**Education Report: Possible Closure of Inangahua Junction School (3198)**

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<tr>
<th>To:</th>
<th>Hon. Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education</th>
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<td>Date:</td>
<td>4 October 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Priority:</td>
<td>Low</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security Level:</td>
<td>In Confidence</td>
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<td>METIS No:</td>
<td>1156804</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drafter:</td>
<td>Philippa Pidd</td>
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<td>DDI:</td>
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<td>Key contact and number:</td>
<td>Katrina Casey</td>
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<td>DDI:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Messaging seen by</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
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<td>Communications team:</td>
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<td>Round robin:</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
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**Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this paper is for you to consider whether to close Inangahua Junction School. On 25 June 2018 you agreed to initiate consultation on the possible closure of Inangahua Junction School following a request from the Board of Trustees of the School. The boards of affected schools have now been consulted and have responded stating they have no concerns.

**Summary**

2. The roll at Inangahua Junction School has steadily declined from 11 students in March 2010 to two students at present, both of whom are expected to move to new schools for Term 4 2018. The Board of Trustees believes the long-term viability of the school is poor with no predicted future students in the area and an inability to provide social and cultural activities for students.

3. The Board of Trustees of Inangahua Junction School wrote to the Ministry on 11 April 2018 asking for the voluntary closure of the school at the end of 2018.

4. Consultation under section 157 of the Education Act (the Act) was initiated with affected schools and no concerns were received.

5. Closure of the school, should it be approved, would be under section 154 of the Act.
Recommended Actions

We recommend that you:

a. **agree** to close Inangahua Junction School

   Agree / Disagree

b. **sign** the attached letter to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of Inangahua Junction School and the *New Zealand Gazette* notice;

c. **agree** that this report be provided to the Board of Trustees; and

   Agree / Disagree

d. **agree** that this report is proactively released as part of the Ministry’s next publication of reports on its website

   Agree / Disagree

Katrina Casey  
Deputy Secretary  
Sector Enablement and Support

4/10/2018

Hon Chris Hipkins  
Minister of Education

13/10/18
Background

1. Inangahua Junction School is a decile 6, contributing primary school located 35 kilometres north of Reefton, in the Buller District.

2. The school is currently on a three year Education Review Office (ERO) cycle.

3. The roll at Inangahua Junction School has steadily declined from 11 students in March 2010 to its current roll of two students.

4. The Board of Trustees wrote to the Ministry on 11 April 2018 asking for a voluntary closure of its school. METIS 1130354 refers.

5. The Ministry met with the Board on 9 May 2018. Information was provided about the closure process, asset distribution and the Education Development Initiative (EDI) policy.

6. The Ministry’s view is that Inangahua Junction School should close due to its isolation, falling roll and that there is capacity in the local network to absorb current students.

Assessment

7. The Ministry considers that Inangahua Junction School is no longer viable and is being considered for closure for the following reasons:

   - The Board has informed the Ministry that Inangahua Junction School will have no students enrolled from Term 4, 2018. Both current students have new schooling options arranged.

   - There is no significant pre-school population in the area and the Board are not aware of any new students of school age until 2021.

   - The community is aware of the lack of opportunities for social interaction available to current learners as a result of the low numbers, as well as the lack of opportunity for meeting the sporting and cultural needs of the students.

Education in the Local Area

8. Should Inangahua Junction School close, there are two local schools that have capacity to enrol students. Both Reefton Area School and Sacred Heart School (Reefton) are approximately 35 kilometres from Inangahua Junction School.
Financial Implications

9. Inangahua Junction School has performed well financially although it has had a number of recent financial deficits. The deficits in the last three years are shown in the table below.

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Deficit</th>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$4,830</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$1,195</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$4,960</td>
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10. If Inangahua Junction School closed, the first year cost to the Crown is estimated to be $8,000. This cost is due to surplus staffing arrangements. However, each year after this will see estimated savings to the Crown of $96,000 and an estimated saving of $980,000 over a 10 year period.

Property Implications

11. The property at Inangahua Junction School is Crown owned. If the school closes, as it is not required for educational purposes, the property would be disposed of in accordance with section 40 of the Public Works Act 1981, related local authority legislation and the protection mechanisms in respect of Māori land claims. The school house on site would also be part of this process.

