



15 November 2012

Hon. Brian Charles Ellis MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
GPO Box A11
Perth WA 6837

Hon Dr Sally Talbot MLC
Parliament of Western Australia
Member for South West Region
Shadow Minister for Environment;
Climate Change; Lands; Youth; Peel

Dear Chairman

Brian

Thank you for your letter dated 18 October 2012 regarding petition 174 - Great Southern Institute of TAFE Music and Arts Program.

The Great Southern Institute of TAFE Music and Arts Program petition reflects the determination of local community members to ensure that funding for their existing music and arts programs is guaranteed.

The decision by the Barnett Government no longer to run accredited arts or music courses in 2013 came as a big blow to enrolled students and other community members. The immediate effect of the decision was that those students who had started Certificates II, III, IV or Diploma would not be able to finish their relevant qualification or continue to the next level.

I understand that the decision has been modified since the original announcement so that publicly funded courses in Certificate II and III in visual arts and music will be offered in 2013. Despite this concession, the fact remains that for Certificate IV and Diploma students, the nearest campus for arts and music courses is Perth, more than 400km away.

The wider effects are that Denmark's active and thriving arts community (which provides an opportunity for local people to be active, have a sense of belonging, and have a purpose in life which all contribute to happiness and good mental health) will suffer. Visitors who holiday in Denmark to enjoy the community arts festivals and regular free music sessions featuring local artists at various venues will also lose out.

Cutting funding to the music and arts programs at the Great Southern Institute of TAFE is a very short-sighted move, akin to a farmer eating rather than planting seeds. We are cutting now rather than investing in the future.

The people of Denmark would appreciate your committee's assistance to retain access to local music and arts programs and preserve the cultural richness of the town.

Yours sincerely

Sally Talbot
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