



Petition

Registration No.	41
Title	Secondary education options at Mount Liebig
Presented on	27 November 2014
Presented by	Mr Chandler (Member for Brennan)
Referred to	Minister for Education (Hon Peter Chandler)
Date referred	27 November 2014
Response due	30 April 2014
Response received	12 February 2015
Response presented	17 February 2015

Petition

Petition for a School of the Air Learning Centre in Mount Liebig.

The children and community of Mount Liebig do not want their young people to move away in order to gain an education. The young people of Mount Liebig come from a small community of around 200 people and have a close connection to their families, community and country.

Currently boarding schools have very poor retention rates for Mount Liebig students. The young people are not used to being locked in at night or follow strict boarding school rules. It is also the experience of Mount Liebig Youth that they suffer bullying and prejudice while attending boarding schools.

We believe there needs to be secondary education options at Mount Liebig so that the young people of our community can achieve the best possible outcomes

Response

A review was undertaken in 2013 in response to poor education outcomes for many Indigenous students, particularly in their secondary years of schooling.

A share in the future - Review of Indigenous Education in the Northern Territory recommends that the Northern Territory Government progressively move to deliver most senior secondary and middle years schooling in regional and urban high schools with a critical mass of students. The Northern Territory Government has accepted all recommendations of the review.

A large proportion of schools throughout the Northern Territory, including Mount Liebig, do not have the student numbers to offer the range of secondary education options available to students in larger regional and urban high schools. While a small number of students have completed their secondary education in remote schools, many students have not been able to achieve beyond basic levels of literacy and numeracy.

Mount Liebig School has an enrolment of 32 students and provides education from preschool to Year 6. Students from Year 7 onwards traditionally attend boarding schools in the Northern Territory or interstate. In 2015, it is estimated that six to eight secondary aged students will reside at Mount Liebig. Students who do not elect to attend boarding school from Year 7 have the option to enrol in a middle years distance education program through Alice Springs School of the Air. School of the Air services are available to individual families who meet the school's tutorship and other requirements.

The Department of Education does not consider a school of the air learning centre that accommodates secondary-aged students to be a viable proposition in Mount Liebig due to the lack of secondary enrolments and suitable infrastructure at the school and in the community. The option for secondary-age students from Mount Liebig will continue to be studying secondary schooling in a regional or urban secondary school with residential accommodation. In 2015, a key action of *A share in the future* Indigenous Education Strategy is the establishment of a transition unit to support upper primary and secondary-aged students with their transition to boarding schools or schooling in regional or urban centres.

Students from Year 5 onwards in remote schools will be prepared for the experience of school away from their home community (and living in a residential facility). This will include short, intensive experiences in regional and urban schools (and residential facilities) during the final two years of primary or middle schooling as negotiated with each community.

Once students have enrolled in secondary education outside of their community, they will be supported through a case management process that involves students, their parents and their chosen boarding school. The transition support unit will work closely with boarding schools and their peak bodies to establish and maintain high standards of care and support for students within a culturally appropriate framework.

These experiences will both familiarise students with the experience of studying away from home and offer them intensive introductions to specialised options available at the urban school. These mechanisms are designed to ensure that the move to a regional or urban school is managed effectively, involves parents and communities in all decisions and that the process is undertaken gradually to build up a record of success.