

Occupy Melbourne's Dare To Share Teddy Bears Protest

The Occupy Movement has emerged globally to oppose greed and inequality. The Victorian State Government's cuts to education demonstrate that it prioritises big business greed over community need. Today kids and carers from Occupy Melbourne and the wider community are joining together for songs, games and a protest to demand investment in education not wealth for corporations. Visit us at www.facebook.com/groups/omkidsandparents/

The Teddy Bears Protest Song

If you go down to the school today
You're sure of a big surprise.
If you go down to the school today
You just won't believe your eyes.

For every bear that ever there was
Will gather there for certain, because
Today's the day that Big Ted cuts their funding.

Chorus:

Budget cuts for teddy bears
The little teddy bears were having a lovely time today.
Big Ted caught them unawares
And cut their VCAL and their teachers pay.
See the classroom's roof fall down
They have to run and shout
But the government doesn't care.
And everyday their mummies and daddies
Will have to stay at home
Because there's no more occasional care.

If Ted goes out to the school today
He'd better not go alone.
It's lovely out at the school today
But Ted better stay at home.

For every bear that ever there was
Will gather there for certain, because
Today's the day the teddy bears have their protest

Chorus

Victorian Government Education Report Card 2011

Subject: Funding for occasional childcare

F

Comments: The Victorian government has been unable to get along with its Federal counterpart with the result that it has decided to take its toys home. If it cannot stop being so selfish, learn to share and agree to fund the Take A Break program for 2012 then occasional childcare places and options for parents and children will be lost across the state.

Subject: Maintenance and improvement of school buildings and facilities

F

Comments: The government needs to take more care with the community's possessions. Whilst it has increased funding for private schools, public school roofs are literally falling in. Three quarters of public school principals have stated that their school needs urgent repairs yet despite promising to spend \$1.7 billion on upgrades at the election the government has only budgeted less than a fifth of that.

Subject: Funding for TAFE

F

Comments: The government must stop cutting corners and giving away the community's money to shonky fly-by-night businesses. Despite serious questions being raised over the standard of education provided by profit driven private adult education providers the Victorian government has given them an extra \$270 million this year. At the same time it has cut tens of millions of dollars from TAFEs undermining their proven ability to deliver quality courses, including those that cannot turn a buck, resulting in job losses and fee hikes, such as almost 60% for apprenticeships.

Subject: Educational staff pay and conditions

F

Comments: The government has developed a bad habit of telling lies and breaking promises. At the last election it said it would ensure that Victoria had the best paid teachers in the country, but now it refuses to even offer a pay increase that would match the rate of inflation. This comes at the same time as it has given the top level bureaucrats implementing its education cuts a pay rise of 9.3%.

Subject: Funding for the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)

F

Comments: The government must stop being greedy and pay attention to the needs of others. It boasts of creating a surplus of \$571 million in the last year, but this has only come through cuts to health, education and community services. As part of this it has refused to listen to students, principals and teachers and taken away \$48 million for the co-ordination of VCAL. The looting of funds from this program undermines the ability of schools to provide students with industry-based learning and the assistance they need to develop applied work skills.

Summary

FAIL

The Victorian government has failed in all of these areas. In cutting \$481 million from the education budget and slashing funding to other areas, such as \$57 million for literacy and numeracy coaches, it is engaging in anti-social behaviour. It must stop lying and wasting money on prisons, private schools and kick-backs (read subsidies) to its corporate mates. It has to start keeping its promises, invest in education and stop picking on children, teachers, parents and the rest of the community. If it does not change its ways it will find itself in serious trouble.