

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

INQUIRY INTO THE REMOVAL OF YEAR 11 AND 12 COURSES AT DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS

With the re-opening of the Newmont Boddington Gold (NBG) mine and the expansion of the BHP Billiton Worsley Alumina mine, the population of Boddington is growing, with projections that the population may double over the next five years.

Peel Development Commission chairs the Boddington Strategic Planning Committee (BSPC) which is coordinating housing and community infrastructure in Boddington, and the Commission also manages the State Government's \$9 million Boddington Community Infrastructure Fund. The Committee includes Department of State Development, NBG, Worsley, and the Shires of Boddington, Wandering and Murray.

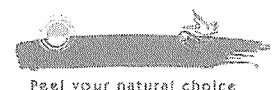
State funds are being applied to priority infrastructure in Boddington and surrounds to make it easier for people to choose to live in the area rather than opt for a 'drive-in-drive-out' option. To date, \$5.227 million in projects from the \$9 million have been completed and all others are under way. Royalties for Regions Peel Regional Grants Scheme has funded an additional \$1 million in projects which are also under way. Inclusive of the above figures, the State Government has funded or committed close to \$50 million on infrastructure in and around Boddington to accommodate the expansion of the NBG mine.

There is concern that the recent decision regarding District High Schools not offering year 11 and 12 courses may influence peoples' decision to live and work in Boddington.

Boddington District High School (BDHS) is K-10 and does not offer Year 11 and 12 TEE subjects therefore the concern is not in this area. However, seven years ago, local demand saw the BDHS set up and run a highly successful Year 11 and 12 Vocational Education and Training (VET) course. Prior to that, students could not access Year 11 and 12 schooling in Boddington. Students wishing to attend Year 11 and 12 had to go to boarding school in Perth or travel daily from Boddington to Narrogin, with the trip being approximately 90kms each way, three hours on a bus per day.

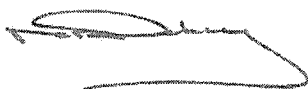
The Boddington District High School Year 11 and 12 VET program is highly successful and well supported by local industry including Newmont Boddington Gold. The decision to cease the program in 2011 is causing some concern for community members and industry in the area. The VET program provides students with links to local industry that offer important local employment opportunities and school based traineeships. NBG has financially contributed to the BDHS VET program - Family of Metal Trades Pre-Apprenticeship Course. On completion of this course last year, all students were offered apprenticeships with the gold mine.

The Commission understands that approximately 15 to 20 students have expressed an interest in attending the Year 11 and 12 VET program in 2011.



The success of the current BDHS Year 11 and 12 VET program was recently recognised by the Department of Education when it was selected as one of two district high schools in Western Australia showing good practice with links to the community and industry.

Given the special circumstances surrounding Boddington, Peel Development Commission has advocated, along with other stakeholders in the region, that BDHS be considered as a 'special case' to allow the Year 11 and 12 VET program to continue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maree De Lacey', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Maree De Lacey
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

28 May 2010