

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

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

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE  
TAKEN AT JURIEN BAY  
FRIDAY, 11 JUNE 2010**

**SESSION SIX**

**Members**

**Hon Giz Watson (Chair)  
Hon Philip Gardiner (Deputy Chair)  
Hon Liz Behjat  
Hon Ken Travers  
Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich**

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**Hearing commenced at 2.13 pm****BAKER, MR RODNEY****Principal, Carnamah District High School,  
sworn and examined:**

**The CHAIR:** On behalf of the committee, I welcome you to this meeting this afternoon. Before we begin, I am required to ask you to take either an oath or an affirmation.

[Witnesses took the oath or affirmation.]

**The CHAIR:** You will have signed a document entitled “Information for Witnesses”. Have you read and understood that document?

**Mr Baker:** I have, yes.

**The CHAIR:** These proceedings are being recorded by Hansard. A transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. To assist Hansard, please be aware of the microphone and try to talk directly into it. I remind you that your transcript will become a matter for the public record. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today’s proceedings, you should ask that the evidence be taken in closed session. If the committee grants your request, any public and media in attendance will be excluded from the hearing. Please note that until such time as the transcript of your public evidence is finalised, it should not be made public. This prohibition, however, does not prevent you from discussing your public evidence generally once you leave the hearing.

Again, thank you for coming this afternoon. As you are aware, the committee is inquiring into the government decision to cease providing the senior school allocation funding for year 11 and 12 courses at 21 district high schools in Western Australia, including Carnamah District High School. We welcome your input. If you would like to make an opening statement, please feel free. We have clearly got a submission from you in writing, which we thank you for, but if you would like to make an opening comment or elaborate on your submission, please feel free.

**Mr Baker:** I guess all I would say to start off with is that I made this submission, supporting Carnamah District High School but also hoping to give the committee my understanding of how the year 11 and 12 programs came to be in rural areas. I am particularly keen to see the program at Carnamah continue, but I am also aware that there are a number of other district high schools where programs are equally successful. I think that the program we have got on offer is actually meeting the intentions of the school leaving age changes, and that was to make sure that young people who were dropping out of school at 15 years of age had a chance to continue in education and/or training until the age of 17. I think we are doing that. I think if we do away with the sort of program that we operate, those young people will slip through the system and not continue in education. These are the kids who this was designed for, I believe. Previously their families would allow them to leave at 15 and they would not have had any form of education or training after that. I think that we run the risk of doing a considerable disservice to them and to the communities at large that are concerned here. And that is basically, I guess, how I would like to start off.

**The CHAIR:** I might ask some specific questions, if I could. I understand that Carnamah is not receiving a senior school allocation for years 11 and 12 this year. Is that correct?

**Mr Baker:** Yes, that is correct.

**The CHAIR:** How much money were you receiving each year under the senior school allocation funding? If you could, provide a breakdown for the years from when the funding was first made available, which I think was 2006.

**Mr Baker:** That is probably correct, although I have only been there this year. I had the last couple of years in the Kimberley and prior to that I was the director for the district. Until this year the school was getting approximately one FTE. That would equate to around \$80 000. It has dropped to .48 FTE, which is around about half a teacher, so we were getting, I would think, somewhere around \$40 000 to \$50 000. I will say that we are operating our program comfortably on that, and I cannot see why we would need more than that to do it.

**The CHAIR:** For what purpose is the school using that senior school allocation?

**Mr Baker:** We only have the VET program. We do not operate TEE. I did make a statement in my submission that I do support it. I have been on both sides of the fence and I realise how difficult it is to support all of these programs operating in every little school across the state. But I think that VET is very different from TEE, and schools are able to provide that sort of program with less resources than you can do with TEE, and so that is what we are focused on. We have tapped into a fantastic level of community support in business and so on, and the program is operating very successfully.

**The CHAIR:** In terms of the impact of the removal of the senior school allocation, would you like to talk about that?

**Mr Baker:** We have dropped about half the amount of money. I think we are operating quite adequately with what we have got. I do not think we need any more, so perhaps one FTE was a bit of a bonus, because things at school have not changed a great deal. If we had none, I think it would be really difficult for us to run the program and make sure we met all bases. One of the things I did say in my submission is that it is very important to have a person who is available to manage this program. Most days it goes very sweetly, but there are times when issues arise. One that we have had is where a student was not turning up to work. We needed someone to go to his home and family, and we needed someone to go to the work site, and just work it all through and get him back on track and then happy again, because if you do not do that, you find that work site can be lost. People feel that no-one is interested because he did not come and so on. I think that what we have got is about right for us, and that is about half a teacher week.

