

Question on Notice

No. 1323

Asked on 31 October 2006

Mr RICKUSS asked the Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts (Mr Welford) –

QUESTION:

With reference to the 'mothballing' of Memerambi State School –

Will he provide full details of (a) the consultation process that the Department of Education, Training and the Arts engaged in with the Memerambi community, (b) what consideration was given to the Memerambi community's submissions, particularly the submission made as to the school's projected enrolment figures and (c) the reasons for the school's 'mothballing'?

ANSWER:

Extensive discussions about the school's viability occurred in April and May 2006 with the Principal, local and state government representatives, the Memerambi P&C president, local parents, relevant unions, the QCPCA and the Isolated Children's Parents Association.

A community consultation meeting was held on 22 June 2006 and attended by the Principal, P&C president, P&C executive, parents, community members, transport provider (school bus), and other school staff.

The Memerambi community's submissions were given significant consideration in making the decision on whether to mothball the school. Other considerations included information from my department, particularly in regard to state trends, state forecasts and school enrolment data, and data from local and state government departments.

The decision to mothball the school was based on:

- continuing low enrolments in 2006
- projected future low enrolments to 2011
- the benefits to students of a wider student cohort, including effective social and emotional development and opportunities for improved learning outcomes
- proximity to other schools in the local area.

It should be emphasised that 'mothballing' does not mean permanent closure of a school. If circumstances change, the school can be reopened if it proves viable to do so. The school is merely mothballed as an interim measure to allow time to determine the long term needs and prospects for the use of the school.

Crawford State School (5.3km), Wooroolin State School (7km), Tingoorra State School (12km) and Kingaroy State School (13.5km) are located within very close travelling distance of Memerambi. All schools can accommodate Memerambi students.