



# HAWTHORN SECONDARY COLLEGE

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**D**IVERSITY

**A**CHIEVEMENT

**R**ESPONSIBILITY

**E**NDEAVOUR

12/3/2013

## **Report to the Hawthorn College Community, College Council and surrounding schools**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to reflect on the range of inputs this year and to outline the basis of broad recommendations to the College Council for consideration at its meeting on March 27.

Since the start of this year the interest in the discussions at Hawthorn has increased and there has been a series of meetings with parents and staff in a range of schools. I have had the opportunity to meet approximately 150 parents in Primary schools in this consultation this year alone. There has been a series of discussions with the new Regional Director, meetings with local Secondary College Principals and discussions with the central office of the department. The continuing involvement of a key group of Primary Principals as key advisers has also been vital.

Particular attention ought to be given to the community members, staff, and parents of different schools who have come to several meetings, every fortnight and 'workshopped' different ideas. They, in particular have helped to ground the progress to date. This continued role will be very important.

Above all else the message has been clear, praise for the Hawthorn Secondary College Council in the decision they made last year. There has been clear confirmation that this decision, [to vote to recommend to the Minister that the College close at the end of the year and re open January 2014 as a new College], was correct and full of potential. It accords with the wishes and hopes of the community at large.

The process we have gone through has given confidence that the broad proposals to be put in this paper are grounded in the views of many parents and many schools.

It is very clear there is a strong demand for another choice in the area. It is clear that the demand for a responsive secondary college that can meet the changing needs and aspirations of parents is required and has the potential to be supported

## **Key findings**

The feedback indicates a strong desire in the community for a College that is:

- A co-educational college inclusive of students of all backgrounds,
- One that has a strong culture focused on achievement and excellence,
- One that will aim to provide other qualifications alongside the VCE e.g. the International Baccalaureate (IB),
- One that is clearly academic and aspirational in its nature,
- One committed to partnerships with other providers at the tertiary level with international partnerships as well,
- A College that works closely in the provision of curriculum with local primary schools, particularly in the transition years. This link is seen as basic to the success of the proposal,
- A College committed to the concept of students being global citizens. A college committed to the aim that every child over time will have experiences nationally at a minimum and internationally as a goal,
- One that encourages entrepreneurship amongst its students and seeks to give them a sense of personal responsibility and confidence in their capacities,
- One with a rich tapestry of sport, creativity and a broad extracurricular life for students to explore new areas of personal growth.

## **What would continue?**

It is important to be clear that the current students of the College would have an automatic place in the new College if they so choose.

It is envisaged that the International Student Program would remain a part of the new College.

In discussions with many parents in Primary schools and Principals of Primary Schools and in the Advisory Group there has been a broad consensus developed that could be the basis of a submission to the Minister Martin Dixon MP to support.

## **What is being proposed?**

The consensus that has developed can be summarised as follows. It is this consensus that would be put in the form of broad motions for the College Council to consider and vote on at its meeting on 27/03/13.

The motion for Council will touch on the five parts of the proposal that follow and the motions would be subject to the input received from this paper and feedback.

1. A co- educational College with a broadly based curriculum providing AusVELS and at the senior level VCE.
2. A college that has a set of specialisms that would be linked to other providers locally nationally and internationally that broaden and deepen pathways for students during their time at the College.

3. The core curriculum will be based on AusVELS though at the same time the new College will explore the prospects of the IB as an appropriate qualification. This is a significant possibility and needs to be explored with local schools, e.g. Auburn South Primary School.

#### 4. Two Bi Lingual Programs

The College will introduce two bi lingual programs. One will be in **French**, the other in **Mandarin**.

It is clear that there is a deep reservoir of families who are looking for a way to continue their commitment to a bi lingual program in Mandarin and in French within the immediate network of schools in the catchment area of the College.

Separate to that there is a strong set of evidence to suggest that if this were to occur that many families beyond the area would seriously look at the College.

Both of these proposals will see students undertaking several key studies in either French or Mandarin.

These programs will assist the College to establish significant international links, exchanges and achievable global links.

The structure of these programs will utilise the experience of primary schools undertaking bi lingual programs, experts in the department, relevant communities and representatives of organisations relevant to each language.

The community support for these programs in several Primary schools including Camberwell Primary School (French Immersion), Richmond West and Abbotsford Primary Schools (Mandarin Immersion) and beyond has been very strong and gives confidence that a local and a potentially broader need beyond the area could well be met.

