

Pinehaven Progressive Association



Submission on the Upper Hutt Network Review Proposed Model

Thursday, 13 November 2003

“People need help to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps – The state education system gave us that help.” – Bruce Murray¹

¹ pg 14 “When Schools Compete”, Edward B. Fiske & Helen F. Ladd.

To the facilitator, Ministry of Education

Submission by the Pinehaven Progressive Association, for the Upper Hutt Network Review

Our Interim Submission, dated September 26th 2003², outlined how the Pinehaven Progressive Association (PPA) participated directly in the earliest stages of the foundation of Pinehaven School. This participation has continued over the past 50 years and represents a considerable investment of resources and commitment by the community and has strongly contributed to the school's success.

Although the PPA is an organisation primarily concerned with the issues that affect Pinehaven, we recognise that the current review is a matter of deep concern to both the Pinehaven and Silverstream communities. Therefore, underlying our submission is a holistic approach, reviewing and celebrating the complementary nature of Pinehaven and Silverstream schools' distinctive educational views.

This submission is in three parts:

Firstly, that both schools should be retained.

Secondly, that both schools could merge into a single school which spans two sites.

Thirdly, that a merged stand-alone school is logistically preferable on the Pinehaven site.

² Appendix 1 – Interim Submission, Pinehaven Progressive Association

Our Position

We base our submission on solid facts that clearly show the Pinehaven and Silverstream schools are *necessary* to both the Pinehaven and Silverstream communities, delivering a more sustainable educational result than any other model currently envisaged. Thus we are firmly convinced that both the Pinehaven and Silverstream schools are essential.

In the section titled "*Pinehaven and Silverstream schools should be retained as separate schools*" we show that:

- The statistics previously presented are incomplete
- The merged school is not "sustainable"
- Educational outcomes will be affected
- The merged school may cause long term disadvantages to minority groups.

If our position is unacceptable for economic, as opposed to educational, reasons, our community would support a school spanning the two existing sites, with a single Board of Trustees and a single Principal assisted by a Deputy Principal on each site.

Refer "*A single school spanning the two sites*".

Lastly, if the consolidation were to go ahead against the clearly expressed wishes of both the Pinehaven and Silverstream communities, then we accept the most logical location for the new school would be the existing Pinehaven School site.

Refer "*A merged school*".

Pinehaven and Silverstream schools should be retained as separate schools

According to our research maintaining two schools in the Pinehaven/Silverstream area:

- Will be **more sustainable**.
- Will offer **better educational outcomes** than one large school.
- Will **better satisfy Maori needs**.
- Will "continue to strengthen the ability of **families and communities** to support educational achievement of learners, and the ability of schools and teachers to build strong, active relationships with families and communities"³.

Sustainability

The Pinehaven Progressive Association can show that keeping Pinehaven School as a separate school is a more sustainable option.

Sustainable schools need to be able to cope with a variety of possible demographic trends. The Ministry of Education (MOE) has presented one possible projection, that there will be a falling roll.

A research project by a team of local scientists suggests that this trend is unlikely to apply to Pinehaven or Silverstream. The project was able to focus on the many driving forces, which impact upon local demographic trends. The details of this research are submitted with this document and will be referred to. A summary of this research is as follows.

Current Roll Trends of Pinehaven School and Silverstream School

Over the last thirty years, Pinehaven School has had a very steady roll. The 2001 census shows a steady number of children available for both schools, and that both have recently experienced population bulges.

Birth Trends in Pinehaven and Silverstream

There has been no decline in the birth trends of Pinehaven or Silverstream/Heretaunga areas. There is a steady increase in the number of births in southern Whitemans Valley. Whitemans Valley is adjacent to Pinehaven and is currently being developed into lifestyle blocks. Pinehaven School is the closest school to this area and already sends a school bus there.

³ Education Priorities May 2003: <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/mallard/priorities>

Pre-school Trends in Pinehaven and Silverstream

Pinehaven Playcentre has an increasing roll, with about 70 children being enrolled there in July 2003. Pinehaven Playcentre is located next to Pinehaven School. Whitemans Valley Playcentre has a steady roll.

All sessions at Silverstream Kindergarten are full and the waiting list has been steady. Heretaunga Kindergarten waiting list has been steadily increasing since October 2000. As a result, Heretaunga Kindergarten has had to increase the number of sessions available. The local daycare centres state that their waiting lists are increasing or steady.

All of these pre-schools feed Pinehaven and Silverstream Schools.

Housing Developments

There are several large housing developments in Southern Upper Hutt: Sylvan Heights, Pinehill Crescent, Riverstone Terraces and Whitemans Valley.

