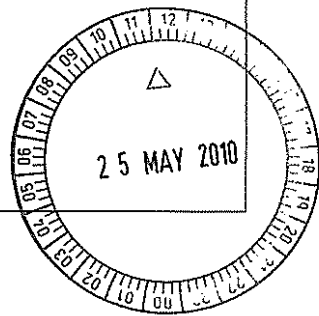


Narembeen District High School **PUBLIC**

~ Parents & Citizens Association ~

President: Ian Mortimore
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Submission to:
**Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial
Operations – Inquiry into the Removal of Year 11 and 12
Courses at District High Schools**

From:
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Contact:
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The decision to remove Year 11 and 12 courses at District High Schools (removal of the Senior School allocation funding) was announced in letters to Principals at the end of Term 4 2009. Our P&C association regret the lack of consultation in this decision making process and feel that the schools involved should have had the opportunity to demonstrate the positive aspects of what they have been providing for, albeit a small number, of Year 11 and 12 students.

It would appear from this letter that part of the rationale for the government decision is based upon research showing the benefits for Year 11 and 12 students attending Senior High Schools. These are undoubtedly true for the majority of students but we would wish to make the following points in relation to this:

- ❖ Some students at the age of 15 are not socially or emotionally mature enough to leave home and live in a hostel setting.

- ❖ Some students at the age of 15 do not have the social or emotional skills for the transition to a Senior High School setting. The larger cohorts and increased peer interaction may in fact have an adverse effect on the emotional or educational development of these students and the resulting emotional, behavioural or disciplinary issues can be avoided by removing the need for transition and the student can benefit from a seamless curriculum in a safe environment in which they may previously have thrived.
- ❖ Travelling to the nearest Senior High School is no guarantee that the student will have access to subject specific expertise and they may still have to study subjects such as physics or higher maths as a SIDE student.
- ❖ The economic implications of a child boarding at their nearest Senior High School may put considerable financial pressure on a family. The cost not only of materials, uniforms etc but also the cost of travelling to and from school may be beyond them. Without a reliable vehicle or when two parents work and are unavailable for these trips may mean that the child's attendance and subsequent education is disrupted.

Two years ago funding was provided to equip a room for Year 11 and 12 students. There are no other significant financial implications for allowing these students to study in Narembeen, and in fact, should they study in the closest Senior High School then they would be entitled to claim not only the Living Away From Home Allowance but also other financial entitlements. Providing a 0.2 FTE staffing allowance for supervision of these students would be cheaper than the cost of the students studying away from home.

The number of Year 11 and 12 students enrolled at Narembeen may never be more than one or two in any year and may not be considered educationally viable when viewed in terms of educational best practice. However when we consider the students that have been or are enrolled in Year and 12 at Narembeen, the school and staff should be proud that they have provided these students with the opportunity to complete their education in the place which for those individuals at that time was the right place for them to be.

We do not deny that for most students the benefits of attending Senior High School are numerous. However we feel that it is vital that we retain the option of offering selected Year 11 and 12 students the opportunity to complete their education in Narembeen when their individual circumstances mean that other avenues are closed to them. We believe that denying these students access to this facility will impact not only on their social and emotional well-being but also that of their families. It is individuals such as these whom we need to engage with and provide them with the chance to complete their Year 11 and 12 courses.

Ian R Mortimore
President
Narembeen P&C Association

23 May 2010