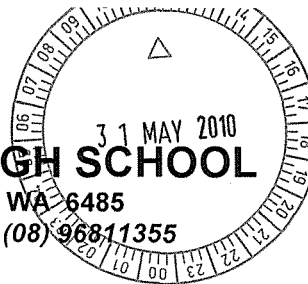


PUBLIC



Submission 57



WYALKATCHEM DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

Honour Avenue WYALKATCHEM WA 6485
Phone: (08) 9692 1500 Facsimile: (08) 9681 1355
A.B.N. 64 009 806 226



SUBMISSION TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

DATE: 31 MAY 2010

FROM: Katrina vanStraalen PRINCIPAL Wyalkatchem District High School on behalf of the Wyalkatchem School Community.

NAME OF ORGANISATION ON WHOSE BEHALF I AM MAKING THE SUBMISSION:

Wyalkatchem School Community (including feeder schools of Trayning and Koorda)

Tel: 96921500 **Fax:** 9681 1355 **Mob:** 0449180073

Email: Katrina.vanstraalen@det.wa.edu.au

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

Hon. Giz Watson
Hon. Philip Warren Gardiner MLC
Hon. Elizabeth (Liz) Lloyd Behjat MLC
Hon. Kenneth (Ken) Dunstan Elder Trav
Hon. Ljiljanna Maria Ravlich MLC

I write on behalf of the Wyalkatchem School Community, whose views are outlined below.

Also attached are eight emails, from parents and community members, forwarded to the school to support the Submission.

I write in relation to the removal of Senior School Allocation Funding for Year 11 and 12 Courses at District High Schools with particular reference to Wyalkatchem District High School, situated in the Midlands Education District.

Following a Public Forum on 26th May 2010, a clear outcome demonstrating strong unity in the communities' **opposition** into the removal of Year 11 and 12 courses at District High Schools, and the common desire for Wyalkatchem DHS enrolments, in the future to include:

- Year 11 and 12 with the provision for adequate resourcing; and
- S.I.D.E (School of Isolated and Distance Education) with the provision for adequate resourcing;

In summary these outcomes were derived because:

- Education is simply NOT AN OPTION;
- The ultimate right of parents is to choose the school their child attends; and
- It is the right of every child to be able to access and engage in high quality education opportunities.

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1. The decision-making process and rationale behind the decision

Following considerable community concern regarding the Removal of Years 11 and 12 and uncertainty about the future of choice for Secondary Education in Wyalkatchem, the Shire President suggested consideration for a Community Forum to discuss the issues. A Community Forum was held, on 26th May, 2010.

There was less than one week's notice prior to the Forum.

Thirty one members of the Community attended with an additional five apologies. Attendees included the President of the Shire, President of the P&C Wyalkatchem, and President of the P&C Koorda, other persons of significance in the Community, parents of current and past students, local business owners, interested community members, school staff and so forth.

The School Principal facilitated the Forum. As Principal my position is to serve and support the local school community.

Commencing the forum the Principal stressed that a vote would not be taken and everyone was welcome to express their views. We agreed on simple *Forum Norms*, being:

- Respect each others opinions; *and*
- Respect where each other is at.

The School Registrar took the minutes.

The purpose of the Forum was to:

- to gain a clear understanding of the Local Community's desire for the future of Wyalkatchem District High School, in terms of Secondary Education in particular, Years 11 and 12 and S.I.D.E. enrolments and resourcing;
- to prepare a submission addressing the Terms of Reference, as stated by the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations in relation to the outcome of the Forum Minutes;
- to provide an opportunity for the School Community to engage in dialogue on the removal of Year 11 and 12, to ask questions, and to seek answers.

The Principal prepared a brief *PowerPoint* presentation detailing the relevant information. The presentation included a summary of reports relevant to the Inquiry, followed by documented commentary relevant to the inquiry, the history of School Numbers and so forth. The research document was voluntarily emailed from the School of Isolated and Distance Education. Copies of these documents were available for the Forum Members, as were the Terms of Reference.