**The CHAIR:** Prior to the introduction of the senior school allocation funding, did Carnamah offer year 11 and 12 to students?

**Mr Baker:** No. I can remember the principal at that time ringing me—it could be 2004 or 2005, but probably 2004—to say that they had actually set up a deal with Waltons—they are a very big dealership in this area—to say that they will provide traineeships, I think for five at the time. That was a sort of breakthrough in the district. It was great to think that we actually had something that these kids could go to, and from there others occurred. But prior to then Carnamah did not offer a year 11 and 12 program.

**The CHAIR:** I am sorry; which year was that?

**Mr Baker:** I am guessing here, but it is probably about 2005 or maybe 2006; I would think probably 2005.

**The CHAIR:** What was your understanding of the purpose of the senior school allocation fund when it was initially allocated?

**Mr Baker:** It was to assist schools to manage what they were doing. There was an additional aspect to the school being developed. I think that the changes to the school leaving age had more of an impact in some ways on the smaller schools. They were not set up to cater for year 11 and 12; the senior high schools were. They had that structure in place. Okay, they were bringing in some more students, but with the district high there was none of that structure there. So there was a recognition that some funding was needed to employ a part-time teacher or someone to actually manage this, to do the liaising and so on that was necessary.

**The CHAIR:** When the allocation was introduced, were you advised that it was transitional funding to assist with this new legislation about raising leaving school age?

**Mr Baker:** I cannot recall that, and I should be someone who knows because I was on the other end at the time, but I would not say that it was not; it may well have been. I just cannot say.

**The CHAIR:** Because what we have heard from the department and what they have advised the committee is that money was allocated to assist in the planning required for the transition and support for the introduction of the new legislation.

**Mr Baker:** I could not dispute that. I am not sure. I think over a period of a few years people became comfortable with it and assumed that it would continue. But I cannot argue with that.

[2.23 pm]

**The CHAIR:** So, until the announcement earlier this year that the senior school allocation was not going to be provided, had you ever been made aware that it was temporary funding?

**Mr Baker:** Not that I can recall, no. It may have, but I cannot recall, I am sorry.

**The CHAIR:** You cannot recall; that is fine. So, just in terms of student numbers, how many do you currently have enrolled?

**Mr Baker:** We have 15 in years 11 and 12, and they are all involved in the VET program. Actually we do have one SIDE student as well, but she has come recently and she is doing a SIDE program apart from the others.

**The CHAIR:** And in 8, 9 and 10?

**Mr Baker:** Approximately 50. So, we have got a secondary cohort of around about 65 to 70; fairly small.

**The CHAIR:** And so, you just have just got the one student who is doing SIDE?

**Mr Baker:** Yes. She has come back from Geraldton. There were some issues. She is continuing a TEE program with SIDE. She is actually enrolled there but just sitting with us, and I supervise her.

**The CHAIR:** And is there any proposal that you are aware of to ask that 25 per cent of the cost of SIDE be funded by the school?

**Mr Baker:** In regard to this one student?

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mr Baker:** No.

**The CHAIR:** It is just that there seems to be some conjecture about what is happening with the SIDE fundings. I just wondered if you had heard anything.

**Mr Baker:** I am certainly aware in the past of SIDE levelling charges, if you like, on schools that have used their services. But in Sasha's case, she is enrolled with SIDE and so I do not think there is going to be a cost to us.

**The CHAIR:** Any additional cost?

**Mr Baker:** If there is, I am not prepared for it. That would be a bit of a surprise.

**The CHAIR:** Okay. I wonder if you could explain your experience with the introduction—I do not know whether you have already covered this—of the senior school allocation and its purposes, just elaborating on your submission.

