

# **AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

## **PRESS RELEASE 593#**

### **UNIVERSITY ENTRY FOR SALE: THE STRANGE CASE OF SCOTS COLLEGE BOYS BY-PASSING THE HSC**

**When the market takes over in educational services, Australia is plummeted back into the bad old days of the C18, - before a meritocracy, let alone a democracy. Forget about education for all, or even education for the academically able. In the market place all that matters is the parental bank balance and cold hard cash.**

This became obvious in Sydney after it was revealed that Scots College boys bypassed the HSC and studied a 17-week diploma to gain access to the University of Sydney. Boys from the elite college are the only school students in the state to benefit from a pilot of the Diploma of Tertiary Preparation, which is aimed at teenagers with predictive tertiary admissions ranks of between 55 and 70 per cent.

Eight Scots students took a 17-week intensive course for the diploma in 2014. Six were offered places in selected degrees at the university this year; four enrolled and one deferred. Scots was continuing the pilot with another 11 boys this year with a contract with **Sydney Learning, the wholly-owned subsidiary of Sydney university that devised a diploma course**. While TAFE offers a tertiary preparation course for **\$700**, Sydney Learning charges **\$12,000** for its diploma, which is typically aimed at mature-age students. It has not disclosed how much it is charging Scots, which is absorbing the cost as part of its school fees. These are up to **\$33,098** for tuition only, with another **\$24,121** for boarders. While the trial was only at Scots, it had been envisaged the diploma would be made available to other schools.

**DOGS are amused.** Does this mean that SCOTS, with resources fit for the plutocracy are really just an ordinary school when it comes to just teaching ordinary students. Have they lost their nerve because they cannot guarantee 'excellence', university entry, and further business networks to middle of the road students whose parents pay big money and expect value for their dollar? Are they worried about legal actions for failure to honour an education contract?

And does this mean that the University of Sydney has embraced the market and thrown 'standards' to the winds.

Principal of Scots, Ian Lambert rejects the notion that it was an exclusive deal for an elite school. He and the university's academic board agree that the ATAR admissions ranking system has worked well for the top 20 per cent of students, but not for middle-ranking students who can be excluded from universities even when they may be bright enough to succeed.

The meritocrats, if not the democrats have fought back.

Concern among University of Sydney staff, worried about preserving equitable access to degree courses, has led its academic board to shut down this alternative pathway for school-age students. On March 25, the board resolved that any diploma applicants for its degree courses who were younger than 21 would still need to have the HSC or equivalent qualification.

And State Education Minister Adrian Piccoli has declared that no school students should get an "unfair advantage" after it was revealed that Scots College boys bypassed the HSC and studied a 17-week diploma to gain access to the University of Sydney." Access to university should be fair and equitable," Mr Piccoli told Fairfax Media. "Any scheme that gives some students an unfair advantage is unacceptable and I will be discussing this with the federal government, which is responsible for universities." See <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/scots-hsc-free-path-to-uni-unfair-advantage-is-unacceptable-says-education-minister-adrian-piccoli-20150406-1mfcsf.html>

### **What else did Mr Piccoli and our political masters expect?**

- They fail to make the tax system equitable with the wealthy refusing to pay taxes for the education of the poor.
- They short change and privatise public tertiary, secondary and primary sector and demand that its administrators become 'entrepreneurial'.
- They divert public money from the public into the private education sector

And then.....

- They wonder why Australia has fallen behind the rest of the world!

The only way forward is to provide adequate public, taxpayer funding for public education at all level and leave the private sector where it belongs – in the dog eat dog market place.

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