

Media Release
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VAGO School Costs Report proves an Education Ombudsman for all sectors is needed

Our Children Our Schools (OCOS) welcomes today's release of the Victorian Auditor-General's Report "Additional School Costs for Families" and calls on the government to give Victorians an education ombudsman.

The report highlights once again the importance to the Victorian community to be able to trust the performance and accountability of the Victorian public service.

The fact that school costs are rising is not news to Victorian parents. However, the public can for the first time appreciate just how much more schools and the Department of Education and Training (DET) could do to help make government schools more affordable.

OCOS spokesperson, Catherine Hall said, 'Our Children, Our Schools supports every measure to ease the burden of school costs on families, especially for low-income families'.

To name one example, DET has a policy of one student : one computer and this is essentially a parent funded policy without any duty of care or effort to appreciate its effect on student participation or family budgets.

The report points to so many weaknesses in the administration and knowledge of current school costs and funding regimes that OCOS thinks only a dedicated Education Ombudsman could systemically tackle this issue and scrutinise the delivery of educational services across the school sectors.

All schools receive public monies so it is only fair all schools are subject to regular accountability mechanisms.

OCOS calls on all families and all other education stakeholders to start talking about increasing scrutiny in educational delivery beyond school council governance and DET procedures and policies.

Last year's election campaigns witnessed many new school announcements showing that local activism is needed to compensate for the lack of planned long-term provision of state schools.

'Let's make Victoria the Education State and start by giving it an Education Ombudsman', said Hall.

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About Our Children, Our Schools

Our Children, Our Schools believes every Victorian child should have access to high-quality Foundation-to-Year 12 public education in their local community.

This means that these schools must be proactively planned for and built, well-maintained, staffed and funded appropriately.

OCOS members are community groups campaigning for the same outcomes as OCOS:

Beaumaris School Community Group (BSCG)
A new school for Bannockburn District
High School for Coburg (HSC)
Doreen and Mernda Secondary School Alliance
Friends of Elwood College
Friends of Kyneton Education (FoKE)
Nunawading Primary School Site Preservation Group Inc
Oakleigh Ward Local Secondary School (OWLSS)
High School for Preston
Point Cook Action Group
Public Education Group (PGR)
Reopen Our Schools (Banyule City)
Richmond High School Choices (RHSC)
Secondary Education for Seddon, Kingsville and Yarraville (SKY High)
Restore Strathmore Heights' School Zones
TwoSchoolsNow (Port Phillip and Southbank)
Docklands Community Forum
Fishermans Bend Network
Northern Mallee School Council Presidents Group

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