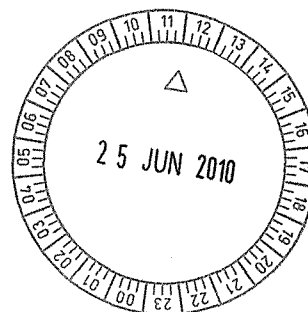




PUBLIC



0207

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

Dear Mrs Jewell

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

I would like to apologise for the lateness of this submission.

As you are aware this decision to cease year 11 and 12 from the Gnowangerup District High School has come as a devastating blow to the Community and Council. I have answered the Terms of Reference as listed.

- a) As far as Council is concerned there was no decision making process as there was no consultation with local Communities at all, Education staff members were reportedly not allowed to discuss the issue outside of the school. The decision to remove the years has come due to the lack of students and with no apparent consideration of the distance that these students will now need to travel and the impact of removing more students from the school by forcing them to larger centres or boarding schools. Numbers vary year from year and it would have seemed more pertinent to have reduced the teacher numbers during the smaller number years and then to increase the teachers as the numbers re increase (merging classes like they do when they have to for year 1 and 2). Please note that Gnowangerup District High School only offered restricted classes for year 11 and 12 anyway.

The other major impact is with the indigenous Community in Gnowangerup, that is quite large, as these students may now receive considerably less education as the likelihood of these students travelling to a regional centre is next to none. The school offered additional support to these students during the last two years of school and ensured that many were being educated and off the streets.

- b) The effect that this decision by the State Government will be absolutely minimal, from Gnowangerup, in the States Budget but will have a major impact on the local Community. It can easily be expected that crime and antisocial behaviour will increase substantially and will result in additional pressures being placed on the Local Police.

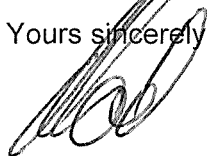
Coupled with the closure of the Gnowangerup Training Centre (Agricultural School) student now have no local option for education. This is alarming and will work to greatly reduce the general education of the Youth of Gnowangerup.

- c) The Gnowangerup Community have not been kept informed as to any alternatives offered and as such it is only a closure of the years. This is part of the lack of communication that I stated earlier.
- d) It has been proven time and time again that the smaller schools provide a far greater education service provision than larger schools; however, the cost is provided over less students. When you live remotely State Government Agencies cannot expect to achieve the same cost benefit as the Metropolitan area. It appears that the State Government is pushing hard to have everyone living on the coast in the Metropolitan Area or Regional Centre. That's great to keep costs down but who will farm the land and produce Australia's Grain, Wheat and Meat?

It comes with great dismay to also reveal that the Education Department bullied several parents to relocate their children to other schools. A Councillor first hand experienced this Bullying and was amazed at the pressure placed on her and her family to relocate the Childs education.

Again I apologise for being late in the preparation of this submission; however, I hope that the information can be used or at least to back up other submissions that were received. If you have any queries regarding any information contained within this letter please do not hesitate to contact me at the Shire office on 9827 1007.

Yours sincerely



Aaron Cook

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

21st JUNE 2010