

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 507#

DIXON AS WELL AS BAILLIEU SHOULD RESIGN

State School Parents waking up to Loss of Public Education Choices.

8 March 2013

Public school supporters and parents of school age children in Victoria are starting to wake up that the choice of a free, secular and universal public education for their children is not on the agenda of the Victorian government.

Mr Baillieu has just resigned but it is Education Minister Dixon, the closet Minister for Sectarian Education, who should be drummed out of office.

Not only are parents in developing areas being denied public schools and forced to 'choose' sectarian schools for their children.

Parents in developed areas are confronted with decaying buildings abandoned facilities, and – no choice whatever.

A spate of letters from parents to the Age of 5 March 2013 illustrates the point . See <http://www.theage.com.au/national/letters/beaumaris-needs-a-quality-state-high-school-20130304-2fh91.html#ixzz2MnMcia3m>

Parents are even waking up to the reality of the Victorian Government's voucher system.

Trevor Cobbold from Save our Schools Canberra has provided research which indicates that Victoria's private schools stand to pocket up to \$55 million extra a year and private schools in other states would gain an extra \$33 million under the Victorian voucher system. This outrage has even attracted an article in the Age of 4 March 2013. See Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/political-news/baillieu-schools-plan-an-outrage-20130303-2feft.html#ixzz2Mi4K0ZN5>

VICTORIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENTS HAVE HAD ENOUGH

THE NEXT VICTORIAN ELECTION WILL SEE THE FALL OF A GOVERNMENT WITH PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN THEIR DNA

The following letters from parents to The Age of 5 March 2013 are of interest:

Nearly 3000 children are moving through the state primary schools in this area; young couples moved here when housing was affordable, and we have sadly watched the Beaumaris campus of Sandringham College slide into disrepair. Is the government waiting for it to die a slow death to sell off the land for more housing? I don't want to have to pretend to be Catholic to get my kids an affordable education. Albert Park had its high school rebuilt, so why can't we? Residents are outraged.

Carla Murley, Beaumaris

Lift your game, Murray Thompson

We live in a street about 300 metres from the Beaumaris campus; the school is the obvious choice for secondary education for our children aged four, six and eight. Our street is also home to at least 17 young children from six families, all of whom want to educate their children at the local co-ed college. But it is currently a run-down, uninspiring site and in need of a total overhaul. The many private schools in the bayside area do not offer an affordable alternative for middle-income families. The efforts of Murray Thompson, our local member, have been pathetic. Mr Thompson, public schooling is residents' top priority, so you better start representing us.

Georgie McLennan, Beaumaris

Killing off equality

So, 2013 will be another year of shamefully missed opportunity in relation to public education. The likelihood of an Abbott-led federal government, combined with Ted Baillieu's politically motivated attempt to undermine the Gonski review, signals the killer blow to this country's greatest chance of achieving educational equality. The long-term consequences for labour markets and our social fabric should be extremely worrisome even for the most die-hard Liberal voter.

Janine Rawlings, Sandringham

Private doors will not open

Premier Ted Baillieu's funding plan for state schools is a voucher system where money would follow "disadvantaged" students. Do any of us seriously believe that private schools will open their doors to the increasing number of students who are diagnosed with severe behaviour disorder or even autism? Implementing the Gonski plan in full is the only way our public system can continue to equitably support the students they now cater for on a daily basis.

Sharon Mawby, Wodonga

To those that hath

After divorce, I moved from a leafy eastern suburb to a disadvantage area. My daughter, who had been a very average student at a middle-class state school, suddenly topped the grade in her new school. Socially and financially disadvantaged families have a greater need for the language laboratories, rural campuses, classroom heating and other luxuries that children at elite private schools or even state schools in "nice" areas take for granted.

Helen Pereira, Heidelberg Heights

The article from The Age of March 4 2013 at Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/political-news/baillieu-schools-plan-an-outrage-20130303-2feft.html#ixzz2Mi4K0ZN5>

uses material from Trevor Cobbold's article *Private Schools to Triple-Dip Under Baillieu Plan*

on the SOS website at <http://www.saveourschools.com.au/funding/private-schools-to-triple-dip-under-baillieu-plan>

Fighting for Equity in Education

Private Schools to Triple-Dip Under Baillieu Plan

Tuesday March 5, 2013

Private schools around Australia and in Victoria would get a hidden windfall gain of up to \$90 million a year from the Baillieu funding plan proposed as an alternative to the Gonski model. Victorian private schools would gain up to \$55 million and private schools in other states would gain about \$33 million. This hidden bonus is in addition to an increase in their direct funding from the plan of about \$100 million.

Private schools will triple-dip on the taxpayer under the Baillieu plan. It will provide three sources of additional government funding for private schools in Victoria – one direct funding for disadvantaged students from the Victorian and Federal governments, a second as hidden indirect funding for all private schools from the Federal Government and a third as hidden indirect funding for all schools from the Victorian Government.

They can triple-dip because private school funding is linked to government school costs. Under current Federal and Victorian government funding of private schools part of any increase in funding for disadvantaged government school students automatically flows on to all private schools. Even those that have none or few disadvantaged students would get an increase.

