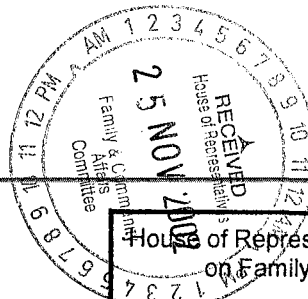


Irwin, Debbie (REPS)

From: Nick Guggisberg [nickg@pacific.net.au]
Sent: Thursday, 21 November 2002 1:57 PM
To: Committee, FCA (REPS)
Subject: submission to enquiry into improving children's health &



House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs	
Submission No:	01.....
Date Received:	25 NOVEMBER 2002.....
Secretary:	<i>S. Falke</i>

To whom this may concern,

I would like the committee to consider what the "Vincent Postcode Study" (1999 or 2000) found in relation to what is the single biggest predictor of young people: - becoming involved in the criminal justice system, - living in poverty, - and having poor health... **'the education of their mothers'**.

This is not to say that mothers are to blame for poor outcomes in these areas, it is to point out the central importance of education in relation to all these matters. If we want to have a lasting impact on all children's health & wellbeing, then we need a better resourced, flexible, accessible, innovative and engaging education system for our young people, that also engages parents and other communities. Our schools need to be the engines of community, fostering links between adults, young people, business and government. Schools should not be places that only young people go to between the ages of 5 and 17. Schools need to be places where people go to, to engage in community.

I am frustrated by the public discourse around 'Law and Order' always being about courts being too soft on crime, and the need for more police to lock up more criminals. If we really want to have a lasting impact on 'Law and Order', then lets put the resources where they will have the broadest and most effective impact... **education**. If we're serious about health, then lets put the lions share of resources where they tackle the root cause of poor health... **education**.

Professionally, I am a Child and Family Community Development Worker based in Albion Park in NSW. I have many clients who have children that are refusing to go to school. They are disengaging on many levels, and their futures look bleak. They have very few opportunities, and the education system does not cater for their needs; which are obviously complex. They need a better resourced education system that is equipped to provide learning in a manner that keeps these young people engaged and that is not disabled by their complex social needs. Unfortunately, what is happening though is they're increasingly engaging in drug taking and petty crime while refusing to go to school. These children are likely to end up living in poverty, having significant involvement with the criminal justice system, having very poor health, and breeding more children to face the same problems.

The best education system in the world won't solve all these problems, but it is likely to have a lasting and significant impact on the above, and in my assessment, more than any other single initiative.

Please lobby for significantly more resources to be allocated to our education system.

Thankyou for your consideration,

Nick Guggisberg

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22/11/2002