

Legislative Council
GENERAL PURPOSE
STANDING COMMITTEES

10 JUN 2004

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89 Edden Street,
Bellbird NSW 2325
9th June, 2004

Mr Ian Cohen
Chair

Inquiry into Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture
Parliament House
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Cohen

*Re: Inquiry into Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture
General Purpose Standing Committee No 5*

I do not wish to see Tocal Agricultural College transferred to the NSW Department of Education and Training. My reasons are as follows:

1. The clients of the College are there to learn about a specialist area of knowledge and knowledge is best given by the experts in the area under the administration of the government department closest to that knowledge, namely the Ministry of Agriculture.
2. The quality of TAFE courses now being provided for students leaves a lot to be desired. My husband, who was a teacher in TAFE for twenty years before his retirement, was very disappointed by the watering down in both course content and standards, particularly of the paraprofessional level courses with which he was involved. If Tocal passes into the hands of the Department of Education and Training, every precedent is there for the same thing happening to the existing excellent courses.
3. If something isn't broken, why fix it? If something is working very well, total reorganization is not going to make it better, just send it backwards. Since Tocal is working so well, the only possible reason I can see for a change of administration is to save money. What a short-sighted view! We need more, not less, money spent on educating today's farmers and the farmers of the future. In the present economic climate, with fierce overseas competition and with ongoing climate changes, our farmers have to be smarter than those who went before them. What better places than specialist agricultural colleges such as Tocal, under the administration of the closely allied Department of Agriculture?

Both my husband and I have signed and faxed to you letters of support from the Friends of Tocal, of which we are both members. We agree absolutely with the contents of this letter and are very unhappy to have to start fighting for yet another threatened institution in our NSW community.

Yours sincerely



(Mrs) Barbara Sherlock
Fax. 02 4991 1369

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