

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 657#

PARENT POWER: DEMANDING PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR INNER MELBOURNE.

For decades, it was assumed that people, couples and children would not live in inner Melbourne. Schools would no longer be necessary. They closed most of the schools inherited from previous generations. Short-sighted, crazy Kennett led the charge, and in the case of Richmond secondary college, local parents and teachers (not the union and certainly not Trades Hall) saved the school.

In 2016, parent-power is on the move again.

There has been a population explosion in the inner City and docklands area, and the only new school is a huge \$52 million multi-storey private school- Haileybury- opposite the Flagstaff Gardens – for wealthy Uniting church parents of course. But Haileybury and the wealthy parents should remember what happened to Acacia College in Mernda. And pity the poor church congregations that lose their places of worship to pay for failed religious business enterprises.

Meanwhile, public school supporters are mobilising.

Existing schools are bursting at the seams, the State school vote has rejected the Coalition but is hardly committed to the Labor Party, the Greens are campaigning robustly in the inner City - and all the Labor State Government can do is offer a Review. The following is a letter sent to the DOGS from the State Minister for Education on this issue:

Thank you for your email regarding inner city school provision.

The 2016-17 Budget delivers the largest ever investment in Victorian school infrastructure, allocating \$1.1 billion to build, upgrade and maintain schools across the state. To deal with this major new investment, combined with our investment in the 15/16 budget which was also historic at \$730 million, we have created a new *Victorian School Building Authority*.

Victoria is experiencing unprecedented population growth which is leading to overcrowding at existing schools. It is anticipated that the total school age population (5-17) in Victoria will increase by over 90,000 student enrolments between 2016 and 2021. The Department of Education and Training estimates that 50 new schools are needed in the next five years alone.

Many schools across Victoria are facing enrolment pressures. This pressure is being experienced in the regions, across our growth areas, and as you are well aware, across the inner city.

The latest budget including funding to buy land, build or complete 23 new schools. This additional funding means that 42 new school projects are now in the pipeline which will come online in the next few years.

Our first two budgets have made a significant step in the right direction. They follow record low school capital budgets under the Coalition where funding was at a mere \$200 million a year for three years in a row. This had a devastating impact on school provision across the state. I know there is a lot more work to be done and the Andrews Labor Government is committed to taking up this challenge.

The Government is delivering on its commitment to undertake a school provision review in Docklands and the immediate surrounding suburbs of North Melbourne, West Melbourne, Melbourne, Parkville and Flemington. Stage One of the school provision review in Docklands is now complete. Stage One of the review found that more capacity will be needed by 2031 to meet the expected increase in demand for Government primary and secondary school places.

Stage Two of the review is underway and will look at options to better meet the needs of the Docklands residents. This will involve further consultation with the community and key stakeholders. This review will contribute to our decision making on school provision across the inner city into the future.

Further information regarding the review is available on the Department's website:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/infrastructure/Pages/reviewdocklands.aspx>.

If you would like further information you may contact Mr Peter Graham, Acting Executive Director, Resources Strategy Division, Infrastructure and Financial Services Group, Department of Education and Training on 9637 3860 or by email: graham.peter.j@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Thanks again for contacting me and outlining your concerns. |

Yours sincerely

The Hon James Merlino MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Education

The North Melbourne (Errol Street) primary school was all that was left after the Kennett closures. This lovely, multi-cultural school is now being forced to import four new portables into an overstretched car-park and playing area.

So, public school parents are also bursting with ideas. Here is one of them.

The Government won't build a city school 4 city kids. Will you? Denise and Michelle - City Schools 4 City Kids

Our [city schools petition](#) has just surpassed 900 people and getting bigger every single day.

Despite this, the Victorian Government did not deliver a city school in their Budget.

Since the Government won't build a city school, parents have come up with an ingenious idea: kids in the inner city will design their perfect school, to inspire the Government to action.

[This is a chance for our city kids to design the school they'd love to go to.](#)

Entries can be drawn, painted, sketched or even built and will be judged by an independent panel. Imagination is the only limit for this competition.

It's time to get your budding architect, designer, artist or engineer to create their dream school, and there are some prizes from local businesses for the most creative kids.

There are four categories: pre-school, primary, secondary and open.

Entries close on Tuesday 14th June 2016.

To enter, email your entry to cityschools4citykids@gmail.com, once you've sent the entry post it to [Facebook](#) and Instagram and use the hashtag #cityschools4citykids.

We can't wait to see what entries all our kids come up with. If the Government won't commit to building our dream school, then we'll design our own.

Denise and Michelle

City Schools 4 City Kids

PS: Do you know someone who should enter the competition? Forward them this message and make sure they enter and [don't forget to 'like' us on Facebook so you can see the entries as they come in!](#)

Public schools were initiated, supported and saved, time and again in the last two centuries by Parent-power. In recent years State school parents have forced the State government to reopen a number of schools in the Melbourne area.

Those in the North Melbourne /Docklands area should perhaps cast their eyes on the old West Melbourne State school and the old Print College in Queensbury Street North Melbourne.

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