

# AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

## PRESS RELEASE 630#

### ROSS GITTINS AGREES WITH DOGS ON HARPER REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

#### ‘ Let’s not repeat our many competition stuff-ups

The belief that increased competition leads to greater efficiency and higher productivity is one of the articles of faith for admission to the economic priesthood.’

That is not a Media Release heading from the DOGS website. It is from the economics Editor of *The Age* and the *SMH* of November 30, 2015.

Gittins is a product of the NSW public school system who got as far as Cambridge. He has his economic feet firmly placed in reality. He is prepared to question the twin econocrat doctrines of competition and choice.

What is of most interest to the DOGS is his comments on Harper’s proposal for complete deregulation of human services at

<http://www.rossgittins.com/2015/11/lets-not-repeat-our-many-competition.html>

...The most potentially alarming (recommendation) is Harper's proposal that the principles of competition policy be extended to the domain of "human services" – healthcare, education and community services – which is mainly the responsibility of the states.....to frame them as part of competition policy is an old economists' trick: take an area that's always been outside the marketplace and marketise it. Take the world as it is and make it more like the textbook assumes it to be.

Apply the economists' two magic answers – getting the incentives right and introducing competition and choice – and everything will fix itself without the economists ever needing to come to grips with the causes of the particular inefficiencies that are causing the problem.

Brilliant. But often disastrous. Think of the string of stuff-ups that have followed the econocrats' efforts to contract-out the provision of government services...

Think of last week's collapse of Vocation Ltd and the much wider rorting of the misguided experiment with profit-motivated provision of higher education. Federal and state "reformers" are totally stuffing up vocational education in response to the problems with TAFE.

**Think of all the money federal taxpayers have pumped into private schools in the sacred name of choice, without any evidence of this wider competition leading to higher standards of education on either side of the fence....**Sorry, econocrats. If you want to achieve genuine improvements in the delivery of health and education and community services, you'll have to try a mighty lot harder than applying magic answers.

DOGS thank Ross Gittens for telling it like it is.

**LISTEN TO DOGS PROGRAM**

**ON 3CR**

**855 ON THE AM DIAL: 12.00 NOON SATURDAYS**

**For Podcast go to <http://www.3cr.org.au/podcasts/podcasts/list> and go to DOGS**