

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 894

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PER PRIVATE STUDENTS TWO TO THREE TIMES MORE THAN THAT FOR PUBLIC STUDENTS – A NATIONAL SHAME

Adam Rorris, an education economist and policy analyst working extensively in Australia and overseas (World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade etc) has written a report entitled *Investing in Schools- Funding the Future*.

His findings have been reported in *the Age* by Adam Carey under the Title : [*The \\$30 billion capital gap: Private schools dominate renovation spending*](#) and by the Australian Education Union under the title : [*Investment in Modern Classrooms would Lift Student Performance New Report Shows*](#)

In a nutshell the Report shows - to quote Correna Haythorpe from the AEU

When children are learning in modern classrooms that are well maintained and equipped for the future, they can thrive and reach their full potential.

The report shows a capital investment gap of over \$8,000 between 2009 and 2018 per public school student compared to their private school peers and that private schools have received two to four times the level of investment of public schools per student, every year since 2013, a funding gap which Rorris describes as a “ratio of shame and inequity”.

In hard \$ figures, Rorris found that:

Annual capital investment in Australian schools over the ten year period 2009–18 varied from around \$4.1 billion to \$11.85 billion.

- (i) Private schools had greater total capital investment 7 years out of 10 even though they have approximately half the enrolments.
- (ii) The three years where public schools had more funds invested in capital than private schools was during the Building Education Revolution (BER) period in the Julia Gillard years when the Commonwealth government invested in schools as part of its fiscal stimulus program to deal with the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) and
- (iii) The cumulative capital investment gap over the 10 year period (2009–18) exceeds \$8,000 per student for all jurisdictions except the ACT.

Adam Rorris told *The Age*

‘the data showed “investment in Australian schools has favoured private students to an astonishing degree”. He argued government funds for capital works would be better directed at under-resourced schools.

“Research suggests you are going to get most benefit from investing in facilities and buildings where there is a shortage and inadequacy of those facilities and buildings,” he said.

“You’re not going to get a great deal of bang for your buck in terms of learning, in terms of kids staying in school, if you invest it in a school that already has all of that and you’re just giving them something even better.”

DOGS LOOK AT THESE FIGURES AND NOTE THAT IN TERMS OF ‘CHOICE’ OF A PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN, AUSTRALIA IS AT THE CROSSROADS.

What no one is saying, but what DOGS wish to emphasize is that every year billions of taxpayer dollars in both recurrent and capital grants are being channelled into private, religious, educational enterprises. These enterprises use this money to buy land, build lavish infrastructure and demand more of the same from the public purse. In other words, huge sums of public money are used every year to enrich private, religious enterprises for the private, not the public good.

This amounts to

- i. the alienation of the public estate,
- ii. the endowment of religious enterprises and
- iii. gross entanglement of religion with the state. There is concern about the influence of Pentecostalism in the Liberal Party, but these figures indicate a much broader problem.

Meanwhile, lack of funding for basic infrastructure and maintenance of public schools means that, in the near future, Australian parents and children will be confronted with taxpayer money funding private but NOT public schools in their areas! For example, already in the inner city which is crying out for a new secondary school, public money is being poured into the Catholic sector to expand their schools, and in the developing suburbs new public schools are years away while Catholic and other schools are already being built – with public money. Older public schools are bereft of suitable maintenance.

Yet, whatever the policy of governments influenced by the private school lobby might think, parents are choosing public rather than private schools., if only for pure financial reasons.

Public school enrolments have grown by 300,000 over the last decade and there will be an additional 200,000 students entering public schools in the next 10 years. But we don't have the classrooms need to cater for this growth.

Irresponsible Government !

Economic and Social Madness!

When is the next election?

A summary of the Rorris Report is found on the Statistics website.

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