The Forum Members engaged in clarifying questions, views and dialogue during the Presentation. The

A number of Questions were raised, which were not answered due to lack of knowledge. These included:

- *how, why and when were the twenty one schools identified;*
- *why one of the twenty one schools identified, was able to retain their VET (Vocational Education and Training Program);*
- *if there was any evidence as to the reasons why Year 11 and 12 was being removed, in the twenty-one schools;*
- *why S.I.D.E funding was ceasing in these schools, and on what basis.*

2. The effect of the decision on the State budget, the affected students and communities;

"Considering families living in metropolitan areas are not under pressure to make decisions like this, why then should families living in county towns have to make such a choice.

The recently announced decision to remove Years 11 and 12 was not consultative; in particular the Wyalkatchem School Community was not consulted.

Too many questions are left unanswered." Community Member

From dialogue during 2010, the School Community strongly sense their local community will be affected in many ways. Their comments include:

- *There is a need for Social and educational equity and opportunity.*
- *If the decision was purely financial, then the Wyalkatchem is truly offended. Does this imply that the persons making this decision believe that our young people, our future Australian are not worthy of the cost of providing access to compulsory education;*
- *There appears to have been no suggestions of alternative Education options made for families;*
- *The closest Secondary schools are approximately 100 kms away;*
- *Some students simply would not survive in hostel type accommodation;*
- *If the local Wyalkatchem students are sent away, is this not perpetuating the breakdown of the family? A family often in rural Australia, who rely on their children to assist with farm operations, before and after school and on the week-ends. Now more than ever in times of economic down-turn;*
- *As more students move away, the sense of Community soon loses its real meaning, in small local towns. Wyalkatchem people live here because they value a sense of belonging and pride in their community. They choose to live here because it is a safe, caring and inclusive community.*
- *For years the School Community has strengthening their capacity to provide flexible Inclusive School Environments. Now these students, with Special Needs are entering Year 11. Some have attended Wyalkatchem DHS for their entire Education. These students are valued and understood members of our Community. Their focus is on promoting independence through school based program and community work placement program. How could this possible be equitable sending them away, in a foreign learning and living environment?*

3. the Adequacy, cost effectiveness and social impacts of the educational alternatives proposed:

The School Community highlights maintaining Year 11 and 12, is about options and choice, specifically, the School Community argues that:

- *District High Schools play an essential role in providing a nurturing and positive learning environment;*
- *District High Schools are supervised and equipped; they have lighting, heating, cooling, printers and so forth. Only recently was significant money spent on them for upgrading;*
- *District High Schools cater for students' emotional and social needs, they offer a sense of belonging, friendships groups, structures, school activities and so forth;*
- *There is a need to cater for the average student whose parents could not afford to send their children away to school;*

- *There doesn't appear to be a correlation between sending children away and them receiving a good education;*
- *Children should be catered for in their local community;*
- *Some don't want to send their children away and break the family unit*
- *Easier to attract families to the country if the school can offer a complete education package, i.e. Doctors, Police, Nurses;*
- *Whilst Wyalkatchem is a small school there were benefits;*
- *Many families that couldn't afford to send their children to boarding school*
- *Children in rural areas should not be disadvantaged;*
- *Long bus trips are a waste of time and energy;*
- *Two feeder schools of Trayning and Koorda, that rely on the Wyalkatchem DHS option;*
- *Students are becoming increasingly isolated by having to study at home, via S.I.D.E. there are five cases of students in Wyalkatchem alone where students commenced S.I.D.E. at home this year, all whom have since quit;*
- *Local businesses' find staff from our school in particular apprentices. If students go out of town for education they rarely return. This will impact on our Local Business's;*
- *The SIDE room at Wyalkatchem DHS was recently refurbished and is great – why now take this opportunity away;*
- *If Year 11 and 12 are removed, does this mean the school is downgraded to a Level four school, and then a Level three school?*

4. any other relevant information

The School Community highlights maintaining Year 11 and 12, is about options and choice, specifically, the School Community highlights that:

- *Equity is about differential resourcing to ensure that a program is successful;*
- *Resourcing a school is about determining what is necessary to enable the educational program to be taught successfully, rather than on committing to a strict formula;*
- *As one community member highlighted each child and each family have such different needs and circumstances. "I don't want my family being split and having someone else seeing them grow up and coping with their day to day problemsfinancially putting six children through boarding school is daunting, so I really hope something changes so the decision won't be so difficult".*
- *Providing Access and Participation – All students have the right to enrol, access and participate in schooling which meets their individual needs, and in some cases this is Wyalkatchem DHS;*
- *A range of effective and appropriate adjustment is provided to ensure access, participation and achievement, for all young Australians;*

END



From: Glenn & Nikki Hawser
To: 'Katrina Vanstraelen'
Cc:
Subject: RE: Removing Year 11 & 12 courses from DHSs
Attachments: forum.doc (46 KB)

Sent: Fri 28/05/2010 3:30 PM

Hi Katrina,

Further to our conversation this morning, let me say again that we are all very grateful that you are willing to go into bat for our children and future students on this issue.