**Mr Baker:** Yes, I was around at the time that it was first introduced. As I said in the submission, we participated in road shows with the then minister, Alan Carpenter. We had two in this district; one in Geraldton and one at Carnarvon. The focus was very much, I think, on the bigger schools, and it took some of the little schools somewhat by surprise, I think, and certainly me as well. We

found that parents, I think, seemed to assume that with the change in the school leaving age, their children would be able to continue to get education at their local centre. The pressure came onto the schools; what do we do? That was a pretty hard question to answer. Bit by bit various schools and communities began to put programs together that met their needs, and funding was made available through the departments to assist schools in managing these changes. Not a lot of money in the first instance. It certainly was not the equivalent of one FTE for Carnamah District High School; I am sure of that. Initially I think we only offered about 0.2 to Carnamah to do their program, and that has increased over the last few years.

**The CHAIR:** Will the VET program at Carnamah District High School be able to continue without the senior school allocation funding?

**Mr Baker:** I think it would be very difficult. We will certainly give it a go. Horror of horrors, it could even mean that people like me have to teach! But it would be hard. I must be serious about that. It would be difficult, if we did not have the additional bit of FTE, to run the program.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** Mr Baker, firstly just going to your submission, I just want to check on the top of the third page—do you have a copy of your submission there?

**Mr Baker:** I do, but I do not have my glasses with me.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** Just that first complete sentence, you say —

Employees are quite willing to give the additional time ...

I am certain you mean that to be “Employers are quite willing to give the additional time to ensure that they, their personnel and their premises meet the standards”.

**Mr Baker:** Yes, certainly.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** Yes, okay; I thought that was right; I just want to check that. It is a great submission, too, and I think the telling part of your submission is the first paragraph of your conclusion —

... this is a matter that has been poorly handled, lacking sensitivity in the way it has been communicated to rural communities.

I think I could fully endorse those comments that you have made in your submission. I think this is where the problem lies. There has been a gross lack of communication. In your submission you say you have coped adequately with your additional 0.48 FTE at the moment and you are worried that next year you will lose that. It also seems that part of what you are delivering in your VET program is sort of that liaison between the employer and students and coordination and the paperwork that goes along with that.

**Mr Baker:** Yes.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** I suppose this is a bit of the devil’s advocate here, but could you envisage that that function could be carried out by someone other than a qualified teacher?

**Mr Baker:** It could; not ideally but it is something that could happen. I think when we gave the 0.2 or 0.3 to Carnamah back in 2005, or whenever it was, it was possibly a teacher assistant who actually did the job. So, I think the answer is yes; although I would prefer that it was done by a teacher because there is some need to know the literacy–numeracy component of what it is they are doing and how that might relate to the work that they are doing at their work site. But, yes, if we were not able to get a teacher or if we were only able to get—I do not know—a fraction of that amount of money and we had to employ someone else, then we would certainly do the best we could with that.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** I sincerely hope that your VET program is going to continue at Carnamah because it seems like you have really got a great one running there.

**Mr Baker:** It is. I can take no credit for it because I have only been there six months. But we are tapping into some fantastic work placements, and I have outlined them there, and we have got kids who now know that when they leave, either at the end of this year or next year, they have got jobs with Rio Tinto, with Waltons, with the shire. We have just a young fellow in year 11 who has gone to the Shire of Three Springs. He was doing his work placement. He has actually left and is now in a full-time traineeship with them, because they wanted him and he was considered ideal for their circumstances. So, he continues in his education but he is actually in a job. He was saying to me last week, which is when he left, that he is going to be a CEO of the shire. So, there are some fantastic examples there. But, I guess, I did want to present a balanced argument. My background gives me some insight into what happens on both sides of the fence. I understand that there would be some communities that are pretty emotional about it and would want to continue with their TEE program or whatever. It is not realistic in some places, but that is my feeling. But there are certainly many places around where it works well and it meets local needs without question.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** If I am not wrong, Hon Philip Gardiner, Carnamah is the home town of that great Premier, Sir David Brand; is it not? Was he not from Carnamah?

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** Dongara.

**Mr Baker:** I might claim him!

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** Dongara? I thought it was Carnamah.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** Nonetheless, Carnamah is a great spot. You are close to the money!

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** That is right. It is a good spot in your electorate!

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Mr Baker, Hon Liz Behjat beat me to the punch on this one, but in your conclusion you say that the abolishing of the senior school allocation has been poorly handled and lacking in sensitivity in the way that it was communicated. I wonder whether you could just give the committee the reasons why you made that statement.

