

Submission
No 3

INQUIRY INTO CLOSURE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Ms Joan Hall

Date received: 21/07/2015

Partially Confidential

ATTENTION: Merrin Thompson - Inquiry Manager / Upper House Committees.

REFERENCE: Closure of public schools in New South Wales (inquiry)

I am writing this submission as a concerned citizen and anything said in this submission is only what has been said in correspondence to Members of Parliament, staff of the Education Department and articles in the local paper. I am the Secretary of the Harrington Community Action Inc. and all the correspondence was written on behalf of the Action Group. I am now a member of the Working Group which is working on the future use of the Crowdy Head School grounds. This group are receiving the same run around as the Action Group did prior to the school closure at the end of the School year in December 2014.

Listed by point form are my points of concern at the closure of Crowdy Head School:

- * For over two years the closure of the school hung over the heads of all staff, students and parents - students I believe were the main ones effected.
- * It appeared that the Principle of the school was given a hard time by the department and in the end by the end of the 1st or 2nd term he [REDACTED] went on sick leave and then retired - casual teachers were brought in which had effect on the students once again. One casual teacher was pregnant and had the baby somewhere between the 3rd & 4th term - once again another teacher change to run the school and an adverse effect on the students.
- * Believe the enforcing of the Enrolment of Students in Government Schools Policy was interpreted to suit the Education Department and the needs to close the school not to the benefit of the community needs - this Policy had not been revised since August 1997 and is written in such a way that suits city schools for allocation of students more so than regional schools.

There was one student who's Grandparents requested that their grandson be allowed to go to Crowdy for the last 3 terms of 2014 as he was being bullied at Harrington school - the boy had just lost his father and his grandparents were raising him - he was to go to high school in 2015 - [REDACTED] Director of the area would not allow the boy to attend Crowdy School.

Four members of the Action Group met with the Director on the 11 February 2014 at Crowdy School where it was said that the Principal had told 2 children residing in Crowdy that they should go to another school as Crowdy would be closing in 2 years - this is just one of the reasons that the student numbers decreased - believe this situation had been the norm over the previous 2 years.

- * All the correspondence written to Members of Parliament including our local member and staff of the Education Department just gave the Action Group the run around and past the correspondence from one section / person to another - believe the closure of Crowdy Head School was very under handed and deceitful.

* There was no official announcement made that the school was actually closing to well into the 4th term - there was not official function held inviting old students, teachers, parents and members of the community - believe there was a morning tea for whoever on the last day or there about it was all very secretive. There had been a school at Crowdy Head for over 100years does that not mean something?

* Cannot understand why the Education Department built the new BR Federal Funded class room - constructed a 3 station fully equipped kitchen - students planted vegetable gardens and grew their own vegetables and then learned how to cook them - a Staff member from Crowdy School was sent to a school in Sydney to find out how cooking classes and running of a kitchen operated in a school and the rules and regulations - all this when the Education Dept. said that Crowdy School would be closing at the end of the school years in 2014.

* Students from out West used to come to Crowdy School and camp out at the Crowdy Surf Club - reason being to see the sea and study the natural environment of the area - this type of exercise is very beneficial to students.

Summing up!

As a resident of this area for 36 years it is very disappointing to see the way in which the Government and Education Department saw fit to close the Crowdy Head School as over the years the school has assisted a great many local students to over comes problems and become upstanding students / people where as if they had not gone to Crowdy school they would have been lost to the community.

Believe the meeting that the members of the Action Group had with [REDACTED] back in February 2014 was a waste of time and was not impressed with [REDACTED] attitude - attached is copies and responses of issues and requests raised with [REDACTED] by the members of the Action Group at the meeting. Attached is a copy of an email sent to Daryl Maguire MP Wagga Wagga Parliamentary Secretary which was in response to correspondence from this MP. I am only too happy to make available copies of all correspondence associated with this issue.

Joan Hall