I have put together a document (attached) and it turned out to be more of a paper than a letter.

I hope it is not too wordy and that it can be of some use.

I got a bit carried away I think, but there just seemed to be so many issues to address and I could have gone on much longer.

Anyway, hope this all goes well for all and if you need any assistance putting things together, my mobile is 0407 063264



Nikki Hawser

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Last night, I attended a community forum, the purpose of which was to discuss the department of education's decision to remove yr 11 & 12 course funding from district high schools.

Let me first say that the number of people who attended, (including students who were clearly worried about their futures) was very encouraging, and by the end of the night it was clear that the community feeling on this subject was very solid.

I believe that the department's decision is very short sighted and ill conceived, and that they have not considered the long term ramifications to rural communities.

The education department and the government have always led us to believe that they consider the education of our children to be of prime importance. They talk of equality, exclusivity, and the right of every child to a happy and secure school environment. It would seem that with this latest decision, they have excluded students in rural areas from that equation.

To date, no one has been able to inform us of the criteria used to determine which schools will lose their funding and why these 21 schools have been chosen in this round of cut backs.

It would seem certain that in time the department will take the funding from all rural schools, forcing parents to make extremely hard decisions, and students to suffer in their education.

For rural students, the loss of this education facility means travelling at least one hour to school and then an hour back again.

As we do not have bus services to cater for this, it will mean that either parents must make the trip to take these children to and from school, which would involve at least 1000km of travel per week, or send their children away to board at a school that is funded to cater for yr 11 and 12 students, or even to have to sell up their homes, businesses etc and move to a city location.

Let's look firstly at the impact of children travelling such long distances each day. This will affect their health, as they have to be up much earlier to make the trip, also arriving home much later (in the winter months, this would mean starting and ending the day in the dark) and then trying to study, do normal chores around the home and have some semblance of a social life.

Socially these children would be in ruins, it is impossible to create and maintain friendships under these circumstances. These children would not belong to any social group as they would not be afforded the time to socialize out of school hours. The friendships they have cultivated through their communities would suffer as they would be time poor due to the time and distance travelled to school and back each day. The friendships made in the new schools could not be properly maintained for the same reasons; it is not possible to have time after school with new or old friends when you have to leave to travel home each day.

That brings us to the option of boarding.

Boarding brings its own unique difficulties to our children.

Firstly they are separated from family, home, familiarity and friends. How many of us would send our children away from home by choice? For most of us, the family unit is a close bond. Although we are all aware that as parents we must separate from our children at some stage, we do not expect to do this while they are still children, still dependent upon us for safety, security, life skills and comfort. Children do not expect to be separated from their family either and many children view this as punishment for a crime they are unaware they have committed.

Children need the security of home and family, it helps them to identify with who they are and to grow as secure and stable people. To add to this, many families will suffer financial hardship to send their children to a boarding school, as the costs are quite significant and parents may find themselves struggling to give their child what is needed in a financial sense.

Also the culture shock of going from a school and community environment in which you are known as an individual to a large school and community environment in which you are just one of many in each class, where the teachers do not have the time to know you individually, where unless you stand out either by fact of being an exceptional student or a troublesome one, you are just a number, just a face in the room, a name on a roll, this is a devastating thing for young people to have to face, especially in the teen years when they are already struggling to find their own identities.

Families forced to leave the country and move to the city in order to avoid having to send their children to boarding school, face equally if not even greater problems.

Homes and jobs must be found, and we know that for many of us this is a challenge of extreme proportions as property prices in the city are often out of reach for those who have lived long term in the country.

Then children have to face the social stigma that many city children place on those from the country. They see them as different, often in a manner that is derogatory and this will undermine the self esteem of any child.

