



**Queensland
Government**

Hon Geoff Wilson MP
Member for Ferny Grove

15 JUN 2010

Minister for Education and Training

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
TableOffice@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter and attached petition number 1377-10 dated 10 February 2010 regarding the issue of a secondary school servicing of the town of Agnes Water.

I would like to apologise for the delay in providing this response, which was a result of a misunderstanding in the Department of Education and Training (DET) as to required time frames for response and a desire by DET to provide the most current advice possible to you.

In the context of secondary school servicing, I acknowledge parents' views that 'all children deserve access to quality education within their own community'.

The very nature of secondary school servicing in remote rural areas raises complex issues for the Department of Education and Training. These issues relate to the qualitative differences between Primary and Secondary education. Secondary education is more vocationally oriented and is expected to offer a wide range of specialist subjects. For this range of subjects, the number of students needs to be significantly larger than primary schools.

However, student numbers in the rural context tend to be dispersed across considerable distances. If the Department was to follow the practice of opening many small secondary centres, it is possible that such centres may not meet parental and student expectations in relation to breadth of curriculum offerings in a secondary school.

The Department acknowledges that Agnes Water has emerged as the most prominent and largest town (or point of concentration of students) within what was the former Miriam Vale Shire. This town would therefore be the logical point at which to provide a secondary school to service the wider sub-region.

The Department must consider such a step in the context of changed servicing of the wider sub-region. Action in one part of the subregion will inevitably have repercussions for the servicing of other local areas.

Each year, the Department monitors school enrolments in all schools across the State.

Due to the complex enrolment trends in the Agnes Water area, the Department has recently completed a review of the specific needs and changing demographics with regard to the provision of a secondary school. As the review is now complete, a number of options have been prepared in order to offer changed secondary servicing in the Miriam Vale sub-region.

These are to be explored in conjunction with the local community.

Following this process, the options will be submitted to me for consideration to then proceed to consultation with the wider community in order to better identify the pros and cons of each of the options. This is due to be completed by the end of August for my further consideration.

Yours sincerely

GEOFF WILSON MP
Minister for Education and Training

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