

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT

SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 760

Dan TEHAN: the new Federal Minister for Private Education

Dan Tehan is preparing to be sworn in as Federal Education Minister, following a cabinet reshuffle that saw former Education Minister Simon Birmingham moved to Trade, Tourism and Investment. Tehan has been specifically appointed to put into effect the ‘special deals’ of Malcolm Turnbull and Scott Morrison as they run scared of the mystical Catholic vote.

Educational Background: Tehan is expected to help smooth out the Catholic school funding dispute that has dominated education headlines recently. An old boy of Melbourne's Catholic Xavier College, Mr Tehan is well-positioned to lift the Coalition's flagging stocks with Catholic schools and parents. His late mother Marie Tehan also served as health minister in the Kennett government while Mr Elder was parliamentary secretary for education. His mission will be enhanced by his Catholic education and ties to Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) head Stephen Elder. *The Australian* newspaper reports a “good personal relationship” between the two.

Political Background: Tehan is a relatively fresh face on the front bench, picking up his first ministerial appointment in 2016, when he was given the Veteran's Affairs and Defence Materiel portfolios, along with a role as Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC. Following the 2016 election, Tehan kept his position as Minister for Veteran's Affairs but was moved from Defence Materiel to Defence Personnel, while also taking on the role of Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Cyber Security. In December 2017, Tehan was promoted from the outer ministry to cabinet, trading in all of his previous portfolios for the job of Minister for Social Services, a position that he held until this week. In the role, Tehan oversaw the passing of the Welfare Reform Bill this year, and the expansion of the Government's Cashless Debit Card trial.

Representative bodies from the Catholic, and independent school sectors have all welcomed Tehan's appointment. But it should be noted that public schools, which educate the bulk of Australia's most disadvantaged students receive on average less than 90 per cent of their funding targets, while non-government schools that do less heavy lifting are much closer to being fully funded, at least on average.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS appear to have been left out of the Coalition political equation – again. Talking to the Catholic sector in a political echo chamber is very unwise . But, then the Australian electorate has not witnessed much wisdom from their masters in Canberra in recent weeks.

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