Many of us in rural communities rely on those around us for child care, social networks and even our mental health wellness.

Having come from the city myself, I know that the pace of life is much more hectic in the city and that it is often impossible to find child care especially in emergency situations.

This can often lead to social ostracising as parents can not attend social functions as they did at home in the country. Rural communities are accepting of children at functions whilst in the city this is not always the case.

The stresses on the family often transfer to the child who will blame themselves for the upheaval that has happened in the name of education. This can ultimately lead to the breakdown of a marriage and even stronger feelings of guilt for the young person.

History shows that many of our young people who are sent away from rural communities are unable to readjust to life when they return home after they leave school; this places a greater strain on families as the separation becomes more complete before its time.

What we must also be made aware of is the flow on effect that all of this has on rural communities.

Due to families having to move away, and to children moving out of their towns, there is a significant effect on the day to day business of these towns.

Many businesses are affected by the loss of these young people, suddenly they have lost their after school, weekend, and holiday staff. Businesses that rely on trainees and apprentices to continue on are suddenly at a loss as to who to employ. This can lead to businesses going out of business and what of our farming community, suddenly they have lost their most valuable assets, their children, who would have learned the family business and eventually taken over. Now many farms will cease to exist.

The on flow is that due to the lack of numbers in towns, we lose our hospitals, doctors, police, nurses, emergency services, teachers and eventually our shops and other business ventures.

This in time can only lead to the closing of schools and ultimately the loss of yet another rural town.

Is this what the education department or our government really want?

Are you prepared for the consequence of the loss of farming in Western Australia?

Do you realise that the effect on one town and community flows on to our neighbours? Currently we have other towns feeding into our school system, the loss of one district high school will have far reaching effects on our neighbours. Is this what we really want?

Wouldn't it make far more sense to continue to fund our SIDE courses and keep our students where they should be..... AT HOME with family.



From: Kahu & Rod
To: Katrina Vanstraelen
Cc:
Subject: Re: FORUM - INQUIRY INTO THE REMOVAL OF YEAR 11 AND 12 COURSES AT DISTRICT HIGH

Sent: Fri 28/05/2010 3:04 PM

Dear Katrina,

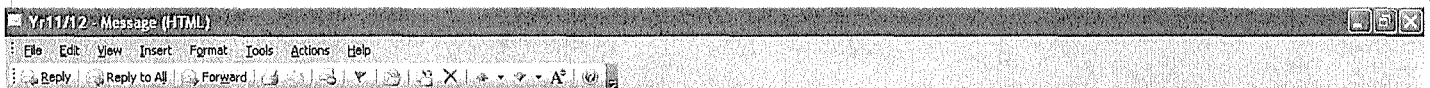
I write to return our appreciation. Appreciation for giving us the opportunity to voice, as a passionate community, our concerns for the future of our young staying in the town of Wyalkatchem, Koorda, Trayning and small surrounding locations; Continuing the success of these small towns and their educational needs being met in Wyalkatchem with the continuation of Year 11 and 12 at WdHS, is imperative.

On arrival to the Forum in question, my tummy fluttered at the strength of community spirit we uphold, the turn out was heart-warming and moving. The range of community members present proved we are willing to stand strong and firm to provide a future in our small towns, as the youngsters of today are our future attributes. By taking Year 11 and 12 out of the equation ultimately takes the opportunity of the young staying in rural areas, takes away the opportunity for the success of completion of K-12 and for the families who can't send their children away, whether being for financial reasons or purely due to breaking up the family unit, it may jeopardise their whole family future.

We have chosen to raise our children in Wyalkatchem for the security our small community offers, the educational opportunities for a successful future, K-12, and the services provided, are the basic necessities eliminating the hustle and bustle and dangers found in more built up areas. There is no reason, as it stands, to consider a move in the future or to break our family unit by sending our children elsewhere to complete their education, not that we could necessarily even afford to do this, and we don't believe any family should be forced to be make such heart wrenching decisions. Since when did the educational future of our children become of less concern, to the point where the power at be could pull the rug from under them, and limit their potential future by removing Year 11 and 12. What next? Is Year 8, 9 and 10 the next to go? Where does the buck stop.

