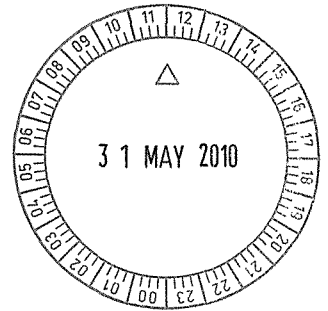


## Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations.

Mrs Justine Whyte  
President  
Parents and Citizens Association  
Quairading District High School



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

When the decision was made to raise the school leaving age earlier this decade, District High Schools were expected to manage that situation. Quairading District High School made several integral changes and was able to provide services to a small group of students for those years, catering for approximately twelve students over the years.

In 2010 the decision was then made to rescind these services from District High Schools, thus removing the possibility of students continuing at Quairading District High School after Year Ten. In 2010 this has specifically affected four students.

The school has provided, over the time, a relevant program for these students, liaising strongly with TAFE, the School of Isolated and Distance Education and local businesses for work placements.

Since the school leaving age was raised and Quairading District High School has offered courses to year 11 and 12s, each student has been offered a program that suits their individual social, educational and training needs specifically. Withdrawing the option of Year 11 & 12 at the local school closes down options for families who live in the town.

Quairading District High School has no feeder school. Prior to raising the school leaving age, after year ten our students would either find work in the community or move to Perth to various boarding schools. Since raising the school leaving age many students still move to Perth for various boarding schools. In addition, several students each year have chosen to complete their schooling at Quairading District High School. The closest senior high school is over 100kms away and there is no bus service. There is no option for students who would choose to stay in town other than home schooling.

The results of home schooling from an individual perspective have not been positive in this area. The social impact of forcing children to either leave town or study at home is significant. The ones who are forced to study at home find it very difficult to maintain focus and motivation. They tend to 'fall through the cracks', finding mischief to entertain themselves during the day.

The impact of forced movement on families and individual students is also negative, either by forcing the whole family to move or having an unhappy child at boarding school. Students are far more likely to succeed if going away is a decision they have made themselves.

Families who would otherwise have their children attend Year 11 and 12 in Quairading often do not have the financial means to send their children away. Whilst there is financial

support for boarding fees, the cost escalates when children need their own set of clothing and personal items, plus the extras that peer pressure demands when they're away from home.

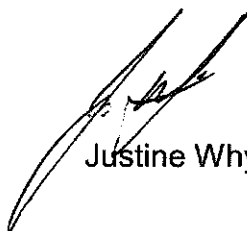
Regardless of financial support, these families often do not have the emotional resilience to have a member of the family live away. This results in emotional pressure and generally the child dropping out early or failing to succeed.

Withdrawing this option is withdrawing choice for families and forcing them to make decisions they would rather not make, forcing them into situations in which they would rather not be.

Opportunity for Shire and local businesses to 'try out' and train prospective employees. Through work experience and work placement programs offered by the school whilst students are in year 11 & 12, students can attend work on a part time basis and become familiar with processes, receive training and develop skills prior to having to apply for positions. Students experience more success through the application process. Employees are local, settled in the town and provide a more stable workforce.

I would be grateful if you would reconsider the decision regarding Year 11 and 12 for Quairading District High School.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justine Whyte', written over a horizontal line.

Justine Whyte.