The Baillieu plan has the same “lack of coherence and transparency” as the current Federal SES funding model criticised by the Gonski report. The hidden benefits for private schools under the Baillieu plan would not occur under the Gonski model because it does not link private school funding to government school costs.

The Baillieu Plan would deliver about \$400 million in additional funding for disadvantaged Victorian schools and disability students each year when fully implemented. It is subject to an “appropriate” contribution from the Federal Government.

Of this, disadvantaged private schools would get a direct funding increase of about \$100 million. According to 2006 Census data, 74% of low income students in Victoria attended government schools and the Report on Government Services shows that 76% of disability students attended government schools in 2011. Therefore, it can be roughly estimated that about 25% of the additional \$400 million, or \$100 million, would go directly to disadvantaged students in private schools. Anything more would be out of proportion to the enrolments of disadvantaged students in private schools.

In addition, however, all private schools would receive a large hidden funding increase that does not discriminate between disadvantaged and well-off private schools. Even elite private schools such as Geelong Grammar, Melbourne Grammar, Scotch College, MLC and others would get an increase.

This increase would occur because both Federal and Victorian government funding for private schools are linked to average government school recurrent costs (AGSRC).

The increase in Victorian Government funding for government schools would increase national AGSRC by about \$150 million, assuming a 50/50 split between the Federal and Victorian governments in the increase (national AGSRC does not include Federal grants). The national AGSRC in 2011 was \$10,570 per student (a weighted average of primary and secondary AGSRC) and this would increase by \$65 per student to \$10,636 with the Baillieu increase.

Every private school in Australia would share in the increase. On average Federal Government special purpose payments (excluding National Partnership funding) to all private schools in 2010-11 amounted to 55% of AGSRC (or \$5786 per student). Therefore, on average, every private school student would receive 0.55 of the \$65 increase in AGSRC which would amount to a total of \$44 million across Australia, including about \$11.4 million for Victorian private schools.

Victorian private schools will also get another hidden increase because Victorian Government funding for private schools is linked to average government school costs in Victoria. The Baillieu Government is increasing the rate of funding for private schools from 17% to 25% of Victorian AGSRC.

There does not appear to be any published estimate of Victorian AGRSC. However, it can be roughly estimated from the figures in the Report on Government Services on Victorian government expenditure on government schools, excluding user cost of capital and depreciation. In 2010-11 it was \$5.1 billion, or \$9382 per student. With the \$300 million increase, Victorian AGSRC would be \$9937 per student (assuming that Federal grants are included in Victorian AGSRC) – an increase of \$555 per student.

All Victorian private schools will get 25% of this increase, that is, \$139 per student. The total increase would be \$44 million, which added to the national increase would give an overall increase of \$88 million. Victorian private schools would receive \$55 million and private schools in the rest of Australia would receive \$33 million.

If Federal grants are excluded from Victorian AGSRC then these amounts will be less. The total increase would be \$22 million, which added to the national increase would give a total of \$66 million. In this case, Victorian private schools would receive an increase of \$33 million.

Thus, the \$300 million increase for disadvantaged students in government schools would generate an increase of \$66 – \$88 million for private schools around Australia and in Victoria without regard to whether they enrol any disadvantaged students. This is a pure windfall gain for private schools on top of the increased direct funding of \$100 million.

In total, private schools will get a funding increase of nearly \$200 million compared to the increase for government schools of \$300 million. This is way out of proportion to relative education need in government and private schools. Private schools enrol about 25 per cent of low income and disability students, but will get nearly 40 per cent of the total direct and hidden funding increases under the Baillieu plan. Even the richest schools in Australia will get part of the increase. No wonder Independent Schools Victoria has welcomed the plan.

These hidden bonuses for private schools are likely to increase. The Queensland Government has announced that it will follow the Victorian Government and prepare its own funding plan. Any increase in Queensland Government funding for government schools will generate hidden increases for all private schools from the Federal and Queensland Governments. Queensland Government funding for private schools is also linked to government school costs at a rate of 21.2% of Queensland AGRSC.

The Gonski report criticised the current school funding approach based on AGSRC as “opaque” and lacking “a convincing education rationale”. It said that retaining the AGRSC mechanism as a centrepiece

of school funding will not assist Australia in meeting its educational challenges and that it should be replaced by a new set of arrangements.

The Baillieu plan (and the likely Newman plan) demonstrates the truth of this judgement. A funding system that allows private schools to triple-dip on the taxpayer is an outrage that must be replaced.

Although, accord to the Age article on March 4,

His (Trevor Cobbold's) comments follow the Australian Government Primary Principals Association's call to end the "politicisation" of education.

"Principals are sick of the politicising of our public education system and the ongoing blame shifting between the major political parties," AGPPA president Gabrielle Leigh said.

Provision of Public Education will be the crucial issue that will bring down the current Victorian Liberal Government. Julia Gillard and the Abbott with private schools in his DNA should take heed for the Federal election.

**THE DOGS RADIO PROGRAM
3CR
855 ON THE AM DIAL
12.00 NOON SATURDAYS**