

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
PRESS RELEASE 888
ALAN TUDGE AND TEACHER TRAINING REVIEW:
GOVERNMENT BY DENIABILITY NOT ACCOUNTABILITY**

In the last year our public school teachers have excelled in acquiring a host of new professional and practical skills and, in the pandemic front line, keeping the majority of Australian children educated online. Their contribution to the welfare of Australian families and the national welfare cannot be underestimated. And they have done this on salaries which, in comparison with other professions and corporate administrators are derisory.

In the last week they, and their children returned to public schools. Many of these schools are being systematically underfunded by both federal and State governments – while the private sector is overfunded as the system of ‘choice’ for the wealthy and the Lib-Lab politicians themselves. This has been revealed in all its stark reality by Trevor Cobbold in a further chapter on the abandonment of needs-based funding and the massive increase for private schools by the Morrison Government. This Chapter is [entitled ‘Morrison Abandons Needs-Based Funding.’](#) Chris Bonner reacted specifically to the Minister’s announcement of a review with an article on John Menadue’s Blog, Pearls and Irritation entitled [Tudge on the Bludge](#)

What has been the reward for our marvellous public school teachers who have kept our education systems afloat? Without their efforts the international results would have declined even further than they have with glaring underfunding ?

Alan Tudge, the latest Minister for Education in the Ministerial Musical Chairs of the Morrison Cabinet, has rewarded our teachers with an announcement that the Government ‘will focus on improving teacher quality to help achieve its ambitious goal of returning Australian students to the top of international rankings in reading, maths and science.’ So he has appointed a panel of education experts to conduct a six-month review of initial teacher education courses, which he said was the most critical element in arresting [declining academic standards](#).

This announcement in the Sydney Morning Herald and a rejoinder from a researcher from the Grattan Institute, Julie Sonnerman, that the Minister would

have to pay teachers more if he was going to entice high achievers into teaching, elicited many, many interesting comments.

DOGS thinks it is perhaps best to let a few teachers speak for themselves:

Lindy B

Once again, the tory government blames the teachers for their own shortfalls.

JAL

Every time there is an issue in Australian society, the solution is for it to be tackled in schools. For example: consent, respect, communication and intimacy as currently being played out in the media. Many schools already teach the 'respectful relationships' program, and are being called on to extend that. Schools also need to teach mindfulness, help seeking, resilience, cyber safety, financial literacy and so on, as there are perceived gaps in what young people are being equipped with. These demands have only increased in the 20 years I have been teaching, and make it very tricky to have enough time to teach literacy and numeracy and other fundamental skills, as well as manage the increasing mandated admin load. There is only so much teachers and schools can do!

Bruce

Falling standards appear to coincide with massive increases in the federal governments private school "Pool Building" policy and other divisive tactics they have used to create an education market. The LNP states play the same game with prefabs at the other end of the equation. Perhaps we could make education a politician free zone and let teachers teach in good conditions for students to learn in. The LNP are about entrenching a sense of entitlement, not education.

grumpyom

It's always the teachers.

The Liberal Party plan is not to improve education outcomes, or achieve equality of opportunity.

Quite the reverse. The Liberal Party seeks to do harm to public school teachers because they are public school teachers, and because they are in a union. Harming teachers, harms the union, and in turn harms the ALP. Without any consideration of the effects on the education of our children.

And why is the Federal Education Minister sticking his nose into a state responsibility? The Feds do not own, operate or directly fund a single school. They do not employ teachers. In fact they have no personal experience of public education.

Magpie59

Until governments of all persuasions regard education as an investment and not an expense where more and more is expected of teachers and schools with no additional staff, funding or resources, how will things change? Minister Tudge should look carefully at the Gallop review

of education which was conducted by examining the work of teachers and listening to experts in the field of education - teachers, if he wants answers on how to improve our schools. Funding education at all levels - preschool to tertiary- would be a starting point.

SteveM

Maybe we should be putting more money into public education to provide better infrastructure and facilities.

Stop this nonsense that only the very brightest academic achievers should become teachers. There are plenty of people with real life experience who could go into teaching later in life and could make excellent teachers.

Get rid of meaningless tick and flick paperwork and let teachers have more teaching time. There, less than 5 minutes and I've done a quick review - for free.

Nodyarg

Read this this morning and got really angry. As a retired teacher of mathematics, this strick me as just another attack on teachers, who, by and large, do the best that can be done. Then, coming back to it this afternoon, it strikes me that this is just a diversion to take attention from the COALitions failings in Vaccinations, Climate, and Women. Keepng in mind that over half of the teaching profession is female.

And finally teachers have long memories and here is a teacher going back to the 1990s when Victorian teachers were sold out by Labor Premier Kirner and Liberal premier Kennett:

Dad55

I taught in the Victorian Government education system, starting 1978 and retiring 2016, except for three years in the private system in the early 2000s. The expectations, demands and pressure experienced in the latter part of my career was greater in those years than in the earlier year. Except, naturally, for my first year as a teacher.

In my experience as a secondary school maths teacher, during the beginning years up until 1992, class sizes were comparatively small and I taught 21 periods a week. I had time to prepare thoroughly and to engage in informal discussions with sometimes older teachers and sometimes with teachers of my own vintage. Those informal discussions were incredibly valuable in providing advice, ideas and moral support.

What happened in 1992? Our union, VSTA (now AEU Vic) blinked. They agreed to worsen our conditions in the Conditions Agreement for 1992 by increasing the teaching load by one period per week. We were assured that this was for one year only to help the Kirner Government "balance the books". Kirner lost and Kennett came into power at the end of 1992. The increased teaching load remained. There was less time for those all-important informal discussions.

This was the thin end of the wedge.

Time was now given for whole-of-school school curriculum development or KLA based

sessions. The less said about those the better as they were often run by people with a particular barrow to push so therefore lacking in relevance to individual teachers. They were full of "buzz words".

The staffing formula was tightened forcing up class sizes. To push down class sizes, some smart-bunny administrators found that by stating that classes were not 50 minutes in length but actually 48 minutes in length (teachers take time walking between classrooms), teachers could be given 23 lessons per week but still fit within the face-to-face teaching time per week that appeared in the Conditions Agreement. So now they were teaching two extra periods per week.

More demands came from the powers-that-be, from parents. Developing performance plans and going through an annual review. All I needed for a performance plan should have been I will be fully prepared for each lesson, correct work promptly and give clear feedback on assessed work. But that was never enough.

Personalised learning was the last trend statement I had to deal with.

I've asked students who had parents who were teachers if they were going to follow in the footsteps and the response was always "no way, I've seen the pressure my mum/dad has been put under".

It's not one thing that the issue. It's a million little things. Comparatively good pay at the start that just stalls. No progression unless you want to do less teaching and more other stuff.

Limited opportunities to get into the senior teacher-principle types positions. Increasing demands with less time and less support. There is a high percentage of teachers who seek a chance of career within the first five years

LISTEN TO THE DOGS PROGRAM
855 ON THE AM DIAL: 12.00 NOON SATURDAYS
<http://www.3cr.org.au/dogs>