Jye and Jordan, our children attended this Forum with me, as it is their future potentially being subject to limitation. Jordan asking many questions of why his future is at stake, suggesting ways our community can come together to speak as a whole in hope that we will be heard and to stand up for his rights as a country boy to stay in his beloved community and to become the best he can be as he enters adulthood and to adhere to the responsibilities that go with being a young adult in rural Australia. Jordan is only 11 years old and his input at this meeting makes me so proud that Wyalkatchem has upcoming community spirited youth like him, and his awareness of the tragedy the removal of Year 11 and 12 may cause his future here and the future of the generation that follows and so on. Without success in this generation of children, we question the future of the services in these small communities, as who will fill these roles if these children aren't able to successfully finish their education, or they have to move away to do so.

Kahu Ratima and Rodney Smith



From: Rob & Belinda Jonas
To: Katrina Vanstraelen
Cc:
Subject: Yr11/12

Sent: Fri 28/05/2010 2:29 PM

Dear Katrina,

Sorry for the delay in responding. I am a slow thinker and usually can't collate my thoughts until a day or so after the event!

In view of the decision to protest against the proposed withdrawal of support for Yr 11 and 12 students at the school, I believe the following points are relevant to maintaining this provision:

1. Inability of students to complete SIDE at home due to lack of parental supervision (eg. parents at work) or unsuitability of student for disciplined self-motivated studying away from a school environment.
2. Economic circumstances and/or unwillingness to break up family prevents student from being able to board away.
3. Any initiatives such as the proposed Aviation Course will become completely unviable with the loss of the ability to receive upper secondary students. I don't know anything about the current state of this proposal (I was hoping Mel Green would be at the meeting to enlighten us), but it might have been possible to attract a few more students from outside our usual intake area and increase the viability of the high school in general.
4. As the government has made it mandatory for students to attend school until Yr 12 (unless they have work or acceptable alternative) I feel they are then obliged to provide and fund at least a basic facility to enable any student to do this without undue inconvenience or disadvantage. This should at least be access to SIDE with a teacher to supervise.

