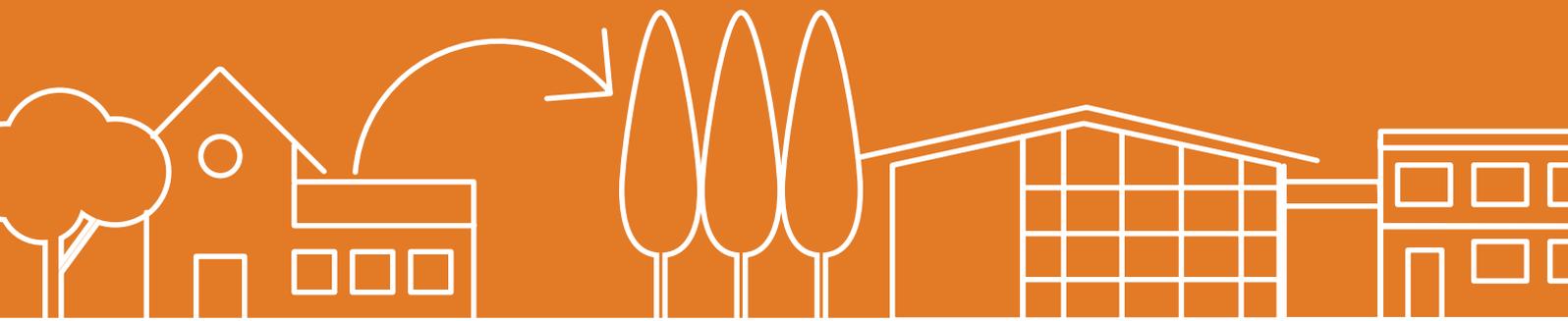


yourSAy  
**Community  
Feedback**

YEAR 7 TO HIGH SCHOOL REGIONAL CONSULTATION



Government of  
South Australia



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# INTRODUCTION

Year 7 will be taught in all public high schools from term 1, 2022.

The move of year 7 to high school brings new opportunities for our students, workforce and system.

Year 7 students will benefit from access to specialist facilities and resources and exposure to different teaching styles, and the new high school environment will provide opportunities for more peer interactions and greater independence and responsibility.

We understand that introducing year 7 to high school in the regional setting will require special consideration, and our regional consultation process has sought feedback from communities in regional South Australia about the opportunities and challenges they anticipate.

Under the proposed approach, some regional primary schools would continue to offer year 7, while all regional high schools would introduce year 7 (so that year 7 is offered concurrently in both settings).

# PROPOSAL

Modelled on the Western Australian exemption, the proposal provides eligible families with a choice to keep their year 7 child in primary school, if their primary school is located more than 20 kilometres by road from its nearest area or high school, for a transitional period of 3 years.

The proposed distance of 20 kilometres responds to the particular issues of travel time for younger students, as well as concerns for the impact on smaller primary schools in more removed communities.

This option would be made available to families for a limited period of 3 years (2022-2024) in order to smooth the system changeover.

Forty-six schools would be eligible under the proposal. The list of schools is provided at Appendix 1.

# CONSULTATION PROCESS

The consultation process comprised a program of regional forums and online (YourSAy) consultation.

The consultation was advertised in local media (regional newspapers and radio). All regional councils and regionally-based Members of Parliament received written advice of the consultation.

All regional primary schools were provided with appropriate resources to communicate the consultation with their communities, including:

- a letter to their governing council
- content for newsletter / Facebook page
- posters for display in the school.

Stakeholder groups received written advice of the consultation and were invited to contribute. The full list stakeholder groups is provided at Appendix 2.

All contributors were provided a draft version of this report for comment. Additional feedback received is provided at Appendix 8.

## Online consultation

Online consultation was delivered through the YourSAy website at [www.yoursay.sa.gov.au](http://www.yoursay.sa.gov.au).

The YourSAy consultation was live from 25 June to 13 September 2019.

Regional communities were invited to contribute via online discussion, questionnaire or written submission, emailed to [Year7toHS@sa.gov.au](mailto:Year7toHS@sa.gov.au). The questionnaire template is provided at Appendix 3.

There were a total of 8 contributors to the YourSAy online discussion (provided at Appendix 4).

Eight written submissions were received and are provided at Appendix 5.

Seven completed questionnaires were received and were incorporated into the responses to key questions (Appendix 7).

In response to an ABC Riverland Facebook post, an additional 35 comments were received.

## Regional forums

Twenty forums were scheduled in community venues across regional South Australia between 29 July and 5 September 2019. Two of the forums were cancelled due to lack of registrations (Bute and Gawler). The schedule of regional visits is provided at Appendix 6.

An additional 4 sessions were provided at the request of governing councils / leadership at Goolwa Primary School, Glencoe Central Primary School, Peterborough Primary School and Wallaroo Primary School.

A virtual 'Webex' online session was held with School of the Air families.

More than 250 individuals were involved in all sessions.

At the end of each forum, participants were asked to respond to a set of key questions. These responses are provided at Appendix 7.

# REGIONAL CONSULTATION LOCATIONS

**SOTA**  
School of the Air



**WHAT WE HEARD:**

**1**

**FEEDBACK  
ON  
PROPOSAL**



There was acknowledgement of the different circumstances between towns and regions, and that there is no 'one size fits all' approach for regional South Australia. Some participants suggested that many of the concerns raised were 'not an issue' for the children, and that the option was mainly for the comfort of parents.

There was a strong sense in some areas that it would be reassuring to have the option for a limited period. Multiple participants suggested that they wanted the option but would make their decision closer to the time.

A number of participants suggested that the extra time associated with the option may assist specific schools with enrolment sustainability.

## Support for option

In some communities (notably Wilmington, Pinnaroo, Rapid Bay, Penong, Wangary, Beachport and School of the Air) there was strong support for the option and some sought an ongoing exemption. The key reasons for seeking the option are reflected in the table below.

It is important to note that these figures are based on approximately 100 responses and therefore only represent a sample of all forum participants (and families eligible under the proposal).

Responses to question "Would you keep your year 7 in primary school?"  
(based on approximately 100 responses received)

18%	<b>Yes</b>	I love my primary school - it offers my child more than my Area or High School
14%	<b>Yes</b>	I don't want to send my child away to boarding school a year early
17%	<b>It depends</b>	I'm worried one of my kids won't cope - but the other would be fine (e.g. my child has a disability, is young in his year, is anxious)
13%	<b>Probably not</b>	I have some worries, but I know my child wants to go and/or will go with their peers
38%	<b>No</b>	High School is the right location for Year 7s My child will benefit from access to more facilities and opportunities



### **Clare forum participant:**

*"I think it would be disadvantageous to have such a small cohort of students doing year 7 at the primary school when the majority are at high school and able to access better science / art / music /etc facilities."*

### **Bordertown forum participant:**

*"Worried that my year 5 boy is not ready, emotionally for a high school setting. Seems like a much safer setting for a 12 year old in primary school - finding out who they are etc - emotions decisions."*

### **Berri forum participant:**

*"I would not keep my year 7 child at primary school unless ALL their age / year group were staying."*

*Splitting classes may have a negative impact on their development and create division once everyone ends up in high school."*

## **View that all schools should transition together**

In the majority of forums, there was a view that the option was just delaying the inevitable and schools should all "jump at once". We heard the view that the move of year 7 to high school in 2022 is decided, and it was time to "rip the band-aid off". There was also a view that providing the option makes the move of year 7 to high school more complicated and "muddies the waters". Some participants suggested that providing a single date for the move will allow for better planning for the system overall.

## **Focus on transition processes**

There was a strong view that the move of year 7 to high school provided an opportunity for a renewed focus on transition processes and that this would go a long way to "unpacking the fear" expressed by some parents. It was noted in several forums that communication with parents was crucial in terms of reassuring them on key issues, such as bullying, and promoting confidence in the move. There was a suggestion that high schools could hold their own forums to gather parent perspectives and address their concerns. Drawing on learnings from interstate and pilot schools were seen as ways to support this.

## Concerns for students and families

A number of concerns were raised about the implications for the year 7 student, should they not move with their peers to high school. The key question underpinning these concerns was “What’s best for child?” (in contrast to “What’s best for the school?”).

The importance of the first 6 months in high school in establishing networks was raised in a number of forums, and was considered a strong argument for students to transition with their peers. Concerns were raised about the social implications for the year 7 child remaining in primary school (particularly if one of a very small group, or indeed the sole year 7 student). In the following year (when the child commences high school as a year 8) it was suggested that the child may again face challenges in integrating with the existing year 8 cohort and would need additional support to transition. Many participants viewed friendship groups as the critical consideration for children of this age.

In one forum, there was a specific concern about entrenching a ‘townie kids versus country kids’ distinction through the option. It was suggested that where the town-based high school drew students from a number of town-based and more remote primary schools, it would only be the more remote students eligible to remain in primary school - highlighting student difference.

An issue that was raised in a number of forums was the extra burden of choice that the option presents for families. There was a question regarding what information would be provided to families to inform their choice. Some communities expressed a preference that their primary school advise them what to do. Some participants suggested that, in a disadvantaged community, parents might feel forced to keep their child in primary school, where fees are cheaper than high school.

## Concerns for teachers, leaders and support staff

The administration of the option was seen as a particular challenge for affected primary schools, in particular the impact of late or changed enrolment decisions. It was noted that there would be funding implications for changes of mind (after census) for both the primary school and the high school. These implications would extend to staffing decisions, class structures, bus routes and funding for extra-curricular programs (as funded by the school). It was noted that in larger primary schools, the impacts of uncertainty would be greater.

A number of contributors viewed the extended transition period as an additional 3 years’ workload for schools. The need for ongoing funding to support the 3 extra years of double transition was highlighted.

It was noted that a perverse outcome could be a family’s choice of primary school based on whether this option is available to them.

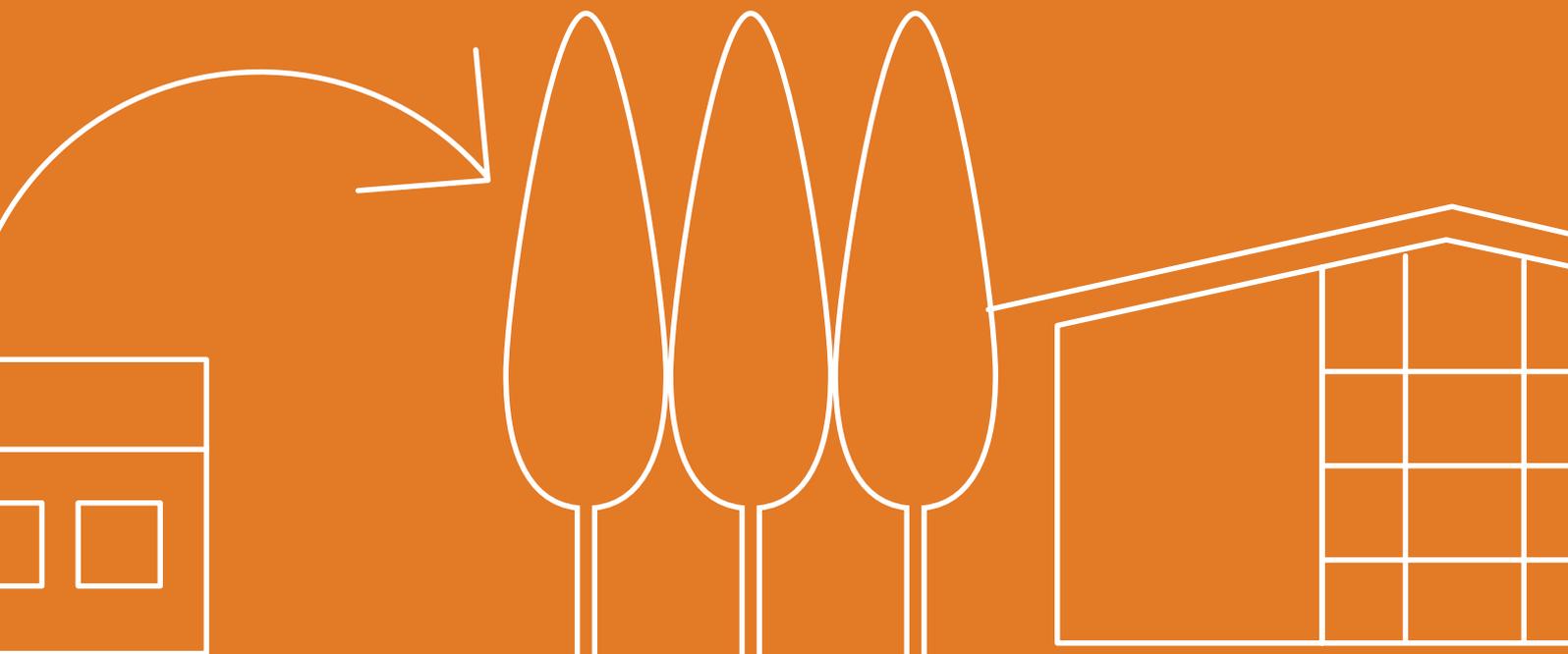
A number of participants identified the challenges presented for teachers to accommodate a small number of year 7s (possibly 1 student), which extend to extra-curricular activities such as SAPSASA and camps. It was suggested that the disproportionate amount of work for these teachers would require additional funding.

Finally, we heard concerns about the impact on the teaching workforce more generally, due to the prolonged uncertainty of the transition period.

