

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF  
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS  
PRESS RELEASE 950  
PRIVATE SCHOOLS UNDER THREAT –  
PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT OF RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS**

**Two private schools, the Colmont International School in Kilmore, Victoria and the Yeshiva College in Bondi, Sydney have been placed under scrutiny and threatened with de-registration in the past week. Yet in spite of a mountain of evidence of malpractice, attempts are still being made to keep the schools open.**

**1. COLMONT SCHOOL**

Victoria's schools regulator is pressing ahead with plans to cancel the failed Colmont School's registration, as new administrators investigate whether the school's former owners were trading while insolvent.

The administrators, Cor Cordis, told creditors who are owed millions that it has asked the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority to hold off cancelling Colmont's registration, as a claimed mystery party considers whether to present a proposal to re-establish the school in 2023.

Cor Cordis has applied to the Supreme Court for a six-month extension of the convening period – the period of time administrators have to call a meeting of creditors to decide the school's future – as it investigates whether the school was trading while insolvent and whether the directors breached their duties.

In a letter to creditors, the administrators identified “a number of agreements and transactions” that required more investigation to see if there were claims under the act to recover payments if it was liquidated.

The email estimated the school owed creditors, including parents, teachers and contractors more than \$6.3 million.

This included more than \$3.4 million to staff, with parents owed more than \$2.2 million in bond and tuition fees and \$315,723 owed to trade suppliers.

## 2. YESHIVA COLLEGE

And in Sydney, [a ruling by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal in this last week backed a searing report that uncovered](#) a litany of compliance and safety breaches at Yeshiva College, including the school's failure to provide basic education to primary and secondary students, inconsistent enrolment records and that the head was "not a fit and proper person" to be operating a school. But the billionaire owner of the school's building, Harry Triguboff, is trying to keep it open.

The school has about 60 children enrolled from kindergarten to year 10, most in primary years. The school's 2021 annual report shows it received \$1.14 million in Commonwealth and state funding that year. It received \$915,000 in funding in the previous year.

According to the My School website, parents at the school pay about \$1500 a year in fees and other contributions. The state and federal governments provide about \$18,000 in funding for each student.

The ruling said figures provided by the school in its annual reports and financial statements indicate that some of the funding is used to pay external organisation IJL (Institute for Jewish Leadership and Education Association) for non-NESA accredited Jewish studies and, or alternatively, out-of-school care. It also found incomplete enrolment records and non-compliance with basic governance.

The school has had at least three principals since 2018, including Duncan Kendall, who was the former assistant head of the preparatory campus at one of Sydney's wealthiest schools, The Scots College.

In the tribunal ruling, senior member Juliet Lucy wrote she was unsatisfied that the school was compliant with requirements concerning child protection.

**DOGS note that the predicament facing these schools exposes the uncertainties posed by privatisation of schooling in this country and the necessity for a strong, universal public school system which can guarantee a high quality education for every child.**

**DOGS also note that one of these schools is a secular school while the other is a Jewish school. They stand alone and do not appear to be protected by a broader system.**

**DOGS also note that although the media have spent the last two decades exposing the systemic child abuse in at least one religious system, none of the schools run by the offending religious orders or religious groups have been de-registered.**

**Luke Beck, a professor in Constitutional Law at Monash University believes that Section 116, according to the narrow interpretation of the High Court in the 1981 DOGS case, at least prohibits preferential treatment of particular religious schools.**

**He might take note of this anomaly.**

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