

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT  
SCHOOLS  
PRESS RELEASE 704#**

**Gonski 2.0  
Testing the mythical strength of the Catholic Vote**

On Tuesday 2 May 2017 businessman and school friend from Sydney Grammar, David Gonski stood with Malcolm Turnbull to announce the Coalition school funding policy. This was the same Gonski who conducted a review of school funding for the Gillard government. Mr Turnbull, like Mr Abbott before the federal election of 2013, said he would succeed where Labor failed by delivering a genuine needs-based funding model. How serious is he?

Echoing Kim Beazley Snr and Peter Karmel of 1973 'Needs' Policy fame, and Mark Latham's 'hit list' of the 2004 federal election, he declared he will "bring the school funding wars to an end". This appeared to be a stunning turnaround that will see the government pump an extra \$19 billion into schools over the next decade, but leave about 350 Catholic and private institutions worse off.

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/gonski-school-funding-wealthy-schools-to-have-funding-slashed-as-turnbull-government-redirects-funds-20170502-gvxknc.html>

In 1973, when it was mainly Protestant schools that lost State Aid, they joined with the Catholic bishops to rewrite the 'Needs' policy into a 'Greeds' policy. Some funds trickled through to disadvantaged children in public education but the Catholic Education Offices 'gamed' the system with many bottom of schoolyard schemes. DOGS exposed these in a series of paid Advertisements.

In 2004 Latham lost the election, but not, as Gillard mistakenly believed, on his wealthy school 'hit list' issue. <http://insidestory.org.au/lathams-list-was-a-hit-in-the-polls>.

If anything, his 'hit list' gained Latham votes. But unlike Plibysek and Shorten, Latham was a graduate from a public, not a Catholic school. So the myth of a toxic 'hit list' gained traction.

Although Gillard told Gonski that no school should be worse off, she still demanded facts and figures and these are now readily available. The Catholic and independent school avarice is available for all to see. It is even available on the front page of the Australian Newspaper of May 3 2017. Loreto Kirribilli is overfunded 283.1%; Monte Sant' Angelo 277% Riverview ( Abbott's alma mater) 263.1% to name a few. The Archbishop's Christian, charitable clothes, if visible, are in tatters.

Even Tim Hawkes, from the Kings School Parramatta has some integrity, and is prepared to describe the Turnbull's requirement that all schools be guided by one funding policy is an 'excellent' initiative.

So, perhaps, finally, the diabolical Protestant/Catholic alliance which has fuelled the commodification and marketing of education for the wealthy at the expense of the rest, is showing strain - at least in Sydney .

The bleating of the Catholic Education spokesmen about 'fairness for Catholic children' rings hollow. Where was the fairness in the decades when public money for the disadvantaged was channelled into new 'needy' secondary schools and existing wealthy fee-paying institutions? Where was the fairness when vulnerable children were sexually assaulted by the clergy?

The fat lady has not yet sung. And the Greens in the Senate are thinking. The commentary on this move by the Turnbull government has just begun. As Chris Bonner notes in his (and our) Media Watch:

**Gonski 2.0**, May 3. An essential move, notwithstanding great difficulties and reservations. Various reports in the *SMH*, [ABC News](#), Comments on the politics from [Mark Kenny](#), [Jacqueline Maley](#), more to come..... Peter Goss [explains much more](#) in *The Conversation*. More explanation in *The Guardian*, as well as a round up of [various reactions](#). The *SMH* [lists the schools](#) facing early cuts....maybe this is the time to re-read Peter Browne on the politics of [school hit lists](#).

[The fantasy of Gonski funding](#). Much of this CIS report is quite good (if not original) - but the conclusions come straight from the CIS ideology tool kit. The Gonski review was fine - until Labor and the non-govs butchered the recommendations. Not sure how CIS can lament Gonski NOT being implemented while also suggesting it be abandoned.

This was a response to a Guardian article posted by the DOGS on 4 May 2017 on Tuesday 2 May 2017

Here we go again.

No needs policy has been successful since 1973. In the initial stages a bit of money flows through to public schools and the public school supporters are content with crumbs from the privileged tables. Gonski 1.0 is in fact a veiled voucher system.

The only countries that have solved the equality problem are those, like Australia in the years 1872-1964 that have public funding for free, secular and universal public education only - Take a look at Finland and Germany for starters. Trump and DeVos have a wonderful precedent in the current Australian primary and TAFE situation for the voucher and charter schemes they plan to roll out.

Isn't it time we confronted the Catholic Education Offices and archbishops and so-called Christian colleges for the way they have outrageously gamed the system since 1973. And what else did anyone expect? Have these hypocrites ever really cared about children ? Look what some of the clergy did to vulnerable children in Ballarat and along the Hunter River.

The only way forward is to have a genuinely free education system. WE pay for the private sector now. Take them over and rationalise our scarce resources. We did it in 1862-1872.

Have Australians lost their democratic guts?

PS .In Finland it is illegal to charge fees. In Australia education is a commodity up for sale. How long will it take us to learn....again?

Jean Ely

Watch this space.

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