Due to the large size of most sections in Pinehaven, infill housing has begun to take place there.

There has been a 10% increase in the number of rateable rural properties in Upper Hutt since 2000, many of which are located in Whitemans Valley. There has been a 3% increase in the number of residential rateable units in Upper Hutt in this time. Some residential rateable units have up to eleven dwellings on them.

The Rural Mail Delivery Points in Whitemans Valley have increased from 264 in November 1995 to 405 this year. Whitemans Valley is being developed rapidly into small lifestyle blocks. the number of homes in Riverstone Terraces increased from 8 homes 1999 to 123 homes today, with plans for about 800 homes.

Southern Upper Hutt Demographic Research

The research indicates that the demographics being used by the MOE are not applicable to the Pinehaven and Silverstream areas. Indeed, the Minister of Education has recently admitted that the projections being used nationally are wrong⁴. In fact the one large school proposed for the Pinehaven and Silverstream communities may have insufficient capacity to cope with growth.

Changes in Industry in Upper Hutt

Upper Hutt City Council is promoting Upper Hutt as a great place to live. Property Developers are actively promoting Upper Hutt as a great place for new industry due to low rents and the available labour force. The Defence Force plans to expand its site at Trentham.

Changes in Government policy

Changes in Government policy can affect where and how people settle. For example, Gareth Morgan has proposed a welfare model that if accepted by a government, would have a dramatic effect on the number of people living in the Hutt valley⁵.

⁴ <http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/sundaystarttimes/0,2106,2712742a6442,00.html>

⁵ <http://articles.garethmorgan.com/pdf.php?id=874>

General

The effects of unexpected urban growth can place dramatic strains on the schooling infrastructure. A significant increase in population on the Kapiti Coast has put great pressure on both the local school rolls and the urban infrastructure. Waikanae School's roll has increased from 290 to 460 since 1998. Paraparaumu Beach School's has increased from 230 to 680 since 1994. Subdivisions developed in Paraparaumu are similar to those being developed in Upper Hutt. However we are closer to Wellington than the Kapiti Coast, the sections are larger and the houses are more affordable. Our city has a strong infrastructure, a strong family culture and many facilities aimed at families. The land space and the infrastructure is available to cope with development in Upper Hutt.

Upper Hutt now has the lowest average house prices and daycare costs in the Wellington region. Most daycare centres in Upper Hutt are in the Southern part of the Valley. Pinehaven and Silverstream are the closest parts of Upper Hutt to Wellington City. Pinehaven has particular appeal to families, due to large section sizes and the fact that house prices in Pinehaven are lower than in Silverstream.

Due to recent increases in house prices in the Wellington region and financial pressure, many families are choosing to live in an area that has a lower cost of living and better lifestyle.

Educational outcomes

The PPA believes that keeping Pinehaven and Silverstream School separate will offer better educational outcomes

The premise that these reviews will improve educational outcomes must be questioned. At no point in the review process is any measure of educational performance taken into consideration, not even the ERO reviews. It is not possible to determine how the education of children in a given area will be improved if the MOE does not take their current educational needs into account.

Research commissioned by the MOE shows that the larger a primary school, the higher the rate of truancy it is likely to experience⁶.

Evidence shows that consolidation negatively effects educational outcomes⁷, and polarizes communities. Research from overseas shows that small schools offer better educational outcomes⁸. Research shows that in large schools, disadvantaged and minority groups suffer the most⁹. Is this what we really want in New Zealand¹⁰?

Unlikely though it is, even if the number of primary school children does decrease this is a wonderful opportunity to decrease class size rather than the number of schools.

⁶ Attendance and Absence in NZ Schools 2002
<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=8788&indexid=5874&indexparentid=5871>

⁷ Appendix 2 – ERO small school discretionary reviews

⁸ Appendix 3 – Small schools research

⁹ <http://www.challengewv.org/news/Matthew.pdf>

¹⁰ "The gap between rich and poor is widening, and the commitment of the state to quality education for all students is weakening – It's a scandal" - Bruce Murray quoted on page 15, "When Schools Compete", Edward B. Fiske & Helen F. Ladd.

Maori needs

PPA believes that keeping Pinehaven and Silverstream School separate will better cater for the needs of Maori students.

A stated goal of the network review process is to "allow for greater responsiveness to the expressed needs of Maori students".

But Howard Fancy, the Secretary of Education¹¹, notes research by Russell Bishop showing Maori pupils identify a good relationship with their teacher as being the most crucial element in their success as learners. The MOE itself backs this position in a paper titled "Making a Difference in the Classroom"¹².

