Students Pay Price for Middle Schools Haste

The Education Minister’s announcement that plans to stall the proper commencement of middle schooling in Palmerston means that students will pay the price for ill-considered and hastily implemented middle schools program.

“This whole process was supposed to be about improving educational outcomes for students,” CLP Deputy Leader, Terry Mills said today.

“Now the Government is announcing that year seven students will not be shifted from their current schools to the Palmerston High School until half way through next year.

“It is not as though Government was not warned of this eventuality. I have been criticised for talking education down because I did not support Labor’s bullish approach to education reform.

Parents have long been angered by lack of foresight shown by this government. Not one new school has been built in Palmerston to alleviate overcrowding in their two terms of office. Teachers have had to endure years of overcrowding.

First, the closure of the Farrar After-Hour’s clinic, now this! No wonder Palmerston families consider that they are treated like second class citizens when it comes to this Labor Government.

“This announcement by Henderson betrays the fact that this whole process has been rushed and poorly planned. Holding over the middle school transition until the middle of next year means that educational outcomes have been subordinated to departmental structural requirements. Clearly, the tail is wagging the dog in the Education Department now.

“This Labor Government was warned to take great care when implementing these changes. Real changes are driven by well resourced teachers, not Government schedules. By neglecting the serious and more challenging components of reform the objective to improve educational outcomes has been compromised.

Why are Palmerston families required to wear the consequences of poor planning and little care? Most primary schools have been overcrowded for years. They were told that relief would come when year sevens move to Palmerston High School.

“Now it is insult to injury when these primary schools will be required to manage both primary schools and some middle school students on top of no relief from over crowding.

Rather than reform we have confusion and potential chaos as buses are brought in to ferry kids around. It is hard enough to teach these days and teachers can do without this shambles called ‘reform’. No wonder the slick slogan ‘Building Better Schools’ is more commonly referred to as ‘Buggering Better Schools’.”

Further comment: Terry Mills 0418 833 594