

**Submission
No 9**

**INQUIRY INTO CLOSURE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN NEW
SOUTH WALES**

Name: Ms Robyn Schmetzer

Date received: 5/08/2015

Robyn Schmetzer

28/7/15

Dear Sir,

I have been a member of the Murrami community for the past 25 years after we purchased our farm. This small community has been an amazing place to bring up children and to be a part of. In my time here I have been involved with the local play group, mobile pre-school, Murrami Land care group, Hall committee, Sport and Recreational Grounds development committee and all three of my children attended the Murrami public school over an 18 year period. I was also the Treasurer of the Murrami Parents and Citizens group for 13 years over that time.

Over the 18 years I was part of the school there was always the cloud hanging over us about the numbers of children starting the next year. There were many years that we were never sure we would have the mandatory number of children to maintain a two teacher school. But because we have a village that has many rental homes the population can change very quickly and families with up to seven children often moved in over the Xmas break.

During the process of closing down the Murrami school we were not given any chance to talk about what could be done to keep the school open. The principal spoke to the parents of children about the only choice that was available was to close the school and send the Murrami Children to Whitton Public school. Then he called a public meeting for anyone interested and I attended the meeting.

During the course of the meeting he made it definitely clear there was no possible way the Murrami school could remain open with the 19 children that would be attending in 2015 and the only choice was to close the school, any assets the school had would be transferred to the Whitton school and after a year the school grounds would be sold.

The principal conducted the meeting with a hard sell approach by promising the parents that there was no end of money available to spend on the Murrami children at Whitton. They would have a uniform supplied, the children could name whatever activities they were interested in e.g. dancing, guitar lessons, singing lessons and all excursion fees would be paid for by the huge amount of money the Whitton School P & C. had. In fact one of the parents stated to the principal "You are doing a hard sell for Whitton School and what about the Murrami Community."

My three sons were devastated to hear about the closure of the school because of the wonderful years that had helped develop them into the fully employed tax paying Australian citizens they have become. Centred around the school was a real reason to come together and keep a tight knit community. From parents all participating in working bees to develop the grounds and COLA or helping with craft and reading, sports days, street stalls and raffle ticket selling to setting up the hall for the annual school concert.

One of my children is disabled and in a wheel chair and rather than hide him away like the Catholic high school did. He was always included in all aspects of the school and in fact was often expected to lead processions and be the person out front, this has given him a great sense and grounding for all the challenges he will come across, during the hard times in life. As a mother I loved the safety around the school, you did not have to worry about drug dealers or paedophiles lurking around the school.

All this sense of community has now been lost. If it is possible we would love to see the Murrami school reopen, even if it is a one teacher school. But sadly we were never given the option.

Yours Faithfully
Robyn Schmetzer.