



Hon Giz Watson MLC

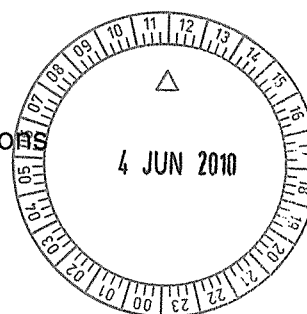
Chair

Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations

Legislative Council

Parliament House

PERTH WA 6000



Dear Ms Watson

INQUIRY INTO REMOVAL OF SENIOR SCHOOL ALLOCATION FUNDING FOR YEAR 11 AND 12 COURSES AT DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS

The Mid West Development Commission is pleased to provide this submission on the above Inquiry.

Education is a fundamental component of regional development. Its availability strongly influences people's lives in regional communities and is a major factor in determining where people live.

Accordingly, the Mid West Development Commission would be concerned at any reduction to educational services in the Mid West including the recent announcement that senior school funding allocation for Year 11 and 12 courses at a number of District High Schools in the Mid West would cease.

It is the Commission's understanding that there are very few, if any students undertaking Year 11 or 12 academic courses at the three affected 3 District High Schools in the Mid West (Carnamah, Dongara, Mullewa), though some students do so via Schools of Isolated Distance Education (SIDE). Given the low number of students involved, it would be extremely difficult for these schools to provide a meaningful range of academic courses. Understandably therefore, the Year 11 and 12 offerings at these schools are largely geared towards Vocational Education and Training courses.

Whilst it would appear that the withdrawal of the Senior School Allocation funding may therefore not be an issue, the situation is a little more complex. The removal of such funding is likely to lead to a reduction in the number of teachers at each of the schools in question, as well as other valuable teaching resources, thereby reducing the quality of delivery to students. The reduced resources could also impact negatively on SIDE students.

It is important that District Highs continue to offer VET courses to provide a valuable local link between students and local employers. The pool of prospective employers would be insufficient to meet demand if Year 11 and 12 VET students were forced to travel to fewer, larger schools.

The key outcome advocated by the Mid West Development Commission is to ensure District High Schools continue to provide appropriate non academic, VET based courses for local students, whilst also providing appropriate support for SIDE students. We would also expect that decisions on funding

for regional schools and specific regional programs are based on current need as well as future demand.

While Jurien is not in the Mid West, it does have a catchment area which extends into the Mid West communities of Leeman and Greenhead. It is very surprising that this school is on the list for funding cuts given its status as a regional centre and its strong growth prospects which will be further stimulated by the completion in 2010 of Indian Ocean Drive.

Whilst these comments are brief, I trust they add some value to your Inquiry on this important issue. Should you require further information or clarification, please contact me on 08 9921 0701.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Douglas', with a stylized, flowing script.

STEVE DOUGLAS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

31 May 2010