

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT

SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 784

THE EFFECT OF SCHOOL SHOPPING ON

THE LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOL

The neoliberal ideology of ‘choice’ has not only bolstered taxpayer funding of private education at the expense of public provision. It has undermined the local provision of education, pushing even young children into cars, trains and buses in our major cities, as parents engage in ‘school shopping’. This is leading to angst in the public sector.

In NSW the problem of school shopping has been articulated in a recent article in the Sydney Morning Herald at <https://www.smh.com.au/education/why-school-shopping-is-killing-off-the-local-high-school-20190222-p50zpy.html#comments>

In Victoria, the Andrews government is under pressure to change the ‘zoning’ barriers to prestigious public schools.
<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/school-zones-set-to-be-redrawn-in-move-that-may-concern-parents-20190222-p50zp5.html>

In Sydney there is concern that ‘school shopping’ is ‘killing off’ the local public school. Almost half of the students attending Sydney public secondary schools live outside the catchment area, suggesting the local comprehensive high is becoming a thing of the past as parents embrace school shopping.

Among non-specialist, non-selective schools in the greater Sydney area, 43 per cent of students live outside their school's catchment area. When partially selective and schools with specialties such as sports and performing arts are included, that grows to 44 per cent.

In Victoria, the move of students from the private to the public sector has seen changes introduced that enabled schools turn away hundreds of students who lived outside the local area.

Under those changes, [schools are no longer entitled to extra portable classrooms](#) if 50 per cent or more of their students do not live locally.

Berwick Lodge Primary School principal Henry Grosseck, for example, said the changes would give every school an enrolment ceiling to help them manage growth – a change he’s been advocating for years.

"They will do a capacity check on your school grounds and facilities to see what your maximum number can be," he said.

The DOGS position was articulated in a few comments

James, 78 wrote:

Absolutely the only solution: every state school needs to be as good as the best one. The whole point of state schooling should be that every child receives the same - good - education. Allowing parents significant choice will inevitably magnify small initial differences. "Good schools" grow exponentially and "bad" schools wither away.

But allowing significant school differences without choice means that preferences of school parents, especially rich ones, severely distorts house prices, to the significant detriment of society - but, of course, the glee of those owning property with inflated prices. Yet another mechanism reinforcing growing inequality in Australia.

Idiocy is Here wrote:

'Only in Australia people buy properties to inflated prices to be able to enrol their children to the school of their choice.

The train network needs to expand, we need a loop that you can go between suburbs without the need to change to unreliable buses, and parents need to feel safe to send their children on public transport.

Open all public and private schools to everyone and work on a first come first service basis.

And , for those who remember Jeff Kennett's big public school sell off and the Battle for Richmond in 1993

A significant lack of wrote:

1990s.. "let's close all of the marginal schools and sell the land to developers! It will make us a packet!"

2010s.. "let's build a bunch of new schools because we don't have any capacity left"

No one could possibly have predicted that...

ICSBSS responded:

Yes they could. Kennett ignored a large amount of data about population growth, especially in the inner and middle suburbs. I was involved with providing a report that showed how families were moving into the inner suburbs and the flow on for the middle suburbs. It was all about the money and bugger the future.

Di Keller wrote:

Let me fix that for you :

Jeff Kennett - "let's close all of the marginal schools and sell the land to developers! It will make us a packet!"

Daniel Andrews - "let's build a bunch of new schools because we don't have any capacity left"

Up in NSW there were some interesting comments also:

Hilligrll wrote

While this article is not about private schools, I was sent to one which was about 20 mins drive away or 1.5+ hours EACH WAY by bus. My mother extremely rarely drove me. I had no "local" school friends; most of them were 40+ mins drive away which never, ever happened in my house. I had little time due to my "commute" for after school activities and my friends who went to the local high got much better and varied subjects to study and had heaps of local friends and activities. While I do appreciate my education, I missed out on so much.

nsw_woy wrote:

I think the issue with catchment is very much to do with one matter only.

- 1) There is this DISDAIN towards teachers in public school among political class and their attacks on the teaching profession more or less have been taken up by the general public and the media and the press.
- 2) Secondly, the public school system has been eroded in funding along with this attacks by politicians on school teachers.
- 3) As a result, many parents send their kids to private high schools often without understanding that private high schools are generally waste of money at the end of the day. (I went to the only private primary school in the city I was born and refused to be sent to a private boarding high school in another city and attended local junior high school and I see the reality of private school first hand).
- 4) The political class also have emphasised on the selective school system as way of masking their disdain for the teaching profession and the public school system as a whole. Even ALP government does this OPENLY. Hence parents have this obsession with selective schools.
- 5) No wonder the politicians that hold the purse string refuse to fund the public high school system adequately. The success of their attacks on the teaching profession and hence the reductions in funding public school education is there to be seen in, among other facts, the issue with school catchment.
- 6) I am not a teacher but from a country-culture that respect teachers. On the very first week of attending Chatswood High back in late 1977. I was shocked as to how disrespectful even NORTH SHORE kids (living at Artarmon, Chatswood, Lane Cove, Roseville and Lindfield) of well-off/educated parents to the teachers at classroom. I was put off from ever becoming a teacher forever.
- 7) If your kids due to the parents' attitude do not respect teachers, why would the political class be giving teachers sufficient funding for their important tasks of educating your kids? You are KILLING your own kids' futures and if your kids grow up to be ignorant, it is you the parents' own fault.
- 8) The only thing that parents, kids, teachers and the community as a whole could revert this tragedy is for the average people NOT to be CONNED by the political class (both ALP and the Lib/Nat) with their attacks on the teaching profession. This way, the political class have to fund public school system PROPERLY and IN-FULL rather than giving themselves gold star travels and all kinds of other privileges for their families and staff and give tax money to their favourite pals and corporate.

9) BTW, go and ask TAFE teachers. They have similar problems and difficulties.

10) CON by the political class is to fool the public. Current state of the public school education is one outcome of such.

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