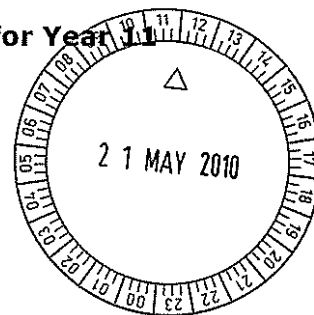


STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**Inquiry into the Removal of Senior School Allocation Funding for Year 11 and 12 Courses at District High Schools****Submission from:**

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Amended Terms of Reference:

The Estimates and Financial Operations Committee has resolved to inquire into and report to the Legislative Council on the Government decision, announced in March 2010, to cease senior school allocation funding* for year 11 and 12 courses at 21 district high schools across Western Australia, with particular reference to:

- a) the decision-making process and rationale behind the decision;
- 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; and
- d) any other relevant matter.

*Terms of Reference amended 18/05/10.

Submission:

Boddington is a rapidly growing community south east of Perth. With the commissioning of the gold mine and the expansion of bauxite mining in the town the population is expected to double in the next 10 years. Associated industries such as building, food provision and child care are adding to the population increase. The gold mine employs 650 workers and their policy is that at least 65% of these employees will live within a 50 km radius of Boddington. The flow on jobs (all trades and services) is calculated at 1.7 jobs per mining job. The gold mine and bauxite mines have an expected life of at least 20 years.

Current building programs in town and the surrounding rural area indicate a large influx of families is imminent. Boddington is expected to require 500 new dwellings within 5 years (Boddington Ranford Townsite Strategy).

This growth is having a significant impact on school numbers with our K-12 population increasing from 284 in December 2009 to 324 in February 2010- a total of 40. We have enrolled 61 new students from pre-primary to Year 12 and 30 new Kindergarten students so far this year.

The number of indigenous students has increased over the same time from 14 to 27. In our experience indigenous students do not leave their home town to go to school in Narrogin.

The removal of the Senior School Allocation has reduced the ability of the school to provide for our Years 10-12 students with curriculum access - in particular

- Course of Study choices
- Workplace Learning (a Course of Study)
- Career counselling and course selection

Students study Curriculum Council Courses of Study in Years 11 & 12 which are delivered by our highly qualified staff. With the excellent services provided by SIDE we are able to enrol several students in other Courses of Study not available at BDHS to meet their special interests such as Early Childhood Development and higher level mathematics courses.

We have been offering and running the Years 11 & 12 courses for 7 years. All students except one have gained their WACE through the program. Over this time, 22 students have returned from other upper school programs to successfully gain their WACE here.

This year we attracted a Senior School Allocation of 0.4 FTE (2 days per week) to appoint a teacher to carry out all the tasks involved in Workplace Learning. These include attracting and assessing suitable worksites, matching students with worksites, training of students and employers, workplace inspections, assessment of student achievement in the workplace, record keeping and online submission of results for Workplace Learning for our Year 11 & 12 students. This time is also used to collect and submit TAFE results from Cert I and II Horticulture and Family of Trades Cert I and II.

The Year 10 VET students have traditionally engaged in Workplace Learning. Because of the reduction in Senior School Allocation this year we have not been able to offer them Workplace Learning.

The Workplace Learning program is a critical part of the VET course and is highly regarded by students, employers, parents and the community.

Next year, if we do not attract any of the Senior School Allocation, we will find it impossible to provide adequate FTE to set up, train, monitor, assess and report on Workplace Learning for any year group.

Year 11 & 12 Numbers and Senior School Allocation

Year	Year 11	Year 12	Senior School Allocation
2012 *	20 +	14	?
2011	12-14	13	0.00
2010	13	5	0.40
2009	7	6	1.04
2008	9	10	1.52
2007	8	8	1.44

* These numbers have not taken into account any population increases of Boddington and surrounds.

Local employers currently oversubscribe to this Workplace Learning program. Many students attract School Based Traineeships from BHP Billiton Worsley Alumina and other companies and businesses.

Access to TAFE courses is growing and diversifying to meet the training needs of students and adults. For example, Newmont Boddington Gold bankrolls the TAFE Family of Trades Course (Engineering) which will be Cert II from 2010. This is a Pre-Apprenticeship Course which has led to offers from NBG and other metals trades companies for all students to be offered apprenticeships. This course runs from Boddington DHS from a state-of-the-art metals facility, usually in Term 4.

The school facilities include two purpose built adult learning buildings for the VET students, Food Science and Technology Room, Materials Design and Technology Rooms and a computer for each Year 11 & 12 student. The ICT system has been inspected by Department of Education staff and declared "the best ICT set-up we have seen".

The nearest senior high school requires a return journey of 3 hours by bus. Students leave Boddington at about 7.00 am and return at about 5.00 pm. This means they miss out on part-time jobs and sport practice, feel dislocated from their community as well as the exhaustion they have with all the travel time.

Some comments from Year 11 & 12 students who have returned to Boddington:

- *Travelling wears you out.*
- *It is intimidating for shy people to leave their family and their home town to go to a big school.*
- *No links to the mine for SWL unlike Boddington.*
- *Travelling makes it harder to get after-school jobs.*
- *You miss out on a lot of after school activities such as sport.*
- *Classes too big and you don't get personal attention.*

Another consideration is that our experienced and graduate secondary teachers are gaining valuable experience teaching the new Courses of Study and from being involved in moderation with the Curriculum Council. This adds value to the education sector. It also improves their knowledge of the requirements for upper school. When the teachers transfer they take a broader and current range of skills and experience to their new school and their new students.

Gary Sherry, CEO, Shire of Boddington, wrote the following in a recent letter to Dr Constable:

The BDHS VET program is a small but very successful program that produces job ready graduates that are keenly sought after by a growing local industry. The success of the program is based around an innovative school in touch with the community and strong partnerships with local industry. The Boddington BDHS VET Program is an example of how programs should be operated.

Thank you for your time in considering our request to have the Senior School Allocation reinstated.

Lee Jones Hogg
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Boddington DHS