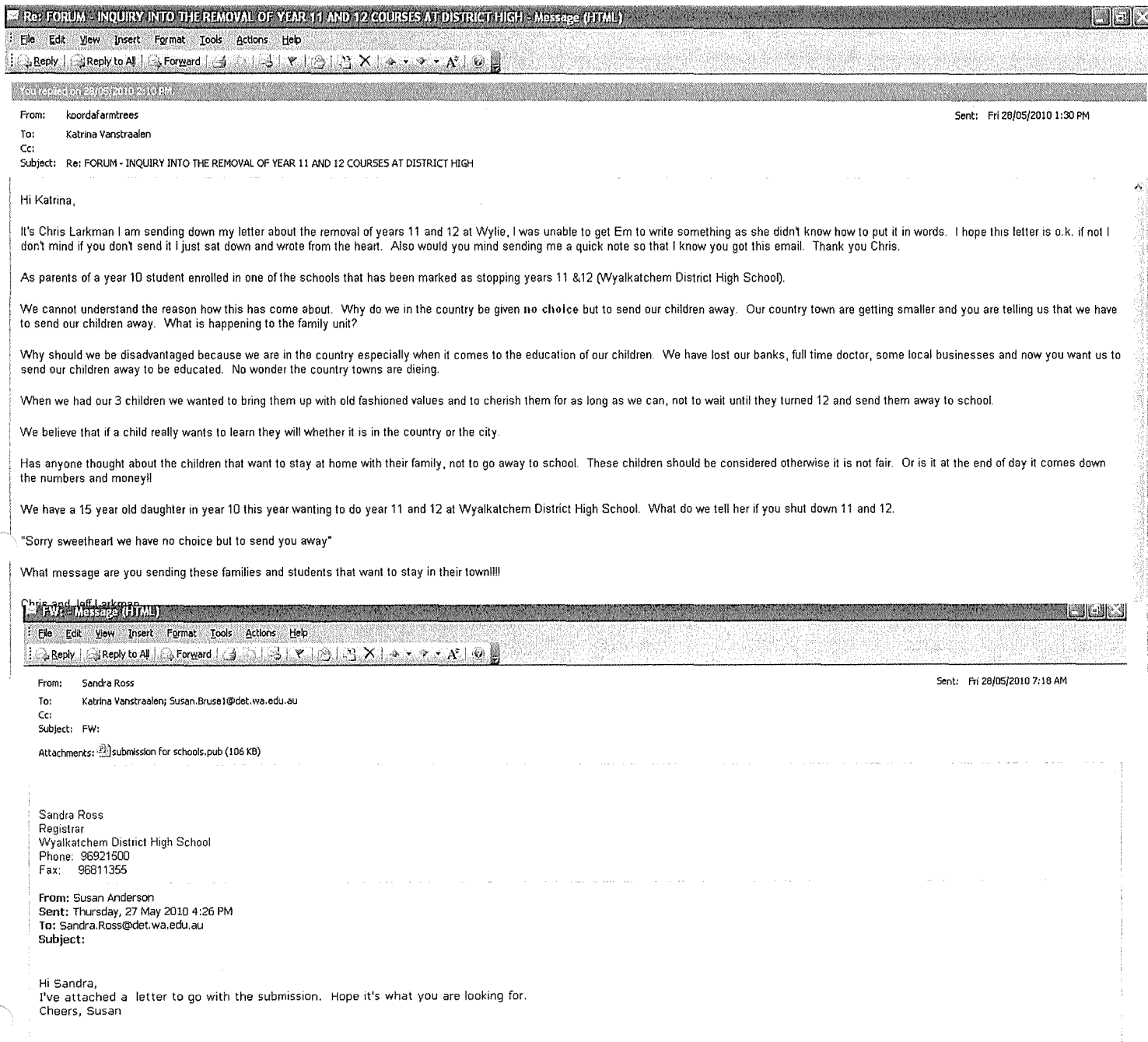
After leaving the meeting last Wednesday, for all the talk about the benefits for the town and the families, I just kept thinking, "Where are the numbers coming from?". Who is going to support keeping the children here? Maybe the Toodyay principal was right. Why not put the energy and resources into lower secondary? I don't know the answer. I do know that it is not the standard or availability of education alone that determines where parents send their children to school. A good education is not only about a well-funded and resourced school. The children need to be able to have social, cultural and sporting opportunities and at present these are limited. (It is all linked though I suppose - good facilities encourages people to stay and then more people mean more sporting teams etc.) My oldest son Matthew stayed here in year 8 and it was a very frustrating year for him in a lot of ways (as well as some positives). He had few friends, he was frustrated at the behavioural disruptions of a lot of his class (which rubbed off on him at times too - I'm not saying he was a perfect student - he just wanted to learn) and there was very little for him to do after school. It makes it harder, in this regard, living out of town where there is no spontaneous interaction - all social and sporting meetings have to be planned and rely on parents organising and providing transport. I was very happy with the efforts of the teachers and I don't think he suffered academically, but socially, things were pretty ordinary. I would have been quite happy for him to do some of his subjects through SIDE if other parts of his life here were more stimulating.

As Peter Wood pointed out, the demographics of the area have been changing for a while with less families around and fewer children. I wonder how many people calling to have the provisions maintained will have their own children using them. (Just because you have different plans for your own children doesn't mean you can't fight for those who do need them, of course. People's circumstances sometimes change. It is a community issue.) It is a very vexing problem, constantly being torn between maintaining a viable community and provided opportunities and choice for your children. Each child and each family has such different needs and circumstances and I have full sympathy for parents sending their children away as I do for those wanting to keep them here. I had no wish to send my children away before Year 10. I didn't want my family being split and having someone else seeing them grow up and coping with their day-to-day problems (although there are plenty of times when I'm sure this has benefits). Personally, we will be taking each of our children as they come and working out what their needs are. Financially, putting 6 children through boarding school (especially when there are years when 3 of them will be there at the same time) is pretty daunting, so I really hope something changes so the decision won't be so difficult.

I'm sorry I don't have something more positive to say, but will support this decision in any case.

Regards,

Belinda Jonas



Submission to the Legislative Council Estimates and Financial Operations Committee in relation to The Removal of Senior School Allocation Funding for year 11 and 12 Courses at District High Schools with particular reference to WYALKATCHEM DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL.

From: Mrs Susan Anderson,

Members of the Committee;

I write to you as a member of the Community of Wyalkatchem and as a parent of a student who currently attends

Wyalkatchem District High School.

