

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT

SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 787

THE ANSWER TO TRIBALISM:

THE NEXT GENERATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In the last week the news cycle has been filled with horrific acts of mass shootings of 50 New Zealand Muslims by a far right extremist Australian; the attempted burning of 50 Italian children by a disaffected Senegalese Italian; and the Turkish President threatening a Holy war against visitors to ANZAC cove.

Our media and politicians are caught in a moral dilemma. Violence of any kind is assault, next to murder/manslaughter on the criminal code. But when it is caught up with religion and cultural identity, it becomes tribalism.

Western democracies thought they had left all this behind. But they haven't.

Australians thought they had an egalitarian, multi-cultural society. But this is fast becoming a myth.

There is nothing new about this problem. The reasons for 'tribalism' trumping 'community' are many and complex.

There is one strategy which has great potential and a good track record.

It is difficult to change the mind-set, preferences, racism, etc of older generations, particularly if they have grown up within their own 'tribe'. Such a tribe in Australia, can be the economically privileged; a religious establishment; or a particular ethnic group.

The perpetuation of economic, religious, and ethnic tribalism depends upon the separation of the next generation. But, if we put all our children in pre-school and school together, the tribal chain can be weakened, if not broken. Both experience and research indicates that through the integration of our children in school together, we can produce a more cohesive, harmonious community.

This is what our public schools have been doing since 1848. They are open to all children, and offensive to none. They should be properly funded to do their job without being undermined by the public funding of a tribal system which divides children on the basis of colour, creed and ability to pay.

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