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WEETHALLE NSW 2669

20 May 2004

The Director
General Purpose Standing Committee No 5
Legislative Council, Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Claire Butler and I was a first-year student of Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture (MCA) in 2003 when the NSW Government decided to cease full-time residential courses at the College. I would like you to know the effect the closure has had on me as one of the many unhappy former students of MCA.

I want everyone to know the truth about the decision making process of Mr Ian Macdonald, the person we elected into Parliament. One morning tea break we were told there were discussions about the College's future and by lunchtime our fears were confirmed, full-time residential courses would cease! That really made us feel of little worth to the government, that they couldn't even keep it open for one more year so the first-year students could finish what they had started. We then knew that we had to start re-thinking our futures. The student that did transfer to Tocal was leaving MCA at the end of 2003 to complete their studies at Tocal, because family members had previously studied there. I want to make certain that Mr Macdonald knows the impact of what he has done; I have lost all faith in the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries.

This year I am studying Certificate III in Business Administration at West Wyalong TAFE in the hope that it will give me a boost in Agri-business. I travel two hours each day, four days a week to complete this course. I am also completing a Certificate in Woolclassing, which I attend class one night a week.

My future has been jeopardised by Mr Ian Macdonald's decision. I went to MCA believing I could do Certificate III and IV Agriculture and then gain entry into Charles Stuart University and complete a Science in Agriculture degree as my career goal is to be an agronomist. I am unable to do that now because of Mr Macdonald and my only chance now is to get a position with an Agri-Business that will train me in the agronomy field, but due to the worsening drought in the area I am doubtful I will find a job at the end of the year.

Claire Butler