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 A.C.T. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OFFICE	
SUBMISSION NUMBER	46
DATE AUTH'D FOR PUBLICATION	

Mrs Karen Johnstone



26.03.09

To: The Secretary
Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs.
Inquiry into school closures and reform of the ACT education system

I am writing to you in regard to the closure of the Hall Primary School.
This is one of many submissions and letters written in an attempt to find out why it was closed and how we as a community can reopen the school.
Every effort was made to have our voice and choices heard but to absolutely no avail.

As a lifetime resident of Canberra and now for some 12 years a local resident of the Hall area, I have seen many changes mostly productive and socially beneficial in Canberra. Canberra has always built strong communities one of which is Hall; however the recent closure of the school has seen the whole community in an almost forgotten crisis. The outlying areas of Hall Springrange, Murrumbateman and Wallaroo rely heavily on the school to maintain a complete social network a community of some 400 homes, this is now shattered with children relocated to other schools with in Canberra.

Hall Primary School was the heart and soul of a very unique community and had been for over 100 years. My family like many others are 4th and 5th generation Hall residents with a large majority of their children attending Hall School. We had 10 wonderful years there and I am so grateful my children had the opportunity to attend Hall School. The friendships made at Hall School have been life long you that comment over and over.

I feel the community's choices of sending their children to a small or large school have been taken away not that Hall was that small the enrolments varied in the 10 years we were there from 120 children to around 160. Hall school was of great benefit to the whole of Canberra as well with almost all schools visiting the school for heritage day and to see the museum which is of great importance to keep our heritage alive. Small rural schools have an enormous benefit for the whole community.

I really need to point out that 2 years on since the closure of the school and demise of our very special community the village of Hall is really struggling to remain a vibrant and go ahead place. With the reopening of the school the special community can be rebuilt to its former glory. The Stanhope government was very keen and still is to promote strong healthy communities yet successfully managed to completely destroy the community of hall (which was one of the strongest I have ever lived in) with one silly and in my opinion very ignorant decision. Many residents including myself tried to no avail to meet with Mr Stanhope and Mr Barr to invite them into our community to see how we as rural and

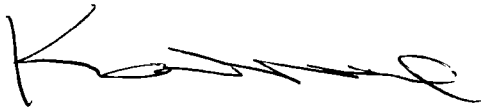
residential families relied on the Hall School as a close (travel wise) school for our children to attend . Now children in my local area are traveling over an hour to and from school and these children are between the ages of 5 and 12 years old some parents are choosing to drive them to school as they feel the waiting time for the buses from in Canberra and travel time makes their day too long some aren't getting home till 5 and 5.30pm after leaving for school at 7 and 7.30am.

The closure of Hall School just doesn't make sense economically, socially environmentally and educationally. Its closure has had a huge impact on the Hall businesses especially the Hall Premier Store; other businesses noticing the change are widespread from the local vets to the hairdressers. The school needs to reopen as soon as possible. Although my children had left Hall school in 2003 and 2004 after year 6 I felt when the school closed in 2006 I must rejoin the P and C with a very strong aim to help with the fight to reopen the school and ensure other families will not miss out on a remarkable school experience for their children. There are many families in our area with lots and lots of young children coming up to school age that will benefit from a wonderful school environment like Hall.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Johnstone.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Johnstone', with a stylized, cursive script.

Andrew Barr
Ph: 62050011
Fax: 62050157

John Stanhope
Ph: 62050104
Fax: 62050433

School site – Dept. of territories & municipal services (TAMS)
Preschool – Dept. of Ed

My family

- Successful farming family for 4 generations
- First two and last one went to Hall school
- Contacts still made with school friends

The school

- My involvement at the school for 9 years as was other families as old as mine were still attending Hall school
- It has kept the community of Hall strong and vibrant especially for the isolated farming families for over 100 years
- I strongly believe that strong community spirit builds strong social networks building communities with leadership qualities unsurpassed anywhere. It all starts in our own backyard. We were so grateful my family had the opportunity to go to Hall school as are many other families.

Points

- School – outstanding for building strong resilient and caring people
- Unique – for rural families has an amazing environment and feel. Attracts a cross section of people (teachers) and children from a wide variety of backgrounds. Extremely strong parent involvement and commitment
- Social community – the whole Hall community revolves around the school. Gatherings, festivals, sheep dog trials all support each other. Countless properties taking part in school projects eg. Tree planting and environmental studies
- Rural heritage – gives a different outlook of life from other schools and is shared with all other A.C.T schools with visits to museum and participation in heritage days. Heritage value, unbeatable as is one of the oldest buildings in Canberra.



OUR HERITAGE AT RISK

Home

Background

Endangered
Places
Outcomes

What is Our
Heritage At
Risk?

» Media Release

How It Works

Criteria

Top 10 List
2007

Nominated
Places 2007

» Places
Forwarded for
National Top 10

What is
Heritage?

What can you
do?

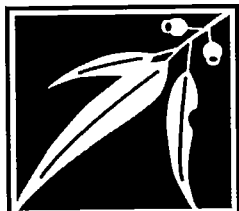
Endangered
Places

Getting
Involved

What's
happening in
your
State/Territory?

