

## Recipient Details

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Reference Type: Committee chairperson, Great Southern Middle School Committee, Katanning

State or territory: WA

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## Responses

### Curriculum and assessment

Rural high schools should not limit the options to their students by continually leading them away from academic study/ATAR subjects. Students should not be given the easy option to steer away from academic study because teachers and administration are encouraging them to 'dumb down' their subject choices to make school stats look more attractive. Stop treating our rural students like idiots and give them every opportunity to succeed in whatever area they choose.

Rating: 7

### Teachers and teaching

Department of Education and rural communities need to work together to change the perception of teaching in a rural community as a bad career move. "Going country" should be seen as a chance for teachers and administrators to enhance their career, take on new challenges and accept the responsibility of teaching our country kids who deserve their expertise just as much as those in the city. There is a common judgement that only the rubbish teachers who can't get a job in the city are the ones who end up in the country or new graduates who can't get a job elsewhere. I live in a rural area and I know that's not true. We have some of the most progressive and innovative, caring and bold teachers I have ever seen. BUT they are limited by what country high schools allow them to deliver and are restricted by funding. I sincerely believe we can change the perception of teaching in the country by providing higher incentives to attract and retain teachers (housing, tax incentives, bonuses, career progression), deliver curriculum in high schools on par with city schools and share the message that educating our kids in the country is a unique and treasured opportunity, hey, they just might like it!!!

Rating: 7

### Leaders and leadership

Much of what I wrote in the 'teachers' section also applies to leaders/principals. I live in Katanning so we all know the damage that can be done to a community, a school and students lives by one person in leadership who is not fit to be in that position. With review after review, investigations and public outcry I find it hard to understand how a government department, the Director General, the regional executive officer, politicians, the community, teachers and the shire are powerless it ensure the safety and well being of kids let alone ensure adequate education choices are being offered.

Over 5 years 100 students in Y7-10 left KSHS seeking education elsewhere, 28% of those to private schools. In 2016 116 students left the KSHS before the end of the year! That's almost 30% of the students leaving before graduating yet somehow we are seeing 10% graduation rates. Leaders must be transparent and be held accountable when there is obvious dissatisfaction. And don't forget, our

taxes pay for their position and the government department are responsible for management of those funds and the people employed to deliver a service!

Poor leadership has led to an increase in students and their families leaving this town and the local area just to give their kids a chance at a good education. Provide massive incentives and bonuses to attract the best of the best in leadership to our rural towns. Don't allow unsuitable leaders to dig their heels in and change the direction and outcomes of a school for the worst. Enable the department to act if there is an issue with leadership, give them some power to manage poor performers or those who impact negatively on a school and community.

Leaders may have lost some connection with students on the ground with their increasing requirements for reporting. The reason they got in to teaching has been lost under a pile of paperwork and resentment towards a system that doesn't allow them to deliver and makes them question why they took on teaching in the first place!!

Rating: 4

### School and Community

Education is KEY to regional growth. We are investigating the demand for a new non-government school Y7-9 to service our community. We will deliver a regional non-government satellite campus of an existing private school in the next 2 years. There is already have interest from 3 private service providers and look forward to taking the findings from our report to all suitable non-government schools in October this year. Initial findings from our survey show there are sufficient numbers from our survey alone (~ 6% of our population was surveyed!) to start a new school with little or no impact on existing schools. The Great Southern Middle School committee has successfully secured funding through the Great Southern Development Commission, the Shire of Katanning and the Katanning Regional Business Association to begin an important study into education in our local area. The study will examine the demand for a new non-government regional middle school campus in Katanning and deliver recommendations to build capacity in existing schools including recommendations for local government strategic planning and decision making. Results of a 2016-17 online survey, supported by the Shire of Katanning, highlight concerns of local residents about education for their children. An astonishing 317 surveys were completed, 40% by Katanning residents but the remaining 60% completed by residents from small surrounding communities which are feeling the biggest impact of losing residents when they leave to educate their children. The survey represents 1196 individuals with an overwhelming 79% positive response to using a new non-government middle school in Katanning. To improve retention and attraction of residents to the region there needs to be strategic action to tackle this fundamental issue and provide alternative choices for families who want to stay and educate their children here. Expanding the range and quality of education in Katanning will attract and retain residents to the town, keep young families together in our region and ensure education dollars are spent in the Great Southern. Positive, honest, practical action must be taken now to support regional growth.

Rating: 7

### Information and Communication Technology

With the advancement of information and communication technology it is to remember the value of people! Kids can have all the smart screens and Ipads and computer access, online courses but we all know the value of having a quality who knows them and cares about. Human connections are being lost in the digital era and teachers are more likely to allow overuse of technology, seeing it as a reflection of their greater knowledge of technology whilst forgetting the human aspect of their job.

Students in Katanning are often left unsupervised to study online and many ATAR classes are all online!

In speaking to residents about the new middle school model one consistent request is that we don't have it online, that their must be quality teachers on ground to teach their children or they won't use it. In speaking to service providers we are reminding them that for this to work the on site teacher model is the only model that will be accepted in any proposals.

Plus we live in the country so the NBN is rubbish and all other services are too expensive. Without serious improvements to reception and data access there will be no improvements in communications here for a while!

I feel the less courses for high school available online, the more likely it is to attract teachers who are capable of delivering the curriculum to regional students, face to face!

Rating: 2

Entrepreneurship and schools

Rating: 4

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding

Rating for enrolments: 7

Rating for clusters: 4

Rating for distance education: 2

Rating for boarding: 7

Diversity

Rating: 5

Transitioning beyond school

Rating: 7

Additional Comments