



Hon John-Paul Langbroek MP
Minister for Education, Training and Employment

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Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Neil,

I refer to Petition 1938-12 tabled in the Legislative Assembly regarding the request for a state secondary school to serve the residents of Gracemere.

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring that all areas across the State are continually assessed in terms of the need for more accessible schooling. Departmental guidelines are employed for this purpose to ensure that such assessment is undertaken impartially and fairly.

The nearest state high school to the Gracemere suburb is Rockhampton State High School, which is approximately 14 kilometres by road from Gracemere State School. This is regarded as a reasonable distance for travel to a secondary school.

A new school is proposed primarily when a new general residential growth area of sufficient size to warrant its own school can be identified. Any proposed new school should not undermine the continuing viability of the existing schools of the area otherwise the capacity of any existing school is normally augmented by additional classroom provision should the need arise. I am informed that Townsville state schools are currently operating within capacity.

Enrolments at Rockhampton State High School have remained moderate and stable over the past few years, and are forecast to continue at this rate. Rockhampton State High School currently enrolls 1,057 students and has capacity for more students. Based on current data, should a secondary state school for Years 8 to 12 open at Gracemere, it would only attract approximately 360 students.

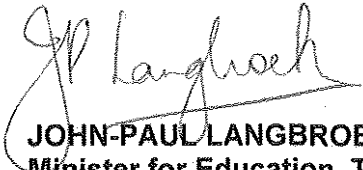
While Gracemere has experienced some residential growth over the past few years, further growth is limited by the amount of land suitable for further residential growth under the Rockhampton Regional Council's current Planning Scheme. Therefore, there are no current plans to construct an additional secondary state school at Gracemere.

The Department of Education, Training and Employment regularly assesses all school requirements across the State. Material from Council Planning Schemes and development applications before Council, school enrolment patterns, and many other sources, are referenced. One of the outcomes of this assessment is a series of plans for new schools covering a 20 year forward period.

The Government announced the establishment of the Schools Planning Commission in June 2012 which will build upon this planning approach in order to ensure that areas of significant need, across both state and non-state school jurisdictions, are identified and assessed in a timely way. The Commission will also look at population trends and school capacity to help guide future planning. The future schooling needs of Gracemere, together with the rest of Queensland, will be considered through this process.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, I invite you to contact Ms Lee Callum, Executive Director, Strategy, Research, and Performance, Infrastructure Services Branch, on telephone 3237 0950.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'JP Langbroek', with a stylized flourish at the end.

JOHN-PAUL LANGBROEK MP
Minister for Education, Training and Employment

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