

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

**Press Release 982**

## **STATE AID TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS: PRIVATISATION OF AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION BY STEALTH**

[On May 18 the Sydney Morning Herald](#) printed an article by Christopher Harris and Lucy Carroll entitled *Parents opt for religious schools as student enrolments soar*.

The figures quoted in this article proved the point made by the DOGS six decades ago that State Aid to private religious schools meant a return to the old sectarian and class based denominational system of the nineteenth century. These figures were released by the denominational lobby group, *Independent Schools Australia*.

*'Enrolments in private schools across Australia have grown by 35 per cent over the past decade, fuelled by a surge in student numbers in Islamic and Christian schools...Independent enrolments increased to 688,638 last year, according to official data released in a report by private school lobby group Independent Schools Australia.*

*Islamic school enrolments doubled to 46,278 between 2012 and 2022 while Christian schools grew by 50 per cent to 82,779 over the same period. Enrolments in non-religious private schools also grew by 38 per cent to 100,067 students.... The total share of students attending private schools went from 4.1 per cent in 1970 to 17.1 per cent of pupils by last year.*

*However, the Independent Catholic schools were one of just two affiliations whose enrolments fell. Systemic Catholic schools, which charge low fees and are run by dioceses around the country, were not included in the report.*

*Governments save an estimated \$5.7 billion in funding due to the contribution from families and other private sources,' the report said.*

The Report is a self serving one from a powerful lobby group, but the figures tell the story of privatization of education in Australia and the fragmentation of our society by stealth.

Perhaps the most interesting figure is the \$5.7 billion so-called saving to the public purse of the private sector. Does this mean that for that figure we could abolish educational fees and open these schools to the public ?

The comments on the article were of particular interest:

**cherub**

State governments are abdicating their responsibility to educate all children by not building schools in growth areas, and incentivising construction of private schools in these areas. For equivalent SES, private schools perform worse than State schools. Australia's performance on all international indicators of student performance has dropped substantially since the increase in private schools.

**Dingocreekoldboy**

I invested in houses with the money I saved not sending my kids to Publically Funded Private Schools. Now I am paying for my kids to go to University so they have no hecs debt. Our public school experience has been real and wonderful. Thank you public school teachers at Gisborne Secondary College Victoria.

**drybar22**

Perhaps we are lucky, but my sons thrive at their local primary public school. They get a great education, play sports in local clubs, and have lots of friends in the neighborhood. They are living their best life. My older son is in year 6 and he chose our local public high school for his next adventure. Most of his friends will be going there, too.

When we attended the school's Open Day, I was impressed with the quality of the leadership at the school, the values they promote, the variety of subjects taught, and multitude of sports they provide. The grounds were not fancy by any means, but well maintained. Many of the classrooms have been completely refurbished and are well equipped. I have no concerns about sending my son there.

**Greenbags**

**RTP.**

Why wouldn't they these schools are better funded from the federal government than the nation's public schools which should be the responsibility of that government. School funding directed at those least in need is a disgrace in this country and only reflects the fact that politicians with few exceptions send their kids to these schools.

**Jack Brumby**

Please use the correct terminology: Publically Funded Private Schools.

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