

INQUIRY INTO CLOSURE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Mr Fred Bell

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Mr. Fred Bell
8th August 2015

The Director
Select Committee on the Closure of Public Schools
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

To The Director

Re: Impact on Local School Communities Affected by School Closures

In regard to the possible closure of the Wyangala Dam Public School, although at present there are only five (5) students attending the school, I believe this to be a temporary situation.

In 2009, it was announced that the road atop of the dam wall was to be closed permanently, effectively cutting off the main access to the village of Wyangala, this in turn caused an immediate and dramatic drop in land values in the village and surrounding areas, many families moved out of the area, those that stayed and had children of school age, were fronted with possibility to travel a further 30 K.Ms. each way to take their children to school, so their alternative was to relocate them in Cowra.

In my capacity, at the time, as President and Public Officer of The Wyangala and District Residents Association, I rallied the local residents, businesses, tourist association, local M.Ps and both Cowra Shire and Boorowa Councils, to help us fight this situation, many meetings were held with Radio, Television and media coverage of all kinds.

Although the road is still going to be closed, I managed to have an alternate access in the way of a \$35 Million Dollar bridge built across the Lachlan River, ensuring not only the survival of the village, but also the State Park, Wyangala Country Club and those local businesses in the surrounding areas. This in turn has resulted in the land values going back up, bringing new families into the area once more.

As Vice President of the Wyangala Country Club, I have been asked on many occasions by those on holidays at the Wyangala State Park, if there are any houses available for sale, or where are the local Real Estate Agents, as they want to move here permanently. There are a number of sub divisions around the village and I see new homes being built.

We all know the importance of communication and how the internet is now a necessity in our everyday lives, so to that end, I applied for and succeeded to recently having installed a Mobile Telephone Antenna to the entrance of the village. A new N.B.N. tower has also been built, but yet to be switched on, giving internet access to large area of the community, which I'm sure, will be of great benefit to the school.

The School and students take a very active role in the community, they attend many of the functions held, recently, for example, when we built a new A.N.Z.A.C. memorial, we had the students raise the flag and present a wreath, every year they build a float for Cowra's World Peace Harmony Day and have won many awards for the best float, much of their artwork is displayed at the Wyangala Country Club Bistro,

they go on many excursions to places like Sydney and Ayers Rock, this would not be possible in a larger school. They even have a vegetable garden, growing, harvesting and learning to cook their own lunch.

If I were Mr. Greg Pommering, Principle of the school. I would be very proud of my achievements, being able to boast that I could afford a one on one with my students, also that a number of them, have gone on to higher education, with honours.

I believe that the numbers attending the school will increase dramatically over the next few years and I would ask you, no I would beg you, to please consider keeping the school open, closing it, in my opinion would be a detrimental blow to both the students and the community.

Yours Sincerely

Fred Bell