Consider the following sent to DOGS by Max Wallace from ANZSA

Labor stalwart helped secure Catholic vote (excerpt from Obituary, Sydney Morning Herald, 21 July 2011)

Arthur Rolfe, 1923 - 2011.

Activist ... Arthur Rolfe's initiative aided Gough Whitlam's election.

Gough Whitlam's campaign to end 23 years in opposition took an unexpected turn in Sydney during the afternoon of November 12, 1972.

The Roman Catholic senior auxiliary bishop of Sydney, Archbishop James Carroll, when opening a Catholic school library, said the then disagreements between political parties over "state aid" were "unimportant", which was seen as freeing Catholics to vote for either Labor or Liberal in the approaching election.

It is hard to believe now that the occasion could make national news but it did. The statement was a turning point in the decades-old sectarian debate on the issue of government aid to Catholic and independent schools that had been so damaging to Labor.

The archbishop's words, running counter to the prevailing official view that Catholics could not vote for a Labor party that withheld funding from Catholic schools, came out of the blue. Apparently. In fact, the archbishop's message was the result of an initiative by Arthur Rolfe, a long-time member of the ALP and, crucially, a man with the credentials of an activist on the issue of state aid.

It was Rolfe's judgment that Archbishop Carroll offered the best chance of freeing Catholics to vote Labor if they so chose in the federal election, despite others in the Catholic hierarchy speaking against it. Rolfe broached the idea of a direct approach to the archbishop with Mick Young, the ALP federal secretary and a campaign strategist for Gough Whitlam, and with Whitlam staffers Eric Walsh and David White.

At a subsequent meeting, Rolfe, Young and Walsh helped persuade the archbishop to make his statement.

LISTEN TO DOGS PROGRAM

ON 3CR

855 ON THE AM DIAL: 12.00 NOON SATURDAYS