

From: jsiiteri [mailto:jsiiteri@bigpond.net.au]
Sent: Sunday, 29 March 2009 4:59 PM
To: Committees
Cc: 'Roger Nicoll'
Subject: School Closure Inquiry

Dear Committee Members

I appreciate this opportunity to write to you to express my family's distress and concern regarding the closure of Flynn Primary School at the end of 2006. I trust that this time our voices do not go unheard.

For many years until the end of 2006 our family had a pleasant and fruitful relationship with the Flynn Primary School. Having come from a migrant background where both of our children spoke another language before they learned English the school showed exceptional understanding, warmth, acceptance and professionalism in their attitude towards our children and us as a family. Indeed, we all felt part of the Flynn School family. All this came to an abrupt end in 2006.

Prior to the school closure we were led to believe and, in fact promised by the government, that should the school meet certain criteria it would not close. This we also explained to our children and as a family worked hard towards obtaining the required data and statistics door knocking and interviewing Flynn residents. We had the numbers and other things the government required and therefore foolishly reassured our children that their school would be safe. It goes without saying that in December 2006 we felt absolutely and totally betrayed by Mr Stanhope's government and our children lost faith and trust in adults and, especially in the government. What a way to install good values in the younger generation!!!!

The announcement of the closure of Flynn Primary School gave us the total of 6 days to frantically search for a new school. After all we had met the government's requirements in order to keep the school open and naively believed them. Therefore, we had not commenced researching other schools earlier.

The beginning of the 2007 school year meant that we were driving our daughter to school, whereas before she walked. (Our son commenced high school in 2007). In addition, we needed to arrange private transport for her to return home from school, which added a significant burden to the family budget. We also lobbied hard for a school bus. Our letters to the transport minister were usually met with extremely unsympathetic and cold (bordering rudeness) responses. Finally the school bus was established a full year later in 2008! It is needless to say that we were not impressed at the lack of assistance and understanding we received.

Whilst our daughter has coped with this forced and unplanned transition, it has not happened without pain and grief. She lost the closest friendships she had formed since Kindergarten and to this date she has not been able to establish friendships of the same calibre in the new school. As her parents we

feel for her and try our best to encourage and maintain the bonds she developed at the Flynn Primary School. However, the saddest outcome of the school closure for both of our children was the loud and clear message that adults can not be trusted, governments lie and the best interests of children, which should be the community's main concern and focus, are not met. This we regret and mourn.

Our hope is that something good will eventually come out of this tragedy. Another school, a community centre or a community facility, which the residents of Flynn could access and enjoy would alleviate some of our family's sadness, especially as Flynn is currently void of any type of community hub.

I trust you will respond to my concerns in a due course.

Thank you

Leena Siiteri