Research confirms the obvious reality that the desired trusting and caring relationships between pupils and teachers are far easier to build at schools with fewer than 400 pupils.¹³.

Pinehaven family and community involvement

The PPA recognise that family and community support improves the educational achievement of learners,

Pinehaven School is in the relatively unique position of having been an integral part of the community from its conception in 1954 through to present times. There is a longstanding agreement between the community and the school that there are to be no fences adjoining the reserve. This provides the school with unimpeded access to the reserve and playing fields during school hours. In return the community have full access to the school playgrounds after school and at weekends. The school is thus seldom unused and this adds tremendously to its security. The incidence of vandalism is kept low in both the school and the adjacent Playcentre, due to community involvement.

In past years the free access to the reserve has also enabled Pinehaven to host interschool sporting events at the school. This is not possible at many other schools in New Zealand.

The school has always been strongly supported by the greater Pinehaven community and not only by the parents. We have an active group of grandparents, parents, ex-pupils, and interested community members who assist in the Parent-tutor reading programme. Community members help with oral-language programmes and assist special needs students. Volunteers assist with academic extension programmes for gifted and talented. Volunteers join in the folk dancing, swimming, gym and other sporting activities. The entire community is involved in the annual Art and Craft Exhibition held in the school hall and the school gala. The community raised funds, designed and built the school hall when the school did not qualify for MOE funding. The community helped design, build and stock the school library. A Pinehaven family originally made the land for the school available to the MOE.

¹¹ http://www.nzpf.ac.nz/moot_20031.htm

¹² Making a Difference in the Classroom
<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=6135&indexid=5875&indexparentid=5871>

¹³ Appendix 3 – Small schools research

In Pinehaven the parents and the teachers know the majority of the children by name. This means that children are seldom alone. Several informal walking busses operate in the area, with one adult often accompanying children from several families walking to and from school. Unfamiliar adults and vehicles are easily noted adding to the security of children in times of rising violence against children.

Pinehaven School is the furthest from any known fault line in Upper Hutt. The school is well above the flood line of the Hutt River and remedial drainage work was carried out after the floods in 1976 to prevent future surface flooding. The Pinehaven School is an important centre for civil defence in the area. It has the only space available for landing a helicopter in the Silverstream-Pinehaven area.

The school was recently used as a centre for over 80 fire-fighters, their support vehicles and a helicopter with a monsoon bucket to successfully combat a fire on Blue Mountain Road. The school hall was available in case of the emergency continuing through the night for households needing to be evacuated.

Playcentre and After School Care

Pinehaven Playcentre, a member of the NZ Playcentre Federation, was started in 1970 in the community hall. In 1977 a purpose built centre was built to house the growing Playcentre on a portion of the Pinehaven School grounds. The Pinehaven School and Playcentre share a special relationship due to the close proximity and special character of both.

Pinehaven Playcentre currently caters for Early Childhood Education of 76 children and the adult education of 46 families. The Playcentre recently received an outstanding ERO report. Over the past 3 years the roll has grown steadily. Between July 2001 and July 2003 alone, there was a 34% increase in the roll.

The secure tenure of the Playcentre on the Pinehaven site has not been guaranteed in the event of school closures and the creation of one large school. A merged school on the Pinehaven site may require Playcentre land and buildings to cater for the projected increase in numbers of school age children in this area. Playcentre do not have the funds available to relocate and this may lead to the disruption of early childhood education for 77 children, as well as disruption of adult education and after school care. The building was purpose built and a tremendous amount of time and effort went into the planning and construction. The building is on a concrete slab and cannot be shifted. The mature trees surrounding the centre were planted almost 30 years ago and cannot be instantly replaced on a new site.

The ministry is aiming to improve the links between school and early childhood education. Some of the special relationships enjoyed between Playcentre and the Pinehaven School, which may be disrupted in the event of school closures, include:

Regular school visits to the New Entrants class and Year 6 classes. Socialising between school age children and Playcentre children over the fence. Visits from school children to Playcentre. Playcentre attendance and participation in School Concerts. Playcentre use the school facilities for meetings, training courses. Playcentre use the school facilities for faxing and photocopying, and contribution to the running costs of these facilities. The School uses Playcentre facilities for specific learning experiences e.g. properties of materials, caring for others. There is added security for both the school and the Playcentre provided by the after hours use of both facilities for education and community events.

The Playcentre building and secure playing area are currently used by the Pinehaven Out of School Care Association (POSCA). POSCA started up in 1988 and became an Incorporated Society in 1989. It is a non-profit, parent co-operative. The guidelines for Early Childhood institutions were used in employing a Supervisor.

POSCA has always been well supported by parents. In 1990 it experienced a “population bulge” that required it temporarily to make use of the PPA Hall next door for the year 5 and 6 children. It has a roll of 40 children currently (not all present at the same time), and this is rising.

POSCA follows OSCAR guidelines in its policies and charges very reasonable fees, aiming to break even in its payments to Playcentre for use their facilities.

The Playcentre is an ideal premise for POSCA, especially for the younger children who require greater security. The Playcentre buildings are limited in size because of Playcentre Philosophy, therefore the increased after school care needs of a combined school on the Pinehaven site would have to be catered for in different premises.

A single school spanning the two sites

If the population projections are correct, it seems odd that a lot of money will be spent building many new classrooms that will then have to be demolished as the population declines.

If our position is unacceptable for economic, as opposed to educational, reasons, our community would support a school spanning the two existing sites, with a single Board of Trustees and a single Principal assisted by a Deputy Principal on each site¹⁴.

This model is sustainable and will not affect current good educational outcomes.

There are some positive features offered by this model. It would:

- Lessen conflict between the two communities;
- Lessen the effects of reorganisation on the children¹⁵; and
- Allow for the trusting relationship with teachers that all pupils desire.

Additionally:

- If the projections are wrong, for whatever reason, and there is growth in the roll, this model will have the capacity to cope with the growth - no extra building funds will be required.
- If the “small schools” educational model is followed in New Zealand, the facilities will already be in place, and there will be minimal disruption in the change.
- The MOE provided figures show that there will be a boom in the number of children in the intermediate schools in the next few years. This model allows excess capacity to be given over to the teaching of these children in the short term, thus allowing an easing of pressure on the intermediate schools.

The new school can launch immediately in April, when the network review findings are announced.

Should the combined roll ever shrink to below the 400 mark then one of the sites can be scaled back.

This model offers the MOE insurance against the two schools competing in a boom/bust arrangement.

It allows the existing Playcentre and After School Care facilities to continue their valuable services without disruption.

We must note that once a school is gone, and the land is sold off, it's gone. It is very difficult and expensive to put a school back in its place. In the United States schools are now being placed in office blocks and shopping malls.

¹⁴ <http://ruraledu.org/docs/consolidation/alternatives.pdf>

¹⁵ <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Publications/pubs2003/WainuiomataSummarReportJul03.doc>

A merged school

This is our last option and least preferred because one of the two communities will suffer deeply through the loss of their school.

Note that this proposed model for the two schools is not sustainable if the United States research favouring schools of less than 400 pupils were to be understood and implemented by a future government¹⁶.

This trend towards small schools in the United States is backed up with an impressive body of research¹⁷. The Minister of Education admitted in a public meeting on November 11th, in Upper Hutt, that New Zealand is starting to experiment with the "school within a school" concept. We are concerned about arriving at the bizarre situation of having paid to create one school and then having to pay again to split it into two separate schools¹⁸!

But if such a decision is to be imposed, in the teeth of strong community opposition, then we believe that Pinehaven is the more logical site.

We understand that the Pinehaven School board is actively promoting the idea of a combined school on the Pinehaven Site. Whilst this is against the wishes expressed to the PPA by the greater Pinehaven community, we believe this option would, at least, be preferable to no school or empty buildings on the site. Logistically and financially the Pinehaven site would be the optimal site for a large school.

The Pinehaven School Board submission will adequately cover the logistic and financial benefits of using the Pinehaven site for a combined school. We have helped the Board in the collection of data.

¹⁶ <http://www.ruraledu.org/docs/consolidation/schoolsize.pdf>

¹⁷ Appendix 3 – Small schools research

¹⁸ <http://www.edfacilities.org/pubs/size.html>

Conclusion

Based firmly on the evidence provided by our extensive research, and having consulted a wide spectrum of resources, we have come to the considered view that the best way to meet the MOE's brief to make schooling sustainable for the future so that school children continue to receive quality education, is for the twin communities of Pinehaven and Silverstream *to keep both of their state Primary schools.*

In coming to this view, we have been struck by the complementary nature of these two schools and of the communities they serve. A striking example of this symbiosis has been shown in the number of children from both communities that start together at the Pinehaven Playcentre and Silverstream Kindergarten and then move on to either of the two schools.

As a community organisation representing the interests of Pinehaven residents, we can offer testament as to how central a school is to the life of the community. It is a hub. We congregate around it. It is where we take our children to play. We meet and talk there. We have indoor bowling and table tennis; we rent the hall out for weddings and receptions. We have craft markets; we have fairs. In Pinehaven it is also used as the local civil defence centre. Taking the school away from a community harms it irrevocably and as a result many families and children will suffer.

We see the Pinehaven and Silverstream schools as being dynamic, definitely not static, and at the starting point of a significant development towards an even more complementary relationship as a direct result of this review. We are happy to assist the Ministry in assessing the impacts of any resulting changes that may be necessary, but we strongly recommend you to retain Pinehaven and Silverstream Schools as the outcome of your review

Signed by

Patricia Christianson

Spokesperson

For Pinehaven Progressive Association

Dominic Baron

Honorary Secretary

Pinehaven Progressive Association

Post Script

PPA Assumptions.

We assume:

That the network review is driven by the ideals of “sustainability” and “educational outcome.”¹⁹.

That the consolidation of existing schools is proposed because of forecasts of declining school rolls.

That the ERO figures provided as justification for consolidation are not applicable to Upper Hutt²⁰

That money is not a crucial issue. This belief is based on:

- The Ministry of Education (MOE) says it is not²¹.
- Research shows that consolidation of schools does not lead to savings²².
- Pinehaven is a decile 10 school. Silverstream is a decile 9 school. The merged school will most likely be a decile 9 school, leading to greater per pupil costs for the MOE.

PPA Concerns

We are concerned about the network review in Upper Hutt as:

- ERO recommends that education needs be assessed before a review start²³. Trevor Mallard, the Minister, states that "from now on, the needs of schools will be assessed before a merger review starts"²⁴. But the MOE admits²⁵ that such a review has not been done in Upper Hutt²⁶.
- Local issues have not been researched by the MOE in depth prior to the announcement of a model for that area. In many areas the local communities may not be able to or choose not to do this on the MOE's behalf. The review process thus hugely disadvantages those communities.
- Integrated schools are currently excluded from the network review. But legislation is being proposed that will allow them to be included in a future round of reviews. We are worried that this means our community will be subject to another round of reviews at a later date, causing some of our children to have their education disrupted more than once.
- We are concerned that the existing Pinehaven Playcentre and After School Care will be displaced.
- Secondary Schooling is being reviewed now, when the MOE projections show that the secondary school population will continue to increase until 2007.

¹⁹ Appendix 4 – A Conversation with the Ministry

²⁰ Appendix 2 – ERO small school discretionary reviews

²¹ Appendix 4 – A Conversation with the Ministry

²² <http://www.ruraledu.org/docs/consolidation/fiscal.pdf>

²³ <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Publications/pubs2003/WainuiomataSummarReportJul03.doc>

²⁴ Dominion Post, Saturday November 8th 2003.

²⁵ Appendix 4 – A Conversation with the Ministry

²⁶ We find rich irony in that ERO figures are being used as justification for the closure of schools, and yet the review team itself is not following ERO recommended process in Upper Hutt.

- We strongly urge that before any future educational model is irrevocably changed that an educational needs assessment be done and that local issues are researched by the MOE. This research should include the integrated schools.

Afterword

Given our concerns it is comforting to know that we are working with people in the MOE who will look objectively at the evidence:

*"I'm also in the position of telling the ministry that some of the policies they suggest are not useful and that we won't implement them." – **Graeme Marshall**²⁷*

²⁷ page 75, "When Schools Compete", Edward B. Fiske & Helen F. Ladd

A note on URLs

Given the tight time constraints we have had to draw heavily on the World Wide Web. Wherever possible we provide the URLs (Uniform Resource Locators) for the material that we have sourced on the Web as footnotes.

In directing the reader to these sources we realize that they may no longer exist when the document is read. We thus provide a print copy of each resource in a separate volume.

Appendix 1 – Interim Submission, Pinehaven Progressive Association

In the document "Building Sustainable Schooling Networks" the Ministry of Education has signalled that it is desirable to communicate with the wider community before any decision is made that will affect future schooling in the area. The Pinehaven Progressive Association is pleased to be able to comment on the review with regard to Pinehaven School.

In Pinehaven the development of the community and the school are inextricably linked together. For 50 years the synergies from the community involvement in Pinehaven School have imbued a pride amongst residents, pupils and teachers that is an important background to the latest very favourable ERO report.

Background :-

Incorporated in 1942 the Pinehaven Progressive Association obtained land and built a community hall. Minutes of a PP A meeting recorded on 26.1.1954 show that discussion arose over a verbal request from the Education Board that the hall be used as a temporary school. As the permanent fixtures in the hall would have to be rearranged further discussion was necessary with The Ladies Guild, the Methodist Church and the Women's Division of the Labour Party. A sum of £5 per week for use of the hall as a school was proposed. It is noted that at the following meeting the chairman stated that the Education Board would not pay more than £2.10s. This was agreed to by the members and thus began a collaborative partnership between the Association and the school, which still continues. Throughout we have adopted an attitude of support, openness, integrity and goodwill.

We view the review of Pinehaven School as a community based issue. We agree that reviews provide a process for creating certainty about schooling and that they should look to the future educational needs as well as the needs of students today. We are pleased that the review process is designed to be interactive and as inclusive as possible between the Ministry of Education, school and community.

Process :-

Following the announcement of the Upper Hutt Schools Review of Educational Provision the PP A immediately called a public meeting to assist the community to understand the process and content of the project, to advise people how and when to present their views and to assist with community networking and communication. The meeting was well attended by the public, educationalists, Trustees, and local body personnel. From the meeting we drew together experts from educational, economic, ecological and- social disciplines to devise appropriate processes, to network and to manage expectations.

Statistical Information :-

The Pinehaven Progressive Association has used statistical information available from Statistics New Zealand, Ministry of Education Review Newsletter, N.Z. Plunket, Playcentre and other community contacts to provide additional information. Considerable statistical research and graphing have indicated that we should take a positive view of the ongoing sustainability of Pinehaven School which plays such a pivotal role in the young and not so young citizens of this area.

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Graph 1 | Number of live Births in Each Suburb in Upper Hutt. |
| Graph 2 | Plunket New Baby Cases for Upper Hutt. Upper Hutt South (yellow). |
| Graph 3 | Number of Births in Pinehaven compared to those in Heretaunga/ Silverstream
This shows that Pinehaven holds its own when compared to a much larger area. |
| Graph 4 | Pinehaven children by age in the 2001 census. |
| Graph 5 | Number of Students at Pinehaven and Silverstream Schools.
This shows that Pinehaven's role is more constant and did not fall in 1990. It is important to note that at this time classrooms were removed from Silverstream School. The land that was previously used as the junior school playground was sold by the Ministry of Education and is now a residential development. Land for expansion of the current Silverstream School is no longer available. Silverstream School's role could be expected to increase in future if parents from the Sylvan Heights, Pinehill and Riverstone Terrace subdivisions choose to send their children there. |
| Graph 6 | Number of children attending Playcentre as at 1st July 2003 in Pinehaven and Whitemans Valley.
This indicates a known large pool of preschool children in the area adjacent to Pinehaven School. |
| Number 7 | Letter from Rural Mail Contractor confirming new residences in Whitemans City Council's more permissive planning regulations means more subdivision will take place in the Whitemans Valley, Blue Mountains areas in future. |

Pinehaven itself is a potential growth area. Property prices are affordable. Houses are selling quickly. The large sections allow for future subdivision. The school grounds will allow the Pinehaven School to expand. As the school is unfenced, and totally integrated with the Pinehaven Reserve, there is plenty of land available for recreation, and extra-curricular sports activities. The native and exotic bush backdrop provides for bush walks and the opportunity for high quality science programmes.

Far from being an area where there is declining educational need our research to date indicates there is an ongoing expanding need for Pinehaven school to continue to provide high quality education in an environment most city schools can only dream about. The Pinehaven community values its school and works collaboratively with it. The Association would be pleased to discuss this matter further in order that its views can be fully explored by the Ministry.

Patricia Christianson

Spokesperson

For Pinehaven Progressive Association
September 26th 2003

To Mr Bruce Murray
Review Facilitator
Ministry of Education.

NB:

We have not included again the 6 graphs and the letter referred to in the preceding pages. Please refer to the original documents sent to you on the 26th September.

Appendix 2 – ERO small school discretionary reviews

From: Marshall Graeme [mailto:graeme.marshall@minedu.govt.nz]

Sent: Thursday, 9 October 2003 5:20 p.m.

To: Martin Paulo

Subject: RE: Upper Hutt Network Review

Herewith the ERO material. As you can see the next round of this information is about due. The ERO material corroborates our own anecdotal observation and persuades us that we don't want small schools where we don't need them for reasons of access.

