

## **Moolarben Coal Complex OC3 Extension Project – Individual letter of support- 10/2/26**

**Dear Panel Members,**

**I am writing to you in support of the Moolarben Coal OC3 extension project. It is vital that this project is successful due to the dynamic role Moolarben plays in our local community. My firsthand experience will focus on Moolarben's community grants system and the impact it had and continues to have on a school community.**

**As a retired principal with a tenure of 10 years from 2013 – 2023 at Kandos Public School I accessed Moolarbens' community grants system to great effect. In that time Moolarben saw fit to donate up to \$30000 for vital educational and social initiatives.**

**I will outline in this letter a brief background of the Kandos Public School community and the projects supported by Moolarben which developed opportunity and life changing prospects for its students.**

**During my time at Kandos Public School, it had a high Family Opportunity Employment Index (FOEI) which placed it into the bottom quartile of social disadvantage Australia wide. With low socio-economic backgrounds the students were facing insurmountable conditions to thrive educationally. This was supported by poor Beststart Kindergarten Assessment data and NAPLAN results.**

**My team and I developed a 5-year strategic plan focussing on student engagement and wellbeing. After meeting with Moolarben representatives they quickly grasped the social and educational benefits of the plan. With the use of the grant funding from Moolarben we targeted specific programs to improve student literacy, numeracy and socialisation.**

**The funding allowed us to purchase key educational programs (Pre-Lit, Minilit, Multilit and Quicksmart) which were woven into our mandatory curriculum requirements. The funding also allowed us the opportunity to provide 21<sup>st</sup> learning spaces and engagement programs.**

**With the inception of a Pre-Kindergarten Early Start program which was based heavily on phonological awareness taken from the Pre-Lit program we enabled students entering Kindergarten the following year a step up for a successful start to primary school.**

**As you can imagine with a low socio-economic community there is a statistically higher level of social dysfunction. With this in mind we introduced a boys**

**engagement program to improve attendance and wellbeing. In 2015 to 2016 suspensions of boys accounted for 93% of all school suspension at Kandos Public School and attendance of that cohort was sitting at 63%. We introduced a skills-based mentor program around woodworking and the incidental counsellor strategy. Moolarben funded the tools and shed, this allowed us to free up other funding streams to professional develop the right mentor. Within 6 months the suspension rate of at-risk boys reduced to 11% with an uplift in attendance to 95%. A high proportion of the boys went on to complete their HSC and now are engaged in the workforce. The majority of the boys in the program either came from backgrounds of domestic violence, unemployment and or single parent families.**

**As mentioned previously Moolarben provided grants to us to purchase educational programs. These data driven programs combined with a team driven to succeed provided opportunities for students to flourish. As reported by the Sydney Daily Telegraph “Kandos Public School was identified in 2022 as one of the top-improving schools in the Central West region, according to an analysis by the Daily Telegraph. The school achieved an 11.66% increase in its 5-year average NAPLAN results, highlighting significant academic progress during that period.**

**5-Year Performance: The school's 5-year average score was recorded at 2,214.80 in the 2022 report.”**

**This result is inclusive of all school systems which cater for primary aged students (Catholic, Government and Independent) and saw Kandos Public School ranked number 1 in the Central West, 22 in NSW and 102 in Australia.**

**Great things can happen with vision and systematic planning and Moolarben was a vital player in a success model that worked.**

**By granting the OC3 extension you will allow Moolartben to continue its outstanding commitment to improving the opportunities and outcomes for all people in our community, especially our children.**

**Yours Faithfully**

**Phillip Morley**

**Bachelor Of Education/Special Education**

**Retired Principal**