

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 622#

ISLAMIC RADICALS

AND RELIGIOUS PROSELITIZING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

According to Fairfax Press, Public schools that have been used by religious groups to proselitize have been blamed for Islamic radicals murdering innocent citizens. ('Radicals emerge from state schools', Sun Herald, 11 October, p. 8,

Every publicly known teenager who has travelled overseas to fight in Iraq or Syria or is believed to have been radicalised, attended government-run high schools in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland

Farhad Jabar, the 15-year-old who murdered NSW Police employee Curtis Cheng came from the public school system. The revelation comes amid concerns that religious teaching and prayer groups in public schools have been manipulated by religious groups as a cover for proselytising activities.

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/all-teenage-jihadis-came-from-public-school-system-20151009-gk5vdu.html#ixzz3oa5SpyLL>

It is highly questionable whether public schools can be blamed for the actions of radicalised teenagers. Blame for violence lies with the perpetrators and those who corrupt them.

However, as DOGS have argued, religious radicalisation of teenagers in a public school could be one of the unintended consequences of ANY religious group, however genuine and well-meaning, obtaining the right to enter public schools for the purpose of promoting ANY religious beliefs. This is why our public schools must be free, universal and SECULAR. Dr. John Kaye, the NSW Greens MP understood this. He said: *If radicalisation of Moslem students is occurring in NSW public schools, it is because proselytising Christian groups have protected their right to run lunchtime religious meetings. The real blame lies with successive NSW governments that have failed to stand up to the push to turn public schools into recruiting grounds for aggressive religions of all types. The Baird government's guidelines put all of the responsibility on principals to ensure that the content is appropriate. It's an impossible ask that leaves principals frustrated and public schools vulnerable to radical preachers of all faiths... Public schools in Australia do a remarkable job building a cohesive future despite inadequate funding and politicians pushing their own religious barrows. Public schools should be religiously neutral where discussion is about values, history and culture.*

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