

# AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

## Press Release 691

### Taxpayers pay for Private Schools : It now makes Economic sense to Take them over and Make them public schools

**The week before schools opened after the summer holidays, three things happened.**

1. One of the biggest critics of the federal Coalition's reversal on Gonski schools funding, Adrian Piccoli, was dumped as education minister in the NSW premier [Glady Berejiklian's cabinet reshuffle](#) on Sunday. Piccoli, a country MP, who understood the importance of public education for country children, was farewelled with many many accolades from teachers, principals and public school supporters.
2. The education minister, [Simon Birmingham, has committed](#) to have a school funding plan ready for the April Council of Australian Governments (Coag) meeting. At the same time Birmingham has attempted to divert attention from the issue of glaring inequalities in Australian education and falling standards by introducing tests for Grade One children!
3. **By far the most important event was the production of Chris Bonner and Bernie Shepherd's report entitled 'The Vanishing Private School'**. with statistics proving that the costs of private schools are now 'substantially met' by public funds. In an article in the Guardian Newspaper, they asked the question : [Can we really call schools private when they get so much public money?](#) Their original report is found at [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8UbZRpTfT\\_5eFI5NzNKSU52Z0U/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8UbZRpTfT_5eFI5NzNKSU52Z0U/view). DOGS note their statistics which prove that **it would SAVE the taxpayers money if private schools were now taken over by the governments of Australia !** And on the facts and figures issue DOGS also note that Bonner and Shepherd are not even counting capital , indirect taxpayer expenditures and endowments in their calculations.

**DOGS have a very simple solution. DOGS have always had a very simple solution. If a school takes public money it should be public in purpose, outcome, access, ownership control, funding, accountability and provision. Private schools have never been and never can be public schools. They should not receive any public funding whatsoever.**

Bonner and Shepherd in their Report at write: at  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8UbZRpTft\\_5eF15NzNKSU52Z0U/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8UbZRpTft_5eF15NzNKSU52Z0U/view).

## **The vanishing private school**

### **Introduction**

*Australia is in the middle of a remarkable transition that may pass unnoticed*

*Most of our private schools, which enrol about a third of our students, are on the verge of Disappearing.*

*Not physically; they are vanishing because most are now funded close to, and in some cases above, similar public schools*

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*. In financial terms they should no longer be considered 'private. Private schools have long been funded by fees, with additional support from governments. This arrangement has now been tipped upside down. All but the wealthier private schools are essentially funded by governments . For a majority of private schools the Fees provide additional income which is increasingly taking their total resourcing to levels well above similar public schools*

*The rapid growth of their public funding component raises serious questions about the relationship between private schools which are open to some and public schools which must be available to every child from every family in every location and circumstance.*

*Most of Australia's private schools are on the verge of disappearing. In funding terms they can no longer be considered to be private.*

*The majority are essentially funded by governments, most commonly at 90-95% (2014 figures) of the funding going to similar public schools. Their private income takes their total resourcing to levels well above similar public schools.*

*This raises long-forgotten questions about differences in the operation and obligations of what are now virtually two publicly-funded sectors. This question was never addressed in the past, not least because it was considered that, rather than costing governments, directing public funding to support the running of private schools actually saves money. The amount saved is variously claimed to be between \$4 and \$9 billion each year*

*This analysis takes a closer look by asking what would be the recurrent funding cost to governments if they had to fully fund the education of all school students? It uses My School data to model several scenarios. We show that the cost is, at most, around \$1.9 billion. But for a combination of reasons the actual cost would be around half that amount and even less*

*School funding –described by Gonski as uncoordinated, divisive and unnecessarily complex- has reached the point where the claimed savings created by funding private schools may not exist. We can't create a better conversation about the future relationship between the public and private school sectors until we deal with current realities. The near-full public funding of private schools, and its implications, is one of those realities.*

*Chris Bonnor and Bernie Shepherd*

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