The decision to remove the facility of Year 11 and 12 courses at 21 District High Schools throughout Western Australia appears to have been made without due consideration or consultation with people who may be affected by this decision. I have been unable to find any evidence of the reasons this decision has been made, and, like many others in this community, I can only assume that the reasons for such a drastic action are purely financial. I sincerely hope that this is not the only reason. If it is then the young people in this and all of the other Communities affected have very good reason to be offended - since this would imply that our decision makers believe that our young people are not worth the cost of providing access to higher education. It should also not be forgotten that it is now a Government requirement that all young people up to the age of 17 are required to attend School or some other learning facility unless they are actually employed. So on the one hand we have a requirement that they attend School, and on the other hand we have the Department of Education proposing to remove the ability of 21 District High Schools to offer the very Education that it requires young people to attend!

What this decision will do to some Communities is force families to move away to bigger centres where there are High Schools which can cater for students in years eleven and twelve. Small towns like Wyalkatchem can not afford to lose families in this way.

There are many and varied reasons why people choose to live in towns such as ours, but high among those reasons would have to be the sense of *COMMUNITY*. People like living here because they feel secure, because it's familiar and because they have a sense of belonging that may take years to develop in a new environment. Forcing people to choose between sending their older children away to boarding school or moving the whole family is both unfair and highly discriminatory. Families living in Metropolitan areas are not under pressure to make decisions like this so why should families living in country towns have to make such a choice.

I am also very concerned that there appears to have been no suggestions of alternative Education options made for families affected by this decision. Surely those responsible for making and implementing this decision realise that for some (possibly many) families, sending their older children away to boarding facilities for the final two years of their Education is simply *NOT AN OPTION*. It is extremely expensive to have children living away from home to attend school and for some families it would be financially impossible. What is supposed to happen to the children in those families?

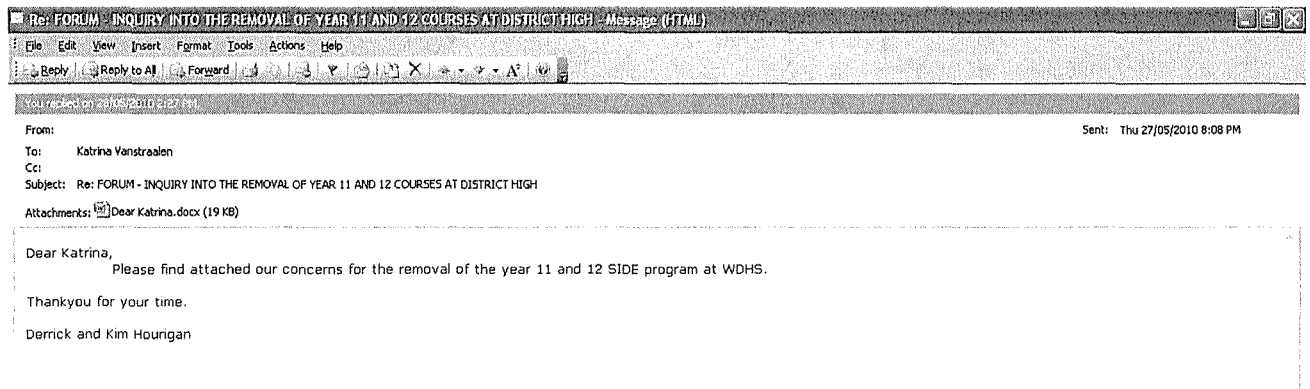
I firmly believe that this is an ill informed decision which has been made in haste, without any consideration given to the people, and their Communities, who will be most affected by it.

I would like to see the decision reversed immediately, with a return to fully funded education for all years of

High School available at ALL District High Schools. Education is for everyone, not just for those who happen to live where it is most convenient for the Government, or for those whose families can afford the added cost of accessing services provided either publicly or in the private Education sector.

I respectfully request that you give this matter your full consideration.

Susan Anderson, Wyalkatchem.



