

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Press Release 692

The Catholic Church is “A Law Unto Itself” Why fund the Educational Institutions of This ‘State Within the State’?

<http://www.theherald.com.au/story/4455957/catholic-church-a-law-unto-itself-archbishop-tells-royal-commission/?cs=12>

When Andrew Inglis Clark inserted what is now Section 116 into his 1891 draft of the Australian Constitution he argued that the Catholic Church was ‘an imperium in imperio’ –a State within a State. Separation of religion from the State protected the State from a religious ‘State within the State’ that was a law unto itself.

Nothing has changed because, fundamentally, like dictatorships, hierarchical, theocracies do not change. The power of the Catholic church has been its unchanging structure since the fading days of the Roman Empire.

So, those who have done their European and Australian history, and most particularly those were involved in dealing with the Catholic hierarchy in the infamous 1981 DOGS case (See ‘*Erosion of the Judicial Process* and *Contempt of Court* at <http://www.adogs.info/high-court-case> were not surprised when the Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane Mark Coleridge told the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse there was a lack of transparency within the church.

"We are, as it were, a law and a world unto ourselves," he said.

DOGS, Save Our Schools, and the Victorian Auditor General discovered this when they analysed what happened to public moneys given to ‘needy’ schools. The funds have rarely trickled down to any ‘disadvantaged’ destination.

The facts, figures and ongoing hypocrisy of Catholic institutions are mind-boggling and survivors who have dragged their realities into the light of scrutiny are to be congratulated for their persistence and courage.

The research by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (See [commission's research](#)) found there had been 4444 alleged victims of child sexual abuse within Catholic institutions over the past 35 years and 1880 alleged offenders. It found, overall, seven per cent of priests were alleged perpetrators.

Peter Johnstone, president of Catholics for Renewal and a former senior public servant, told the inquiry the real numbers could be higher.

"The statistics ... are quite conservative given that they're based on those who have come forward," he said. And

Patrick Parkinson, a professor of law at The University of Sydney, told the commission there may have been a "culture of facilitation" in male religious orders which explained the high proportion of alleged perpetrators in orders such as St John of God, the Christian Brothers and the Marist Brothers.

"That gave people permission, I suspect, to continue offending," he said.

There is no evidence that the Catholic church has ever or ever could or would change.

DOGS experienced constant dissembling from religious men in their High Court case. And yet, while they were running this case, Catholic children were being sexually abused – systematically.

DOGS opposed and oppose State Aid because it is bad for the education of a nation's children; it is bad for religious integrity; and it is bad for a democracy which is transparent and works for the common good of the citizenry.

Australian politicians are now confronted with an institution which has never and never will change'.

In the current situation, The Holy See has declined a 2014 request from the royal commission to release documents relating to Australian clergy accused of child sexual abuse

"The Holy See responded . . . that it was, . . ., 'Neither possible nor appropriate to provide the information requested'," counsel assisting the commission Gail Furness SC told the hearing on Monday.

All the Australian citizenry are offered is talk about 'changing the culture of the Catholic church'.

All the Lib-Lab politicians offer us is favouritism to the wealthy religious institutions which they themselves attended. <http://www.saveourschools.com.au/funding/labor-again-exposed-as-morally-bankrupt-on-private-school-overfunding>

This is an Institution responsible for the education of at least one fifth of Australian children – an institution with a proven record of child abuse of the worst kind!

DOGS say STATE AID TO RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS MUST STOP

Not unsurprisingly, they are no longer a voice crying in the wilderness.

Consider the following letter in response to the Hearing of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse:

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has brought to light thousands of incidents of sexual abuse of children by people in authority in the Catholic Church ("[Catholic Church can hide no more](#)", February 8). I have been shocked, appalled and saddened by these crimes against children. It seems that many occurred while children were at schools managed by the church.

An Islamic School in Sydney has had its Commonwealth funding withdrawn due to misuse of those funds, and rightly so.

Taxpayers should not be expected to support the funding of any institutions that do not abide by the conditions for which funding is granted.

In the case of schools, surely this would include a failure to provide due care, in loco parentis, of children at those schools. One would certainly expect that no child would become a victim of a serious crime while at school.

And yet, this is precisely what the royal commission has uncovered. Not only were thousands of crimes committed, but the institution receiving the funding has been apparently deliberately covering up these crimes. It is apparent that the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Australia was aware of many crimes being committed, and yet did nothing – or worse, actually punished victims for speaking up.

It is not acceptable to consign these crimes to history. It is not acceptable to maintain funding to an educational institution that has failed at the most fundamental requirement of being in loco parentis.

If the Catholic Church were a business or government institution, this abject failure would bring about condemnation from government and cessation of funding with no expectation that the institution would ever receive funding again.

I believe it would be an appropriate response to withdraw funding from the Catholic Church for delivering education services to Australian children.

The money saved could pay for monitoring of non-government schools to ensure that they are capable of delivering high quality education in an environment where children are safe.

Jane Robinson Nicholls

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/smh-letters/abuse-government-funds-for-catholic-schools-should-be-stopped-20170207-gu7uix.html>

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