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The Principal Research Officer
Community Development and Justice Standing Committee
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

INQUIRY INTO COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES IN GOVERNMENT

Partnership Models

The Country High School Hostels Authority provides a boarding service to give geographically isolated students access to secondary school education and training. It does this by establishing and operating residential colleges in regional centres which have good quality secondary education and training services.

The Authority provides the policy framework for local boards of management whose members are appointed by the Authority and given appropriate administrative powers through a constitution. Each residential college has its own board of management comprised of members of the local community, partner secondary school principals and parents. A college manager reports to the college board of management at formal board meetings held twice per school term. The board of management selects and appoints the college manager.

In three regional centres the Authority is working in partnership with private secondary schools to provide a boarding service for students attending both public and private secondary schools. In two instances the private sector has contributed capital funds to secure a number of boarding places for private school students. In the other instance, the private school contributes a lesser amount towards the operating costs to gain the use of spare boarding capacity not taken up by public school students.

Role of Legislation

These service arrangements have been enabled through changes to the *Country High School Hostels Authority Act* in 1998 which gave the Minister for Education the power to allow the admission of students, other than public school students, subject to such conditions as the Minister may impose.

This legislative amendment recognised the need for cost sharing as a means to improve the cost effectiveness of existing boarding facilities and as the most cost effective way of developing boarding services in new regional locations as the need arose.

Since this change to the legislation the Authority has actively sought to negotiate partnership arrangements which are of benefit to both the public and private sector. There have been recent discussions, too, with private companies and with Federal Government agencies



whose desired outcomes can be supported through appropriate student residential services in conjunction with the Authority's own desired outcomes.

Citizen Centred Services

The Country High School Hostels Authority's country based operations liaise locally with other government and private services supporting Western Australian youth. Rather than duplicate services and employ our own specialists, our boarding staff liaise with parents, local education, training, health, medical, child protection, police, Indigenous affairs, community service, non-government support service, shire and recreation people in supporting teenage boarders with their personal, social, physical, and intellectual development.

In some regional centres various people employed by different government agencies and non-government support services have organised regular meetings to ensure that they are aware of any cross-over in relation to their involvement with any of the young people in the community. This model is particularly appropriate in regional centres where the population and local economy cannot sustain the same level of social support resources relative to need as the metropolitan area.

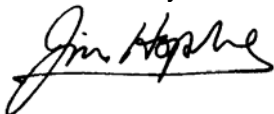
The Authority does see scope for better coordination of youth support services. It would be helpful for parents, youth workers like boarding staff, teachers, and youth themselves, to be able to more easily link into the various youth support services within the local community. Local government could be given a coordinating role so that all people working with youth within each local government jurisdiction have to register with a youth service coordinator whose role it is to organise these people to meet, share their service goals and support strategies, and identify how they can better liaise to provide the most appropriate and effective means of support to individuals and groups of young people that they are working with.

Other Partnerships

The Country High School Hostels Authority also sees a need to work with other stakeholder organisations like the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (to ensure that parents' needs and concerns are being addressed); the National Association of Rural Student Accommodation (to ensure that there is collaboration across the whole boarding industry in the pursuit of appropriate service standards); the Rural and Remote Education Advisory Council (to ensure that advice provided by this organisation to the Minister for Education and Training is based on a good understanding of the service role played by the Country High School Hostels Authority); the Rural Education Forum of Australia which provides advice on rural education matters to the Federal Government; and State and Federal government departments of education and training.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this Inquiry

Yours sincerely



Jim Hopkins
Director

31 March, 2008

