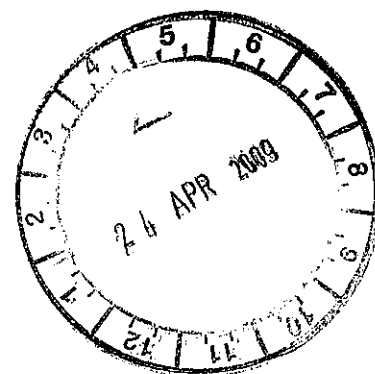


PUBLIC

**Isolated Children's Parents' Association of WA (Inc)
STATE COUNCIL**

*"Working together to gain access to choice of appropriate educational opportunities
for all rural and remote Western Australians."*



SUBMISSION

to the

**STANDING COMMITTEE on ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC
AFFAIRS**

On

**THE UPGRADE AND EXPANSION
OF THE
ESPERANCE RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE**

Prepared on behalf of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association of WA by:
Mrs Kathy Boladeras
WA State Council.
P: 9037 5942
kathyboladeras@bigpond.com
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INTRODUCTION:

The Isolated Children's Parents' Association of WA, or ICPA(WA), represents 350 families living in rural and remote parts of the State, in achieving equity of access to appropriate education from early childhood to adult education. ICPA (WA) Policy areas include Early Childhood Education, Rural & Remote Schools, Teacher Training, Special Education, Distance Education, Schools of the Air, Curriculum, Priority Country Areas Program, Communications, Allowances, Travel, Post Compulsory Education and Student Accommodation.

ICPA (WA) has had representation on the Country High School Hostels Authority since 1990. This has enabled the ICPA to closely monitor the condition of the Esperance Residential College. It has been disheartening to see the Authority's requests for funding for an upgrade ignored in each of the previous four years' State Government budgets.

ICPA (WA) has not taken a complaint to the Ombudsman.

(1) HISTORY OF THE ESPERANCE RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE:

The college was built in 1968, to accommodate 75-80 students.

At that time, dormitory-style accommodation was the accepted standard for boarders.

It wasn't until 1997 that 14 single rooms were added and the remaining dormitories were made into rooms to accommodate 2 and 4 students. At the same time, 2 new staff flats were built. The total cost of these works amounted to \$1.6M.

The next round of renovations was carried out in 2005. These included a new roof over the front of the college and alterations to the foyer at a cost of \$750,000.

The upgrade of the Esperance High School in 2004 led to an increase in enrolments of students requiring accommodation in town, placing pressure on the residential college's capacity. Numbers suddenly went from around 80 (capacity) to between 95-105 for each of past 4 years.

(2) ISSUES:

- a) 61 senior students (Yr 10,11 and 12) share just 14 single rooms. The staff have been forced to make choices about which students are most in need of single rooms, based on ability to study in a noisy environment, distractions etc.
- b) 50 students share 6 bathrooms/toilets, in each of the boys' and girls' accommodation blocks. The ratio at other colleges is 1:4 as opposed to 1:9 at Esperance. Staff and

students must abide by a very strict schedule each day to enable all students to be showered in time for school.

- c) The dining hall only seats 80, necessitating two meal sittings each breakfast and evening meal.
- d) There is only one access road into the college, used by staff, visitors, students, service vehicles etc. Students from school cross this road daily to access sporting facilities and College students must walk through the College car park to and from school.
- e) The accommodation for Year 8 males and Year 10/11 female students is in demountables divided internally by furniture, meaning lack of privacy and no sound proofing for study times. These demountables are pre-1997.
- f) Staff accommodation is inadequate and married quarters accommodation is very limited.

(3) COPING MEASURES:

The staff, students and families have lived with these conditions for the past 4 years, and it is a credit to their patience and adaptability. There exists a very good relationship between staff, students and parents.

Music rooms have been sacrificed to provide more bed space.

Double meal sittings mean an extra waiting time for some students for their meals, and extra workload for the catering staff.

Shower times are managed as well as possible by staff and students.

(4) WHAT IS REQUIRED:

- a) A modern, spacious accommodation facility to house students attending the high-quality Esperance Senior High School.
- b) Replacement of the old demountables with new buildings, to house 50 students with a single room each.
- c) A bigger dining hall to seat up to 110 students.
- d) Five new staff houses, to attract long term staff and provide continuity for the students.
- e) Realignment of the access road.

(5) COST: Currently with Architects and Quantitative Surveyors to provide costing