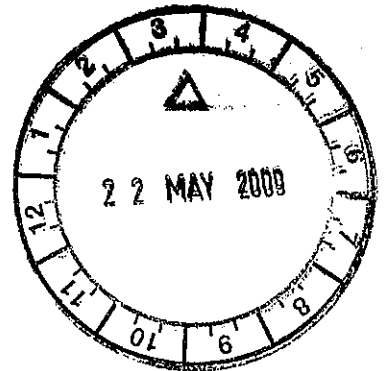




## Minister for Education; Tourism

28-10487-D09/0235152

**PUBLIC**



Hon Sheila Mills MLC  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs  
Parliament House  
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Ms Mills

Thank you for your letter requesting comment on the Esperance Residential College - Upgrade and Expansion submission – Petition No 25.

The Esperance Residential College was designed with long dormitories and common ablutions. Over the years the internal configuration has been modified to provide students with a greater degree of space and privacy and better bed/storage/study arrangements. Fourteen single bedrooms were added in 1997. Since then many boarding facilities have made the transition from cubicle dormitories to single bedrooms for all senior students. Increasingly, boarding facilities are being modified to provide all students with a personal bedroom.

Planning has been undertaken in relation to meeting an expected increase in demand for the boarding service provided at the Esperance Residential College following the increase in the school leaving age, and the anticipated construction of family accommodation in Hopetoun in conjunction with a nearby nickel mining venture.

Initial demand projections in 2005 forecast a need for just over 140 boarding places at the residential college by the commencement of 2009.

In 2005, demand had increased to approximately 100 students following the increase in the school leaving age and the cessation of a short-term adjustment to the Defined Remote Area, which had enabled students in the region to access free air travel to and from metropolitan boarding schools.

The development of housing in Hopetoun did not progress as quickly as expected. Sewerage infrastructure limitations also affected the number of houses being built.

Planning has been reviewed on an annual basis and in 2008 forecast demand was adjusted (due to the housing situation in Hopetoun) to a need for approximately 130 boarding places by 2010.

Following the cessation of mining in 2008 and uncertainty about the impact of nickel pricing on future operations, projections were adjusted at the end of 2008 in line with the current demand for approximately 100 boarding places.

The review is considering the scope for the utilisation of different construction materials and methods with a view to maximising the amount of single bedroom accommodation at this facility and ensuring that the facility can be cost effectively expanded in response to future population growth in Esperance.

I expect to receive new recommendations relating to additions and improvements to the Esperance Residential College within the next three months.

If you require further information please let me know.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Constable', written in a cursive style.

Dr Elizabeth Constable MLA  
**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION; TOURISM**

21 MAY 2009