**Mr Baker:** Yes. When I took up my appointment, and I did outline there that I spent two years at Kalumburu in the north Kimberley, I was going back to Geraldton to do whatever and I was asked whether I would be interested in going to that school three days before the school year ended last year. So, my first dealings with the school and the community and staff and so on were at the beginning of the school year. I had an opportunity over a couple of days before everyone arrived to look through mail and I was very surprised to see a letter there that said the senior school allocation was ending and years 11 and 12 programs could end. I was a bit suspicious, to be quite honest and I read a little bit more into it than that as well, and maybe that would be the case—I do not know. But to me it said not just the senior school allocation, but also years 11 and 12 programs were to be finished at that school. That is how I read it. So, when I spoke to the deputy who came in, she said, “Yes, that letter applied from the end of last year.” It had been presented to the school council right at the end of the year but there had been no opportunity to enter into any form of discussion with the community or get feedback or prepare them for it or whatever. So, it did seem to me to be pretty harsh, particularly given what places like Carnamah went through to actually establish what they are doing. They had real ownership of it. They had the kids there. They did not have much for them, and then gradually things were put together, and then to have it taken away like that was a real shock. So, to me, that is why I have written that. I know what places were going through to actually get these programs in place. They gradually developed. There was strong ownership of them, they met local needs, and then—bang!—it looked like it was going.

[2.33 pm]

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I was interested to read the comments that you made in relation to the potential savings to the system, particularly your analysis of one FTE equating to \$80 000 times 20 district high schools—effectively \$1.6 million. If we load a bit on top of that, it is probably \$2 million. You would be aware, as I am aware, that the education budget is around \$4 billion. The

pain for \$2 million in savings out of a \$4 billion plus budget seems to be a pretty high pain threshold for 20 communities. You did say that other areas should be closely scrutinised. Would you like to give us some insights so we can go and argue the toss?

**Mr Baker:** I will not enlarge on that right here. I have been in a remote school for two years. I went there because of the issues that were there and it interested me a great deal. I wanted to do something different. I was particularly frustrated at times about the sorts of things we dealt with. I do not think the savings are there, quite honestly. We might say that there will be a \$2 million saving but the overall costs could be quite different. I do not think these kids are going to go to school to start off with. Effort will be put into tracking them down, and they will be hard to track down. They will be found in many cases, not in all cases. How you then get them to school, I do not know. There are costs to their families. I think there is a cost to the community down the track too. I just do not think the saving is there. In places where there is a good demonstration of a successful program—I am not suggesting that everyone is accepted—I did conclude by suggesting that there is some form of evaluation conducted by the department with some measure that they be allowed to continue because I think to knock them on the head will cost more in the long term.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** There is some potential for cost shifting to the PTA and parents and so on and so forth.

**Mr Baker:** For sure. We might be saving but someone else is not.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Thank you for that.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** In some places we have found that some children in years 11 and 12 have fallen off the edge of the table and not been counted in the 11 and 12 category. With your program at Carnamah, as a model and a very good model, are there any who have fallen off the table, any year 11 and 12 age groups that are not going to school?

**Mr Baker:** No, there is not one that I am aware of.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** That is the answer I expected, and I think it is a very encouraging answer. It shows you have got the model right.

**Mr Baker:** There have been a couple who were on our list from last year but we received notification during this first semester of them being elsewhere in programs. I am not aware of anyone who is not engaged. One of the positives of our program is that we are able to shop around and find something that interests the kids. It is not a matter of having 10 jobs and that is all we can find. We can move around a little. We have a great young person on our staff who supervises it. She has a lot of local knowledge and she can look around. That is a positive for our young people.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** Are there any Aboriginal students in your year 11 and 12 cohort?

**Mr Baker:** For sure, yes.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** Can I ask how many?

**Mr Baker:** Two that I can think of. We have some more coming on but one in year 12 and one in year 11.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** They are still significant in a positive way. Given the way this whole thing was communicated, what is the perception of the school community at this very minute about the future of the district high school?

**Mr Baker:** There are certainly some concerns held for the place. I did include that in my submission. When I first visited, it had over 200 students. We are now down to around 140. People attribute that to the drought. When families talk about their kids not being able to continue in year 11 and 12, they start making early plans. There is a fear that they will go early and they will affect the numbers at the school. Our P&C president is coming along later, and I am sure she will enlarge

on that. She has been in Carnamah for a long time. There is concern that, overall, school hubs could be impacted on.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** This may be too hypothetical but let me try it anyway. What do you think needs to be done to steady that whole perception down?

**Mr Baker:** If we were able to continue as we are now, confidence would be renewed. It is pretty much as simple as that. Everything else is in place. We continue to have the support of the businesses and the support of the community and parents. They see it as a good thing for those kids who are not TEE bound, who do not have an academic bent. I think that it would very quickly become business as usual and things would continue positively. I would imagine that school numbers would stay about the same as they are now.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** Finally, if there was to be an ideal or constructive consultative process, given your experience with what you have seen at Carnamah—that it goes beyond the school and the community’s involvement—how do you think that should take place?

**Mr Baker:** There needs to be an assessment of the types of support that are evident in the community. The first one would need to be around the level of work placement and that sort of support. If the community does not have the capacity to take these young people into various workplaces, I think we are wasting our time. That is one of the points I wanted to make about moving our students to Morawa. Morawa has really struggled, as I think you would know, over the past few years. When I was last visiting the place as a director, I do not think it had a mechanic operating there. I think he closed up during the time of my visits. I know that there is mining there now and the place will obviously bloom again. That is great. I think they would really struggle to place all of our students. That is a reason why you would not do it.

One thing that I think needs to be assessed is the capacity of the community to support it. The level of local government support is pretty important too. If local government is committed to something like this, I think it gives a really positive message to the rest of the community that this has obviously been successful with the students in the past. We have just been saying to our kids at present who are coming up towards the end of semester that reports are due and some of them do not have their work in. I am going along to argue the case to a committee on Friday afternoon and we have kids back at school who have not finished all their work. I want to go along and say that it is a successful program that includes their work in the school because we want them to graduate and we want them to get WACE. That sort of thing is important as well.

I do not have all the answers to that. I know that it will be very hard because, as I said before, communities are very strongly supportive of it but in some places I do not think it will work, and I do not think TEE works in too many places. That is an issue that we have to work through, but we at least need to get into some form of consultation with the community and be able to justify that the decision is important.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** Based on your experience when you were a district officer —

**Mr Baker:** Director.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** — would you have suggested that different schools then need to do the year 11s or have different drivers for how years 11 and 12 would work at district high schools?

**Mr Baker:** If I had my time over again, right from the beginning we would have been saying to certain places, “This is not for you.” We would really need to have gone in there and given some messages to parents. It was sort of left in limbo. I do not know whether I am answering your question. We did not give clear messages about what we could or could not manage. I do not know whether that answers the question you are asking.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** Perhaps a little. Let me put it to you, at a previous hearing on Tuesday we had a person come in to say 95 per cent of our community would not even know there is a



problem, but it is those five per cent of our parents who actually have a serious problem because they have got special needs and that kind of thing. It is a different model to the one you have got in Carnamah, I think; that was the issue he was raising. I was wondering whether you identified that some of those schools are going to have to cater for special needs of a particular kind, whereas others will have a more community trade-based VET program like you have got at Carnamah.

**Mr Baker:** Yes, that is possible. I think that, certainly in our community, there are some families and parents who share our concern, but they are not going to be involved in it because their children are not going to continue into upper school at Carnamah and do that; they are going off to TEE. So, yes, I think there would certainly be a percentage of our people who support it but are not buying into it. But then there are others who are very supportive. I think Colleen Bennier, who is coming this afternoon, is an example of a person whose child will probably not go through it—she would continue into TEE—but who, as part of the community, sees the benefits of having this program there to cater for a particular group of young people who are quite vital to the community long term. I think everyone shares the concern and buys into it to some level.

**The CHAIR:** Just one of a couple of follow-on ones that I have is whether you wanted to elaborate on the suggestion that the Carnamah students could travel by bus to Morawa. That was a comment you made in your submission.

