

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 506#

STATE AID TO SECTARIAN SCHOOLS A BOTTOMLESS PIT

28 February 2013

Despite all the evidence of the Gonski Report, funding of disadvantaged students in public schools has been – predictably – hamstrung by the overweening greed of the private sectarian sector.

- The tax cake is too small: International mining companies have managed to minimise their profits tax
- Wealthy - and greedy education authorities demand the first cut of the taxpayer funding cake.
- The State Aid education funding bill skyrockets as the sectarian lobby flexes its political muscles and
- Disadvantaged children in public education go begging.

Perhaps the most predictable tactic in the political posturing of the private sectarian sector is the ‘crying poor’ stance of bureaucratic monsters with a bottomless appetite for public funds – The Catholic Education administrations, and the independent schools organisation. Citizens confronted without even a choice of public secondary schools are outraged by:

1. The Victorian Catholic Education Office is demanding certainty of funding so they can build twelve new schools in outer Melbourne – where new public secondary schools are NOT being built.

Stephen Elder, the executive director of Catholic Education at the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, said the schools, planned for growth suburbs including Craigieburn, Doreen, Point Cook and Wyndham Vale, were on hold because of the lack of security regarding capital funding.

See Jewel Topsfield, *The Age* February 16, 2013 Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/new-schools-on-hold-due-to-funding-uncertainty-20130215-2eis5.html#ixzz2LT5JT6lv>

2. The Independent Teachers Union has been complaining bitterly about uncertainty of funding and the Australian Primary Principals Association, a group dominated by private schools is complaining that uncertainty of funding means that school fees are a concern to sectarian school parents. (**Australian Financial Review**, 27 February 2013 p. 9)

It seems that Australia, sadly, is travelling swiftly backwards into a previous time when powerful sectarian interests dominated the State and the educational opportunities of children. The opportunities of our future generation is, in part, in hoc to these interests, following down the path of a country like Southern Ireland, rather than democracies like Finland, or even America.

We would do well to learn from the mistakes of Ireland rather than be led, unquestioningly, by the nose of representatives of religious groups that have a questionable record in both the past and present.

We would do well to learn from our forefathers who attempted to enshrine the separation of church and state in our Constitution.

DOGS note with interest the following excerpt from the Washington Post's 2/26/13 story on the resignation of British Cardinal Keith O'Brien ---

"The country in which religion has thrived most strongly is where church and state are separated", said Ruairi Quinn, Ireland's education minister, referring to the United States in explaining Europe's drift away from the church. 'The countries where religion is languishing either through neglect or indifference are those European countries which previously were dominated or controlled by the Catholic Church such as Portugal, Italy, Spain, not to mention Ireland'."

"Take, for example, Ireland – long one of the most devout Catholic countries in Europe. After a wave of church scandals, the government is now in the midst of rolling out a plan that would initiate a gradual shift away from having church authorities act as the official patrons of virtually all public schools –something that would limit teaching of Catholic sacraments and theology.

The article goes on to mention that church officials want to "confront the rise of 'aggressive atheism' and more liberal Protestant faiths'. It then brought up the controversy in Ireland over the death of the young woman due to Ireland's church-induced opposition to all abortion.

DOGS quote from Benjamin Franklin who said:

When a religion is good, I conceive it will support itself; and when it does not support itself, and God does not take care to support it so that its professors are obliged to call for help of the civil power, 'tis a sign, I apprehend, of its being a bad one.

Benjamin Franklin

DOGS certainly proved this in their High Court Case of 1981. (See this scandalous story elsewhere on this website)

Thanks to Edd Doerr from Americans for Religious Liberty who provided this reference.

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