

our school

TIMOR 1207

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Wright, "close the small schools and send everyone to Maryborough."

The community was outraged. In fact, as the Advertiser wandered all over the backblocks looking for Timor, we were finally guided there by all the "save our school"-type signs seemingly in evidence outside every building in the community.

Owner of the Miners Right's Store, Chris Frahn, is a typical supporter. He has two children at No. 1207 and in fact only moved to the town in April 1992 because of the school.

"All we were looking for was a place with a small school nearby; the school actually sold us the business," Mr Frahn said. "There's already been people talking of moving out if the school closes.

"We struggle enough as it is. It's not as though we have 20,000 people coming through every day."

Whether the school remains open is pretty much line-ball. Next year it has 28 pupils lined up and would qualify for a second teacher if it recruits just two more. After that, numbers are predicted to rise for each of the next five years.

Teacher Bill McIlroy jokes about one of the mums who had an ultrasound recently which revealed her to be pregnant with twins. "If only they were all that loyal," he laughs.

Like all other taskforces, Timor's has now finished its work. It is understood all four schools wish to remain free-standing. "We were just stunned. It was very exciting to win the support of the big schools as well," said Hilda Wright.

Timor will discover its fate on October 4, when Education Minister Don Hayward announces his decision on taskforce findings.

There may yet be one final, delightful irony in the 120-year saga of Timor Primary School.

Modern mining techniques have opened up the possibility of a resumption of gold-mining at the Grand Duke. Although the proposal is only in its infancy, it is a delicious prospect to think of miner's sons and daughters again being taught to the rhythmic thump of pumps as dad toils away under their feet.