

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF  
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS  
PRESS RELEASE 927  
A BLAST FROM THE PAST  
1987/88 STATE AID HITS \$1 BILLION MARK  
2019-2020 STATE AID HITS THE 20 BILLION DOLLAR MARK  
(AT LEAST)**

**DOGS have always opposed taxpayer funding for private schools. It not only undermines public education, leads, with separation of children on sectarian criteria. It subsidises schools that discriminate against the disadvantaged and vulnerable, and involves entanglement of religion with the State. What DOGS said would happen in 1964 is happening.**

**In recent weeks Trevor Cobbold, Chris Bonnor and others from the Save Our Schools group have exposed the extraordinary inequalities now caused by the billions pouring into the private sector. But -**

**On 21<sup>st</sup> September 1987 Ray Nilsen, President of the DOGS issued the following Press Release:**

“Direct Federal assistance to the private school system for the first time will hit the staggering figure of over *One Billion* in a financial year during 1987/88.

What started as a trickle is now a raging flood. The priest has truly invaded the Treasury.

Federal government commenced funding private schools in the States in 1964/65 with an amount of \$2.7 million. Now federal grants alone are to hit the \$billion mark. That is to say, State Aid has gone from virtually nothing to a billion dollars per annum in less than twenty five years.

If we add the assistance given by the States and the Northern Territory to the private education sector direct aid to private schools from government sources will be in excess of \$1.5 billion in 1987/88.

If indirect assistance is added to direct assistance e.g. payroll tax and land tax exemptions; municipal rates exemption; use of public school resources; the cost of private education to the taxpayer could be between \$1.75 billion and \$2.00 billion.

## **Private Schools Promised over Twenty Times Better Increase than Public Schools from Federal Government in 1988 Calendar Year**

An examination of government documents indicates that the Federal Government has promised to give private school pupils over twenty times better increase than for public school pupils in 1988. In the latest budget the Federal Government has promised to give public school pupils a read increase of \$2.00 per pupil whereas a \$42.90 per pupil increase is promised to private school pupils. That is, over twenty times more favourable treatment is being given to private school pupils than to public school pupils by the Hawke government.

The six Hawke Budgets have promised private schools a per pupil increase of over \$662.1 per pupil whilst public schools have only been promised \$116.1 per pupil.

## **Hawke Government Worse than Last Fraser Government for Public Schools**

A study of the percentage share of Federal expenditure specifically allocated to public and private schools for recurrent and capital programs in the last Fraser year (1981/1982) and the latest Hawke Budget indicates a large cut to the public system share of funds and a large increase in the share of funds going to private schools.

The public system percentage share of funds specifically given to sectors in the last Fraser financial year was 49.8%. This public school system share has been cut to 43.5% in the latest Hawke Budget. Whilst private schools have had their percentage share lifted from 50.2% in the last year of the Fraser reign to 56.5% in the latest Hawke budget.

## **Conclusion**

As predicted, State aid has undermined one of the most important institutions in our society: the public education system.

Instead of Hawke's incitement to privatisation of education, we should the Bicentenary with a vigorous promotion of public education and the abolition of State Aid to parasitic private sector institutions.

Private schools are a cancer in the Body Politic and the greatest event we could wish for in the Bicentennial Year would be the abolition of aid to private schools if we want Australia to go forward as a viable, heterogeneous, democratic, peaceful and just society.

## **Back to the Present**

According to *the Guardian* of 16 February 2022, on the basis of the latest calculations of direct, recurrent funding of private schools, the average cost of a private school student to the taxpayer is \$13,189. There are approximately 1,407,962 private school students in Australia. That means, on a very conservative estimate, it costs the taxpayer \$18.5 billion to separate our next generation on the basis of class, colour and creed in Australia. That figure does not take into account the capital costs, taxation exemptions, and public school resources available to the private sector. \$20 billion is a very conservative estimate indeed.

What was \$1 billion in 1987 is now multiplied at least 20 times over.

The time has come to halt the leaky sieve and make subsidised private schools into public institutions, open to all children, teachers, and employees.

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