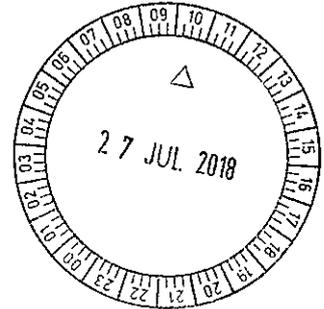




Hon Sue Ellery MLC
Minister for Education and Training
Leader of the Legislative Council

Our Ref: 61-11324



Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC
Chair, Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace
WEST PERTH WA 6005

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Dear Mr Swinbourn

Thank you for your letter dated 28 June 2018 regarding Petition No 68 – Rossmoyne and Willetton Senior High Schools.

The McGowan Labor Government is committed to providing high-quality education to all students across Western Australia and implementing an equity adjustment that addresses the funding inequity due to school size, enabling all students to access a comprehensive educational program.

Economies of scale are evident as student numbers increase, which means larger schools have significant amounts of discretionary funding after they have met their general operating costs. Discretionary funding can be used to offer a wider range of courses for students and to provide more support and pastoral care services.

In developing the student-centred funding model, the large school advantage was identified for future consideration. Considerable growth in some secondary schools, including the enrolment of Year 7 students, and considerable reduction in others, has created a greater range in the size of secondary schools across the State, leading to the need to reconsider the funding of these schools.

The reduced per-student allocation once an enrolment threshold of 1 200 is met continues to provide additional funding to large schools for each student over the enrolment threshold, but at a slower rate of growth. Some of the funding generated from this change to the per-student funding has been reinvested into smaller senior high schools, providing more equity across all public schools.

All schools now operate with one-line budgets, which provides greater flexibility to develop educational programs and staffing profiles that best suit the needs of the school communities within their budget parameters. This includes decisions related to the type and number of staff they employ and the programs they run.

With respect to the concerns raised about the impact on the petitioner's children at Willetton Senior High School, I am advised that the school has made some revisions to the delivery of support for students identified at educational risk in English, Science and Humanities and Social Science for 2018. The provision was reduced by the school, particularly in Year 9. However, funded support for literacy remains the same for both children. The school continues to deliver in the same way based on individual needs funding. I encourage the petitioner, and all parents, to liaise with their school Principals about their children's education.

As you are aware, a third stage for Willetton Senior High School was identified to complete the redevelopment of the school. The final stage was to provide a new 24-room teaching block to replace an old existing teaching block, and to remove some transportable classrooms from the site. Stage 3 was deferred to accommodate upgrades and improvements in schools of a similar age and under similar enrolment pressure. The school has capacity in its current buildings to accommodate up to 2 700 students. I acknowledge that this includes transportable buildings, all of which have heating and cooling facilities. The school has a current enrolment of 2 276 students, which is expected to increase to 2 696 by 2020 and to 3 000 by 2025. I note the petition's request for this funding to be reinstated, and this will be considered when future capital works programs are compiled.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments towards the Committee's preliminary inquiry into this matter.

Yours sincerely



SUE ELLERY MLC
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

24 JUL 2018