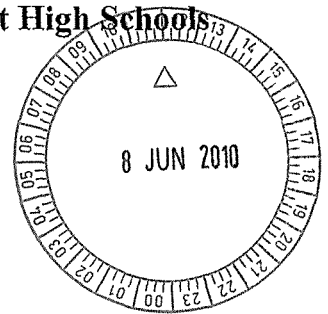


SUBMISSION FOR THE SHIRE OF KOJONUP TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS.

Inquiry into the Removal of Year 11 and 12 Courses at District High Schools

Contact Details

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Shire President

Introduction

This submission has been prepared by Cr Jill Mathwin, Shire President of Kojonup, based on consultation with the Senior School Advisory Committee and the Principal of Kojonup District High School.

The Shire of Kojonup recognises the value this Senior School Campus has contributed to the community and businesses in the Shire. These values I have elaborated on within this Submission.

I have noted the Terms of Reference for the inquiry and have attempted to respond to these.

(a) The decision making process and rationale behind the decision

- It appears that the decision making process and rationale behind the decision is about cost-cutting. This cost-cutting does not address long term social cost to the community.
- The priority should be the retention of students in the education system. We are concerned the proposed changes will force students away.
- Future employment in our town is our ultimate aim for these students.

- (b) The effect of the decision on the State Budget, the affected students and communities; and
- (c) The adequacy, cost effectiveness and social impact of the educational alternatives proposed

Effect on the systems

We urge consideration of how the cost compares between

1. The cost of the extra teachers in a normal school system to assist SIDE; and
2. The cost of the teachers in the Senior School campus.

Schools of Isolated and Distance Education ("SIDE")

We are concerned at the discussion in the media regarding the increased cost of SIDE subjects, perhaps greater than \$1,000 per subject, and who will be forced to pay. It would be unreasonable to pass this cost onto parents as a result of this change in policy. However, we are equally concerned if the schools are forced to subsidize the cost, and prioritize within their already stretched budgets.

We require information if there will be additional funding to cover the SIDE programme in the future.

SIDE works well for average to the above average students, but there is a need for more than this. We need to address the situations of students with additional problems, to assist them to re-engage with learning, and giving them work exposure and more hope of employment.

Our Senior School is actively involved in addressing this gap, and is the reason why students in some cases have been retained in the education system, who otherwise would not have been retained.

Surely this is an "incentive programme" endeavouring to make employment a possibility, and also to keep youth off the streets.

The affected students

There is strong community support for SIDE delivered in collaboration between CWA, Kojonup Working and TAFE which has provided a separate campus of the Kojonup Senior School Students.

To remove senior school funding for years 11 and 12 classes at Kojonup would result in the loss of this campus for the Kojonup Senior School students, which has proven such a success.

The advantages of the campus are as follows:

- A new campus location in the CWA building in the main street (Albany Highway) of Kojonup. This new and separate location gives students a "fresh start", (particularly if a student has had a negative experience in the main stream school which reduces incentive for education).

- Smaller student/teacher ratio; opportunity for teachers to;-
 - i. understand the more complex needs of a particular student (often 1 on 1 situation required).
 - ii. to build their confidence and self esteem.
- Motivation to learn, needs to be fostered if possible. We believe this is happening in the success stories forwarded to the Minister.
- The teachers at the Senior School Campus, who are committed to this community based project, are all residents of Kojonup, with no intention of moving in the near future. This gives continuity of teaching, and is less disruptive than a constant change of teachers.
- Students are treated with adult focus .If rules are adhered to, privileges are given. The Senior High School focus is to build confidence, self-esteem, belief in the possibility of success and hope for employment, and ultimately be a valued community member.

The effect of the decision on the communities

- The loss of not only students from our town but in some cases, the whole family.
- Also if year 11 and 12 is not available in Kojonup it may influence decisions of professional people to stay or move to the district.
- We have a programme in place at our Senior High School Campus that is, not only proving to retain more students in the education system, but providing them with opportunities in the town's workforce.
- The local community support is very strong for the Senior High School Campus.
 - i. Local businesses are supporting work experience, offering apprenticeships. The value to businesses who provide work experience, is the opportunity to evaluate students suitability, interest and work ethics, apprenticeships for continued employment.
 - ii. The Shire of Kojonup is also offering apprenticeships, and will continue this support into the future.
 - iii. Year 11 and 12. These students can start apprenticeships year 11 and 12.. They need appropriate education levels required for apprenticeships.

The Shire of Kojonup has a vision of the population of the town to grown to 4,000 by 2030 (due to private development in the near future).

We are building our town for future generations. We need to train and retain these students in OUR workforce. Employment in the town of Kojonup is very important for our future growth.

Consequences of Change of location:-

1. There is a cost to families of students who will have to move on. Yes, there is more financial assistance available, but there is also a "social cost" that needs to be realized and addressed.
2. Katanning Hostel has been closed; hence distance becomes an issue for those students having to move to, eg. Albany or Bunbury. The impact of separation from family member support is greater.
3. Some of the students we are trying to keep in the education stream have social problems (emotional, cultural, family responsibilities e.g caring for siblings when parents working).

These problems need more than the normal assistance, hence the smaller campus better able to provide this assistance.

4. To move to a large school can prove overwhelming for some students without that family support – especially if point (3) above is a factor.
5. Regardless of more subjects available and specialist teachers at larger high school – this does not address all the needs of some students.

The Shire of Kojonup strongly opposes the Removal of Year 11 and 12 courses at our senior high school campus.

Summary

The Senior School Campus in Kojonup caters for two groups of students:-

1. These students who wish to continue year 11 and 12 studies – with normal family lives and no obvious social problems
2. Those students who have emotional, cultural, social and greater assistance needs .To keep them in the education system, our Senior School gives them that extra support they cannot often receive in a larger more complex system with larger class sizes. We are addressing point (2) with success in many cases.
3. The aim is to give them motivation to continue learning, to have more hope for employment and realize there are opportunities in the town for employment where they will be valued – finally to keep them off the streets.
4. We already have a programme which is working well with approx 15 students and yet funding is to be removed. We surely meet the criteria of an incentive programme, which was stated in the media recently, a programme for which there is additional funding. I believe the Kojonup Senior High School is providing an exceptional service to students and the Community.
5. It has been put to concerned citizens by Education Department officials, that the reason for change has been the limited demand for year 11 and 12 places. We dispute this, and contend that the demand has been artificially kept low due to a cap on numbers. .The communication last year to student's families that there was no more funding, directed families to find alternative schools for their children. Therefore our students have been previously turned away, or actively discouraged, despite our view of an increasing demand for the service.

.....*Jillian Mathwin*.....
Signed: Jillian Mathwin

.....*2/06/10*.....
Dated