Transport Implications

12. Should closure be approved, School Transport Assistance (STA) may be provided to students who are attending the closest school they can enrol at, and where distance and accessibility are a barrier to attending this school.

Closure Process for State School

13. Consultation under sections 154 and 157 of the Act has been undertaken with the boards of other schools whose rolls might be affected. No concerns were received.

14. As the Board of Trustees requested this process, if you are satisfied the school should close, you do not need to request final arguments from the Board as to why it should stay open. A letter to the Chairperson of Inangahua Junction School Board of Trustees is attached for your signature.
Conclusion

15. The Ministry considers that Inangahua Junction School is no longer viable, and is being considered for closure for the following reasons:

- The Board has informed the Ministry that there will be no students enrolled from Term 4 2018.

- There is no significant pre-school aged population in the area and the Board are not aware of any new students of school age until 2021.

- The community is aware of the lack of opportunities for social interaction available to current learners as a result of the low numbers, as well as the lack of opportunity for meeting the sporting and cultural needs of the students.

16. The Board of Trustees has considered the future of the school, but because it is isolated, it considers there are limited options.

Annexes

Annex 1: Letter to Board Chair
Annex 2: Letter to MPs
Annex 3: New Zealand Gazette Notice
Justine Mitchell  
Chairperson  
Board of Trustees  
Inangahua Junction School  
122 State Highway 6  
RD1 Reefton 7895  

13 OCT 2018  

Dear Justine,

Thank you for your letter of 11 April 2018 advising that you are requesting the voluntary closure of Inangahua Junction School. I note that closure is being considered because the roll has now dropped to two students in Term 3 this year, with these students expected to take up new schooling options in Term 4 of 2018, and that there is no significant pre-school population in the area.

The Ministry of Education has consulted on my behalf with your Board and with the Boards of schools whose rolls might be affected if the school closes. This consultation fulfils the requirements of sections 154 and 157 of the Education Act 1989.

After considering all the information provided to me, I am satisfied that Inangahua Junction School should close. The closure will be gazetted shortly to take effect on 15 November 2018.

Please ensure you follow the surplus staffing processes regarding school closure that are outlined in the relevant collective agreements.

Even though there is agreement to Inangahua Junction School closing, I realise that it is not an easy matter for a Board and a school community to take these actions. I would like to take this opportunity to record my appreciation of the service that the Board, its previous members and the school staff have given to Inangahua Junction School and its students.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Hipkins  
Minister of Education
Annex 2: Letter to MPs
19 OCT 2018

Hon Rino Tirikatene
MP Te Tai Tonga
Parliament Buildings

Dear Rino

On 11 April 2018 the Board of Trustees of Inangahua Junction School wrote to me requesting the closure of the school.

The Ministry of Education has consulted on my behalf with the Board and with the Boards of schools whose rolls might be affected if the school closes. The consultation fulfils the requirements of sections 154 and 157 of the Education Act 1989.

After considering all the information provided to me I am satisfied that Inangahua Junction School should close. The closure will be gazetted shortly to take effect on 15 November 2019.

For your information I have attached a copy of the letter to the Board of Trustees.

Yours sincerely

Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

enc
19 OCT 2018

Damien O'Connor
MP for West Coast-Tasman
Parliament Buildings

Dear Damien

On 11 April 2018 the Board of Trustees of Inangahua Junction School wrote to me requesting the closure of the school.

The Ministry of Education has consulted on my behalf with the Board and with the Boards of schools whose rolls might be affected if the school closes. The consultation fulfills the requirements of sections 154 and 157 of the Education Act 1989.

After considering all the information provided to me I am satisfied that Inangahua Junction School should close. The closure will be gazetted shortly to take effect on 15 November 2019.

For your information I have attached a copy of the letter to the Board of Trustees.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

enc
Annex 3: New Zealand Gazette Notice
NEW ZEALAND GAZETTE NOTICE

Education Act 1989

Inangahua Junction School (3198) Closure Notice

Pursuant to section 154 of the Education Act 1989 I hereby declare that Inangahua Junction School (3198), Buller District will close on 15 November 2018 and will cease to be established on that day.

Dated at Wellington this 13th day of October 2018.

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education