**WHAT WE HEARD:**

**2**

**STUDENT  
OUTCOMES  
AND  
WELLBEING**





## Benefits of the move recognised

There was broad-ranging acknowledgement of the benefits of the move of year 7 to high school. It was noted that whilst some country primary schools have visiting specialist teachers, they do not have the facilities that high schools generally have. Other participants noted the pedagogical benefits and opportunity for a middle school approach to teaching.

A commonly held view was that year 7s, in the main, were ready for the 'next challenge' of high school.

### ***Cadell PS parent:***

*"Enormous opportunities: earlier introduction to high school environment, quicker stimulation, better adaptation, better acclimatisation, introduction to more advanced technologies and better facilities for study etc"*

### ***Beachport forum participant:***

*"I believe both socially / emotionally and academically that they are ready to have new experiences"*

## Younger students starting high school

A key issue raised at forums was that of younger students starting high school. It was noted that as a result of the Same First Day (single intake) policy coming into effect in 2014, there will be a proportion of 11 year olds entering high school (approximately 22% of intake). It was noted that these students would turn 12 years old by the start of term 2.

The maturity / readiness of some students was raised as an issue of concern and it was noted that parents of those students would need to support them. Associated expectations, such as mobile phone ownership, were also raised as a potential challenge for parents. It was suggested that younger children may need additional pastoral care from the school, particularly if new to the community.

Parents also noted that the lack of Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) in high school settings was problematic for those who sought it.

The importance of play was raised at several forums, with parents suggesting that the move to high school will discourage their year 7 child from being active due to different social norms and a general lack of playground facilities.

## Class composition

The impact of reduced student numbers on class composition (that is, how a class is comprised in terms of year levels) was discussed at several forums. The specific concern was that if a reduction in enrolments results in the loss of a class, there will be more year levels taught in the remaining classes. For example, a school which previously offered 3 classes (R-2, years 3-5, and years 6-7) may be required to offer 2 classes with a wider spread of year levels (eg R-2 and years 3-6). Further, as enrolments by year level are often uneven, the class composition may be further skewed.

Parents were concerned that a greater spread of year levels within the class would put greater pressure on teachers to deliver curriculum. Some parents felt that if there were 3 or more year levels in a composite class, it may result in lesser educational outcomes for their children. There was also a concern that their child would have less exposure to different teachers over their school career.



## Disruption and risk of disengagement

It was noted that students in regional areas are likely to transition more than their metropolitan counterparts, and this disruption may have negative effects on their learning. Some country students that transition to high school from primary school, may transition to independent schools again for their senior years of high-schooling.

In one region, there was a specific concern that the move would increase the risk of disengagement of year 7 students. Due to the known risk of increased non-attendance with the move to high school, the community was concerned that the move could see younger children disengaging from the education system.

The introduction of an R-9 model was seen as a potential solution to this issue for some schools.

## Students with special needs and disability

At a number of forums we heard concerns from parents of children with special needs (in both specialist and mainstream settings) who would like to delay their child's move to high school. In the main, parents felt that their child was receiving the support they needed from their current primary school.

The option was described as 'a relief' by one parent.

On this basis, consideration for the option to keep their year 7 child in the primary school setting was also sought by parents who were not eligible under the proposed model.

### ***From AEU submission:***

*"Those students who are at risk will be disadvantaged as when they miss the bus they will not attend school for the day. For these students, time management and routines are not well developed enough to for them to be able to regularly get to the bus stop on time."*

### ***Cambrai PS parent:***

*"At this stage I feel my son will be ready for the transition to high school in year 7 but I certainly want to be able to make that decision myself based on what is best for him. Cambrai has many students who are impacted by trauma and I feel that the longer they can receive the current support from this school the better for them."*

Commentary drawn from discussions in:  
*Beachport, Clare, Glencoe, Kapunda, Keyneton,  
Kongorong, Lameroo, Minlaton, Murray Bridge,  
Nangwarry, Padthaway, Peterborough, Port Neill,  
Rapid Bay, Riverton, Waikerie and Wangary.*

**WHAT WE HEARD:**

**3**  
**SMALL**  
**SCHOOLS**





## Appeal of small schools

The importance of the small school environment was a strong message in particular communities. These communities valued the nurturing environment provided by their small school, and the fact that their child was known and supported by the teachers of the school. Some communities felt that it was their small school in particular that offered the best learning environment for their child.

## Importance to regional community

The importance of the school in a small town was a recurring theme in many of the forums. In these areas, the primary school was viewed as the heart of the community. Communities feared the social and economic fallout if their school was to close. In areas with an itinerant population, there was a concern that families would move away from the area, if this should occur.

## Risk of closure

The Government's commitment that it will not close schools as part of the Year 7 to High School move was reiterated in most sessions. However it was acknowledged that even with this commitment in place, concerns for small regional schools persist.

Described in one forum as the 'snowball effect', communities expected that reduced enrolments as a result of the removal of the year 7 cohort would result in the school being less attractive to the community, leading to a further reduction in enrolments.

Some communities sought further guarantees in relation to the Government not closing or amalgamating schools.

## **Rapid Bay PS parent:**

*'...Year 7 in this school creates amazing children who play, lead, grow in confidence and develop positive traits that are nurtured in this unique environment opportunity.'*

## **Wilmington forum participant:**

*"A small town needs a school, a post office, and a pub."*

## **Pinnaroo PS Governing Council:**

*"... the impact that this will have on many small regional primary schools and their communities will be long lasting, and in the long term detrimental to the population and economies of these areas."*

## Ability to sustain enrolments

A school's ability to sustain enrolments was a key topic of discussion in many locations. Several communities expressed a sense of struggle and described a 'year by year' proposition to ensure sufficient reception enrolments / number of classes.

Some communities reported challenges associated with establishing and / or maintaining a preschool service for their school. Co-located preschools were seen as an important pathway for building enrolments from the 'bottom up'. Under existing departmental policy, some schools were unable to continue offering their preschool service and felt this was undermining their enrolments.

Further, the lack of bus entitlement for preschool children (as preschool is not compulsory) was identified as inhibiting enrolment efforts. Bus routes more generally were raised in some places as an impediment to sustaining enrolments. At one forum, a travel subsidy was suggested as an alternative support for preschool children.

The impact of non-Government schools on enrolments was of concern in some areas. In particular, the fact that most Catholic schools offer two intakes per year for children starting Reception (in contrast to the government system's single intake) was seen as a hindrance to building enrolments by some small schools. There was speculation about whether some Catholic primary schools will retain year 7 in primary school in specific regional locations. Participants noted that if that was the case, this may encourage some families to choose the Catholic school over the government school.

Provision of services such as Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) and breakfast programs were also identified ways to build enrolments.

Some participants were concerned about families choosing to move younger siblings to the area school alongside their year 7 child, further reducing primary school enrolments. The potential convenience for the families to do so is mitigated by current school bus policy that does not provide those siblings with travel eligibility.

In one forum, there was a concern about possibly losing year 6 students from their primary school as parents may see it as a 'transition period before high school'.



## Transition from small primary school to large high school

In several forums, the need for extra support for children going from a small school to a larger high school was identified.

It was suggested that any delay for children going from a small primary school to a large high school would be detrimental, putting them 'even further behind the 8-ball' in terms of development.

It was noted that where there are a number of small schools in proximity to each other, there are opportunities for them to creatively work together. Examples include a teacher exchange between small primary schools and large high schools, to aid in the transition process.

The need to provide support for school services officers (SSOs) moving from a small school setting was also identified.

### ***Nangwarry forum participant:***

*"No funding for preschools makes for whole year levels to be extinct in small schools and has a roll-on effect."*

Commentary drawn from discussions in:

*Clare, Glencoe, Keyneton, Kongorong, Lameroo, Minlaton, Murray Bridge, Nangwarry, Padthaway, Peterborough, Rapid Bay, Waikerie, Wallaroo, Wangary and Wilmington.*

# WHAT WE HEARD:

# 4

# RESOURCING



## *Via YourSAy:*

*"Rural schools are so socially important to rural/remote communities, their value cannot be understated and they should be protected with changes to their budgets and staffing allocations to ensure they remain open."*

## *Keyneton forum participant:*

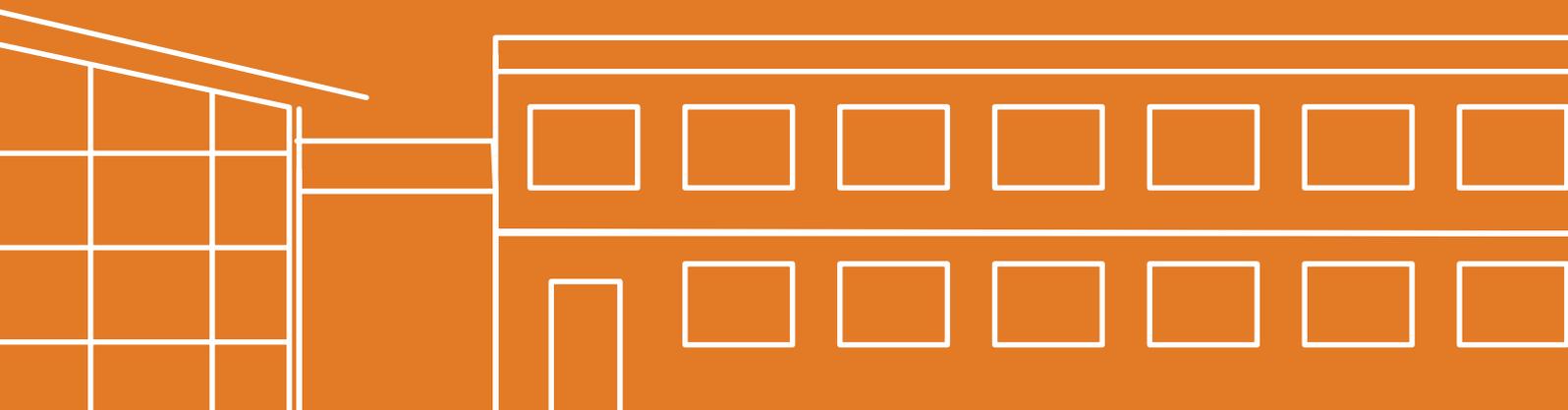
*"To maintain small schools which are very important to local communities, they need to maintain at least 2 classes."*

## *Murray Bridge forum participant:*

*"Small school funding (is) a critical consideration in the short term due to reduced enrolments / entitlements".*

## *Wangary forum participant:*

*"Smaller class sizes [should be] allowed in small schools so less year levels in one class."*



## Country regions as underfunded

There was a general sense that country services, specifically schools, are underfunded. In some areas, it was suggested that the funding they do receive is unreliable. We heard that assurances regarding funding for primary schools would be welcomed.

## Loss of funds to primary school

It was recognised that under the existing student centred funding model, in which funding follows the student, the move of the year 7 cohort will result in that funding shifting from primary schools to area or high schools.

There was a view in some regions that area schools are already better funded than primary schools.

It was noted that the current small school funding structure provides a safety net for those small schools that will lose students as a result of the move of year 7 to high school. The funding allows small schools the flexibility to 'top up' in areas that may be impacted by reduced enrolments.

A number of participants wanted small schools affected by reduced funding to be supported financially for a transition period (suggested 2-3 years).

## 'Magic number' that determines the number of classes

The key funding concern for communities related to small primary school enrolments falling below the so-called 'magic number' (the number of enrolments at which they drop a class) with a belief that this will make their school less attractive to local communities.

A number of schools indicated they expected to drop a class with the move of year 7s to high school and their communities were clear that they wanted to maintain existing class structures. Some participants suggested funding to maintain a minimum number of classes, others sought a review of enrolment numbers required to fund a class.

## Primary schools left with excess accommodation

Some participants queried what would happen to primary schools left with excess accommodation. It was suggested that primary schools be supported to repurpose classrooms no longer being used into facilities for the remaining students (eg art rooms).

Commentary drawn from discussions in:

*Beachport, Berri, Bordertown, Glencoe, Kapunda, Keyneton, Kongorong, Lameroo, Minlaton, Murray Bridge, Peterborough, Wangary and Wilmington.*

# WHAT WE HEARD:

# 5

# SCHOOL BUS ROUTES AND ACCESS



## *Pinnaroo PS parent:*

*"The DfE bus policy is outdated and does not reflect the living, working, lifestyle and education needs of country families".*

## *Participant:*

*"Reduced numbers means less buses, makes our communities less liveable."*



## Interaction of buses and enrolments

There was strong feedback on the role of bus routes in shaping access to schools, summarised as 'bus routes equal enrolments'.

There was a shared concern that under the existing departmental School Transport Policy, the move of year 7 to high school could have a negative impact on small schools. The specific scenarios identified were: the potential loss of bus runs associated with fewer students in the primary school and a change in bus routes associated with increased students in high / area school.

In some areas, complexities were identified where non-government schools utilise the bus service but do not count toward numbers required for service provision. A further complexity was identified by schools close to the state border, where Victorian students access the bus service in a similar way. As noted previously, preschool children do not have a bus entitlement, thus are not 'counted' either. One participant queried the priority of access between these groups.

Participants identified a number of challenges in meeting the minimum requirements to secure or extend a bus route, and the process to review a route.

Some participants suggested the need for a review of departmental policy as a result of year 7 to high school, others proposed differentiated policies. The need to engage with councils, in order to negotiate road upgrades for bus routes, was also suggested.

## Younger children on buses

There was general acceptance at the forums that travelling long distances by school bus was a part of country life. It was noted that a number of children are already travelling more than 20 kilometres to school (each way) on a daily basis. We heard several concerns relating to the issue of younger children travelling on buses in order to attend their area or high school.

