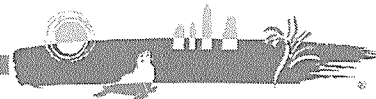


Jurien Bay Chamber of Commerce

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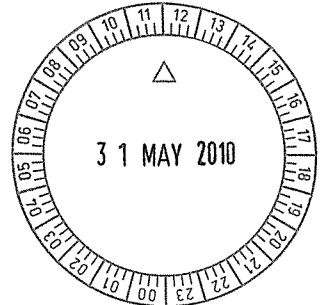


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Chairperson: Kim Meers

Committee Clerk
Estimates and Financial Operations Committee
Legislative Council
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000



Attention: Renae Jewell

Dear Madam

RE: Estimates and Financial Operations Standing Committee

"Inquiry into the Removal of Senior School Allocation Funding for Year 11 and 12 Courses at District High Schools"

Contact person available to give evidence in Jurien Bay: Secretary of Jurien Bay Chamber of Commerce: Mr Peter Lyons
chamber@jurienbay.net

Contact Person available to give evidence to any hearing in Perth: Mr David Lantzke (from 24 June 2010) dlantzke@ardross.com

We write to address the Terms of Reference for the above mentioned inquiry, and take this opportunity to congratulate the Committee for taking the time to address this matter.

The impact of the Department's decision is generating much local community disquiet and we are aware of at least two petitions circulating Jurien Bay.

Term of reference:

a) The decision-making process and rationale behind the decision.

The Chamber is unaware of any community consultation undertaken with the Jurien Bay community or surrounding town communities feeding into the Jurien Bay District High School by the Department of Education.

We are at a loss to explain the rationale behind the decision, however believe that circumstances surrounding the future projected growth and development of Jurien Bay have not been taken into account in arriving at the decision. Neither has the fact that Jurien Bay has been designated the sub-regional centre for the Central Coast, with the closest other senior high school being at least a three hour round trip away.

Jurien Bay serves as the educational centre for Greenhead, Cervantes and Leeman. Students from these towns will be required to travel by bus more than 330km every day.

Jurien Bay has been anticipating and preparing for the completion of an important coastal road more directly linking the town with the Perth Metropolitan area. The State Government's \$160 million "Indian Ocean Drive" is due for completion late this year and Jurien Bay is the only town served by this road that is not bypassed.

The Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) and Wheatbelt Development Commission have, via a number of studies and strategies since 1996, estimated Jurien Bay's population will double within 10 years of the completion the coast road.

The WAPC has also approved the "Turquoise Coast Development Structure Plan" containing some 9,000 residential lots, hotel, resort and caravan park sites, as well as commercial and industrial land, to cater for the expansion of Jurien Bay to the south.

In addition, the State Planning Strategy recognises the coastal strip between Perth and Geraldton as a "population and economic growth area".

Furthermore, an Employment Strategy is currently being undertaken by the University of Western Australia having been commissioned by the Wheatbelt Development Commission and Local Authorities.

Jurien Bay is a GROWTH town, having recently received Royalties for Regions funding (the largest grant awarded thus far) towards the replacement of the Town's (timber) main jetty, an important tourism asset.

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.

Since 1983, Jurien Bay's population has increased by more than 64%. Enrolments at Jurien Bay District High School have followed this trend, with enrolments in the primary school increasing by 13% between 2006 and 2010 and 135% in the senior school in the same period.

Jurien Bay District High School also focuses its vocational training on industries that are pertinent to Jurien Bay and its economic growth, namely marine, Business & IT and construction. In the past focus industry areas included Hospitality.

To remove these students and place them in an inland high school focusing mainly on agricultural vocations will also disadvantage not just the students, but the local industries. Families with important local workplace skills are already making plans to leave the District because of this decision; plus it means a three hour return bus journey for their children to attend their new local high school in Moora. Recorded in Hansard of 19th May 2010 the Minister acknowledges the distance problem in her speech where she states: 'That senior school allocation will remain in other district high schools where bus services are not practical...'. Families at Jurien Bay are deciding that the proposed three hour plus return trip to the local high school is not practical. As the bus service to Moora does not currently exist, we cannot see any economy in removing teachers locally and making student travel such long distances.

The closure of Swanleigh Boarding Facility has exacerbated their dilemma and the closure of the TAFE in Jurien Bay leads us to a situation where the next generation of Jurien Bay residents, part of a growth town and important centre, will be unable to receive any form of high level senior school or college education for their children, unless students are prepared to travel more than three hours per day.

The withdrawal of educational resources by the Education Department sends an ambiguous message to the Jurien Bay business community that has for some time been investing in their individual businesses for growth.

The Contact persons mentioned above are prepared to provide further evidence to the Committee at a public hearing, if invited to attend.

We respectfully request you use this inquiry to closely examine the circumstances surrounding the Department's decision and if considered appropriate, recommend to Government that funding for years 11 and 12 at the Jurien Bay District High School be continued at 2009 level. Importantly, it is our recommendation to ensure the Senior School allocation be re-instated as an important resourcing component for Senior School staff.

Yours sincerely



Peter Lyons
Vice Chairperson/Acting Secretary
Jurien Bay Chamber of Commerce Inc
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