

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 582#

THREE EDUCATION MINISTERS WITH PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL BACKGROUNDS :

Rewards for the Public School Vote in the Victorian Election?

Although the private, religious school lobby attempted to influence the outcome of the recent Victorian election, it was the disaffected public school voters, particularly in the neglected developing suburbs and inner city that decided the outcome.

Education was a key election issue, with Labor making significant commitments to increase support and funding for public TAFEs, schools and preschools. However, it should be noted that Labor also attempted to ‘buy’ the religious vote with a promise of \$120 m for expanded facilities. James Merlino, like the Labor Party is Janus faced – facing both ways.

Yet when the Catholic Education Office instructed Catholic parents to put the Greens last in the inner city electorates, they did the Greens a great service. Two members from those electorates are now sitting in the Victorian Parliament.

And the victorious Labor Party has had the sense to replace the ex-Catholic school principal and administrator, Liberal Education Minister Dixon, with someone who has at least a primary school public education- James Merlino. Deputy Premier Merlino is joined by two other Ministers who have public school experiences. They are:

- Steve Herbert as Minister for Skills and Training and
- Jenny Mikakos as Minister for Children and Families, Youth Affairs

DOGS note the following CVs for the three Labor Ministers involved with education:

1. JAMES MERLINO:



James Merlino was born 19 August 1972.

He notes that he attended St Edmonds Public School 1978-1984 , Mt Lilydale College 1985-1990 and received a BA (Hons) 1996 (The University of Melbourne). He worked as a part-time Bricklayer's Labourer from 1990-95 then worked in the Electorate Office for Jan Wilson MP from 1996-99. He was the National Industrial Officer, Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association 1999-2002.

He has been elected MLA for Monbulk November since 2002 . In Parliament he has been :

Minister for Sport, Recreation and Youth Affairs December 2006-December 2010; Minister Assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs August 2007-December 2010; Minister for Police and Minister for Corrections October-December 2010; shadow Minister for Police and Shadow Minister for the TAC and Road Safety December 2010-February 2012; Shadow Minister for Education February 2012-December 2014 and Deputy Leader of the Opposition February 2012-December 2014 .

However, DOGS note an entry on the Mount Lilydale Mercy College facebook page as follows:

Congratulations to Old Collegians James Merlino & Lizzie Blandthorn who both won their seats in today's election. As well, congrats to John Michael McLinden for his role in advising Daniel Andrews.

<https://www.facebook.com/MLMCOldCollegians>

From James Merlino's own facebook page on 23 December we find:

Very exciting first parliamentary day for the Andrews Labor Government. Nothing better than sharing it with Meagan, our kids, family and the wonderful people I work with. Straight to work today delivering on our election commitment to legislate funding certainty for Catholic and independent schools.

On 15 December:

Great to be at Upwey South Primary School Graduation tonight. Beautiful setting too - the lovely gardens at Marybrooke in Sherbrooke. Well done to Principal Anne Ng and all the Grade 6 students - good luck as you make the exciting leap to secondary school!

And

Such a privilege to be at Upwey High at 7am this morning with Year 12 students as they logged on to get their VCE results. After a massive year the students were excited and relieved and their parents and teachers were full of pride. Congratulations to students across the state. And always remember, if you didn't quite get the result you were after - there are many pathways to success and happiness.

And 10 December

A fantastic 1700 strong crowd last night for the Belgrave Heights Christian School 2014 Celebration Night. Well done to Principal Andy Callow & team for putting on such an entertaining event - a very talented lot! Good luck to all the Year 12 students as you leave this great school - you're leaving well equipped to tackle the next stage in your lives.

And 5 December

Every year I speak at Billanook College's Year 9 Politics Week. I've been coming here for more than a decade. Really happy to be back today. Always an enjoyable discussion with the students.

And 2 December

Back at Swinburne Lilydale today. Big first step with Daniel Andrews unlocking the doors to the university and TAFE. It was such a sad sight inside - utterly empty. We'll get this place back up and running - filled with students. Bigger and better than ever.

25 November

Children can't learn if they start the day on an empty stomach. Yet for many thousands of kids, it's a sad reality. This morning Daniel Andrews, Cath, Neil Pharaoh for Prahran and I visited the breakfast club at Stonnington Primary School. Labor will roll-out breakfast clubs to 500 primary schools across Victoria - that's around 25,000 kids.

