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**To:** [stateeducationinquiry](#)  
**Subject:** PUBLIC: Submission to Inquiry into Victoria's State Education System  
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Organisation:

Name: Rodney O'Connell

Submission:

To the Committee Re the State Education System.

I would like to address the geographical disparity in regional areas and the ability of the education department to monitor future growth and current needs of country students. I would like to use the Omeo region as an example. Omeo is the the main town in an isolated part of Victoria, it services smaller outlying towns, a large agricultural area as well as the nearby ski resorts of Mt Hotham and Dinner Plain.

Omeo provides all the usual services to its region including health, local government centre, tourism accommodation, public transport services and employment opportunities to name a few. The only thing it can't provide is education past primary level because its nearest high school is based 25 kilometres away in a small sawmilling town which is in decline. This has resulted in families leaving the region for the lack of secondary classes in Omeo and the inability to attract and retain professional people such as doctors and nurses. Omeo is growing with new businesses opening, proposed land rezoning to allow for increased growth and increased interest from people wanting to move here.

There needs to be the return of secondary classes to the Omeo school to not only attract families but to stop people leaving the area for higher education. The social and economic cost to areas such as this with children either being sent away or families leaving cannot be underestimated. It is hard enough for families to send children away for university education let alone secondary education as well.

My point for this inquiry is who monitors situations like this in areas far removed from major regional offices or indeed Melbourne? I believe that education planning and decision making should involve at the very least local councils who manage areas such as this and know first hand where future growth is occurring.

I have met with the previous Minister for education, Natalie Hutchins to raise these issues she has just moved on to another portfolio which highlights the lack of continuity when issues like this are raised. I also provided letters to the Minister from families who have raised concerns about education delivery in Omeo.

Yours sincerely Rodney O'Connell