There was a concern that the increased time spent on the bus, potentially coupled with earlier starts / later finishes may put a strain on younger children. There was also a concern about younger children being exposed to concepts and language from older children on the bus that is not appropriate for their age level. It was suggested that there will be a need for greater supervision and support for younger children while on the bus. Specific concerns were raised about the safety and wellbeing of preschool children where they were accessing the bus service.

Commentary drawn from discussions in:

*Beachport, Bordertown, Clare, Glencoe, Keyneton, Kongorong, Lameroo, Minlaton, Nangwarry, Padthaway, Port Neill, Riverton, Waikerie, Wangary and Wilmington.*

# WHAT WE HEARD:

# 6

# BOARDING CONSIDERATIONS



## *School of the Air parent:*

*"Some children will be only age 11 when having to go away at the end of year 6".*

## *School of the Air parent:*

*"The average cost of boarding is \$41K, add that up per child for an extra year, it becomes costly."*

## *School of the Air parent:*

*"Children aren't emotionally ready in year 7 so [the option] gives them an extra year to grow up."*



For a number of geographically isolated and remote families, the only viable option for their secondary education is for the child to go away to boarding school. The emotional and financial strain of sending a child to boarding school was made explicit by those families. The key concern we heard from these families was that the move of year 7 to high school would intensify and bring forward these challenges by a year.

### Younger children leaving the family unit

School of the Air (SOTA) families expressed concerns about the emotional readiness of their child to leave their family a year earlier to attend boarding school in Adelaide, as well as that of the family farewelling the child. It was noted that some children will still be 11 years old when they leave the family home.

An alternative pathway is for one of the parents to relocate with their child, to set up a second home in the closest town or city. With the move of year 7 to high school, the change to the family unit will be brought forward and extended by a year, a concern for SOTA families.

### Financial cost

The Isolated Children's Parents' Association of South Australia (SA ICPA) reports that the average cost of boarding school in South Australia is \$41,000 per year. The additional year of boarding per child may present a financial burden that some families cannot carry. We heard that many families are already under financial strain due to the current drought conditions being experienced.

Under the scenario of setting up a second home, there is the financial impact of additional housing costs, as well as taking that parent away from the family business.

### Boarding houses at government schools

The government operates boarding houses at 3 of our government schools - Lucindale Area School, Cleve Area School and Goyder House at Burra Community School.

We heard concerns about younger students in boarding houses being able to cope away from home. The need to equip those schools to support younger students was also identified.

Commentary drawn from discussions in:  
*Peterborough, School of the Air 'Webex' online session and Wallaroo.*

# WHAT WE HEARD:

# 7

# GENERAL REGIONAL ISSUES



*From AEU submission:*

*"One of the main areas of concern in small rural schools is attracting and retaining qualified and capable staff in leadership positions Leaders are often required to undertake significant teaching loads in addition to their leadership duties".*



## Delivery of professional learning

It was suggested that particular consideration should be given to the delivery of professional learning in country areas, specifically taking into account the time and distance for teachers to access professional learning (usually held in Adelaide). In several areas the lack of available relief staff, in order to release teaching staff, was highlighted as a problem.

## Building works in country areas

A number of participants voiced their doubts that building works will be ready in time and were concerned that demountables would be required to accommodate students. We heard that communities need the confidence that their schools will be ready, and that this will contribute to the overall success of year 7 to high school.

It was suggested in some areas they would need a longer lead time for building works, due to a lack of available tradespeople. In one forum, it was requested that the grant funding allocated to ready high school classrooms be brought forward, to allow for this. It was also proposed that local tradespeople should be used wherever possible.

## Cost of transporting students

The cost of transporting students from primary schools to area or high schools, for transition purposes and more generally, was identified as an impediment by some primary schools. We heard from them that the expense of hiring a bus limits how easily and often their students are able to visit the local area / high school, an activity which helps familiarise the primary students with the other school.

## Importance of SAPSASA to regions

There are approximately 20 SAPSASA (now known as School Sport SA) districts in regional areas. Removing year 7 from primary school will impact on the existing structure and it is expected that this will be felt more acutely in regions where selection is very competitive. Some communities described this as effectively halving the existing opportunities for year 6s and 7s to participate.

## Country incentives

The effectiveness of country incentives in attracting staff was questioned by some contributors. Suggestions for improvements included extending incentives to non-teaching staff and linking the incentives to a minimum stay in the region (eg 5+ years).

In one forum, there was a call for funding to retain specialist teachers supporting individual needs in the regional setting.

Commentary drawn from discussions in:  
*Beachport, Glencoe, Kongorong, Minlaton,  
Padthaway, Riverton and Wangary.*



**APPENDIX -**

**1**

**LIST OF ELIGIBLE  
SCHOOLS**



### Primary schools more than 20kms by road from their nearest area or high school

Andamooka Primary School	Lake Wangary Primary School
Auburn Primary School	Mallala Primary School
Beachport Primary School	Moorook Primary School
Blanchetown Primary School	Morgan Primary School
Booborowie Primary School	Mypolonga Primary School
Brinkworth Primary School	Nangwarry Primary School
Bute Primary School	Padthaway Primary School
Cadell Primary School	Penong Primary School
Callington Primary School	Pinnaroo Primary School
Cambrai Primary School	Port Neill Primary School
Cobdogla Primary School	Port Wakefield Primary School
Coonalpyn Primary School	Rapid Bay Primary School
Frances Primary School	Robe Primary School
Geranium Primary School	Robertstown Primary School
Glencoe Central Primary School	Snowtown Primary School
Goolwa Primary School	Spalding Primary School
Hamley Bridge Primary School	Stansbury Primary School
Jervois Primary School	Tailem Bend Primary School
Kalangadoo Primary School	Two Wells Primary School
Kingston-on-Murray Primary School	Ungarra Primary School
Kongorong Primary School	Warooka Primary School
Koolunga Primary School	Wasleys Primary School
Koonibba Aboriginal School	Wilmington Primary School

**APPENDIX -**

**2**

**LIST OF  
STAKEHOLDER  
GROUPS**



1. Australian Education Union
2. Educators SA
3. Preschool Directors Association of South Australia
4. Public Service Association of SA Inc
5. SA Special Education Principals and Leaders Association
6. SA State School Leaders Association
7. SA State Schools Administrative Officers Association
8. Small Schools Association of South Australia
9. South Australian Area Leaders Association
10. South Australian Association of State School Organisations Inc.
11. South Australian Primary Principals Association Inc
12. South Australian Secondary Principals' Association

**APPENDIX -**

**3**

**KEY  
QUESTIONS**



# YEAR 7 TO HIGH SCHOOL REGIONAL CONSULTATION

Drawing on interstate experience, we are testing the possibility of providing eligible families with a choice to keep their year 7 child in primary school, if their primary school is located more than 20 kilometres by road from its nearest area or high school by road, for a transitional period of 3 years.

The Government is committed to providing all year 7 students with the benefits of the move of Year 7 to High School, however this approach will support those parents concerned about the increased travel distance for younger students to their schooling.

Under the proposed approach, some regional primary schools would continue to offer year 7, while all regional high schools would introduce year 7 (so that year 7 is offered concurrently in both settings).

This option would be made available to families for a limited period of 3 years (2022-2024) in order to smooth the system changeover.

## ***Questions to consider – you may answer as many questions as you like.***

The proposed distance of 20 kilometres by road from their nearest area or high school (approximated as 15 minute travel time) responds to the particular issues of travel time for younger students, as well as concerns for the impact on smaller primary schools in more removed communities.

*Is 20 kilometres the appropriate distance to consider?*

## Extended transition period

In Western Australia, the transition period was extended for some families, for a limited 3 year period.

*Should a similar choice be offered in South Australia, is the 3 year period an appropriate length of time?*

A key challenge with the proposed approach is the associated planning uncertainty for primary and high schools. It is expected that planning decisions relating to staffing, budget and curriculum

planning could be made more difficult due to the changeable nature of enrolments under this approach (as it is not possible to forecast parents' decisions).

*What are the challenges or opportunities you anticipate in the introduction of Year 7 to high school in the regional setting?*

## Existing supports

Existing supports for small schools and country staff are outlined below.

### Small school funding

The existing small school funding structures will provide a safety net for those small schools which will lose students as a result of the move of year 7 to high school. The funding allows small schools the flexibility to 'top up' in areas that may be impacted by reduced enrolments (such as reduced funding for support staff).

### Country incentives

Country incentives can apply to staff employed by schools in country locations, to support country schools in attracting staff.

*What support measures do you propose?*

*Given the option, would you keep your year 7 child in the primary school setting?*

*What factors are important to you in making this decision?*

**APPENDIX -**

**4**

**YourSAy  
ONLINE  
DISCUSSION**



## What do you think about our proposal to introduce a 3 year transitional period for eligible families?



*Year 7 to High School team*

Welcome to the Year 7 to High School regional consultation!

We look forward to hearing what our regional communities think about the proposed 3-year transitional approach.



*Renee Chandler*

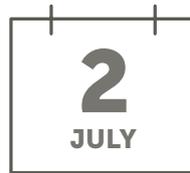
Would the school fees for Year 7 in a primary school be the same as school fees for Year 7 in a high school?



*Year 7 to High School team*

Thanks for your question Renee. School fees are set by individual schools, in conjunction with their governing councils. How high schools will set for their year 7 fees will form part of the planning process as we approach the 2022 transition. In general, high school fees are higher than primary school fees. As a guide, you may like to contact your local high school to ask what their current year 8 fees are.

- Alison



*Lauren Josie*

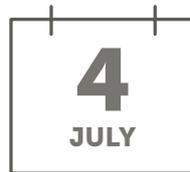
What if my child isn't ready for a high school setting?



*Year 7 to High School team*

Hi Lauren, Making sure that our primary kids are properly prepared for high school is a really important part of the transition process. This is already a focus area for schools preparing our existing Year 7s for the move into Year 8. What kinds of things do you think will be important to focus on to make sure every child is ready for high school from year 7 in 2022? What do you think is particularly important to help kids in country areas with the move?

- Anna



*Leanne Machin*

I am really concerned my child will not be ready to transition. Academically and emotionally. He is already year levels behind in primary school?



*Lauren Josie*

My child who is now in year 4 (in the MP class, year 3, year 4 class) so more than likely will be affected and is doing year 3 work because the school won't leave him down a year until year 6/ year 7 once the other children go to high school and I'm wondering if this can still happen?

He is behind quite a bit without a label, i am paying for one in the next few weeks because i have finally worked out how, cost and what the true process is.

We are in a country town the only time children get "high school" ready is the UP class 5/6/7 class but our school is thinking about spitting the year 5's up but won't keep them in year 4 (even after i have pleaded with the same school since he was in kindy to keep him down)

If he misses year 5 in the UP class that would mean he would only have one year in there. I know for sure that it will not be enough time for him.



*Year 7 to High School team*

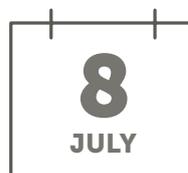
Thanks for the additional information Lauren.



*Adrian Hogg*

I have serious concerns about the whole project and its aims. I think year 7 in primary school is the year they are mature enough to learn leadership and be an active role model in the school for the other children. I don't like the move I think that it is a waste of money when we already have a working system with the accommodation already available for these kids. Now tens of millions will be spent were it's not necessary because a working system is already in place. This is the first nail in the coffin of small regional schools. The primary school student numbers will decrease then allocated teacher funding will follow then inevitable closures.

To add to this money was allocated to the high schools to rejuvenate old buildings so that we don't end up with dilapidated buildings. This money was then locked up to be used to build new buildings to accommodate the year 7s, This seems like robbing peter and creating problems for the future that are avoidable



*Year 7 to High School team*

Thanks for taking the time to provide your views Adrian.



*Karen Baines*

My major concern with Year 7 going to high school is the small rural schools and the numbers they will lose. I would probably leave my child at primary school for Year 7, certainly if his absence might mean a loss of funding for the local primary school. Rural schools are so socially important to rural/remote communities, their value can not be understated and they should be protected with changes to their budgets and staffing allocations to ensure they remain open. When you live 50km from the Area School, I can't imagine a 5 year old managing that travel twice a day on the bus, it's unacceptable when a perfectly good primary school is only 20km away. Protect the small rural schools as a matter of priority.

#### *Year 7 to High School team*

Thanks for providing your comments here Karen. We will be sure to reflect them in our report back to Government.

