



# LEETON HIGH SCHOOL

*Educating young people for active and responsible citizenship*

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Principal: Mr P J Edwards

Minister for Agriculture  
Hon Ian Macdonald  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Macdonald

**RE: PROPOSED CLOSURE OF MURRUMBIDGEE COLLEGE OF  
AGRICULTURE FULL TIME AND PART TIME EDUCATIONAL COURSES AND  
FACILITIES**

I am writing to express my concern at the decisions of your Department in respect of education courses at Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture, Yanco.

There is a belief that high school students enter high school at Year 7 and exit at points between there and Year 12, having obtained sufficient education from within the school setting to meet their current and future needs.

This view of education is fallacious and we often have the need to call on other agencies or institutions to assist with educational programs, either by providing extension programs, enrichment programs, vocational programs or remediation programs. In the context of my school, Murrumbidgee College assists us with all these functions, and more. It has facilities and resources that we can tap into that are the envy of many schools. Its vocational programs and the assistance its staff provide for our own vocational programs are noteworthy.

In my experience as Principal of Leeton High School for the past five years, I can identify many cases where the opportunities and encouragement provided by the teachers and other staff at Murrumbidgee College have kept students at risk at school and in formal education. The indigenous education programs offered by the college have had a similar beneficial impact on indigenous students from this school and other schools.

Many students who complete their education at Leeton High School seize the opportunities offered by Murrumbidgee College for further education and enrol seamlessly into short and long courses provided by College staff. If the College was not so accessible, I have no doubt that this further education would not have been undertaken and our working community would be poorer for this loss.

I urge you to reconsider your decision to close down full-time and part-time education courses at Murrumbidgee College. The impact of this decision on many of my students will be profoundly negative and a fine educational institution that provides an enormous resource for the local and wider community of learners will be lost.

I also ask that you discuss the issue of *Lifelong Learning* with your colleague, Dr Andrew Refshauge, who promotes this concept at every available opportunity. *Lifelong Learning* suggests that we access educational opportunities throughout our lives. In post compulsory years, we opt in and out of education as the need arises. Closing the educational facilities of the Murrumbidgee College is hardly conducive to those who seek further education throughout their lives, particularly their working lives, and the loss of the facility makes attainment of the “knowledge nation” more difficult.

Quality educational facilities are not widely available here in rural and remote NSW and closing an institution with such a fine reputation for providing quality educational opportunities for southern NSW and northern Victoria seems to me , as someone in the business of education, to be a significantly retrograde step.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Edwards  
PRINCIPAL  
12 October 2003

c.c. Mr Adrian Piccoli  
Member for Murrumbidgee

Mrs Kay Hull  
Member for Riverina