

ENQUIRIES:

Mr Stuart Taylor

PUBLIC

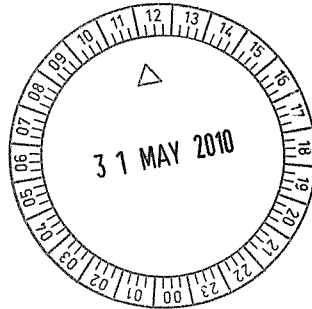
Submission 45

OUR REFERENCE:

A1.18

YOUR REFERENCE:

27 May 2010



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Attn: Renae Jewell

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

Dear Inquiry Committee,

At the end of last year we, as a Shire, were informed that the Government would be ceasing funding for the Year 11 and 12's in District High Schools. This was quite a sudden and shocking revelation as we had not previously been informed of this possibility, nor had we been asked about the ramifications this may have had on our town; the local business and partnerships.

It is the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu's stance that this proposition DOES NOT go ahead the removal of the funding for the local Year 11/12's at Wongan Hills District High School would have many serious consequences at many different levels for this Shire; its families, the businesses and the youth.

Currently there are 25 Year 11 and 12 students studying at our local High School. 17 of these students are engaged in a face-to face delivery program for three days a week and for the other two days they are meaningfully occupied in either Traineeships that this community has committed to or Work Placement programs, assisting the local businesses at the same time as up training them in areas that are both purposeful to the future of the community and of huge benefit to the students learning.

Prior to the raising of the leaving age, our town was in desperately in need of programs to occupy students who had dropped out of school after year 10 and had, in reality, become a burden on the local community. Since Wongan Hills DHS has developed a range of programs that cater specifically for the various needs of these students, we do not have the same level of issues surrounding the youth in the town.

If these 25 students had their program removed and the families are refusing to have their children board or travel 200kms a day to the nearest SHS, what will become of them? In speaking to the parents who have chosen to keep their children in town, there appears to be a host of reasons backing their decision. Boarding schools are certainly not for everyone and parents feel they should not be forced to send their children away.

SHIRE OF WONGAN-BALLIDU

Parents who want to continue to send their children to boarding school for Year 11 and 12, especially those wanting face to face delivery of TEE continue to do so at no disadvantage.

The Media Release Statement made by Education Minister Liz Constable, *Students affected by cuts can either study through SIDE, travel to the nearest senior high school or attend a boarding college*, is broadly naïve.

- Studying via SIDE does not offer the face to face delivery we offer, nor does it have local High School staff working in Partnerships with the community to place these students in Traineeships and Workplacements. The VET opportunities are significantly reduced.
- Travelling to the nearest SHS – 100kms each way (over two hours on a bus a day) is not practical, healthy or beneficial and predicably students participation will decline
- As expressed above, boarding school is a very personal choice and families should have the right not to disrupt the family unit or burden extra financial impact for what may not be necessary when the local school can provide for their needs

This is about catering for the needs of students who for social, emotional, economical or prospective employment reasons are staying here within our town. Students who are currently blossoming in a face to face delivered program whilst working towards their goals. Students in this community have not been disadvantaged and are well looked after by the Community Partnerships in gaining access to avenues to pursue their desired pathways. Currently 13 students are in Traineeships in a variety of professions.

Through careful restructuring, collaboration with numerous stakeholders, including the Shire, the Year 11 and 12 program that is currently offered at Wongan Hills DHS is not only successful but its continuation is necessary and will be beneficial to the student and the community as a whole.

Allow our parents and students to retain the freedom to educate their children locally. Allow the Wongan Hills Community the opportunity to continue to assist our youth. Allow family units to stay in our Shire and not be uprooted or divided because the Government will not fund what is currently a successful and well implemented program. Please; support our schools, support our Shire, support the rural communities and support the youth and their families. Do not allow funding for our Year 11 and 12's to be removed.

Yours faithfully



Mr. Stuart Taylor
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER