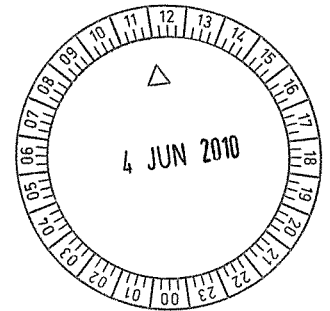


Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations.

Mr Peter Groves
Chairperson
School Council
Quairading District High School

RMB 2108
Shackleton, 6386.
9645 5204



Inquiry into Removal of Year 11 and 12 Courses at District High Schools

Quairading District High School has no feeder school. The closest senior high school is over 100kms away and there is no bus service. Prior to raising the school leaving age, after Year 10 our students would either find work in the community or move to Perth to various boarding schools. Since students must now stay at school or in training until the equivalent of Year 12 there is a requirement for those students to be provided Year 11 and 12 courses through the local school. There is no option for students who would choose to stay in town other than home schooling which is not a viable option for most of those students. The results of home schooling from an individual perspective have not been positive in this area. The social impact of forcing children to study at home is significant. The ones who are forced to study at home find it very difficult to maintain focus and motivation. They tend to 'fall through the cracks', finding 'mischief' to entertain themselves during the day.

The impact of forced movement on families and individual students is also negative, either by forcing the whole family to move or having an unhappy child at boarding school. Students are far more likely to succeed if going away is a decision they have made themselves. Regardless of financial support, these families often do not have the emotional resilience to have a member of the family live away. This results in emotional pressure and generally the child dropping out early or failing to succeed.

Families who would otherwise have their children attend Year 11 and 12 in Quairading often do not have the financial means to send their children away. Whilst there is financial support for boarding fees, the cost escalates when children need their own set of clothing and personal items, plus the extras that peer pressure demands when they're away from home.

Through work experience and work placement programs offered by the school whilst students are in year 11 & 12, students can attend work on a part time basis and become familiar with processes, receive training and develop skills prior to having to apply for positions. Students experience more success through the application process. Employees are local, settled in the town and provide a more stable workforce. The Shire and local businesses have an opportunity to 'try out' and train students who may be prospective employees.

These students require programs that are individually tailored to their needs, a combination of school, TAFE and work placement, which is what the school has been providing for the past five years, experiencing success with most of the students involved.

Withdrawing this option is withdrawing choice for families and forcing them to make decisions they would rather not make, forcing them into situations in which they would rather not be and are not beneficial to the students and community economically or socially.

I urge you to consider carefully the situation for students in Quairading.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. J. Groves". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Peter Groves.