

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT

SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 765

'FAIR FUNDING NOW'

PUBLIC SCHOOL LOBBY FIGHTS BACK

On Tuesday 2 October 2018, an organisation called *Fair Funding Now* paid for a full page Letter to the Prime Minister in the Fairfax Press. The letter was signed by 27 organisations including, public school principals, teacher and parents' organisations and lobby groups, concerned about the current discrimination against public schools in the Australian Government's 'funding wars'.

What is 'Fair Funding Now? Their website at <http://www.fairfundingnow.org.au/> says:

We are a community of people, parents, teachers, principals and citizens, working together to speak up and demand fair funding of public schools.

*We believe all schools should be properly resourced to meet the unique needs of every child and help them reach their potential. We're speaking up against the **Liberal-National government in Canberra's \$1.9 billion funding cut to public schools that will leave 87% of public schools below the minimum level of funding required to meet the educational needs of children.***

*We can't stay silent while millions of public school children miss out on vital funding for smaller class sizes and extra specialist teachers. Join us and help us build the groundswell of pressure needed to demand fair funding of public schools. **Our children only get one chance at an education. Help them reach their potential with Fair Funding Now!***

The letter is available at <https://www.nswspc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/AEU141-SMH-AGE.pdf> called for the Federal Government to

- ✓ Immediately restore their \$1.9 billion cut to public schools
- ✓ Fund all schools to 100% of the agreed Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) by 2023.
- ✓ Upgrade schools and facilities by establishing a capital works fund for public schools
- ✓ Reverse the cuts to funding for students with disabilities.

Effect of the Advertisement

The Advertisement was in danger of being lost in a week when the Federal Government was in damage control on many fronts. As the Banking Commission Interim Report took centre stage, even the increase in gas emissions report got surreptitiously buried at the end of the week.

So Morrison may hope will the public education funding problems will fade, as the Coalition attempt to push their private school billions through Senate and COAG meetings.

The Labor opposition has engaged in diversion tactics, announcing an extension to pre-school education. But will this be publicly provided as well as publicly funded? Or will we have the ongoing corruption of the pre-school, primary and secondary as well as the Vocational industry, imposed upon our next generation.

Public education is in great need of both administrative and political champions. Principals, parents and teachers are looking to the State Governments to fight in their funding corner. But, As Trevor Cobbold has indicated in his recent research, Both State and Federal Government are letting the public sector down badly. See <http://www.saveourschools.com.au/funding/state-govts-evade-commitments-to-public-schools>

He notes:

Public schools have suffered a double blow in the last fortnight. The Morrison Government announced a \$4.6 billion appeasement deal for private schools with no increase for public schools. Last week The Guardian exposed how Labor and Coalition state governments are trying to evade commitments to increase their funding of public schools through a subterfuge. If successful, public schools, which enrol over 80% of disadvantaged students, could lose up to \$2.6 billion a year. Public schools need and deserve better than this.

There is an interesting disconnect between Governments chasing the 'Catholic' vote, and the electorate. But the Greens, and in part, the Labor Party are finally starting to realise the true value of the public school vote.

Not all parents are stupid when it comes to value for money in education. Even on the 'choice' principle, parents are choosing public schools. Why? They are educationally better. Private schools are about networking systems as much if not more than educational opportunity. They will always be educationally predatory on the major system.

Enrolment Trends

Public school enrolments are forecast to increase by 23 times more than Catholic school enrolments over the next decade, raising hard questions about the assumptions behind the Morrison government's \$4.6 billion private school funding deal.

The forecasts were provided by the federal Department of Education and Training under the Freedom of Information act to the Australian Education Union. They show that, in real

terms, the public school sector will grow by more than 270,000 students in the next 10 years, as opposed to only 11,000 extra students for the Catholic sector.

In Victoria, public school enrolments are forecast to grow at almost 10 times that of the Catholic sector over the next decade, while Queensland's public school enrolments are forecast to grow at almost eight times that of the Catholic sector.

Federal Australian Education Union President Correna Haythorpe said that, despite funding cuts imposed by the Morrison government, public school enrolment figures are a strong vote of confidence by parents in excellent high-quality public education delivered by committed, highly-qualified teachers.

“These federal school enrolment forecasts demonstrate the complete disconnect between Scott Morrison’s \$4.6 billion private school spending splurge and the stark reality of school enrolments,” The President of the AEU, Ms Haythorpe represents a unified lobby group of State School supporters. All they are asking for is some measure of ‘fairness’ in funding for public schools rather than withdrawal of State Aid, they are armed with very solid facts and figures.

These facts and figures indicate

- gross unfairness in the funding of public as opposed to private schools;
- ever increasing dependence upon public funding of private schools; and
- scandalous lack of accountability of private schools for public funding.

The Coalition Government prides itself on its economic credentials. But its neo-liberal attempts at privatising our public services, be they education, electricity, banking or transport are an expensive, unmitigated disaster.

DOGS suggest a Royal Commission into the privatisation of education in Australia, and the withdrawal of State Aid to the private sector. Now we pay for them, private schools are no longer too big to fail.

LISTEN TO THE DOGS PROGRAM

855 ON THE AM DIAL: 12.00 NOON SATURDAYS

<http://www.3cr.org.au/dogs>