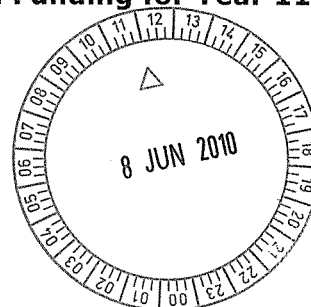


STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**Inquiry into the Removal of Senior School Allocation Funding for Year 11 and 12 Courses at District High Schools****Submission from:**

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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:

Jurien Bay is a growing community North of Perth. With the opening of the Indian Ocean Drive later this year the town the population is expected to **treble** in the next 10 years. There is continual building activity occurring in the town and a range of other developments that are planning for the anticipated population increase. Government agencies, supported by planning data from private industry indicate Jurien Bay to become a sub-regional centre.

Over the three years between 2007 – 2010, the average percentage growth rate of the schools K – 12 population has been approximately 2.5% (with a maximum increase of 6.7% during the 2009 – 2010 year). The previous three year block had an average growth rate of approximately 1%.

Jurien Bay has been offering a VET orientated Senior School Program for approximately a decade. Between 2007 – 2010 the average proportion of year 11 and 12 students (from the total secondary enrolment) was approximately 23% (with the highest being almost 33% in 2009). The year 11/12 proportion of students in 2010 was to be 37%, but a number of students were successful in securing apprenticeships during December 2009 and February 2010. In the

previous three year block, the average proportion of year 11/12 students was 11.6%.

In 2009, the school was a state finalist in the prestigious VET in Schools awards. We were the first DHS to achieve the title of state finalist in the history of the awards. In 2006, the then Participation Directorate of the Department of Education and Training requested our school to provide professional learning at the annual conference to other DHS as an example of successful practice of year 11 and 12 provision in a DHS setting. In 2009/2010, one of our year 12 students was a State Gold Medal Winner in the World Skills Competition, travelling to Brisbane in May this year for the National competition. These are just a few of the positive indicators of success of the Senior School program at JBDHS.

The removal of the Senior School Allocation has reduced the ability of the school to provide for our Years 11-12 students with curriculum access - in particular

- Course of Study choices
- Co-ordination and support in the area of career counselling and course selection
- Increased the workload regarding attracting and assessing students worksites and matching students to workplaces. Furthermore, there has been a significant strain in record keeping, complying with submitting TAFE results in Cert 1 and 11 courses.

Students study Curriculum Council Courses of Study in Years 11 & 12 which are delivered by qualified staff. We receive, in the main, good support from SIDE so that students can enrol in other Courses of Study not available at JBDHS. However, there is a limit to the number of courses students can enrol into using the SIDE mode of delivery.

The Workplace Learning program is a critical aspect of the VET course and is highly regarded by students, employers, parents and the community. Local employers currently provide tremendous support to the Workplace Learning program. Many students attract School Based Traineeships from a range of industries in the town.

Access to TAFE courses is growing and diversifying to meet the training needs of students and adults. The school has worked tirelessly to work with the community to identify industry areas that have a current or future demand. These industry areas include Cert 11 qualifications in General Constructions, Aquaculture and Business and IT. There are a range of face-to-face courses on offer in addition to these industry training areas. Some of these courses are unique to JBDHS as compared to Senior High Schools. These courses are run in good facilities, with significant investments occurring in the last 2 years in the area of Aquaculture.

The school facilities senior school students have access to include a Food Science and Technology Room, Materials Design and Technology Rooms and an IT laboratory along with general classrooms. Planning commenced last year to establish a dedicated room including ICT facilities for Senior School students.

Mr Shane Love (Shire President, Shire of Dandaragan), wrote the following in a recent letter to Dr Constable:

At present the JBDHS provides for a strong focus in General Constructions, Aquaculture and Business IT. These pathways strongly supported through local business providing structured workplace training. They have been quite deliberately structured around the primary industries in Jurien Bay.

.... Requiring Jurien Bay yr 11 and 12 students to travel to Moora which has very different industries and employment opportunities not only disadvantage the student but also disengages industry that is essential to these students' employment opportunities.

Some comments from current Year 10 and 11 students about the reduced capacity for the school to be able to provide a viable Senior School Program include concerns around the following themes:

- *Travelling wears you out.*
- *A reluctance to leave their family, friends and their home town to go to a bigger school.*
- *The financial burden it will impose on their families, with the possibility of their entire family having to move from town or fracturing the family unit*
- *A preference to stay at home rather than boarding facilities*
- *Classes are too big and you don't get personal attention in Senior High Schools*

The above is just a snapshot of the negative social implications that will be placed on students and families should a viable and vibrant Senior Schooling not be provided by JBDHS, with the Senior School Allocation being pivotal to its resourcing.

Next year, if we do not attract any of the Senior School Allocation, we will find it impossible to allocate adequate FTE to provide a viable Senior Schooling program that has occurred at the school over a number of years. This will also have a significant impact on the setting up, training, monitoring, assessing and reporting on Workplace Learning for any senior school students. Furthermore, the capacity to offer Cert 11 qualifications would be almost abolished. The residualisation of the Senior School program is a matter of significant concern for the Jurien Bay school community. The significant economic and social impact that this will have on the community has been expressed with letters to Dr Constable and other members of parliament from a range of agencies including the Chamber of Commerce (Jurien Bay), Shire of Dandaragan, School Council and P&C to name a few.

The nearest senior high school (Moora) requires a return journey over 3 hours by bus. This time period is measured from the Jurien Bay town-site. A significant proportion of students travel from the outlying towns of Cervantes, Greenhead and Leeman. This will add considerably to the travel time. There is no bus run available and the journey would certainly not comply with policies governing student bus travel time. Having students travel out of town means they miss out on part-time jobs and community sport activities, feel dislocated from their community as well as the exhaustion from excessive travelling periods.

From a workforce development perspective, it is vital that our experienced and graduate secondary teachers gain valuable experience in 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 senior school. When the teachers transfer they take a broader and current range of skills and experience to their new school and students. Experienced staff have indicated that should they not be able to engage in a Senior Schooling program at JBDHS, they would strongly consider leaving the town and transferring to a location where they can teach senior school courses. The attraction and retention of staff at the school is always a challenge, which has been acknowledged by many stakeholders and this is certainly a workforce risk at

the local level, with the mix of staff having the potential to be significantly imbalanced.

I would request that the Senior School Allocation be reinstated and thank you for giving the opportunity to provide a submission regarding this inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Mr Trevlyn Geiles

Principal

27 May 2010