

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT  
SCHOOLS**

**PRESS RELEASE 820**

**DOGS PREDICTIONS COME TO PASS**

**SIXTY YEARS LATER**

Sixty years after the re-introduction of State Aid to private religious schools in the 1960s, DOGS predictions have come to pass. It did not take the wisdom of a prophet or the son of a prophet to predict what was likely to happen.

The Proof?

**Issues which have surfaced in the Press in the last two weeks.**

DOGS predicted that

- **our children and our society would be divided along religious, ethnic, and class lines.** And so we have a recent publication on *Inside Story*, namely, Tom Greenwell's very illuminating and timely: ['Everyone loses when schools are segregated... but some more than others'](#)
- **Australians would suffer the loss of religious liberty and separation of church and State enshrined in Section 116 of the Constitution** once State Aid to religious schools was accepted by the High Court as constitutional in 1981. Both Christians and non-Christians in Australia are now feeling under attack and all religious groups have their hands in the Treasury till for taxpayers money to fund their peculiar religious tenets. The current controversy surrounding Mr Morrison's Religious Discrimination Bill is evidence of the religious fragmentation of our society. See
  - <https://www.theage.com.au/national/religious-discrimination-bill-youre-not-one-of-us-so-dont-bother-to-apply-20191211-h1kayq.html>;
  - <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/11/vinnies-refuses-to-be-used-to-promote-coalitions-new-religious-discrimination-bill>;
  - <https://www.smh.com.au/national/do-onto-others-power-of-religions-to-discriminate-must-have-limits-20191211-p53iw9.html> ;
  - <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/dec/11/the-coalitions-religious-discrimination-bill-whats-changed-and-can-doctors-refuse-treatment>
  - <https://www.etsnews.com.au/opinion/its-not-persecution-but-these-christians-got-a-raw-deal>
- **Our educational standards would fall behind those countries that resisted religious division and privatisation of their education systems.** And now, sixty years later, the PISA results are in. It's PISA time again, time to re-run what it again shows and the responses from the usual suspects. The headlines tell bits of the story: ['Australian students' maths performance falls to OECD average in worst result since 2000'](#) *The Guardian*. ['Australian students behind in maths, reading and](#)

[science, PISA education study shows' ABC News.](#) '[Alarm bells: Australian students record worst result in global tests' SMH](#) etc. Stand by for a deluge of opinion, with Jordan Baker first off the block with '[The PISA problem: The rest of the world is moving away from us' \(SMH\)](#). Dan Teehan says we should get [back to basics](#) - and it's downhill from there. Comments like "alarm bells" and "wake-up call" are in full flight. After a few days you get more considered reflections on things like PISA. **The best 'wider perspective' read** at the moment is Dean Ashenden's [What is to be done about Australian schooling?](#) in *Inside Story*. A superb essay. Natassia Chrysanthos reports that PISA shows [no public-private school difference](#). Pasi Sahlberg says [to rush the reform is to ruin it](#) (*Guardian*) Follow-up commentary on PISA from [Margaret Merga](#) (*ABC News*), more from [Jordan Baker](#) (*SMH*), [Pasi Sahlberg](#) (*SMH*), [Natassia Chrysanthos](#) (*SMH*)...and Chris Bonner's [hopefully wider perspective](#) in *P&I*. Also [Jordan Baker again](#) with some telling graphs.

- **State Aid would undermine our democratic institutions.** In our democracy in which citizens should be able to expect accountability for the expenditure of public money, we now have religious bureaucracies which act as a State within a State, demanding public money without having to adhere to basic accountability standards or legal requirements. The results of the Royal Commission into Child Abuse are but the tip of a corruption iceberg. The TAFE privatisation scandal is a C19 billion scandal. Federal authorities have spent almost \$10 million chasing shonky training providers who conned taxpayers out of hundreds of millions of dollars. Yet not a single person has been charged with fraud over the scheme. <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/hundreds-of-millions-lost-from-vocational-scheme-20191206-p53hqk.html>
- **We have craven politicians who give in to any and every demand from the religious school interest.** In the last week we have discovered that Residents will lose the right to object to the building of new private schools – paid for by the State Government. Under planning laws designed to ‘fast track’ the development of the Catholic and independent sectors, residents who object to the expansion of schools such as Scotch College (which they did) will no longer be able to take complaints to their local council. The State government has responded to lobbying by planning consultant Urbis on behalf of more than 20 elite private schools including Camberwell Grammar, Caulfield Grammar, Scotch College and Trinity Grammar  
[.https://www.theage.com.au/politics/victoria/ending-right-to-block-private-schools-hailed-as-a-win-over-red-tape-20191209-p53ic0.html](https://www.theage.com.au/politics/victoria/ending-right-to-block-private-schools-hailed-as-a-win-over-red-tape-20191209-p53ic0.html)

**DOGS take no pleasure in saying ‘We told you so!’ But we do suggest that the time has come to say: If Australia has the will or wit to solve its educational problems, take stock of what has happened , stop State Aid to religious schools and look to countries like Finland rather than the class ridden UK.**

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