- Alison



*Ellen Sanders*

I am NOT happy about the year 7 transition to high school. I live in \_\_\_\_\_. My son is year 3 and attends \_\_\_\_\_ primary school. He has level 3 Autism and PDA. Last year he was deemed too high needs for a mainstream classroom so he is in a small room 1:1 with a 1:1 teacher. He trialed my LOCAL primary school, \_\_\_\_\_ primary last year but was deemed "too high needs" for their setting as it lacks fencing and is next to a busy main road and I was told my son "needs a specialist school" by the principal there, HOWEVER the only special unit in the area is in Victor and only takes children with an iq below 70. My son does not fit this criteria. I have concerns my son will NOT be ready for high school in year 7 due to the large numbers of students at Victor Harbor high school, no idea what type of option my son will have ( as he is not in a classroom of other children, where will he go?), inability to catch the school bus the 20 km each way from \_\_\_\_\_ due to not having the same schooling start and finish times as the other kids (he starts at 9:30 Am and finishes at 11 or 12 ) which will place additional petrol costs on myself as other kids get to catch a bus and the school is a 40 km round trip from my home, Victor high being "at capacity" even before the new year 7 intake with no room to expand (my son's primary school already has this issue), and the fact my son is in limbo as he has an iq above 70 so does not fit Victor's special unit's iq criteria so I'm guessing he will not fit it for a special options placement in high school? Where will he go? I would much rather he had the chance to spend year 7 at his primary school, it's not like he is in a classroom with other children as it is anyway?! Will there be petrol reimbursements from the government for parent/s of country students with special needs such as my son who live 20 km each way from the only high school in the area who have a child who CANNOT catch a school bus due

to bring on a different timetable to other children due to a high level of need (my son starts at 9:30 and finishes at 11 or 12, he has a part exemption from decd due to being 1:1 and NOT in a classroom with other children, but is 1:1 in a small room at his mainstream primary school, \_\_\_\_\_ primary, due to a high level of need?I would rather my son had year 7 at his primary school as it is closer to my home at \_\_\_\_\_, less cost in petrol for me as a fulltime carer of my son, his inability to catch a school bus (not that there is one from \_\_\_\_\_ any way, but he cannot attend \_\_\_\_\_ primary as he was deemed too high needs. Will the government assist with the extra costs of fees for an extra year of high school to parent/s? Will FLO options start a year earlier for students who may require an alternate setting a year earlier due to year 7 intake (FLO begins in year 10)? Where will these extra year 7 students be placed at Victor high, considering the school has no room to expand? EFS Strath high was in the media earlier this year due to students having lessons outside in 40c heat due to overcrowding (7-12 school)?...



### *Year 7 to High School team*

Hi Ellen, thanks for sharing your family's situation. Planning for the transition of children and students with disability is an important part of this project. We will be working with schools and student support services on how to support families, taking into account their different circumstances. We'll be considering the issues you've raised in our planning.

- Alison



### *Percey Callahan*

I feel 12 years old is far too young to start mixing with the older kids in high school, especially the ones who simply don't want to be there. Also, I assume you have thought about the inevitability of 17 year olds and 12 year olds being boyfriend and girlfriend. Could you share how, exactly, this will be stopped? I remember year 8 girls being taken advantage of by year 12 boys at my high school, you have your heads in the sand if you think it doesn't happen. Exposing a younger even more naive age group to the problematic older kids just seems a horrible idea.



### *Year 7 to High School team*

Thanks for your comments Percey.

Student wellbeing is an important part of planning for the move, and we will be looking at our pilot schools, interstate counterparts and our existing R-12 and B-12 schools for examples of best practice to combat the issues you've raised.

- Alison

**APPENDIX -**

**5**

**WRITTEN  
SUBMISSIONS**



# INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS

**From:** \_\_\_\_\_

**To:** Education: Year 7 to HS

**Subject:** Lameroo Forum

**Date:** Wednesday, 11 September 2019 11:03:29 PM

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to you in response to my attendance at the Lameroo Year 7 To HS forum held recently.

In attendance were parents and staff from Pinnaroo PS, Lameroo RCS and Geranium PS, to express their concerns and ask questions about Year 7 moving to high schools from 2022, hows this affects us in the Mallee.

I would like to formally share my concerns about the effect this policy, amongst others, will have on my local Primary School, Pinnaroo, my family (my child will be affected by the transition), and my township. We were asked at the forum to send in our comments, as specific as possible.

## Reduction in enrolments

As a F-7 primary school with enrolments varying between 70-80 we have managed to survive with 4 composite classrooms. When our enrolments fall below 80, our fourth teacher is funded by our site. This isn't a viable long term solution but whilst we have managed to maintain enrolments it has been viable in the medium term. A big part of this has been a push at our site to retain our year 7's who we have been losing early to Murrayville Community College in Victoria, which is our closest high school. We have had a real turn around in year 7 retention at our site due to the hard work of dedicated staff and governing council members who realise the importance of maintaining enrolments for the sustainability of our school. The budget formula is so heavily dependent on enrolments that there is an insufficient minimum level of funding!!!! I can point out Coonalpyn, Geranium and Pinnaroo as the three Primary Schools in our region, all who are

struggling financially due to low enrolments, whilst the Area schools by comparison are thriving. Is it really that surprising that the Area schools are all that will remain, as over time our Primary schools close their doors. If there were to be a review of the financial and staffing support of primary school staff in primary schools versus area schools I believe the results would be astounding. It also explains the high turnover and bum out rates of staff.

To lose our year 7s has a direct financial impact on the schools operating budget and therefore ability to staff. As a result, our site will have to increase the year levels in one composite class, eg Fil, 2/3 and 4/5/6. History tells us that the more year levels in one class, the greater complexity of needs to fill, and the more parents seek out alternative schools. Choice of alternative schools in our region is made possible by the bus runs which run to our two neighbouring schools Murrayville and Lameroo. This gets me to my second point; enrolments follow bus routes.

## Bus routes

Our two neighbouring schools are 42km (Lameroo) and 25km (Murrayville) each side of Pinnaroo respectively. There is currently a DfE bus from Pinnaroo to Lameroo, and a Victorian bus from Pinnaroo to Murrayville. So if you don't want your primary aged child to go to school in Pinnaroo, they get on a bus, no questions asked, to their neighbouring school.

The Victorian funding model has historically enabled Murrayville to fund more bus routes to outlying students in both VIC and SA than the DfE. This has been of great loss to Pinnaroo and Lameroo as the majority of families have chosen

their high school according to which bus route is the nearest. Bus routes = enrolments. This is a proven statistic and can be verified by my school, it is not conjecture.

The DfE bus policy is outdated and does not reflect the living, working, lifestyle and education needs of country families. Minimum numbers of 10 for a bus route, and a minimum of 3 families required to extend a route, can be difficult to achieve. Which is further exacerbated as the policy does not count Victorian residents (yes, we live on the border!) and kindy students.

There are layers of government policy which show a great misunderstanding and disrespect for country residents, indeed, our education needs are not treated equally nor equitably. A city student must abide by the same bus policy, however has so many more alternative transport opportunities available to them. The country student gets one crack to get a bus run, and the only alternative is being driven by private vehicle. This means country parents of school aged children are limited in work, living and lifestyle choices as they must physically drive their children to school, or else they do not attend. And as far as attendance policies; they mean nothing. We live too far away from Child Protection for this to register on their radar. Kids fall through the cracks. Again this statistic can be verified by my school.

There is nothing in the bus policy to reflect the amount of time children travel by bus or kms they travel. Ourschool was operating two consecutive bus routes with the one bus as this was the only feasible way of getting these children to school. Our school made the choice to disadvantage all students rather than to pick and choose which ones would receive the service, and which would receive none. With the preschool policies which have come into place in recent years, whereby offsite preschools have been absorbed into school sites, then school classrooms and in the case of Geranium, been discontinued altogether, there are further impact on bus policy.

As a result we will now be seeing children younger than 4 catching buses to attend school some 60kms away. That's for the lucky ones who are getting a bus that is. Another problem with these two policies converging (preschool and buses) is that preschool is not compulsory. It is very concerning that even for all we know about early learning and development, and school readiness, that we are still putting every possible hurdle in front of country preschoolers. There is a very real possibility that families will simply choose not to attend, because as I stated earlier; bus routes = enrolments.

Aside to the poor educational outcomes for these already disadvantaged kids, lets talk about how these policies affect the viability of our towns.

#### Viability/Liveability

As humans we all share the need for basic services, health, education, safety and household consumables. Country communities do their best to rally for services, but sadly three out of the four are dictated by government policy, and the fourth is directly linked to the financial viability of the town as a direct result of population.

DfE policy which dictates less bus routes, less school funding, less teachers, less support and less facilities really does mean YOU GET LESS as a country resident. The only significant funding (over and above operational funding) in our region in the past decade was for Lameroo RCS in response to their tech building burning down. Yes, you have to have a major disaster our here to get any money. But great to see a wealthy school like Loxton HS got money in every capital funding round, cos gee do the need it. Their entire school has been rebuilt since 2000 (again, another fire...) yet they scored many more millions in capital and STEM funding when our Mallee schools are currently receiving insufficient maintenance funding let alone funding to bring us up to standard.

So for families who are deciding where to live, work and educate their kids, if they are going to choose Pinnaroo they need to be prepared to compromise for what is not being offered. For the bus run they may not receive will limit their working opportunities. For the composite classes will compromise their children's learning as the unsupported teachers with skeleton funding try to do the best they can. For the resources that their children will not receive as our school does not have the funds to maintain the IT, resources and equipment that city schools have on offer. For the old buildings where their children will be educated, hot and sweaty in summer, cold in winter, with pigeons nesting in the roof. I am ashamed to say it, but transitioning year 7 to HS is yet another policy which has yet again missed the mark with its financial implications for our school. DtE says they don't and won't schools down. That's right. They won't shut us down, they will just keep underfunding us until we have no money in the bank and no enrolments so we have to shut ourselves. Have a chat to some families at East Murray and see how they feel about the 80km drive to Loxton since their school shut. Have a chat to Geranium and Coonalpyn families who are in a real predicament to keep their doors open.

See what is left of their communities. Policy + time has contributed to the unviability of their townships.

It was made painfully clear that as an election promise by our Liberal government, year 7 to HS is going to happen. Grace period of 3 years aside, the decision has been made and our school will be adversely affected. That is, unless the government reviews their funding model. Small country hospitals are funded under a different funding model to their larger counterparts, so why not education? It does not mean they can offer the same services as in the city, but it ensures they stay viable. DtE needs to take a good look at itself and realise that the people responsible for feeding our nation don't live in the city, and hey, they need an education too.

They matter. We matter.

I closing, I would also like to state that my school is an INSPIRE school and therefore as a leader in the industry commands and deserves the respect of the Department to do its due diligence in reviewing its funding.

Regards

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**From:** \_\_\_\_\_

**To:** Education: Year 7 to HS

**Subject:** Consultation Process for Country Primary Schools

**Date:** Monday, 1 July 2019 9:28:22 PM

To Whom it May Concern,

RE: Year 7 to High School transition trial period

Thanks for giving us the opportunity to submit to this discussion.

I am a parent of children attending Pinnaroo Primary School (PPS) Here are my thoughts on continuing to provide year 7 for a transition period at PPS and other rural schools.

**Leadership.** Currently the Year 6 and 7 class are the leaders of the school. While year 6s are capable of being effective leaders, the difference of an extra

year's growth and maturity would really help their leadership skills grow and provide huge benefits to the younger students in the school. Year 7s can take a more active role in the school community in terms of organizing events and mentoring younger students. This will also really help the Year 7 students' confidence at a time of life where confidence is easily knocked. Being older and looked up to by younger students, rather than starting again at the bottom of the school, is going to help self-esteem and increase students' confidence to take on leadership roles in school and community in later life.

**Facilities.** It is a huge advantage in starting high school in year 7 that these students have access

to high school level teachers and facilities, e.g. science, art, music, physical education. I can imagine that parents who have high achieving students in any of these areas may want to shift their children to high school early so they would have the benefit of these facilities.

However, I am very concerned that the off-loading of year 7 in country schools may cause the further reduction of these facilities in primary schools. Pinnaroo Primary School has been trying to obtain funding to build STEM and art classroom facilities with absolutely no success over many years. I believe losing year 7 students would make it more difficult to get funding for such facilities. This means the R-6 students would then miss out on the opportunity to use these facilities. Many lower and middle primary age students are expert technology users and their abilities far outstrip the technology programs available to them. Science facilities should also be available to young students while they still have the wonder and excitement of childhood.

Without year 7, teachers may have less incentive to participate in advanced training in these areas, and less upper primary teachers who may have specialist skills in these areas will be employed. This means the skills of these teachers will not be available to the R-6 students.

**Overall funding.** Pinnaroo Primary School and I am sure many other country primary schools have had huge issues getting funding for any site improvements, with funding instead going to larger schools, metropolitan and regional schools and area schools. For example, our school has been trying to replace an ancient, unsanitary toilet block that is impossible to ever completely clean, and regularly blocks up and leaks waste all over the floor. We have had absolutely no success in getting the department to fund basic hygiene and toileting facilities for our students, despite repeated requests, submissions and politicians and department representative visits. Not only that, but our ageing buildings are falling apart, and no money is available to upgrade or repair. This is from a school with good enrolment numbers both now and into the future.

Looking at the rural primary schools on the list, they are all schools that are the hub of their communities. These primary schools constantly miss out on the funding that seems to be splashed all over the media provided to other schools. Taking year 7 away from these rural primary schools will make this worse!

In conclusion, I am very much in support of Year 7 being retained in rural primary schools, not

only due to transport but for the above reasons. However, I do understand that once older siblings are attending high school, it may be difficult to retain year 7 students for this transition year.

I would very much hope that the Department provides a lot of compensation for these schools for the loss of numbers that losing year 7 would provide, and provides necessary funding for adequate teaching staff, support staff, staff training and building upgrades, including in areas such as STEM and art. And note, what they are providing now is nowhere near enough. Please get your act together and stop treating country primary schools like they are not important. They are the basis of the education of some of the most disadvantaged students in the state, some of the people who will be growing our food in the future, some of the people who will go on to be future leaders in this country, many hopefully all of the above! Let's look after them.