**Mr Baker:** Yes, I am happy to. I described it as a silly suggestion. To me it represented the lack of consultation. I can imagine that people probably looked on a map and saw that was a place that was in a reasonable travelling distance of Carnamah and Mullewa and so on and, “Okay; we’ll go with that one.” But only a handful of our kids live in Carnamah; the rest live in Three Springs or Coorow or Eneabba. They cannot travel another 50 minutes and have any sort of meaningful work program during the day. Apart from the fact that they could be travelling for up to two and a half hours on the bus, it is just not realistic. Being someone who has had 43 years in rural education, that sort of stuff really frustrates me because it just demonstrates a complete lack of understanding of the sort of issues that are relevant and important to people. That would not work.

**The CHAIR:** Which perhaps points to your conclusion, which was that the matter has been poorly handled and lacking sensitivity in the way it has been communicated to rural communities. I think if there is anything that is becoming clear to me through these hearings, it is that we are all pretty sure that that is the case. Is there a way forward that you can suggest? Again, I am suggesting, with your length of experience in the department and working at the level you have, what would you do to fix the problem now? At the least, it is miscommunication; at the worst, it is causing parents and schools to make decisions that have got long-term consequences and, perhaps, not on the full information.

**Mr Baker:** I was just thinking I would send the district worker out to sort it out! No, I would not do that; that would be unkind.

**The CHAIR:** Have we got his name!

**Mr Baker:** The first thing I would say is, as I think I have said a few times, I would not be giving the message that everyone will get what they want, because I do not think it works. I have had my say about TEE. It will work in some places—big schools—but overall it is not the case. And that one, I think, really needs to be put aside. I guess there would need to be some team of people who have got a little bit of an understanding of what they are dealing with and maybe an understanding of rural communities to go along and look at what is happening, meet with people in the communities and have a discussion around the value of it and do an honest estimate of the cost as well; what does it mean to continue this if, in the case of Carnamah, for example, there might be hidden costs that I am not aware of, but I do not think they are too big. It would be around some discussion and consultation with people and a close look at what is actually operating there.

**The CHAIR:** It seems to me that the input is that each situation is quite different depending on the school. It is almost as though you need to have, as you say, a team to go out there, have a conversation with that group and then make a decision that is tailored to each school. I suppose my other question was: how do you generate that sort of cost-benefit analysis? Is it by way of that sort of consultation, or is there a way of making that evaluation of the flow-on effects of the changing in funding?

**Mr Baker:** I think that is the case. I do not think we should always balance educational outcomes against the cost either. I think it is one aspect of this overall program. If the cost at Carnamah was going to be quite big but the benefits for the school and the community and the students and so on were also identified as being great, maybe that is something that needs to be worn. I do not know. I am not really sure of the way it can be done, but I do think the first instance is to go and talk with people. I closed the school and it was a really unpleasant experience. I am not saying that I am very popular in that community, but we talked and talked and talked for months and months over the year about what might happen and then what was going to happen and how we work it through. I think that sort of example is what needs to happen to really get into some decent discussion with the people who are in the communities and in the school about what it means and come to a decision that will not in all cases be perhaps what the community wants, but at least it can be justified with some evidence supporting the decision.

**The CHAIR:** Are there precedents for this sort of approach from the education department to actually go out and have those sort of consultations?

**Mr Baker:** I would like to think so.

**The CHAIR:** Because it would not be unheard of.

**Mr Baker:** No; I think so. In the example that I gave of closing that school, that started in March; it happened at the end of the year. I think that sort of consultation is not unreasonable and could be conducted. I do think that most of the costs could be identified as well. After the FTE, I do not think there really is much more that is wrapped up in our program that I am not aware of.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much, Mr Baker. That is great. I appreciate your contribution.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Can I just get clarification?

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Mr Baker, I have sort of been left hanging in the breeze a bit in relation to the other areas that should be closely scrutinised within the system before settling on this. I am just wondering whether you might like to forward us your ideas in due course.

**Mr Baker:** Yes, okay.

**The CHAIR:** It is an invitation to!

**Mr Baker:** As I said, I had eight years as a bureaucrat and I wanted to do a few other things before I finished, including going back to a remote school. My wife and I opened the school at One Arm Point many years ago, and, in going back to school and becoming a principal, I was face to face with the sort of issues that principals over eight years had been bringing to my attention—about ministers and other things!

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** We are all guilty as charged!

**Mr Baker:** I will think about it. It probably would not be wise to do it—maybe. Thank you very much.

**The CHAIR:** You have the invitation if you like.

**Hearing concluded at 2.52 pm**