13 November

38% of Victorian kids go to independent & Catholic schools. Labor will deliver a capital fund for low-fee non-government schools - it's been many years since we've had this kind of program in Victoria. Had a great time today at St Martin of Tours Primary School with Anthony Carbines and at Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School in Prahran with Neil Pharaoh. We announced important upgrades at these two terrific schools

4 August 2014

Thanks for the welcome this morning Richmond West Primary School. Daniel Andrews, Richard Wynne & I were very impressed. Daniel made an exciting announcement that these kids will benefit from in the years to come.

What Kennett closed down 22 years ago, Labor will bring back. If elected in November Labor will build a new 7-12 secondary school in Richmond!

The Minister's facebook page is a very interesting source of information. It will enabled public school supporters to hold him to some of his promises.

Meanwhile - James Merlino has two children. One will be starting primary school in 2015. DOGS wonder where this might be....where the heart is....

2. STEVEN (STEVE) HERBERT



Hon Steven (Steve) Herbert

Steve Herbert was born 30 April 1954. He attended Glenroy Technical School 1965-1970 and obtained a DipArts 1975 (Swinburne) and a DipEd 1977 (Melbourne State Teachers College). He worked as a secondary teacher and ALP State organiser. He was Senior Electorate Officer to Senator Kim Carr and Chief of Staff, Victorian Minister for Education and Training from 1999 - 2002.

Living in Melbourne's northern suburbs most of his life, Herbert taught at several schools including at his alma mater, Glenroy Tech. He was elected MLA for Eltham November 2002 - 2014, and elected MLC for Northern Metropolitan November 2014. He has parliamentary experience

as the Parliamentary Secretary, Environment December 2006-August 2007; and the Parliamentary Secretary, Education August 2007-December 2010.

He has been in and around education in recent years as Shadow Minister for Higher Education, Shadow Minister for Skills and Apprenticeships December 2010-December 2014 and Shadow Minister for the Teaching Profession December 2010-December 2013.

Steve appears to be the committed in both word and deed to public education. We hope that he fulfils all the Labor promises concerning TAFE and new public secondary schools.

3. JENNY MIKAKOS



Jenny Mikakos was born 25 January 1969. She attended Westgarth Public School, Thornbury High School, and Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar. She obtained a BA and LLB in 1993 at the University of Melbourne.

She was a Public Servant 1991-93; Articled Clerk 1994; Solicitor practising in Revenue and Commercial Law with Coopers and Lybrand, Mallesons Stephen Jaques and Jerrard & Stuk, 1995-99.

Jenny has been elected MLC for Jika Jika Province September 1999 -2015. She was the Parliamentary Secretary, Justice December 2002-August 2007; and Parliamentary Secretary, Planning August 2007-December 2010. But she has given a lot of her time to Parliamentary Committees, particularly those dealing with social issues. These include:

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee 1999-2002 (Chair of Regulations Review Subcommittee). LC Standing Orders Cttee 1999-2002. LC Temporary Chair 1999-2002. House Cttee 1999-2002. LC Privileges Cttee 2003-November 2010. Drugs and Crime Prevention Cttee 2007-November 2010. LC Legislation Cttee 2007-November 2010. Legal and Social Issues Legislation Cttee, Legal and Social Issues References Cttee February 2011 - 2014.

She has also been the Shadow Minister for Seniors and Ageing December 2010-December 2014; the Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader on Children and Young Adults December 2010-February 2012; the Shadow Minister for Children and Young Adults (known as Shadow Minister for Children since December 2013) February 2012-December 2014; the Shadow Minister for Youth Justice December 2010-December 2013; and the Shadow Minister for Community Services December 2013-December 2014

Jenny Mikakos almost certainly regards herself as a Greek-Australian and has strong support within that community.

<http://www.newgreektv.com/index.php/omogeneia/item/13019-jenny-mikakos-makes-diaspora-first>

She is concerned about family violence. Here is one of her tweets from 19 January 2015:

JennyMikakos: RT @FRichardsonMP: Today I joined Premier @DanielAndrewsMP to release Terms of Reference for the Royal Commission into Family Violence [http...](http://www.royalcommission.gov.au)”

@ 2015-01-19 17:38:43

JennyMikakos: RT @DanielAndrewsMP: The Royal Commission will give us the answers we need and nothing will be off limits. #SpringSt”

In Parliament, Mikakos has voted against the human cloning bill but for stem cell research, for abortion decriminalisation and for assisted reproductive technology reforms. These bills were subject to a conscience votes in the Labor Party.

DOGS note that the experience of public education by the Labor Education Minister and his assistant Ministers are a considerable improvement on the previous Liberal Minister. However the proof of their commitment will remain with their actions on behalf of PUBLIC EDUCATION.

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855 ON THE AM DIAL: 12.00 NOON SATURDAYS