Yours sincerely,

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**From:** \_\_\_\_\_

**To:** Education: Year 7 to HS

**Subject:** Year 7 to High School Feedback

**Date:** Friday, 23 August 2019 3:33 PM

Hi There

I just firstly wanted to say thank you for providing the opportunity to obtain information at a regional site. Yesterday I visited the Kapunda Institute, the session was very informative and we received a lot of information. I would recommend for a different way to advertise this if further sessions occur in the future as I only heard about it because a friend sent the ad to me via a text message. Perhaps class Dojo or skoolbag app's.

I think this is a fantastic move forward for our young children however I would like to also comment in relation to the funding opportunities. I would like to deeply express being in a regional area it is of great concern about the regional areas missing out on funding which is what predominantly has happened in the past. It would be such a shame for all of these efforts to occur and little country towns like our areas miss out.

I would like to express also about having the extra supports in place soon with SSO's at schools and high schools,

Feel free to contact me

Kind Regards,

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# PINNAROO PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING COUNCIL SUBMISSION

## Year 7 to High School

While our Governing Council are acutely aware and respect the decision of the current Government and their decision to shift year 7 to high school, there are a number of concerns that we would like to raise and some suggestions to put forward as measures to assist with the issues.

We understand that having year 7 in secondary school will align more with the Australian Curriculum and match other states and many private and independent schools. We also understand that for a majority of schools in metropolitan and larger regional centres there will be very little impact on schools and communities.

However the impact that this will have on many small regional primary schools and their communities will be long lasting, and in the long term detrimental to the population and economies of these areas.

Some of the considerations in policy that we would like to see revolve around the services that will be offered to our students and children.

Access to buses and bus runs will be affected if there are less students attending small schools, with current policy requiring certain numbers for buses. If bus routes change to suit the high/ area school that older children will be attending, this could possibly mean primary age students may not be able to catch a bus to their local school. Differentiated policies need to be developed to accommodate these families and students.

In the case of Pinnaroo, we were once an Area school and already suffer the economic effects of the downsizing that took place in the community nearly 30 years ago. In excess of 40-50 students leaving the town each day to attend high schools in other towns. The loss of year 7 to high school will have further negative effects on our school and community. With the likely loss of another teacher and their family. When numbers of students are small, even one family can make a difference.

We would encourage the government and education department to consider the possibility of utilising the R-9 model seen in a number of predominantly Aboriginal schools to keep our students learning in an environment they feel comfortable and safe in. Regional and remote students are also some of the most disadvantaged in the state. Evidence shows that learning from year 7-9 is quite disrupted and is often not as strong as it could be. We believe that implementing an R-9 system in these areas would benefit not only the learning of the students, but also more strongly support the economies of our regional areas.

Many students in regional areas will transition more than metropolitan students which has negative effects on their learning. Students will transition to high school at the end of year 6 or 7 and then may transition to colleges again at year 10, let alone then the move to university. It would be more beneficial for students to be able to stay in their local school for longer. Having a positive effect on their social and emotional wellbeing, as well as being less disruptive to their learning.

Nowhere in the research that has taken place, or evidence from other states has there been any mention of any educational benefits to students in moving Year 7 to high school. Under the R-9 model we know there will be less disruptions to students, leading to more positive long term learning for students.

I am sure that there will be many more schools around the state in regional and remote areas will be affected than just that of Pinnaroo, so we would like to see some consideration and differentiation given to these areas as well. A policy directly aligned with these considerations in mind is encouraged, instead of the very metro centric rhetoric and ideas that suit the majority, to allow the differentiation required for regional areas.

# AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION UNION SUBMISSION

1. The proposed distance of 20 kilometres by road from their nearest area or high school (approximated as 15 minutes travel time) responds to the particular issues of travel time for younger students, as well as concerns for the impact on smaller primary schools in more removed communities. Is 20 kilometres the appropriate distance to consider?

The general view was that the distance should be 20km or less. Comments included:

- Public transport or school buses not available in all areas
- In some areas there are only dirt roads so 20km is a long distance
- Safety of some roads
- Maintaining Yr 7 students who want to stay in a Primary setting will allow a stronger sense of community in a local setting.
- Students with special needs will become the target of bullying and harassment on a bus that has to travel extended distances.
- Sitting on a bus for unreasonably long periods of time does not address the issue of obesity that we hear so much about from health professionals and DfE.
- Yr 7 students will be exposed to concepts and language from older bus students that is not appropriate for their age level.
- Those students who are at risk will be disadvantaged as when they miss the bus they will not attend school for that day. For these students, time management and routines are not well developed enough for them to be able to regularly get to the bus stop on time.

2. In Western Australia, the transition period was extended for some families, for a limited 3-year period. Should a similar choice be offered in South Australia, is the 3-year period an appropriate length of time?

There were a range of responses including:

- Three years seems reasonable for adjustments to be made.
- A transition period would allow for schools and staff to make decisions about their ongoing futures and directions and students to come to grips with a move to a larger school
- This may impact on secure work
- May result in 3 years of insecurity and uncertainty
- Yes, however adequate planning must occur during this time and if deemed inadequate further time should be granted
- No - too long. if we're doing 7-HS let's do it and not put it off that long . One year grace is plenty

3. A key challenge with the proposed approach is the associated planning uncertainty for primary and high schools. It is expected that planning decisions relating to staffing, budget and curriculum planning could be made more difficult due to the changeable nature of enrolments under this approach (as it is not possible to forecast parents' decisions). What are the challenges or opportunities you anticipate in the introduction of Year 7 to high school in the regional setting?

AEU members call on the Government to ensure that small schools do not close as a result of the transition of year 7 to high school. Members are also concerned about the impacts on workload for staff remaining in small primary school if funding is reduced as a result of students leaving. Other comments include:

- In our area, there will be limited impact at secondary schools, as most schools in our area are Area Schools which already accommodate year 7's in middle school arrangements. The numbers are also small in comparison to the city or large regional areas. The impact on our small primary school could be more severe in some years which have larger Year 7 student cohorts. We would hope that there be transition arrangements in place so that existing teaching and support staff could be maintained.
- Students at risk being at a greater risk of non-attendance.
- Staffing issues when parents change their minds about where they are sending their Yr 7 child.
- Schools having to pay for supernumerary staff who exercise their 45km rule and refused to go to a local High School that is beyond that distance. In this case, DfE should pick up the full cost of the staff member and not shift some of it to the small school.
- The funding for Yr 7 students who remain in a Primary school should be the same per student as those in a High School setting,
- RES allocations need to be changed so that staffing is based on 35 students instead of the current 45 students to maintain functional staffing.
- Complex sites with Preschools should not have a downgrade of leadership entitlement because of reduced student numbers.
- Restricting staffing - more responsibilities for left over staff eg. More yard duties.
- Travel and transport
- Transient students in regional areas makes budgeting difficult
- Loss of a class at a 5 class school, loss of leadership classification and positions, loss of support staff and SSO hours
- Changes to high school minimums based on funding in tiny area schools
- If student enrolment numbers are uncertain, staff considering relocation may miss out on positions if they delay the decision to apply based on the assumption that the year 7s will stay
- Loss of large number of students and staff from the school
- General resistance to change - parents and staff
- Teachers facing relocation/ displacement
- Exciting opportunities for yr seven students moving to high school campuses
- New start for some staff
- Opportunity for close cooperation for primary and high schools.

4. Existing supports for small schools and country staff are outlined below.

#### Small school funding

The existing small school funding structures will provide a safety net for those small schools that will lose students as a result of the move of year 7 to high school.

The funding allows small schools the flexibility to 'top up' in areas that may be impacted by reduced enrolments (such as reduced funding for support staff).

#### Country incentives

Country incentives can apply to staff employed by schools in country locations, to support country schools in attracting staff. What support measures do you propose?

AEU members call on the Government to provide increased and ongoing country incentives to attract and retain staff to country schools. AEU members also seek a guarantee that current funding levels will be maintained during the transition. Accessibility and availability of high quality professional development for teachers, leaders and support staff will also be critical in an effective transition. Members also suggested transition visits for teachers and support staff interested in making the transition, and additional support for leaders.

Other comments include:

- One of the main areas of concern in small rural schools is attracting and retaining qualified and capable staff in leadership positions. Leaders often are required to undertake significant teaching loads in addition to their leadership duties. More time needs to be made available for leadership functions so that they are not over-loaded.
- I think options for upper primary teachers to be able to teach in high schools should be considered. Give them the option to do some further studies over a period of time to brush

up on Middle school teaching requirement. This should be a period of over 5 years.

- We believe that small schools should be guaranteed that they will be no worse off in terms of funding for the duration of the transition.
- I believe that there needs to be a commitment from DfE that no R-6 students will be permitted to bypass their school of right by accessing a departmentally supplied or funded school bus. Additionally, Educational Directors should not be allowed to permit a younger student using departmental buses if one or more of the Principals do not agree to being bypassed. This would allow small schools to plan for their future as they would know what their student numbers are into the future.
- Regional schools need improved access to specialist staff
- Parents fully involved and the process transparent
- Country incentives to include support staff
- Teachers and SSOs should be given the opportunity to attend transition visits to secondary school
- More PR Ts allocated to regions, perhaps this would be a way of offering secure employment to teachers affected by falling enrolments in primary schools
- Review of leadership classification and structure to improve current leadership entitlements
- Increasing small school funding should be a high priority
- Job security and training for support staff
- Right to return to primary school for staff
- Negotiate changes to the recruitment and selection policy with the AEU
- More information provided to department employees about the transition

# ISOLATED CHILDREN'S PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA (SA ICPA) SUBMISSION

10 September 2019

Re: Year 7 to High School Regional Consultation

To Whom It May Concern:

The Isolated Children's Parents' Association of South Australia (SA ICPA) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the South Australian Government review into the Year 7 to High School Regional Consultation.

School of the Air (SOTA) located in Port Augusta South Australia is a unique school. It caters for remote and isolated children from Reception to Year 7, with all the students enrolled executing their schooling via an online platform.

SA ICPA thank you for meeting with us and SOTA via the online platform, Webex on 2/9/19 to discuss Year 7 moving into High School and the possible outcomes. We greatly appreciate that Alison Hackett Rogers and Caroline Crosser Barlow were so receptive and genuinely interested to hear our voices. It was comforting to know that they were going to carry back to government that we are very interested in retaining year 7. It was a valuable session for our communities.

Our greatest concern is that as SOTA is a such a unique learning school with families of students living geographically remote this ultimately leads to the issue of what school do the SOTA children attend if year 7 was in High School. For almost all the students the only viable options available to them are to attend a boarding school in Adelaide or for one of the parents to relocate and set up a second home in the closest town or the city.

Having to send children away to boarding school at any age or having to set up a second home arrangement is socially, emotionally, mentally and financially challenging for any family.

The specific concerns and factors that affect our community and families when having to start boarding school or relocate in year 7 are:

- Are both the child and the family emotionally ready for boarding school?
- The year earlier can mean that some children are age 11 when leaving home and are often living 100's of km away from home. Year 7 is the emergence of a youth's adolescence and is a proven emotionally vulnerable age.
- The family unit changes when one child leaves home at a young age.
- The cost of boarding for an extra year per child, is for most, a hefty cost that many families may not be able to afford.
- SA ICPA figures show that the average cost of boarding school in South Australia is \$41,000 per year.
- While setting up a second home is also an option, it means there is an added cost both financially and emotionally for the family. Often the Mother leaves the community and the home business to set up a second home for schooling purposes.
- SA ICPA recognises that Open Access College (OAC) is an option for year 7 students however this uproots the child's friendship group, face to face events and school community with SOTA. The teaching scaffolding and student cohort is dissimilar to SOTA's.

We understand that there is a level of uncertainty from the Government's point of view re: the enrolment numbers dropping rapidly once other schools roll over to the new plan of the middle school inclusion of year 7. We want to reassure you that there will always be families wishing to enrol their children into year 7 as over the years we have seen a steady enrolment of Broken Hill SOTA students to Port Augusta SOTA for year 7. An additional comfort is that SOTA has successfully navigated its way through the implementation of the new year 7 curriculum, which has been proven with the student's high results and achievements.

SA ICPA would like to see SOTA become exempt from this rule of Year 7 moving into High School in SA.

We hope that the reasons outlined above allow you to see how earnestly the ICPA wishes that SOTA retains year 7 for now and indefinitely.

Kind Regards

Comments and discussion points from Year 7 to High School meeting: 02/09/19

"The average cost of boarding is \$41K, add that up per child for an extra year, it becomes costly."

"Drought is gripping our state and this is an emotional topic as families can't afford boarding fees so an extra year is not an option."

"My child will still only be 11 when she starts year 7, I know that I can continue home education with Open Access but I don't want to "change schools" for one year and I want to still be involved in the face to face events that SOTA have with the kids she has done all of her primary schooling with and have the support of the itinerants and the SOTA community. It also affects students in year 7 with younger siblings all "home schooled" but having to attend different face to face events as they are at "different schools". I would just really love to chance to continue with Port Augusta School of the Air for year 7."

"Some children will be only age 11 when having to go away at the end of year 6."

"Many children aren't ready to go away then. Leave this option to families not our government."

"Many Broken Hill SOTA (NSW) children have completed yr 7 at Port Augusta SOTA as they didn't have yr 7 at their own school."

"Govt will need to look at the State Education Allowance (SEA) and Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) allowance if parents have to afford an extra year of boarding or setting up a second home."

"Not wanting to do Open Access College (OAC) for just one year (yr 7) as it's like changing a school, will miss the SOTA community and activities, camps etc for that year. This means children will be changing friendship groups and community 3 times instead of only the twice."

"Children aren't emotionally ready in yr 7 so gives them an extra year to grow up."

