

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 660#

WORRIED ABOUT PRIVATISATION OF MEDICARE BY A THOUSAND CUTS?

The Lib-Labs have been privatising Public Education By stealth for fifty years

Privatisation of Medicare by the Liberal Government has become part of the Labor Party campaign. But nobody dares to talk about the ongoing privatisation of public education, particularly in Victoria.

For this might open up the REAL funding problem, namely, State Aid pouring with no strings attached into private schools that duplicate and undermine our cash-strapped public school facilities.

Only countries that no longer value their sovereignty, citizenry, and independence from marauding multinational companies, financial pirates that plunder resources and avoid tax - fall into the privatisation trap.

Our State Aid to private school problems commenced in the 1960s when the Labor Party gave in to the threats of the Catholic sector. These problems have been exacerbated by the shift to globalisation that took off in the 1980s. Our leaders led us into a novel process, the consequences of which were unknown or highly questionable. DOGS predicted an outmoded misunderstanding of C18 ideology would lead us back into C18 inequalities, booms and busts. And so it has. We are now in a globalisation trap, with governments seeking to privatise what little in public facilities remain after the big sell-off.

And, in spite of the realisation that public education is the only way forward for our next generation of Australian citizens, our public schools in Victoria are being forced into a privatisation business model and starved of funds. The Department has long been taken over

by private school and political interest groups. In recent times, there has been evidence of corruption, fraud and mismanagement of public moneys. The schools have been cut off from the centre, support resources have been cut, and principals are given inadequate 'budgets' and told to go and survive the way their private school counterparts have learnt to do.

And so, they have done. Victorian public school supporters were horrified – and angered – in the last week to discover that Cash-strapped state schools are hiring out their teachers to private schools to raise desperately-needed funds.

Schools are finding increasingly creative ways of making extra money, with new figures revealing almost [one in four state schools are in deficit](#).

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/schools-in-the-red-and-battling-to-balance-books-20160609-gpfy4o.html#ixzz4CLlqjpvU>

Instead of the Department providing sufficient funds for a public school's expenses, we have principals contracting out their budget problems to private enterprise.

The only reason the current outrageous situation has surfaced into public notice is because Philip Rainford – the director of the Harlequin Group of Companies which helps 100 Victorian state schools manage their budgets – said schools were leasing out under-utilised teachers to make ends meet.

The Age revealed last week that at the end of last year, 361 of Victoria's 1528 government schools were in deficit. A growing number of principals said they had been forced to cut programs, hire cheaper teachers and limit the VCE subjects they offer due to inadequate funding.

A review into school funding by former Victorian premier Steve Bracks, which was commissioned by the state government and released in April, recommended a revamp of funding to ensure it covers school costs. Each Victorian public school student received \$2253 less state and federal government funding than the national average in 2013-14, making them the lowest funded in the country. Yet the first thing the Andrews-Merlino government did on election was to guarantee private schools 25% of public school costs.

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/cashstrapped-state-schools-hire-out-teachers-to-private-schools-20160616-gpkj6j.html>

Many Victorian state schools have [also turned to crowdfunding](#) to make ends meet. V <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/schools-crowdfund-to-make-ends-meet-20140725-zwzea.html>. Others supplement their government funding with income from international students. Schools are also striking up relationships with sponsors, who might display banners at fetes or pay for sports uniforms. Many schools have arrangements with sponsors, where they will thank them at every school assembly.

According to the AEU' State of our Schools survey last year, an average 12.3% of state schools' budgets came from parent fundraising.

Some, Thornbury High being an example, have resorted to crowd-funding to provide for the basics of supporting children in need. As the Principal, Mr Edgeberg says:

“I just think it's a bit sad that's what we've had to resort to,”

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/schools-crowdfund-to-make-ends-meet-20140725-zwzea.html#ixzz4CM0AI920>

DOGS think that this situation is a bit more than sad. The dangers to Medicare of GP co-payments and outsourcing to private contractors of so many health services have long since taken place in Australian education. Governments have long since outsourced the education of one third of Australian children to private, religious institutions, which, like the Catholic church are multinational organisations which are a law unto themselves. And now our public schools themselves are being forced to outsource their very financial survival to private contractors.

This situation is both outrageous and dangerous. Starving public schools of funds, testing, testing and testing , again through outsourced contractors or even robots, using results to accuse them of 'failure' and then handing them over, holus bolus, to private multinational contractors, representatives of hedge funds in profits at public expense is a pattern already evident into the United States. <https://dianeravitch.net/>

Australian parents and public school supporters should think of the world to be inherited by our children. We should not follow our Lib-Lab leaders down the privatisation road to perdition.

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