

Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs
GPO Box 1020
Canberra
ACT 2601
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Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a parent of a child who attended Flynn Primary school immediately prior to its closure. Prior to the closure I sent in a submission in support of the school remaining open. My sentiments are the same now as they were then as my basic premise is that having children attend a school in their own community is of huge benefit both to the children themselves and to the community at large.

Because my son attended a school outside of our community prior to attending Flynn and again after the closure we both have first hand experience of the difference remaining in a community to attend school has on the child, the family and the community.

Whilst travelling by car to a school outside of our immediate locality we found that we did not meet neighbours, did not make friends in our neighbourhood and did not have a strong sense of community. Whilst attending Flynn school we found a new sense of community as we met neighbours, children and parents, from many walks of life both on the way to school and at school. Now that my son is once again leaving the community each morning, by bus (at a monetary cost to us of \$50 per term and a cost to the environment of additional buses, where he once walked), this sense of community has once again dissipated as we find ourselves disconnected from those we once met every day. Added to this is a lack of ownership of our new school. Although this new school has been very helpful in integration and my son has found good friends, we are not part of that immediate community of parents and children who walk to school and live amongst each other and so have closer ties to each other than we can easily have with them.

I have not touched on the inadequacies of the process of closure of Flynn Primary School, though I believe they were many and wide ranging, as I believe that, with this new inquiry, we can go forward from here to rectify the mistakes made.

I urge you, as you consider this submission, to reflect on how important strong community is to building healthy children, healthy networks within communities and thus a healthier and stronger environment for the future. I urge you to reopen Flynn primary school and/or community centre.

Yours sincerely
Alison Ubels