Dear Katrina,

We have several concerns about the proposed closing of the year 11 and 12 SIDE education programs at Wyalkatchem District High School:

- Being forced to leave our home town and extended family. We do not want to send our children away, if there is no year 11 and 12 programs in Wyalkatchem we will all be moving. This is going to affect more than just our family unit, Derrick's employers will be without a worker and there will be no young workers available in town either!
- This policy will affect our whole community; from a social aspect-through to the local sporting clubs which we support and the local shops, will all loose out.
- The local community are going to find it hard to find quality labourers. As a quality labourer myself, I know that when looking for work you make sure there is a High School that offers the year 11 and 12 education program. The reason being that your average labourer cannot afford to send their children away to school. There is also the issue of emotional and mental effects of families being torn apart.
- This policy will prevent the school from opportunities such as the year 11 and 12 Aviation Program (as was planned before the department introduced this policy). It seems to be working in opposition to the development of the Wyalkatchem Shire Airfield program, which is being pursued by Brendon Grylls MLA, and other royalties for regions funded initiatives. These initiatives have the potential to attract new families to Wyalkatchem – this will be difficult if these families have no access to years 11 and 12. The Opportunity to develop education delivery as an 'industry' for international students to access will also not be possible.
- This seems to be discrimination against rural people based on their location! We as rural people have to right to access year 11 and 12 education in our local area. Especially when we have fantastic facilities to accommodate the year 11 and 12 program right here in town. There is no common sense in this decision.

- We have concerns about larger Senior High Schools due to their size. They present greater negative social pressures that many of us parents and the children themselves choose to avoid.
- If families choose to stay in town the students will have difficulty accessing quality learning programs. These students have limited choices:
TAFE – nearest being Northam (104km)
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL – nearest being Northam or Merredin (120km)
EMPLOYMENT - !!
DISTANCE EDUCATION – Learning at home (one parent will have to stop work to supervise)
- Some students are not ready for employment or living away from home. Many require the love and care that can only be provided by their family unit, and the personal support and guidance they get from the staff at a small caring school such as Wyalkatchem DHS.

Thank you for your time and efforts.
Derrick and Kim Hourigan

RE: FORUM - INQUIRY INTO THE REMOVAL OF YEAR 11 AND 12 COURSES AT DISTRICT HIGH - Message (HTML)

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Actions Help

Reply Reply to All Forward

You replied on 28/05/2010 2:16 PM

From: Michelle Maitland
To: katrina.vanstraalen@det.wa.edu.au
Cc:
Subject: RE: FORUM - INQUIRY INTO THE REMOVAL OF YEAR 11 AND 12 COURSES AT DISTRICT HIGH

Sent: Fri 28/05/2010 12:41 PM

Hello Katrina,

Thank you and to the other various school staff members for holding last nights community forum on the removal of year 11 & 12 courses at District High Schools. Our son Avery is currently doing Year 10 at Wyalkatchem Dist High and enjoys the whole school environment and the community feel we have at our school, which all are proud of and hope to continue with. Having said that next year Avery will be attending Cunderdin Ag College to do Years 11 & 12. This is the path he has chosen to follow and we are fortunately financially able to provide him with this. We as a family and as parents do not want to send our children to Perth Boarding Schools/Colleges etc. With Cunderdin only being a short distance away and offering the courses Avery wants it is ideal. If Avery had to continue at Wyalkatchem next year to do his Years 11 & 12 he would have struggled. He needs to study and be at school with helpful teachers and his peers to succeed, this includes social interaction in the school with sports, younger children and most importantly motivation from other students and especially teachers guidance. Without these important elements he would be unable to complete his study goals etc.

Katrina we also have 2 younger girls at Wyalkatchem who are in primary levels and I do not want to ship them off to Perth Boarding Schools and if in the years to come our District High School does not offer adequate funding & resources for supervised Year 11 & 12 we will as a family suffer. This is because I myself and the 2 girls would have to leave the farm and our home for schooling, as I don't want them in Perth or wherever without a parent. So therefore our family will be split for quite some period of time, I dread the thought but it is my decision to be with my daughters instead of just sending them away. Luckily we as parents hopefully have the finances to make these choices in future but really there are a very many parents and families in our town and district who just cannot afford any other options. Also I know that our children would find it hard to be separated and schooled elsewhere for such a period. Thanks for your time and efforts Katrina, I do hope that we have some success with our letters etc as our town and surrounding smaller towns needs Year 11 & 12 to remain ~ it is vital to our towns future and all of the community benefits in some way or form.

Kind Regards Michelle & Gill Maitland