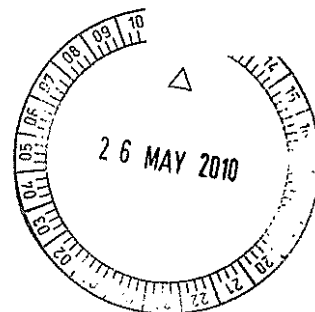


PUBLIC

Mrs Trudy McClurg



SUBMISSION
Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations
Effect on Students and Communities

I wish to submit my comments regarding the removal of Year 11 and Year 12 courses at 21 District High Schools across Western Australia.

In particular, I would like to address this proposal and its effect on Dongara District High School.

I have been involved with the Dongara District High School since 1997, both as a parent, and as a member of Dongara District High School Council, serving some time as Chair of the Council.

During the past 13 years, I have watched this school grow and extend the programmes made available to its students, the culmination of which was the introduction of the VET programme for Year 11 and 12 students. I attended the first graduation of these students approximately five years ago, and it was an honour to be present at this highly emotional and joyous occasion.

Since the inception of our VET programme, we have become the shining example of how these programmes create success and futures for our young Australians, and a majority of the graduates have gone on to successful careers within the Dongara area. We have also had students undertake distance education courses from Dongara District High School at a higher academic level.

It is a constant battle for a town the size of Dongara to give its young people scope to live and work in the town, and the VET programme at Dongara has indeed helped in this endeavour. Many students previously left Dongara District High School to attend schools in other towns because there was nothing left for them here. When they move away, their immediate families often move with them for support, and we not only lose the young people, but a wider range of people that live and work in Dongara. This would have such a negative impact on the School and community as a whole; it could set the town back 20 years.

If you have a successful school, you have a successful community.

Cost effectiveness of the decision

Removing Year 11 and Year 12 students from Dongara will only move the costs to another location. Students from Dongara will have to be transported to other schools. Those that choose to board will have to be housed somewhere, and there is currently already a shortage of boarding places in nearby towns. We have been fortunate enough to receive a long awaited new school which will begin construction soon, and I find it ludicrous that we are just about to embark on the most exciting phase of Dongara District High School's history, with a dark shadow hanging over the future of our most precious resource, our kids.

I submit these comments to you in the hope that this horrendous decision will be overturned.

Yours truly,
Mrs Trudy McClurg