There are many issues that would need to be resolved re-entry levels etc. but these can be worked on and settled on sound advice.

These two programs would be capped initially to 25, [though not yet determined], each in year 7 subject to demand in 2014.

It is assumed that this number would grow over time at year 7 level in 2015.

#### 5. An Academy of Science Mathematics Design and Technology

The new College will introduce a new 7-12 program, which will be developed in close association with a range of experts from Universities and TAFE.

It will be innovative and utilise a strong project base to engage students. It will ensure sound teaching in key academic knowledge and seek means of integrating studies. It will draw from the STEM approach, which is Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics. The existing STEM academies will be sources of advice and support for this innovative approach. This approach will assist in shaping pathways in the longer term for students in the senior years and strong tertiary

pathways beyond school. It is the intention to actively partner with Universities in staff mentoring, access to research and guidance.

There will be particular attention given to the different learning styles and approaches required to engage girls and boys in the program. It will not be a one size fits all approach. It will have a heavy emphasis on projects and development of portfolios.

For year 7, the nature and shape of the Maths, Technology, Science and Design program will be strongly influenced by advice from Primary School Principals, maximising their knowledge and understanding of how to ensure engagement, and develop aspirations amongst students. Details of the curriculum will be overseen by a task force drawn together to shape the program.

There will be two entry points into the program, one general entry into a mainstream program and the other as a result of some testing and possible interview into a more focussed and intense course of study. The number of students in the selective stream would be up to 50 in 2014.

### **Crossover**

It is understood that there will be some students who will benefit from accessing the bi lingual program and the Mathematics Science Technology and Design program.

### **A Broad Program**

The College has transformed its teaching and learning spaces to meet the needs of flexible and innovative curriculum. These include a Science Discovery Centre, tertiary style VCE Learning Common, an Applied Design Education Complex, an International Student Centre, a Middle Years Learning Space, a tiered multi purpose Lecture Theatre, and an indoor dining area. These new facilities are complemented by vast grounds and community gymnasiums. The school is therefore well positioned to provide the new specialisms that are articulated in this paper.

All students will have experiences across the range of learning areas. All will have access to a strong creative experience in the Arts. All will have a strong program in the Humanities.

All will have a strong program in Physical Education and Sport. The College will explore links to Swinburne Senior Secondary College and their sporting facilities and program.

The College will aim to develop strong partnerships with sporting organisations to promote initiatives such as soccer for girls. It will also explore avenues afforded by its location to consider such sports as Cycling.

The number of International students will grow over time and we predict that with the introduction of specialist programs its appeal will broaden and deepen.

The College as currently configured has developed strengths with students with particular learning needs. It is envisaged that this would continue but in the context of a broader program and a wider, larger cohort of mainstream students.

### **Appearance**

It is proposed that a new Uniform will be introduced and that a strict uniform policy will be in place.

## **Name**

A new College will require a new name. A process that engages the community will be put in place to recommend a new name to the Minister before the start of the next semester. It may well be advisable to ascertain views shortly on this and request the current Council to endorse a new working title for publicity pending the selection of a new name based on the processes required to meet a range of criteria. It is recommended that it be a geographically recognisable name as opposed to a name of an individual.

## **Governance**

If the proposal for a new College is endorsed the Department would set in train an Interim Council for the new College. The current College Council would continue in its duties and provide leadership for the remainder of the year. It would be reasonable to assume that there would be a strong link between the two bodies, charged with different tasks. It is reasonable to assume that there would be a degree of cross over in membership.

## **Transport**

Over many discussions the issue of access by public transport has been raised. It is important that in the range of issues requiring resolution that this is given attention.

Discussions between the Region and Local Government, particularly the City of Yarra and the City of Stonnington need to be facilitated.

## **Next Steps**

This paper is in the public domain and responses are requested.

As those who have been involved can see there are no surprises in the paper. It is an attempt to bring together tremendous efforts by many to craft an appropriate forward looking agenda for a new Secondary College.

Your responses by email to [hrkelly2@bigpond.com](mailto:hrkelly2@bigpond.com) by close of business on Monday 18/03/13 would be valued.

The Advisory Group will meet on 19/03/13

Recommendations will go to the College Council on 27/03/13

The resolution will then go to the Minister soon after that.

Howard Kelly