



Hon John-Paul Langbroek MP
Minister for Education, Training and Employment

17 DEC 2013

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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie *Neil,*

I acknowledge receipt of e-Petition 2173-13 tabled in the Legislative Assembly of Queensland on 19 November 2013 regarding the closure of six Queensland state schools.

I acknowledge the concern of the 820 petitioners regarding the decision to close Charlton State School, Fortitude Valley State School, Nyanda State High School, Old Yarranlea State School, Stuart State School and Toowoomba South State School from the end of Term 4 2013.

While I understand that these school communities would like to stay open for a further 12 months, I can advise that the school closure date will not be changed. As the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, I have authority under the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (the Act) to close a state school.

My Department's School Viability Assessment procedure provides the framework for the assessment, consultation and decision-making processes associated with school closures. This procedure was developed in consultation with key education stakeholder groups including P&Cs Queensland and the Queensland Teachers' Union.

Under the School Viability Assessment procedure, a school is identified for proposed closure based on four criteria – enrolments, accessibility, resourcing equity and curriculum. In 2013, eight schools were identified for proposed closure using these criteria and approved to proceed to community consultation. After carefully considering the results of the school viability assessment and consultation process, I made a determination that the six schools listed above would close, while two other schools, Everton Park State High School and Wyreema State School, would remain open.

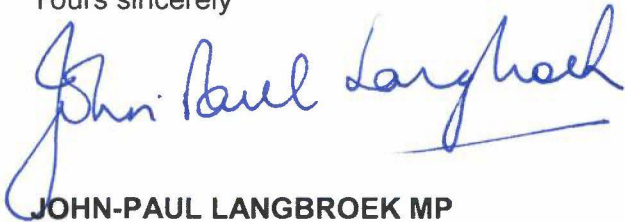
An extension of 12 months is unlikely to change the long-term viability of the schools which have been approved for closure. Therefore, in line with the requirements of the Act, my decision to close these six schools at the end of Term 4 2013 stands.

As Minister for Education, Training and Employment, it is important that I ensure our educational facilities are appropriately managed. As part of ensuring that we have the best facilities for our students, we need to identify where it is appropriate to close a particular school or where it is necessary to build a school. This planning process enables the Government to ensure that all Queensland students have access to a quality education and that our school facilities are being used to their maximum potential. This can involve making decisions that may not be popular, but are in the broader interests of all of Queensland.

I acknowledge this is a challenging time for community members affected by an approved school closure. I can assure you that I have not taken this action lightly. My Department has been working to support students, families and staff to transition to alternative schools for the start of 2014. I can advise that the transition planning process is well advanced, with school and regional office staff working hard to ensure the remainder of the 2013 school year runs as smoothly as possible.

I would like to thank petitioners for raising this matter with me and for their ongoing interest in the welfare and wellbeing of Queensland state school students.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John-Paul Langbroek". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

JOHN-PAUL LANGBROEK MP
Minister for Education, Training and Employment

Ref: 13/420308