Regards

Graeme Marshall

SMALL SCHOOL DISCRETIONARY REVIEWS

For the two-year period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2002

Total number of schools: 2718

Total number of discretionary reviews: 383

School size	Percentage of all schools	Number of Discretionary Reviews	Percentage of all Discretionary Reviews
Roll < 150	45%	256	67%
Roll < 100	34%	210	55%
Roll < 50	19%	135	35%
Roll < 25	7%	48	13%

Another view, grouped differently:

School size	Percentage of all schools	Number of Discretionary Reviews	Percentage of all Discretionary Reviews
100 <= Roll < 150	11%	46	12%
50 <= Roll < 100	15%	75	20%
25 <= Roll < 50	12%	87	23%
Roll < 25	7%	48	13%

Appendix 3 – Small schools research

Bill Gates is the world's richest man. He thought that the American education system was not producing the pupils demanded by a modern economy. He decided to act. He set up a foundation²⁸ with top-notch staff and tasked it to find how to get the quality of education he demanded. The staff travelled widely, interviewed the top educators, studied schools, and read research papers.

They found that schools are more likely to produce good educational outcomes if they are small and personalised. With at most 400 pupils and an emphasis being placed on long term relationships between students and teachers. The kind of relationships that our Maori students desire!

They found that small schools gave strong bonds between pupils and teachers. They found that small schools generated levels of caring and mutual obligation not found in big schools. That teacher turnover is lower. That disciplinary problems are lower. That drop out rates are lower. And they found that students from disadvantaged backgrounds did far better in small schools.

In the last three years Bill Gates has spent over \$(NZ) 30,000,000.00 dollars²⁹ on education research.

Bill Gates was so encouraged by the results of this research that he has spent in this short time over \$(NZ) 620,000,000.00 on creating small schools in the United States.

Other researches are coming to similar conclusions. Mary Anne Raywid in her overview of small schools research has noted that “All of these things we have confirmed with a clarity and at a level of confidence rare in the annals of education research”³⁰.

²⁸ <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Education>

²⁹ <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Education/Grants/default.htm?showYear=2003>

³⁰ http://www.ericfacility.net/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed425049.html

Appendix 4 – A Conversation with the Ministry

Dear Mr. Marshall

As one of the parents affected by the Upper Hutt Network Review I would very much like to get a copy of the requirements that has resulted in the current proposed model. I feel that I cannot respond properly to the model until I have seen these requirements.

Could you help me in this regard?

Thank you
Martin

Greetings Martin and thank you for your enquiry. I am not certain what you mean by "requirements". Could you clarify for me please. We have operated from the basic position that there are too many schools in Upper Hutt given the present and future roll projections. We have put out for community consideration one view of what the schooling provision might look like in the future. You will see that our basic "requirement" that there be fewer schools is embodied in that proposal. We took into account matters such as reasonableness of access to schools so that geographic spread was of some importance. E did not take into account any questions such as the current educational performance of schools. While the community may have perceptions from time to time that one school is "better" than another we are operating on the basis that they are all the same in this respect. We would like the community to consider our proposal and suggest parts of it that they agree with or disagree with. They may also like to
I hope this helps. We look forward to receiving your contribution and thank you for taking an active interest. That is be much appreciated.

Regards
Graeme Marshall

Thank you for your prompt reply. As I understand your response, the basic driver of this review is simply that Upper Hutt has too many schools.

If so I assume that some form of study or research has been done to show this. I would very much like to get my hands on this research/study. Do you have a copy available or can you advise me on how to get one?

Thank you in anticipation
Martin

Greetings again, Martin

There is no academic study as such. The information we use is a combination of past rolls - back to 1974), present rolls (based on the official returns by schools), and future projections (based on information provided by Statistics NZ - including the most recent census data and data gathered from early childhood services etc). This is then viewed against the capacities of the existing schools i.e. the unoccupied spaces. The whole assessment is then put up for discussion and consultation with the various communities. Most of the information has been made available through newsletters or in individual school cases by the facilitator to the schools concerned. I'll copy to you the newsletters sent to date that relate to the Upper Hutt review in case you haven't seen them.

Regards
Graeme Marshall

Again, thank you for another prompt reply, and for the newsletters. You are right - I hadn't seen them as I have been out of the country for the last few weeks.

My understanding of the matter from your e-mails boils down to: No study has been done on optimal school enrolment size or on the effects of school closure to the community and students. Simply put, schools have empty seats, and Statistics New Zealand has projected that there will be more empty seats in the future. This is unacceptable, therefore schools must be closed. What is left to be debated is simply which, and how, schools are to be closed.

I would very much like to see the projections of Statistics New Zealand that you are using. In particular I would like to understand the assumptions made in the production of their model. If you could give me, or tell me where to find this documentation I would be most grateful!

