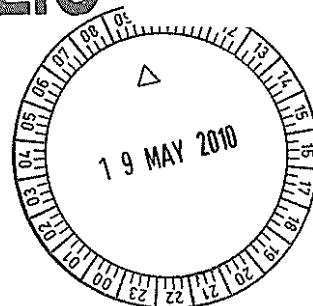


PUBLIC

Estimates and Financial Operations Committee

Gavin Treasure, Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Morawa

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I would like to make a submission to the Estimates and Financial Operations Committee in relation to the Inquiry into the Removal of Year 11 and 12 Courses at District High Schools.

From the outset, I would like to highlight that although the decision does not appear to have a specific impact on the Morawa District High School, the magnitude of the decision has created significant concern amongst all sections of country communities – particularly those located in the hinterland of Western Australia.

My submission makes particular reference to the following:-

a) The decision-making process and rationale behind the decision

The Shire of Morawa was not consulted into this decision and is concerned that issues of this magnitude are not given any opportunity for thorough consultation and due consideration. By not consulting with the communities impacted by this decision, the impression is that rural communities don't matter and are unimportant when it comes to matters of our children's education and well being.

b) The effect of the decision on the State budget, the affected students and communities

By ceasing to provide a senior schooling program to some District High Schools, parents are forced to consider out of town options for the senior schooling of their children. This places increased emotional and financial pressure on rural families to identify an option that either:-

1. Requires their children to board away from home, or
2. Requires families to shift to more populous locations to move closer to the new school

Either option drains the community of its social fabric. Already struggling communities are placed under greater pressure to remain viable.

The multiplier effect of this decision also means that schools lose valuable teaching resources and associated funding connected to this position. If the teacher/s has a family, then this is a further loss, which cumulatively has impacts right across the community. Such losses include retail sales, trade servicing, sporting club membership support and community volunteer functions.

c) The adequacy, cost effectiveness and social impact of the educational alternatives proposed

The Shire of Morawa is concerned that no social impact assessment has been undertaken to determine the impacts of the decision to close Year 11 and Year 12 District High School courses on the communities to be affected by the proposed closures. A social impact assessment is critical to identify the particular areas and economic factors potentially impacted by this decision. Indeed, other options may have been identified had a social impact assessment been conducted to determine and assess all of the alternatives available.