

The Honourable William Hodgman, LLB, BA
Premier of Tasmania
House of Assembly,
Parliament House
Hobart TASMANIA 7000

15 September 2016

Dear Premier,

We wish to draw your attention to a major failing of the Meander Valley Council in granting a lease for the closed Meander Primary School to Teen Challenge to run their Christian faith-based drug rehabilitation centre for women and children.

The Council has:

1. not fulfilled their obligations under the MOU with the Department of Education covering the closure of the school and the transfer of ownership
2. never consulted with the whole community, yet they and Teen Challenge have been dealing with a few local families for over a year
3. refused to recognise the result of their own survey which proved there was no endorsement of their decision
4. refused to act on a petition of over 100 Meander signatories objecting to the rehabilitation centre
5. ignored all letters of protest and deflected all related questions on notice at every Council meeting
6. risked client and resident safety by allowing the rehabilitation to be conducted in the unguarded main street of Meander
7. failed to exercise due diligence, by not investigating the background of Teen Challenge
8. excluded whole community use of the school by letting only Teen Challenge be owners.

A timeline of events is attached.

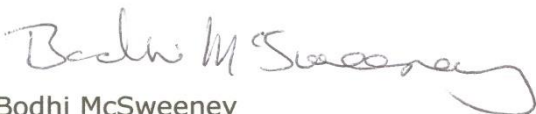
Council's lack of engagement with the community spurred us to form a new association, Meander Area Residents and Ratepayers Association (MARRA) Incorporated. We have a growing membership of over 50 locals.

MARRA has been unable to get satisfactory responses to any approach to Council. MARRA is also up against the resources and well-rehearsed responses of Global Teen Challenge, a ministry of the Assemblies of God Church, based in the USA.

Although extremely disappointed over the school's closure, MARRA sees that there are extraordinary opportunities for both economic and social development for the whole community if retained in public ownership and available for a multitude of uses.

We call on you to redress the injustice caused by failure to ensure a proper process was followed.

Yours faithfully



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