

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
Press Release 1024**

**STATE AID TO CHURCH SCHOOLS – A CANCER ON
THE BODY POLITIC**

The billions of dollars channelled into Australian religious enterprises, most particularly religious educational enterprises, has led to a grievous entanglement between church and State in Australia. Given that the major beneficiary of this taxpayer largesse is the Catholic Church it could be argued that we have if not a particular established religion then at least a major, preferred religious establishment in this country.

DOGS would argue that this is contrary to Section 116 of the Australian Constitution. Their battle in the High Court on this issue is told elsewhere on this website, but in an article entitled *The Religious School Funding Decision that Flouted the Constitution*, written for the [Independent](#) on 30 September 2022 Tom Orren re-told this story most succinctly.

One of the results of religious establishment is the undermining of the democratic State as politicians and churchmen band together to raid the public Treasury. In the last week a window into these activities was opened by John Ferguson in the [Australian newspaper](#). He obtained its information from the [Catholic News](#). The following article taken from both sources illustrates the extraordinary incestuous relationship between the Catholic church and prominent members of both major parties.

A rare coalition of heavyweight Labor and Liberal advisers has been formed to protect Catholic education funding in the run-up to the next multi-billion dollar national funding agreement.

Former federal Liberal director Brian Loughnane has joined the board of the Victorian Catholic Education Authority alongside its chairman James Merlino, the former Victorian Labor Education Minister funding battles with the federal and Victorian governments.

Catholic dioceses across Australia are concerned the rising influence of the Greens and other leftist groups such as unions hostile to the Church will have more influence in the next federal Parliament if the Albanese Government is pushed into minority.

The concern is that the next federal government will be lobbied heavily to cut back on Catholic and independent school funding, which has been at the centre of a culture war for decades.

Negotiations will start in earnest for the new federal funding arrangements for the post-2029 period in the next government term.

Mr Loughnane has broad political contacts across the major parties, having been Liberal federal director from 2003 to 2016, but also engaging with both sides of politics on key issues after leaving the chief campaign role.

In Victoria, there is growing angst over the way the Labor Government has imposed punitive measures affecting Catholic schools, including payroll tax changes and excluding most families in Catholic schools through the \$400-a-student School Savings Bonus.

VCEA chief Elizabeth Labone said Mr Loughnane's elevation to the authority board would bolster its mission to support the faith's schools.

The Catholic sector plans to hit back against what it claims are "false and divisive narratives" around school funding, especially by the peak union.

FULL STORY

[Key Liberal and Labor figures unite to fight Catholic school funding cuts](#) (By John Ferguson, *The Australian*)

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