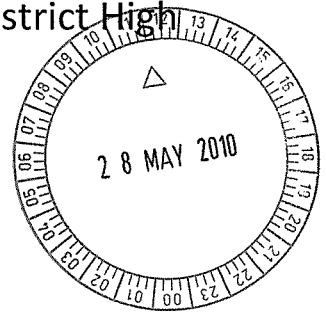


Submission to:
Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations.
Inquiry into the Removal of Year 11 and 12 Courses at District High
Schools.

From:
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The Narembeen District High School – School Council was formed with the fundamental purpose of enabling parents and members of the community to engage in activities that are in the best interests of students and will enhance the education provided by the school. Thus we feel the need to respond to the Government decision to cease Year 11 and 12 courses at District High Schools across Western Australia.

In 2006, when the School leaving age rose to the age of 17 we appreciated the Governments initiative in providing our school with the funding to be able to provide students an opportunity to further their studies albeit a small number of them. Our school received Senior School Allocation to provide senior schooling for students in Year 11 and 12. Our school has had at least one student choosing to study here and making use of this provision every year since.

Narembeen is situated 286kilometres east of the metropolitan area and 75kilometres from the nearest Senior High School. The town site is situated on the west side of the Shire which covers 3821square kilometres.

Some students attending the school travel by bus for 50kilometres or more. There is currently no bus service from Narembeen to Merredin nor would one be a viable option due to the length of time spent by students travelling. The only option for students studying Year 11 and 12 is to board and live away from their family and community.

Due to the current financial climate, families are finding it more difficult to find the additional funds to send their children away to school for their Senior Schooling. Even with the Isolated Children's Allowance and other concessions this still does not make it a viable comparison to an education at their current school. As funding has already been provided

for IT equipment and furniture there would be minimal ongoing costs to continue this service at our school. Providing 0.2FTE would be a teacher for 1 day per week. Hypothetically with 2 students (based on current numbers) using the service this would well and truly pay for itself.

We agree that in **most** situations interaction with peers is very important, although for some the increased peer interaction can have a negative effect causing interruption to study. The students studying Year 11 and 12 at Narembeen have already formed friendships with their peers and are in the enviable position of being role models for not only children their own age but children from Year 1 upwards. We believe this is an important part in developing maturity and responsibility in these students and gives them the ability to interact with people of all ages.

Some students do not have the social or emotional skills to deal with being apart from their families thus making study, for them, even more difficult due to the turmoil they are feeling. Being able to attend a facility in their town provides 'protection' for them and gives them the ability to study without other factors hindering their progress.

Travelling to our nearest Senior High School does not necessarily provide appropriate qualified teachers for all subjects. At our school we are lucky to have enough qualified teachers to assist the students with their studies. We agree that larger schools can offer a wider range of curriculum programs, whether these suit all children is also questionable. We need to be mindful of the fact that most students as they enter Year 11 have an idea of their career path and in some cases have the mindset to study in whatever environment they are placed in whilst others do not. This being the case in Narembeen where some students are academically able to study and do well whilst others have needed the security and nurturing of their family close by.

We agree the benefits for our students attending most Senior High Schools are many. Our Council also believes that we need to protect and nurture all our students and understand that everybody has their own needs and we respect this whether it is right or wrong in the eyes of our Council, the School or the Government if these children can continue their studies and grow from this we have all achieved our tasks.

Country town populations are diminishing; we would hate to lose families in our town due to the fact that either financially or emotionally they had no option but to move to a town with a Senior High School. At present we can give these families another option.



Kellie MORTIMORE
School Council

May 24, 2010