

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 651#

Malcolm Turnbull wishes to only Fund Private Education

The money we are using at the moment is not being spent strategically. It's being spent in schools that don't need it, on things that don't matter. Ken Boston .

Funding of Public Education, as opposed to private sectarian education has just become a key election issue.

Last week Mr Turnbull said that, if state governments were given a share of income tax revenue, the federal government could withdraw from funding public schools, while continuing to fund non-government schools.

His thought bubble was pricked by State Governments at COAG. The Labor Party and the electorate reacted. Opinion polls turned against the Coalition.

The Federation has been under fiscal strain and unbalanced since the Second World War when income tax was taken from the States by the federal government. But the States resisted Turnbull's temptation.

Why?

- 1. The State Aid to private religious schools fiasco raised its ugly head. It is becoming blatantly obvious that public school supporters have had more than enough of the Coalition's sectarian education policies. Still, Labor cannot be certain of the State school vote.**
- 2. The States were not offered a return of ALL income taxing powers – only a non-specific proportion. But the abolition of Section 96 tied grants under which federal State Aid to religious schools are given had interesting legal implications.**

The return of income taxing powers to the States is not necessarily 'the worst idea ever'. (NSW Education Minister Adrian Piccoli) See <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/the-worst-idea-ever-piccoli-blasts-pm-on-schools-20160404-gny3gw.html#ixzz451yM0yj9>.

The States are currently raising taxes that cover less than 20% of their expenditure and are forced to go cap in hand to the Federal Government.

But the Federal Government has wasted billions and billions of taxpayer dollars on an outmoded ideology of privatisation. They are looking for fall guys and scapegoats. The State premiers are wary.

Basic infrastructure has been neglected, or left to private enterprise which only goes where profits are to be made. In education, private schools have not only wasted public money on advertising, 'branding' and a capital resources race. They have FAILED to educate more than a select proportion of Australian children; they have divided the community along sectarian, social and ethnic lines; they have undermined public education; they have caused widespread disadvantage; and they have consequently triggered the decline in the country's educational standards.

The impasse over school funding arrangements has not been resolved, with federal and state leaders agreeing to re-examine school funding in 2017 and explore options for states to receive a fixed share of income tax to fund their services.

The realities of the educational situation was encapsulated in a statement by Ken Boston, a member of the Gonski committee and an erstwhile Director of Public Education in NSW. He said:

The money we are using at the moment is not being spent strategically.

"It's being spent in schools that don't need it, on things that don't matter."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-01/premiers-deliver-assessment-on-tax-discussions-at-the-lodge/7291454>

DOGS agree. A half century of the State Aid fiasco later.

If he wants to win the next election - Turnbull should be looking at

Public Funding for Public Schools only.

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