



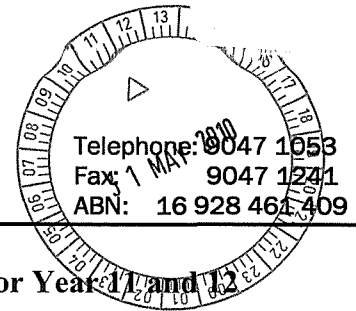
# Mukinbudin District High School

White Street  
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Submission 31

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## PUBLIC



### **Inquiry into the Removal of the Senior Schooling Allocation for Year 11 and 12 at District High Schools**

Please accept this submission from Mukinbudin District High School for inclusion into the above inquiry.

#### ***Term of Reference a) – the decision-making process and rationale behind the decision***

The rationale behind the decision to remove the senior schooling allocation for Year 11 and 12 students in District High Schools has not been made clear to Principals of these District High Schools. There have been comments to the effect that it is because District High Schools were not designed to cater for Year 11 and 12 students but the reality of this is that District High Schools have been in existence long before the decision to raise the leaving age was passed through parliament. Up until that time many of the current Year 11 and 12 students in District High Schools would not have remained at schools so the need to cater for these students was not an issue. However, when the need arose District High Schools, as an integral part of the community in which they operate, realised the need to prevent these students from becoming 'lost' in the system and offered courses for them. The 'temporary' Senior Schooling Allocation was given to these schools to assist in this process. These students are still an integral part of these District High Schools and will not go elsewhere, the main reason District High Schools took these students under their wing in the first place.

#### ***Term of Reference b) – the effect of the decision on the State budget, the affected students and communities      c) – the adequacy, cost effectiveness and social impact of the educational alternatives proposed***

I am not in a position to make an informed comment on the effect of this decision on the State budget other than to say that I cannot see there being any significant cost-saving to the budget as result of this decision. These students will still need to be catered for, and, if as suggested, a bus run I made available to these students then the cost to the State budget may in fact increase. There is currently no school bus run for students from Mukinbudin to Merredin Senior High School, the nearest high school at a distance of some 75 kilometres from Mukinbudin. A round trip each day would be a costly exercise and would far outweigh the savings from removal of the Senior Schooling Allocation.

The effect on the students and their local community however, may be considerable. These students currently play a large part in the social fabric of the community and the impending loss of the students to the community could be devastating. Whilst I understand that the decision is most likely made on educational grounds, including offering these students a greater range of curriculum choices, this is not a major consideration for the parents of these students. These parents choose to send their children to the local District High School mainly for social and emotional reasons.

At Mukinbudin District High School we have a student with significant educational disability and students with high emotional needs who cannot function without the ongoing support of their families and local community. These students will not go elsewhere, in fact we have had students return to the school because of the nurturing effect the school has on these students.

We also have Aboriginal students at this school that will not go elsewhere for further education. In 2009 we had an Aboriginal student graduate from Year 12 and accepted into tertiary education in her first choice units of study. This student was able to select relevant courses of study through the School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE) and did not feel that her choices were limited. The level of

expertise of the SIDE teachers and the caring and nurturing environment provided both by the school and home environment enabled this student to successfully complete all her education at the one site. We currently have two other Aboriginal students who have indicated they wish to follow the same pathway forged by our successful Year 12 student last year.

In this time when a great focus has been placed on the closing of the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students the removal of the Senior Schooling Allocation may result in these students not being afforded the opportunity of completing the formal education years thereby further exacerbating an already identified problem in Indigenous education.

The decline in agricultural areas, further emphasised by many years of drought or near drought conditions, has seen a large number of people leave the land. In order to support the remaining communities it is essential that the youth are able to remain in the local community as active participants in the social, sporting and cultural routines of the community. By removing the Senior Schooling Allocation these students will be forced to receive their education away from the local community and research indicated that once a youth leaves the local community there is a significant possibility that they will not return, further decimating the community.

Educational opportunity is a very important aspect of the furthering of this state. However, it is also important that parents and students are offered valid choices in where this education takes place. Once this choice is removed then the other factors may well exclude these students from gaining that necessary education as the choice may well be to abandon schooling. I understand that not all District High Schools warrant or even choose to have Year 11 and 12 students based on a number of other circumstances. However, identifying District High Schools where the continued presence of Year 11 and 12 students may be the only option for these students and resourcing these schools to provide the necessary education may be a better alternative than the across the board removal of the Senior Schooling Allocation.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Edward de Ruiter  
PRINCIPAL