Thank you

Martin

A quick reply. I am off now to another meeting. ERO evidence shows that schools of any size can be successful but schools that are smaller tend to have a disproportionately high experience of instability and require more frequent intervention. I'll arrange to have the Stas Projections sent to you but it may be a couple of days. They project on "high", "medium" and "low" rates of growth/decline. In short, we have experienced significant decline in the youth population to this date and we are tied to expect more in the future. A network that was built for x now needs to cater for x-y and in future x-2y. The current policy settings give some incentive to change now.
Regards
Graeme Marshall

I await the arrival of the Statistics New Zealand Projections that you use with interest.

I thought that ERO reviewed "process", rather than "outcome"? Thus when they talk of "instability" and of "intervention" I assume that ERO is in fact talking about systemic failures of process? Thus I am very keen to see their studies as well!

I had heard of these studies, and thus have done a search on the ERO web site for them, but come up empty handed. If you could point me to or provide me with a copy of the ERO studies that you are using as well I would be most grateful!

Thank you, again in anticipation

Martin

Briefly back in. Have attached a copy of the presentation made by the Minister to the Upper Hutt and Stokes Valley Schools in late August. It includes a summary of the demographic data and other background information. ERO has two pieces - one some work that I asked them for and the other is their background document on small schools. That should be listed among their publications on their website. The other I'll seek out and send to you. I haven't yet received this year's update.
Regards
Graeme

Herewith the ERO material. As you can see the next round of this information is about due. The ERO material corroborates our own anecdotal observation and persuades us that we don't want small schools where we don't need them for reasons of access.
Regards
Graeme Marshall

Thank for this.

One last question for the week! Has any form of impact assessment been done on the initial model, and if so

how would I get my hands on a copy?

Thank you

Martin

Greetings again, Martin

No, there has been no impact assessment made at this stage. We have not used such assessments in any reviews, to date. The process of consultation develops one form of such an assessment - albeit from a community perspective - but nothing formal has been done.

Thank you for your enquiry.

Regards

Graeme Marshall

YAQ (Yet Another Question)

A lot of the debate about this review seems to be centred around whether the "consolidation" is a money saving exercise or not. So:

What is the annual cost per student head in Upper Hutt under the current system? What is it projected to be under the new model?

Thank you

Martin

Greetings Martin

Two things - and they relate. We don't have that information readily to hand and it was not part of the decision-making process. This because the process is not primarily about saving money - although there are, obviously, savings to be had. If there were not, we would not be able to speak of the schools and communities receiving "four years worth of the estimated savings from the changes". I suppose that this calculation has been done somewhere at some stage, but the formula upon which the EDI sums are calculated is a national one and would be subject to averaging across the country. Whether the Upper Hutt area is a net contributor to or taker from this is not clear.

Regards

Graeme Marshall

I have been struggling to understand what problem the proposed model solves so that I can try to evaluate the model fairly and give appropriate feedback.

So please help me here:

As cost of education isn't the issue;

As you have done no assessment of educational requirements;

As you have done no impact analysis of the proposed changes;

As the statistical model you are using is one of 9 possible alternatives;

As every school in Upper Hutt is above the size that seems to cause ERO so much headache;

Then why are you planning a major upheaval to the schooling and social structures of Upper Hutt?

What problem does the model address?

Thank you

Martin

Martin

The question is the sustainability and viability of quality education into the future. Your characterisation of my responses is extreme. When I have stated that cost isn't the issue, I have

also stated that there are savings to be had - that is acknowledged. I suggest that you re-read the Minister's presentation to Upper Hutt school boards. I sent that to you earlier. He outlines the issues that we are dealing with.

Regards
Graeme Marshall

Graeme

I understand that there may be a future fall in rolls nationwide. What I don't understand is how you, or any one else can develop a "quality" and "sustainable" solution for Upper Hutt without first finding out what our educational requirements are.

I have read the Ministers presentation and can find no reference to such an investigation. You have told me that you haven't investigated the educational requirements of Upper Hutt. Note that ERO has recommended that such a needs assessment be performed at the start of a network review. It is disturbing to me that ERO "persuades us that we don't want small schools where we don't need them" yet you don't appear to be adhering to ERO recommendations.

If, as you state, "the question is the sustainability and viability of quality education into the future" by what metrics do you measure "sustainability" and "quality"?

If you can answer this then I may be able to understand the problems of our region that your model is trying to solve!

Perhaps it would be easier for you to answer these questions after your next meeting with the review panel?

Yours
Martin

PS: I am not trying to "characterize" your responses. I am simply stating my understanding of them. I am sorry if this makes them appear "extreme".