"Keeping the family unit together for an extra year as some families choose to set up a 2nd home. This means that the mother (generally) moves to a town with a high school so that the child can do their secondary schooling."

"Very important that Yr 7s still are eligible for Itinerant teacher visits."

"Some children are even younger in Yr 7 (our child will still be 10 at the start of that year)

DECD needs to consider more support for SOTA supervisors to prepare children for high school."

"I have 4 children in SOTA next year, with it being my daughters last year in primary school. No boarding has been decided so I am thankful I have next year to think on it. If year 7 goes into high school when originally planned, I will be making the decision to keep my children in OAC for that final year as my boys will all be too young to leave home and I couldn't emotionally handle them leaving at the end of year 6/start of year 7. This is ok for rural schools where their children still come

home each night but for us, we say goodbye to that at around 11 years of age, if they were to leave in year 7, and some are even younger than that. It's emotionally and mentally too young for anyone to be sent away from their parents."

"Also, the state of this drought is financially extremely hard for family pastoral companies and the extra burden of trying to afford an extra year of boarding school is a HUGE stress on families. I've heard of families pulling their children out of school simply because they can't afford to keep them there anymore."

"SOTA in SA is a very unique school, especially with it being the only one of its kind in the state. I think we should be exempt from this new move permanently in order to help our children mature for an extra year before they 'leave home'."

"I would like to see the exemption be permanent for the SOTA community. Leaving for boarding school at 11 years of age is too early. When your child leaves for boarding school your family unit changes and they seem to grow up without you, so to keep them for year 7 is important for the whole family."

"My child at age 11 is too young to go to boarding school, I understand that I can stay with Marden (OAC) but I would like to stay at SOTA for that last year."

"Financially and emotionally it would benefit my family if year 7 could stay with SOTA for the forthcoming years. We live in extraordinary circumstances."

"Would like to acknowledge that even though SOTA is a campus of OAC the students that are enrolled in SOTA are purely for distance reasons."

# SA STATE SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION (SASSAOA) SUBMISSION

Notes from discussion with SA State Schools Administrative Officers Association (SASSAOA)

9 July 2019

Approximately 10 SASSAOA committee members, a number from country schools, met with Year 7 to High School team on 9 July 2019 to discuss the proposal to provide a 3 year transition period for some country schools.

There was general consensus that it would be sensible for the whole system to move together.

Reasons for this perspective included:

- Benefits for students in transitioning with their peers
- Funding complexities associated with the proposal (such as late enrolment changes)
- Complexities with administering small numbers of Year 7s.

SASSAOA identified the following issues for regional areas:

- Consideration needed for special needs students and bus travel
- Pathways for SSOs who would lose hours as a result of reduced student numbers - what are their options?
- How will reduced SSO hours affect the school community?
- Support for SSOs moving from a small school setting.

## OUTBACK PARENT'S & FRIENDS ASSOCIATION (OFPA) SUBMISSION

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you on behalf of our school community in relation to the YourSAy consultation for the year 7 transition. At our Port Augusta School of the Air (SOTA) Outback Parents & Friends Association (OPFA) meeting held on Wednesday, 6th September 2019, much discussion was had concerning the proposal of the Department of Education's decision of Year 7 student transition becoming part of high school by 2022.

School of the Air at Port Augusta is a unique school, predominantly because it is the only one of its kind in South Australia. Almost all our students live in very remote and isolated areas throughout South Australia. Secondary education options for our families are very limited, and for the majority, sending our kids away to boarding school is the only option. This is a hard transition for families in the best of times, let alone the thought of kids leaving home a year younger.

When this transition comes into effect, our SOTA families will have to face sending their children away to school at the beginning of Year 7, with some children being barely 11 years old. This is a heart-wrenching choice to be facing and is only amplified by the drought the state is experiencing at the present time, financially putting a larger burden onto families. Preparing their children in year 6 to the idea of moving 100's of kilometres away from family will place extreme pressure on families.

We understand that we have the choice of keeping them going through Open Access College, our Adelaide based campus, for Year 7 but if students peers go away to boarding school in year 6, they will feel isolated and distressed, potentially detrimentally effecting their final year of primary school.

A large percentage of our families on School of the Air don't live 'within 20km of their nearest school' so it would seem suitable that our School of the Air students would be eligible to qualify for this selection process.

We would also ask that, because we are a very unique community, that the process of Year 7 transition, be eliminated altogether from our school, so that our students have the opportunity to stay on School of the Air for Year 7 and do no need to leave home at such a young age.

We would like to request that careful consideration be given to our School of the Air students and community and that we be included and carefully considered in this important process of consultation.

Thank you for your time.

Yours Sincerely,

**APPENDIX -**

**6**

**SCHEDULE  
OF  
REGIONAL  
FORUMS**



## Year 7 to High School - Regional consultation

*All sessions commence at 4pm unless otherwise indicated*

Monday 29 July	Murray Bridge
Tuesday 30 July	Berri
Wednesday 31 July	Waikerie
Monday 5 August	Kongorong
Tuesday 6 August	Nangwarry
Tuesday 6 August	Beachport (7.30pm)
Thursday 8 August	Minlaton
Friday 9 August	Bute – cancelled due to lack of demand
Monday 12 August	Keyneton
Wednesday 14 August	Bordertown
Thursday 15 August	Padthaway
Monday 19 August	Port Neill
Tuesday 20 August	Wangary
Wednesday 21 August	Gawler – cancelled due to lack of demand
Thursday 22 August	Kapunda
Monday 26 August	Wilmington
Thursday 29 August	Lameroo
Tuesday 3 September	Rapid Bay (6.15pm)
Wednesday 4 September	Riverton
Thursday 5 September	Clare
Additional sessions were provided at request of leadership / governing councils at Goolwa PS, Glencoe Central PS, Peterborough PS and Wallaroo PS.	

**APPENDIX -**

**7**

**RESPONSES  
TO KEY  
QUESTIONS**



# RESPONSES TO KEY QUESTIONS

## Beachport forum 6/08/2019

<p><b>Is 20 kilometres the appropriate distance to consider?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't just consider distance from school where students live</li> <li>• Lots of country kids travel long distances anyway.</li> <li>• Possibly depending on teacher ratios of classes. And friends going and how my child feels</li> </ul>
<p><b>Should a similar choice be offered in South Australia, is a 3 year period the appropriate length of time?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definitely at least a one year period.</li> <li>• Only in remote areas ie similar to WA wheatbelt.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What are the challenges or opportunities you anticipate in the introduction of Year 7 to high school in the regional setting?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help the kids safe/learning create nurturing age appropriate areas!</li> <li>• Help kids transition in a nurturing environment</li> <li>• nurturing new enrolments and creating a safe/open learning environment</li> </ul>
<p><b>What support measures do you propose?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Magic# for small school funding and non capital works funding</li> <li>• \$\$ for the extension of the Yr 7 move could be going towards transition program and improve school funding</li> <li>• Adjusting the funding model to adjust for changed enrolment no.s in PS and other "magic no.s" for buses etc</li> <li>• change in the numbers to ensure 2-3 classes in small country primary schools to maintain viability</li> <li>• Please adjust 'magic number' funding for 3 classes to 38 from 45.</li> <li>• Is the 'safety net' a one off or ongoing? Needs ongoing commitment.</li> <li>• Instead of spending money on 'possible' transition periods and consultations, spend money on actual transition programs etc</li> <li>• Will the 'magic number' be reduced to reflect fewer students in PS settings and schools wanting to meet their needs with class composition</li> <li>• Numbers would mean we drop a classroom if magic number doesn't change. Even though slightly less numbers in each class it is massive levels of students difference eg Yr 6 and Yr 3</li> <li>• Magic Number ?</li> <li>• Reduce the magic number in PS</li> </ul>
<p><b>Given the option, would you keep your year 7 child in the primary school setting? What factors are important to you in making this decision?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The factor if I send my kid to high school, would be: Who is the teacher?</li> <li>• No. Peer group maintenance is needed for social support network</li> <li>• No. I believe both socially/emotionally and academically that they are ready to have new experiences</li> <li>• Possibly depending on teacher ratios of classes. And friends going and how my child feels</li> <li>• No. being behind when other students have been in high school longer</li> <li>• Depends on who else is moving forward or staying "teacher"</li> <li>• No.</li> <li>• Possibly. Main decision will be on the teacher in the class (either at PS or HS).How my child is feeling about the transition</li> <li>• Would depend on how many kids moving 'friendships' important</li> </ul>

**Berri forum  
30/07/2019**

Is 20 kilometres the appropriate distance to consider?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20km/15min travel time is nothing for most country people!</li> <li>• Distance is not an issue for country people.</li> </ul>
Should a similar choice be offered in South Australia, is a 3 year period the appropriate length of time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No</li> <li>• No. Sometimes offering 'too many' choices simply creates complications, set a date and stick with it</li> <li>• No. I think this creates too much grey area and is problematic in and of itself, for all included.</li> <li>• No - use the band aid effect - quickly and all at once!</li> </ul>
What are the challenges or opportunities you anticipate in the introduction of Year 7 to high school in the regional setting?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wellbeing support may need to increase</li> <li>• Leaderships groups for students will change and we may lose some important peer guidance for our....</li> <li>• Potential to heavily impact the future of pre-existing teachers. Could prove to be negative or positive)</li> </ul>
What support measures do you propose?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What happens to staff when numbers decline - less class teachers?</li> <li>• There is a 'magic number ' of funding that supports schools - in particular small schools - does this need to change to reflect a reduction, and ongoing reduction in student numbers. This number is 23.</li> </ul>
Given the option, would you keep your year 7 child in the primary school setting? What factors are important to you in making this decision?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. Connectivity to peers. Transition process will be stranger for 7 to 8 beyond 2022</li> <li>• No. I think this disrupts the natural progression amongst their peers and friendship groups.</li> <li>• I would not keep my yr 7 child at primary school unless ALL their age/yr group were staying. Splitting classes may have a negative impact on their development and create division once everyone ends up in HS</li> </ul>

	Blanchetown Primary School (via questionnaire)	Bordertown forum 14/08/2019	Cadell Primary School (via questionnaire)
Is 20 kilometres the appropriate distance to consider?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possibly 50kms</li> <li>Go a larger distance. Should be more for ones who go to boarding school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30km will be more appropriate</li> </ul>
Should a similar choice be offered in South Australia, is a 3 year period the appropriate length of time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No, just do it.</li> </ul>	
What are the challenges or opportunities you anticipate in the introduction of Year 7 to high school in the regional setting?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of no.s (students), staffing cuts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dealing with the change</li> <li>Worried that my Yr5 boy is not ready, emotionally for a high school setting. Seems like a much safer setting for a 12 year old in PS - finding out who they are etc - emotions decisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enormous opportunities, earlier introduction to HS environment, quicker stimulation, better adaptation, better acclimatization, introduction to more advanced technologies and better facilities for study etc</li> </ul>
What support measures do you propose?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Magic# for small school funding and non capital works funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give top up money to help with transition</li> <li>Support for primary schools important</li> <li>Will this start early to compensate for schools saving due to being worried?</li> </ul>	
Given the option, would you keep your year 7 child in the primary school setting? What factors are important to you in making this decision?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at this stage, if it means more numbers and staff funding at our smal school, then yes, I have 2 younger children that will still be in primary school and I'd like them to have had the same rate of Education as the older 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No</li> <li>No. Need to go with change</li> <li>Yes, for my boy (currently Yr 5) No, for my girl (currently Yr 3)All kids are different I guess. I think the kids will need extra emotional support during Year 7 at high school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 7 students belong to high school</li> </ul>

Clare forum  
5/09/2019

Kapunda forum  
22/08/2019

<p>Is 20 kilometres the appropriate distance to consider?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20km seems close in our setting - just down road</li> </ul>
<p>Should a similar choice be offered in South Australia, is a 3 year period the appropriate length of time?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 years is great. A minimum of 2 is required though</li> <li>Seems like significant investment when may have minimal uptake for special needs may</li> </ul>
<p>What are the challenges or opportunities you anticipate in the introduction of Year 7 to high school in the regional setting?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>concerned about the leadership opportunities that will be available in the final year of primary school, given the double cohort of yr 6 &amp; 7's. And also the transition to high school for such a large group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If given the choice, many students may leave the primary school only potentially leaving the primary school with a few students</li> <li>Make sure funding is there as regionals can miss out</li> </ul>
<p>What support measures do you propose?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extra funding for more support to yr 6 teachers and yr 7 HS home group/teachers etc to help with transition</li> </ul>
<p>Given the option, would you keep your year 7 child in the primary school setting? What factors are important to you in making this decision?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. I think it would be disadvantageous to have such a small cohort of students doing Year 7 at the primary school when the majority are at high school and able to access better science/art/music/etc facilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No, not for my children - social group, opportunities</li> <li>No. Important to move forward and progress students</li> <li>For any middle child YES! Although I'd assess closer to date the option is very reassuring especially for those with additional needs</li> <li>No - singled out</li> <li>No. Investment in yr 7 high school will be great. Miss out otherwise.</li> <li>I don't know! Probably not.</li> </ul>