Site Map

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY



OUR HERITAGE AT RISK - AUSTRALIAN CA

Place: Hall School

Threat: Neglect and Devaluation of Heritage Values



Significance:

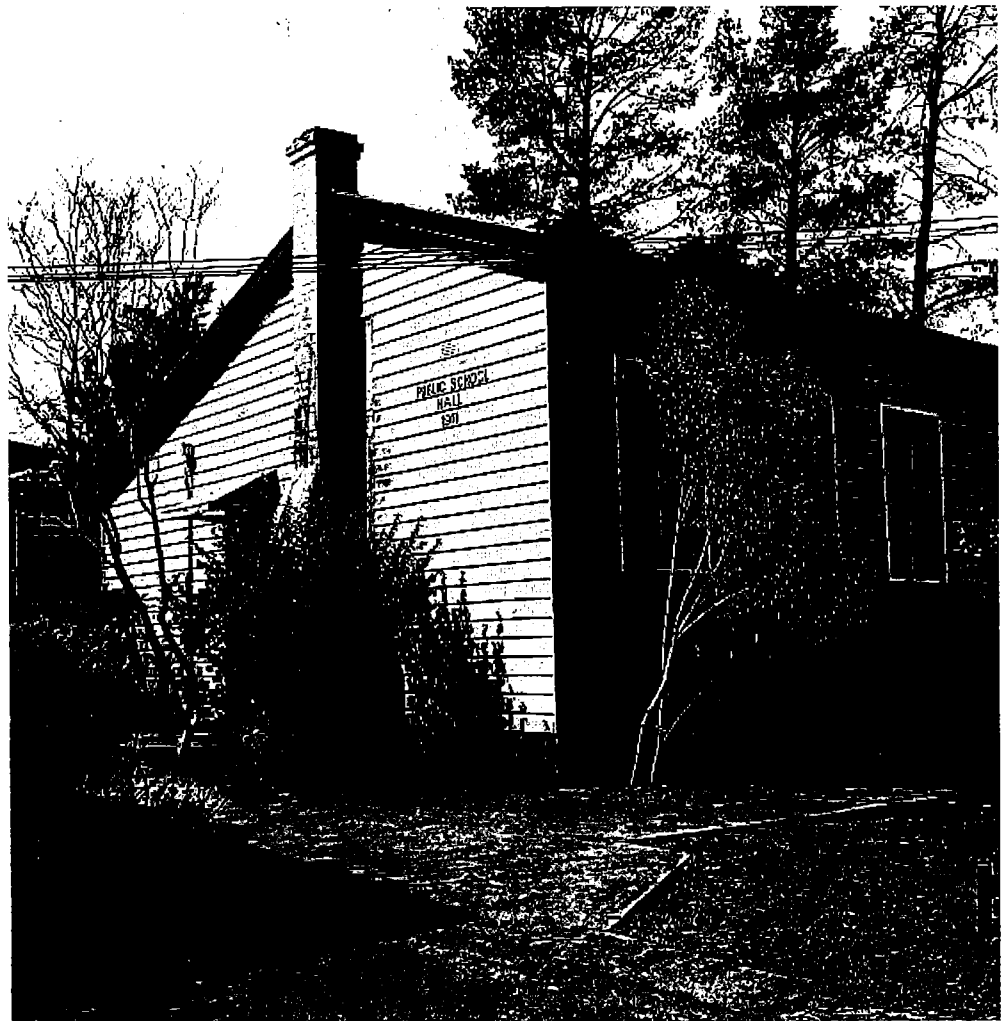
Hall village demonstrates a range of physical characteristics resulting from (1882) village. The school, along with other identified specific places of ~~vital~~ important in defining a 'sense of place' for the Hall community and is ~~closest~~ of northern Canberra. Significant as one of only two examples associated ~~ed~~.

Risk:

The recent closure (December 2006) and non-occupancy of this school future use and threatens the conservation of the existing fabric, particularly has the closure of this school begun to erode the historical, heritage and has been a loss to the ACT as a whole.

Desired outcome:

The school to be reopened for educational use and the fabric, partially appropriately conserved in accordance with Conservation Objectives 1.1, Hall Village Heritage Precinct entry to the ACT Heritage Register.



CONNECT - VALUE - LEARN - EN

copy

21-3-07

Mrs Karen Johnstone

Dear Mr. Barr,

As a lifetime resident of Canberra and a local resident of the Hall area, I would like to meet with you to discuss my urgent concerns about the future of the Hall community. I realise some of my concerns are a matter for the Department of Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS), but as the community and businesses are being severely affected by the closure of the school, I feel it is a matter I need to discuss with you personally.

My urgency has come about with the obvious concerns of the businesses and community and vandalism evident at the school site after just three months since closure.

I have the written the same letter to Mr. Stanhope in the hope that you could both attend this meeting with me at a convenient time. I feel this would cover the issues concerned more appropriately.

Also attached
a snippet of
what was sent
to Mr Barrs &
Mr Stanhope



Andrew Barr MLA

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

MINISTER FOR PLANNING

MINISTER FOR TOURISM, SPORT AND RECREATION

MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

MEMBER FOR MOLONGLO

Ms Karen Johnstone

Dear Ms Johnstone

Thank you for your faxed letter received in my office on 23 April 2007 about your concerns regarding the future of the Hall community following the closure of Hall Primary School.

As you have noted, issues relating to the former primary school site are a matter for the Department of Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS). I am advised that following the damage to some windows at the site in early March this year, a glazier was engaged to rectify the problem. I am also aware that TAMS staff have met with the Hall and District Progress Association and with members of the Hall community regarding the school site.

I appreciate your concerns and have passed your letter to the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Mr John Hargreaves MLA, who is the appropriate Minister regarding the matters you raise. Thank you once again for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Barr MLA

Minister for Education and Training

30 MAY 2007

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601

Phone (02) 6205 0011 Fax (02) 6205 0157 Email barr@act.gov.au

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No Response from Mr Stanhope
at all. (October 07)