Keyneton forum  
12/08/2019

Kongorong forum  
5/08/2019

<p>Is 20 kilometres the appropriate distance to consider?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This should be flexible. 20km is different in different areas</li> <li>• This depends greatly on location of schools. Should be flexible</li> <li>• Who do you contact to negotiate if this IS flexible?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> </ul>
<p>Should a similar choice be offered in South Australia, is a 3 year period the appropriate length of time?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definitely and longer if necessary. Could be a permanent option</li> <li>• So after 2022 parents still have 3 years to choose. How will school be supported?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why delay if it's going to happen</li> </ul>
<p>What are the challenges or opportunities you anticipate in the introduction of Year 7 to high school in the regional setting?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Losing staff - SSO's. School staffing should be maintained</li> <li>• Principal work load. Having no team &amp; having to teach .5 - nervous breakdown</li> <li>• Uncertainty of small schools staffing re class structure</li> <li>• Can SSO currently working with child with disability, follow the child in Year 7 to high school IF it's year 7 they have to go to HS in (hope not)</li> <li>• The insecurity of year 7 numbers for the 3 years transitional period.</li> <li>• Principal/Teacher work load- smaller numbers but higher work eg. Duties curriculum and subjects extra eg. Camps SAPSASA etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact greatly on our school over 45. and our programs</li> </ul>
<p>What support measures do you propose?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower the 'magic no' for funding for small schools</li> <li>• Fund all small schools for a minimum of 2 classes no matter the number</li> <li>• What to you consider country locations? Is there a km radius or department classification Funding follows child into HS via school. Can the funding go with child not school to give parents choice.</li> <li>• To maintain small schools which are very important to local communities they need to maintain at least 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is 45 flexible?</li> <li>• Numbers for classes need to change to reflect R-6 not R-7</li> <li>• What happens to future small schools</li> </ul>
<p>Given the option, would you keep your year 7 child in the primary school setting? What factors are important to you in making this decision?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs of my child.- maturity- learning needs</li> <li>• If my child is well supported in her transition I would not keep her at primary school. Bus transport with suitable stop is important to me.</li> <li>• Gom students who make their decision</li> <li>• Special needs options at HSSupervised bus Bus driver student ratio depending on the higher range of age</li> <li>• No - non disabled children prefer to start year 7 at high school</li> <li>• Yes - child with disability needs community/social environment to thrive. Primary school gives that</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not sure how to answer...split in my thought process now. Want them to stay but really why?</li> </ul>

	Lameroo forum 29/08/2019	Minlaton forum 8/08/2019	Murray Bridge forum 29/07/2019
Is 20 kilometres the appropriate distance to consider?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools that have lower numbers still have reasonable bus runs in country areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes</li> <li>Need to consider the children travelling further by bus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes</li> <li>Yes</li> <li>Sounds like it is the best line in the sand!</li> <li>Yes</li> <li>Not sure!</li> <li>Unsure, feel like this is very specific to each high school and area. I think it's fine for this particular area.</li> </ul>
Should a similar choice be offered in South Australia, is a 3 year period the appropriate length of time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The social and economical fall outs in small towns needs more discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes 3 years seems fair</li> <li>Yes at least 3 year period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No - no transition</li> <li>No! Need to just do it!</li> <li>No. Too much choice and ambiguity.</li> <li>No - let's all do it together.</li> <li>No.</li> <li>No.</li> </ul>
What are the challenges or opportunities you anticipate in the introduction of Year 7 to high school in the regional setting?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staffing - loss of funding curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents' anxiety about the change - really important to get the transition to high school running really well.</li> <li>Pedagogy, transition, middle school concept - great opportunity</li> <li>Transition planning: staffing / students / pedagogy</li> </ul>
What support measures do you propose?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lowering the 'magic no.' so children left are not in trouble</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small school funding - a critical consideration in the short term due to reduced enrolments / entitlements</li> <li>Critical support! Real thought given to how schools will be supported moving forward</li> <li>Making sure buildings facilities are ready to use -&gt; additional funding for additional students</li> <li>Transition period of flexible funding.</li> <li>Both the above.</li> </ul>
Given the option, would you keep your year 7 child in the primary school setting? What factors are important to you in making this decision?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>yes. Community</li> <li>Age? Are they ready</li> <li>Children with special needs</li> <li>Emotional resilience</li> <li>Not sure - want to make sure they get the right support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No - more opportunities</li> <li>No - better facilities</li> <li>No - Year 7s are so ready for "something else" eg choice subjects</li> <li>No - we are the only state in Aust still doing it</li> <li>No! Kids are ready</li> <li>Depends on the child, but if peers are going, all go!!</li> </ul>

Nangwarry forum  
6/08/2019

Padthaway forum  
15/08/2019

<p>Is 20 kilometres the appropriate distance to consider?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes although younger children do travel for longer in other circumstances</li> <li>• Think 20km is a good distance, as anything over makes too long of a day for young year 7 children</li> <li>• 20kms is fine provided there is enough buses to support them travelling</li> </ul>	
<p>Should a similar choice be offered in South Australia, is a 3 year period the appropriate length of time?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think it gets hard for schools re staffing etc as numbers uncertain. Could get a new student from Penola for only one year.</li> <li>• No. All students should go at the same time</li> <li>• The real investment should be in creating the right conditions in High Schools that - a) support the well-being of younger adolescentsb) deliver appropriate learning for middle years</li> <li>• No, 1 intake doesn't spread funding so thin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No (x5 times)</li> </ul>
<p>What are the challenges or opportunities you anticipate in the introduction of Year 7 to high school in the regional setting?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How capture data for few students who stay in year 7.</li> <li>• No funding for pre-schools makes for whole year levels to be extinct in small schools, has a roll on effect</li> <li>• Teachers both HS and PS moving to HS having sound pedagogical and developmental knowledge of 11 &amp; 12 year olds</li> <li>• Reduced numbers in small school therefore reducing amount of classes. 3 year transition EXTREMELY difficult to budget and staff for.</li> <li>• 11 year olds wont have emotional or social intelligence to have successful transition. If keep back year 7 PS loses friendship with group of mates</li> <li>• Primary school reduced classes. Need to staff at 3 classes and maintain staff and support.</li> <li>• Challenge &amp; Opportunity - The skills of HS teachers to cater appropriately for young adolescents development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings NOT built</li> <li>• Bus</li> <li>• Infrastructure building not built on time</li> <li>• In order to ensure numbers in small schools consider revising bus routes to collect more kids reduce red tape</li> </ul>
<p>What support measures do you propose?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SE having a bigger country incentive. It is minimal and yet we can't attract teachers</li> <li>• What is an appropriate incentive? Does more money attract the right people?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider changes to current bus route to attract new families to small schools</li> <li>• Small schools need financial assistance for sustainability</li> </ul>
<p>Given the option, would you keep your year 7 child in the primary school setting? What factors are important to you in making this decision?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depends on child negatives either way. Want them to stay with friend group but they need to be ready.</li> <li>• No. - Continuity of learning. - Being behind their peers - knowledge or learning experiences- Social issues</li> <li>• Depending on social/emotional development and their peer group</li> <li>• would let me child go to HS in Yr 7 as I did as a child. Also, it's not for quite a few years for my children so I think the kinks would be ironed out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No (x7 times)</li> </ul>

<p>Is 20 kilometres the appropriate distance to consider?</p>	
<p>Should a similar choice be offered in South Australia, is a 3 year period the appropriate length of time?</p>	
<p>What are the challenges or opportunities you anticipate in the introduction of Year 7 to high school in the regional setting?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity year 7 students having greater social network and specialist teaching</li> <li>• learning from research/prior experience re best way to support</li> <li>• Opportunity for Yr 7's to mix with older kids more mature</li> <li>• Still concerned about primary school get less funding due to less enrolments</li> <li>• Possibly losing year 6 students from primary as parents may see it as a transition period before high school</li> <li>• Time spent travelling on buses</li> </ul>
<p>What support measures do you propose?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater fraction of time for teachers to teach to attract teachers to small schools</li> <li>• More funding to support multi-year level teaching</li> <li>• more funding</li> <li>• Department bus to facilitate primary kids attending their nearest school - keep numbers of Yr 7's as much</li> <li>• Band B leader no. Enterprise top up.</li> </ul>
<p>Given the option, would you keep your year 7 child in the primary school setting? What factors are important to you in making this decision?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It would depend on individual needs of my child</li> <li>• Yes I would keep in Yr 7 due to well being and learning issues</li> <li>• I would like my children to move to high school in Yr 7. However the reputation and culture at my local area school is a big concern. Bullying, based on weak v strong football/netball club membership is a major issue and not being addressed. That would need to change. if not the longer my children are not exposed to that the better</li> </ul>

<p><b>Is 20 kilometres the appropriate distance to consider?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is it not open to all schools? Parent/community choice</li> <li>• Not sure distance should be an issue - it's all Yr 7s to me</li> <li>• Why not offer to all schools? I believe that 20 kilometres is an appropriate distance to consider because, in my experience, this distance does translate reasonably well to a 15-minute travel time. However, I strongly disagree with the Movement of Year 7 to High School altogether on the basis of the average child's development and well-being rather than an "earlier than expected" increase in travel time itself (although this obviously may still relate to development and well-being). [cf. from questionnaire]</li> </ul>
<p><b>Should a similar choice be offered in South Australia, is a 3 year period the appropriate length of time?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, unlimited length of time to accommodate needs of future families</li> <li>• Yes, more time would be ideal</li> <li>• Yes, I do see the issue with extending this period in larger primary schools but not here</li> <li>• Yes - even more time would be good</li> <li>• Yes, especially schools surrounded by R-12 options. Doesn't matter when they attend.</li> <li>• Yes - children enrolled before the 2018 announcement should have opportunity to complete Yr 7 in PS as they may have chosen different school based on this change I will take whatever "Transition Period" my child is offered on the basis that I disagree with the Movement of Year 7 to High School altogether. Whether or not a child is moved to High School or not in Year 7 has been a decision for parents at my child's Primary School for some time. This situation seems to have accommodated individual children and their families well. I believe very strongly that the decision, Whether or Not a Child Should be Moved to High School for Year 7, should be a decision for parents and/or caregivers in consultation with the individual Child and his or her educators. [comment via questionnaire]</li> </ul>
<p><b>What are the challenges or opportunities you anticipate in the introduction of Year 7 to high school in the regional setting?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big loss of numbers. Change in dynamic playground. Loss of classroom 3-2. Loss of teacher SSO etc</li> <li>• Students not having a clear understanding as to when they finish PS</li> <li>• Parents/schools need to know when kids will 'graduate' Year 7 from time of enrolment</li> <li>• If given the option to leave in year 7 then class sizes might change regularly.</li> <li>• The biggest challenge which I anticipate in the event of the Introduction of Year 7 to High School in the Regional Setting is my child's Primary School losing a key element (the Year 7 Upper Primary – the Year 7 "Uppers") from its School Culture. From Reception the Children naturally grow to expect that they will have their own "Year 7 Graduation Dinner" (an annual event which has become an institution at my child's Primary School) one day. [comment via questionnaire]</li> </ul>
<p><b>What support measures do you propose?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More SSO wellbeing transition work with kids</li> <li>• As much as possible - Yr 7 moving up would have a big % effect on RBPS (13 from 50)</li> <li>• More \$\$ for classroom, teacher support.</li> <li>• More SSO time for wellbeing for 5 &amp; 6's</li> <li>• Years 5 &amp; 6 more SSO for lead up transition</li> <li>• I would like the above measures defined first. "Small School Funding" – What do you mean by "top up"? I have developed friendships with my child's educators over the last 5 years of my child's School life and feel that his educators have been badly left out of this process (Movement of Year 7 to High School). Any re-education they require to be resilient to the Movement of Year 7 should be provided to them, paid for by the South Australian State Education Department and at the convenience of these educators and also the Students at the School (not a "Student Free Day" at the School). [comment via questionnaire]</li> </ul>

<p>Given the option, would you keep your year 7 child in the primary school setting? What factors are important to you in making this decision?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are not mature enough</li> <li>• Yes, Yr 7 in this school creates amazing children who play, lead, grow in confidence and develop positive character traits that are nurtured in this unique environment opportunity</li> <li>• Child dependent each is independent and individual</li> <li>• Yes! Yr 7 builds Leadership and confidence. Play!</li> <li>• In this setting I would keep them in PS others I would consider the move based on culture of PS</li> <li>• yes - Give opportunity to be leaders in school</li> <li>• Yes, family, community, sense of belonging</li> <li>• Yes - see no need to cut childhood &amp; play short</li> <li>• Yes, students don't need added pressure to grow up faster - leadership skills</li> <li>• I absolutely believe passionately in keeping my child, when he reaches Year 7, in the Primary School setting (my child, as of 2019, is in Grade 4). In the event that he "stays on track" the year that he is in Year 7 will be the year that he turns 13 years of age. I think most parents, educators and society at large would accept this point in a child's life as their "coming of age". I certainly do. However, I believe, in the strongest of terms, that the interests of my child will be best served when he meets this time in his life in a safe, secure and familiar environment. Then let him be ready for High School! Childhood is a precious, precious time in a person's life. A time to play. A time to learn. A time to just "be". He has the rest of his life to be an adult with all the pressures and responsibilities it brings with it. I do not want to rush him. Why do you? [comment via questionnaire]</li> </ul>
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Riverton forum  
4/09/2019

<p>Given the option, would you keep your year 7 child in the primary school setting? What factors are important to you in making this decision?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the whole group of students were moving on to high school I would not keep my year 7 in PS, but would want to know they would be emotionally supported going into HS that little bit younger</li> </ul>
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	Robe Primary School (via questionnaire)	Waikerie forum 31/07/2019	Wangary forum 20/08/2019
Is 20 kilometres the appropriate distance to consider?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a random number in the country as rural families can choose their school and may be living 50kms away for that school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes but with a choice for remote rural schools to keep Yr 7</li> </ul>
Should a similar choice be offered in South Australia, is a 3 year period the appropriate length of time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes</li> <li>2 years would be fine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 years too long</li> <li>Too long. 1 year</li> <li>Too long. 1 year is sufficient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No - make it happen</li> <li>Just do it</li> <li>No offer to let remote schools permanently keep it.</li> </ul>
What are the challenges or opportunities you anticipate in the introduction of Year 7 to high school in the regional setting?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I would worry about losing a whole grade 7 class would greatly impact our little school. I would hate for us to lose our primary school because of this.</li> <li>Opportunity of a school bus to high school. Challenge of providing adequate orientation to the students to the new high school.</li> <li>No challenges</li> <li>No challenges. In the majority of other states and territories Year 7-10 is High School already</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staffing teaching/SSO curriculum pedagogy</li> <li>Many opportunities! - Aust Curriculum Specialised subjects Learning opportunities Wellbeing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding for small schools. Families leaving community</li> <li>Families leaving community</li> <li>Funding small schools - travel on bus - families leaving small communities because yr 7 shifted</li> </ul>
What support measures do you propose?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide adequate transition with orientation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decreased enrolments in Primary Schools can have a dramatic effect of reduced funding for all students</li> <li>Extra maintained recurrent funding for a transition period of 2-3 years to keep school systems running smoothly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change country incentives perm. After 2 years with \$ increase but have to stay 5 yrs more</li> <li>More funding so less year levels in each class</li> <li>small schools - smaller class sizes allowed so less year levels in one class</li> </ul>
Given the option, would you keep your year 7 child in the primary school setting? What factors are important to you in making this decision?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes I would like to keep my child in primary school for longer. My Child is one of the youngest in the class. I feel that I would rather her stay in a smaller school environment for as long as possible. Also sending them on a 30 min bus trip with little supervision with older children concerns me.</li> <li>No my child would to go high school in year 7 but, if the majority of class mates remain at the primary school I would consider holding him there</li> <li>No. Year 7 is suitable for High School.</li> <li>No. High School is suitable for Year 7 students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No, if everyone is going I would want her to go.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maturity of student when reaching year 7. Depending on age of other children in school</li> <li>No facilities</li> <li>No but time travelling on bus to high school is a thought</li> <li>No for social opportunities and head start to settling in.</li> <li>No due to back of system support in primary schools for learning difficulties</li> </ul>

<p>Is 20 kilometres the appropriate distance to consider?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes (x5 times)</li> <li>• Why my son will be living with his dad</li> </ul>
<p>Should a similar choice be offered in South Australia, is a 3 year period the appropriate length of time?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• Yes, good idea</li> <li>• Have parents chose every year</li> <li>• Yes good idea</li> <li>• yes, I think this is a good idea</li> </ul>
<p>What are the challenges or opportunities you anticipate in the introduction of Year 7 to high school in the regional setting?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right teacher</li> <li>• Going from 3 classes to 2 in primary school</li> <li>• Going back to 2 classes instead of 3</li> <li>• Staffing and budget planning uncertainty</li> <li>• My child leaving home to live with his dad so young</li> <li>• Support for teachers to teach bigger composite classes</li> </ul>
<p>What support measures do you propose?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change the step model of funding to a per child model. Also provide support to teachers who do not wish to transition</li> <li>• Option to keep funding or provide supp funding to help keep 3 classes</li> <li>• The choice to choose if they go or not. 3 classes - very important</li> <li>• Would be good to provide funding to keep 3 classes</li> <li>• Top up small schools - change the small schools base there should not be \$81,000 if you have 1 less kid</li> <li>• Make it so every parent has a choice to stay in primary school</li> </ul>
<p>Given the option, would you keep your year 7 child in the primary school setting? What factors are important to you in making this decision?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, the step model funding encourages higher PS numbers. Bus travel time concerns, maturity.</li> <li>• Yes. Socially may not be ready. Academically may not be any benefit</li> <li>• Yes, smaller schools - greater support</li> <li>• Yes, would keep in Yr 7 for child one who I think wouldn't be ready. Child 2 - not sure, but I like the idea of having the choice</li> <li>• YES!! Having him in a small class as long as possible.</li> <li>• Yes small schools nurture children better</li> <li>• No - I think child #1 and #2 will be academically ready to transition. Yes - #3 would benefit more from small school support</li> <li>• Child 1 - I'd keep at primary school because he is behind and struggles socially. Child 2 - depends on where her friends go</li> <li>• Yes - better support and teacher attention in a small school</li> </ul>



**APPENDIX -**

**8**

**FEEDBACK  
RECEIVED  
ON DRAFT  
REPORT**



# INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS

**From:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sent:** Thursday, 17 October 2019 9:35 AM

**To:** Education:Year 7 to HS

**Subject:** RE: DRAFT report - Year 7 to High School Regional Consultation [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

**Importance:** High

Dear Alison and Caroline,

Thank you for all of your hard work.

However, having read the Attachments I do not feel that my input has been accurately reflected.

In fact, the "DRAFT Regional Consultation Report" does not appear to even reflect its own Appendices. The opening paragraph in the Report reflects Consultation Participants being positive about the Change of Year 7 to High School whereas all of the Appendices reflect a negative view of the Change. I note that the Change of Year 7 to High School seems to be a "foregone conclusion" and that "the Consultation" is really only in regard to whether Primary Schools with their High Schools and Area Schools more than 20 kms away may have a "3 Year Transition Period". I attended the Consultation at the Rapid Bay Primary School. The Discussion at that Consultation was very much focused on the merit of the Change of Year 7 to High School at all. I, in particular, requested data as to the merit of this unilateral, far-reaching and high impacting change in South Australian State Educational policy. From Discussion at the Consultation I understand that Western Australia and Queensland changed their Year 7 to High School 3 years ago and the State of Victoria has always had its Year 7 in High School. On that basis, there should be 3 years of data on the merits of the "Change of Year 7 to High School" from Western Australia and Queensland and 231 years of data (give or take a few years) from Victoria. By "merits" I mean more than just how impacted children and their families coped with an "inevitable" change. Did grades

improve in Western Australia and Queensland following the Change? Has morale amongst Year 7s in Victoria always been significantly higher than their peers throughout the rest of Australia? What methodology was used to measure such subject matter? I have yet to see any such information.

As a Parent, the Change of Year 7 to High School seems to be a quantum shift in Childhood Education and as such I formally request that the Case Be Put that the Change is indeed in the Best Interests of Each Individual Child. In my opinion the Change appears to be rather a bureaucratic, knee-jerk reaction to concerns regarding inter-State compliance throughout the Federation of Australia in relation to childhood education. Admittedly I am not a childhood education professional. However, it still seems to me that there must be better ways to address differences in education throughout Australia.

I would like to take this opportunity to say that I most definitely want my 10 year old son's school (Rapid Bay Primary School) to have the 3 Year Transition Period. However, my reasoning behind this is because I do not agree with the Change of Year 7 to High School at all and view the process by which the change is being implemented as draconian and baseless in data. At the very least, such an important decision, at a pivotal time in any child's education and life, should be left with the child's parents and or caregivers, the child's educators and the child him or herself. And each case to be taken on its individual merits. Issues as to distance, travel times and cost being brought forward a year are not really the point (although significant). I would also like to take this opportunity to say that, I most definitely

admire Parents of School of the Air Children (and the children themselves) and that some of these parents are willing to completely relocate with their child when the child must move to attend High School. However, for it to be inferred (and that's what I think has been done) that this should be a "matter of course" is extraordinary to say the least.

And what was said at the Rapid Bay Primary School's Consultation was in regard to the importance of Play in any child's development. And I would like to take this opportunity to add that a Child's Right to Play is enshrined in International Human Rights Law and how dare the South Australian State Education Department impede on such a Basic Human Right of My Child!!!

I look forward to further correspondence in relation to the above.

Yours Sincerely,

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# RAPID BAY PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING COUNCIL SUBMISSION (RECEIVED 21/10/19)

Submission regarding South Australian State Government Education Department moving Year 7 to High School And Offer of Transition Period (2022 to 2024) for Schools > 20 kms from nearest Area or High School

The Rapid Bay Primary School Governing Council believes that Year 7 should not be moved to High School because we feel that this irreversibly compromises a child's last chance to play. The Governing Council would certainly accept the offer of the "3 Year Transition Period" (2022 to 2024) outlined to us at our Consultation Session in this regard. However, it should be noted that the Governing Council welcomes the opportunity of the 3 Year Transition Period largely because we disagree with the concept of moving Year 7 to High School at all rather than any hardships the Movement may add to transportation times.

Available Members of the Rapid Bay Primary School Governing Council and Staff attended the Consultation Session offered to us. The general consensus is that this Session was excellent. However, the general consensus is also that Year 7 should not be moved to High School at all (even though this appears to have been decided upon). Further, the Governing Council believes that our Primary School should be granted the 3 Year Transition Period (2022 to 2024) on the basis that we disagree with moving Year 7 to High School. Our reasoning was most succinctly put forward by one parent's heart-felt plea at the Consultation – and that was, for the South Australian State Government to not take away one of our children's last important opportunities to just play.

The Presenters at the Consultation Session informed Attendees that Year 7 is being moved to High School in order for the teaching of Year 7 to be in accordance with the Australian Curriculum especially in regard to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (the "STEM" subjects). This requirement would be far better met with new facilities and/or equipment at the existing Rapid Bay Primary School grounds rather than uprooting the children altogether at a pivotal time in their lives. The "transitioning strategies"

provided in documentation following the Consultation are things which Rapid Bay Primary School already does and it is done in a safe, controlled and nurturing environment. In fact, the issue (Whether or Not Year 7 Should be Put to High School) should be "turned on its head" and we hereby invite those of you with authority in this regard to come and see how we do it!

As you would be aware the State of Victoria has had its Year 7 in High School since Western Education was introduced in that state and Queensland and Western Australia moved their Year 7 to High School in 2015 (putting those children in Year 11 now barring exceptions for any reason). On that basis there should be generations of evidence to support the movement of Year 7 to High School in Victoria and going on 5 years of evidence from Queensland and Western Australia to support the move. The only evidence provided to Attendees at the Consultation was that National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results have settled to a reasonable standard (or words to that effect) in Queensland and Western Australia. Conversely, the NAPLAN results from Rapid Bay Primary School have consistently shown growth. Rapid Bay Primary School would be the first, however, to say that NAPLAN is not everything – that all aspects of the child should be considered. In this way, too, however, Rapid Bay Primary School excels in producing well-rounded, caring and independent learners. This can also be evidenced in regular South Australian State Government Education Department sanctioned surveys of the Rapid Bay Primary School.

The Movement of Year 7 to High School appears to be a "foregone conclusion" despite there being no evidence for its merit or otherwise. The only room for exception seems to be a 3 Year Transition Period for Schools more than 20 kms from its nearest Area or High School (3 year and 20 kms both appearing as rather arbitrary figures in themselves).

The Governing Council absolutely welcomes the opportunity of the 3 Year Transition Period offered. However, we invite you to reconsider the Movement of Year 7 to High School altogether at least in regard to the Rapid Bay Primary School on the basis of how well we are already doing.

At a time when there is so much focus on “well-being” the Movement of Year 7 to High School seems an extraordinary, non-evidenced based risk for no clear nor obvious gain. The South Australian State Government Education Department should look to the Australian Family Law Act and consider its guiding principle in regard to children. That is, anything in relation to children should be considered purely on whether or not it is “in the best interest of the child”. Failing that, perhaps the State Government should look to International Law and the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Right of All Children to Play enshrined within. As you would be aware the Movement of Year 7 to High School in 2022 is due to effect children now in Grade 4 in 2019. These children were the first to be impacted by the “One In-take” Concept introduced in or about 2014/15 with the “31 May Exception” Option. Anecdotally “the jury is already out” as to whether or not that was a success. Does the State Government have evidence in this regard? The Governing Council certainly wishes to receive a report as to the success or otherwise (from the relevant children’s point of view) of the Movement of Year 7 to High School in 2020 at the 3 “Pilot Schools”.

Parents of children at the Rapid Bay Primary School have had the option to enrol their children for Year 7 at Area and High Schools for sometime now. Every child is an individual with sometimes great differences between (especially, dare it be said, between girls and boys) and such a decision (when to “make the move” to High School) is perhaps best left to the child and his or her family (they are the ones who will have to deal with the consequences, good or bad, after all). All

that said, even if children are “bored”, this, in itself, and a safe and constructive solution to that boredom, can be one of life’s great lessons!

An opportunity also seems to have been lost in not consulting more with all educators due to be impacted by Year 7 being moved to High School. Further, long-term vision in the past may have seen co-operation between the State Government, the Australian Curriculum and universities in order to be ready for such a significant shift in the educational landscape.

In Conclusion - Why Fix That Which Is Not Broken? The Rapid Bay Primary School Governing Council hereby implores the South Australian State Education Department to reconsider its decision to move Year 7 to High School or at least to leave the matter as a Parent/Care Giver and Child Decision. Further, we certainly welcome the opportunity of the 3 Year Transition (2022 to 2024) which has been offered to us. Year 7 at Rapid Bay Primary School is a year of gentle introduction to leadership culminating in an annual graduation dinner which has become a very special “rite of passage” tradition for our families. The Rapid Bay Primary School Governing Council hereby invites you to its 2019 Year 7 Graduation Dinner and experience our “point of difference” as our guest.

